

August 1998

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. P O Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

Remnants and Roundabouts

By Pat Coupar

Manningham Council is compiling a map of remnant vegetation in areas that are not included in the 'green wedge'. Several members of FOWSP, not all living in the Shire, have been asked to contribute their knowledge. Each member has been sent a large detailed map on which to mark all existing blocks of remnant vegetation that they are aware of. The blocks may be on private or public land, including roadsides.

In addition, information such as size, vegetation community, integrity (level of disturbance), health and risk factors (building extension etc.), is to be recorded on an accompanying data sheet. According to Nicole Moore, Manningham's environmental education officer, the data will be incorporated into the council's remnant vegetation strategy with the goal of stopping the loss of plant and animal biodiversity in the municipality. While the initiative is highly commendable, inspection of sites known to contain remnant vegetation and recording even the minimal detail requested would be a time consuming commitment. Oh to be retired!

Having set this grand scheme in motion along with the 'steps to sustainability' published last year and 'Manningham's green print', it seems contradictory of the council to be planning the removal of several mature native trees. The trees, including a large Manna Gum estimated to be around 200 years old were due to be cut down to make way for a roundabout at the corner of Harris Gully Road and Yarra St. Apart from a few local residents and businesses, there appears to have been little evidence of public

consultation on this matter. It was only due to swift and persistent action by concerned locals and several FOWSP members that succeeded in getting the council to put the project on hold.

Another issue is the council's concept plan for Witton's Reserve which was due to be released at the same time as the Mount Lofty draft concept plan (see last month's front page story). However, the council have done an about turn and are now reviewing their long-term interest in managing the reserve. The future of Witton's remains undecided.

Now that the Warrandyte Environment League (WEL), relatively inactive for several years, is officially defunct, FOWSP must take on another role and spread our wings to pursue environmental issues in the wider areas of Warrandyte even the township.

If any of our members find they have some spare time and can contribute their knowledge, however small, of remnant vegetation in the municipality they can ring the environmental education officer at the council on 9840 9333.



Scotia: John Wamsley's biggest Earth Sanctuary

By Fia Clendinnen

It's hard to imagine how you could make money farming out here. This is the fair dinkum Aussie outback and the horizon stretches away into the lonely distance on every side. There's a lot of brilliant blue sky and red sandy earth. The trees are low and scrubby and it hardly ever rains. There is so little for an animal to eat that sheep need 30 acres of grazing each.

A few decades ago wool was worth good money and Australian sheep farmers on stations like this were millionaires. They built themselves new houses, complete with private tennis courts. Their homes had thick walls, deep shady verandahs all round and big open fireplaces. It's tough country and a hard climate. Although it can get up to 50 degrees in summer, in winter the temperature drops to minus seven. But times have changed dramatically and nowadays, for farmers in this part of the world, shearing sheep is hardly worth while. At the same time, the big growth industry in Australia is eco-tourism. That's where John Wamsley enters the picture.

In the conservation movement Wamsley inspires intense emotion. Either people hate him and violently disagree with his methods or people love him; they say he's a shaker and a mover, achieving results despite immense bureaucratic obstacles.

As a child Wamsley saw what was happening to this country's fragile ecosystem, and was appalled. "When I was seven my father bought land on the central coast of New South Wales," he said. "There were potoroos, bettongs and other animals. By the time I was 11 the fox and the cat had moved in. By the time I was 14 there were no animals left and no one seemed to care"

But Wamsley cared. And now he is a man with a driving passion: to prevent any more Australian animals from becoming extinct. Over the last 200 years, of the 40 species of mammals that have become extinct worldwide, over half have been from Australia. Wamsley has a practical solution to this problem and it's beautifully simple. He's a lateral thinker (he trained as a mathematician) and he has the knack of making his ideas seem like

nothing more than common sense. He buys up immense tracts of land with high conservation value. He surrounds the land with electric fences (these fences, minor engineering miracles, have to be seen to be believed). Feral animals within the fences are eradicated. Here Wamsley is his characteristic ruthless and perfectionist self; he doesn't stop until every single one of the rabbits, foxes, goats and whatever else are gone.

Finally the endangered native mammals that were once endemic to the area are released into the compounds, where they fend for themselves. It's a formula Wamsley has successfully repeated with an impressive list of rare and endangered species: numbats, platypus, bilbies, woylies, etc.

Wamsley's company, Earth Sanctuaries, is the world's first conservation company and sees itself as Australia's private alternative to government managed parks. Scotia Sanctuary, 200 kilometres north west of Mildura, is in the outback. Originally two sheep stations, at nearly 65,000 hectares it's now by far the largest of Wamsley's seven properties.

When the feral proof fence at Scotia is completed it will measure 404 kms and cost around ten million dollars. Within the enclosure indigenous animals and plants will flourish and this piece of Australia will look pretty much the way it did before the white man came.

Which is exactly what Wamsley and his shareholders want.



Bettong

Stephen and Fia Clendinnen will be giving an illustrated talk on **Earth Sanctuary**

Date: Friday September 11th 6.00pm for BBQ followed by slides

Place: The Folly, WSP depot, Pound Bend Rd (Melway's ref. map 23 C10)

Green Wedge Seminar

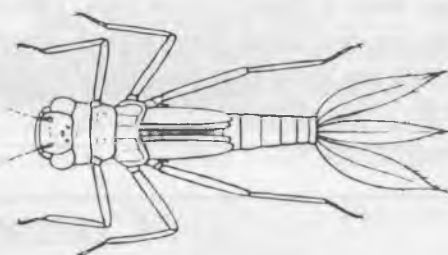
Freshwater Invertebrates

Report by Mike Coupar

Tim Doeg's informative and amusing talk was attended by a large audience of about 50 people wanting to know about the importance of our local aquatic 'creepy crawlies'. They weren't disappointed as many clear close up pictures of insect larvae that we are more familiar with as adults, were projected on the screen. Hence the young swimming forms of dragonflies, damselflies, stoneflies, and even some species of true flies and beetles were presented. Tim explained how these larvae are adapted to life on the river bed, what they eat and what they need for shelter from the water's flow. He also explained the life cycles, food and habitat requirements of crustaceans, worms, mites and snails.

Having introduced the cast, the last half of Tim's talk was taken up with the ecology of these animals; the subject that deals with the mixtures of species and their interactions in particular habitats. Hence the mix (sometimes called suits by the experts) are different in undisturbed mountain creeks and rivers than those found in urban and rural waterways as one would expect. Tim said he was often asked at his talks "why do we need these creatures". I found this disturbing, thinking that these creatures may well ask the same question "why do we need these humans"! Well of course nature doesn't exist for us - it's just the way life has evolved on planet earth. Anyway, in the question time I decided abstain from such discussions and to ask instead what Tim thought of the quality of the Yarra

River at Warrandyte. This was partly because the number of invertebrate species (biodiversity) is used to measure the health of rivers. It was also spurned by Tim's quote from a Melbourne newspaper in 1892 (yes - eighteen!) that the river's quality had declined dramatically "Prior to this date" Tim quoted "the river was good to the taste and teeming with fish". In reply to my question Tim said that biodiversity was excellent at Warburton, was significantly lower through the Yarra Valley and then improved again through the Warrandyte Gorge to Warrandyte itself. Good news for FOWSPians.



Larva of damselfly

After spending 9 years with the Department of Natural Resources & Environment as a freshwater biologist, Tim was leaving the Department the next day. After all questions had been answered and we were talking over a cup of tea and biscuits, I asked him bluntly whether it was his choice or as a result of the recent redundancies to prop up our ailing Health system. He was very diplomatic, but declined to commit himself. I found myself remembering our previous speakers comment only a month before "that the DNRE is now considered an endangered species in its own right".

Update on Our Book

We had a good response to the request for a member to take over part of our book distribution network. Local resident Vivien Honeyborne has offered her services - she has had experience in the book distribution business and intends looking for further outlets.

For your interest, *Discover Warrandyte* is currently for sale at the Historical Society, Australiana Aspect, Folk Art, the Post Office, Spencer and Martin Real Estate, the local newsagency and our stall at the monthly (first Saturday) Warrandyte Market. If anyone knows of other likely locations please let Vivien know as we

are keen to sell more - we have about 350 left of the original run of several thousand.

And now a reminder: if you haven't used your copy of *Discover Warrandyte* lately, it's a great seasonal compendium of what's likely to be seen or heard in the bush and it's relevant to a much wider area than Warrandyte and Wonga Park. So, put your thinking caps on and work out a list of all the friends and relatives who just must have a copy of this great natural history handbook. If you would like further copies of our book, now priced at only \$6 for members (\$10 for non-members), please give Vivien a call on 9844 4809.

Wonderful Warrandyte Wander

with Ranger David (Frankie) Farrar

Date: Sunday August 30th

Time: 10.00am onwards

There is something to suit everyone on this 'FOWSP family day' - a leisurely ramble along bush tracks beside the river, a section of broad management track through stands of almost pure Red Box and back to the river again into the seldom visited Stane Brae section of the Park.. This will be followed by a BBQ lunch. Come for the whole morning, part of the walk or you are most welcome to just pop in for the barbeque. Frankie has a wealth of knowledge about fauna, including birds and has many ideas for fauna projects some of which FOWSP members may be interested in being involved.

The Itinerary

10.00 am. Meet at Black Flat car park, Tills Drive (Melways ref. map 23 H11)

11.00 am (approx) Sandy Bay car park, Jumping Ck Reserve (Melways ref. map 23 K9)

12.30 - 1.00 pm Stane Brae for BBQ. Drive through Stane Brae Crt and continue on through the gate to the end of the road. (Melways ref. map 24 C9).



Come and Join Us

We'd love some new blood on our committee/management team. You can help make the decisions that guide our activities and enjoy knowing more about how FOWSP operates. It's good fun, always interesting (amazing the breadth of topics covered at each meeting) and held on a rotating basis at members' homes. Suppers are *always excellent!*

Whatever your main interest, be it on the practical side, or the more theoretical, please don't hesitate to express yourself. We are always looking for new

ideas, opinions, perspectives etc. - for this we need a regular infusion of new contributors. We currently have two vacancies, as twelve is the maximum allowed.

We have a meeting each month other than January. The next meeting is on Wednesday August 12th at Ron's place, which is the house at the very end of Pound Rd. (Time?: 7.30pm). Do come and join us. You'll be very welcome.

Cat Awareness Signs for Bush or City

Whether you love them or hate them, studies show that cats are a major cause of the decline of small native animals and birds. Norman Webb and Lex Metcalf of St Georges Basin, New South Wales, have come up with an effective way for property owners (and renters) to show where they stand.



"We understand that cats are beloved by many people, but responsible cat owners should not let their cats wander on to other people's properties" say Norman. The Cat Awareness Sign, which has been professionally produced and measures 225 mm by 270 mm, has been endorsed by the Native Animal Network Association (NANA). The background is on white waterproof corrugated plastic, the cat is black, the circle and line are red and the bird is green.

The price for one sign is \$5, two to nine signs \$4.50 and ten or more \$4 each (all prices include postage). Signs can be ordered from Norman Webb 7 Terry St, St Georges Basin, NSW 3540.

Thanks to long time active FOWSP member Joy Hilderbrand for sending this information. Despite moving to the Western district, Joy maintains an interest in all FOWSP matters and has always strongly believed that cats and the natural environment just don't mix.

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.

This activities list will be pinned on the noticeboard in the Folly.

AUGUST 13TH: NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00am onwards.

AUGUST 20TH: NO NURSERY

MORNING ACTIVITY: Time to learn some of Warrandyte's most troublesome weeds at a 'Weed Identification Walk at Scotchman's Hill'

Meet at the top of Scotchman's Hill, Magpie Lane, Warrandyte at 10.00 am (Melways ref. map 23 G11)

AUGUST 27TH: NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00am onwards.

SEPTEMBER 3RD: NO NURSERY

MORNING ACTIVITY: Ranger, Glen Jameson, will lead 'A walk at Glynn's Reserve' (opposite Pound Bend). This is a superb example of a recreated wetland -lots of amazing aquatic plants and plenty of wetland birds. Don't miss it.

Meet at the end of Glynn's Rd, North, Warrandyte at 10.00 am (Melways ref. map 23 A10)

SEPTEMBER 10TH: NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00am onwards.

SEPTEMBER 17TH: NO NURSERY

MORNING ACTIVITY: It is a while since we've worked in 'Frogland' so there will be plenty of pruning, weeding and planting.

Meet at the depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte at 10.00 am (Melways ref. map 23 G10)

SEPTEMBER 24TH: NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00am onwards.

For more information on any of these activities contact Jan Tindale 9844 3719



If anyone has any requests for a Thursday activity please contact a member of the committee.



Calendar of Sunday Events

AUGUST 30TH Ranger David Farrar (Frankie) will be leading a morning walk from Black Flat through Jumping Ck and ending up at Stane Brae for a lunch time BBQ.(see ad. this newsletter).

OCTOBER 25TH Ranger-in-Charge, Andy Nixon will be organising an activity on this day.

Dates for Your Diary

Greening Australia Workshops

Greening Australia run lots of interesting workshops and FOWSP members are eligible for a significant discount. (You pay only \$10 instead of \$30). Even that \$10 will be refunded if you write an article on the workshop for our newsletter. For more information on any of these workshops ring the Training Co-ordinator on 9457 3024.

AUGUST 19TH Training Session "Managing weed problems - an integrated approach".

AUGUST 29TH Training Session "Protecting and managing remnants".

SEPTEMBER 8TH Bus Tour "Revegetation Projects - turning trials into triumphs"

SEPTEMBER 19TH Training Session "How to identify native plants".

Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (FNCV)

The FNCV hold meetings at the Field Naturalists premises at 1 Gardenia St, Blackburn as well as a number of excursions. Visitors are welcome.

AUG 19TH Club Meeting -"The identification of species using hair with Rob Wallis". Contact Ray Power 9717 3511

AUG 20TH Botany "The Rutaceae family with Marco Durretto" Contact Rob Arnold 9808 3829

AUG 26TH Geology "The many faces and hazards of volcanos" Contact Doug Harper 9890 0913

AUG 29TH Fauna Survey "Equipment day, maintenance of equipment used for surveys" Contact Rob Gration 9689 8536

Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series

(Thank you to the City of Manningham for their sponsorship)

Time: First Thursday of each month at 7.30pm

Place: Warrandyte Community Centre (Melway 23 F11)

Entry: FREE! and SUPPER is provided

SEPTEMBER 3RD Echidna - Kath Hundasyde. Kath will give us insight into the distribution, habitat, breeding, diet and social conservation status of these amazing monotremes.

OCTOBER 1ST - Wombat - Roger Martin. Roger will discuss the distribution, habitat, breeding, social organisation, diet and conservation status of the wombat.

FOWSP Committee

Mike Coupar	9903 9567	Contact person	Alistair Traill	9722 1518
Ron Taylor	9844 4285	Contact person	Alison Thom	9844 3527
Flora Anderson	9722 1776	Public Officer	Wildlife Rescue	
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter editor	Julie Pryor	9722 1117
Joan MacMahon	9844 3213	Newsletter editor	Market	
Anthony Owen	9844 1344	Treasurer/Membership Sec.	Betty Oke	9844 3763
Cathy Willis	9844 1841	Secretary	Park Office	9844 2659
Janie Vagg				

My Favourite Place

By Andy Nixon

As a ranger I have worked in a variety of Parks and Mount Buffalo was a favourite. So my second favourite place is a magical location on that marvellous plateau - 'the island in the sky'. A place known as 'Mahomets Coffin'. This is the place to go to get a tingle up the back of your neck. Approached by a climb to yet a further suspended snow plain, pick your way between the delicate alpine plants, then on the far side one enters a jumble of boulders.



Zig-zag, duck, squeeze your body through the crack and..... there you are. An immense egg-shaped boulder sits above your head pegged between three other granite siblings. Sit here, gaze out to the distant alps, and contemplate it all.

The place in Warrandyte to do this - to contemplate, ponder and enjoy the gifts of a sunny spring afternoon, is Black Flat. Stop 14 on the nature walk to be exact - Mullens Orchard. Sit and rest your back against the huge old manna gum. What a magnificent eucalypt. So old. Imagine all that this tree has seen. An encampment of Wurundjeri, the farmers, fossickers and Fowspians, but visit on your own or with someone special - avoid the larger groups.

And my favourite place..... Its somewhere that all would be touched by. You would have to be. Such a beautiful place on planet earth. But I'm not going to tell you where that is. Perhaps that's selfish, but then that is why it is so special.

No Ring Freeway through the Green Wedge

The State Government plans to build one of the world's biggest ring roads right through your neighbourhood. It denies that it intends to do this, yet planning is actually at an advanced stage. We must oppose this threat to our community and demand a meaningful, sustainable transport plan for our region. Unless we act now, the freeway could be finished within ten years.

This is the message contained in the impressive new pamphlet produced by the Anti Ring Road Organisation (ARRO). The pamphlet also includes detailed information on poor planning, unsustainable development, limited vision and a section on myths and facts. The pamphlets can be obtained from FOWSP and ARRO and will be available at the 'Friends' monthly market stall. For more information contact ARRO 9844 3454.



Census data shows that few people need to travel between the population centres along the route.

Koorng Activities

If you should be free for a few hours on the morning of the **first Wednesday of the month**, you might like to give **Friends of the Koorng** a hand.

The Koorng is a lovely nature reserve bordering the Yarra in North Warrandyte (Melway 23 J7). Opposite the northern part of Jumping Creek Reserve, it is not far from Blue Tongue Bend and Pigeon Bank Creek. It's the largest block of our park on the northern side of the river and has been greatly

enhanced over the last four or five years by the persistent efforts of Friends of the Koorng.

So, if you feel like helping with some further bush restoration, come along, you'll be made to feel **very welcome**.

Details: 9-11am, followed by morning tea. Phone Cathy Willis on 9844 1841 for the exact activity location. Next few meetings are September 2nd and October 7th.

The Tikilara Trek

By Pat Coupar

The Tikilara Trek began, after a complicated car shuffle, just upstream of the Fitzsimmons Lane bridge. Led by Ranger, Glen Jameson, we entered Candlebark Park - one of a string of reserves that constitute the Yarra Valley Metropolitan Park. Along the way Glen pointed out several areas that been direct seeded following an intensive weed control program. The result is an impressive dense canopy of eucalypts, while the equally dense middlestorey shrubs help to shade out the weeds.

We had a close look at a remnant patch of Kangaroo Grass and assorted herbs and encountered several magnificent old Yellow Box trees before moving into Red Gum territory - apparently these trees favour disturbed areas. The transition to riparian Manna Gum community was quite sudden with again some grand old trees.

We joined an attractive boardwalk which, during its construction, was closed to the public because a pair of Powerful Owls were breeding close by. The move was unpopular with some people who continued to use the boardwalk. This resulted in the owls becoming extremely stressed. Unfortunately their old breeding tree has since fallen into the river.

Historical Petty's Orchard came next, an interesting feature if you're into old fruit trees, but a nightmare for revegetators. The confluence of Mullum Creek with the Yarra marked another point on our journey - plenty of work here for the willows eradicators!

Finally we emerged at Tikilara Park and, while the billy boiled, walked up the hill to Major Newman's cottage. The old building, built in the 1850's, is now protected by an outer shell of timber and corrugated iron and surrounded by an electric fence and high metal gate. Glen's key



had already opened many gates along the trek and it was no surprise when it unlocked not only this one, but also the door to the old cottage as well. We crept inside looking in crannies for ghosts.

Back to the cars for a hot cup of billy tea and homemade sticky buns. The afternoon ended with a spectacular fly past of a lone Wedge-tailed Eagle pursued and bombarded by at least half a dozen ravens - an awesome sight.

Many thanks to Glen for organising the walk and sharing with us his wealth of knowledge of the area, and to Flora Anderson for providing the delicious afternoon tea.



Worth Repeating

She subverts nature by the sea-shore

She sells sea-shells on the sea-shore, according to a famous English tongue-twister. But not any more, if the Tidy Britain Group has its way.

Not only will the sale of shells on the shore become politically incorrect, but children will be discouraged even from the age old habit of collecting them in memory of a holiday.

This is because shell collection could wear out the beaches. A 10-point code launched yesterday on Bournemouth beach in southern England tells children "Don't take natural things like shells and driftwood off the beach. Use a camera to record your memories."

The code urges them not to leave litter or disturb wildlife and to clean up after dogs.

Susan Huller, curator of shell museum at Glandfor, Norfolk, said she thought the code went a little too far, although she could understand advice on litter and wildlife. But Dr Trevor Dixon, a marine scientist who advises the group said robbing the coast of shells could cause erosion.

"The cumulative effect of taking shells over the years in some areas is that it can undermine the sand and make it blowy.

"There can be species living in shells which will die if the shell is taken away." People hacking at

cliffs for fossils could also cause coastal erosion.

The code - endorsed by the Disney organisation and linked to the re-release of the cartoon *The Little Mermaid* - stresses: "Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints. Waste nothing but time."

A spokeswoman for the Guide movement said: "If this is something that is thought to be damaging the environment, then we will take account of it."

Terry Sullivan, who created the sea-shells



tongue-twister in 1908 also wrote, with his fellow-British songwriter, Harry Bedford, Marie Lloyd's legendary 1920 song 'Bit of a Ruin that Cromwell knocked about a bit'.

Source: *The Age* 23/6/978

Editor's Note: I thought this article is food for thought. I would be interested to hear the views of FOWSP members particularly those with young children

Spring Camp

When: **October 17th & 18th at The Brisbane Ranges National Park**

Ranger, Chris Worrall (formerly of WSP) will be opening up a special camping site just for Fowspians. Perfect time for the wildflowers which should be fantastic this year. More details next newsletter.

Welcome

FOWSP would like to extend a warm welcome to new members **Dick and Marian Thomson** from Temple Heights and **Alex McCallum and family** from Warrandyte.

Wanted to Buy

"Encyclopedia of Australian Plants - suitable for cultivation" by Elliott and Jones parts 4, 5, 6 & 7 and any supplements
Ring Joan 9844 3213



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