

December 2007

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113
ABN 94170156655/ACN A0024890C

FOWSP Celebrates

By Pat Coupar

It was a great day. All who came agreed that things could not have been better. Even the weather was perfect – not too hot, and much as we need the rain, we did not want a downpour on our special day.

Around a hundred Fowspians past and present, and Parks Victoria staff, attended the Friends of Warrandyte State Park's 25th Anniversary Celebration at the 'Folly' on Sunday November 25th.

Long time Fowspian and committee member, Mike Coupar, welcomed everyone and drew attention to the marquee, trailer and other displays and explained the activities for the day. He then gave a brief summary of the early days of FOWSP when activities involved pulling old car wrecks out of the river. He reminisced about some of the 'old times' – slides shows, camping weekends and the like, before making mention of some of the major achievements of the group over the years including our many excellent publications especially the now out of print book 'Discover Warrandyte. Mike spoke of all the rangers-in-charge with whom we have worked closely over the years and who have been so supportive of our group. He also touched on some of our groups political involvement, both successful (keeping the rangers in Warrandyte) and unsuccessful (demolition of rangers houses).

Mike handed the microphone over to Andy Nixon our most recent Ranger-in-Charge who is away for 12 months working on another Parks Victoria project. Andy gave a short, but heart-felt speech thanking all Fowspians and saying how much he has enjoyed working with our group. He

was followed by our current Ranger-in-Charge, Conrad Annal, who reiterated Andy's thanks and said that he was looking forward to working with FOWSP in 2008. He also made mention of the various Landcare groups in the area that work closely with Parks.

After a break Lynne Meredith spoke on behalf on Manningham city Council and introduced Tim O'Donnel who officially launched the Middle Yarra Landcare Network.

Once the speeches were over it was time to eat. The food was prepared on site by caterers, and was delicious and plentiful. In fact plates of tempting delights were passed around regularly.

Among the displays in the marquee was continual 15 minute slide presentation of FOWSP. There was much interest in this particularly trying to put names to familiar faces from years gone by.

Kids were given a special nature walk by the rangers, before the main presentation by Black Snake Productions. We were treated to a variety of reptiles, insects and amphibians including the Golden Bell Frog, scorpions,



Stumpy Tail Lizards, Bearded Dragons, several pythons and a small, but aggressive (fortunately with jaws taped) saltwater crocodile that had earlier that day take a chunk out of our reptile show host's leg!

For those that lingered, tea and coffee was available. The clearing up - just as the setting up - was done efficiently and with no fuss by members of the committee and others. The whole day was a

huge success. Thanks go to Manningham City Council for their generous support. Special thanks must also be given to committee members Artur Muchow and Martyn Hiley who were the driving force behind this auspicious occasion. The planning began many months ago and it is to their credit that the day was such a memorable one.



Letter to the Editor

I'd like to respond to Joan MacMahon's article *A Walk in the Common* (Nov newsletter), in particular, about the damage done by horses. Alas, there are ignorant, uncaring horse people, as there are in any other population. But many of us riders consider ourselves to be environmentalists: we cherish this magic corner of the world in which we live, and want to protect and enhance its biodiversity.

We know it's important to manage our properties sustainably. Looking after the pasture, managing weeds, and planting local indigenous species improves the health of the whole ecosystem, the health of our horses, and greatly lessens the need for extra feeding (with associated costs of manufacture and transport). Many of us take our role as caretakers of acreage and wildlife corridors very seriously, and have also made decisions in other areas of our lives to live as lightly as possible on this earth. (Small house, small car, no children, being vegetarian...)

Riding horses is a wonderful physical activity that also keeps you in touch with the fact that different species perceive the world differently from humans. (Your life often depends on this awareness!) Most of us want to slowly toddle out on quiet back roads and tracks. We keep to the paths, and are happy to stay away from sensitive areas. Some of us even dismount and pull out pittosporums, seedling pines, and boneseed! But it is getting harder and harder and harder to find safe places to ride, as roads are sealed, and the amount and speed of traffic is ever-increasing. There are a lot of ignorant and uncaring drivers out there!

Like Joan, I think education can help. I try to do my bit at my local riding club. Many people, in many areas of our community, (not just horse riders), need to have a better appreciation of our environment, and how it "works". But please don't tar all riders with the same brush that a few rogues deserve.

PS Scientific studies have shown that it is a myth that horse poo spreads weeds.

PPS I've seen crested pigeons a number of times recently, on a horse property near the River in Kangaroo Ground.

Shan Shnookal

Bush Backyard

The Striated Thornbill

By Steven Katsineris

While holidaying with my family in the Otways, on the southwest coast of Victoria, on quite a few occasions I saw several small flocks of Striated Thornbills, mostly in trees and tall shrubs, but sometimes on the ground. I observed and heard many of them in the forested hills behind Wye River and there were others flying about in foliage next to the beach. I also saw more Striated Thornbills among the trees and thick scrub on our bushwalks to the Carisbrook Falls lookout and through the rainforest trees at the Cora Lynn Cascades.

The Striated Thornbills head is a brown/olive colour with white streaks on the face, the wings are brown, the body is mainly olive green, yellowish/cream below, with black streaks and a brown tail, with a black band near the tip. This is the only thornbill with the distinctive white streaks on a brown crown.

These thornbills make many fast, high-pitched notes, including also often a quiet 'zit' and 'zit-zit' sound.

Striated Thornbills generally forage in trees feeding mainly on insects, but they will also eat nectar, fruit and seeds.

Striated Thornbills breed in a specific nesting area in small family related groups. The oval, domed nest is usually in the outer branches of mainly Eucalypt trees or shrubs. The nest is built out of bark, lichen, grasses, mosses, spider's webs and spider's egg sacs. It is lined with fur, feathers and soft plant material. The female incubates the 2-4 eggs, but both parents feed the young.

The Striated Thornbill inhabits temperate rainforests, drier woodlands, parks and gardens from coastal areas to the mountains.

Striated Thornbills are found in southeastern Australia, from southern Queensland, through NSW and Victoria to eastern SA. They are quite common in suitable environment, but the species is badly affected by habitat loss due to logging.

Striated Thornbills are often difficult to catch sight of as they generally stay in the thick cover of the taller shrubs and Eucalypt trees and frequently remain in the higher branches. But, stillness and patience usually proved successful in catching a glimpse of these pretty little birds.

Late Spring

By Lawrie Safstrom

Rain at last, pelting down! A kookaburra, up an old gum, banging the head of an 18



inch snake, then, swallowing it all, in a slow series of 10 gulps.

An echidna out and about the garden searching out ant nests, then exiting through the wombat gate.

Three young relentlessly begging magpies, after their hard pressed parents. A pair of butcherbirds melodiously calling.

Masses of frothy frogs eggs in the pond. So much in Warrandyte to watch for and enjoy. What a season!



What's happening in your backyard this month?

Contributions for next years newsletters can either sent to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or via email to co-editor Linda Rogan at lindarogan@netspace.net.au

People in Plants

By Shelagh Morton

Centipeda cunninghamii (Sneezeweed)

Sir Joseph Banks is once again an influence on botanical discoveries in our continent. He was responsible for sending "perhaps the greatest of all the collectors of Australian plants", Allan Cunningham, to Australia in 1816.

Cunningham had worked at Kew Gardens and spent two years in Brazil on the way to this country. He is probably better known for his journeys of exploration, accompanying Oxley on his Lachlan expedition and Phillip Parker King on his four expeditions to the northwest coastline. His most important journey was in 1827 when he became the first European to explore the Darling Downs and discover Cunninghams Gap. He had also explored the Upper Hunter and named the mystical Pandoras Pass, I thought of him when we drove past it a month ago.

Cunningham also escorted Dumont d'Urville the French botanist on the *Coquille* expedition in 1824 on a botanising trip west of Sydney

From all these expeditions he returned with invaluable collections of new plant species including palms and other tropical species. His brother Richard was also a notable botanist and many plants were named after the brothers by fellow botanists. We all know the most famous of our pines, the Hoop Pine or *Araucaria cunninghamii* which does not occur locally, but the little herb *Centipeda* does flourish here.

The President of the Linnean Society in London commented that "He was distinguished for his moral worth, singleness of heart, and enthusiastic zeal in the pursuit of science."

Geranium solanderi Austral cranebill

Daniel Solander (1733-1782) was born in Sweden where he studied under Carl Linnaeus to become one of his "apostles" despatched to England to introduce the Linnaean sexual system of plant classification. While he was cataloguing the collections at the British Museum he met the young naturalist Joseph Banks and a "working partnership and lasting friendship from which so many advances in natural history were to evolve" was formed.

He accompanied Banks on Cooks "Endeavour" voyage in 1768 and became one of the founders of botany and zoology in Australia. He was an extraordinarily observant naturalist, always overshadowed by Banks

The huge number of new genera and species described, provisionally named and classified by them was never published by Banks who was diverted by other interests. As a result, other naturalists appropriated some of Solanders descriptions.

His name lives on in *Banksia solanderi*, found in the Stirling Ranges of Western Australia and named by Robert Brown: the Mexican genus *Solandra*: and the lovely New Zealand beech *Nothofagus solanderi*.

Solanders most profound influence was on Cook who learnt the value of systematic descriptive detail and systematic observation and comparison from him.

The delicate *Geranium solanderi* is the only plant I can find in our area that commemorates him.

New Editors for a New Year

By Pat Coupar

This will be my last newsletter as editor of the FOWSP newsletter. I first took over the job at the end of 1995 after Marg Burke resigned as co-ordinator of FOWSP and - together with husband Ian - editor of the newsletter. Those 'older' members will well remember Ian's thoughtful front page editorials.

In the design and format of the newsletter I was helped initially by Cliff Green from the Warrandyte Diary and that style has remained relatively unchanged.

I have really enjoyed my time as editor and would like to thank all those who have contributed over the years, particularly the regulars like Ben Gotlib (I Spy), Steven Katsineris and Joan Macmahon.

Next year there will be joint editors: Joan Broadberry and Linda Rogan. They plan to bring out six issues during the first year, starting in February and I'm sure they would welcome any contributions.

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. When there is no scheduled afternoon activity we often go on a spontaneously organised walk. Propagation takes place from 10.00am to 12 midday followed by lunch. No prior experience necessary - there is always someone available to show you the ropes.

PLEASE NOTE

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday. Please note new opening times for Thursdays 9.30am to 12.30pm and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

New Prices

Members 80 cents

Non-members \$1.20



Important Notice

Please note the nursery is **only open** for plant sales during the above times. Some members and non-members have been turning up for plants (and advice) outside these hours without prior arrangement. If you find it impossible to come during official opening times please contact the nursery manager first.

Attention all Members

Would all members who have obtained plants from the FOWSP nursery please make sure they return the empty forestry tubes and more importantly the black plastic tube holder trays. These trays are specially made and have been bought by FOWSP at considerable cost. We cannot possibly keep track of where they all go, but many are not coming back. So would all members, particularly who put in large orders last year of several hundred plants, have a look round to see if they still have our plastic trays somewhere. They can be returned to the nursery any weekday between 8.00am and 5.00pm or on the first Sunday of the month between 2.00pm and 4.00pm.

Sunday Walks 2007

Walks are held on the first Sunday of each month. Meet at 10.15 am. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours. Join us after the walk for a BYO lunch (BBQ available) at 'the Folly' at Warrandyte State Park Rangers Depot, Pound Bend. Hot and cold drinks provided.

Walks are FREE. Bookings are ESSENTIAL. For more information contact Jeanette 9840 9129

Look out for next year's calendar of walks in the February 2008 newsletter.

Thursday Walks 2007

The walks are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 1.00pm. Meet at the nursery, Pound Bend Rangers depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10). Walks will last approximately 2 hours.

FOWSP Committee 2007

Joan Broadberry	9846 1218	Treasurer
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor
Joan Macmahon	9844 3213	
Peter Curry	9844 0958	
Mike Coupar	9844 1650	
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797	
Martyn Hiley	9844 4547	
Artur Muchow	0415383328	
Gray Ardern	0418190261	
Winsome Coutts	9844 5819	

Nursery Manager 0408317327

Park Office 9844 2659

Wildlife Rescue Adriana Simmonds

Koala Rescue Julie Pryor 9722 1117

Market Marie Krause 9712 0498

Market Volunteers

A big thank you to the following people who volunteered their time on the FOWSP trailer at the November Warrandyte market: Ray Kruger, Alan Woolcock, Joan Macmahon, Mark and Margaret Hassell, Marie Thomson and Marie Krause. The trailer was delivered and returned by Peter Curry.

And at the December market, a big thanks to Ray Kruger, Alison Thom, Diane Baird, Mark and Margaret Hassell, Joan Macmahon and Tim Bedford. Once again the trailer was delivered and returned by Peter Curry.

Anyone who would like to be rostered on to help with the trailer, even for just one hour, can contact Marie Krause on 9712 0498. New members especially welcome - no previous experience necessary.



FOWSP 25th Anniversary Celebration DVD

Our memorable day has been recorded for posterity on film. From the preparations through the speeches, special interviews and the snake display.

Copies of the DVD are available to borrow from the FOWSP library in the ranger office at the Pound Bend depot.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
to all Fowspians

Deadline for February 2008 newsletter is January 27th

contributions can be sent to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113 or
email lindarogan@netspace.net.au

DVD Review

The Thin Green Line

International Ranger Documentary

Report by Pat Coupar

This is a remarkable DVD, made by a remarkable man. Sean Willmore is an Australian Park ranger who had a vision. In 2003 he attended an International Rangers Congress at Wilson's Promontory National Park and it was there that his idea to document the lives of rangers all over the world was born.

In the following year Sean sold his car and remortgaged his house. For the next 14 months he travelled the world filming and interviewing rangers on six continents and 19 countries. He met rangers from different locations, political environments, cultural influences and personal histories, each had their own story to tell. Stories of how they have to cope with corruption, ignorance, politics and greed. Stories of dedication, sacrifice, passion, pride in their Park and love for the job.

Sean joined foot patrols in the Kruger National Park, horse patrols in the Andes, firewood poaching patrols in India, and in a Ugandan jungle a 3 day anti-poaching patrol with armed rangers where they found and removed 15 snares.

There is some amazing footage of an elephant charge that he faced while interviewing a ranger in South Africa. In addition, there was a reindeer survey in Norway, track maintenance in Scotland, helicopter rescue of injured climbers in Canada, ghost net removal in northern Australia and in the Galapagos Islands he met the 128 year old tortoise – the last of its species.

There were extremes of environment and weather from his interview with a ranger in Ireland in the pouring rain to a crocodile

relocation in the heat of Arnhem Land where he interviewed an indigenous and non-indigenous ranger working together and obviously best mates.

Two particularly poignant moments stick in the mind. One is of a ranger in Uganda who every day puts his life on the line protecting the endangered mountain gorillas. He told Sean that he gets home so rarely that when he does his son calls him uncle. The other is a ranger in Chile who was interviewed on top of the Villarica active volcano. He pointed to the vast snow-capped Andes mountains and said "This is my Park"

There is some breathtaking scenery, but this is not a nature documentary. It is a ranger to taking to one of their own, sharing very personal views of the lives they lead - rangers from diverse backgrounds and cultures from around the world united by the same inspiring goal. It is probably best summed up by John Makombo, Chief Ranger of Bwindi National Park in Uganda, home of the mountain gorilla.

"We are just one family, struggling for one thing. We have to keep this working. They should keep the spirit of conservation and the spirit of wildlife, in their minds, at their heart and everywhere they go. Let's struggle and make sure that what is surviving in the world keeps on surviving until further notice. Forever and ever"

What this DVD delivers is a behind the scenes look at rangers and I cannot recommend this DVD highly enough. Sean makes the pledge that 100% of all profits from the documentary will aid the families of rangers killed in the line of duty and other ranger/conservation programs. Already he has fulfilled this promise by personally presenting the widows of rangers shot and killed by poachers in Africa \$1000USD each to help support their families.

If you would like to know more about the Thin Green Line or would like to buy the DVD go to www.thingreenline.info



Annual Koala Report

By Julie Pryor

From October 1st 2006 until 30th September 2007 we attended to 17 koalas from this area. Unfortunately they were all put down or died overnight from illness or injuries.

I was called to another four koalas from this area during this time; they were attended by local vets or shelter people. Unfortunately all four died or were put down. Twenty one koalas from this area is a tragic loss.

Of the eight koalas we had from the Framlingham fires earlier this year, we managed to get five back. We lost a mother and her joey due to burns (the burns did not appear until 10 days after the fires). The other was a female. A post mortem showed she had smoke inhalation.



So far this year (our year starts in October) we have lost two koalas. One koala was from Donvale, he had been attacked by two dogs and died overnight. The koala roamed into the dog's yard (the dogs were securely fenced in their own yard). This koala was fit and healthy, 11.65 kilogram male, but two dogs were too much for him.

The second koala was from Yarc, it had been hit by a car and left in the middle of the road. Another motorist stopped to assist this big boy, but he had to be put down as he had massive injuries – too many broken bones.



How Trees Came to Broken Hill

By Lawrie Safstrom

Broken Hill is on the way to Mootwingee National Park. And further on is Sturt Desert Park and the deep water holes of Cooper's Creek. We love to camp there.

Broken Hill is a welcoming stopover from Melbourne; for once you leave it, the outback really starts. So, we spend a day or two there, reacquainting ourselves in the town before heading to camp spots.

July and August have been our favourite months for searching out this area. And there is always a pull to return. Why? We only have to re-read our daily jottings while there, to get the urge to re-visit the area, with its sense of the outback.



But how different today, with all the wonderful trees. Now, streets and streets of corrugated miners' homes are shaded by avenues of trees.

It's hard to imagine those early days of dust storms, no air conditioning, no refrigeration. Only a Coolgardie safe to keep food cool.

Perhaps working down the deep mines was a welcome relief to men from the glaring summer

sun – but what about the women and children? No escape for them. Very little spare water. No swimming pools. No trees!

Albert Morris, a crippled metallurgist who made a life study of native plants had a wild dream to plant trees all over Broken Hill to counter the terrible dust there.

The trees of the Silver City and a lovely plantation are given to his memory. There, too, cast in bronze is the 'Trees Prayer' by an unknown Persian poet.

"Ye who would pass by and raise your hand against me, hearken ere you harm me - I am the heat of your hearth on cold winter nights, the friendly shade screening you from the summer sun, and my fruits are refreshing draughts quenching your thirst as you journey on. I am the beam that holds up your house, the board of your table, the bed on which you lie, and the timber that builds your boat. I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your home, the wood of your cradle, and the shell of your coffin. I am the bread of kindness and the flower of beauty.

Ye who pass by, listen to my prayer - harm me not, I am a tree."

"I SPY"

By B.G



Garden Gurus Gather

On Saturday 17th February 2008 the Maroondah branch members of the Australian Plant Society will have a 'garden' visit to Warrandyte State Park. website: www.vicnet.net.au/apsmrdah

Mucronata Mention

During October 2007 Sandy Quick of North Warrandyte and Matthew came to the depot to have a tree identified so that they could buy another if possible.

Various Visitors

Simone Griffith (primary teacher, Caulfield) came and helped to remove weed moss from plant tubes containing *Pomaderris lanigera*.

Vicky and Ennio Torresan visited to acquire plants for their block in Warrandyte. Mahala Clivaz was acquiring plants and rejoining FOWSP. Monique Fabris was obtaining some eucalypts (Long-leaf Box).

Julie and Jane

Julie Bishop was showing photographs of her garden taken when Jane Edmandson visited Julie's block to award a garden prize.

District Drop-in

Gary French from the District Office based at Westerfolds was seen delivering plant material to the WSP Office. Gary is a planner for the Yarra District.

Josh's Journey

Josh is back, but from where?

Canada to Kenya

Lex Rutherford, a visitor from Kenya was helping prepare the Folly for the 25th anniversary event. Lex is in Australia for three months, and grew up in Saskatchewan in Canada. He is an agrologist, had been a farmer, worked in agriculture and work with co-operatives.

Feverish Folly

It took eleven people to clean and prepare the Folly building (Thursday 22nd November) in preparation for the 25th anniversary.

It took all these people to equal the sometimes solo effort of Margaret Gotlib who did a similar job in the past. Margaret is currently ambulating with the assistance of two crutches.

Miracle at Mortlake

Dick Thomson was happy to report that at the Parkland Reserve, one and a half miles out of town, a group went to look for and found what they thought was *Dianella aomena* in the paddock. But they have found a new species of plant related to *Prasophyllum correctum* (Bairnsdale) and *Prasophyllum incorrectum* (Tasmania). The estimate was that there were at least 8000 of the plants.

Election Example

Jozica Kutin was at the nursery on the 22nd November selecting plants for the Warrandyte Primary School. They were to be sold at the school on election day. (The school is a polling booth).

Membership Move

Lee Speedy, in her involvement with the membership activity has been able to organise a two year membership for Simon Dickie – a special arrangement for a special person.

Rare Rabbit

Yours truly found a 50mm high rabbit (albeit a toy) hiding under the plant trestles in the nursery area open to the public. First reaction was – if it was alive it would get through any wire fence and devastate the plants. However, close inspection showed it was not a menace.

Witness to this awesome find were Jan Smids and Belinda Christie. It is actually quite an interesting specimen. No doubt some child has misplaced it. Owner-applicants please queue at the nursery store.

Spiny/Spied

A spiny anteater was seen near Coopes Orchard. Apparently another echidna can be identified by green tips on the end of its spikes. It was? done by locals to identify it in its adventures in the bush and on the road. Going green?



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Victorian Christmas Bush

(Prostanthera lasianthos)



What a wonderful show the Victorian Christmas Bush is putting on around Warrandyte this year. Branches are laden with white or pale mauve flowers. This tall shrub or small tree grows mostly in damp areas beside creeks and rivers. Belonging to the mint family, its dark green leaves give off a distinctive aroma when crushed.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL TO SEE IF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE

FOWSP Membership Renewal Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Email.....

Membership \$20
Concession \$10

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