



FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE STATE PARK

NEWSLETTER MAY 1988.

Welcome to new members, who joined us for the first time: Anne, Tim, and Megan Bedford. We were also pleased to have working with us visitors Adele and Wil Renfrey, Karen Brot and Geoff Durham, Victorian National Parks Friends Co-ordinator. We trust all these people will be able to come to our other meetings. A very nice afternoon tea was provided by various members of the group. Heather and Dennis ably led the day.

Heather's Report

We were lucky to have such beautiful weather for our April meeting, which was held on the 24th. of the month. Twenty Fowspians turned up to do battle with the pine trees on Fourth Hill.

By our rough calculations we pulled out 1300 pine trees, which was about 200 more than last year. There are a large number of pine trees that need to be cut down. The Rangers are aware of this so hopefully they may be able to help out there.

We were pleased to welcome our speaker, Julian Grusovin, of the Field Naturalist Club of Victoria. Julian is in the Mammal Survey Group of this Club, which is mainly made up of amateurs, who give of their time to go into areas of conservation value.

Julian showed us a few traps used in his work and had quite a few mammal skulls to show us, pointing out the different teeth formations according to the mammal's eating habits. Julian had particularly mentioned the water rat and how his whole body is adapted to his lifestyle. A lengthy question-time ensued as members asked about the mammals in the Warrandyte area.

For anyone interested in going on a trip with the Field Naturalist Club or just gaining more information on what they do, Julian can be contacted on 211 4997.

VISIT FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE MORWELL STATE PARK.

We have been asked to host a visit on the 14th. August by the Friends of the Morwell State Park. They are very keen to see the work we have done in our park areas. We can discuss the arrangements, plans etc, at this meeting. The Ranger at their park is Ian Roach, who was at Warrandyte previously. Our own Rangers have offered to help show them around.

Anyway, - Keep the 14th. of August free if you can! Will bring the F.O.M.S.P. Newsletter for all to read. If you have any ideas contact Marg or Ian on 844 1060.



NEXT MEETING :

Under the leadership of the Riddell Brothers we tackle the Asparagus Weed at Black Flat. Graeme Riddell can be contacted on 894 1260.

WHEN : Mid-day Sunday May 29th.

WHERE : At Black Flat --- Tills Drive

WHAT TO BRING : Gloves, a weeder or other small hand tools.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO MEMBERS RE MEETINGS.

For some time it has been apparent that the format of our monthly meetings could be improved.

It has been suggested that we retain the 12 midday start, but that we bring a sandwich and have a cuppa tea before starting the project of the day. (approx. 1.00 pm.) This will enable those living a fair distance away to vary their time of arrival. but more importantly, it will give us all a chance to talk with the Rangers about the area we plan to work in that day. Of course we will retain the afternoon tea arrangement as before.

We have a treat in store at the afternoon tea time (don't forget to bring a bite !) We are to have a talk on the Koori Oral History Programme by Norm Hunter. Norm and his family shared our picnic/A.G.M. last year, and we look forward to learning more from him. We have published here the dreamings of Barak and Norm's aunt Balam Balam.



BARAK

Brushy Creek flows into the Yarra through a small rocky gorge on the opposite side to the Bend of Island, close by to Witton's Reserve Wonga Park. There in that gorge on a winter's day in 1881 sat a lone forlorn figure huddled over a campfire. Perhaps he was thinking of happier times, of when he was a child over 50 years ago, or how he had played so happily at this very same spot, for it was a very special place for him.

He was born here 58 years before. This was his country, part of his dreaming. He was a Wurundjeri. His people called this small creek " Barneong" , the place of healing. The Yarra alongside was to them always " Baynarung", the place of mists. They knew it well, for they had hunted its banks for over 2000 generations, ever since the dreamtime. The stringy-bark woodlands, the rocky gorges and bountiful river flats had provided their every need. The river of life.

As he gazed into his fire, he conjured images of his early years, before the coming of the whites, when as a child he played with his cousin Wonga. He saw the proud hunters returning from a day in the forests. the women with baskets of myrnong and berries back from a day gathering the river flats. He saw the smoke of many fires, then slowly the images faded. Now there was only his small fire. Now there was only he, Barak. Old Barak alone and sad.

He gazed into his fire trying to recreate the past, but managed to only see the present. He saw the grave as they lowered into it the body of his 14 year old son. That had been only two days before in Melbourne. A month before he had stood by another grave, that of his wife in the crowded little cemetery at Coranderrk. When would all this dying stop ? Where had all the children gone. Presently his thoughts drifted back again into the past to when he was a twelve year old, now he stood back on the banks of another creek, the Merri Merri and in his hand he held a mirror, there was much excitement. His father was examining a small sharp axe, and around the necks of the women were bright glass beads. A tall white man stood in the centre of the group handing out woolen blankets. It was the first time he had seen his face in a mirror, it was the first time he had seen a white man. Nothing like this had happened before to his people. The white man pointed to the South and West and took out a scroll of paper. He asked each of the men his name and wrote it down. Jaka Jaka was the first to make his mark. Soon the white man's magic was done. Now he owned the land ! He said he would return bye and bye with more axes and beads and more people.



All those promises had been broken; his people had been broken. They had followed the White Man's law and now were being punished, for wasn't this very gorge in which he sat Buk-tilible, the Place of Punishment. As a young boy he had sat here spellbound listening to Billi Bellary passing on the dreamtime legend of Buk Ker-tilible. He had told how Bunjil the great Spirit had learnt that his people were not living according to tribal law. He had found them camped here, and with all his might had hurled down a star upon them. In doing so he created the gorge.

Barak pondered the thought of punishment. Who was punishing him? Was it the white man's God or Bunjil? Barak threw more wood on the fire and he was cold as it was winter. The wood was wet and smoke billowed into the night air. He looked up and saw the moon racing through the clouds. It reminded him of the far away days when he would gallop through the trees, a member of Captain Dana's Native Police Corps. He had a smart uniform and a cap. He was said to be their best tracker.

He had learnt much from the white man, now he could smoke and drink the white man's drink and swear with the best of them. He could ride into the hunting grounds of his enemy's camp and shoot them if he pleased, for that was the white man's way. Barak shook his head. He was a Christian now! He prayed to the white man's God for forgiveness. He was confused and tired. Tomorrow he would continue his journey on to Coranderk up around Mt Lofty and down onto the lush river flats where the fat cattle grazed, then up into the hills of his people to tell them his sad news, his son was dead.

He must be strong. He was their leader but where must he lead them. The big White Chief in Melbourne had said they must live on the reserve in the cold hills. Of all the tribes that hunted around Fort Phillip, the Yarra and the Goulbourn, there remained less than 50 old people and Barak was their leader, but Barak was sleeping. No longer did the past disturb him. If he had been able to see into the future he would not be sleeping as peacefully, for he would be seeing the last of the children dying, the last of his tribe, the Wurundjeri disappearing. He would stand alone; yet he would be holding his head high.

The white man had looked again into his soul and seen what a terrible thing he had done. Barak represented his last chance to make amends. They called him King Barak and wrote down his stories and then in twenty years he would be dead. For 2000 generations the dreamtime stories had been passed on from father to son, but soon the dream will have ended. They would place a fine monument upon his grave and try to forget the proud Wurundjeri.

But Barak is only sleeping. Tomorrow he will continue his journey up over Mt. Lofty and down to the lush river flats where the myrrong grows and the kangaroo sleeps. He would walk along the banks of Bayramung, the place of mists. He will be holding his head high.

The Barak Dreaming is by courtesy of Mike Volzsa.



Princess of an alien dreaming tells her own tale of majesty

By CHRISTOBEL BOTTEN

She is 70, frail and in pain, but before she dies, Mrs Julia Jones wants to make peace with her heritage.

Mrs Jones, a blue-eyed child of the Coranderrk land round Healesville, is Princess Balam-Balam, or White Butterfly, the last Aborigine to be made monarch of the Wurundjeri tribe of Victoria.

She calls it a death wish, this desire of hers to let people know of her royalty. Until recently, she said, she was frightened to tell anyone, particularly white people, lest they laugh. She thought this was sad.

But what is perhaps sadder is that the title of princess was one imposed upon her and her people by European settlers. It was part of a system created to break down and replace the tradition of tribal elders, who earned their position through wisdom and experience, not mere birth.

The settlers even handed out breastplates, or kingplates, to Aborigines upon whom they bestowed titles. One recipient was a former Wurundjeri head man, William Barak, whom the Europeans made King Barak. He became great grand-uncle to Mrs Jones.

Unlike today's generation of Aborigines, Mrs Jones is unaware of this twist to her history. But Mr Norm Hunter, Mrs Jones's nephew and a State Library researcher who is collecting Aboriginal oral history, said that the people of Mrs Jones's generation believe the honor of princess to be real.

"She is one of the very knowledgeable and most respected of our people," he said. "That is the way our younger generation looks at it. She is one of the elders.

"As far as her being princess, well that is the belief of the old people; that's how they had it drummed into them by the white people, and I am pleased that she still believes in it."

None of this seems to affect Mrs Jones. She believes in her role as Princess Balam-Balam, but does not want "special attention", just that her story be told before she dies.

So this week, curled into a bed in a private nursing home in Yarraville, this tiny woman with short grey hair and pink cotton nightgown recalled memories of a childhood in the beloved bush.

It was difficult to talk; she had never been strong, she said, and now her lungs and heart were failing her. But she boasted that her hearing had always been fine.

It was when she was happiest, those times in the bush, and now she was content to retire to images of a childhood with friends and family at Coranderrk, where she played and hunted and camped out along creeks with names like Merri, Badger and Bushy.

It was around there that, as a baby, she was anointed with oil from the echidna, a sacred animal in the Port Phillip area, which once supported thousands of her people.



Mrs Jones: "I love my people and I am never ashamed."

By the time Coranderrk was established in 1863 as a mission station and hop farm — Mrs Jones was one of the last to be born there, in 1918 — only about 400 Aborigines had survived. Introduced diseases and what Mr Hunter called "frontier violence" had wiped out her tribe's strength.

Mrs Jones didn't want to talk about that, although she did say "there used to be so many of us, but we got shifted".

To Mrs Jones, Coranderrk was the spiritual home. Her land, her home, was "my spirit". When the mission was closed in the mid-1920s, she travelled around but continued to return all through her life, often camping out.

Mrs Jones was the oldest of eight children, and when she was "just two months off 19" she married a white man, Bill Jones,

with whom she spent time raising her children and caring for Aborigines who had trouble adapting to urban life. Her marriage was reported in 'The Argus' of 23 November 1936, under the headline "Yarra Yarra king's niece married in Melbourne".

Of the early days, she recalled time spent with her Granny Jemima Wandin, upon whose knee she used to sit. She liked gathering blackberries and quandong fruit, spearing eel out on the flats, and catching ring-tail possums with lassos. She liked eating those possums. Mrs Jones was also adept at tickling trout, a technique of catching fish by hand. Yes, that made her smile.

She had never learnt to read or write, but she liked singing, especially when "we would... play hymns every Sunday night".

She did have her own language, but she could not remember much now, and according to Mr Hunter, the people were flogged when they tried to talk "in their own lingo".

"There's only me now," said Mrs Jones, speech fluttering in and out of bouts of pain. "We are nearly all gone.

"It has meant a lot, a lot of daydreams. We used to have what they call the Dreamtime, and those Dreaming stories, that was beautiful. You know, that is all they ever fought for, to keep for our people. I love my people.

"I don't know what has really happened. Now I just close my eyes and wish to die, but I remember an Aborigine's hand is always pink inside. I love my people and I am never ashamed."



Mrs Jones, centre foreground, sitting on her mother's knee at Coranderrk in the early 1920s. Her father is at far right. The woman on the left is Granny Jemima and the man second from the right is Jemima's second husband.

ABORIGINAL FOOD PLANTS OF THE YARRA VALLEY - a select list.

<u>Botanical Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
<u>'Roots'</u>	
Typha species	Cumbungi or Bulrush
Triglochin procera	Water Ribbons
Bolboschoenus medianus	Marsh Club-rush
Wurmbea dioica	Early Nancy
Arthropodium milleflorum	Pale Vanilla-lily
Bulbine bulbosa	Bulbine Lily
Burchardia umbellata	Milkmaids
Dichopogon strictus	Chocolate Lily
Thysanotus patersonii	Twining Fringe-lily
Glossodia major	Wax-lip Orchid
Pterostylis species	Greenhood Orchids
Thelymitra ixioides	Dotted Sun-orchid
Pteridium esculentum	Austral Bracken
Geranium species	Crane's-bill, Native Geranium
Clematis microphylla	Small-leaf Clematis
Microseris scapigera	Murnong or Yam-daisy
<u>Fruits and Seeds</u>	
Amyema species	Mistletoes
Billardiera scandens	Common Apple-berry
Carpobrotus species	Pigfaces
Coprosma quadrifida	Prickly Currant-bush
Exocarpos cupressiformis	Cherry Ballart
Persoonia juniperina	Prickly Geebung
Rubus parvifolius	Small-leaf Bramble, Native Raspberry
Sambucus gaudichaudiana	White Elderberry
Solanum laciniatum	Kangaroo Apple
Solanum aviculare	Kangaroo Apple
Linum marginale	Native Flax (seeds)
<u>'Greens'</u>	
Rorippa islandica	Yellow Marsh-cress
Sonchus oleraceus	Sow Thistle
Tetragonia tetragonioides	New Zealand Spinach
Dicksonia antarctica	Soft Tree-fern
<u>'Sweets' and Gum</u>	
Banksia marginata	Silver Banksia
Acrotriche serrulata	Honey-pots
Eucalyptus viminalis	Manna Gum
Acacia dealbata	Silver Wattle
Acacia mearnsii	Black Wattle
Acacia pycnantha	Golden Wattle

This list does not include all food plants, only those mentioned in my talk.

Beth Gott, Botany Dept,
Monash University, 27/11/87

Wandering Warrandigidytes Column.

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WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE FAMOUS WANDERING W.'S ???????????



- Did they
- (1) set off in the wrong direction and became lost in a Tasmanian rainforest?
 - (2) decided to buy a unit in Surfers Paradise?
 - (3) lost the stamped addressed envelopes we gave him?
 - (4) can't find a Postbox in Queensland?

If anyone has heard ,please let the struggling editors of the Newsletter know without delay!

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY.

Tree planting to be led by Alan Noy of W.E.L. Alan can be contacted on 844 3050. A barbeque is planned and we are meeting at the corner Taroon Avenue and Everard Drive.

Coming Up Next.

MAY 29 - ASPARAGUS WEEDING... TILLS DRIVE ,BLACK FLAT... TALK FROM KOORI ORAL HISTORY PROGRAMMER, NORM HUNTER

JUNE 5 - WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY...TREEPLANTING... CORNER TAROONA AVE.& EVERARD DRIVE.

JUNE 26- WEEDING... TIMBER RESERVE... END OF WEBB ST.

JULY 31-PROPAGATION WORK & TREE PLANTING...POUND BEND PARK DEPOT.. TALK FROM VICTORIAN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 220.
WARRANDYTE. 3113

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I/WE WISH TO BECOME A FRIEND OF WARRANDYTE STATE PARK & ENCLOSE \$8.00 MEMBERSHIP FEE.

NAME.....	TELEPHONE.....	
ADDRESS.....	POST TO BOX 220	844 1060
.....POSTCODE.....	WARRANDYTE 3113	

