



FRIENDS OF WARRANDYTE STATE PARK INC.

March 1996 newsletter

A PERSONAL VIEW

(Otherwise known as the editorial)

Who are the Friends of Warrandyte State Park (the Fowspians)? They are people who love the collection of nature reserves known by the rather prosaic title of Warrandyte State Park. They appreciate its importance in a world of shrinking natural environments. They care about it and for it. They also like to socialise and take every opportunity to share lunch or afternoon tea. Some like to walk through the park, others to canoe or ride their horse. Some others just like to read about it while there are those who adore growing the plants they will one day gently place in the earth. Finally there are those who love to talk about it, hence our team of Betty, Neil and Anthony (and helpers) who each month take our "shopfront" to the Warrandyte Market. Our next big event is the Festival where we'll be providing billy tea and damper. Do join in and help to make our stall a great success.

written by Joan MacMahon

Ps. Guest editorials are always welcome so please do put pen to paper.

Lost in the common, or, Warrandyte's Bermuda Triangle??

Led by Cathy and Pat on a February Thursday afternoon walk, Ben, Anthony, David (a biology student) and Ray set out to locate *Austrofestuca hookeriana**, in gullies adjacent to The Common (that section of the park behind Potter's Cottage).

After several forks in the tracks and some bush-meandering we realised we were lost! Then, on a densely covered hillside several holes were discovered in the ground - one filled with what looked like a cross between a tomato plant and a large nettle. Still lost, the group headed up-hill and came to a cleared area at the top. Suddenly a Wedge-tailed Eagle soared over the brow of the hill giving the best full wing-span view I have ever seen, then it slowly drifted over the hill-top out of sight. It knew where we were, but we didn't.

Then after a reconnoitre by Anthony, and led by Ray we moved downhill, across a sloping bush area and finally onto tracks in the Common. Then the rain came down. Soaked, we returned to our vehicles and left.

Sans *Austrofestuca*, sans seeing kangaroos, just the memory of a Wedge-tailed Eagle and an unusual plant variety.

Written by Ben Gotlib

* Editors note: This is a grass that grows in shaded moist sites, (see Flora of Melbourne p. 247). On a subsequent visit Pat was able to locate some specimens and collect seed. We now have quite a lot of this Warrandyte rarity growing at the nursery.

Dates for your Diary

MARCH

Thurs. 21st Discover 'Dad's Bush' (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact: *Anthony Owen* 9844 1344

Sat. 23rd } Warrandyte Festival
Sun. 24th } Contact: *Betty Oke* 9844 3763

Wed. 27th Warrandyte Follies (see ad. this newsletter)
Contact: *Cecilia Le Duc* 9725 3959

Thurs. 28th Koornong Revisited (see thurs. prog for details)
Contact: *Cathy Willis* 9844 1841

Sat. 30th } Barmah Camping Trip (see ad. this newsletter)
Sun. 31st } Contact: *Ron Taylor* 9844 4285

APRIL

Thurs. 4th Species enrichment evaluation (see thurs. prog. for details*)
Contact: *Pat Coupar* 9844 1650 & *Cathy Willis* 9844 1841

Sat 6th Warrandyte Market
Contact: *Betty Oke* 9844 3763

Thurs. 11th Freshen up Frogland (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact: *Pat Coupar* 9844 1650

Thurs. 18th Davids Day (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact *Ranger David Van Bockel* 9844 2659

Thurs. 25th Fourth Hill - a place of contrast (see thurs. prog. for details)
Contact: *Joan MacMahon* 9844 3213

Sun. 28th Family Activity with the 'Friends of Fourth Hill'
Contact: *Ranger David Van Bockel* 9844 2659

MAY

Sat 4th Warrandyte Market
Contact: *Betty Oke* 9844 3763

Fri 10th BBQ & Slide Show - 'An intimate association'
Contact: *Mike & Pat Coupar* 9844 1650

Sun 26th Family Activity Pound Bend Beautification
Contact: *Neal Tessier* 9844 3763

*Note: Change of time



SWAMPED by AQUATICS

A February Thursday afternoon saw David, Pat, Joan and me (Cathy) at the end of Bradleys Lane ready to venture into Antechinus Swamp. David and Pat have been on the aquatic trail for a while now and have done a few trips to wetlands further up the Yarra recently to widen their already considerable knowledge. They were hoping to find some wetland species they've seen elsewhere that could well be here.

Wearing gumboots (mine borrowed from Daniel Macmahon who has much bigger feet than me) we started off rather gingerly. The swamp is a beautiful mass of green, predominantly Sedges Carex appressa and Carex gaudichaudiana. Two Flat Sedges Cyperus lucidus and the rarer Cyperus gunnii are also here, the latter we discovered in much greater numbers than we had thought. The edges are carpeted in places by Leafy Bog-rush, Schoenus maschalinus, Swamp Club-rush, Isolepus inundata. Pat soon found another Club-rush species not known for this site before.

We had started at "the shallow end" and crossed back and forwards, the water level creeping towards the top of our boots. Joan wisely decided to survey the edges from relatively dry ground. The rest of us waded on and soon had boots full of evil smelling water and duckweed. We were soon rewarded for our efforts by seeing some fledgling Coots emerging from a nest under a sedge, and a Bat's Wing Fern, Histiopteris incisa, growing from amongst the old roots of a fallen tree.

By the time we were up to our thighs we had found a good patch of Spike-rush, Eleocharis acuta, looking so lush we thought it might be a different species at first. We waded on though dense Water-ribbons, Triglochin procera, David and Pat continually dipping strainers and hands into the water in the hope of finding some Bladderwort, Utricularia australis. However this was not to be.

Another species David and Pat hoped to find was Swamp Wallaby Grass, an Amphibromus sp., nearing "the deep end" we thought we might be in luck. Not so, this was later confirmed as Manna Grass or Sweet Grass, Glyceria australis, not uncommon in wet areas of Warrandyte.

We had really stirred up the mud by this stage, and we^{were} pretty wet and weedy. After emptying the gumboots (no frogs or snakes inside) we headed back to Joan's for a cuppa.

Antechinus Swamp is a very special place. It is named for previous sightings of Antechinus - Joan and a neighbour were recently lucky enough to see one nearby. Even more special is the swamp's uniqueness in Warrandyte. There are no other permanently wet swamps or billabongs left, due to altered flood patterns and changed land use. It is the ideal place to use as a safe haven for rare or depleted Warrandyte aquatics.



Explore Pigeon Bank Ck and Discover the Koornong

When: Sunday April 21st at 2.pm

Where: Meet at the corner of Pigeon Bank Lane and Yarra River Crt.

The walk will pass through Pigeon Bank Reserve and into the Koornong Reserve of the Warrandyte State Park. It has been organised by Nillumbik Council and all are welcome. For more information contact **Linda Bromilow** on 9844 4707.

Warrandyte Follies

A table has been booked for 20 people for the evening of Wednesday March the 27th. If you would like to book a place, ring **Cecilia Le Duc** on 9725 3959.

Be quick to ensure you don't miss out on this spectacular show.

Warrandyte Festival

The Warrandyte festival is being held on March 23rd and 34th. FOWSP will be having a stall and as usual will be serving billy tea and damper. All helpers welcome. **Ring Betty Oke** on 9844 3763 to put your name on the roster.

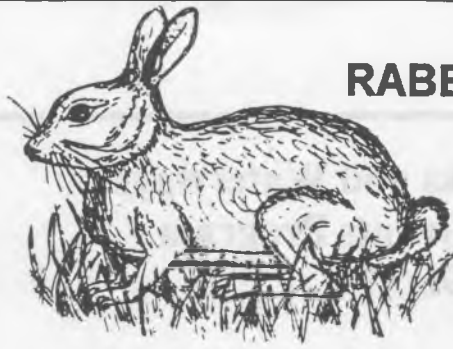
AUTUMN CAMP at BARMAH STATE PARK

An informal camping weekend is planned for March 30th-31st at the Barmah State Park. The large camping area is situated beside Lake Barmah and has toilets and fireplaces. The Lake is suitable for swimming and boating and wildlife is plentiful.

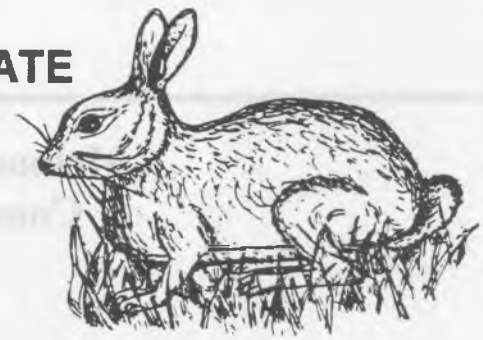
The Barmah Forest is an ideal place for bird-watching, bushwalking, cycling and generally relaxing. There are many forest drives, most accessible to conventional vehicles.

Billabongs are fast-disappearing environments in Australia. Come and see some of Victoria's best examples of these superb wetland habitats and enjoy a relaxing weekend.

Anyone interested in this weekend can ring Ron Taylor on 9844 4285 or Pat Coupar 9844 1650



RABBIT UPDATE



The rabbit baiting groups around Warrandyte were slow to be formed and have only just begun to do baiting in the last few weeks, despite letter drops going around to residents to form groups nearly 5 months ago. Unfortunately now that we have started it appears that winter will be settling upon us much sooner than we would like and baiting programs will be ceasing.

The Good Neighbour Program was a State Government project that provided funding for the Warrandyte rabbit program. The whole basis of this project was to give residents the chance to work with their neighbours to reduce rabbit numbers with little cost, time or effort to themselves.

Though there was a good response from a few Rabbit Action Groups in Warrandyte, the response was quite poor from other parts.

Unfortunately some residents believe that rabbits are the fault and / or the total responsibility of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources or their neighbours. This is a false assumption. Everybody who has rabbits on their land has a legal responsibility to take adequate measures to control them, let alone obvious environmental and neighbourly responsibilities.

Rabbit control was setback largely due to residential apathy, but also to an extremely wet summer, December / January holidaying and inconsistencies on the part of the rabbits. It is highly likely in future that Warrandyte residents may miss out on funding from the Good Neighbour program if they do not work as a whole to reduce Rabbit numbers.

POINTS ABOUT R.C.D (RABBIT CALICIVIRUS DISEASE) RABBIT CONTROL

- In most circumstances one form of rabbit control is not adequate.
- The Calicivirus alone will definitely not eradicate rabbits.
- As was not the case with Myxomatosis and should have been, traditional control measures will be essential to control rabbit numbers in any area of Australia when the Calicivirus arrives.
- The Calicivirus as far as experimentation shows affects only the European Wild Rabbit and rabbits related to the European Wild Rabbit and no other animal.
- Pet Rabbits in Australia are related to European Rabbits and should be vaccinated at a local vet.
- The Calicivirus is not a Hemorrhaging disease.
- The virus is spread on clothing, vehicles, footwear, rabbit faeces and general rabbit contact. Birds and insects may also spread the disease.

POINTS ABOUT "PINDONE" POISONING

- The poison is cumulative in the body when taken at regular intervals, therefore rabbits require more than one feed of carrot.
- "Pindone" is only cumulative in the body when taken at regular intervals and constantly.
- The majority of domestic animals require at least half their body weight in carrot to be affected by the poison. It is suggested that dogs or cats which are elderly or have cardiovascular problems still be restrained when "Pindone" is being used to poison Rabbits.
- Of native animals it is believed that "Pindone" is dangerous to Wallabies, Kangaroos and Wombats.
- Possums both Ringtail and Brushtail are unaffected by "Pindone".
- A 30kg child needs to eat at least a bucket of poisoned carrot to have a lethal dose.
- "Pindone" dissolves and becomes useless when wet e.g. rain, dew.
- "Pindone" is specifically designed for use in urban and semi-rural areas and is less poisonous than "Ratsack"

For further information please do not hesitate to contact Maree Kirkpatrick at the Warrandyte State Park office on 9844 2659.

Melbourne Parks and Waterways Community Grants Program 1996/97

FOWSP have submitted three projects for consideration to the 1996/7 Community Grants Program. Two are a continuation of existing projects, the third is a new project. The projects for which FOWSP have requested funding are briefly as follows:

1) Stage 5 nursery renovation.

Funding for new shadecloth for the newly renovated shadehouse.

2) Stage 2 'Frogland' weed control and revegetation.

Funding for Jute Master underlay, wood shavings, herbicide spray unit and propagation materials.

3) Rabbit-proof fencing of orchid 'hot spot' at The Common.

Funding for fencing materials and some fencing tools.

FOWSP applied for funding for this last project to DC&NR through their Conservation Projects Grants Program but the request was rejected.

A few weeks ago FOWSP had a visit from Jack Dinkgreve who has taken over from Andrew Shannon as MP&WP Community Program coordinator. Jack was given a guided tour of the nursery, was shown 'Frogland' and the 'Coop' (complete with resident koala). He also spent some time looking through the 'Flora of Warrandyte' photographic album (yet to be completed). Jack later wrote that he was "extremely impressed with the groups efforts". So keep your fingers crossed (metaphorically speaking) for this years grants so that we can continue the good work.

SOIL SEARCHING

Anna M. Richtarik is currently carrying out a soil survey of Endeavour Bank at Pound Bend Reserve. "This survey will enable us to get a better understanding of the soils in the whole area, including areas where the soil profile may have been altered".

The survey involves using a grid, and sampling is carried out to a depth of about one metre. The area is known to have deposits of Quaternary (up to 1.5 million years old) origin and mudstones of the Silurian (380-430 million years old) period. Some of Anna's early work is unravelling the past history of the area such as land use, the construction of dams and other structures.

Anyone interested in assisting in this important project is welcome and should contact Anna on 9437 1998.

THE FERNIEST CREEK IN WARRANDYTE

by Pat Coupar

On the afternoon of Sunday February 25th, an enthusiastic group of Fowspians joined Mark Gardener and Ranger David Van Bockel on Stony Creek. (Apologies for the slight change in venue which resulted in some confusion).

The starting point for our willow attack was about 500 metres upstream of Research Rd where a group of very large Crack Willows occupied the bank. The pink-tendrilled roots of these old trees had formed a dense mat which covered the bed of the creek from one bank to the other.

On our slow meander back downstream we drilled and filled not only willows, but other woody weeds including Cotoneaster, Hawthorn, Firethorn and Prunus. The cool clear water of the creek provided the perfect antidote to the hot weather. A delightful bonus was the number and variety of ferns seen along the way, seven species were identified in this short section alone including by far the largest examples of Soft Water Fern (*Blechnum minus*) in Warrandyte. The ferns are hanging in there (some literally) despite opposition

from some vigorous weeds, notably Ivy, Honeysuckle and Monbretia. This last weed is a particularly aggressive, orange-flowered Iris from Africa with golden-brown corms which are impossible to remove without causing immense soil disturbance.

Also surviving on the bank is Forest Hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum latifolium*) a plant only discovered at this location last year and not known from any other site in Warrandyte. Even better, on Sunday another occurrence of this plant was found on the opposite bank to the original population and further downstream.

'Gad's Gang', alias Mark Gardener and friends have been caring for Stony Ck for many years and have made great inroads in weed control and revegetation. If you missed out on Sunday's enlightening walk and would like to discover more about the 'Forniest creek in Warrandyte', and would like to give Mark a hand in looking after this special place either ring Mark on 9844 3799 or call the Park Office on 9844 2659.

MEMBERSHIP

Thank you everybody for your response to the call for payment of subscriptions during February. Everybody seems happy with the new system. Thank you for the generous donations sent with the subscriptions. A very special thank you to the sweet stranger in the bank who responded to my apology for distractedly "taking up more than my share of desk space," by saying "Some days you need to." If you are one of the few who has not returned your MEMBERSHIP FORM and payment, if due, please please send it NOW to Box 220, Warrandyte; or hand it in on any Thursday morning at the nursery. We need this form even if you have PAID stamped on it. If you need another form or have any other queries, ring Joy H, 98442638.

Family dog,
insolently eating
completed, stamped
sealed + addressed
membership form.
#973 in a series



I-SPY

Red Nails in the Shadehouse

Visitors to the Pound Bend depot will have noticed a certain unusual activity, guided by Don Cameron, taking place in the vicinity of the shadehouse.

When the shadehouse was built many years ago, the timbers supporting the roof easily cleared the heads of those walking and working inside it. With the newer method of using a layer of deep mulch on the floor of the shadehouse along with sagging timbers, even the shorter of our members found that their heads were interfering with the roof timbers.

Consequently the shadehouse roof is being raised using about 30 steel plates, attaching them to the

vertical posts so that an extra height of about that an extra height of about 600mm is gained.

Pulling down the old timbers while maintaining shade for the seedlings; drilling 4 large holes in each plate; bolting plates using **red nails** to fix the galvanised timber hangers; putting new sturdier cross timbers to support the shadecloth (and temporarily supporting the sprinkler system) are all tasks being performed with the valuable aid of Colin Bromley (C&M), Bill Saxon, Ben, Anna, Cecilia, Andy and other helpers.

Currently one complete panel, (one third of the shadehouse 'roof-raising'), is nearing completion, with more work and help (any) required.

by Ben Gotlib

OUCH!

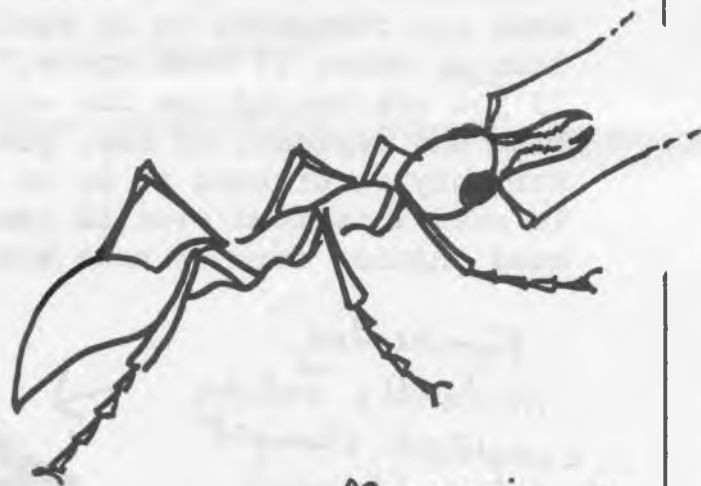
Ever been bitten by a bull ant? It seems to be happening with increasing frequency as some of our members (Cathy, Ross, Joan-any others?) can attest. The bite is very painful and it may be many days before the irritation settles to a comfortable level.

Exactly what is a bull ant? According to Dr. Struan Sutherland in his book **Venomous Creatures of Australia** they are amongst the most primitive and aggressive of all the world's ants. They "show little fear when man trespasses on their territory". They have powerful front jaws or mandibles with which they grasp their victims. When the skin is firmly held by the mandibles, the ant will curl up its body and thrust a long, sharp barbless sting into the victim. This sting is situated on the tail of the ant and it can enter the skin a number of times in quick succession, injecting more venom each time."

If subsequent stings result in more severe reactions it would be wise to seek medical advice as the development of an allergy can have serious consequences.

Dr Sutherland suggests the increase in allergy in recent years may be due to two factors. The first is the number of houses being built on large blocks (presumably leaving large areas of ant habitat - he did not explain his reason) and to "the virtual elimination of the ant's natural enemy, the Spiny Anteater or Echidna. The shooting of Echidnas, their slaughter on the roads and the erection of stout fences against the survivors have all increased the risk of ant stings."

Written by Joan MacMahon



Myrmecia sp.

RE: THE LIBRARY (RE.)LOCATION

Thanks to those members who responded to last month's request for comment on relocating the library. So far we've only heard from eight of you, with reactions ranging from very positive to very negative.

The committee again discussed the issue in light of your comments, and again decided to put it on next month's agenda and to call for more input. We also felt it was worth airing some points (some a second time) to jog you along, a few are prompted by comments so far. The following are in no particular order.

- 1) A special meeting could be called to discuss the issue if enough members are interested. This could be an excellent way to canvass views but at the moment it seems likely we would only have a very small turn up. Do you want a special meeting?
- 2) FOWSP members would not be responsible for building a library extension to the Folly if this was the decision reached. The work would be put out to tender. We can afford to pay for this - see financial statements with minutes on the noticeboard in the Folly.
- 3) FOWSP members would not be eligible to tender for the work.
- 4) Some members do feel too uncomfortable about walking through and spending time in the Rangers' Office to make use of the library.
- 5) The library is for use of all members whether they attend activities regularly or not. The library has been catalogued and this will be published in next month's newsletter.
- 6) Park Staff have no objection to the library being relocated. Nor are they pushing us to relocate it.
- 7) If a library extension was built the library would be open whenever there was activity around the Folly, e.g. Thursday mornings and lunchtimes.

Please let us know your thoughts on all this even if you have never used the library before - we are trying to reach a decision based on the feelings of our members. Ring a committee member, drop a note in the suggestion box, or write C/- the P.O. Box.

BIRD-WATCHING COMPETITION

This is it folks! The idea is to record all the birds you identify in your local area in the two weeks following receipt of your newsletter. Please list them clearly under their different habitat headings e.g. swamp, sports ground, your garden, school ground etc.

The competition has three sections.

1. primary students
2. secondary students
3. everybody else!

Please make sure you indicate which section you are entering. Post your entry either in the suggestion box at The Folly or send to our post box which is P.O. Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

The winner of each section **will receive a \$30 gift voucher from the Bird Observer's Club shop** in Springvale Rd. So get out those bird books and binoculars and best of luck.



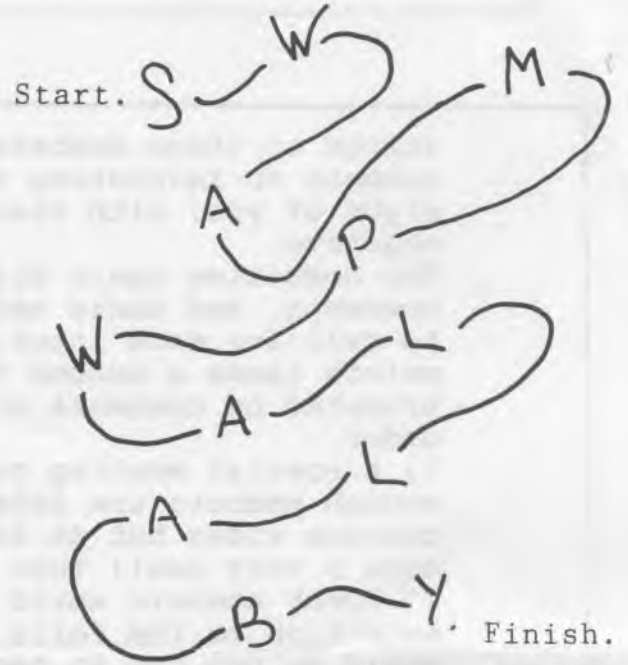
EUCALYPTS.

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- | | | |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| MANNA GUM | MESSMATE | RIVER RED |
| RED BOX | IRON BARK | SUGAR GUM |
| PEPPERMINT | BLUE GUM | SCRIBBLE GUM |
| MALLEE | YELLOW BOX | ASH |

Write the remaining letters here;

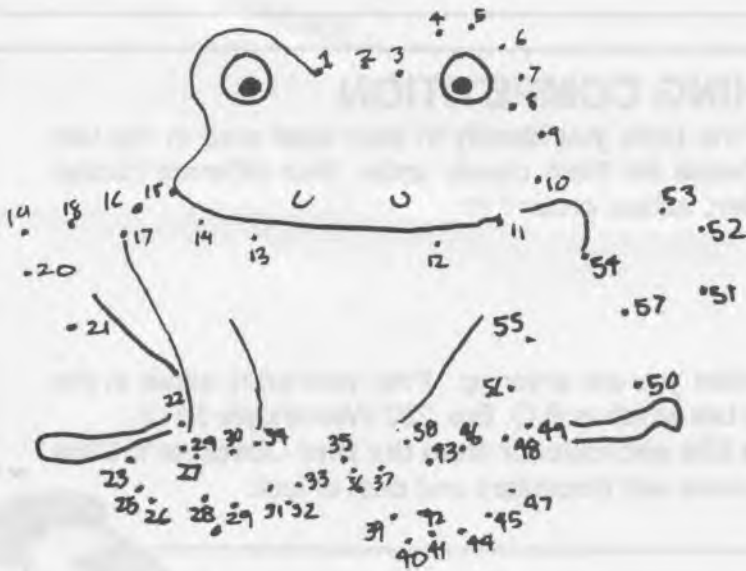
FOLLOW THE LINE,



I am a, -----

DRAW ME.

JOIN THE DOTS, THEN COLOUR ME.



I am a ----- . When I was young, I was a -----

FOWSP THURSDAY P.M PROGRAM



Depart from Depot at 1.15pm (except for April 4th)

or

Meet on site at 1.30pm (except for April 4th)

March 21st Discover 'Dads Bush'

A guided tour of this little known part of Timber Reserve where Painted Button Quail have been sighted. Check on the new population of Musk Daisy-bush and find the elusive Hooker's Fescue.

Leader Anthony Owen. Meet at the end of Wattleblossom Rd (Melways ref: map 35 H1)

March 28th Koornong Revisited

Come and admire the great work carried out by Cathy and her crowd. Maybe a little drill and fill along the way. Search for some early autumn fungi.

Leader Cathy Willis. Meet at the main car park on Koornong Cr. (Melways ref map J7)

April 4th Species enrichment evaluation MORNING ACTIVITY

A big name for a simple task. Visit sites of new (planted) populations of some of our rarest plants, monitor and assess their progress.

Leader Pat Coupar & Cathy Willis. Leave depot at 10.am or meet at the end of Galatlys Lane off Pound Bend Rd at 10.15am.(Melways ref map 23 A9)

April 11th Freshen Up Frogland

How is our aquatic haven? What rare and endangered plants now live there? Dip net the pond and discover aquatic invertebrates and maybe tadpoles or even a long-necked tortoise.

Leader Pat Coupar. Meet at the Depot. (Melways ref map 23 C10)

April 18th Davids Day

- How many species of eucalypt grow in Warrandyte? Identification of our local eucalypts is not difficult, come and learn for yourself.

- **Leader** Ranger David Van Bockel. Meet at Pound Bend picnic area main car park (Melways ref map 23 A 11)

April 25th Fourth Hill - a place of contrast

Discover the contrasting environments of Fourth Hill, from the riparian vegetation of Andersons Ck to the dry sclerophyll forest of the ridge top. Inspect some of the rabbit-proofed 'hot spots'.

Leader Joan MacMahon. Meet at the Andersons Ck car park on Gold Memorial Rd. (Melways ref map 35 E2)





M. J. VAN HUNT SENIOR
WARRANDYTE

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If undeliverable return to

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P.O. Box 220,

Warrandyte. 3113

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Ron Taylor-----9 844 4285

Cecilia le Duc-----9 725 3959

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Cathy Willis-----9 844 1841

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