

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

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107

Cup Moth



Meetings of
Castlemaine Field
Naturalists Club
Inc. are held at the
High School, Lawson
Pde. at 8 p.m. on
the second Friday of
each month.

Business meetings
are held on the
fourth Thursday of
the month (except
Dec), usually at 38
Campbell St.
All members are
invited to attend
business meetings.

Visitors and people
interested in
Natural History are
invited to attend
Club functions.

Glaciated Pavement,
Eppalock.

An Afternoon at Harcourt Reserve

I'd been told about all the orchids - and other flowers - out at the Harcourt Reserve behind the cricket ground, for about three weeks, and decided last Saturday (26th Oct) to go and see for myself. I missed the Red spider orchids (*Caledenia pattersonii* var. *concolor*), but I did find ten other species in flower - Dotted sun-orchids (*Thelymitra ixiodes*), Slender sun-orchid (*T. pauciflora*) Salmon sun-orchid (*T. rubra*), Scented sun-orchids (*T. megalyptra* - was *aristata*), Waxlips (*Glossodia major*), Brown-beards (*Calochilus robertsonii*), Greencomb spiderorchids (*Caledenia dilitata*), Musk caledenia (*C. angustata*), Hooded caledenia (*C. cucullata*) and Pink fingers (*C. carnea* - only it's *C. something-or-other-else* now). There were lots of seed pods of many other species all over the reserve.

As well as the orchids there were many other plants in flower. The thousands of Chocolate lilies seemed to be just finished, but the Flax lilies promise to be quite a show soon. There were still a few Billy buttons, and ride flowers were still blooming, even a few Fairy wax, Pink bells, *Grevillia alpina*, and *Hardenbergia* were still flowering.

There was a good show of Everlastings, especially on the west side, Milk maids (*Burchardia*), *Stackhousia*, *Daphne heath*, Blue bells, Showy parrot pea (*Dilwynia sericia*), *Podelepis*, Yam daisy, Long leaf bitter pea, Mat pea, and a nice patch of Fringe myrtle down near the pines on the north side.

There were a lot of buds on some very healthy Grass trigger plants, and Tall guinea flower (*Hibbertia stricta*), and *H. exutiacies* were there. There were also a number of Bush peas (*Pultenea largiflorens*) coming into flower.

At one spot a Brown quail flew up from a spot a yard in front of me, while a Golden whistler made sure I knew he was there!

A few years ago there was quite a bit of concern among local Naturalists that the Reserve was being spoilt because many flowers were being picked and rubbish dumped. Now it seems that it is improving again, and regaining some of its former glory, though there is still the problem of weeds from farmland on one side, and the dumping of garden rubbish on the other.

OCTOBER AT CAMPBELLS CREEK

Terry Collins.

In the September issue of the Castlemaine Naturalist you would have read the article on Common Insect Pests of Trees wherein was the mention of Cup Moths. A drive around the bush and you will see the evidence of their dastardly work, with trees literally defoliated by the score. Our lovely gums are suffering and look pathetic. I have killed thousands of the larvae as they crawl up and down the trunks. So bad is the infestation that nearly all of our birds have deserted us. No Thornbills, Wrens, Fantails or Honeyeaters; only Parrots nesting, 3 or 4 Wattlebirds and only 2 White-faced Honeyeaters. Even the Currawong family with their one nestling has gone, and the usual nesting by the Thornbills has not taken place. All is caused by the Cup Moth larvae I think. Sadly these pests do not seem to have any predators, although about eight years ago when there was a minor infestation, about 20 crows camped in our trees for over a fortnight, feeding on the larvae as they crawled up and down the boughs.

Our two hares have produced a youngster and the three often hop past the house.

Chocolate Lilies are putting on a late show, but are very small, and the Rice Flowers are still in bloom.

Three types of lizard are still around. The young blue-tongue is staying under the wooden steps and is being fed every two days. The Shingle-back is so fat that he can hardly crawl.

On a recent trip to Bendigo we were saddened to see so many young Magpies killed along the road. It is unfortunately the same everywhere and perhaps in time the parents will learn to educate and warn their young.

BOTANIC GARDENS EXCURSION

Barbara Maund.

A bucketing thunderstorm earlier in the afternoon was unable to deter five members for the mid-week Botanic Gardens stroll. The walk was around the lake, along Barkers Creek to the extreme north end of the reserve

and back to the car park - half of the journey being in drizzle. As the weather was mild and still and the earth and trees sodden, different details took our eye in the damp hazy atmosphere - dark overarching trunks and branches; lime-yellow greens of Oak, Elm and Ash flowers; and bowed tree outlines from moisture laden leaves.

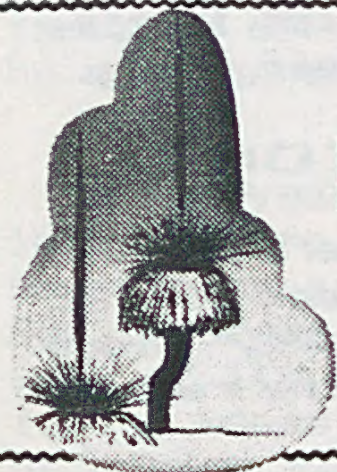
The previous week a Bristle-leaf Oak had been planted as a memento of the 150th committee garden rejuvenation project. On our visit it was observed that during the the ensuing week the tree had moved a metre nearer the path!

Only four species of non-water birds were seen, the most interesting being the resident Sacred Kingfishers. The lake supports a large lingering Mallard X Duck population, which limits a birdwatchers pleasure somewhat.

As there are many signs of both plant and general improvement, the gardens are well worth an amble. Watch especially for the lovely effect promised when 40 tree ferns come into leaf on a steep, well shaded bank of Barkers Creek near the footbridge.

One of the earliest exotic trees planted in Victoria - an Oak planted by Prince Albert in 1867, shades the west end of the barbeque shelter. If anyone is interested I have a list of the new tree plantings, given by the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

A CAR STICKER - 30 cents



Western Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association

**We Study and Preserve Native Flora,
Fauna & Geology**

25th YEAR CELEBRATED IN '85

Car stickers are now on sale at 30 cents. These are produced, at this Clubs suggestion, by the Western Victoria Field Naturalists Clubs Association. The stickers will be used by Field Naturalists throughout Western Victoria.

Quite Cuckoo?

from Rita Mills

Here is an extract from a letter I recieved from my daughter recently, which I am sure will be of interest to the 'birdos'.

My daughter lives in Moyston, which is 10 miles west of Ararat.

'I collected a cuckoo's egg along with the chooks' eggs tonight! I couldn't quite believe my eyes, but we looked up all our books, and it seems it's a black-eared cuckoo, although we've never seen one. They are very hard to spot, apparantly. The main thing about the egg is that the colour rubs off, which the Readers' Digest book says is a characteristic of cuckoo eggs. So top that!'

I don't think I can.

Inelegant Encounter

On the way home from my daughter's place in Moyston recently, when we were about 10 miles this side of Ararat, I saw a movement at the side of the road. The inelegant gait was quite unfamiliar to me, and so I pointed it out to Doug, who slowed the car. As well he did because a Koala ambled onto the road in front of us, and briefly squatted down before suddenly moving off at a smart gallop not unlike the gait of the ground dwelling monkeys of the African savannah. I was surprised to find that koalas have such a turn of speed!



Rita Mills



W.V.F.N.C.A PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The feature of 1985 is the W.V.F.N.C.A.'s 25th birthday, so a few details of our birth are noted here. The association was conceived by the Wimmera Field Naturalists Club who called a meeting of Western Victorian Clubs on 20th August, 1960 at Halls Gap.

The meeting was chaired by Ian McCann of Stawell. During the course of the meeting Eric Muir of the Wimmera Club was elected first President of the W.V.F.N.C.A. and Miss A. Jordan the first secretary.

The association was open to all Victorian Clubs west of the 144°30' meridian.

From the outset general business included action taken to exclude persons with vested commercial interests from the committees of management of National Parks; discussion was held on a Grampians National Park, and, twenty years later, this has become a reality.

The Association showed an immediate interest in conservation as it rightly should have, because it is our most basic interest that the natural history we study should be there to study.

After 3 or 4 formative years, the basic format of campouts, meetings and activities for autumn, winter and spring evolved; these we still use today some 21 years on.

Some people refuse to become involved, on the grounds that the Association achieves nothing, and campouts are just socialising. This attitude belittles the Association's efforts in conservation pressure, assistance in publishing the A.C.B. plant lists, the unseen benefits of people with like interests getting together and discussing ideas and problems. The way in which one club conducts an outing or overcomes a problem or presents natural history information can inspire or influence other clubs in their efforts, and socialising is a great way to spend a weekend anyway! Different viewpoints, outings with local expertise, meeting people with a common interest and establishing friendships makes socialising very pleasant, and is one of the reasons that so many people make the effort to keep these dates free, and travel to and join in all of the activities for a weekend.

It is infinitely better than Clubs being isolated and insular in their ideas.

The outings over the past 12 months, from Stawells Halls gap Campout to Timboon's Kangarooie Campout with its swamp life.

waterbirds, bristlebirds, seascapes, history, plants and the unforgettable glowworms, and then Bendigo's Axedale Campout with its very professional Audio Visual and Video plus seeing interesting rarer plants and areas. Our warm thanks to these Clubs and to Colac, whose efforts will, I am sure, provide an excellent weekend, for hosting over the 1984/85 year.

Issues that arose during the year point to the need for continual vigilance to protect the environment and all aspects of natural history, from unnecessary exploitation by well organised groups with blanket opposition to any form of conservation.

We must consider all issues raised, and if worthy, support various groups such as N.F.A.C., C.C.V. and other activist groups, to counter these well organised oppositions.

One subject that has been raised during the year is the lack of awareness of most people as to what a Field Naturalist is, so an effort is needed by all clubs to correct this position by including in any advertising or publicity, some simple concise wording to explain our activities, so with your help we can gradually educate the general public!

Another issue that is apparent is the need to introduce youngsters to the study of Natural History. In many Clubs the members are getting along in years and there is not always younger members coming along to ensure continuity of the clubs; the Association hopes that you will give these thoughts your careful consideration and assess the position of your own club.

The admiration of all Western Victorians must once again be expressed for the efforts of Cliff Beauglehole in his continuing task of listing Victorias Vascular Plants; and also to the Portland Club for their distribution of the books; Ian McCann for his Kingston Tours fund raising efforts, including the cheque he is presenting this weekend; and to the Trustees for overseeing the finances.

Thanks are due to our secretary, Win McPhee, for her excellent job over the past year, Isabelle Humphries for typing and duplicating, and to all members who helped, either in supporting their clubs hosting of campouts, or by coming along and joining in. Without your attendance there would not be any W.V.F.N.C.A. - you are the Association.

Thank you
Bob Humphries, President 1984/85 year.

CUP MOTHS. This month Terry Collins has written about Cup Moth damage to local trees. Members are asked to bring reports to the next meeting. Will the trees recover? Are predators helping? What should be done?

PLANT LIST A new edition of the Castlemaine Plant list will be produced shortly. Do you have any additions for it?

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. AGENDA

Excursions leave promptly at the times shown.

Fri 8 Nov AFRICA. Dr Gretna Weste will speak on "Game Parks in Tanzania, finding Fossil man in the Olduvai Gorge, and climbing Mt Kilimanjaro". NOTTO BE MISSED.

Wed 13 Nov WATTLE FLAT. This is the last of the Wednesday afternoon excursions. Meet cr Mostyn and Kennedy St at 4.15 p.m.

Sat 9 Nov. BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB will be joining with us and Maggie Oliver. Bring your binoculars. Meet 10.30 a.m. at the Market Car Park.

Fri 13 Dec MEMBERS AND VISITORS. Bring some specimens, some observations and maybe some slides or photographs, or some of your experiences (about Natural History!). And bring a plate.

Sat 14 Dec FRYERS RIDGE. Leave SEC, Mostyn St at 1.30. We will look at the late Spring wildflowers. This is about the best time to visit the Ridge area.

Feb 1986. BENDIGO SETTLING PONDS with Maryborough F.N.C.

CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

Post Office Box 324, Castlemaine.

President: Mr Jack Dare, Clydesdale

Secretary: Mrs Beri Perry, Guildford

Treasurer: Mr Stan Bruton, View St.

Newsletter Editor George Broadway is back from Western Australia, with lots of interesting things to tell us, and with slides to match. Watch for the meeting program for next year.

The large number of contributions to the Castlemaine Naturalist over the past few months has made the job of acting editor very pleasant. E.P.
