

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSLETTER

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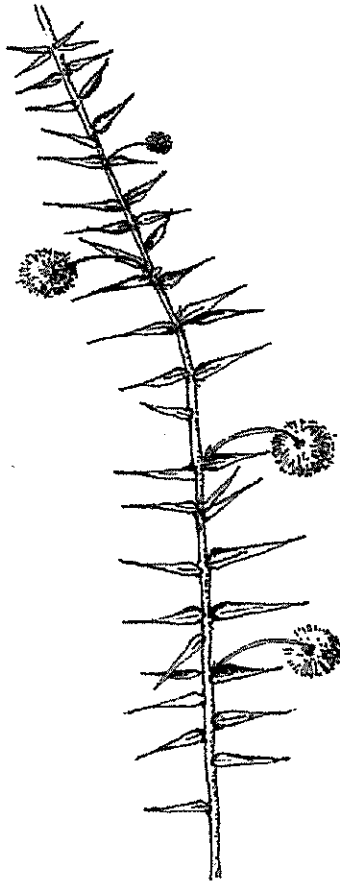
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WHAT LOCAL PLANT IS FLOWERING?

Number 66 July 2006

BOTANICAL NAME: *Acacia ulicifolia*
COMMON NAME: Juniper Wattle
FAMILY: Mimosaceae

FLOWERING PERIOD: March to September



A small, open branched shrub, one to two metres tall, typical of the Box, Stringybark Forests and Valley Grassy Forests.

This understorey shrub is not on the Bend of Islands Plant List, but has been recorded in Warrandyte and Research. We purchased some of these plants from the Friends of Warrandyte State Park Nursery and they were planted on the cut embankment to the house.

Technically this species should be in our area but may have been lost, or depleted to very few numbers, due to an inappropriate fire regime or overclearing of the past. *Acacia brownei* (Heath Wattle) and *Acacia aculeatissima* (Thin leaf Wattle) are on the Bend of Islands plant list and these two species are varieties of *Acacia ulicifolia*. So look out for *Acacia ulicifolia* (Juniper Wattle) on your walks and let us know if you think you have found it. We need to be encouraging and maintaining the diversity of the understorey plants in the bush.

The plant is prickly, with branches slightly arching. The phyllodes (which are the leaf stems modified to perform as leaves) are crowded along the branches, 1 cm long, dark green and narrow, being broader at the base and tapering to a very sharp point at the end.

The flowerheads are globular and cream to pale yellow in colour. The flower stems originate in the axils of the phyllodes and are longer than the phyllodes.

Seed pods are 3 – 5 cm long, flat, narrow and curved, with the seeds prominent under the seed case.

A. ulicifolia prefers a moist root system, grows well in partial sun or semi shade and tolerates frost.

CRIC HENRY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The end of Autumn weather was no doubt letting us know that we were in for a chilly winter. The Bonny's temperature indicator is the ice on the roof, in the gutters and bird-bath. It tells us that it is certainly very cold out there. Haven't managed to see any of our feathered friends skating yet but I'm sure a few have had a shock while attempting their morning bath. The icy conditions haven't deterred the Tree Creeper from it's evening bathing ritual. His constant piping as he backs into the water is always a delight to observe. There will be plenty of wood being stoked onto fires so please make sure it is dry and your heater is burning efficiently. We don't want to add to the greenhouse pollution unnecessarily.

Since the last Newsletter The Round the Bend Conservation Co-op celebrated 35 years. Congratulations to all involved past and present. The display of their photos etc. in the Fire Shed provided some wonderful history.

More history was also provided at Café Benders with the showing of Duggo video and Wolfgang Krause videos of various BICA events. All provide great archive history.

As we commute along Henley Rd I'm sure you share with me a concern for the weeds gathering force. On request Council have addressed Cape Broom this year. Property owners who have infestations are being contacted to request action to complement the roadside verge works. Roadside weeds are an ongoing problem not just in Henley Rd but thru-out the shire

Bird sightings include Quail in our driveway, Musk Lorikeets (a first for us) and our first look at our local Lyrebird.

Thanks to all who pay their BICA subscriptions promptly and even those who are not so prompt. We do still have a few unfinancials and would be more than happy to receive your subscription now.

Paying at or before the AGM in November makes the task less arduous for our Hon Sec and he's much easier to work with if he is happy.

If you are not sure of your financial status please contact treasurer Neil Harvey 9712 0462

I'm now looking forward to a little bit of sunshine to go with the first Acacia blooms.

See you 'round,

Carol Bonny

SUZ2 AND YOU

Alan Bonny

Hopefully buyers are attracted to the Bend of Islands because of the natural values existing here and because of the zoning in place that was designed to protect our environment. If they are not motivated in this way then the purchase may not provide the lifestyle hoped for. Either way all residents are expected to comply with the requirements of our Special Use Zone 2 – Environmental Living planning scheme. Non-compliance with the provisions will probably annoy and impact on your neighbours and may incur a penalty from the council.

- **SUZ2:** The Special Use Zone 2 Environmental Living zone (SUZ2) is part of the State Planning Scheme specially drafted for our area. If you want a copy of SUZ2 ask council or go to the DSE web site www.dse.vic.gov.au and access "planning schemes online". Select "Nillumbik" shire and the "SUZ2" zone.

- **NCUR:** Non Conforming Use Register. The SUZ2 requires that a register of non conforming uses is kept and maintained by the council. This NCUR records grazing and domestic animal uses that were in place at the declaration of our Environmental Living Zone some 30 years ago. These rights are applied to a property and prevail as long as they are used. The rights may expire by voluntary relinquishment or if not used.

- **Nillumbik Council:** It is the role of Council to advise and enforce the planning scheme requirements and to maintain the Non Conforming Use Register.

- **BICA:** The BICA Constitution objectives are to protect the natural values of the area by collaborating with others with the same objectives and representing membership to achieve the protection of the natural values. To this end BICA inform and advise property owners and residents of the zone requirements by providing to ALL owners and residents the Bend of Islands Environmental Living Information folder and the BICA Newsletter.

- **Owners and Residents:** It is required that owners and residents should understand and comply with the planning scheme provisions. Failure to do so may alienate your neighbours and also incur a penalty from the council.

No matter where you live there are responsibilities and requirements that all must comply with. Ignorance is not an excuse. Ask council or BICA for information or requirements before you take actions that you may regret. In our zone you will require a planning permit for most construction and works. If in doubt, please ASK.

Play your part in protecting our unique 'Residential National Park'.

ST ANDREWS MARKET

Sheila Dixon

Went to the St.Andrews Market last Saturday. It's just north east of Kangaroo Ground. I found it ranging between the 1970's and 2001. Cars everywhere and parking people doing a roaring trade in fines. The market winds its way round a hill spread with stalls to explore. Tables, piled with such a lot of surprises unlike any other market I know or spread out over the ground

Want your runes read? I'm not sure what they are but I am assured they can give you guidance in life but after that it's up to you. Runes come from a Scandinavian, Greek or Turkish heritage and were thought of as magical. Isn't it wonderful that they have come down all this way from the 3rd. century and finished up in a bush market in Australia.

Then there are the organic vegie stalls. There is an Italian family there from Kinglake. They pick the stuff in the morning before they come and the red soil of Kinglake is still on them. Once the Mum from the stall chased me through the crowd to give me the change I had forgotten. You don't find that often. And the vegies don't come any fresher than these.

The clothes are such a variety, caftans and all those tie dyed bits and pieces, which takes me back to the seventies when one of my daughters used to sell the stuff in an outlet in the city called the Gusunder. A strange smell of incense and funny cigarettes permeated that place then. The incense is still with us here. Then there were racks of hemp clothing, rather nice stuff, more twenty first century designs these days. My favourite clothing stall is the one with the clothesline of rainbow dyed socks.

There is always the man with the tools. All spread out on the ground and what an assortment. Some tools I haven't seen since I was a child when I used to poke around in work sheds up here at Kanga. I used to love levels. I was fascinated by the little bubble in them that showed when things were just right and even.

A stall that is my favourite is run by a smiling Turkish man. He has a friend who does his baking and the fragrant Turkish bread sits there among the dips and nuts . The pine nuts and sesame seeds are so fresh and half the price from the supermarkets. The dolmades, the hummus is just perfect with the bread for a Saturday lunch.

The bread stall is a sight to behold. Crusty hand made loaves of all persuasion. Brown loaves with oats on top, sesame seeds, loaves with olives and other surprises. I'd have loved to have been there when they were coming out of the oven.

I always notice that bakers have a certain look about them. Warm and clean, an open smiling face and always happy about their early mornings work. And I don't blame them.

Then there is the big tent where you can get chai or tea and relax among the trees. There is such a variety of eating stalls too. Plenty of lovely vegetarian goodies and cakes and tarts. And all this on an area of bush and looking as colourful as the people selling their treasures. I think the only time it hasn't operated was the weekend of the first of Feb. when we had the bushfires up at Kinglake. St. Andrews was a bit close for comfort.

EASTER CANOE RUN

Carol Bonny

Our excuses for not putting our hands up to attend the annual Easter canoe run were pretty feeble, Alan had a torn shoulder and I don't like the rapids. But we did wander up to see the brave crews set sail (or so we thought). Cars and people gathered at the end of Henley road only to be given the devastating news that there were no canoes! The regular canoe hire group didn't return N.H.s frantic calls. Did this mean this annual tradition would be broken? Not at all! A few brave souls arrived with their own vessels to continue the tradition. New adventurers Kirk and Nick livened the waiting crews and spectators by arriving atop a Ute proudly displaying their handmade (and very rustic) paddles. After closer inspection their nautical gear was confiscated and more seaworthy equipment provided. All seafarers arrived safely at Claire's and were warmed by her wonderful hospitality and hot toddy. That evening tales of the afternoons adventures were bandied about at the traditional Woiwods BBQ in their refurbished Chook Shed now known as "The Summer House".

EVENTS CALENDAR

August 6th Sun. Wattle day

August 12th Sat. night. Cinema Pompier

August 27th Sun. BICA General Meeting

Sept. 10th Sun. Garden Walk

October 14th Sat. Field Day. Steve's Forest at Yellingbo

October 29th Sun. Pub Walk

November 11th Sat. Night Event

November 26th Sun. BICA AGM

INDEED!! WHERE HAS ALL THE GROUND COVER GONE!!

Tim Ealy

In BICA News 65, Dylan Osler raised the question of the reduced floral diversity especially in the understory of our forest. Tim is an ecologist and a former resident of the ELZ. He was one of the founders of the Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative.

About 20 years ago I wrote a similar article to Dylan's and encouraged BICA, with help from the fire brigade, to carry out some test burns. However the opinions of well meaning amateur ecologists prevailed and nothing was done. As Dylan quite correctly points out most seed has now gone. Ants and birds eat a lot, soft seeds rot quickly and some simply become unviable. The Northern Heath Hen became extinct in North America because fire was kept out of its habitat and Australia's ground parrot and New Holland mouse became threatened by lack of burning to promote their food plants.

There are three options in this dry sclerophyll forest;

1. Keep fire out and end up with trees and lots of litter (this rots away on southern slopes). If this is all you want that is OK. There will be less of a fuel load.
2. Ecological burns need to be *no* more frequent than every seven to ten years and may produce a native flower garden.
3. By burning whenever there is enough litter to carry a fire, so called cool burns end up with lots of grass and other plants, which are not killed by fire. However there may be very few flowering plants as they will have not had time to set seeds.

However a big problem is grazing. The new seedlings are very tasty and high in protein, so are more attractive to rabbits and wallabies than unburnt surrounding bush. Wallabies are specifically browsing animals but rabbits eat any bluddy thing. If you burn and don't protect the site, the seed supply will be diminished for no good reason. If you can knock out the rabbits with Pindone, the re-growth may survive some wallaby grazing. The smaller the area you burn the greater will be the grazing pressure.

You might check out the places where there are still wildflowers such as parts of the Coop although I think many of our fires were too cool. I recall John McCallum did some burning and may have wildflowers. You could check Mt. Lofty where there has been some burning and check the fire history of wildflower areas. Blackened trees are a good indication. Dianne Simmons and Andy McMahon could give you some advice.

I am afraid you have loved the place to death by protecting it from fire. It may be too late now to bring back the flowers. However I am encouraged by a report by Dr. Harry Recher about the terrible fires just north of the Vic border years ago. After a **very** hot fire, plants came back which had not been seen for years. Because of the accumulated silt and humus covering and insulating any remaining seeds you will need a very hot fire, say 2-3 meter flame height. You may even have to bring in extra litter to get a good blaze. Burn uphill rather than down hill with a wide break at the top. Don't burn after rain. You will have to tolerate a bit of understory scorch.

I am busy growing Mangrove and Seagrass. No rabbits and wallabies but there are other problems. The school kids call me Dr. Mangrove and raise mangroves for me. Got a \$20,000 grant for this project. However we miss the critters and the smell of the bush.

Good luck.!!!

HERITAGE... A CLARIFICATION

In the local paper there was an item that indicated that a sub-division of lands excess to the Henley Golf Course with some lots being given to DSE/Parks was a done deal. Not so. The process requires that before council can process the Heritage application the Minister must consent to the application.

This is what has happened and after the minister gives his consent the normal process begins and there should be some consultation and chance for input before any decisions are made.

The Heritage proposal is that lands outside the golf course are not required and a sub-division to provide lots for sale and lots for DSE/Parks.

BICA members were invited to an on site tour to have a look at the proposal and in principal it may be a good resolution. Some consultation with DSE/Parks to hear what they propose for their inheritance would be requested before BICA could support the proposal as well as a few other issues for clarification. We wait and watch.

It is with regret that BICA notes the death of Lyn Grigg after her battle with Cancer. We extend our condolences to Max and the rest of the family.

FUNGI FIELD DAY

Dylan Osler

As part of World Environment Day this year Tom May, fungus boffin from the Melbourne Herbarium, came out and gave a wonderful and truly intriguing walk and talk. For those of you that weren't there, you missed out! Not only was he a wonderful speaker but the new naturalist pin-up boy for the ladies and great with the kids.

Tom explained some of his roles at the herbarium, these include the Fungi Map. This project targets 100 different fungus species that should be able to be identified by the general public. Targeting these certain species not only helps to inspire interest from the general public but helps to gain more detailed understanding of their distribution and ecology across the state. This data collected by the community is then submitted to the Fungi Map and helps folks like Tom gain a greater understanding of the distribution of these species. With some species they have found that they occur across Victoria and in the South West of Western Australia with nowhere in between.

Another role that Tom has at the herbarium is part of the poisons unit, where if some one has eaten a fungus and then found themselves rather ill, he is one of the people who try to establish what species they have been eating. Therefore Tom was rather apprehensive about the supply of information regarding edible mushrooms, explaining that in Europe where there is a greater understanding of what mushrooms are edible there are still a large number of poisonings each year.

Tom started the day's proceedings with an introductory talk about fungi. He started by explaining what a fungus is and showing slides of the many sorts. Whether it is your typical mushroom, bracket fungi on trees or rot in wood, they are all fungi.

Tom then went onto explain that within Australia we actually know very little about our fungi, their distribution and their ecology. Listening to the talk and digesting these fascinating fungal facts, trying to comprehend what's actually going on under the ground's surface is just mind boggling.

I still so often think of the mushroom as the whole of the organism, when in fact it is merely the fruiting body with the rest of the organism under the ground which is often of immense size (the largest organism on the planet is a fungus). The fruiting body is the equivalent to single flower on an Ironbark.

Tom highlighted the fact that these organisms do not get the recognition for the role that they play within the ecology of our bush land. Not only do they break down and recycle all types of organic waste matter, provide food for a large number of faunal species (from insects to Stumpy Tail Lizards to Long-footed Potoroos and of course people) but another more important role they play is the symbiotic relationship with the majority of plants in our bushland.

The plants usually form a symbiotic relationship with a number of fungi and together they form specialized roots known as mycorrhiza. This association provides the fungus with sugars and water and assists the plant with mineral and nutrient uptake. It also confers antibiotic protection for the plant against pathogenic fungi and other soil-borne disease (B. Fuhrer, A field guide to Australian fungi, 2005).

Realising this, it has to make one wonder what is the true health of our bushland in degraded areas or within sites of revegetation. Is this why certain species that seem to be an appropriate selection for a site may often die?

But it was also disheartening to hear that the introduced species such as Fly Agaric (fairytale mushroom) *Amanita muscaria* have been found to be displacing indigenous mushrooms in Myrtle Beech Forest. Fly Agaric are typically associated with birches, beeches and pine, but because Myrtle Beech (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) is a long lost cousin to the northern hemisphere beeches, this noxious mushroom has now naturalised in bushland areas. With this is the saddening thought that there's the potential to now lose species before we have even met them.

And it was at that point that we got to know how to meet some. Apparently this has been the best year for fungi for a number of years. This was related to the gentle but consistent rain during early autumn. While Tom supplied a name to all we saw, if we each walk away with one name that we would remember and something to do with their ecology the day was a huge success.

For me that fungus was *Phlebopus marginatus*, this mush (as Meika would call them) is from a group of fungi commonly called Boletes which have pores rather than gills under the cap. The cap of the fruiting bodies can be a metre across, with one specimen from western Victoria weight 29 kg.

Aeshna's was *Oudemansiella*, but just when I had got the little cherub to remember its name they changed it. You know what they say about taxonomic botanists, they change plant names more often than their jocks.

For the majority of kids the species would be *Boletellus barragensis*, this boletes mush has a striking red cap. Which when cut in half you can write your name in the gills with a small twig and the bruise would go a different colour revealing each kids name. Another activity that Tom recommended and while he didn't encourage picking mushrooms, if your little one has, then place the cap on a piece of paper and over night it will leave spore print.

This winter I have started compiling images of the different mushes from the Bend of Islands, which are slowly being named so that in time we will have a species list for the fungi of the area. If anyone has any interesting records or photos please forward them to johenry@rabbit.com.au

OUR SHEIL

Barb Whiter

'But the best thing to come home to happened late afternoon. I happened to look out my window and there was a small family of kangas. Mum with someone in her pocket and three youngish ones. I think Dad was down at the pub.'

from Coming home by Sheila Dixon

For BICA's May General Meeting we all popped down Catani Boulevard and dropped in on Ilan and Michaela. It was a smallish gathering, but with the fire dancing and the urn bubbling away, plus many goodies on offer for our arvo tea, it was a friendly and neighbourly meeting.

The business of the day took its normal course – some comments here and there, some *sotto voce* witty comments from the back chairs, a bit of a belly laugh occasionally, and, as always, some useful and interesting topics and information raised, discussed and voted upon by all members.

Then, we all settled back in our chairs to listen to our special guest speaker – one of our Revered Elders (sorry Sheil!) who is also one of our published writers – Sheila Dixon, was going to read us some of her short pieces written mostly for the ABC's *Country Viewpoint*.

Sheila began by telling us how she started. She heard the call from her favourite ABC one day for people to send them their short pieces about where they live in rural Australia.

'I can do that!' said our Sheil. And did it she certainly did! She's coming up to celebrate her three year anniversary with the production team who have all become friends over that time.

We were treated to quite a few of Sheil's stories, memories or observations over the next hour or so. They are all short, pithy observed vignettes of the Bend, the wider Kangaroo Ground area and, as Sheila said, they were written to be read on radio. It's the right way to hear them!

Observing the audience I saw lots of nodding as something Sheila said struck a nerve with the established members of our community – probably did it myself too! However, looking at the newer members of our community, leaning forward and being entranced with Sheila's word pictures made me tear up – it's such a special place and it takes looking back in from outside sometimes to remember this!

You weren't there? Never mind, the quote which began this article gives you some idea why Sheila loves coming home, here's a little more:

'And coming home it was. Those first paddocks past Research and into Kangaroo Ground proper, and then it hit me. Only three days in the suburbs and there it all was.

'In the paddock by Wellers Pub were the cows all settled down in the grass doing their midday thing, thinking deeply about something and chewing their cud. Then it was up the hill and a quick pop in to Ken's Post Office in the wine shed just to see what was going on. I wandered down to the vines and lifted the greenery aside to find bunch after bunch of small green chardonnay grapes having a party in there.'

One more was *The Back Veranda Room* – how evocative of another era:

'If ever there was a more useful room in the early Australian country houses this one had to be it. The back veranda room, tacked on like an afterthought to add a bit of space for an ever-growing family. These days it would be called a sunroom and be far more upmarket.

'...But it was the furniture that gave this room its special flavour. Firstly, a huge pine table well sprinkled with marks and gouges from countless games, meals and years of use. Kangaroo chairs and a long bench on one side for us kids.'

Then there was *The Library that Comes to us*:

'Yesterday I went driving through the hills to another little hamlet near Kangaroo Ground to experience a library parked in the bush. Yes, a large yellow semi-trailer marked Yarra Plenty Mobile Library. Steel steps led into the large vehicle and I went in and met the two librarians, Ian and Allen, who absolutely love their job.'

Sheila's cleverly observed pieces are a joy – and she's right – they were written to be read aloud and there's nothing nicer than hearing the author doing the reading.

Thanks Sheil – I loved hearing your voice and your thoughts!

PS – want to hear Sheil for yourself? Listen from 11am to *Bush Telegraph* on Radio National and within that program you hear *Country Viewpoint* at around 11.55am each week day – not just Sheil but a variety of people from around rural Australia will entertain you. For those who need a website – go here – <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/telegraph/viewpoint/default.htm>

Welcome to new Bender! Arthur and Brook are proud parents of Banjo Robin, a playmate for Darcy.

SUNSHINE!

Carol Bonny

While doing some domestics in the laundry early one very foggy morn I was thinking how grey the outside world was as I stared through the window. Wouldn't it be nice to see some sunshine. My mood was lifted when a Grey fantail landed on the windowsill and did his very colourfull dance. Wow that brightened me up. To make it even better, emerging from the mist was the brilliant Scarlet Robin quickly followed by a variety of chattering birds including Eastern Yellow Robin, White- Eared Honeyeater, Yellow Faced Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote, White Browed Scrub- Wren, White Throated Treecreeper and both Brown and Striated Thornbills to mention but a few. It is always a joy to watch when these waves of little birds move up our slope to feed on insects on the leaves and bark of the eucalypts and take of the available nectar when there are blossoms. The sun didn't come out that day but I was more than happy with the brilliance that our little feathered friends created.

BICA ARCHIVE DATABASE

Megan McCallum

A catalogue of the BICA archives is going online, thanks to Eastern Regional Libraries. The Library is offering a catalogue hosting service to local historical societies and groups. Prior to the Council amalgamations the Bend of Islands was part of the Shire of Healesville which was serviced by ERL. The BICA Archive contains material relating to the whole region and so is eligible to participate in the project. Funding for the project comes from the State Government Local Priorities Grant.

The catalogue will enable you to trace documents held on particular subjects, find out where they are stored and how they can be retrieved. I have made a start by cataloguing some Newsletters and early documents. The entries are not full text but have a description field that can be used for including summaries and contents. Searching is by keyword on the Internet via the ERL or BICA websites.

You can check the progress of the archiving project by following these links:

www.erl.vic.gov.au

Community Databases

Bend of Islands Conservation Association

Keyword search

Try entering some of these terms "newsletter" "yarra brae" "history" "lyrebirds"

Any feedback on format or content or any comments in general gratefully accepted.

DAY TO DAY CONSERVATION

Alan Bonny

While we enjoy living in an area that provides the conservation of our natural environment I would hope that we would also be leaders in domestic conservation as well.

What do you do at your house to save the world? Waste minimalisation, water use, domestic product use, vehicles and transport, anything that works. How about sharing your experience and expertise so we can also do the same. This may manifest in many ways and we can use the Newsletter to share and encourage Day to Day Conservation.

How are you managing Waste Disposal? A major environmental impact is the disposal of domestic garbage and with the current Nillumbik GreenRecycleOther (GRO) waste collection service there are things we must do for the service to function efficiently and therefore reduce landfill.

You probably have received a GRO booklet from council but if not a copy can be collected from council offices, the library and other places around the shire. The booklet contains information on the Green waste, Recycling service and Other garbage. It is important that you comply with the bin use requirements or contaminated Green waste and Recycling just becomes additional Other garbage destined for landfill. With our combined efforts the frequency, volume and cost of waste disposal could all be reduced.

While the Reduce, Recycle, Re-use, rules are good approaches I believe the most important R is REFUSE. Only get what you need with consideration to all of the environmental impacts in the making, use and disposal of an item. Raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, transport, disposal etc. You don't have to be an expert to get it right and you do make a difference.

TRIVIAL MATTERS

Carol Bonny

A change of venue and many thanks to the Kammingas but the same brilliant hosting by Bob and Trish Millington. A large crowd crammed around five tables and despite the usual B of I chit chat the games began. A great night of fun with wonderful friends and neighbours indulging in intellect food and wine. (Not necessarily in that order)

The winning table for the night, Karyn, Neill & Rory Kamminga, Jeff Drummond, Rob Laughlin, Val Himmelreich and Carol Bonny. Two years in a row despite Alan not present due to a snuffle.

ON TOP OF MOUNT LOFTY

Mick Woiwod

The day was just perfect for the bend of Islands Elders Group's June outing. Without a cloud in the sky the ten of us set out with Alan Bonny at the wheel on what was to be our shortest journey yet. Down to Pound Bend to pick up the key from the Ranger's office then on to Heritage Golf Course for coffee and nibbles.

It's certainly a very different world on the south side of the river. Not a muddle in sight and our own Sanctuary Cove on the Yarra! It's not that the complex is unattractive in its way because it isn't. There's wall-to-wall harmony, appeal even, about its perfectly manicured lawns but it's definitely not Bend of Islands!

I'm told that it's even compulsory to drive a motorised golf-buggy to play a round so as not to slow the pace of those following, and since this removes any real pretence of exercise, golfers need to find that in the resort's up-market gym and indoor pool.

Our next stop was Mount Lofty a mere five minutes away. We were met at the gate by park ranger David van Bockel, who led us up to a viewpoint above the Park's recently completed seven hectare burn, described by Peter Gurney in BICA News 65, March this year. According to David, the burn has attained its main goals of diminishing burgan spread and activating the germination of other native species. He went on to explain that it may be some years before a final assessment can be made. David spent the better part of an hour with our group answering questions and providing us with a splendid dissertation on matted environmental. It was then time for lunch on Mt Lofty's highest point overlooking Bend of Islands, the river and a large slice of the Yarra Valley. What a view! It was most heart-warming to gaze out as we munched. Southward, the beautiful Yarra Valley, to the east another world's gentrified golf course and around our entire north-western vista, Bend of Islands presenting much as it would have a thousand years ago.

After lunch, talk turned to Mt Lofty's history. With it visible every single day of the year from our own east-facing windows, it had long ranked high among my own pet interests.

Cleared of trees in 1904 it had been sown into pasture for sheep and cattle by Captain A. E. T. Payne (of Payne's Bon Marche stores fame) as part of his model farm, "River View". Prior to that, from 1860 onwards, it had formed part of William 'Bully' Brown's 'Wonga Park Cattle Station'. Bully employed mainly Aboriginal stockmen and, until a bushfire wiped it out, there's been a small fenced in Aboriginal cemetery on the hill's southern slopes. 'The Whiffler', who won the Melbourne Cup of 1867, was the most famous of Bully Brown's mob of Mt Lofty horses.

With regeneration burns, lunch and history behind us we bid farewell to Mt Lofty. Our next stop was Barneong or, as most of us know it today, Brushy Creek for a visit to Buk-ker-til-ibul the dreamtime site that had given Warrandyte its name. After parking the bus at Wittons Reserve we strolled across to a small gorge beside the bridge that straddles the creek to hear its story which runs as follows

*Long time ago in the Dreamtime, Bunjil the eagle flew over this land and looked down and saw his people doing wrong things. He was angry and flew off to talk with other Dreamtime spirits who, together, had made this land the beautiful place that it is. They talked together into the night and decided the wrongdoers must be punished.**

Bunjil the eagle flew off high into the night sky and reached out to grasp one of his smaller stars which he hurled down to strike those who'd transgressed his lore. After that his people were always careful to remain true to the land

Warrandyte is said to translate as 'Warren' to throw and 'dyte' the place thrown to. The spot where the star hit in the Dreamtime is today that small gorge in Brushy Creek. Geologically speaking it marks the intersection of the Yarra and Brushy Creek Faults.

Weather permitting, the next Bend of Islands Elder's Group outing will be to the new Botanical Gardens at Cranbourne, expected to be a real treat. Should any Bend of Islander, young or old, wish to join future outings, and should there be any seats to spare, give Marg a call on 9712 0563

*Excerpt from Mick Woiwod, forthcoming Tales of Auld Duncan, due to be launched in September 2006

SCHOOL VISITS TO THE ELZ

As part of the Year 9 program at Eltham College, all students spend two three week stints at the Swipers Gully campus. In their first stint they undertake studies in sustainability, which includes work at Edendale Community Farm and activities on the College Environmental Reserve.

In the second semester the theme is community and as part of this, all six Year 9 classes will visit the Bend of Islands. A number of people have volunteered to talk to them about the ELZ and the involvement of the Fire Brigade and BICA in our community.

We had our first visit on Monday 10 July and, after a session at the Catani Boulevard fire station with Karyn Kamminga and John McCallum, the class visited the Fisher's where Carol-Ann took them through their passive solar house and talked about the ways in which it was energy efficient.

Thanks to Karyn for organising the program at this end, Carol-Ann and, in advance, to all other contributors to this program. It would be good if some of our stuff could rub off on at least a few of these kids!

BICA Newsletter July 2006

HOOKED!

Mick Woiwod

One has to watch oneself when age becomes a part of the equation that determines what one ought or ought not do. It's so easy to lose the plot and wander from the straight and narrow. Worse still there's this habit of us oldies harking back to former times. For example, I remember when I was building the muddie we now call home. Without power, it was all hard yakka and heavy lifting yet, as I remember it, in the hot summers of the early eighties, I'd be able to down tools at midday, grab a sandwich and race down to the river to strip for a quick swim before tearing back up to the house to recommence work. Ah, they were the days!

Then as the years rolled on, lifestyle intervened and my visits to the river became less frequent until some years, with the hill seemingly all the while becoming steeper, I might see it only once or twice a year.

That all changed last year when Marg and I decided to convert our 20-year old chook-house into a summer house. Seemed like a good idea at the time but we hadn't taken into consideration that it would involve us in carrying approximately 10 ton of rock, sand and gravel up to it in buckets from the drive. It cost me just on 20 KG of accumulated lifestyle flab.

Soon after, I wandered down to the river and found the slope hadn't really steepened. After setting up a rustic seat or two for the years ahead when I'd be really old, I now do the walk every morning, each time extending the old wallaby tracks further up the downriver.

The Yarra has always energized me. It is a beautiful stream and Marg and I consider ourselves fortunate in having it flow so audibly by.

Seated beside it, my thoughts at times return to the mid-eighties when a group of us decided to rid our stretch of the river of willows. Equipped with hand drill and Roundup, we tackled our mission with gusto and the following summer were delighted to see no new leaves re-appear. Soon after, Melbourne Water took over and cleared every willow we hadn't been able to reach. Goodbye, willows!

Over more recent years Peter Gurney and his energetic team of Land-Carers have made recurring onslaughts on our section of river, clearing it of Madeira Winter Cherry and Scotch Thistle. Yet they still reappear!

It got me to thinking. To really enjoy my morning walks I needed to eliminate every single alien weed along my extending walking trail. This morning, with thistles almost vanquished, I dealt fatal blows to a couple of tree-sized Pittosporum and a clump of Arum Lily. What's life without a challenge? Yet for continuity's sake there need to be rewards.



My walks before sunup and my rewards will come the day I spot a platypus frolicking or a lyrebird dancing, or perhaps a svelte water rat crunching mussels on a nearby rock bar, or even a Land Yabby working its magic under a full moon. Two mornings ago I had my first taste of it as I quietly watched a Scaly Thrush, *Zoothera lunulata* rummaging for bugs in the nearby leaf litter.

In winter time it's real Gondwana country along the lower riparian slopes, A world of moss and lichen, fern and sedge, sundew and Burgan, with here and there a stand of ancient Muttonwood. Hanging on from the era that had seen the Bend of Islands part of a great primordial forest.

Come summer these primeval species will be joined by other relics of former times, the egg laying Echidna and Platypus. The other morning, gazing out across the water, another thought struck; why not break out a fishing rod? Who knows what might lurk beneath the surface? Who's hooked?

THANKS DON BROWN FOR THE PICTURE

C25 AMMENDMENT

Alan Bonny

The C25 Amendment regarding fence and Kitchen Garden definitions for the SUZ2 planning scheme have been gazetted and have been in operation since 18th May. If you download a copy of SUZ2 from DSE it will contain these latest amendments. As detailed in previous BICA Newsletters and Newsheets the definitions included were as follows:

Fences

Fencing, including property boundary fencing is prohibited except for the protection of regenerating bush, protection of kitchen gardens, statutory safety requirements and boundary fencing as specified below. Solid or substantially solid fencing styles (eg brick or paling fences) will generally not be permitted. These restrictions are intended to facilitate fauna movement and minimise the visual impact of fencing.

Existing boundary fencing enclosing land used for grazing purposes can be replaced with a permit.

Additional internal fencing on land presently used for grazing purposes may be erected with a permit.

For the purposes of this clause no permit is required for bush regeneration or kitchen garden fencing provided it is:

- Of post and wire see-through type;

and in the case of bush regeneration fencing it is:

- Less than 1.0 metre high and does not enclose more than 50% of the site or 1000m² (whichever is the lesser).

AND for Kitchen Garden

Planting of Vegetation

No vegetation, except vegetation indigenous to the area, is permitted to be planted.

This does not apply in kitchen garden areas. For the purpose of this clause, a kitchen garden means a garden area, adjoining or close to a house, for vegetables, flowers and fruit for the household. The area of the kitchen garden should not exceed 150 square metres and should not extend along access ways or boundaries. Plants on the Shire of Nillumbik Environmental Weed List 2004 as incorporated in this Scheme shall not be planted.

If you have any queries regarding these requirements please ask.

ICT SURVEY

Alan Bonny

Anitra Nelson, a former resident of the Bend of Islands, approached us recently to encourage local residents to fill out surveys on uses and experiences of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) including working from home (e-work). The survey is for a RMIT University Sustainable Housing and Urban Planning project. This is not a commercial survey and the researchers aren't pro-ICTs or anti-ICTS. They are interested in all the different ways people are incorporating these new tools into their social and work lives.

Anitra has targeted the Bend of Islands because it represents 'a very special kind of community'. Surveys have been distributed through KG postal boxes and are available in e format if you prefer.

Any questions regarding the survey should be addressed to

yolande.strengers@rmit.edu.au.

Contact secretary Alan Bonny for a copy on paper or e format. 9712 0648 or

bica@rabbit.com.au.

The Suburban Communities project, which includes researchers such as Anitra from RMIT University, is donating to the Bend of Islands Community Association (BICA) 50 cents per survey returned, so, BICA could stand to gain some if lots of people return the surveys.

EARLY CHRISTMAS?

Mike Pelling

Christmas could be early this year. Early in June I was driving back into the Bend of Islands, after dusk, pleased to escape the suburbs and totally relaxed. So much so that I was only travelling at 60 k/hr and anticipating a feast to overcome the fatigue of the day. Imagine my surprise, when in my left side field of vision, I recognized with the aid of lightning reflexes, a grey mass intending to stop my progress. I stopped in a cloud of white smoke and the smell of burning rubber plus suitable sound effects, and just as I did so, I recognized this terrestrial being. This apparition hit the car, badly dented the passenger side but then flipped across the surface of the car bonnet. At last I recognized it completely. It was Rudolph, obviously late for an appointment. He slowed momentarily, antlers in full view, and then continued on his way toward the Yarra.

The moral of this tale is worry about reindeers, not just kangaroos and wombats and drive to conditions. If it had been wet, I would not have been able to stop and Rudolph

BICA Newsletter July 2006

would have crashed through the windscreen and probably punctured me with his antlers. He could have missed out on Christmas.

The incident occurred near 200 Henley Rd, at the low point of the road, fortunately with no one tailgating or trying to break the sound barrier behind me. Even with this relatively minor damage, the car was off the road for over a week.

HOT AIR OR BULLDUST?

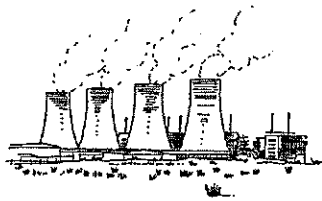
Mike Pelling

There is at least one alternative to windmill powered energy generation. Only the NSW and Federal governments seem to be supporting it, but a small scale unit will be built. It will be located about 20 kms north of Mildura at Burronga, and unlike windmill solutions, will operate consistently for 24 hours. This first unit will produce some 50 MW, this being equivalent to the output of about 25 windmill generators, assuming the wind blows all the time.

The technology, German, has been demonstrated by the operation of a small prototype, built in the La Mancha province of Spain in 1982. (Was the man from La Mancha the guy who tilted at windmills?) You might ask why we are so slow in pursuing technology.

The concept is basically that of an "inverted funnel" with the large diameter being close to the ground. Just like a chimney, any warm air rises up the throat, and this produces a strong enough flow to power turbines, which like those in the windmills, drive electrical generators or alternators. Its height will be about 400 m. Noise level should not be an issue and it would not be a hazard to birds.

Ultimately a 200 MW unit is proposed, about 1 km high and with a base of 5 km. obviously this is enormous, but it is apparently feasible to construct.



BICA MEMBERSHIP

If you are financial for 2006 please ignore this notice. If you are not sure of your financial status please contact treasurer Neil Harvey 9712 0462. The BICA Membership year ends before the Annual General Meeting in November. If you want to renew (or join) please fill in the form and submit it, with your subscription, to the Treasurer, Bend of Islands Conservation Association, C/- PO, Kangaroo Ground, Vic. 3097

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