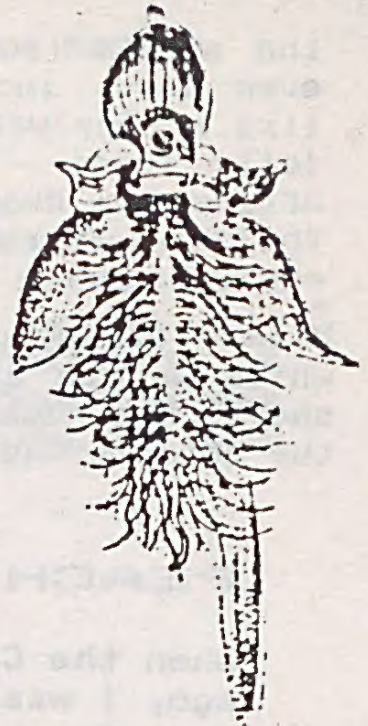


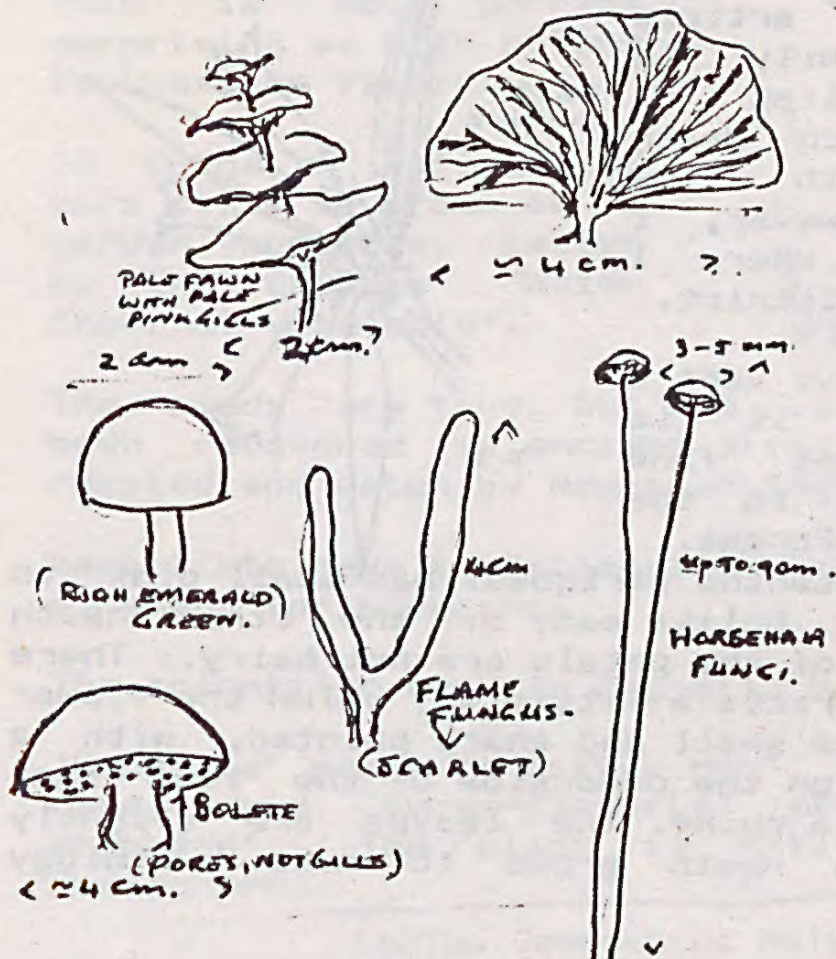
CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST



AUGUST 1988

#137

Fungi Excursion to Firth Park



Despite rather unpromising weather twelve brave (or crazy) people arrived at Firth Park just as the rain started, to search for fungi - not that it rained for long, anyway.

The slides the night before had sharpened our interest, and we hoped to find some real treasures - which we did.

I lost count of the number of fungi found, but there was a huge variety - gilled ones that were emerald green, or large and red brown in fairy rings, or crimson, with white gills and a pink stem, or orange or yellow, or brown etc., etc. One we saw

was the tiny horsehair fungus with its amazingly strong hair-like stem and minute white cap. Another we saw was the one that only grows in manure, and there were two of them, doing all the right things, growing from a kangaroo scat. another one I had never seen before that was shown on the slides were the Chimney Pots, so it was a real thrill to find a group of them pushing their way up through the soil just near the toilets.

Most of these were on the hill or the grassed area, so we headed down the gully after the rain stopped, and, after negotiating

the stream (some sensible people wore gumboots!) we discovered even more, including the interesting little fungus that looks like a tiny water spout, Flame Fungi, Orange Peel Fungi, several jelly fungi - tho' they were past their best, and some very attractive bracket fungi. I was disappointed we didn't find the Blue Fairy Parasols this time, but I guess you can't have everything.

Hilary arranged the ones she had collected on sheets of paper while we ate afternoon tea, and named many of them for us, but she took a number back with her which were new to her, so, despite the cold it was a very rewarding afternoon.

Rita Mills

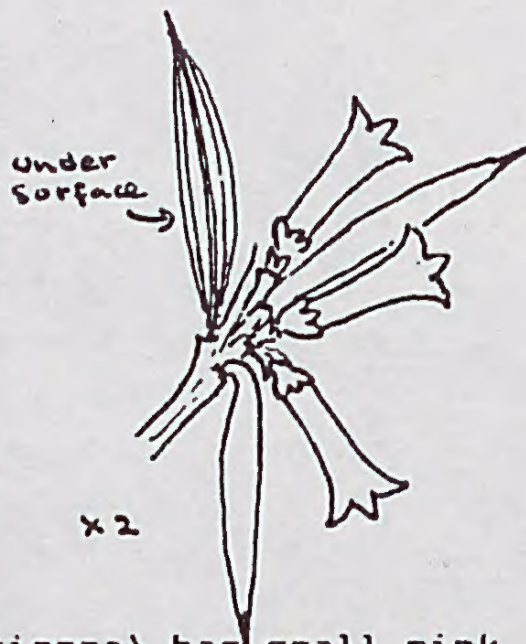
PEACH HEATH AT SANDON

When the Castlemaine Plant List was compiled some years ago, I was surprised that there were no records at all for Peach Heath. It is a plant that is fairly widespread, and grows in similar countryside to that around Castlemaine. In the article on the Heath Family in Castlemaine Naturalist 51 (October 1980), Peach Heath was included, with the comment "rare". However, I could not remember where I had seen it in the district.

Since this time I have kept a look out for it. It is pleasing to at last find Peach Heath growing in the district, at Sandon Forest.

Peach Heath (or *Lissanthe strigosa*) has small pink to white tube flowers. Unlike many of the other heath flowers, the inside of the petals are not hairy. There are small brownish bracts a little way below the flower base. The leaves are small and sharp pointed, with a raised centre-vein on the underside of the leaf that continues to make a spine. The leaves are slightly rolled back. Peach Heath grows to make a twiggy shrublet.

The name 'lissanthe' means smooth (i.e not hairy) and 'strigosa' means 'covered with short hairs', so that the name could be translated, rather loosely, as "hairless and hairy". This curious mixture has an explanation however. Peach Heath differs from other heaths with its smooth inner surface to the petals (and hence 'lissanthe'), and the lower part of the seed case has a coating of short hairs (hence 'strigosa').



E.P.

If you can't beat them, eat them.

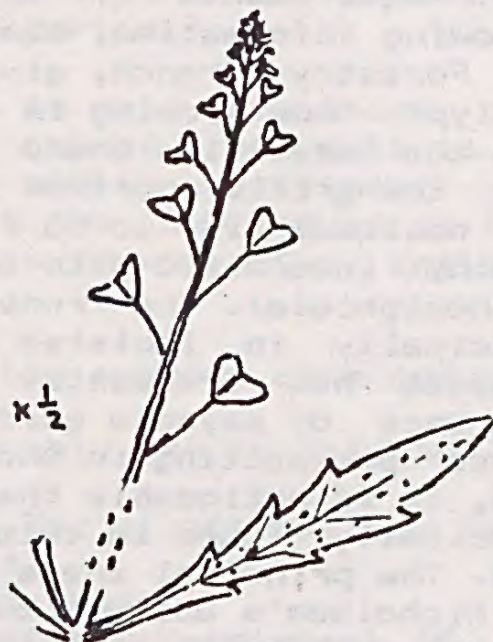
One of a series

SHEPHERD'S PURSE

Shepherd's Purse is moderately common in local gardens, and can often be found growing along roadsides. Its name refers to the heart-shaped seed pods - rather like an old-fashioned shepherd's purse. The leaves are mostly at the base of the plant. In good conditions, it will grow to about half a metre high. but under stress it may reach only a few centimetres. It flowers over many months with small white flowers.

The leaves are reputed to make a highly nutritious vegetable, with large amounts of vitamins A and C. It can be eaten raw, or cooked. The taste is reputed to be like cabbage, but spicier. This is not perhaps surprising as both belong to the same family.

In China, a variety of this plant is grown as a garden vegetable, called by the Chinese "Water Chestnut Vegetable".



The seeds are tiny, but are also edible. Seeds have been recovered in ancient sites, and the seeds were roasted and eaten by American Indians.

Herbalists have traditionally used Shepherd's Purse as a remedy for bleeding.

The scientific name is *Capsella bursa-pastoris*.

'Capsella' means 'a little box', referring to the seed case, and 'bursa-pastoris' means 'purse of the shepherd'. The plant is native of the northern hemisphere.

Spring Campout at Melville Caves

A small group intends to camp out at Mt Kooyoora (Melville Caves) State Park, away from the main Picnic Area, in the first week of the September Holidays.

The intention is to leave the railway goods sheds parking area at 10.30 am on Monday 19th, and return home on the afternoon of Wednesday 21st.

Anyone wishing to join us will be most welcome.

Ruth Mills

EUCALYPTS OF THE CASTLEMAINE GOLDFIELDS

[This is an extract of a Mines Department Report on the Castlemaine Goldfields, dated about 1903]

"Of the original forest growth very few trees remain to show what species formerly covered the ranges. At present however, a vigorous growth of saplings, protected by the Forestry Branch of the Lands Department, covers the greater portion of the field, and will in a short time suffice for the timber and fuel requirements of a large mining centre. The following information, kindly furnished by Mr Jones, of the Forestry Branch, gives the principal species of eucalypts now growing in the surveyed area, together with the localities where they are met with. Scattered over the greater portion of the field the stringybark (*E. obliqua*) is to be found in various stages of growth, intermixed with occasional grey or silver box (*E. hemiphloia*). The ironbark (*E. siderophloia*) occurs principally in isolated patches, and although its presence has frequently been associated with the occurrence of payable gold deposits, so much so as to induce prospecting in the localities where it is met with, it is noticeable that the localities where it is principally found in this district carry very little gold. The principal areas where ironbark is to be found are Nicholson's Gully, Launceston Gully, Norris Gully, and the portion of the field lying to the west of these gullies towards the railway line. Another large patch occurs near the Monk Hill, and extends on either side about a quarter of a mile in an east and west direction by about half a mile north and south. Occasionally small patches occur in other portions of the field, but these are generally of very limited extent. The grey or silver box (*E. hemiphloia*) although scattered throughout the whole field, is principally found in Nicholson's Gully and on the ranges between Chewton and Fryers, mostly to the south of Specimen Hill, being here more plentiful than stringybark or other species. In the latter locality red box (*E. polyanthemos*) occurs sparingly, but this species is not plentiful in the area surveyed. A small patch of yellow box (*E. melliodora*) is found at the head of Poverty Gully, to the west of Monk Hill, occasional trees being scattered in the surrounding locality. The whitegum (*E. hamastorma*) occurs in the gullies and flats towards Campbells Creek, box and stringybark being found on the hills. White ironbark (*E. sideroxylon*) occurs in a small patch at New Year's Gully, near the Junction of Granny Thomas' Gully. Spotted Box occurs, intermixed with red and white species in various localities, but

is not plentiful. Near Golden Point, Forest Creek, the only patch of messmate (*E. amygdalina*) occurring within the surveyed area is met with. Redgum (*E. rostrata*) is found in Granny Thomas' Gully in small quantities, but within the granite area this is almost the sole species, being met with alike on the spurs and low-lying portions.

The timber obtainable from the field at present is for the most part small, having been thinned out principally for fuel. Trees up to 1 foot in diameter suitable for mining timber are scarce. Under the present forest supervision a good supply of timber will be available within a few years, and could then be maintained for a very lengthy period.

The soil covering the hills is only of third class quality, small portions of the of the gullies and flats, when not destroyed by mining operations, being of second class. On the hills the covering of soil is not of any great depth, and is in very few instances suitable for agriculture."

[It is difficult to sort out the species referred to.

Stringybark (*E. obliqua*) Probably Red Stringybark, *E. macrorhyncha*

Grey box - now *E. microcarpa*. The silver box may be Long-leaf box (*e. goniocalyx*)

Ironbark - should be *E. sideroxylon*.

Whitegum. (*E. hamastorma*). Possibly candlebark (*E. rubida*).

White ironbark - often now called yellow gum (*E. leucoxylon*)

Spotted Box. Does any reader have a suggestion for this species?

Messmate (*E. amygdalina*). Possibly Narrow-leaf peppermint (*E. radiata*).

Red gum. Is now *E. camaldulensis*.

Some of the localities mentioned are

Nicholson's Gully, Norris Gully, Launceston Gully - all in Barkers Creek.

Specimen Hill. On Chewton-Fryerstown Road, where old road to Spring Gully leads off.

New-Year Gully and Granny Thomas' Gully - south-east of Campbells Creek sports ground.]

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. Inc. P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine 3450.

Committee: George Broadway (Pres), Barbara Maund (Sec), Maggie Oliver (VP), Rita Mills (Newsletter), Kaye Turner (Program Sec), Ern Perkins (Treas), Margaret Dunne, Geoff Sitch, Robyn Holden, Gunter Liebl, Elma Kelly.
Librarian: Lesley Perkins.

FLORA OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Each State of Australia has its own books describing the plants to be found in that State. Some, like the 'Flora of Victoria', have long been out of print and not obtainable. The South Australian Flora, written by John McConnell Black, has long been a model for other states. Often it was referred to as Black's Flora, or even Black, it was also cheap and easily obtainable. My copy of volume one cost ten shillings and sixpence. Inflation began to cause price increases and volume four had increased to fifteen shillings and sixpence.

To mark the 150th anniversary of South Australia, a completely new edition of the South Australian Flora has been produced, this time edited by Jessop and Toelken. Price for the four volumes is \$140.

The value for money is quite outstanding. The keys are easy to use, and the illustrations are excellent and numerous. For example, all of the Orchids, all of the Rushes and all of the Brachycome daisies are illustrated. Many of the original drawings from Black remain, and there are many additional line drawings and coloured paintings.

It is a recommended purchase. If the cost worries you, the price for the 5.8 kg set comes out at about \$25 a kilogram, about the same price as coffee beans. The books should last longer, and give much more pleasure.

Supper Roster

Aug. - M. Oliver K. Turner,
Sept. - F. & E. Blake.

Kalimna Park Sunday 12/06/88

BIRD	NUMBERS	COMMENTS
Yellow Faced Honeyeater		common
Red Wattlebird		Moderately common
Magpie		a small group
White Eared Honeyeater	1	
White Winged Chough		a large flock approx 30 ?
Silvereye		a small group
Red Browed Firetail		a large flock approx 20
Rufous Whistler	1	wintering over?
Mistletoe Bird	2	a male & female
Brown Thornbill		common
Blackbird		moderately common
Common Bronzewing	1	
Crimson Rosella		a small group
Welcome Swallow	2	

Phillip West.

JULY NOTES

WATTLES IN FLOWER. Wattles in flower (at July 6th) included Mt Morgan Wattle, Woolly Wattle. Some Cootamundra Wattle, Rough Wattle and Golden Wattle have been seen in flower.

TALL GREENHOODS have been seen in flower in Smith's Reef and at Castlemaine North, at the beginning of July. Many were flowering by mid-July at Wattle Flat.

FANTAIL CUCKOO was heard calling at the corner of McManus Road and Odgers Road (22/7/88).

PAIR OF EMUS were seen in a paddock beside the Sutton Grange-Redesdale Road. [Some have been resident at Coliban Park for some years at least]

WOOD-DUCK have been nesting at a Muckleford dam.

BLACK-CHINNED HONEYEATERS have been seen near Sawmill Road, Castlemaine North.

GOLDEN WHISTLERS have been seen at Barkers Creek.

BIRD ACTIVITY AT 118 BLAKELEYS ROAD. A pair of Galahs has been trying, over the past six weeks, to make a hollow in the big Yellow Gum at the rear of the house. Big flocks of Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds have also been seen.

WALMER BIRD SIGHTINGS include Flame Robins, Yellow Robins and Scarlet Robins.

ORCHIDS AT WALMER. Thousands of Mosquito Orchid leaves and masses of other orchid leaves can be seen. Tall Greenhoods and Nodding Greenhoods are in flower here (at Mid-July). Plants in flower include Alpine Grevillea, Hardenbergia, Golden Wattle and Rough Wattle.

FUNGI LIST FOR FIRTH PARK. A list of the fungi seen on the Club excursion can be obtained from E. Perkins. A list of the fungi shown at the July meeting is also available.

CAMPBELL STREET BIRD NOTES. Rufous Whistlers and Spinebills have been seen recently.

WHEELER STREET BIRDS. Scissors Grinder has again been seen and heard.

MONTHLY NOTES. These notes are a place to tell of the things you see. It is pleasing that more and more members are contributing.

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. AGENDA

Fri 12 Aug. Mr GRAEME HALLETT. VENTURE SCOUTING, including films of trips to Central Australia and canoeing along the Murray. A plate for supper please.

Sat 13 Aug. FRYERSTOWN AND VAUGHAN TOUR. 1.30 sharp at SEC, Mostyn Street. Leader is E. Perkins.

Fri-Sun 26-28 Aug. BALLARAT CAMPOUT with W.V.F.N.C.A., at Pax Hill Scout camp. Accommodation available at \$5 per night. Corner Fussell St and Spencer St. [From Creswick road, turn left at Sturt St, past the north side of the Mall, turn right around McDonalds into Main Road. Turn left into Clayton St and then turn left into Spencer St. There is a Pax Hill sign at this corner]

Fri 26: Registration from 4.00 p.m. Evening talk by Helen Burgess - "South of Cape Horn". Supper.

Sat 27: 9.00 Depart for Lal Lal, Bungai, Mt Doran

Sat 27: 12.00 BYO lunch at Lal Lal Iron Mine site

Sat 27: 7.15 Meeting of W.V.F.N.C.A.

Sat 27: 8.15 Greg Parker "Reptiles in Western Victoria" followed by supper.

Sun 28: 9.00 Excursion to Lake Wendouree to observe water birds, vegetation and surrounds. Ferryboat trip.

Sun 28: 12.00 Lunch at Pax Hill. BBQ.

Fri 9 Sept. THE GRAMPIANS with Jane Calder.

Sat 10 Sept. BLACK HILL, KYNETON. 1.30 at SEC.

Sat 17 Sept. TARNAGULLA. Excursion with Maryborough and St Arnaud F.N.C. Meet at Tarnagulla at 11.00 a.m.

Mon 19 - Wed 21 Sept. MELVILLE CAVES CAMPOUT. Contact R. Mills for details.

Sat 1st Oct. BICENTENARY WALK THROUGH KALIMNA
2.00 pm; meet outside high school (Lawson Pde)

Wed 5 Oct. Wed afternoon excursions begin. 4.15

Fri 14 Oct. KAKADU with John Zwar

Sat 15 Oct. SANDON FOREST

Fri 21 Oct. WARBY RANGES. W.V.F.N.C.A. campout

8.00 p.m. Fri: Orchids with Roger Briggs.

9.00 a.m. Sat: Excursion to Warby Ranges

6.30 p.m. Sat: Annual meeting of W.V.F.N.C.A.

8.00 p.m. Sat: Booklaunching - Plants of NE Vic.

9.00 a.m. Sun: Excursion to Reef Hills, Benalla

Sat 29 Oct. MUCKLEFORD FOREST Festival excursion

Sat 5 Nov. MUCKLEFORD FOREST Festival excursion

Fri Nov 11. PAT BINGHAM - A CONTRAST IN ISLANDS