



FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE STATE PARK Inc.

October 1994 NEWSLETTER

Editorial.

The Population and Growth Conference in Cairo, Egypt last month finished as quietly as it commenced. It seemed to attract very little attention from the media, particularly in this country. At best it appears that delegates had reached a 'consensus' that there were too many people on the planet. This comforting term is one beloved of politicians, union leaders, and pollsters. All it really means is that any proportion of views exceeding 50% is perceived by people to indicate 100% agreement. All this leads to such conferences having a very bland attitude, thus not attracting press and television coverage. Rules regarding delegates discussing related subjects reduce the effectiveness of such meetings.

In 1835 James Bennett, one of the largest owners of newspapers in the U.S. (before the days of Randolph Hearst) said "The purpose of newspapers is not to educate, but to startle." Such a statement does not seem out of place today.

It would seem that a discussion of overpopulation in the many overcrowded countries of the world would be of value. Also the relationship between food supplies, climate changes, and the generation of poverty. In the Nile Valley, India and Indonesia large numbers of people work the land. Their product no matter how divided provides a mere subsistence. Nothing is left for improving the yield from the land. Few people are educated enough to solve their problems. We did not hear from the conference any constructive ways to ease population burden. Subjects such as migration to other countries, increased technological aid, increased tenure of land, and improved nutrition need to be addressed. Ministers for family planning around the world have been far from adequate and measure success by the eloquence of their speeches and the weight of pamphlets they distribute.

Environmentalism tenets threaten the modus operandi of government and business. A sustainable society needs to be self sufficient and in balance with its ecosystems. It has a long term to aim to consume less and protect the biosphere. Such an agenda profoundly threatens priorities of short term profits, growth, and disregard for air, water, and soil of major industries and transnational corporations.

The Cairo Conference has produced very little of substance or value. The Earth Summit in Rio two years ago is all but forgotten. There seems to be little urgency to develop plans of action in all but a few countries. In the ten days of the conference, world population increased by 2.5 million and in the last twelve months by 94 million.....

"Men do not vary much in virtue:
their vices only are different".

"The ideas that benefit a man are seldom
welcomed by him on first presentation".

"We always preach about things that are not ours".

"The rigours of climate and the unkindness of a scanty soil may be a good thing. They are good, very excellent, provided you do not get more than your constitution requires".

Elbert Hubbard.

Koala Count - Pound Bend, 1pm Sunday 30th October.

The time is here for the annual Koala Count and Frog Day. Come along to the Folly at Pound Bend at 1 o'clock (Melway 23 C:10). There will be tracks, long and short, easy walking and not so easy as well! So the whole family will be able to join in. And they will certainly be welcomed. It is always a great thrill to see a koala for the first time or the fiftieth, and children always have keen eyes for spotting them. There will be heaps of fun activities for the kids, and a great afternoon munchies for all. So on Sunday 30th October bring along sturdy walking boots, binoculars (if you have them) a hat and sun cream.

Jocelyn & Sue Hunter. Enquiries Brenda Hunter 379 7375 (AH) or PARK 8442659.

Now you will ask about the Frogs.... well you will all get a guided tour around our pride and joy - Frogland - after we have counted the Koala population. See if you can count frog calls!

"Do all spiders have eight legs?"

The Spiders are coming..... NOW.... Friday 28th October

Fascinating Facts From Flora

October 1994

E was an Eagle
Exceedingly regal,
Who sat on a rock,
And stole lambs from the flock.

e!

Dreadful old Eagle!

Edward Lear.

from an alphabet drawn for Lord

Tennyson's sons, Hallam and Lionel in 1859.

Edward Lear found solace and delight in the company of birds until his death in 1888 at the age of 75. Best known for his nonsense rhymes, but his early years were devoted to a series of extraordinary bird paintings which rival the work of even the great John James Audubon. Lear was the victim of proficient plagiarism by not only the Goulds but many other authors of natural histories.

I quote from Susan Hyman's 'Edward Lear's Birds.'

I think I'll start an Edward Lear Fan Club.

Inspiration comes this month from a recent trip to Western Australia where the flora is so spectacularly in contrast to that of our local variety that you'd be forgiven for thinking you were in foreign climes. It was the birds which provided the connecting link, reminding us that we were indeed still in the same continent.

Wedge-tailed Eagles were plentiful in the Pilbara as were the Emus (I know we don't see too many in Warrandyte State Park, but it seems a pity not to include them as the mane has such an interesting origin). Black-shouldered Kites and Galahs (or Pink and White Cockatoos as they are called in W.A.) we saw, and the ubiquitous White-plumed Honeyeater, the colour of a canary, was always there to welcome us to the gorges of the Hamersley Range.

We've already 'done' the Greenie..... remember *Lichenostomus penicillatus* ?

So, we'll start with.....

Aquila audax

Wedge-tailed Eagle

The adjective aquiline means 'of an eagle' curved like an eagle's beak, eagle - like, so I presume aquila means eagle.

audax is from the latin for bold.

This regal bird's scientific name used to be *Uroaetus audax* from Greek oura, tail and aetos, eagle.

Cacatua roseicapilla

Galah

Latinized from the Malay *Kakaktua*, from which our word Cockatoo is derived.

Latin - *roseus*, rosy

Latin - *capillus*, hair of the head. Refers to the pinkish/white crest?

Elanus notatus

Black-shouldered Kite.

Greek, *elanos* - kite.

I'll have to leave the Emu for next time but here's another Edward Lear limerick of which I'm very fond

There was an old man with a beard,

Who said, "It is just as I feared!

Two Owls and a Hen,

Four Larks and a Wren,

Have all built their nests in my beard!"

Flora Anderson.

New Group....THE FRIENDS OF THE COMMON. Kym Dowcra and Debby Parker have started a group which will care for this particularly special area of the Park. They would like to hear from any members who would like to join this team, especially members who live close to it. They have chosen to meet on second Sundays and will welcome you all in the main car park at 10 am. Guided walks will feature as part of the program, to be announced. Enquiries Kym Dowcra 876 3807 Debby Parker 846 2214.

The Spiders are coming..... NOW....Friday 28th October

"Why do spiders like letterboxes?"

"Where is the 'badge' on a the badge spider?"



Mystery Reporter.....

"I'VE GOT A LITTLE LIST.....THEY'LL NONE OF THEM BE MISSED!"

In spite of less full-time Park staff to perform more work, the Mystery Reporter *will* track down the elusive "C.B." (To be named at a later date.)

However in a superbly crafted masterstroke, Elizabeth Irma Sevier (nee Creswell) was ambushed and interviewed on Thursday 29th September 1994.

Elizabeth has taken on responsibility for the revegetation area known as the COUPE (Coup? Coop?) an old orchard area on the bend of the Yarra River at the Pound Bend Depot, ie "bringing back the bush to a totally run down, weed devoured situation."

For well over a year Elizabeth, aided by Neal, various FOWSP members, Park Staff(who do a valuable job spraying, delivering mulch and advising), Warrandyte school children and others, has produced an indigenous sapling forest and understorey over a large area. Different techniques have been applied and observed in seed sowing, mulching, dry-root planting, etc.

Question "Plans for the future?"

Answer "When we've finished, or at the same time we hope to join the area up with Anna Richtarik's (also ably assisted by many) area along 'Endeavour Bank' adjacent to the Yarra, thus providing a wildlife corridor between the two areas."

Vital Statistics (Of Elizabeth)

Weight "Unfortunately 64kg."

Height "About 5'3", whatever that is."

Eye Colour "Sort of Blue."

Hair Colour "Blonde, gone dull to mousey shade."

Elizabeth's Favourites

Colour "Blue teal."

Shape "Shape of a mature Red-box eucalypt."

Smell "Tree violet - *Hymenanthera dentata*"

Taste "Meaty stew."

Sound "the sound of a beautiful eastern gong reverberating with lots of overtones and undertones."

Born (at home) in Melbourne on 8th April 1931, Elizabeth attended Ararat Grammar School to Grade 8 level, then on to Clyde Boarding School at Woodend in the Central Victorian Highlands, reaching Matriculation with passes in English Expression, English Literature, French and German. Also studied European History, and musically "reaching the old Piano Grade 5 level. Her chief study was singing-soprano - mostly German 'Leider'. Elizabeth completed a three year diploma course at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and also qualified as a teacher (Melbourne Teacher's College).

"I went on the music staff of the primary schools, a year in Melbourne, two at Castlemaine as a music specialist - that was were I met Maurice and married him." (Four children ensued, Janet, Martin, Madelaine and Charles - there are now two granddaughters, "very little ones".)

Elizabeth returned to teaching in 1971, taught til 1987 including Mt. Beauty, and a round of primary schools, then Regional consultancy and on to State-wide consultancy. Completing a Music Teaching Degree she later took "early retirement".
Favourite Food "I like a lot of different foods, Indian, Thai, Italian, good English."
Favourite Drink "Champagne I really like."
Favourite Piece of Music "At the moment music of the Middle Ages and its connection with Middle Eastern Music, including Indian."

Favourite Jewellery & clothes "American Indian, beads & dangle, blue & silver."

Favourite Football Team? (If pressed.)

"Richmond, because my kids grew up barracking for Richmond - and it seems to have improved a bit this year."

Favourite saying. "A stitch in time saves nine."

Hobbies & Skills. "Apart from here (at the Park), tootle about on the piano, sometimes the recorder. Like going to the Art Galleries, reflective things, walking around looking at people, going to the city, window shopping, looking at beautiful things - well designed. Go frequently to the National Gallery and go on walks with voluntary guides, walking along the beach - St. Kilda, Port Melbourne walks, fascinated with the people there."

Elizabeth used to do a lot of cross-country ski-ing. Enjoys the changing seasons in Melbourne. Used to knit, likes flower arranging, "doing things with whatever I've got outside". Shares a Falcon sedan, drives "as little as possible".... "I watch very little TV., read a lot, I write a diary, four years of journals - I read it up every night".

Elizabeth has travelled to Hawaii, been to Canada two or three times, very briefly to England, and Holland, and Nepal.... and Thailand in transit. Within Australia - Tanami Track and across to Broome. And into Purnulu (Bungle Bungles) "Had a lovely tour last year to 'Tassie', the last days of the *Abel Tasman* ferry, Cradle Mountain, Gordon River, Hobart and up along the east coast then Freycinet.

Question What annoys you most?

Answer "I get quite irritated and disappointed by bad language".

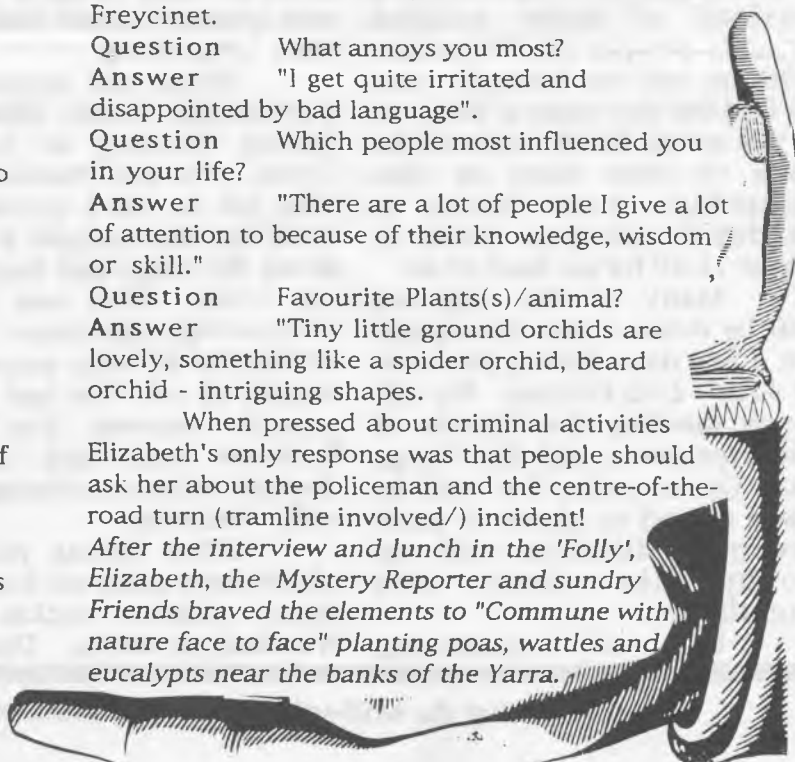
Question Which people most influenced you in your life?

Answer "There are a lot of people I give a lot of attention to because of their knowledge, wisdom or skill."

Question Favourite Plants(s)/animal?

Answer "Tiny little ground orchids are lovely, something like a spider orchid, beard orchid - intriguing shapes."

When pressed about criminal activities Elizabeth's only response was that people should ask her about the policeman and the centre-of-the-road turn (tramline involved/) incident!
After the interview and lunch in the 'Folly', Elizabeth, the Mystery Reporter and sundry Friends braved the elements to "Commune with nature face to face" planting poas, wattles and eucalypts near the banks of the Yarra.



Hot House Gossip.

Our Nursery changed dramatically in the last month. Ian, Don, Maarten and Keith, (with help from Col or Leo and the tractor!) are erecting our 'Temple of Propagation'. Huge poles (with amazing girths), have gone in and the propagation work area is gradually emerging. There is lots of room for extra bush carpenters as well - so much to finish.)

The Nursery work has gone on regardless as 'Spring Plantings' had almost cleared our stock. Amazing it was to watch the pricking out proceeding - still under cover somehow - in the freezing weather. Paid workers would have all gone on strike!! So all we can say is how wonderful our workers are, give them a plant or three, and reflect that we just seem to attract the kind of people who really can make a difference to this poor old world.

Bye the way, the groups who will need plants for Autumn plantings should contact Pat, Cathy or David to organise their order. We need to schedule plants a season in advance with so many areas to cater for.

Of course I am always 'skiting' about our activities, achievements or whatever. So the Melbourne Parks & Waterways are organising a busload of other curious Friends people on November 19th. to visit our Nursery - and to find out just what a 'Folly' is. If you would like to come to the park to meet them on that Saturday, just bring a sandwich and pop down at about 11.30 for an hour or so.

Many of the regulars will be down at the Grampians for a few days during the week of 17th - 24th October. We will enjoy meeting the Friends of the Grampians, and the Wonga Park Conservation Soc. will be there as well so plenty of cross group fertilisation will no doubt take place. (Not literally!)

Lots of organising,

reorganising, assessing, reassessing is going on for the Yarra Corridor Green Task Forces. We have put in a giant plan to allow Greening Aust. to bring their trainee force along to help all the small sub groups along the river - from Pigeon Bank to Stony Creek- to achieve some of their goals, which have looked to some, as the realms of fantasy. We hope if GAV accept our proposal. FOWSP in return can give these young people(all of whom are 'LEAP' unemployed) as wide an experience of bush management as possible. Next Autumn we will let you all help. Plan 'Meandering Yarra', the overview, is available to read in the Folly, Market stall etc.

Another group who will make a fantastic difference to those groups (often just a few people) are the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers. We are setting up a list of day long projects as emergency program for them. Some weekends the ATCV have an activity all lined up for their volunteers (often from overseas) and it is cancelled. So leaders of all sub-groups are invited to think up a project, for short notice implementation, and put your group on the list. You will get a few days lead time and we can assure you these workers are highly motivated. You must be able to have at least one person spend the whole time 'organising'.

David had organised a wonderful treat after the Spring Planting at Jumping Creek. We had Marlene Lyell who led us on a guided Bird Walk to Blue-tongue Bend up along the ridge and back along the river. This was a very interesting experience with a skilled 'birdo' who managed to inspire us all. We had several people answer Fay's last Parkcare call, and they all decided to become Fowspians as well. Welcome.

Other Spring plantings which have gone on have seen many plants tucked into Warrandyte earth. Dave had

the Fourth Hill planting on Sunday 2nd morning and FOWSP also worked with Tim Rowe at Stiggants to transform the wetlands there. Most sub-groups have had their own planting activity as well. We hope the people of Warrandyte all enjoy the transformation taking place.

The planting with CODAT was a wonderful experience. We had three different advertised times so it went on from 10am till about 5.30pm. About 1500 plants have gone in and this will be a wonderful wetlands for people to visit with ease any time they visit Stiggants. The two groups who made really excellent response to the call were Osborne Peninsula and the Mitchell Ave 'Push'. We hope (if this is out in time) that people meet the 'M.A.P's' for the first big meeting on Scotchman's Hill. It is planned for 10 am. 16th October. Scotchman's really need a big group to make a big impression. M.A.P are also planting around the SEC's enclosure in the Community Centre Grounds. Ring the Vannetti's or Buskes. (see Calendar)

The sign has gone up on the Hundred Steps. This area has undergone a total change of status. Until this year a dumping place for car bodies and garden rubbish, it is now a place cars stop for enjoyment of a spectacular view, an interesting rock climb or a walk down to the river by way of those famous Hundred steps!

The visit on Monday by our Guru (sorry Colin but I can't help myself with this title!) was extremely fruitful with Colin Arnold giving lots of very important advice about our organic / recycled soil mixes, future practical operational moves etc. We plan a visit to his Nursery after Xmas for further enlightenment and plain common sense ideas. We find it extraordinary that all Nurseries are not run along these simple, cost efficient lines.

A Letter from Olive Walters

It's time I reported in from Coochiemudlo Island (Qld.). Letter writing is my least favourite activity and I find it hard to stick to any sedentary task as I'm constantly being called outside by bird-song. This morning I'm being teased by one of the gems of the island - the Scarlet Honeyeater. I've already been out three times to catch fleeting glimpses of him as he speeds from tree to tree. (Yes *he* is the scarlet one, *she* is brown like so many of the females.

I've had quite a few bird adventures! There's a Kookaburra which arrives when I'm digging the garden. He swoops down just past my head and scoops up worms, beetles etc. One day when I was working on a retaining wall beside the garage, I looked up in time to see him with a small brown frog already well on its way to his digestive system. No, I wasn't able to positively identify the frog - similar to *Litoria ewingii*, (a species not found here) - but would you try to rescue and identify a frog from the strong beak of a Kookaburra?

I've been putting bird seed out for the pigeons & doves but was very upset one day to find one of the Bar Shouldered Doves dead in the front garden. A little later the same day my brother Rob rescued another of the same species from a female Butcher Bird and we put it in a secure place to rest till it was able to fly away. I think the Butcher Bird is now ensconced on her nest as her mate (a Pied Butcher Bird) has resumed his old habit of dive bombing me when I'm out walking in his territory.

Then there was the day when I was having a late afternoon walk on the golf-course and was adopted (imprinted?) by two baby Wood Ducks. They just ran up to me with cries of joy and proceeded to follow me. I couldn't find parent birds anywhere. I *could* however hear crows nearby and knew there was a Whistling Kite's nest above so I had to take them home. For thirty-six hours they were mine but I wasn't confident I could rear them so rang the Dept. of Conservation and Heritage who gave me some carers phone numbers. I eventually located a 'Bird Lady' in Capalaba who agreed to look after them. Unfortunately one of them died and the other was placed with a family of Wood Ducks at 'Gondwanaland' at Southbank in Brisbane so I hope it survived.

I've also been doing a little bit of environmental weeding but this is daunting as this poor little island is in a very bad state and the Friends of Coochiemudlow are not a group like ours. There is one very good (not perfect) area which is reserved - it's not just one habitat but a combination of several. It is tough going walking in it but I've located lots of wildflowers. These I have photographed (albeit inexpertly) so I won't list species - I will bore you all with my photos when I arrive back.

As you can tell there is stacks here to keep me busy and interested. Andy is still working on the house but the painting should be finished this week so he will be able to relax. He is playing a bit of golf and is presently hitting better than I am.

Well see you all when we return.....Olive Walters.

STAR GAZER'S CORNER

Of all the birds in the world, the eagle is highly prized due to its hunting skills. Many cultures have associated the eagles with the Gods of war and power. In Greek mythology, Zeus, the father of Gods and men declared the eagle to be the prince of birds and carrier of thunder. A mighty role indeed. The Arabians also venerated an eagle 'Al Okab, 'The Black Eagle'.

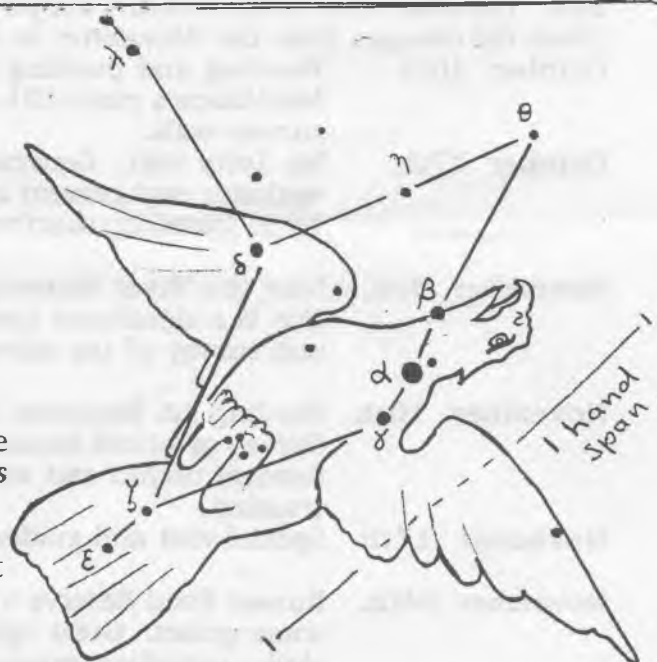
On the other half of the planet, in the land Terra Australis, the Kulin (Central Victorian aboriginal people) associated Altair (aquiliae) with Bunjil, the Eaglehawk. Bunjil was headman of the Kulin nation and creator of the mountains, rivers and all the animals. (*Bunjil, the Eagle is the supreme being/totem of our local Wurundjeri. - Ed.*)

Aquila is visible from sunset to 10pm. when it also sets. To locate this constellation look towards NW-W and at 7pm Aquila is about 40 degrees (2 hand spans) above the horizon.

Key Features.

α Alpha Aquiliae - (Altair, Arabic) the flying eagle. It is the twentieth brightest star and sixteen light years distant (astronomically close) One light year is the distance light travels in one year or 9,600,000,000,000Km! Altair appears white in colour and is easy to find because of its two 'companions' a finger width at either side.

β Beta Aquiliae Alshain and γ Gamma Aquiliae are both derived from the Persian title 'Shahin tara zed' - 'The star striking the vulture'.



HAPPY STARGAZING - S.G.

Memo from Matt - Ranger in Charge Report.

Its been like a menagerie at Warrandyte State Park lately with an attack by uninvited feral visitors; goats, sheep, deer and dogs. Rangers trekking through the park like 'Great White Hunters' chasing more than their tails.

The 'Poppet Head' information shelter construction is underway at Whipstick Gully and together with the Heritage Trail linking Whipstick Gully and Gold Memorial Road will now provide a new and important focus for Fourth Hill.

The park has also put a submission to the Yarra Corridor Project for both the Green Task Force and two placement trainees. So we will be waiting with bated breath to see if we are successful.

Our Director of Parks, Don Saunders is leaving 'Parks' after many years (30) service to head the LCC. There will be a *Picnic in the Park* at Gellibrand Hill Park on October 23rd for everyone who would like to say goodbye to him.

We also said goodbye to Fay Valcanis who has moved to Fire Protection Branch. The good news is that Stephen Anderson has accepted the role of Parkcare Ranger for the next twelve months.

At a recent F.M.T. (Flora Management Team) meeting (Marg, Pat, Dave & Matt) we have solicited the support of FOWSP to help us continue with the establishment of REAMS (Resource Evaluation and Monitoring System) that David has commenced. Margaret Dimech has agreed to help us sort out this volume of information. Thanks also to Jenny Willis who helped put the ground work in to put our fauna observations onto the computer.

Dave reports that he had a great turn up for the Spring Planting Festival at Jumping Creek and at Fourth Hill. Craig and Stuart did a great job on the 'Air Shaft' exclusion fence.

With the finer weather about, just a reminder that if you would like to see what Rangers actually do, and especially what they get up to on weekends, please let me know and have your name added to the list for *Operation Offsider*. (A list is also up in the folly - Ed.)

Next issue Ray will tell us what is happening at One Tree Hill and Doug will keep us up to date with his Mt. Lofty program.

FOWSPian Thursday Afternoon Activities.

This activity takes place in the afternoon, with the morning's activities in the Nursery over. We visit different areas in our park each week and are accompanied by a ranger.

The activity often includes a mini project and is always an opportunity to learn something new. The afternoon finishes with a cuppa and chat. Everyone is welcome.

(Note the changes from last Newsletter in activity dates for the first two afternoons.)

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|----------------|--|---------------------------|
| October 20th | Weeding and planting in Bradley's Lane. (Behind MacMahon's place-101.) To be followed by a general survey walk. | Ranger, David Van Bockel. |
| October 27th. | Mt. Lofty visit. General walk looking at frog populations, wetlands and current and proposed fencing works. To be joined by members of Friends of Mt. Lofty. | Ranger, Doug Cordell |
| November 3rd. | Visit the 'River Buttercup' site at Yarra Brae. (Note: this is a significant species.) Followed by a general walk and survey of the infrequently visited area. | Ranger, Matt le Duc. |
| November 10th. | Harding Rd. Exclusion fence at the Timber Reserve. Survey of plants inside the fence. Some hand weeding. General orchid and wildflower identification skills training. | Ranger, Brian Phefley |
| November 17th | Special visit and guided tour of Hochkin's Ridge. | Ranger, Ray Jasper. |
| November 24th. | Russell Road Reserve visit. Plant survey, hand weed some grasses. Great opportunity to practice identification skills, including grasses. | Ranger, David Van Bockel. |

CHRISTMAS HAMPER - filling slowly.

The lovely basket so generously donated by 'River Clay' (at the bridge) still has lots of space to be filled up with goodies for our Christmas raffle. We are suggesting that you donate home made/hand crafted items to make this a truly special treat. We will have it on show at the market and at any other appropriate places. Thank you to those in early.

Every now and then Mike and I suffer from travel cravings. The opportunity to be on the road again finally came about during the recent school holidays. The past few months had been exceptionally busy for both of us and Ross too was in need of a break from his Year 11 studies.

Heading north out of Warrandyte I watched the wattles along the roadside flash by, their brilliant golden blooms would be all but over when we returned. What other floral gems would I miss over the next two weeks? Most years I wouldn't so much, but this year I'm on a quest to photograph, in flower, all of Warrandyte's indigenous plants. It was no good worrying. Already my thoughts had turned to the distant mountains - the Flinders Rangers to be exact.

Our first stop was Lindsay Island, about 100 kms. west of Mildura. This area of Mallee bush, close to the Murray River, is part of the Murray - Sunset National Park and if you think Warrandyte has a problem with rabbits you should see this place. We came across a recently constructed fence 50 metres square, inside which the sandy soil was totally riddled with hundreds and hundreds of burrows. This it seemed was an inclusion plot. There were exclusion plots as well consisting of electric fences over a metre high designed to keep out, not only rabbits, but kangaroos and also I guess, pigs. Although we didn't see these there was plenty of their destructive digging practices.

On a brighter note native wildlife was abundant. We frequently encountered large parties of emus bobbing across the low mallee scrub. 'Big Reds' were there too - the giants of the roo family which, in Victoria, are found only in this far north-west corner.

After a couple of days we travelled onwards, across endless oceans of salt-bush, bluebush, and sometimes no bush - total degradation. Finally we reached our destination in the Flinders Ranges. We decided to bypass the bright lights of Wilpena Pound - the main tourist centre, and opted instead for a quiet informal campsite beside the Branchina Creek in the dramatic Branchina Gorge.

That first night sitting around the campfire as darkness fell, we listened to the noises of the night. Some sounds were unfamiliar, but others we recognised like the two note hoot of a Boobook Owl, the harsh cry of a Masked Lapwing and then, unmistakably, the bleating 'maaaa...' of a goat (there are estimated to be around 150,000 feral goats in these ranges).

In the morning a different sound caught our attention. A sort of high pitched "peep peep" whistle coming from the tree above. I grabbed my binoculars but hardly needed them as the noise was being made by an eagle (later identified as a Little Eagle) and we were camped directly beneath its enormous stick nest. What a privilege! The eagle didn't seem too fussed by our presence and I suppose we were not the first campers to impose on its territory.

It was particularly dry up in the Flinders, like much of Australia, but that didn't alter the truly remarkable colours that make this area so special. Up here the sky is the bluest of blues and the rocks the richest of reds, rustiest orange, duskiest pink and creamiest ochre. Colours which change in intensity with the time of day.

I could write reams about these ranges, their ancientness (rocks around 1000 million years old - some of the oldest on earth), their ruggedness and remoteness. I could relate stories from the Adnyamathanja Dreamtime about how this remarkable landscape was formed - magical, mythical stories of the two huge serpents that created Wilpena Pound and of the giant Arkaroo who drank Lake Frame dry.

I could write about the plants, Mulga, Wilga, Emu Bush and Quandong and so many I could not name. There were familiar faces too like Narrow-leaf Clematis, Chocolate and Vanilla Lilies, sun orchids and the ubiquitous Golden Wattle. Then there were the animals, friendly Euros (with long coats of hair instead of fur), a rare Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby and dragons, both bearded and painted.

I could mention the drives to hidden water-holes, sacred Aboriginal sites and gorges.... always gorges. There were walks too - some steep and strenuous, others long and leisurely.

I could tell of the stars like silver pins in a black velvet sky so many, so bright, so unknown. And of the mornings, each one perfect with crisp clean air and brilliant blue skies the way every new day should begin.

There are also many things that cannot be put into words. Like the feeling of sitting on a mountain top gazing across a vast wilderness of natural beauty or walking through the corridors of time in a land that is timeless.

Such moments do not come often in a lifetime, but when they do, they are profoundly moving. Above all else there is the memory of peace.

"How common are White Tailed Spiders?"

"Why am I asking these questions?"

Turn to the Calendar Sheet!

The Spiders are coming..... NOW....Friday 28th October

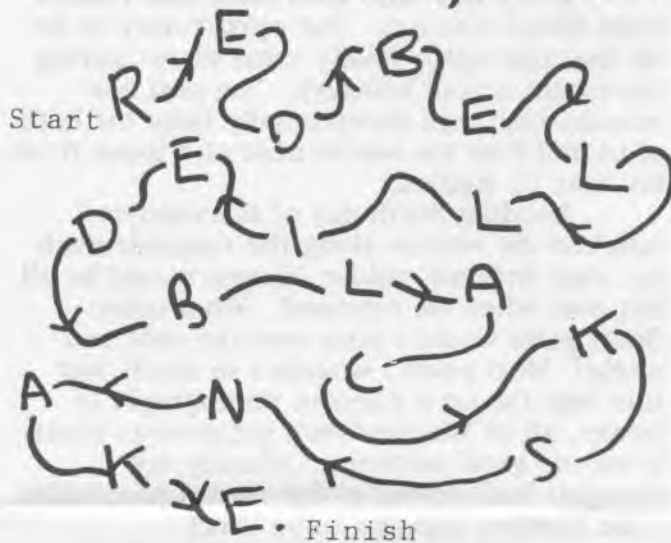
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LIZARD	BROWN	TIPAN
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SNAKE	BLUETONGUE	ADDER
SKINK	TIGER	COBRA
GOANNA		FROG

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FOLLOW THE LINES, THEN DRAW ME



Write the letters here;

Draw me.

UNSUBBLE MY NAME & COLOR ME.



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Tom King (7 years) has drawn Blinky Bill for you to colour in.

"Do all trap-door spiders make doors for their burrows?"