

May 2005

## Friends of Warrandyte State Park



# Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113  
ABN 94170156655/ACN A0024890C

## A Makeover for 'Frogland'

By Pat Coupar

After several years of neglect 'Frogland' is getting a much-needed makeover.

'Frogland' was created over ten years ago by the FOWSP Thursday morning propagation group. The idea to create a wetland came about in response to a major weed problem that was developing due, in part, to the nutrient-rich run off from the Warrandyte State Park nursery.

The regular watering of the nursery had caused a boggy area to form on the downhill (west) side of the entrance road to the depot. Red Box trees on this normally dry grassy slope were suffering from too much water and an invasion of grassy weeds.

With the help of Park staff, a large pond was created to hold the water and a dense stand of sedges (*Carex* species) were planted to absorb the nutrients in the run off.



nutrients in the run off.

FOWSP obtained a grant from Melbourne Parks and Waterways to fence the area and a later grant for the construction of a boardwalk. The original somewhat

grand plan was not only to provide a habitat for frogs, but also to create a safe place to plant some of the Park's rarer flora near the nursery in order to harvest the seed. An Aboriginal plant trail and a butterfly and moth foodplant trail were also part of the original concept.

Over the years 'Frogland' has had several custodians, but people move on and in recent times the site has fallen into disrepair. Now 'Frogland' has some new friends who have begun the restoration process.

A few weeks ago, thanks to the WSP project firefighters, the area enclosed within the fence has undergone a cool burn to rejuvenate the native vegetation. And it will be interesting to watch over the next few months to see what plants germinate.

If you are interested being involved with the ongoing works and have an hour or two available on a Thursday morning, come along and join in with this exciting project. Maybe at last those educational trails that were originally planed over ten years ago will become a reality.



## Bush Backyard

Contributions this month from *Margaret O'Connor, Shan Shnookal, Steven Katsineris and Pat Coupar*

### Two Local Sightings

By Margaret O'Connor

Seen behind the R.S.L in Brackenbury Street, Warrandyte in late March were a pair of large birds feeding on wild Hawthorn berries.

They were scaly grey, the male with a bright orange/red head and crest, grey body, the female a stripy grey body with pale slightly orange tinted chest.

On consulting our book 'What Bird is That?' we found they were Gang Gang Cockatoos (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*). As we stood and watched just a metre or two away, they just kept on eating quite oblivious of our presence – just as the book said they would!

The second sighting this week took place as I was driving along Harris Gully Road. As I rounded the corner past Aumans Orchard, I saw what I thought was a rather clumsy strange-looking dog crossing the road in as much of a hurry as it could muster. I slowed down and realized it was a koala rushing to get to the other side. When it reached the gutter it immediately stopped to sit down and rest.

I was quite astonished to see this in the middle of the day and fortunately with very little traffic around it reached safety, otherwise it would have had little chance if cars had been coming at any speedy in the other direction.



### The Tawny Frogmouth

By Steven Katsineris

Tawny Frogmouths are nocturnal, look like owls and many people confuse them with owls, but they are actually related to nightjars. We often see Tawny

Frogmouths in our yard during the day, usually in pairs resting on a branch close to the tree trunk in our older gum trees camouflaged as part of the branch. We also have a lone one that has been regularly roosting on the same high branch in the same Candlebark. They mostly sit still and upright resting, but sometimes we see them scratching and moving or looking around.



At night we hear them around the house making loud clacking sounds with their beaks, their calls sounding like drumbeats. One night we heard two Tawny Frogmouths just outside our front door and we came out and watched them for quite a long time sitting on a branch only a few feet away, unafraid of our presence. We were all delighted to view them up so close, especially the children.

The Tawny Frogmouth is distributed throughout Australia, including Tasmania. They live in most habitats, but prefer open eucalypt forest.

They hunt at night, feeding mainly on rats, mice and a variety of invertebrates, obtaining their food by pouncing onto the ground from a tree or low perch. Unlike owls, Tawny Frogmouths do not have strong talons and catch their prey with their beaks.

Tawny Frogmouths mate for life. The nest is a loose platform of sticks and leaves usually placed on a horizontal forked branch. Both parents incubate the eggs and feed the chicks.

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### Autumn Frog

By Pat Coupar

They've started. Predictable as ever. In broad daylight emanating from swamps and drainage lines is the call of the Victorian Smooth Froglet (*Geocrinia victoriana*) More often seen than heard – as is usually the case with frogs – the long 'wa aa aa aa ark' followed by a short 'pip pip pip' is very distinctive.

Continued on next page:

### Bushbackyard Contd.

Females lay eggs on land, amongst moist leaf litter or at the base of grass tussocks in anticipation of rain that will wash the spawn into flooded ditches or swamps.

As its name suggests, this species is confined to Victoria.



The frogs provide a pleasant accompaniment to the Wednesday Weeders of

Wombat Creek. And where is Wombat Creek you may ask. It is a little known fern gully of Warrandyte State Park that is undergoing major restoration situated beside Koornong Crescent in North Warrandyte. Well worth a visit.

### Swallows

By Shan Shnookal



It was a fine, warm morning in early April. Two swallows caught my eye as they seemed to be dive-bombing something on the ground in the open paddock. What was it – a mushroom? Suddenly one of them picked it up, took it into the air, then let it go. The other swooped in, and caught it as it fell. It was a large feather! They repeated the game a few times, then flew off to find other amusement.

A magic moment to see!

### More Snippets Please

Contributions can either be dropped into the editor at 143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte or via email at [ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au](mailto:ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au)

## Uncle Max Harrison

By Jill Jameson Osborne Road Peninsular Landcare group

Uncle Max Harrison, a Yuin elder from the Wallaga Lakes Country of NSW, recently generously shared the ancient wisdom of his Country with local people.

We camped over the weekend at the Warrandyte State Park close to the High School, a joy to be camping out so close to home! We sat around a fire at night listening and being inspired by stories. Uncle Max talked of the simple things in the philosophy of life, and that if we allow the land to talk to us, then we can see, feel and understand a lot more about 'mother Earth'. Then he said we would understand the rest of our relations who all come from this source - the trees, rocks, wallabies, all in an intricate web of life. This understanding naturally brings great respect to all living things.

We arose before dawn in time to greet 'grandfather sun', to give thanks for the life and light we receive each day, and for the things that have given up their life for us to eat, etc. Each of us gave our own heart-felt thanks for whatever touched us.

Later in the day we went exploring in the indigenous 'supermarket' and 'hardware store', in the bush close to the river bank. We heard how Lomandra was used for baskets,

Pomaderris branches for fire stick and fish spear, Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) seeds for flour, and a red gum oozing from the bark of a tree as an analgesic for toothache.

When walking in the bush, Uncle Max suggested that we should ask our 'relations' which are the best to use for healing, and ask for permission by sitting and watching and communicating. This can lead to an inner peace, if we are in harmony with the bush.

A very special ritual was performed in the evening by the participants, who created symbols and spoke for the Earth, Wind, Water and Air. This was a very moving ceremony, a sense of connection with something very ancient, and in the presence of our ancestors. At the conclusion, Uncle Max talked about the process of reconciliation. He said he felt there would never be reconciliation between black fellas and white fellas, as there was never conciliation to begin with! However, he said reconciliation could happen. through the land. A great invitation to us.

### Footnote:

Peter Malcolm (50 Osborne Road, North Warrandyte) and Rob, have been some of the main organizers of the event. If you are interested for Uncle Max's return next year, you could e-mail me ([jamesonjg@bigpond.com](mailto:jamesonjg@bigpond.com)) and I'll pass on your details.

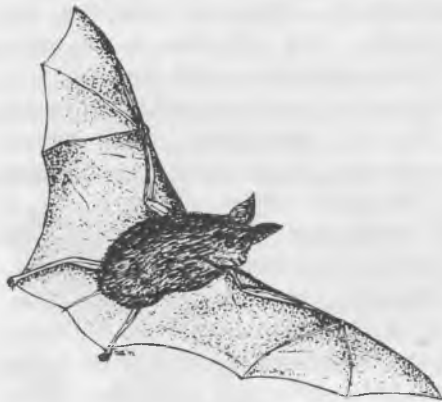
# Bats at Bolin Bolin

By Cathy Willis

**O**n a mild night in early March a small group of FOWSPians joined rangers Cam Beardsell, Jodie Godfrey, Craig Lupton and David Moore for a bat survey at Bolin Bolin Billabong in Yarra Valley Parklands, Bulleen. As far as we know it was the first bat survey conducted there.

We met under the majestic River Red Gums, some of which are well over 300 years old. The billabong was full of water - and mosquitoes. It wasn't an evening to worry about the chemicals contained in 'Rid' repellent! Cam led us on a circumnavigation of the billabong. We soon met the other rangers setting up the first of three harp traps. These devices are so named for their harp like strings strung vertically above the trap. If set in a flight line, bats will fly into them and slide down into a wide heavy plastic fold below. Inside the fold inner plastic sheets prevent the bats climbing out.

Leaving the rangers to secure the traps we continued on in the fading light. Once an important indigenous meeting place, later part of a Whites' dairy farm, Bolin Bolin had been



severely denuded and degraded over the years. Revegetation projects beginning in then 80's saw many trees and shrubs planted. However the ground storey was solid Wandering Tradescantia near the banks with weedy grasses dominating further away from the water's edge. Parks Vic began restoring the ground storey over five years ago and Bolin Bolin is coming back to life.

With two inundations over spring/summer, indigenous seeds long held in the soil are germinating. Species never recorded here are emerging and more common ones are flourishing. Fifteen years ago sparrows and mynahs were the only common birds. Due to the restoration and revegetation work there could now be up to 50 species using the area.

Back near our starting point the last harp trap was being erected. As the darkness fell we watched a Dartar dive for its dinner in the billabong, and settled in to wait to check the traps. Craig got out the 'Anabat', an ultrasonic device which translates the ultra high frequency echo-location signals the bats make into sounds audible to the human ear, and most can be identified by the those sounds. Straight away we heard eerie 'translated' bats calls, and scanned the skies for half seen wings.

An hour later our first trap drew a blank. Spirits fell, the mosquitoes buzzed and attacked. We came across a Striped Marsh Frog on the track which seemed a good omen and sure enough the next two traps held treasure. Four bats were gently placed into cloth bags and taken back to the cars.

'Processing' our catch involved weighing, measuring and checking for identifying features. In males this can include identification by penis features - embarrassing if not worse for the bat! But all ours were female, so we checked to see whether or not they had lactated the previous season (all had). We found we had three Little Forest Bats, cute and quite calm, and one very beautiful but over-excited Chocolate Wattle Bat (apparently its in their nature). All details were recorded. The bats were released to finish their mosquito dinner, and we went home.

The rangers returned at 7am the next morning and recorded a total of 60 bats. There were more Little Forest and Chocolate Wattle Bats plus Goulds Wattle Bats and 1 Southern Forest Bat. These were kept safe and quiet for the day (when they would normally sleep) and released that night. Many thanks to Jodie, Craig and David for including us, and especially to Cam for the walk, and the ecology and history lesson first. Bolin Bolin is unique in our area. In the twilight it has an almost mystical feel. It is a window into our natural, indigenous and cultural heritage and deserves the attention it is now getting.

# 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.

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.



## 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.

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### Thursday Walks 2005

Meet at 1pm at the Nursery, Pound Bend Rangers Depot, Pound Bend Road Warrandyte (Melways Ref. 23 C10) to car pool to walk starting point. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours

May 26<sup>th</sup> Fungi Walk Jumping Ck

### Sunday Walks 2005

Meet at 10.15 am. Bring a water bottle and snack to eat on the walk if you wish. Wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate to the weather. Walks will last approximately 2 hours. Join us after the walk for a BYO lunch (BBQ available) at 'the Folly' at Warrandyte State Park Rangers Depot, Pound Bend. Hot and cold drinks provided.

For more information contact Cynthia Briscoe 9840 9129

June 5<sup>th</sup> 100 Acres. 'Birds' Leader: Murray Bouchier. Meet at Domeney Reserve lower car park Knees Rd, Park Orchards. Melways 35 E9

July 3<sup>rd</sup> Black Flat. "History - a bush walk discovering some indigenous and colonial history". Leader: Ken Crook. Meet at Stonehouse car park Tills Dve corner with Ringwood-Warrandyte Rd. Melways 23 G12

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## Deadline for June Newsletter is May 29<sup>th</sup>

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## FOWSP Committee 2005

Nursery Manager 0408317327

Park Office 9844 2659

Dick Thomson	9850 9867	Treasurer	<u>Assistant Treasurer</u> Ray Clarke	9841 8507
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor		
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary	<u>Wildlife Rescue</u>	
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894		Julie Pryor	9722 1117
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary		
Mike Coupar	9844 1650		<u>Market</u>	
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797	Minutes Secretary	Marie Krause	9712 0498
Artur Muchow	0415383328			
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577		<u>Publications Officer</u>	
Kyen Knight	0418149961		Kirsten Brunt	0438411278

## Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2005



- 1<sup>st</sup> June Andrew Pritchard – “Threatened Flora Species Recovery”
- 6<sup>th</sup> July Kate Whitehouse – “The Long Yarra Walk”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> August Melanie Birtchnell – “Tree Decline in Jumping Creek Reserve”
- 7<sup>th</sup> September Glen Jameson – “Recoverability of Landscapes”
- 5<sup>th</sup> October Heath Butler – “Growling Grass Frog”
- 2<sup>nd</sup> November Scott Watson – “Indigenous Garden Design”
- 7<sup>th</sup> December Paul Barnard – “Wildfire Behaviour and Community Safety”

Please Note: The seminars are now on WEDNESDAY nights

The seminars are free and no bookings are required.

Supper provided.

Time: 7:30pm

Venue: The Function Room Grand Hotel

120 Yarra Street, Warrandyte. (Melways Ref. 23 E11)

To join us for dinner at the pub before the seminars, book a seat in the Bistro on 9844 1199.

For further information contact:

Cynthia Danby 9840 9129

## Dates for your Diary

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### WARRANTYTE MARKET

### THURSDAY WALKS

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May  
Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May  
Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June  
Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August  
Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September

7<sup>th</sup> May  
4<sup>th</sup> June  
2<sup>nd</sup> July  
6<sup>th</sup> August  
3<sup>rd</sup> September

28<sup>th</sup> April  
26<sup>th</sup> May  
30<sup>th</sup> June  
28<sup>th</sup> July  
26<sup>th</sup> August



# “I SPY”

By B.G



## Holmesglen Help

In early April a blue power lead was seen plugged into the power point at the depot toilet. Where did the lead lead to? Straight to the new office building site. Scaffolding was being erected by seven 3<sup>rd</sup> year apprentices (carpentry certificate 3) so that the external cladding could be started (colour bond corrugated iron ‘mixed’ with Shiplap Preservative Treated Board).

Three different apprentice groups are involved in various phases of construction supervised by Mick Turnbull all from Holmesglen Institute of Tafe.

## Jenny Joining

Jenny Todd now lives in Warrandyte after spending ten years or so up the Murray and Canberra with her family. Jenny was a volunteer with Landcare in the Campaspe River area, 5 kms north of Rochester.

She was at the depot pricking out *Wahlenbergia stricta* and hopes to come more often to help.

## Protecting Polyscias

Due to an impending ecological burn in Frogland at the start of April, a small enthusiastic group of Friends were digging out *Polyscias sambucifolius* (Elderberry Panax) – a rarish local riparian indigenous plant – and potting them up to ensure any loss due to the burn would be alleviated.

Kyen Knight will be leading further development work in the site – wheel chair access and board walk improvements.

## Kim and Kids

Kim Reid (nee Dowcra) visited the depot recently with children Zoe, Taylor and Austin.

## Variety of Visitors

(a) Five year old Julian Pirota, who goes to school at Our Ladies of the Pines, was helping during school holidays, making up the potting mix for others to use.

(b) Barry and Gay Stagoll of Park Orchards (both founding members of the Fern Society) visited to

inform those present of a ‘Fern Identification’ trip to Badgers Creek in late April. In the near future they will run a ‘raising ferns from spores’ session for the Friends.

## Festival Friends

During the March Warrandyte Festival the following were all helpers rostered on at the market stall: Lynne Vary, Marion Thomson, Keith Thom, Jan Smidts, Sue Shepherd, Helen Riddell, Joan MacMahon, Wolfgang Krause, Marie Krause, Marjan Kiewert, Alicia Houston, Mark Hassell, Julie Bishop and Cath Andrews.

Marie Krause organised the above volunteers, she also organises the roster for the monthly Friends market stall and would appreciate any extra helpers on our trailer stall. Marie can be contacted on 9712 0498.

## Murray Mouth

In an address to the Bureau of Meteorology, the chief executive of the Murray Darling Basin Commission, Dr Craik, indicated that dredging of the mouth of the once mighty Murray would need to continue indefinitely. “The current drought ..... was the first to occur when so much water was being taken from the river for agriculture and other reasons.” The dredging costs millions of dollars each year.

Source: Melissa Fyfe, *The Age* 24/3/05.

## More Murray

The director of Environment Victoria’s healthy rivers campaign, Paul Sinclair, said supermarkets and food processors made huge profits from the over use of the Murray’s water and should pay for the dredging. “The lower Murray is a basket case and dredging is a symptom of industry’s over use of water from the Murray” he said.

## Pupils Planting

On May 17<sup>th</sup> 225 pupils from Warrandyte Primary School will be planting indigenous plants donated by FOWSP at their school.

## Finishing Facias

Late April, under the supervision of Kevin Corbett, the following 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year apprentices from Holmesglen Institute of Tafe were seen finishing off the facia and eaves on the new depot building in preparation for the roofing: Richard Andrews, Tim Ziegeler, Michael Palau, Andrew Loocaidis, Jeremy Flanagan, Scott Alexander, Melvin Jones and Bryce Tonks.

I-spy continued on next page.

## Foreman on Fourth

On Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May Paul Foreman an ecologist ex-Manningham council led a large group of interested people through the 'Fourth Hill bio-site' – a significant area of National rating in the City of Manningham.

## Park Perimeter Protrudes

A small group of people were seen revegetating a roadside site in Webb Street. This is part of a street sustainability scheme being funded by

Manningham Council and using plants from the Park nursery.

Currently there are only two sustainability streets in Manningham.

**Editor's Note:** where is the other one I-Spy?

## Publicity Person

The Friends now has a Publications Officer, her name is Kirsten Brunt.

## On Our Way

(Part Three)

By Peggy Safstrom



**T**here's something very special you can do in Tasmania.

Well, there are many specials - The Cradle Mountain area is mostly our first camp stop, with its button grass plains, wallabies and exhilarating walks up and around the lakes, - and then East, across to the wonderful beaches on the coast with their great granite tors, - pink elephants lazing in the surf. They all have that Tassie magic!

But, if you think you've seen and done everything in the 'Apple Isle', and you haven't been on a floatplane trip up the Gordon River, think again!

The re-opened rack-and-pinion rail line from Queenstown through tree fern lined gullies and over restored bridges sets you down at Strahan, where a floatplane bobs gently and irresistibly at the wharf. We were hooked!

One and a half glorious hours we spent up and over the rugged wilderness of South Western Tasmania. Such blue skies! Such sparkling sunshine on whitest clouds snuggled tightly into valleys set between high crag mountains! "Oh! Lawrie, look, is that Frenchman's Cap?" We swung between jagged peaks to see the Franklin and Gordon Rivers way down there - great wild rivers with deep gorges and white water sections - coming in to land on the Gordon way up in the deeply timbered wilderness where the Huon Pines line the banks, their majesty perfectly reflected in the dark, tannin stained water. Then up again, and Lake Macquarie's vast waters to set us down in a fine spray back on the wharf, both of us coming out as one with "NOW, THAT WAS SPECIAL".



Images of Tasmania





## Wildlife Rescue

By Julie Pryor



**K**al-El the koala from Warrandyte had

to be put down. He became so weak it would have been cruel to keep him going. A post mortem was done, but nothing showed up for the cause of death.

Another koala was hit by a car on Jumping Creek Road and as usual he was left to die. Unfortunately we were unable to help the animal as he had a depressed fracture of the skull and other problems so he also was put down.

The echidna from Jumping Creek Road has been released. It was eating well and it managed to escape from its enclosure, so it was time to go.

Zoe is still here talking to anyone who will talk to her. Most days she talks to me when I go out to feed her. A wild koala has appeared on the

property next to us. It appears to be a large male, but as yet I have not been too close to it. If he is here to visit Zoe he had better hurry up as she will start her journey home in four days. First stop will be Barwon Heads where she will have a short stay and will be reintroduced to a local gum. Then when satisfied, the handlers will take her back to the Otway Ranges.

She has a tag in her ear and the people at Barwon Heads know roughly where the release occurred in 1996. We know she was relocated from Framlingham to the Otway Ranges in 1996 so she will be put back as close as possible to where she was released in 1996.

Did you know a koalas hand has two thumbs and three fingers? This helps them climb trees.

### Koala Sightings This Month:

Yarra Brae Close, Wonga Park

Webb St, Warrandyte

Summit Crescent, Ringwood

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## Thursday Activity Group (TAG)

Activities will take place on the first Thursday of the month from 10.00am to 12md. Either meet at the depot or on site. **Please note earlier start time for Spadoni's Reserve.**

If you are interested in learning some vegetation management skills and helping improve some special sites in the Park just tag along with the Thursday Activity Group (TAG). No previous experience required.

### TAG dates:

June 2<sup>nd</sup> Spadoni's Reserve. Victoria Rd (Mel ref 274 E8). **Meet at the depot at 9.30am or on site at 10.00am.**

July 7<sup>th</sup> Koornong. Lower car park (Mel ref 23 J 8)

August 4<sup>th</sup> Fourth Hill. Beveridge St. (Mel ref 35 E1)

September 1<sup>st</sup> Fourth Hill. Tunnel St. (Mel ref 35 F2)

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## Serene Summertime

Lara giggling on the swing, pushing her gently again and again, sun splashing delicately through the trees, fish swimming silently in the pond, chickens carefully scratching the earth, while trees sway in the gentle wind. The Bellbird's constant chime, the Magpie's beautiful song, the Kookaburra's boisterous call, this flourishing, fragrant garden, a delightful sensory feast. Life passing softly, slowly, on a serene summers day.

Steven Katsineris October 2002





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### Cranberry Heath

*Astroloma humifusum*



Last month our back page feature was Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*). Another autumn/winter flowering member of the heath family that can be found in Warrandyte is Cranberry Heath. This slow-growing, ground-hugging plant likes to grow on dry stony banks beside tracks. It has narrow somewhat prickly leaves and tubular bright red flowers. While it would be a great addition to any garden, Cranberry Heath is difficult to propagate either from seed or cuttings. However, it can be seen growing naturally in open areas beside the walking track that follows the river between Jumping Creek Reserve and Black Flat.

### FOWSP Membership Form

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Tel. no. ....

Membership    \$20  
Concession    \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

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