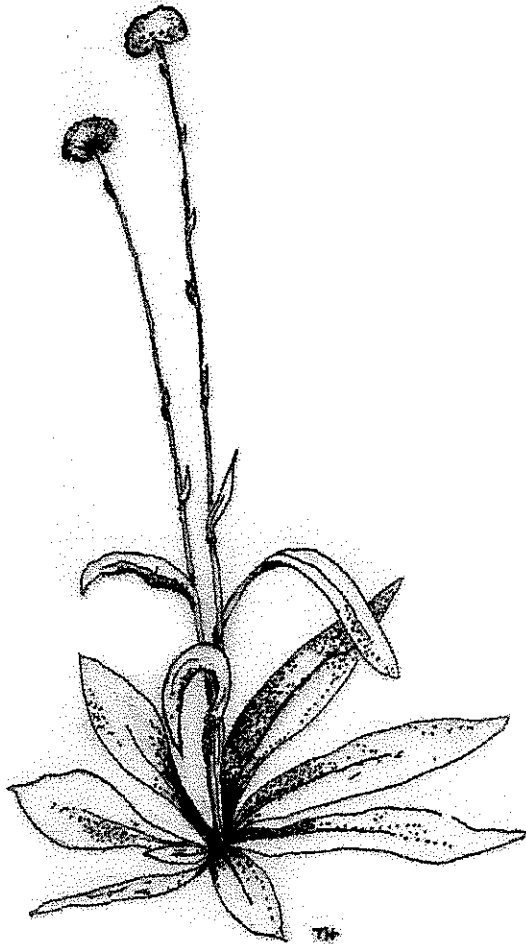


BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSLETTER

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

Inc. No. A11100A

Number 58 November 2003



WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Craspedia variabilis*

Common name: Common Billy Buttons

Family: Asteraceae

Flowering period: September to November

A tufted perennial herb with one to two erect flowering stems, arising from the basal rosette of broad tipped leaves. The flower stalk, 30-50 cm. tall, bears a single bright yellow globular or button-like flower head, 20 cm. diameter, typical of the Daisy family. The soft, hairy basal leaves are 50-130 mm. long and 5-13 mm. wide, with a few well spaced leaves up the flower stem.

Widespread in a range of habitats from grassy wetlands, riparian scrub, dry and valley sclerophyll forest and sclerophyll woodland.

Prefers a moist, well drained and wet soil, in a sunny to semi-shaded position.

Propagate by seed or division. The seed is usually mature in January and remains on the plant for one to two weeks.

Nectar from the flowers attract butterflies.

ERIC HENRY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This Spring surely heralds the year of the Orchid. On our property the beautiful Waxlip Orchid (*Glossodia major*) display is magnificent. They are in the greatest numbers that we have ever seen and are not the only ones that are prolific this year. Unfortunately the dreaded rabbits are having a devastating effect. A group of Bender residents are currently investigating rabbit reduction actions that could be taken up by the rest of us if they are successful.

You probably know that the Heritage Golf Course has been given the go ahead and work will commence soon. I'm sure the native fish enthusiasts will be keeping a close eye on the ground works to make sure the river habitat is kept intact. If all goes as proposed then the outcome should be an environmental gain with sympathetic treatment and protection for the billabongs that have been grazed and degraded by cattle for many years.

Another tour of the Bend by Planners has been promoted by Nillumbik for mid-October. We are pleased to be able to assist council and it is good to see that the council utilizes the Bend as an example of environmental management and planning.

Our Annual General Meeting on Sunday 23rd November is approaching so it's time to forward your annual subscription and to have a thought about joining the BICA committee or one of the sub-committees. If you would like to become involved give me a ring or fill in the nomination form in this publication. The easiest way in which to contribute is to be a financial BICA member. Your membership is important to give BICA the numbers when making submissions to council or other authorities.

See you Round

CAROL BONNY

THE ANNUAL PUB WALK

It's on again and not to be missed. Sunday 26th October. Meet at the Fire Station in Catani Blvd. promptly at 1:30 pm to carpool to the start of the walk. We need a few willing drivers to help with this. This year we are planning an afternoon tea break along the way (sound good Wolfgang?). BYO thermos and snack so we can sit and chat and look at the orchids before we charge on to the Pub.

All welcome to join the walk or if you are not up to it come and have dinner with us after at the St Andrews Hotel.

Enquiries Carol: 9712 0648

FIRE STATION SPRING CLEANING

From Peter Gurney

What a great community resource is our fire station! It very effectively houses the fire truck, other fire fighting equipment and communications gear. The fire shed is also the venue for our monthly Café Benders (run by Friends of the Fire Brigade), a venue for various community meetings (eg. pre-season fire awareness briefing, ELZ planning issues, etc), and for a number of community social events. I think nearly everyone in the BofI has enjoyed one or many happy events in the fire shed.

Well, the place now needs a bit of a clean-up. The chairs are grubby, the internal plaster walls are marked, there are lots of odd bits and pieces of leftover crockery and cutlery, the spouting is in need of a cleanout, and lots more. To give the place a late spring clean we are planning that Saturday 6th December will be Fire Shed Cleanup Day. This is a job for the community - not just the fire fighters (although I bet many of them will lend a hand).

The plan is:

* From 9.30am - 12.30pm, pull all the furniture and equipment out of the fire station, steam clean the chairs and wash down the other furniture, wash down the plaster walls, clean out the cupboards, brush down the metal internal walls, rake, prune, weed and burn to improve the fire break.

* 12.30 - 1.30pm, sausage sizzle/vegie burger lunch. BYO salad and light beer.

* 1.30 - 4.30pm, paint internal walls, clean roof spouting, clean out the spoon drain, clean the windows, wash the floors.

How can you help? Easy - come along and lend a hand for an hour or two, for a session, or for the day. Bring your paint brushes and rollers to the afternoon session, bring general cleaning and gardening gear for the morning session. Gloves are recommended, there are spiders!!

No need to RSVP - but if you have any questions contact me on 9712 0408. The sign tree will have a reminder at least one week before hand.

Thank you once again to all writers who contributed to this BICA Newsletter. Pictures are from Hilary, Carol and Tobey who did the front cover illustration.

BLOOD ON THE WATTLE

Mick Woivod

Life in the Bend of Islands could be described as a social experiment in which a small community of like-minded souls choose to live in the bush without significant impact upon it.

In the last newsletter I described how one individual in the very different world in the 1880s derived pleasure from cutting a swathe through the local wildlife with a gun. He, of course, was not alone!

Early in the 1850s we have young Kangaroo Ground resident, Joseph Furphy, setting the scene:

Steve and I had gone out shooting, not that we found any pleasure or justification in firing on pretty and inoffensive birds, but it was the correct thing to go out shooting on holidays.

Both would have seen the Bend of Islands with its pristine river environs as 'the place to be' on such an occasion. Years earlier in 1841, Penelope Selby and her young family lived on the Bend's opposite bank (Wittons Reserve). Here's dear Penelope on the local wildlife:

There's an animal here called the kangaroo rat, about the size of a rabbit, feet like a kangaroo, head like a rat. They are very nice and eat much the same as a rabbit (Alas, no longer, Penelope! The Bettong (Bettongia gaimardi) you speak of has been extinct on the Australian mainland for a century now) ... but the nicest wild animal I have tasted here is the opossum ... you can only shoot them at night for they creep into the hollow of trees during the day ... the most delicious bird is the bronze winged pigeon ... We eat black magpie [choughs!], cockatoos and paraquets all in their turn as we can get them, always a change from the salt meat

And it wasn't just food for the pot they were after. Jonathon Schofield, along Skyline Road, did a roaring trade in animal pelts.

Tanning of skins was Mr Schofield's occupation. He lived at the top of Mt Wise. Local boys were encouraged to bring him Koala Bears, Platypus and other native fauna which were plentiful throughout the district.

Occasionally too the bush animals would strike back. On 5 May 1866, Watson's Creek publican, William Cleave (great uncle of Arthur Augustus Calwell who once owned the Co-op land) was killed stone-cold dead by an 'old man' kangaroo - and in August 1895 a deer, of all creatures, drowned local resident, Jenkins, in a Bend of Islands stretch of the Yarra. Here's the Healesville Guardian of 9 August 1895:

At about midday a number of gentlemen met for the purpose of having a run over the country towards the confluence of the Brushy Creek and the River Yarra. When near this spot the dogs started a deer which at once made for and safely swam the stream. The hounds followed and killed the animal on the bank. Jenkins who was considered a strong swimmer, divested himself of his clothes, and connecting all the bridle reins, swam the Yarra which is at present flowing strongly, carrying the line of bridles with him. He reached the opposite bank in safety, and having tied the reins to the carcase of the deer, gave the signal to his comrades to pull it across, he holding on to the line so as to be pulled across with it. When he reached the centre of the stream he disappeared, and on rising to the surface again he said in answer to a question from his friends, that he had lost his hold of the rein. He then commenced to struggle and finally sank. The deceased had been residing at Christmas Hills for the past few months for the benefit of his health. He was only 22 years of age.

Undeterred by the mishap these 'gentlemen' were at it again in July 1898 as witness the Lillydale & Yarra Valley Express of 15 July 1898:

Two hares were bagged during a regular run by the Yarra Glen Hunt Club. This followed a ride towards Mt Lofty where it was expected a stag could be bagged. After some hours of riding the club saw no stag but several huntsmen enjoyed good runs with wallabies (a ripping time for their deer-hounds too, ripping these exhausted creatures apart).

These days we do our utmost to protect the local wildlife but that's not to say the carnage has ceased. Road-kills continue to take out local wombats; antechinus are in decline because of our misuse of traps; macquarie perch are under threat from the activities of the Heritage Golf Course and now - with fewer rabbits for prey - foxes no doubt are again eating their way through our local ground-nesting birds



ANNUAL KOALA COUNT

The annual "Koala Count" will take place on Saturday 15 November in the Shire of Nillumbik. This year, Bend of Islands residents are encouraged to go for a walk around their own property any time between dawn and dusk in search of koalas and record the location (Melway map reference) and number seen, including any back young. Also of interest is the species of tree the koala is seen in.

Reported sightings will be combined with other records from Nillumbik, Banyule, Manningham, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges and lodged with the Victorian Wildlife Atlas. The information gained will be used to monitor the status of koalas in the survey area and to establish a strategy for future management of the species.

Koalas are in low numbers in the Bend of Islands but are still regularly seen and occasionally heard calling. They are not easy to find but individuals have been seen recently in Catani Boulevard, along Watsons Creek, the Yarra River and in the moist gullies in the area bordered by Henley Road and Catani Boulevard.

Please report any sightings to Steve Craig on 9712 0029 or email stevecraigus@hotmail.com



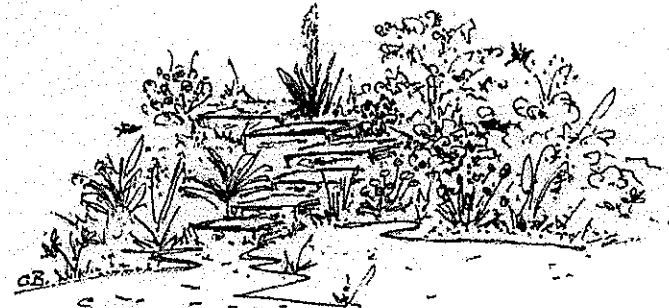
FIRST ELZ OPEN GARDENS

The BICA field day held on September 20th was a tour of three "gardens" in the area. The group met at 1:45 pm at the fire station and boarded the council bus hired for the day. A short trip took us to A Track on the Co-op and the Parris house. After an introduction by Janet Mattiske on the Round the Bend Co-op plant policy, Shane and Norm talked about their garden and planting around the house. Time was taken to wander and discuss the plants and garden layout.

The group was then rounded up and transferred to the Krause house in Catani Boulevard to continue the tour. Wolfgang and Marie detailed the changes they have made over the years and discussed the problems and impacts by exotic and indigenous grazing animals.

Afternoon tea was shared on the Krause deck before moving on to the Henry household at the end of Gongflers Drive. Ross and Cric were on hand to discuss their surrounds. There was plenty of local expertise for plant identification as well as Graham's and Mia's advice on weed management. Over forty attended all or part of the tour with many staying on to enjoy the BBQ. A few hard core prevailed for the late night review and debriefing. Beautiful weather and good company ensured a successful event. Thanks go to Steve and Val for coordinating the day and to the house owners for their hospitality. All attending seemed to be in favor of another Bend of Islands Open Garden Day next year.

The availability of plants of local provenance was discussed on the day with concerns expressed about whether outlets are propagating from Bend of Islands stock. Nominated BICA representatives have approved seed collecting licenses and a variety of plants are being grown in the area for local use only. Before you buy plants elsewhere check the availability of guaranteed local provenance plants. Contact Carol Bonny 9712 0648



OUR LOCAL ROADS

Mick Woiwod

We use them practically every day with seldom a thought as to how they came into being. Each has a story to tell! Some began millennia ago as Wurundjeri pathways, others as wheel-tracks of first white settlers. All have a reason for being the way they are.

Take Henley Road! Almost certainly its origins were in a native pathway used by Wurundjeri clans moving seasonally between their kangaroo hunting ground (today's K.G.) and Birrarung (the river we now know as the Yarra). Next time you drive it, note that throughout it follows the sole available east-west ridge to the river. In 1840, James Murray widened it and built the first bridge across Watsons Creek to reach his homestead alongside the present Henley Road Bridge. It became known as 'Murray's Track' and when he sold to Jimmy McPherson, as 'McPherson's Track'.

When Ned Haughton bought the Bend of Islands in the early 1920s an annual regatta used to be held on the stretch of river flowing through the now Heritage Golf Course so he dubbed it 'Henley Road'.

It was Ned too who named Catani Boulevard after he'd carved that windiest of all of our roads through the bush of the Bend of Islands.

Carlo Catani, after whom it is named, was a charismatic engineer whose name is perpetrated today in St Kilda's Catani Gardens and in Lake Catani on top of Mt Buffalo. Ned Haughton used popular Carlo's name to promote his dream of a 'Grand Boulevard' from the Boulevard in Ivanhoe, through the Bend of Islands to Yarra Glen.

Ned also named Gongflers Drive. The story goes something like this: He planned to build a golf course on its southernmost point and with angling another popular sport in the 1920s, he dreamt up the name 'Golfers and Anglers Drive' to attract buyers to the Bend. Unlike his daughter Jessie's recent Catani sanctuary effort, he saw the name as too long, so (as his son explained it to me years ago) he took the 'Go' out of Golfers, the 'ng' from Anglers, the 'fl' from golfers and the 'ers' from Anglers to make up the magical 'Gongflers' we have today.

Calwell Road is named after local landowner, the Hon. Arthur Augustus Calwell, MP, Oxley Road after the Oxley family, Ironbark after the tree Ned planted along it; and Wendy Way after Wendy Oliver who once owned the Heritage land. Perhaps it's time the 'Round the Bend Observation Cooperative', with its own beguiling name, dreamt up some inspirational names for its pedestrian A, B & C Tracks

THE MARONDAH AQUEDUCT: ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW AND MORE!

Review by Mick Woiwod

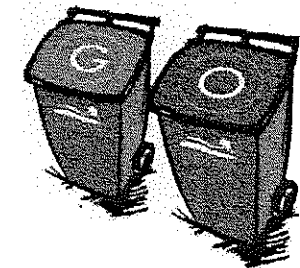
For a good read, try Fred Sadlier's recent book *Along the Length: An Account of Living and Working on the Maroondah Aqueduct*.

Each week day between 1944 and 1980 Fred the patrolman rode his bike the length of the aqueduct between Yarra Glen and Watsons Creek to keep it in good running order. Over the years he pulled out just about every animal imaginable from its waters; occasionally falling in himself. The book tells of how the aqueduct was designed 120-odd years ago to serve thirsty Melbourne with the best of water along a gradient of one foot to the mile. It's a book about how pines and pittosporum came to the Bend; about bats and wood-swallows in tunnels, snakes in the grass, high drama and bush comedy - indeed, just about everything you've ever wanted to know about our ancient waterway, all in 33 pages with maps and colour photos thrown in. For a \$12, it's a steal!

COPIES AVAILABLE FROM MARG WOIWOD ON 97120563 OR THE ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM IN KANGAROO GROUND.

BINS

Steve Craig



The Shire of Nillumbik has agreed to offer a \$20.00 rebate on your rates if you are prepared to accept an 80 Litre red-lid "Other" bin in exchange for the existing 120 Litre bin. If you think you can manage with the slightly smaller bin, which will still be collected on a fortnightly basis, contact Steven White, Manager Infrastructure Maintenance on 9436 3555 or email steven.white@nillumbik.vic.gov.au to request an exchange. If sufficient residents take up this offer we may be able to consider moving to a monthly collection in the Bend of Islands, resulting in further savings to residents. If the Shire of Nillumbik is to achieve the Northern Waste Management group goal of 80% diversion from landfill by 2008 and a target of zero waste by 2020, then we all need to reduce the amount of waste we produce. A smaller bin is a good way to start.

COMUNITY INVOLVEMENT BY STUDENTS FROM ELTHAM COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Peter Gurney

During the first two weeks of September we had two teams of Year 9 Eltham College students taking part in community involvement work in the Bend of Islands. The Community Involvement program is part of the College's Year 9 course and kids can select a range of organizations to work with over two days. We were very fortunate to have two teams each of six students lending a hand with bushcare work under the auspices of BICA Landcare.

The students were dropped off each morning at about 9.30am and were picked up again at 3.00pm. John McCallum, who is a Year 9 teacher at Eltham College, worked with the students and was our point of contact with the school. Each team of students was briefed by Alan Bonny and me on the Bend of Islands ELZ, and on our landcare activities.

Once we had the first team of six boys keen and fired up they set to work. Their first task was to tidy up our plant guards around Oxley Bridge and to plant Manna Gums and various acacias in the more open land just east of the bridge under guidance of John Mac and Carol Bonny. The boys worked like Trojans and seemed to enjoy themselves; perhaps the camp fire and the morning tea had lulled them into a holiday attitude! So that was when we tried to make it tough!! After lunch the group were led up to Shiela Dixon's place and set to work on digging out a large stand of the environmental weed, *Watsonia*. BICA had pre-positioned a rubbish skip and the kids really got stuck about digging out the weed and heaving the plants into the skip. Michael Pelling lent a hand and in a couple of hours most of the *Watsonia*, plus some bamboo and *Agapanthus* had been 'skipped'.

On the following Friday the boys came back for more!! No mucking around this time - straight into the *Watsonia* again. There was also a pile of branches to burn off and the boys set to with gusto. Not only did they clean up all Sheila's *Watsonia* but they made a good start on another large *Watsonia* outbreak at Barb Snell's property (next door to Sheila's). The rubbish skip was filled to overflowing. The burning off had been completed, and the boys finished the day claiming that they had had a good time. We made sure that they understood that they had made a marvellous contribution to our landcare programme and that our community was very grateful for their hard work and great attitude.

The next Monday morning a new team of kids arrived. This team consisted of both males and females and their work tasks were to plant, mulch and temporarily fence off newly planted indigenous plants at Jo Douglas' and Gerard Banner's property, the site of BICA's current pines project at the corner of Henley and Skyline Roads. There were also pine branches to be dragged into a pile and burnt off. Once again the team was briefed by Alan and me and supervised and assisted by John Mac, Jo and Gerrard, Marie Krause and myself. As before, the kids took to the work with vim and vigour. By the end of their second day they had planted dozens of indigenous plants, and had fenced off plots along the fence line near where the school bus parks. All the pine branches had been burnt and the students had taken turns to go down into the property with John, Gerrard and me to "drill and fill" numerous large pines located in the gullies with herbicide. We also "cut and painted" a few small pines with herbicide to demonstrate that technique. Only I handled the herbicide but the students took turns to drill the holes into the pines, which is quite difficult and tiring. John and I took this opportunity to explain about pest plants and their adverse effect on native vegetation and animals. We also took the kids down Henley Rd to the first pines project at Parfitt's and showed them the results of the work there and how the bush was regenerating so beautifully.

This team of students had fun too. They had a camp fire at lunch time and cooked marshmallows, they chatted and enjoyed meeting all the various adults who dropped in or involved themselves in the work. They enjoyed Jo and Gerrard's baby son, Linden. They saw a community which was prepared to work hard to preserve and improve the environment, and they observed how people work alongside one another to achieve outcomes. When this team left we made sure they understood how grateful our community was for their efforts, and how our landcare programme had benefited.

It was a great four days with very positive outcomes for all concerned; Bend of Islanders, the students and our lovely ELZ. Thanks John McCallum for suggesting the Eltham College community involvement project and for organising and joining in. Thanks also to Alan and Carol Bonny, Michael Pelling, Marie Krause, Jo Douglas and Gerrard Banner, Shiela Dixon and Barb Snell.. Alan, as Secretary of BICA is organising a certificate of thanks for each student.

THE CITY OR THE BUSH?

Sheila Dixon

For those of you who haven't yet caught up with the fact, Sheila is a regular on the ABC radio program Bush Telegraph. Part of this show is a short segment each week day at about five to twelve called "A Country Viewpoint". This is the script of the first Country Viewpoint that Sheila read but since then she has done several others and there are more to come. Radio National 621

I live in a small hamlet (long may it be) north east of Melbourne called Kangaroo Ground. Yes, and we do have kangaroos and the rest of their wild family in abundance even though we are just one hour from the city.

My property is on the cusp of the beautiful wine growing area of Yarra Valley which, at the moment, is a sea of white bird netting, for the grapes are just ripening. In fact the seasons can be highlighted by those vineyards. The pruning people arrive in the early spring, slowly wending their way up and down the rows, then the vines grow lush and green against the brown paddocks in this year of drought. It is nearly March now and after the netting come the pickers. Notices are put up in the windows of the local Kangaroo Ground store for people to come along and join the crews of harvesters. From here to Healesville they arrive in utes and caravans and the whole area from being a quiet and gentle backwater becomes filled with people up and down the geometric rows of vines. And all this one hour from Melbourne.

In this beautiful bush place where I live, I drive out on my small country road three times a week to attend a dialysis unit in Greensborough. I might meet one of the local farmers driving his tractor along this road or perhaps Luke Forbes with his water carting truck. We've needed a lot of that for our tanks lately. All this watched by the local cows lying under the trees in the shade or roaming the fairly bare paddocks having their never-ending lunch

Then in autumn the ancient hawthorn hedges are sprinkled with parrots eating the red berries and occasionally the odd old plum tree planted so long ago. Now and again an echinida wanders dangerously across our road in his eternal search for ants. I still marvel at all this and yet can attend one of the state-of-the-art renal units in Australia. How on earth did I manage to combine the two?

My house faces the Yarra River which is a real river here, lots of water birds, and gentle rapids that glow on a moonlight night. In the night the moorhens screech at danger from the banks but other sounds I hear can be quite distressing for, sometimes, I am awakened by the screams of rabbits or possums being carted off, probably by a fox. All of a sudden it is wild out there and I realise the ordinary bush of the day becomes a jungle at night. But sad as the sound is, it is ok, for this is nature working and surviving and I feel privileged to live here.

So, here is a toast to Kangaroo Ground. Tennis courts, Primary School, church, general store, olive groves, museum and vineyards. A small farming community and people like me who just want to live in the peace of it all.

SUZ2 AND YOU

Alan Bonny

As owners and residents in the Bend of Islands it is important that we know and understand the planning scheme that defines what we can and cannot do on our properties. The planning scheme was created by residents of the Environmental Living Zone to protect the fauna and flora and visual amenity of the area and is incorporated as part of the State Planning Scheme enforceable by Nillumbik Shire.

The ELZ is sometimes described as a residential National Park and a National Park philosophy was applied when the zone requirements were drafted.

Our SUZ2 planning scheme specifies in Section 2.0, Use Of Land: "The keeping of domestic pets or livestock by residents and or visitors is prohibited. For the purpose of this clause, domestic pets include dogs, cats, goats, horses, donkeys and dingoes."

This is clear and unambiguous. The only exception is when a Non Conforming Use Right (NCUR) exists. When the ELZ was established a register was compiled detailing pets and grazing uses in the zone. The register is maintained by Nillumbik Shire and will be referred to by council for administering the planning scheme provisions. The prior use rights are viewed as sunset clauses and in time will lapse by due process. Until that happens residents should respect the rights of owners with NCUR's and properties with rights should comply with the limits and requirements of responsible ownership.

It is the owners' responsibility to ensure that the scheme is complied with and to advise relatives, visitors, tradespeople and contractors of the requirements.

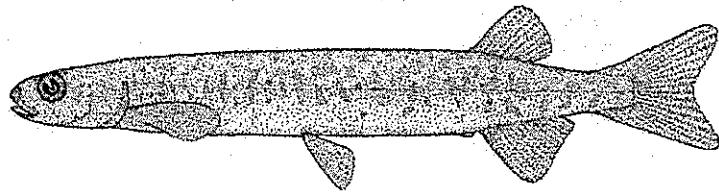
If you have any queries regarding the planning scheme a copy is available from BICA or contact the Shire.

OUR LOCAL FISH

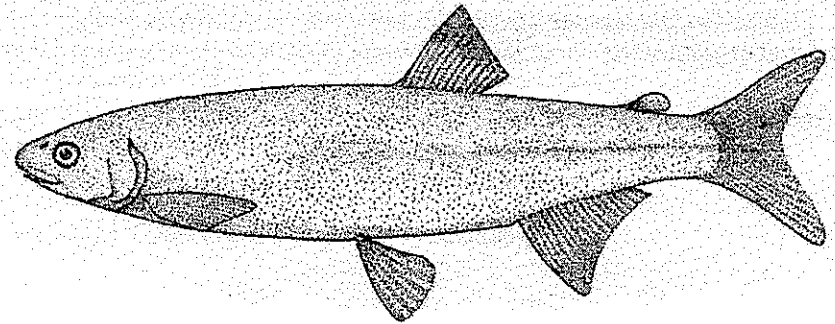
Steve Craig

This list comes from a survey conducted in the Yarra River at Warrandyte Gorge by the Artur Rylah Institute in March 2003. Species marked * are exotic (introduced). The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act lists the Macquarie Perch as 'Endangered' and the Australian Grayling as 'Vulnerable'.

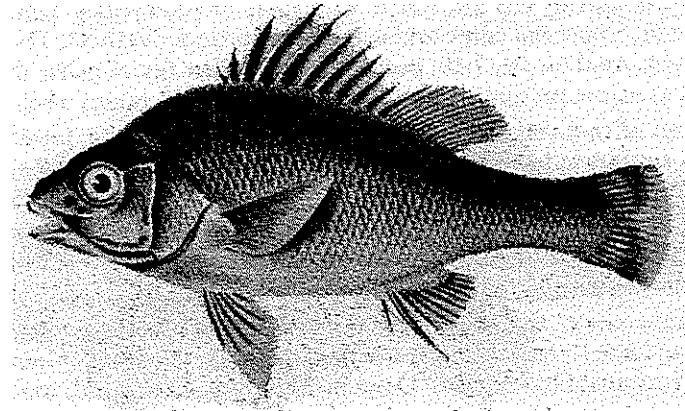
| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Australian Smelt | <i>Retropinna semoni</i> |
| Common Galaxias | <i>Galaxias maculatus</i> |
| Macquarie Perch | <i>Macquarie australasica</i> |
| Short-fin Eel | <i>Anguilla australis</i> |
| Australian Grayling | <i>Prototroctes maraena</i> |
| Short-headed Lamprey | <i>Mordacia mordax</i> |
| River Blackfish | <i>Gadopsis marmoratus</i> |
| *Redfin or English Perch | <i>Perca fluviatilis</i> |
| *Carp | <i>Cyprinus carpio</i> |
| *Roach | <i>Rutilus rutilus</i> |
| *Goldfish | <i>Carassius auratus</i> |
| *Mosquito Fish | <i>Gambusia holbrooki</i> |
| *Brown Trout | <i>Salmo trutta</i> |



Common Galaxias (about 100 mm)



Grayling, (usually up to 170 - 180 mm but can reach 300 mm)



Macquarie Perch (up to 3.5 kg but usually about 1 kg)

Illustrations taken from *Freshwater Fishes of South-eastern Australia*,
Ed R.M. McDowall, Reed, 1980

DEER IN THE BEND OF ISLANDS

Steve Craig

Deer appear to be on the increase in the Bend of Islands, possibly due in part to the accidental or deliberate release of animals from deer farms in the Yarra Glen and Christmas Hills area. Residents are reporting increased sightings of individuals and herds of animals in recent months. Damage caused by Deer, including ringbarking of trees and wallows in wet gullies also appears to be on the increase.

All six species of deer were introduced to Victoria in the mid to late 1800s and are currently protected under the Wildlife Act 1975. If it can be established that deer are causing significant damage on private property, the Department of Sustainability and Environment may issue an Authority to Destroy Protected Wildlife.

Shooting is arguably the most effective method of control, but like the control of rabbits and foxes, the control of deer in the Bend of Islands will be a particularly challenging exercise given the prohibition on the use of firearms in the Special Use Zone.

Many people are of the opinion that deer are no different to other introduced feral animals like rabbits and foxes that are causing significant damage to our native flora and fauna. BICA has written to John Thwaites, Deputy Premier and Minister for the Environment questioning why deer are protected and also asking that action be taken to remove their protected status because they are thought to be having an unacceptable impact on our native flora and fauna.

In continuing to gather information on the status of deer in the Bend of Islands and the impact they are having on our local environment, it is important that residents report sightings of deer and any damage caused by them. You can report your observations to Steve Craig on 9712 0029 or email stevecraigaus@hotmail.com.au Please include the species, number of individuals seen, date, location (Melways ref) and a brief description of what you saw. It is necessary to record this information systematically if the relevant authorities are to be convinced of the need to remove deer from the list of protected wildlife.

THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTIONS OF THE THREE SPECIES OF DEER LIKELY TO BE SEEN IN THE BEND OF ISLANDS WILL ASSIST YOU WITH THEIR IDENTIFICATION.

Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)

Similar in size to a domestic goat the fallow deer stands about 90 cm at shoulder height and has a number of colour variants. In summer, the common form is reddish-brown with large creamy white spots, with black markings on either side of the white-fringed tail that is flicked continuously while feeding undisturbed and curled back when alarmed, displaying a white underside.

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In winter it is greyish-brown and the spots are not obvious.

Fallow deer occur in groups that vary in size depending on the habitat and season. A group of three to four is common in heavy cover while larger groups are seen in undisturbed open country. It is primarily a grazer moving from cover in the late afternoon to feed on grasses and sedges at the forest edge and in clearings. Acacias, blackberry and the tips of rushes and bracken are also browsed but they are particularly attracted to improved pasture.

Adult males have multi-tined (pointed) antlers the upper half of which are flattened. Antlers are cast in October and regrowth is complete by mid-February prior to the onset of the breeding season in late March. The buck advertises his presence by a hoarse, rattling call very similar to the call of a male koala.

Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*)

Little is known about the habitat of red deer in Victoria but they appear to prefer woodland or open-forest with a lush, grassy ground cover where they feed on the foliage and shoots of trees and shrubs, ferns, grasses, forbs, bark, mushrooms, lichens and mosses. Viable populations of free ranging red deer are now confined to the Grampians where they are known to frequently graze on emergent aquatic vegetation on the edges of swamps and reservoirs.

A group of six individuals including animals with prominent yellow ear tags are regularly seen along Skyline Road and inside Sugarloaf Reservoir near the intersection of Skyline Road and Muir Road. These animals are obviously "escapees" from a local deer farm but may be moving into the Bend of Islands.

An adult stag (male) is a very imposing animal standing about 120 cm at shoulder height and weighing about 160kg. Red deer are usually seen in groups of four or five when undisturbed in open forest, or twos and threes in heavier cover. In summer the coat colour is reddish-brown and greyish-brown in winter. Other distinguishing features include long, pointed ears and a prominent light coloured rump patch. The tail is not as obvious as in the sambar deer.

The antlers of adult stags are multi-tined, 6-8 tines being common, 10-12 or more not as common. Antlers are cast in October and regrowth is usually completed by mid-February prior to the onset of the breeding season in late March to April. During the breeding season, usually in the morning and evening, stags make their lion like aggressive roars. For the rest of the year the stag is silent except for the alarm bark which is also made by the hind.

Sambar Deer (*Cervus unicolour*)

Larger and more powerful than a red deer, a full grown sambar stag is about as big as a steer and may attain a shoulder height of 130cm and weigh in excess 200kg. The general colour of the sambar is a uniform brown, the shade varying with age, sex and

possibly season. Older stags may appear almost black and young hinds a light greyish-brown.

They have large, rounded bat-like ears about half the length of the head and when alarmed often make a loud "bark" and raise their bushy tail over the back displaying the light coloured skin and brown to orange hairs of the tail and buttocks as they turn away and crash through the bush.

Adult stags have only three tines to each antler (brow tine and two tines on terminal fork) which is about 75cm long. Many males cast their antlers in early summer but there is no regular cycle of casting and regrowth. Unlike many species of deer, sambar do not form herds and there is no clearly defined breeding season. They live as dispersed family groups of solitary males and occupy permanent home ranges.

Although the sambar's preferred habitat is forested mountain country, it will also inhabit drier open- forest provided there are areas of dense understorey vegetation and secluded gullies that provide breeding habitat.

Sambar deer are active mainly at night but they may begin feeding in the early afternoon in areas where there is little disturbance. They are extremely cautious and move into cover at first light to bed down and ruminate. A grazer and a browser, sambar are reported to feed on soft and coarse grasses and sedges, shrubs and tree foliage. They also find the foliage and fruit of blackberries very attractive.

REFERENCES

Mammals of Victoria. Distribution, ecology and conservation. Edited by Peter Menkhorst. Oxford University Press.

The Australian Museum Complete Book of Australian Mammals. Edited by Ronald Strahan. Angus & Robertson.

Australian Deer Association Web site <http://www.austdeer.com.a>

DID YOU KNOW?

Of the 131 potential house sites in the EIZ, 101 are built on already, giving us an 'occupance rate' of about 88%. BICA membership stands at 135 of which 94 are land owners and 81 are current residents. The mebership of BICA thus represents 72% of all land owners in the area and 76% of all residents. Not bad for a community voluntary organisation!

A WEED TO WATCH

Steve Craig

Flick Weed or Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*) has become established at a number of house sites in the Bend of Islands and was probably originally introduced to the area in pot plants purchased from commercial suppliers.

It is capable of germinating all year round under ideal conditions and at the time of writing (early September) plants have been seen in flower but also with maturing seedpods. A large number of seeds are "flicked" out from the prominent seedpods during spring and summer and if allowed to become established this weed is capable of quickly spreading out of control.

Flick weed is a potentially highly invasive weed because it completes its life cycle within only six weeks and can produce seeds when only a centimetre or two high flicking them up to 45cm.

According to one study, the number of seedpods per plant ranged from 27 to 182. The average number of seeds per seedpod was 29, with the total number of seeds ranging from 675 to 4980 per plant. The seeds are dispersed by a spring-like action of the sides of the seedpod rolling back on both sides perpendicular to each other. The average seed dispersal distance in the study was 19.7 inches.

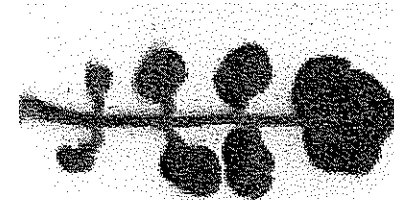
If you have this weed in your pot plants or around your house it is important to remove all seedlings by hand weeding or discrete use of herbicide before they produce seed. If you are unsure about the identification of this or any other weed or the best method of control contact BICA for some friendly advice.

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY MICHELLE HANSLOW IN FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE STATE PARK NEWSLETTER JUNE 2003.

More information about Flickweed can be found on the Web. Here are a couple of URLs that have pictures.

http://www.missouriplants.com/Whitealt/Cardamine_hirsuta_page.html

http://oregonstate.edu/dept/nursery-weeds/weedspeciespage/bittercress/bittercress_foliage.html



BIRD NOTES

Frank Pierce

The following events have been reported since April 2003.

Lyrebirds- 3 further reports. Heard twice near Dam Gate No. 3 on Skyline Road in July and seen on Stevensons Creek in the ELZ in September.

Powerful Owls-There has been a number of sightings recorded and at least two pairs have successfully bred in the ELZ.

Other interesting sightings include Little Corella, Pink Robin and Spotted Quail-thrush, as well as the return of the summer migrants.

Thanks to Ross and Robyn for leading the Survey Walks while I was away enjoying Queensland's winter and birds.

Could you please record the details of any unusual sightings you make and pass them on to Frank Pierce (97120237) or Steve Craig (97120029), especially Lyrebirds and Powerful Owls.

All are welcome to join us on the bird walks on the second Sunday of each month. Times are as per the BICA Calendar.

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

Alwyn Hanson

After twelve years of living here I finally decided to do something about the plague of *Agapanthus* on our property, at the end of The Henley extension.

I mean how hard could it be-after all they're only plants!!

My efforts with shears and a machete resulted in being covered in foul smelling goo.

Out came the "Round up" and I'm sure I heard mocking laughter from the Triffids masquerading as *Agapanthus*.

Finally I resorted to digging each of them out with a mattock, in the process digging out a root system akin to a Telstra junction box.

The process took most of a day and has filled my green bin four times -yes I got to use my green bin at last.

But I must admit to a sense of pride to having a Triffid free area at least until next year!!

Having worked with the Eltham College of Education kids on Agapanthus and Watsonia removal at Sheila's and Barb's places, I have great respect for Alwyn's achievement! JMcC

HALL BALL

The Christmas Hills Hall has been the scene for many a revel in the past but is suffering a little from neglect in recent years. The current structure was built by the community with input from Box Hill TAFE. The toilets were a donated cast-off from the MMBW (now Melbourne Water) and are in desperate need of repair. To raise money towards this and for the general upkeep of the Hall a good old-fashioned ball is to be held.

**THE HALL BALL
WILL BE HELD ON
8 NOVEMBER 2003 AT 8.00 PM
AT THE HALL, RIDGE ROAD CHRISTMAS HILLS
COST \$20.00 A HEAD**

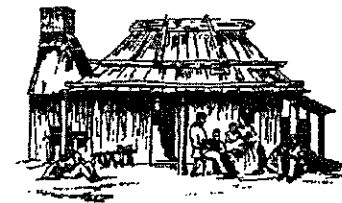
Bring finger food to share and your own drinks

Raffles for local wine will be conducted throughout the evening

Entertainment will be by the All Star Band featuring our own Ross Henry!

Tickets (to be pre-sold) from

- Kevin and Margo Heely 9730 1704
- Sandy Jeffs 9730 1761
- Ross Henry 9712 0547
- Veronica Holland 9730 1823



DOING THE HENLEY ROAD SHUFFLE

Alwyn Hanson

Whilst driving a friend home last month I performed a standard manoeuvre I call a Henley Rd Shuffle.

This consists of

- * Travelling along the centre of Henley Rd at a fair but not dangerous speed
- * Meeting an oncoming car
- * Swerving to avoid the car at the same time as waving to the driver.

Driving back into the middle of the road as if nothing happened.

Looking at my passengers white knuckles and terrified expression I realised this manoeuvre was special to this area and therefore deserved a name.

It is also timely to write these as white lines have appeared all along Henley Rd but has anybody told the Wombats to keep to their side of the road.

The white lines remind us that it is imperative to keep as far to the left as possible at all times no matter at what speed you are travelling. Whether we needed the lines to tell us that is a moot point. Clearance for larger vehicles, including the fire trucks, is tight especially on the unlined roads. JMcC

SOME RANDOM THOUGHTS ON RUBBISH

John McCallum

The advent of the new three bin system of household waste collection has, as it has in our household, no doubt caused many people to re-think the way they organise their domestic rubbish disposal.

The Green Bin

For many years we buried all food scraps in trenches and worked them into the vegetable garden. A couple of years ago we stopped doing this because we think that it encouraged feral rats. We then moved to containing all such waste in supermarket (plastic) bags and disposing of it in the 'other' bin under the old system. The rat problem did diminish somewhat although it is impossible to say whether this was the reason; rat populations fluctuate a lot with the kind of season that prevails. We are now trying composting in bins and are sticking to fairly rigid but standard techniques and 'recipes' and believe that we can use the end product in the vegie patch. Whether it will create a new rodent problem remains to be seen.

Not everyone, however, has the use for such quantities of compost. It has been suggested that they could give it to friends who are keen gardeners or there may be other ways in which the end product of controlled food decomposition can be disposed of.

The Red Bin

We haven't filled a red bin yet. We still generate a fair amount of 'soft plastic' (bags and other wrapping), despite using cloth bags for shopping and re-using fruit and vegie bags as necessary. It takes a bit of effort to remember to return the bag to the car after emptying it of groceries and so forth! Careful planning and polite but firm action when shopping can certainly reduce the amount of packaging that is not recyclable.

The Yellow Bin

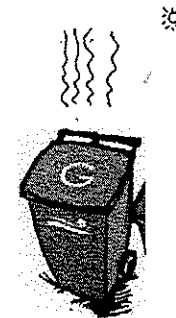
After years of carefully bundling up paper and putting it out separately, it takes a bit of resolve to just chuck everything of a re-cyclable nature into the one bin! It would be interesting to see the sorting process in action and to know the fate of all of the components, especially the different kinds of polymers ('plastics').

General Remarks

The Shire is to be commended for addressing the problem of waste disposal. Landfill is not a sustainable way to get rid of household, commercial and industrial waste. The new domestic waste disposal system may not suit everyone and it will almost certainly have to be modified over the next months. I believe, however, that it is unreasonable to expect the Shire to make exceptions or special arrangements for individual households. If we, as a community, however, can agree on any change (for example, a less frequent pick up), it could result in fewer truck passes in the area and a general reduction in cost for the service. Steve refers to this idea elsewhere in this BICA News.

Such a 'user pays' or 'pro rata' system of rubbish collection should result in a reduction in the amount of intractable waste that is generated. It is to be hoped that if such a system were to be introduced, people would not resort to dumping rubbish to avoid paying for it to be removed by the Shire.

Whatever the eventual outcome, I think that we should be supportive of the initiative and be constructive in our suggestions to Nillumbik. It does take a little bit of planning to put the right bin out on the right day but the handy calendar stickers make this easy.



AGM DETAILS

The BICA Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 23 November at 2.00 PM

The location will be the Kamminga Residence, last house on C Track, 199 Skyline Road, Bend of Islands. Please park in the designated areas.

Bring the usual chair, mug and plate of arvo tea to share.

The topic is Building Aesthetics and Regulations and we have a number of guest speakers.

Rachael Joiner: Statutory Planning team leader with Nillumbik Shire.

Jeff Adair: CFA Community Education Officer who is currently liaising with Nillumbik Shire.

Warren Brooker: Building Surveyor with Nillumbik Shire.

Watch the signs on the Bridge for more information

BICA ELECTIONS

Nominations are needed for the BICA committee for the next twelve months. Positions to be elected at the AGM are President, Vice-president and Committee Members. The Secretary and Treasurer are elected by the Committee at their first meeting. If you wish to nominate anyone or volunteer for any of these positions please fill in and return this form or supply the same information on paper to:

The Secretary, BICA

C/- P.O.

Kangaroo Ground

Vic., 3097

Position:

Nominee:

Nominator:

Secunder:

CURRENT COMMITTEE

President: Carol Bonny 9712 0648

Vice President: Janet Mattiske 9712 0237

Secretary: Allan Bonny 9712 0648

Treasurer: Neil Harvey 9712 0462

Other Committee members:

Steve Craig: 9712 0029, Colin Devenish: 9712 0882,

Tom Fisher: 9712 0451, Cric Henry: 9712 0547,

Val Himmelreich: 9712 0029, Meg McCallum: 9712 0319,

Michael Pelling: 9712 0286

2004 SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Subscriptions for 2004 are due and payable for the Annual General Meeting. Please note revised subscription rates.

please detach and return to:-BICA Treasurer c/o Post office Kangaroo Ground 3097

Please find enclosed my subscriptions for BICA membership for 2004

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------|
| BICA SUBSCRIPTION. | Family membership | \$30 |
| Single membership \$20 | Concession membership | \$10 |

Name.....Phone.....

Address.....

phone.....email.....

PUB WALK

Sun 26 Oct

1.30 pm C. Hills FB South Fire Station
Details: Carol 9712 0648

Bend of Islands Conservation Association AGM

Sun 23 Nov

2.00 pm Kamminga's residence
Track C

199 Skyline Road, Bend of Islands

Topic: BUILDING AESTHETICS AND REGULATIONS

If undelivered return to: Bend of Islands Conservation Association Inc.
C/o Post Office, Kangaroo Ground 3097

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