

June 2003

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

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

Environmental Impact Statement Denied

By Pat Coupar

Back in our April newsletter Cam Beardsell reported on a fish survey carried by the Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) in the Stane Brae/Mt Lofty section of the Yarra River. Among the native fish found was a secure breeding population of the Macquarie Perch which is listed as endangered species in Victoria. Just as exciting was the presence of the Australian Grayling, found in a narrow channel between small islands, this was the first official record of this species in this part of the Yarra in over 100 years.

The ARI stated that the Yarra was one of the most important rivers for freshwater fish in lowland Victoria. Therefore it is of utmost importance that the conservation of these rare and endangered fish and their breeding areas are given high priority.

The Heritage Golf and Country Club (now Yarra Valley Golf Pty) is situated just upstream of where the fish were recorded. Construction of Stage 2 of the development – an 18 hole golf course on the flood plain – is about to commence. There are major concerns that siltation caused by inevitable massive earth works will seriously threaten the future of the Macquarie Perch and the Australian Grayling.

Committee member and FOWSP Public Officer, Flora Anderson, has written to Environment Australia informing them of the findings of the recent fish survey. She pointed out that our group was one of the objectors to the

original application for amendments to the Planning Schemed of Healsville and Lillydale Shires and, further, we were most disappointed to see such use of the flood plain of a Heritage Listed river.

In her letter Flora asked that a full Environmental Impact Statement be prepared. The request was refused. The reason given was that the potential risks had already been addressed.

As a consequence Flora, on behalf of FOWSP, has since written to John Thwaites, the State Minister for the Environment, expressing our alarm and asking for support in invoking the legislation designed to protect vulnerable, rare and threatened species.

At the very least we feel that work on Stage 2 of the golf course should not proceed until an EIS is completed.



Australian Grayling

Interesting Snippets

Contributions this month from Sally Simpson, and Pat Coupar.

Rare Winter Visitor

By Sally Simpson

For the third year running, almost to the day, a white morph of the Grey Goshawk has arrived. (I think it's a male). In the past he's stayed for 2 to 3 weeks.

On the 17th of May I saw him take a Spotted Turtle-dove, although at first I thought it was one of the family of Choughs that were pottering about close by.

It is interesting that this semi-urban environment is being utilized during the winter months by such a rare forest species.



Don't Touch

By Pat Coupar

Found in the Koornong under a loose piece of bark that had fallen on the ground, was a ginger-brown oval cocoon armed with a dense covering of short hairs.



I knew better than to touch these innocent-looking hairs for I recognised the cocoon as belonging to an Anthelid moth – the well-named Urticating Anthelid (*Anthela nicotiae*). If handled the bristly hairs readily break off and enter the skin causing considerable pain. Not only that, the hairs are difficult to remove.

The cocoon is made by the caterpillar which then pupates inside it. As the caterpillar spins the

cocoon it transfers some of the irritating hairs from its body onto the outside of the woven structure.

Needless to say this is a very efficient predator deterrent.

Moth Connection

By Pat Coupar

While on the theme of moths and their pupal cases. Have you noticed the empty, finger-sized, papery brown cases that litter the ground under trees? And have you noticed large reddish-brown moths at your windows or outside light at night, especially after rain?



Well the moth is a Swift Moth and the brown case is its empty pupa. The moths emerge en masse stimulated by autumn rain.

As for the caterpillars, they are rarely seen because they spend all their time underground feeding on the roots of eucalypts and wattles.

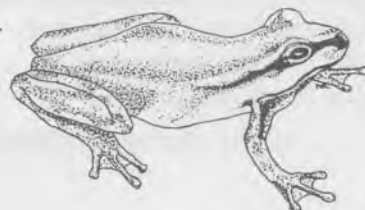
More Snippets Please

Many thanks to all those members who have contributed over the last couple of months, particularly those who have never written in before.

The feedback on this segment has been very positive but it does rely on you, the members, to keep the contributions coming.

Don't forget snippets can be about anything of interest in the environment and do not necessarily have to be about Warrandyte.

Contributions can either be dropped into Joan's, at 101 Bradleys Lane (or via email at joanmacmahon@hotmail.com.) or Pat's at 143 Brackenbury St. or passed on at the nursery.



Plantings and More Plantings

By Pat Coupar

Despite the relative lack of rain and still dry soils, planting of revegetation and species enrichment plants have been going ahead as planned. And, so far, the plants are doing well in the unusually warm late autumn weather.

The sites of plantings include: Fourth Hill, Timber Reserve, Norman Reserve, Pound Bend, Jumping Creek, Koornong/Osborne Peninsula, Mt Lofty, Boomers Reserve and Dodd St.

The planters include: FOWSP, Osborne Peninsula Landcare, contractors, Rangers, Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) and RMIT students.

The species: too numerous to list. There are however, three planting days that I would like to mention in more detail. The first was a FOWSP Thursday activity organised and led by Cam Beardsell at Boomers Reserve and Dodd St.

This activity gave members the opportunity to visit two of the northern flora reserves that are managed by Warrandyte Park Staff. And, the person who knows these wonderfully diverse slabs of bushland better than anyone else is Cam Beardsell. At Boomers we were told about the different plant communities and the various rare species found there. We were shown the leaves of the Large Tongue Orchid and the site of the even rarer Horned Orchid.

We planted inside the new rabbit exclusion fence and on a, usually wet, flat sandy area. After lunch the convoy moved on to Dodd St, but not before we had refilled our six 20 litre containers at a toilet block at St. Andrews. How we managed to get water into these large containers that would not fit under the taps will not be disclosed, but it was ingenious (thanks Dick).

At Dodd St we planted over 50 of the plains form of *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* on a rocky slope trying, unsuccessfully in some cases, to avoid the nests of Jumping Jack and Bull Ants.

The second planting day, also organised by Cam Beardsell on his last day as Ranger at the Park, was at the Homestead Road swamp at Mount Lofty. Here we planted a variety of revegetation and enrichment species. There is a rabbit-proof fence around most of the swamp, complete with gate at the upstream end, but the fence is open at the downstream end of the

boardwalk, so unfortunately, and tediously we had to guard all the new plantings.

Cam told us how important the Mount Lofty ephemeral billabong (dry at the present time) was, particularly in light of the fact that most of the upstream billabongs had been modified as part of the Heritage and Golf Country Club development. Many of the rare enrichment plants were actually salvaged from these old billabongs.

The third planting afternoon was the most well attended of all and took place in the most unlikely and least known area of the Warrandyte State Park's river frontage. The activity was organised by Marg Burke of the Osborne Peninsula Landcare Group and the location was a river terrace opposite the only known site in the Park where Eel Weed (*Vallisneria americana*) occurs and looks across to one of Jumping Creek's most intact sheltered cliffs. The site of the planting was chosen because it is about the only section of the Osborne Peninsula that is lacking an understorey.

Over the last few months blackberries and Bridal Creeper have mostly been controlled, while the grassy weeds - notably Buffalo and Couch - still in the process of eradication.

Overcast drizzly weather did not deter the 27 people that attended the planting and, despite the need to guard everything, the trees, shrubs and grasses were in the ground and watered in no time.

The afternoon was rounded off by a short walk to collect the local Veronica and River Mint to propagate at the Osborne nursery for future planting.

A huge thanks to all the volunteers that gave their time and muscles to make these (and other) planting days such a great success. Many thanks to Cam for his expertise in selecting which plants to put where and for organising the activities at Boomers, Dodd St and Mount Lofty.



Upright Water-milfoil
Myriophyllum crispatum

Profile

Paul Foreman

Manningham City Council's botanist

By Michelle Hanslow

Botanist Paul Foreman is currently mapping and classifying all remnant vegetation in the Green Wedge.

Previous ecological/vegetation studies of the Doncaster/Templestowe area and the Mullum Mullum valley were carried out by Ecology Australia back in 1992. These were fairly general, and needs to be updated for current conditions.

Paul has a Forestry Degree and a Masters in Botany (Grassland Ecology). He has a country background, with a property in the Bendigo area, and many years working in the country/outback areas of Victoria. He has also worked for Trust for Nature as a Conservation Manager. Working in a partly suburban area has been a bit of a culture shock for him, but something he feels he really needed.

Paul is studying not just the vascular plants in the area but also the fungi, liverworts and mosses in the plant kingdom and is working with Alan Yen (Arthur Rylah Institute) to determine the patterns of invertebrate inhabitation. For example some species of beetles are found in grasslands and others in woodlands, so observing where these insects are found in Manningham may indicate changes in the vegetation communities, but this study is purely theoretical at present.

Paul's process does not involve simply surveying all of the vegetation in the Shire, as this would be duplicating the work already completed by the previous surveys. Instead he collates the

already existing data into a workable form (maps) and then confirms these details with ground surveys.

There is very little truly remnant vegetation remaining in Manningham - much of it has been altered/cleared for gold prospecting, housing, forming or other developments, as well as being altered through the effect of bush fires. Most remnant vegetation in the area exists north of the Yarra River in the Shire of Nillumbik, with some also in the Green Wedge, where subdivisions are large. (Warrandyte is not included in the Green Wedge classification, despite a great presence of native trees, due to the smaller subdivision sizes there).

Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) have vegetation maps for all of Victoria showing the condition of vegetation as it existed pre-European influence. These maps were developed based on speculative information as well as soil and geology of the sites, which usually determine the type of vegetation that can be supported.

The majority of the original 16 habitat types shown in these maps are now gone in Manningham - according to NRE (or DSE as it is now known). Paul does not entirely agree with this, based on his research. The vegetation classification of Grassy Woodland, which was only found in a small pocket on Doncaster Hill, is completely eradicated, however most of the other classifications are present, but only in small(ish) isolated areas - i.e. remnant vegetation sites. As a result, most could be listed as 'vulnerable' or 'rare'.

Next month Michelle Hanslow will report on Paul's findings as presented at Manningham's Environment Seminar in May.

The Third Printing

It is less than a year since the FOWSP '**Gardener's Guide to Indigenous Planting**' came out and already a third printing is underway. The booklet, which includes information on position, soil type and use of local plants, has been incredibly successful with locals and people from further afield.

Manningham City Council has just ordered another 2000 of the guides to complement their own full colour publication on indigenous plants called "Native Splendour".

If you don't have a copy of the FOWSP Gardening Guide, you can obtain one for the cost of one dollar from the nursery, the FOWSP trailer at the monthly Warrandyte market or the Warrandyte Post Office, as well as other local outlets.

GARDENER'S GUIDE TO
**INDIGENOUS
PLANTING**
in Warrandyte and Surrounding Areas



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.**



JUNE 19TH NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

JUNE 26TH MORNING ACTIVITY

Planting at Norman Reserve.

Meet at the end of Bradley Lane, (Mel. Ref. 23 B12) at 10.15 am. or meet at the depot at 9.45am.

JULY 3RD NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

JULY 10TH NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

JULY 17TH NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

JULY 24TH NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

JULY 31ST MORNING ACTIVITY

Planting at Whipstick Gully

Meet at the end of Whipstick Gully Rd, (Mel. Ref. 23 F12) at 10.15 am. or at the depot at 9.45am.

Note: Informal walks or planting activities may be organised on propagation mornings

Green Wedge Environmental Seminar Series 2003

Thursday, 3 July 2003 – "Platypus"

Speaker – Geoff Williams, Director of the Australian Platypus Conservancy, previously Director of Healesville Sanctuary.

Thursday, 7 August - "Restoring Ecological Processes, or Just Putting Sticks in the Ground?"

Speaker: Glen Jameson, Environmental Team Leader, Parks Victoria. Glen will evaluate progress in environmental management during the twenty years of his experience in the Middle Yarra region.

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: The Function Room, Club Warrandyte (Warrandyte Pub), 120 Yarra Street, Warrandyte 3113 (Melway ref: 23 11E)

RED DOT

Subscriptions for 2003 are now overdue

A RED DOT on the front of this newsletter indicates that we have no record of your subscription for this year. If you have a red dot but have already paid your membership for the year 2001 please ring our membership secretary Lee on 9437 0894.

If we have not received your renewal by JULY 3rd membership will be discontinued.

FOWSP Committee 2003

Flora Anderson	9722 1776	Public Officer	<u>Wildlife Rescue</u>	
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor	Julie Pryor	9722 1117
Ray Clarke	9841 8507	Treasurer		
Sue Shepherd	9844 3754	Assistant Treasurer		
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary	<u>Market</u>	
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary	Marie Krause	9712 0498
Mike Coupar	9844 1650			
Melanie Birtchnell	9870 1349		<u>Park Office</u>	9844 2659
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797			
Joan MacMahon	9844 3213			
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577		<u>Nursery Manager</u>	0408800026

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday 10.00am to 12md and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 400pm.

Sunday Opening Days for 2003

July 6th
August 3rd
September 7th
October 5th
November 2nd
December 7th

Important Notice

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

FOWSP Committee Meetings for 2003 will be held each month at 7:30pm on the Monday or Tuesday before the monthly Warrandyte market.

Next Meeting will be held on Monday 30th June at Sue Shepherd's house 26 Pound Rd, Warrandyte

Deadline for the July newsletter is July 7th

My Worst Weed

By Michelle Hanslow

My Worst Weed is Flick Weed or Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*). This is a major south-eastern weed that germinates all year during propagation of landscape plants. It produces a huge quantity of seeds that are forcefully expelled.

I have had the terribly embarrassing experience of walking up my front path, blissfully unaware of the presence of dozens of these weeds. They look so lovely and lush and green in the lawn, only to suddenly see tiny things jumping all around me - they were seeds 'flicking' out from the siliques!! Hmmm, now I am more diligent in my weeding.

Flick Weed is a terrible nursery weed because it completes its life cycle within only six weeks, able to seed when they are only a centimetre or two high! And they can flick out up to 45cm!! (and so by the time you find them it is too late)

Plastic containers that are commonly re-



used during propagation often contain some media residue from previous crops on their sides. This residue could hold some of Flick Weed seeds which can then germinate during the next crop cycle. (There can be up to six times more seedlings when using unwashed containers. The problem is amplified by not being able to use pre-emergence herbicides in propagation. (Thus the importance in weeding out **all** Flick Weed seedlings if seen in and around the nursery.)

According to a control method study (found on the internet): "The number of siliques per plant can range from 27 to 182. The average number of seeds per silique is 29, with the total number of seeds ranging >from 675 to 4980 per plant!

The seeds are dispersed by a spring-like action of the locule (sides) of the silique rolling back on both sides perpendicular to each other. The seeds are thrown to each side of the silique on the same plane as the rolling locules. The average seed dispersal distance was 19.7inches."

Your Worst Weed

Contributions (even verbal) can be passed on to Pat or Joan at the nursery on Thursday mornings or sent by e-mail to Joan at joanmacmahon@hotmail.com or posted to Pat at 143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte, 3113.

Phascogale Trapping Survey

Report & Photograph by Julie Bishop

Tuesday May 6th. We were out at 6.30am for the first day of checking traps. One particular trap line proved to be a definite 'hot spot'.

Firstly, we were very aware that we were being watched by a roosting male Powerful Owl.

Secondly, Cam Beardsell pointed out to us three orchids in flower - the Tiny Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*); Red-lipped Greenhood (*Pterostylis* aff. *parviflora*) and the Sharp Midge Orchid (*Genoplesium despectans*).

Thirdly, we were rewarded by the sight of a beautiful Brush-tailed Phascogale, the first of thirteen to be trapped that week.



Worth Repeating

Book Review

Ecological Pioneers A Social History of Australian Ecological Thought and Action

*Martin Mulligan
& Stuart Hill,
Cambridge
University Press
R.R.P \$39.95
Reviewed by Pam
Dougherty*



A land of beauty and promise or a land of trial? For its early European settlers, Australia

was definitely the latter. It lacked the gentility and order of home, the climate was harsh, the soils were fragile, the plants unknown and seemingly without use, the distances daunting. It produced a mix of fear, awe and dismay in many newcomers but, buoyed by their belief in their right to dominate, they set out to transform its 'wilderness' to a southern version of the tamed and 'productive' Europe they had left.

It was a tough challenge and it was only with time, and a great deal of environmental damage, that more thoughtful newcomers began to appreciate the uniqueness of the landscape and to look for ways of working with it, rather than trying to conquer it. From the late 19th century onwards, an impressive number of Australian thinkers and activists emerged to challenge prevailing views of our natural environment and our proper relationship with it. Their work, and their considerable contribution to the global ecology movement, is the subject of *Ecological Pioneers: A Social History of Australian Ecological Thought and Action* by Sydney academics Martin Mulligan and Stuart Hill.

Mulligan and Hill cast a wide net examining the contribution of figures as varied as writer and broadcaster Philip Crosbie Morrison, whose work earned him the title 'The Voice of Nature', father of Green Politics in Australia Jack Mundey, and farmer P.A. Yeomans, whose pioneering work formed the basis for the Permaculture movement.

The authors pay tribute to the importance of Australia's artists, writers and poets in exploring the vital links between the landscape and our emerging identity. Painters such as Arthur Boyd, Russell Drysdale and Sydney Nolan showed us how to look at our country with new eyes. The work of our novelists and poets helped us to feel 'at home'. Poet Judith Wright stands out for her combination of powerful writing and direct environmental activism.

The emergence of the Aboriginal land rights movement in the 1970s played a key role in awakening non-indigenous Australians to a totally different understanding of the relationship between man and nature, one that could have saved much environmental degradation and much personal hardship, if the newcomers had been willing to listen earlier.

Few of the pioneers have had an easy path. Many of them have worked in isolation and have been ridiculed rather than respected for their ideas. As the authors point out "their influence has been limited in a country addicted to economic growth and consumerism." Ask Australians today about their country's contribution to world sport or film making and most could give you a dozen famous names, they would be unlikely to do the same in the field of ecology.

There has been some incorporation of ecological thinking into the mainstream of Australian life but, as Mulligan and Hill point out, this can be a way of deflecting challenging ideas rather than really taking the message on board. Our new housing estates boast of separate bins for recycling and four star energy ratings even as they devour the countryside,

Mulligan and Hill identify three main strands of ecological thinking in Australia - caring for country and sense of place, preservation and conservation, and ecological design and management. In their final chapter they put forward their own philosophy of ecology which seeks to balance these three approaches and provide a basis for a philosophical and practical effort to bring Australia's population and its complex and challenging landscape into greater harmony.

Source: Artstreams, news in arts & cultural heritage for north-eastern Melbourne, July/Aug 2002

Note: This wonderful magazine was found by Joan MacMahon in the Kangaroo Ground General Store.

"I SPY"

By B.G

Sue Assists

From the beginning of April Sue Shepherd has come onto the FOWSP committee as assistant treasurer.

Cape Conference

Joan MacMahon and Lee Speedy were our representatives at the Cape Bridgewater (via Portland) Friends Network Conference. There were over 100 representatives from areas as far away as 'The Prom', The Grampians and Werribee Gorge.

Subaru's Seen

On one Thursday five Subaru's were seen parked at the depot. What does this mean?

Nursery News

An attempt to get a 'State of the Nursery' statement from Josh failed. He was too busy. But according to one hard worker (Dick) "All the plants are looking lush. There has been a good number of volunteers. The new plastic trays are doing well and plants for the Biolink order – 25,000 – will start to be planted from May 5th onwards."

Harry Helps

Nicole Canty and son Harry (13 months) were helping to trim back *Carex appressa* in tubes.

Trailer Talk

The May market trailer was looked after by Alan Woolcock, John Hanson, Wolfgang and Marie Krause, Lee and Geoff Speedy and Betty Oke.

Indigenous Interview

A recent article in a local paper referred to the removal of some plants (indigenous?) as 'part of the natural process of restoration and maintenance'. This raises the philosophical question of indigenous revegetation, when is human intervention appropriate?

Ani Bacterial Activity

Swinburne's Environment and Biotechnology Centre has investigated 39 plants used in traditional Aboriginal medicine. "We examined the effects that plant extracts had on various disease-causing bacteria. The results are very encouraging and could potentially aid in the development of more effective drugs."

Source: Dr Enzo Palombo. Swinburne News Autumn 2003

Bush Food Be Aware

The selection and culling of strains of bush foods to minimise the incidence of known toxic substances has been hasty in some cases. "Caution is urged when promoting new bush foods on the market."

Source: Australian Plants. Vol 10, Page 331. From material prepared for the Australian Native Bush Food Industry Committee.

Conservation Crew

Conservation Volunteers Australia have started planting work in the Park.

Save Soap

Josh was seen with longish fungal growth on his face. Part of a campaign to save soap and water?

Holiday Heaven

Andy Nixon (RIC) spent his holidays cycling in Gippsland, canoeing on the Lakes and a real Rangers holiday – Surfers Paradise!

Food for Thought

The Flight of the Bumble Bee

By Ray Clarke

Following the rather disturbing notes on the Bumble Bee by Dick Thomson in last month's newsletter, I am told that aeronautical engineers have studied the Bumble Bee.

Having weighed a bee, measured its wingspan and conformation and feeding all this into their computer, they concluded that there is no possible way that a Bumble Bee could fly.

But the Bumble Bee, not being well versed in aeronautics, just goes on flying.



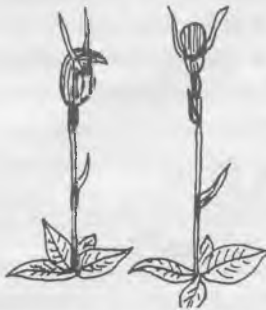


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Trim Greenhood
(Pterostylis concinna)

This month is the time to keep an eye out for this little greenhood orchid in the bushland around Warrandyte.

It can form colonies of over 1000 plants, but is uncommon in the State Park and only known from three locations. However, this orchid has been grown successfully at the nursery and groups of tubers are now being planted back at selected sites.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

- Family \$20
- Single \$15
- Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

Special Membership Offer

Receive a discount if you renew your membership for three years

Single: \$40.00

Family: \$50.00

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