

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

May 1984

90



President : Mr John Dare Ochiltree Farm Clydesdale
Ph. 76 4227

Secretary: Mrs Beres Perry Pound Lane, Guildford
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Meetings are held at the Castlemaine High School,
Blakeley Road, off Lawson Parade, Castlemaine
at 8.00 p.m. second Friday in the month.

Business meetings are held at the Castlemaine Education
Centre, Mostyn St. fourth Thursday on the month at 7-30 p.m.

Outings usually depart from outside the S.E.C. building
in Mostyn St.

Half day outings depart at 1.30 p.m.

Visitors and people interested in Natural History are
cordially invited to attend club dunctions.

One does not have to join before attending an outing or a
meeting.

Editors of the Club Newsletter are always extremely grateful
for any copy submitted by members.

Copy may be handwritten, even scribbled, if legible, or
typed. If typed, lines should be no more than 15 cm in length.
Photographs or sketches would also be welcomed.

THE MONTH AT CAMPBELLS CREEK

by T.E.C.

A tragic month, for as we mentioned in the last issue, a Bronze Winged Pigeon was nesting down the drive. Well she was a wonderful mother, sitting fearlessly on her nest to produce two offspring; but on driving past one day there appeared to be no sign of her so we stopped and inspected the nest only to find all gone and feathers all around. CURSES upon all cats that prowl in the night.

The Eastern Rosellas and Crimson Rosellas have been around inspecting the berries on the Cotoneasters for ripeness. Several Eucalypts are in flower bringing the Red Wattle Birds with all their noise. Honeyeaters are still missing although an Eastern Spinebill flew in for a while. Plenty of Blue Wrens, Silver-Eyes and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, also the Rufous Whistlers were back to the bird bath.

Processional caterpillars are on the move so watch out as they are very partial to Wattles and the first sign is a severely defoliated plant. Usually you can find them bunched together and hiding among the leaves on the ground close to the trunk of the tree. No sign this of the Blue-tongued Lizard which winters in a built-up area of old railway sleepers but surprise to come across a baby B.T about 8 cm long at the bottom of the vegetable garden.

To finish the month, our first Scarlet Robin arrived.

Bird List at CAMPBELLS CREEK 1979-84

A. Permanent residents or daily sightings

Magpies
Galahs
Grey Currawong
Yellow-rumped Thornbills
Silver-eyes
Crimson Rosella
Eastern Rosella
Kookaburra
Peewee
Little Thornbills
Bronze-winged Pigeons
Australian Crow

continued page 3

B. Birds staying for long periods

Spur-winged Plover
Willie Wagtail
Red Wattle Bird
Eastern Spinebill
Blue Wren
White-faced Honeyeater
Grey Thrush
Grey Fantail
Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
New Holland Honeyeater

C. Infrequent Visitors

Scarlet Robin
Red-browed Finch
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
White-winged Chough
Spotted Pardalote
White Ibis
White-necked Heron
Restless Flycatcher
Golden Whistler
Pallid Cuckoo
Welcome Swallow
Fork-tailed Swift
Mistletoe Bird
Eastern Shrike Tit
Red-capped Robin
White-naped Honeyeater
Rufous Whistler
Red backed Parrot
Several unidentified, including two Hawks

THORNBILLS

I chanced to remark recently to a friend who is a member of the Ballarat Club that I was not entirely certain of some of the visitors to my garden. She obligingly swooped away to rummage among some papers and shortly emerged triumphantly bearing the chart which you will find overleaf. This chart was produced by a knowledgeable member of the Ballarat club to assist members with their identification problems and grateful acknowledgement is made to her although I cannot remember the lady's name.

Even today though they are still giving me trouble as the little feathered friends will not sit still long enough to let me have a good look at them, and they usually manage to hide behind any leaves while I try to peer at their irises.

<u>THORNBILLS</u> Acanthiza spp.	RUMP AND UPPERTAIL COVERTS	FOREHEAD AND CROWN	FACE AND EAR COVERTS	UNDERPARTS	IRIS	HABITS
YELLOW (Little) A. nana	PLAIN (NON-CONTRASTING)	UNMARKED	STREAKED - WHITE SHAFTS OF E.C.	UNMARKED - THROAT BUFF	DARK	ARBOREAL - CANOPY
STRIATED A. lineata	PLAIN	BROWN WITH DISTINCT PALE STREAKS	"	IRREGULAR DARK STREAKING	PALE	ARBOREAL - CANOPY
WEEBILL S. brevirostris	UTC generally yellowish than back	DARK AND UNMARKED	E.C. FINELY STREAKED BLACK: WHITE EYEBROW pale, remainder yellow	UNMARKED; throat pale, remainder yellow	PALE	ARBOREAL - CANOPY
YELLOW-RUMPED A. chrysorrhoa	BRIGHT YELLOW AND CONTRASTING	DARK WITH CONSPICUOUS WHITE SPOTTING	SCALLOPED	UNMARKED	PALE	TERRESTRIAL
BUFF-RUMPED A. reguloides	BUFF AND CONTRASTING	FAINT SCALLOPING	FAINT SCALLOPS	SLIGHT THROAT SPECKLING	PALE	MAINLY TERRESTRIAL
SAMPHIRE A. iradalei	DULL BUFF BUT EXTENT VARIES: can. inconspicuous	"	"	"	PALE	"
WESTERN A. inornata	PLAIN	BUFF WITH FAINT SCALLOPING	E.C. BUFF WITH FAINT SCALLOPS	UNMARKED	PALE	GENERALLY ARBOREAL
BROWN A. pusilla	RUSTY BROWN; not v. conspicuous	RUFOUS WITH DISTINCT SCALLOPING	FAINT SCALLOPS	PRONOUNCED DARK STREAKING	DARK	LOW ARBOREAL
BROAD-TAILED A. apicalis	REDDISH-BROWN; more conspicuous than A. pusilla	NOT RUFOUS, WITH PALE SCALLOPING	"	PRONOUNCED DARK STREAKING	DARK	LOW ARBOREAL
TASMANIAN A. ewingi	RUSTY NOT v. CONSPICUOUS	BROWN WITH FAINT SCALLOPING	"	MOTTLED - LESS CONSPICUOUS THAN A. pusilla	DARK	ARBOREAL
MOUNTAIN A. katherina	RUSTY, FAIRLY CONSPICUOUS	FAINT SCALLOPING	"	INDISTINCT STREAKING	PALE	ARBOREAL
CHESTNUT- RUMPED A. uropygialis	CHESTNUT CONTRASTING	"	"	UNMARKED	PALE	MAINLY TERRESTRIAL
SLATE-BACKED A. robustirostris	PINKISH-BROWN CONTRASTING	FINE DARK STREAKS ON GREY HEAD	"	UNMARKED	DARK	ARBOREAL

On the 29th of April, while staying with friends in Ballarat, my wife and I were taken to view the old station homestead "Ercildoune". The weather on that day was absolutely perfect for such an activity and the old house was quite impressive looking as it does like a Scottish castle set against a backdrop of the rugged, granitic Mt Misery.

During the whole time however, the air was thick with threads of spider web, varied lengths of it floating lazily across the sky and often coming to rest on house, trees, grass, on the lake, and on oneself till one felt quite encumbered. And of course one found tiny spiders crawling wherever the threads landed, on the clothes, in the hair, everywhere. On that day, millions of young spiders must have left home to make a new one for themselves elsewhere.

In the afternoon, the low sun reflected off a carpet of gossamer lying across the grass, I wonder what the sheep thought of it all.

A Walk to Kalimna Point

by T.E.C.

From the road through a modern timber entrance, suitably inscribed, you find attached to the rear of a post a metal box with a supply of Tourist leaflets. These wonderfully-compiled leaflets set out in detail the features of the walking track through Kalimna. All the trees listed alongside their respective numbered concrete pegs. All this work compiled by the good grace of our present-day Field Nats.

So on up the steep gravel track towards the top of the rise past the Box trees just shedding their bark revealing misshapen white ghost-like limbs. At the top the writer stops to allow his breath and the ghosts to catch up. Then to sit and reflect. What do we owe our forebears? Who were Messrs Daniels, Penssen, Cocking, Hattam, the donors of the seven foot long concrete seats dated 1930. Was that not the Depression era?

Then the direction marker presented by W.J. Whitchell in 1926. Who cast the bronze plate listing all the compass points, even

to remind us that Kalimna Point is 1120 feet above sea level. Who donated the funds to build what must have been a substantial rotunda? Still standing solidly defying the vandals although missing its panels to the vandals' B.B.Q's. Where did the old W.W.I type field gun stamped 1918 come from? Dedication and generosity from a band of citizens? What did they hope for? Perhaps they sit wherever they are and ponder like me.

THE MINES of CRESWICK

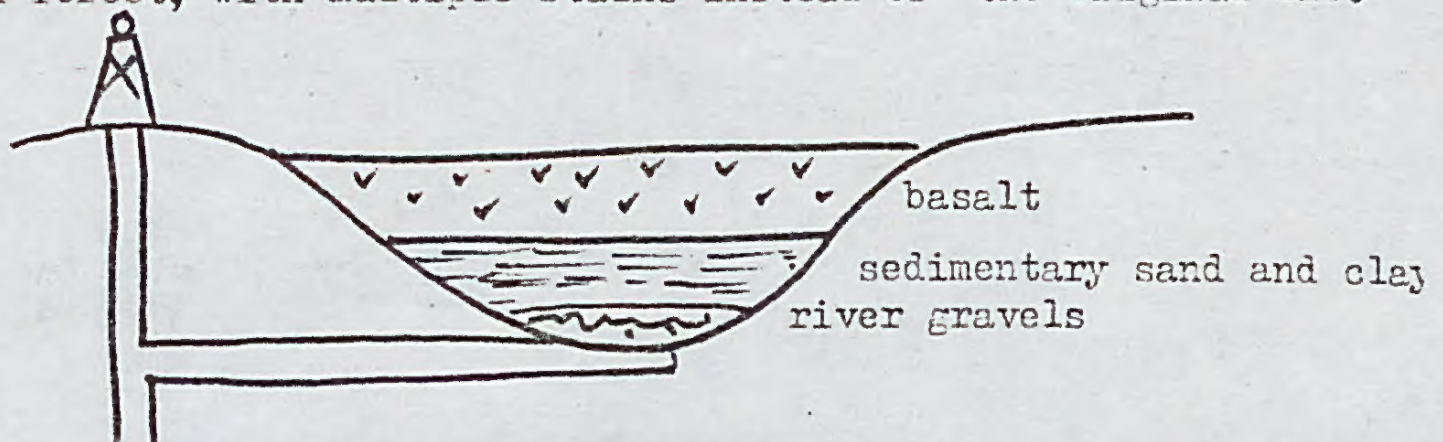
A report of the talk given to the C.F.N.C. by Mr Albert Perry of Creswick on Friday, April 13, 1984.

N.B. pronounced Creswick, not Cressick.

For 5 or so years after the official discovery of gold in Creswick Creek, the alluvial gold was relatively easy to get and sparked off the main rush to the area. After the alluvial was gone the remaining gold was located in deep leads under old river gravels, which had been buried under lava flows when the volcanoes in the area erupted. The Bridge Mall in Ballarat was a gravel pit, about 20 feet deep and very wet. Work was hard and very difficult. Life too was hard, imagine spending a winter living under canvas in wet gravel in Ballarat. It is no wonder that miners were reluctant to part with their licence fees.

Deep leads were explored in other fields, from the gravel pits to the Ballarat West plateau, where there was a 300 ft deep layer of basalt overlying the river gravels. At Creswick there was much the same thing. On the North side of the creek was basalt, the creek formerly ran North not West.

The technique of mining was to sink shafts to the side of the old river bed, then to cut adits horizontally under the basalt to come up under the old river bed with its gold bearing gravel. However the old river beds still carried water which constituted a considerable problem to the mining operations. Pumping machinery had to be installed and in some cases pumping went on for years before the actual mining could commence. By contrast, the deep leads in California were elevated and quite dry, while in Alaska the ground was permanently frozen solid and so was self supporting when shafts were sunk. In Victoria, timber was required for pit props and also to fuel the steam engines which drove the pumps. Pumps were imported from Cornwall and Wales and steam engines from Scotland. Timber was arted from miles around, up to 50 miles distance, e.g. Korweinguboorra, where timber tram ways were used to fetch the logs. All original forest disappeared to be replaced, if at all by a regrowth forest, with multiple stalks instead of the original one.



CLUB PROGRAMME

Meeting: May 11.

Mr Bram Mawson from Mornington Peninsula to speak on
"Orchids"

Outing: Saturday, May 12

The "Oak Forest" Harcourt.

A very short trip to the foot of Mt Alexander where there is a plantation of Oaks of various types, Ashes and Pines. A very pleasant spot in Autumn as the setting sun shines through the yellowing leaves. Very easy walking.

Depart from S.E.C. building, Mostyn St at 1.30 p.m.

Outing: Saturday, June 9

A guided tour of Eucalypts of the area lead by the very knowledgeable E.P.

Notes from the Business Meeting.

The most important item of business discussed was the proposal to incorporate, which will be raised at the May meeting.

In order for this to be done, it will be necessary to alter the constitution and notice of motion has been given to this effect.

Treasurer Frank Meyer reported a credit balance of \$135-95, but the cost of incorporating will make serious inroads into that.

It was decided to discontinue our subscription to "The Victorian Naturalist" as it is read only by the club librarian and now costs \$16.

The possibility of a campout for later in the year was discussed further with the following being suggested as possible places :-

Grampians

Melville Caves

Wychitella

Lake Boort

Mt Cole.

Any others ?