



The Clematis



The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Bairnsdale & District Field Naturalists Club Inc. A0006074C

P.O. Box 563, Bairnsdale Victoria 3875 www.bairnsdalefieldnaturalists.com.au

Issue No. 122

Summer 2019/20

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Executive 2019/20

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Issue date

December 2019



Galbraith's or Aniseed Boronia (*Boronia galbraithiae*) Photo by Rob Cronin

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PROGRAMME JANUARY TO JUNE 2020

Date	Activity	Time	Meeting Place	Destination	Subject/Rated	Leader/Speaker
JANUARY						
10 TH -13 TH	Camp-out	TBA	TBA	Dinner Plain		Jen Wilkinson
FEBRUARY						
Sat 1 st	Juniors	5.30pm	All Abilities Park B'dale	Eagle Point	BBQ @ Eagle Point	Zannah Laird
Thur 13 th	Committee meeting	4.00pm	Pat McPherson's home			
Frid 21 st	General meeting	7.30pm	Noweyung Centre		Rats on Gabo Island Eastern Bristle bird	Mick Bramwell
Sun 23 rd	Excursion		TBA			
MARCH						
Sun 1 st	Bushwalk	9.00am 9.45am	Bridge Club Nowa Nowa	Pettmans Beach		Noel Williamson
Sun 1 st	Juniors	9.00am 9.50am	All Abilities Park B'dale Nowa Nowa store	Old Reservoir, Youngs Ck. Orbost		Connie Tuck
Thur 12 th	Comm. meeting	4.00pm	Margaret Regan's home			
Frid 20 th	General meeting	7.30pm	Noweyung Centre	TBA		
Sun 22 nd	Excursion	9.00am	Bridge Club	Blond Bay to Meerlieu		James Turner
Sun 29 th	Bushwalk	9.00am 9.45am	Bridge Club Red Knob	Buchan Reserve		Noel Williamson
APRIL						
Sun 5 th	Juniors		Easter Camp	Naracoorte S.A	Naracoorte Caves	Vict Junior Field Naturalist Group
Thurs 9 th	Comm. meeting	4.00pm	Pauline Stewart's home			
Frid 17 th	General meeting	7.30pm	Noweyung Centre		Birds	Ken Russell
Sun 19 th	Excursion	9.00am	Bridge Club	Buchan area		James Turner
		9.45am	Red Knob			
Sun 26 th	Bushwalk	9.00am 9.45am	Bridge Club Nowa Nowa	Nowa Nowa Mountain Bike track		Noel Williamson
MAY						
Sun 3 rd	Juniors	9.00am	All Abilities Park B'dale	Nunionong		Heather Watson
Thur 7 th	Comm. meeting	4.00pm	Jen Wilkinson's home			
Frid 15 th	General meeting	7.30pm				David Miralles
Sun 17 th	Excursion	9.00am 9.45am	Bridge Club Nowa Nowa	Newmerella	Fungi trip	James Turner
Sun 24 th	Bushwalk	9.00am	Bridge Club	Old Mitchell River Weir		Noel Williamson
JUNE						
Sun 7 th	Juniors	9.00am	All Abilities Park B,dale	Mt Elizabeth		Sarah Adcock
Sun 21 st	Excursion		TBA			
Sun 28 th	Bushwalk	9.00am	Bridge Club	Lanky Tom Creek		Noel Williamson

BAIRNSDALE & DISTRICT FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC

Reg. No. A0006074C

ANNUAL REPORTfor the year ending 30th June 2019

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the 2018-19 financial year which has been one of highs and lows. First the lows-

Drought

The year has again been defined by the drought. Our illustrious botanical co-ordinator James Turner describes it as one of the most serious in our lifetime in East Gippsland. Even though we had a few reasonable falls of rain on and off across the region which kept a few things flowering, the sub soils remain totally dry.

Die back of shrubs and trees can be seen in the forest; fungi were mainly non-existent this year and orchid populations in particular have been very poor for the third year running.

Environment

In addition to the drought there are other issues that impact our environment and your committee continues to hold a watching brief on appropriate ones; participating when feasible and forwarding material on to members to keep them informed. Current ones are:

- (i) the Victorian Government's 4 year program to reform its forest management system.
- (ii) proposed Kalbar resources mineral sands mine at Fingerboards in Glenaladale
- (iii) Victorian Government Draft Deer Management Strategy.

Deaths

Death was still a spectre over our Club and its members this year. Dianne Laws and John Saxon both lost their mothers this year and Pat McPherson, her best friend and soul mate of fifty years standing. A former long time member Ron Fitzclarenc passed away and the Club was rocked to the core by the untimely death of Fran Bright on 14th July 2018. Fran was a member of the Committee and an avid, committed field naturalist whose knowledge of the East Gippsland flora was enhanced by her stunning photographs which feature in many of our publications.

Along with her church community the Club catered for the afternoon tea following Fran's funeral service at which I spoke on behalf of the Club and Andrew Bould and Diane Weir put together supporting PowerPoint presentations.

That's enough gloom and doom – now for some highs!

Membership

Our Club is going from strength to strength as our membership continued to grow to 155 this year, an all time high. This membership is made up of 79 associated with the junior group (parents and children) and 76 in the adults.

Rare orchids

James Turner and some Orbost/Marlo members and Bill Kosky our member from Melbourne travelled into far East Gippsland looking for summer orchids around Mt Drummer in remote country on the lower Wingan River where they found a new threatened orchid population – the Bonnet Orchid (*Cryptostylis erecta*) that had never been known in that area.

Another exciting find was a patch of Curled Leek Orchids (*Prasophyllum retroflexum*) at Timbarra Plain. This is only the second known location of this species in Victoria. The other site is a fenced area in the nearby Nunniong Plain.

Metallic Sun Orchid

The Club has been monitoring these rare orchids which were discovered by James Turner at the Blond Bay Wildlife Reserve in 1990.

We didn't expect to find any orchid plants this year due to the state of the 2 fenced enclosures that were erected in 1997 and 2005 to protect them and the serious drought. The enclosures are badly breached and allow grazing and are now almost completely overgrown with white Burgan (*Kunzea ericooides*) and Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*).

Nonetheless, amongst all this we found 26 flowering spikes and 13 leaves. A great result.

Publications

The first edition of our landmark publication Orchids of East Gippsland – A Field Guide has been revised; its texts updated and its features updated in the form of a spiral binding for easier handling in the field. 200 copies were printed.

The extensive revision was undertaken by James Turner and meticulously proof read by Neville Walsh, Senior Conservation

Botanist, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne and Margaret Regan our resident botanist. Jennifer Wilkinson co-ordinated the whole process and launched the new edition at our general meeting in October.

Pauline Stewart reprised the marketing strategy that she developed for the first edition that saw the 1100 copies sold and/or placed in public libraries. This has been a masterly effort and a big thank you to our gifted team.

Work is continuing on our next publication –Wild flowers of East Gippsland.

Jennifer Wilkinson and James Turner are documenting names of the plant families alphabetically; their genus, species, common name; distribution and are half way through the texts. They will concentrate on taking photos next year and sourcing photographs from members have been photographing madly for some time now. Publication is scheduled for 2020-21.

Now for the business of the year.

COMMITTEE/CO-ORDINATORS

The Committee of four members and five ordinary members was elected and allocated portfolios at the AGM on 19th October 2018.

• President	Pat McPherson
• Vice President	Jennifer Wilkinson
• Secretary (Under the Act)	Pat McPherson
• Treasurer	Margaret Regan
Botanic Group Co-ordinator	James Turner
Bushwalking Group Co-ordinator	Noel Williamson
Junior Group Co-ordinator	Vicki Fraser
Newsletter Editor	Pauline Stewart
Website Administrator	Jennifer Wilkinson

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Ten committee meetings were held during the year.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Six general meetings were scheduled during the year but two were cancelled – one because it clashed with Good Friday and the other because the guest speaker couldn't make it at the last minute.

The four that were held were preceded by a presentation by a guest speaker. It is the diversity of our guest speakers that contributes to one of our purposes 'to further the awareness and study of natural history within the East Gippsland community'.

The average attendance was 18 members and visitors who heard the following presentations:

Don Love	Marine life of the Gippsland Lakes
Lorna King	Life as a wildlife carer and snake catcher
Len & Jacqui Axen	Western Australian wildflowers
Ray Hack	Development of Eastwood Estate.

In addition to these presentations the Club hosted an information session presented by Fungimap Australia in St Mary's Hall on Saturday night 25th May which was opened to the public and over a hundred people attended.

Fungimap's Dr Sapphire McMullan-Fisher's topic was 'Putting East Gippsland fungi on the map' and Dr Tom May, Senior Research Scientist (Mycology) at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria gave an insight into 'Rare and threatened fungi'.

A big thank you to Andrew Bould for facilitating and publicising this presentation and for the informative articles and photographs he prepared for *The News* to promote all of our other guest speakers.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Field excursions

Monthly field excursions were once again ably planned and led by James Turner starting with a trip to Sarsfield in July. The August trip to Kenny Forest was cancelled because of bad weather but the September visit to Mt Raymond went ahead.

Kath Tisdale, our member from the LaTrobe Valley took us to Mullundung Forest and Jack Smith Lake in South Gippsland in October 2018 and James resumed the leadership in November for a trip to Timbarra and Green Hills.

January 2019 started off with our annual visit to Bentley and Timbarra Plains on Nunniong Plateau followed by excursions to Cape Conran in March. April saw us poking along the Tambo River to Ensay then crossing the mountains to Buchan.

The February excursion was cancelled because of bush fires in the area.

May was a very special excursion facilitated by Andrew Bould who co-opted the Fungimap Australia crew (who were surveying in the area), to undertake a fungi excursion at Fairy Dell on the Sunday following the information session they presented at St Mary's hall the night before. This was led by Dr Sapphire McMullan-Fisher and Dr Tom May and included our junior group members as well as members of the public who turned out in large numbers.

The last excursion for the year was a historic walk and talk in the Bullumwaal area led by Phil Large.

Thank you to Andrew and Kath for your contributions to the programme this year and thank you James another wonderful year of discovery.

The botanical and avian findings on these excursions are documented in great detail in Margaret Regan's scholarly reports in the Clematis but this year James Turner, Jennifer Wilkinson, Audrey Van den Berg and Andrew Bould stepped up to do the reporting honours when Margaret was hospitalised for many weeks.

Field excursions (Junior group)

In addition to the natural history focus, the junior group excursions always include other experiences and activities such as microscope work, walks, swims, picnics and they often end with a camp fire or BBQ.

They were carefully planned and ably led by Vicki Fraser who has sourced an amazing group of specialists this year to share their knowledge with our enthusiastic young Field Nats.

They covered a range of locations in East Gippsland and the average attendance was 25.

They began in August 2018 when the junior group had a fantastic day learning about the importance of the Grey Headed Flying Fox colony in the ecosystem; how they interact with each other and the threats to their survival and habitat on the Mitchell River. This was conducted by Lisa Roberts from Friends of Bats and Habitat and was followed by a walk along the banks of the Mitchell River to their campsite to see them interacting with each other.

In September the junior group visited Deptford to learn about the gold mining history of the area from Travis Whitfield from the Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria.

October involved an interpretive walk/talk at Jemmy's Point, Lakes Entrance with Tom Crooke from East Gippsland Rainforest Catchment Management Network which focused was on rainforest rehabilitation and included planting 50 trees and cleaning up rubbish and was followed by a BBQ lunch.

The November excursion featured a talk about marine mammals (dolphins, seals and whales) by Matt from the Marine Mammal Foundation-Lakes Entrance. This was followed by a walk to the Entrance.

The juniors celebrated the end of the year with their annual dig for marine fossils at the Limestone Quarry at Hospital Creek.

2019 started with the May excursion which was held at the sandbar at Lake Tyers where local author Wayne Thorpe explained the importance of allowing the lake to go through its natural opening/closing cycle and how this is connected to the local Dreamtime story.

The juniors participated in the Fungi Foray at Fairy Dell in May and in June re-visited the Wilkinson property at Dargo.

Bush walks

A big thank you to Noel Williamson and Pauline Stewart for a great programme of bush walks.

Unfortunately the July and August walks in 2018 had to be cancelled because Noel was either away or indisposed but resumed in September with the 7 Mile Road in the Mottle Range area, to German Gully in October and to the Mystery Lake area in November.

2019 started with a walk in the Yeerung-Dock Inlet area at Cape Conran in February, to Raymond Island in March, to Mississippi Creek and the quarry in April and to Fairy Dell in June.

Thank you to Pauline Stewart for reporting on the walks in the Clematis.

Camp outs

In December a small group enjoyed a campout at Horse yard Flat on Moroka Plateau.

The junior group's Easter Joint Camp with the Victorian Field Naturalists group scheduled for Suggan Buggan was cancelled due to fires in the area.

Well that's about it – it has been a full year of activities.

THANKS

I close this annual report by recording my thanks to the management of Noweyung for the continued use of their building for our general meetings.

I thank our members for your continuing support and contribution to the activities of the Club.

I thank the Committee for the heavy workload they have carried this year and for stepping up for me when I had to take most of the year out with caring duties.

I end by again expressing my deepest appreciation to the Co-ordinators who, year after year, keep us in business and keep our field work and activities relevant.

Pat McPherson

President

BAIRNSDALE & DISTRICT FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC
STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE
For the year ended 30th June 2019

	YTD period	Selected period
	From 01/07/2018	From 01/07/2017
	To 30/06/2019	To 30/06/2018
INCOME		
Christmas dinner		196.00
Donations	105.05	42.00
Donations for supper	12.50	81.45
Interest received	574.60	34.20
Membership subscriptions	2,519.00	2,122.50
Orchid book sales	3,176.10	2,569.00
	-----	-----
TOTAL INCOME	6,387.25	5,045.15
EXPENSES		
Bank charges	4.00	
Banners & brochures		742.80
Barcode for 2nd edition of orchid book		45.00
Christmas dinner		237.15
Consumer Affairs	57.80	56.90
Food for Fran Bright's memorial	50.00	
Fuel for excursions	1,200.00	
Hire of Noweyung hall	248.50	321.20
Hire of St Mary's for fungi talk	100.00	
Insurance	293.00	553.00
Memory stick for wildflower book	34.95	
Newspaper notices	61.85	35.70
New projector		1,149.00
Petty cash		200.00
Postage orchid book & clematis	444.30	
Post box	130.00	127.00
Printing of 2nd edition of orchid book	5,182.40	
Refund of membership paid twice	45.00	
Speakers' expenses	95.00	128.00
Treasurer's expenses		49.87
Website	150.00	220.00
	-----	-----
TOTAL EXPENSES	8,096.80	3,865.62
	-----	-----
PROFIT (LOSS) BEFORE ABNORMAL ITEMS	(1,709.55)	1,179.53
	-----	-----
OPERATING PROFIT (LOSS)	(1,709.55)	1,179.53
	=====	=====

BAIRNSDALE & DISTRICT FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC
BALANCE SHEET
As at 30th June 2019

	Current year As at 30/06/2019	Previous year As at 30/06/2018
CURRENT ASSETS		

National Australia Bank	2,802.59	2,645.14
Bendigo Bank Cash Management Account	8,512.65	5,379.65
Natioanal Australia Bank term deposit	15,000.00	20,000.00
	-----	-----
	26,315.24	28,024.79
	-----	-----
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	26,315.24	28,024.79
	-----	-----
TOTAL ASSETS	26,315.24	28,024.79
	=====	=====
NET ASSETS	26,315.24	28,024.79
	=====	=====
MEMBERS' FUNDS		

Members' funds	26,315.24	28,024.79
	-----	-----
	26,315.24	28,024.79
	-----	-----
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	26,315.24	28,024.79
	=====	=====

FREESTONE CREEK - 22 September 2019

By Margaret Regan

Our first stop was at the Fernbank Recreation Reserve. On our previous visits the open area was a sea of the orchids Purple Diuris (*Diuris punctata*) and Blotched Diuris (*D. 'Gippsland Plains'*). Unfortunately we didn't find any plants of either of these species. The area is in the grip of a three year drought; the ground was rough, as if grazing by domestic animals had occurred; but we were too early. There were some plants of another *Diuris*, Lowland Golden Moths (*D. chryseopsis*) whose yellow tepals have brown striations near their bases. Other plants seen in the open area were the tiny shrub cream Common Rice-flower (*Pimelea humilis*) with clusters of tubular flowers with extruded stamens; and the lily white Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica*) whose tepals have a purple nectary near their bases. Beside the open footie ground was a treed area where two major trees were White Stringybark (*Eucalyptus globoidea*) with clusters of almost stalkless small globular fruit; and Red Box (*E. polyanthemos*) with ovate grey-green leaves and stalked fruit.



Lowland Golden Moth (*Diuris chryseopsis*)
Photo by Dianne Weir

Beneath the trees were many different small plants. New orchids were pink Dusky Fingers (*Caladenia fuscata*) whose labellum side lobes are forward-pointing and protruding; Pink Fingers (*C. carnea*) with the labellum side lobes not protruding; and Nodding Greenhood (*Pterostylis nutans*). Lilies were scented mauve Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*) whose petals have wavy margins; the trailing purple Twining Fringe Lily (*Thysanotus patersonii*) where the petals are fringed; the larger Nodding Blue Lily (*Stypandra glauca*) with stamens whose stalks (filaments) are bearded bright yellow; and yellow Bulbine Lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*) whose flowering stalk can be 50cm with many flowers who also have bearded filaments. Other smallies were white Thyme Spurge (*Phyllanthus hirtellus*) whose leaves have bristly hairs, and male and female flowers are borne on different plants (dioecious – two homes); purple Austral Bugle (*Ajuga australis*) with decussate (opposite and alternating) leaves and the flowers are irregular; and purple Showy Violet (*Viola betonicifolia*) which has a rosette of arrow-shaped leaves. There was also orange-yellow herb Small St John's Wort (*Hypericum gramineum*) with stem-clasping leaves; and the two climbers, yellow-green Climbing Apple-berry (*Billardiera mutabilis*) which has narrow wavy-edged leaves, hanging flowers and smooth edible fruits; and the often vigorous Purple Coral-pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*). There was also the hardy Narrow rock-fern (*Cheilanthes sieberi*) which has short pinnae widely spaced.



Striated Pardalote
Photo by Ken Russell, Birdlife East Gippsland

There were a few fungi such as Horse Dung Fungus (*Pisolithus arhizus*), a hard-skinned puffball, which is brown and mottled and resembles a horse dropping. The skin erodes and the spores are shed. Happily digesting a tree stump was Scarlet Bracket Fungus (*Pycnoporus coccineus*), which seems here to be always orange!! There were abundant birds about. We found Pied Currawong, Striated Pardalote, Grey Butcherbird, Noisy Miner, Crimson and Eastern Rosella, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Crested Pigeon, Red Wattlebird and Rainbow Lorikeet. The open area of the previous footie ground was obviously visited by flocks of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos as the ground was covered with the pulled-up leaves and corms of Onion-grass (*Romulea rosea*). The starchy contents of the corms had been removed from their papery sheathing covers. [As a child we called the pretty

short-stalked pink flowers “plum puddings”. We would pull up the flowers and chew the base of the stalk!!!

Now on Insolvent Track (don't you love some of the names!!), two shrubs were the rare yellow Privet Pomaderris (*Pomaderris ligustrina*) with clusters of tiny hairy flowers; and the rather rare white Sandfly Zieria (*Zieria smithii*) with trifoliate leaves and branchlets rough with glands. Here was our first sighting of Wonga-vine (*Pandorea pandorana*) with its gorgeous pink and white flower tubes with wavy edges. We were to see many more really spectacular specimens later.

Bullockhead Creek Track, west off Insolvent Track, was a botanist's (or Field Nats') delight. The first area we stopped was obviously a wetter area in non-drought times. The trees Hazel Pomaderris (*Pomaderris aspera*) and Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) both seem to prefer areas near water. Silver Wattle has bipinnate feathery phyllodes and bright yellow flower heads; while Hazel Pomaderris has large leaves with deeply embedded veins. There were Noddies again, but also Maroonhood (*Pterostylis pedunculata*) where all the tepals are reddish-brown at their tips. Again there was Wonga-vine, but also pink Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*). A new fern was also hardy. It was Gristle-fern (*Blechnum cartilagineum*) whose frond stalks (stipes) have black shiny coarse scales, and the fertile and barren fronds are similar. Birds here were Grey Fantail, Pied Currawong, Eastern Whipbird, Golden Whistler and White-throated Treecreeper.

A little further on was a fantastic display of large Wonga-vines draped over trees, almost completely covering them. A major tree was Apple Box (*Eucalyptus bridgesiana*) with long narrow leaves and stalked fruits with 3-4 exerted valves. Here the wattles were the tree Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) with hard fissured bark, green phyllodes with 3-5 obvious veins and pale globular flower heads; and a fine leaf form of the shrub Varnish Wattle (*A verniciflua*) with narrower shiny leaves with 2 main veins. Here again were Noddies and Purple Coral-pea. Two new shrubs were Dusty Miller (*Spyridium parvifolium*) whose leaves have strongly impressed veins and the tiny flower heads are surrounded by 1- several whitish floral leaves; and another yellow pomaderris, Velvet Pomaderris (*Pomaderris velutina*) whose flattish leaves have very long hairs on their lower surface veins and their stalks. Both Rufous and Golden Whistler were competing in some talent show (it was spring anyway); with other birds being Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail and Olive-backed Oriole.

Further along this track, again we heard Golden Whistler, but also Spotted Pardalote, Pied Currawong and Superb Lyrebird. Orchids were Dusky Fingers and Waxlip (*Glossodia major*) in bud. A new wattle was White Sallow Wattle (*Acacia floribunda*), a large shrub with long, very narrow leaves and pale yellow flower heads in loose spikes. Here once more was Dusty Miller and Nodding Blue Lily, but several new shrubs. In the family Proteaceae were Golden



Fan-tailed Cuckoo Photo by Ken Russell

Grevillea (*Grevillea chrysophaea*) with oval pointed hairy leaves and furry golden flowers in small clusters; and white Tree Hakea (*Hakea eriantha*) which has a fairly large crown of narrow lustrous green leaves, silky-hairy flowers and fruits with single short hooked beaks. Golden Grevillea only grows in Victoria; i.e. it is endemic to Victoria. Two other shrubs were Hairy Pink-bells (*Tetralochea pilosa*) with hairy stems; and mauve Round-leaf Mint-bush (*Prostanthera rotundifolia*) which has opposite round leaves with oil glands.

Bullockhead Creek Track finishes at Freestone Creek Road and we headed north east along the Freestone Creek, stopping for lunch at Johnstons Flat at the edge of the creek. Here we finally saw one of the male Golden Whistlers who had been serenading us all day. Other birds here were a male Satin Bowerbird and a calling Fan-tailed Cuckoo. The only orchids were Nodding Greenhood (yet again) and Maroonhood. Freestone Creek was lined with White Sallow Wattle, and the riverbed was filled with many coloured pebbles. The creek was actually running, despite the drought – maybe it is fed by snow melt from the mountains? When searching the creek bank one specimen of Briagolong Pomaderris (*Pomaderris briagolensis*) was found. It has small oval leaves about 20mm long and small clusters of cream flowers. It is known only from sites on the Freestone Creek catchment upstream of Briagolong.



Dolichoderus scabridus (possibly)

Photo by Rob Cronin

Small shrubs were cream Bootlace Bush (*Pimelea axiflora*) which has long narrow decussate leaves and clusters of tiny flowers in the axils of those leaves; White Marianth (*Rhytidosporum procumbens*) with white starry flowers; and Pale-fruit Ballart (*Exocarpus strictus*), a lax broom-like shrub with tiny scale leaves and fruit stalks swelling to form a succulent aril, thus attracting birds who collect the aril with its seed on top and thus disperse the plant. A small herbaceous daisy was yellow Austral Bear's-ear (*Cymbonotus preissianus*) which has a basal rosette of hairy leaves with a single flower. We were fascinated by a colony of black ants with a fawn V on their abdomens, who were busily building up their nests with twigs and leaf pieces.

Heading towards Bairnsdale down Winkie Creek Track, we found yet more shrubs with another rare pomaderris, yellow Convex Pomaderris (*Pomaderris subcapitata*) with smallish crowded leaves; and white Twin-flower Beard-heath (*Leucopogon fletcheri*) with pendent flowers which are

usually twinned in the axils of the leaves. Back on Insolvent Track we travelled north for a few kms and found white Long-leaf Wax Flower (*Philotheca myoporoides*) with large leaves and branchlets with many oil glands. We especially went a little further to see the shrub Galbraith's or Aniseed Boronia (*Boronia galbraithiae*) which has pinnate fennel-scented leaves with 3-17 leaflets and the flowers are white to deep pink. Galbraith's Boronia is endemic to Victoria, only being found between Stockdale and Dargo. It is rated as vulnerable. We also found the bright pink pea shrub Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*), whose pinnate leaves have 11-25 leaflets. There was also a tiny specimen of the yellow everlasting daisy Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans*) which has solitary terminal flower heads and woolly hairy leaves.

What a brilliant day, thank you James, with so many species discovered.



Twin-flower Beard-heath (*Leucopogon fletcheri*)

Photo by Rob Cronin



Olive-backed Oriole

Photo by John Saxton

Plants:

Acacia dealbata Silver Wattle
A. floribunda White Sallow Wattle
A. melanoxylon Blackwood
A. verniciflua Varnish Wattle
Ajuga australis Austral Bugle
Arthropodium strictum Chocolate Lily
Billardiera mutabilis Climbing Apple-berry
Blechnum cartilagineum Gristle-fern
Boronia galbraithiae Galbraith's or Aniseed Boronia
Bulbine bulbosa Bulbine Lily
Caladenia carnea Pink Fingers
C. fuscata Dusky Fingers
Cheilanthes sieberi Narrow rock-fern
Cymbonotus preissianus Austral Bear's-ear
Diuris chryseopsis Lowland Golden Moths
Epacris impressa Common Heath
Eucalyptus bridgesiana Apple Box
E. globoidea White Stringybark
E. polyanthemos Red Box
Exocarpus strictus Pale-fruit Ballart
Glossodia major Waxlip
Grevillea chrysophaea Golden Grevillea
Hakea eriantha Tree Hakea
Hardenbergia violacea Purple Coral-pea
Hypericum gramineum Small St John's Wort
Indigofera australis Austral Indigo
Leucochrysum albicans Hoary Sunray
Leucopogon fletcheri Twin-flower Beard-heath
Pandorea pandorana Wonga-vine
Philotheca myoporoides Long-leaf Wax Flower
Phyllanthus hirtellus Thyme Spurge
Pimelea axiflora Bootlace Bush
P. humilis Common Rice-flower
Pomaderris aspera Hazel Pomaderris
P. briagolensis Briagolong Pomaderris
P. ligustrina Privet Pomaderris
P. subcapitata Convex Pomaderris
P. velutina Velvet Pomaderris
Prostanthera rotundifolia Round-leaf Mint-bush
Pterostylis nutans Nodding Greenhood
P. pedunculata Maroonhood

Rhytidosporum procumbens White Marianth

**Romulea rosea* Onion-grass

Spyridium parvifolium Dusty Miller

Stypantra glauca Nodding Blue Lily

Tetralathea pilosa Hairy Pink-bells

Thysanotus patersonii Twining Fringe Lily

Viola betonicifolia Showy Violet

Wurmbea dioica Early Nancy

Zieria smithii Sandfly Zieria

*Weed

Fungi:

Pisolithus arhizus Horse Dung Fungus

Pycnoporus coccineus Scarlet Bracket Fungus

Birds:

Crested Pigeon

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Crimson Rosella

Eastern Rosella

Rainbow Lorikeet

Fan-tailed Cuckoo

Superb Lyrebird

White-throated Treecreeper

Striated Pardalote

Spotted Pardalote

Yellow-faced Honeyeater

Red Wattlebird

Noisy Miner

Eastern Whipbird

Golden Whistler

Rufous Whistler

Grey Shrike-thrush

Grey Fantail

Olive-backed Oriole

Satin Bowerbird

Grey Butcherbird

Pied Currawong

Insects:

Dolichoderus scabridus (possibly)

METALLIC SUN-ORCHID COUNT - BLOND BAY

28 September 2019

Was it because it was Grand Final Day or was it because it was cold and windy, that not many hardy Field Nats turned up to count the orchids? The intrepid few set out to count the Metallic Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra epipactoides*) at the Blond Bay Wildlife Reserve. A fenced enclosure was built in 1997 to protect this endangered orchid from the effects of grazing. The club has been counting the numbers of these orchids at least since 2005. They were discovered at this site by James Turner in 1990. An enclosure was built around the greatest concentration of the orchids. A larger enclosure was added in 2005, but it was not well built and has been repeatedly breached, allowing grazing. Inside the larger enclosure we found a wombat burrow and scats, macropod scats and fox scats.

The Metallic Sun-orchid is one of the largest sun-orchids in Victoria. It has one longish strappy fleshy bluish-green leaf. The flowering stalk can be up to 50cm with as many as 20 flowers. The flowers, up to 40mm across, can be bronze, pink, greenish or reddish with a metallic lustre. We didn't find any open orchids unfortunately. The orchid is extinct in NSW and endangered in Victoria and South Australia. It mostly grows in coastal heathland, grassland and woodland, but extends further inland in similar habitats in the west of Victoria. Much of its range has been destroyed for agriculture and it is threatened by weeds, and grazing by both feral and native animals. Flowering is enhanced by summer fires. Controlled burning in the enclosure to reduce competition with other plants was carried out in 1996, 1997, 2000, 2004, 2013 and the autumn of 2017. Burgan (*Kunzea ericoides*) has become a major weed in the Reserve, and within the enclosure Burgan had been slashed and sprayed. Scarlet Bracket Fungus (*Pycnoporus coccineus*) was busy breaking down the stumps of the Burgan. Our past orchid counts have been: 2005 – 261, 2006 – 17, 2007 – 136, 2008 – 20, 2009 – 23, 2011 – 35, 2012 – 60, 2014 – 99, 2015 – 82, 2016 – 46, 2017 – 14 and 2018 – 39. This year we found 12 flowering plants and 4 leaves.

The two major ground covers in the enclosures were the tussocky Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*) with long strappy leaves with tall spiky male or female inflorescences with many tiny pale yellow flowers; and Coarse Twine-rush (*Apodasmia brownii*) whose leaves are reduced to stem-sheathing brown scales and there are separate brown male and female inflorescences terminal on the stems. In the larger outer enclosure there were a few specimens of two tree banksias, the larger Saw Banksia (*Banksia serrata*) whose leaves have serrated margins; and Silver Banksia (*B. marginata*) where the leaves have a blunt end and the margins are entire. Other smaller plants were the tiny prostrate red pea creeper Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*); cream Common Rice-flower (*Pimelea humilis*); Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyne*) whose flowers are strongly scented at night and thus pollinated by night-flying moths; the bright pink trailing succulent Karkalla (*Carpobrotus rossii*), commonly called a pigface; a bluebell (*Wahlenbergia* sp.); and unusually a purple-flag, possibly the tufted Short Purple-flag (*Patersonia fragilis*) which had finished flowering. There was also a rock-fern (*Cheilanthes* sp.) and the primitive fern, Austral adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum lusitanicum*). The generic name comes from the Greek 'ophis', a snake, and "glossa" a tongue. These tiny plants have one stalk with one undivided lamina ("leaf") (the snake tongue) with above a fertile spike producing spores. An edible Field Mushroom (*Agaricus campestris*) was found with many of the introduced Portuguese Millipedes, possibly sheltering, at the top of the stalk just below the gills. These millipedes, with maybe up to 350 pairs of legs, not 1000, first showed up in Port Lincoln SA in 1953, and with no natural predators, they are now widespread in southern Australia. They have a pungent odour when squashed.

In the inner enclosure the vegetation was slightly different as it hadn't been grazed, and there have been several different regimes applied over the years by the Department. There was still some Spiny-headed Mat-rush, but there was also a tall native tussock-grass (*Poa* sp.); and cosmopolitan Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), a rhizomatous perennial with tufts to 1.2m where the leaves have red tones over winter. The flowers are borne in long white feathery spikes above the leaves. Shrubs were white Daphne Heath (*Brachyloma daphnoides*) with bulbous tubular scented flowers with hairy throats; yellow and red Grey Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia cinerascens*) which has flowers densely clustered along the stem; and the tiny yellow pea Creeping Bossiaea (*Bossiaea prostrata*) with circular leaves. While at the enclosures we heard Grey Fantail, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Grey Shrike-thrush, Golden Whistler and one of the bronze-cuckoos.

We lunched at a picnic area at the end of Grass Tree Track, where we had a view across Lake Victoria to the township of Loch Sport. On the water were Black Swans; and right at the boundary of shallow and deeper darker water was a flock of about 15 Hoary-headed Grebes. Again we saw two tree banksias, but these were Saw Banksia and Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*) whose leaves are normally not toothed. A small herb with white flowers was Prickly Starwort (*Stellaria pungens*) with very pointed leaves, and flowers whose 5 petals are so deeply divided that they seem to have 10 petals. On a fallen branch was yellow-orange encrusting lichenised fungus, which was probably a species of *Xanthoria*.

On Storm Point Track was a large low patch of the trailing semi-succulent yellow Bower Spinach (*Tetragonia implexicoma*) with ovate leaves covered with papillae and later soft red fruits. The only orchid was White Fingers (*Caladenia catenata*) where the inside of the column of the flower is red or green, the labellum and its calli are white, with the tip of the labellum yellow. There was also the tiny climbing pea, mauve Twining Glycine (*Glycine clandestina*). The birds were Laughing Kookaburra and Grey Currawong.

Later on Banksia Track, one small overhead tree was the Gippsland Lakes Peppermint (*Eucalyptus arenicola*) with rough bark, glossy green leaves and stalked buds with 11 to many in the cluster. It is rare and endemic to the Gippsland Lakes area. Another small tree was Black Sheoak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*). A large shrub was again Silver Banksia, but new smaller shrubs were Pink Beard-heath (*Leucopogon ericoides*) whose flowers have hairy petals, its buds are pink and its leaves are recurved; the rare Nodding Baeckea (*Euryomyrtus ramosissima* subsp. *prostrata*) with narrow papery leaves and solitary pink flowers; and Twiggy Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia virgata*) whose stems and narrow leaves have crinkly hairs. Everywhere was the often ignored ubiquitous fern Austral Bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*) with its tough 3-4-pinnate fronds. It is the most common and widespread of Victorian ferns. It has an extensive underground rhizome system, so fertile fronds are uncommon. We did see some of the large flat ovate leaves of the orchid Red Beaks (*Pyrorchis nigricans*). Flowering is stimulated by fire, and this area had not been burnt for several years. A new bird was White-eared Honeyeater.

A little further on Banksia Track, beneath and close by Black Sheoak, were three orchids, mauve and white Waxlip Orchid (*Glossodia major*); and two more fingers, white or pink Fairy Fingers (*Caladenia alata*) whose labellum has red bands, yellow to orange calli and a yellow to orange tip; and pure white rare Orange-tip Fingers (*C. aurantiaca*) with the labellum having orange-tipped calli and an orange tip. There was also white Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*).

Our last stop was further along this track where we found draped over vegetation the white to pale yellow climber *Clematis decipiens* with narrow trifoliolate leaves, and separate male and female plants; and a tiny green rosette of Shield Sundew (*Drosera peltata* subsp. *peltata*).

Thank you once again, James.

Plants:

Allocasuarina littoralis Black Sheoak
Apodasmia brownii Coarse Twine-rush
Banksia integrifolia Coast Banksia
B. marginata Silver Banksia
B. serrata Saw Banksia
Bossiaea prostrata Creeping Bossiaea
Brachyloma daphnoides Daphne Heath
Caladenia alata Fairy Fingers
C. aurantiaca Orange-tip Fingers
C. catenata White Fingers
Carpobrotus rossii Karkalla
Cheilanthes sp. a rock-fern
Clematis decipiens a clematis
Dillwynia cinerascens Grey Parrot-pea
Drosera peltata subsp. *peltata* Shield Sundew
Epacris impressa Common Heath
Eucalyptus arenicola Gippsland Lakes Peppermint
Euryomyrtus ramosissima subsp. *prostrata*
 Nodding Baeckea
Glossodia major Waxlip Orchid
Glycine clandestina Twining Glycine
Hibbertia virgata Twiggy Guinea-flower
Imperata cylindrica Blady Grass
Kennedia prostrata Running Postman
Kunzea ericoides Burgan
Leucopogon ericoides Pink Beard-heath
Lomandra longifolia Spiny-headed Mat-rush
Ophioglossum lusitanicum Austral adder's-tongue

Patersonia fragilis Short Purple-flag
Pimelea humilis Common Rice-flower
Poa sp. a tussock grass
Pteridium esculentum Austral Bracken
Pyrorchis nigricans Red Beaks
Stackhousia monogyna Creamy Candles
Stellaria pungens Prickly Starwort
Tetragonia implexicoma Bower Spinach
Thelymitra epipactoides Metallic Sun-orchid
Wahlenbergia sp. a bluebell

Fungi:

Agaricus campestris Field Mushroom
Pycnoporus coccineus Scarlet Bracket Fungus
Xanthoria sp.

Birds:

Hoary-headed Grebe
 Black Swan
 Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo
 Grey Shrike-thrush
 Fan-tailed Cuckoo
 A bronze-cuckoo
 Laughing Kookaburra
 White-eared Honeyeater
 Golden Whistler
 Grey Fantail
 Grey Currawong

Invertebrate:

Portuguese Millipede



Orange-tip Fingers
(*Caladenia aurantiaca*)
 Photo by Dianne Weir

ROSEDALE TO LONGFORD - 20 October 2019

By Margaret Regan

On a very wintry windy day (but no rain, of course) we journeyed to Rosedale to meet Kath, our leader for the day. We started at the Rosedale Bushland Reserve, a natural haven in the midst of pine plantations. There was some invasion by pines into the bushland reserve. (Owners of the surrounding pine plantations should be required to remove such invaders!!) Gippsland



Pink Fingers (*Caladenia carnea*)

Photo by the late Fran Bright

Peppermint (*Eucalyptus croajingolensis*) was an overhead tree, with rough bark, peppermint-scented bluish-grey leaves and 11-20 round stalked buds in the cluster. Two other trees were the wattle Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) with hard and fissured bark, broad phyllodes with 3-5 obvious veins and pale yellow flower heads in short racemes; and Black Sheoak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*) with similar amazing bark, branchlets with tiny leaves in whorls of 6-8 and cylindrical cones with flattened ends. There were quite a few orchids for the enthusiasts. The fingers were Pink Fingers (*Caladenia carnea*) (which may be white) where the labellum has red bars and yellow-tipped calli; and White Fingers (*C. catenata*) whose column is red or green and the labellum and calli are white, with the labellum having a yellow tip. Two yellow and brown donkey orchids were Leopard Orchid (*Diuris pardina*) whose yellow flowers are heavily spotted with brown; and Tiger Orchid (*D. sulphurea*) with fewer brown spots and the dorsal sepals have basal brown marks. Other orchids were mauve and white Waxlip Orchid (*Glossodia major*); Nodding Greenhood (*Pterostylis nutans*); and Large Mosquito-orchid (*Acianthus exsertus*) whose flat heart-shaped leaf is purple underneath.



White Fingers (*Caladenia catenata*) PS

Two shrubs were Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*) with nasty fine thorns, dark green leathery phyllodes with wavy edges and deep golden globular flower heads; and Snowy Daisy-bush (*Olearia lirata*) with large soft green leaves which are whitish below and flower heads with white ray florets and central yellow disc florets. Lilies were the delicate mauve Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*) with a basal tuft of linear leaves and chocolate scented flowers; the uncommon bright Blue Stars (*Chamaescilla corymbosa*) which has grass-like leaves and a loose inflorescence with few flowers whose tepals are 3-veined; and yellow Bulbine Lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*) whose many flowers have stamens with bearded stalks. There were two mat-rushes, the exceedingly common large Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*); and the smaller Wattle Mat-rush (*L. filiformis*) which has yellow female flowers.

Other small plants were purple Austral Bugle (*Ajuga australis*) (in the lavender family Lamiaceae) with opposite leaves with irregular flowers in the axils of the leaves; cream Common Rice-flower (*Pimelea humilis*) which has tubular flowers clustered at the top of the stems; Blue Bottle-daisy (*Lagenophora stipitata*) with hairy stem and leaves; Tall Sundew (*Drosera peltata* subsp. *auriculata*); the tiny pretty blue Love Creeper (*Comesperma volubile*) with its pea-like flower; white Small Poranthera (*Poranthera microphylla*); the creeping perennial Stinking Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle laxiflora*) whose inflorescence has 30-50 unpleasantly scented flowers; and the small red creeping pea Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*). Of course there was loads of the fern Austral Bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*). We noticed wombat, macropod and fox scats. A Black Wallaby (maybe the depositor of some of the scats) was disturbed.

In a small dam by the roadside was Pacific Black Duck. Forest birds were Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Grey Fantail, Golden and Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Red Wattlebird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Grey Currawong, White-throated Treecreeper, Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Superb Fairy-wren.

We moved onto the Rosedale – Longford Road and our first stop was the roadside with a pine plantation on one side and open farm land on the other. Here again was Chocolate Lily, but also another lily, Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*) whose flowers have pink ovaries and long stamens with pink anthers. Its tuberous roots were eaten by aborigines. There was a new mat-rush, ??the smaller Pale Mat-rush (*Lomandra glauca*) where the long narrow leaves are distinctly bluish.

Further east again, near the corner of Tanjil Road, were masses of Tall Sundew. There were many species of orchids. Unfortunately none of the sun-orchids were blooming, but one identified was pale cream to yellow Twisted Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra flexuosa*), named for its wiry twisted stem. It is the only true yellow flowering sun-orchid found in East Gippsland. Three others were Pink Sun-orchid (*T. carnea*), Salmon Sun-orchid (*T. rubra*), and blue Spotted Sun-orchid (*T. ixioides*). Other



Jacky Dragon

Photo by Dianne Weir

orchids were Purple Diuris (*Diuris punctata*) whose lateral sepals are extremely long and held below the flower; green Slender Onion-orchid (*Microtis parviflora*) with a single tall leaf and a tall flowering stem with up to 80 minute flowers; and White Fingers. A new lily was the mauve Twining Fringe Lily (*Thysanotus patersonii*) whose flowers have gorgeous fringed petals. There was Running Postman, a bluebell (*Wahlenbergia* sp.) and the only large shrub was cream Rough-bark Honey-Myrtle (*Melaleuca parvistaminea*) with rough corky bark and the thick linear leaves have prominent oil glands on their lower surfaces. A bird was Crimson Rosella and we were very fortunate to spy a Jacky Lizard. The poor creature was probably as frozen as we were, and made no attempt to depart, allowing the photographers to take its portrait. Its grey back was beautifully patterned with white blotches. The Jacky Lizard is one of the dragons, characterised by their upright posture and small rough non-glossy body scales. This genus can run on their hind legs when alarmed.



Many flowers bloomed under the burnt vegetation at the Significant Vegetation Area.

Photo by Pauline Stewart

Further east again was an area designated as a Significant Vegetation Area. Orchids were Purple Diuris, Salmon Sun-orchid and Slender Onion-orchid. There was another paperbark, cream Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) with pale papery bark and flowers in short spikes; and Chocolate Lily. The only fern was the tough Narrow rock-fern (*Cheilanthes sieberi*). There were lots of introduced pasture grasses, but also a beautiful tall feathery native Quizzical Spear-grass (*Austrostipa stuposa*) whose spikelet awn is bent twice. Again we heard Superb Fairy-wren and there were Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo in the nearby pine plantation. On a decomposing macropod foot were a group of shiny black carnivorous Slaters enjoying a meal.

On our way back to Bairnsdale, we made a brief stop at the Bush Family Reserve on the Bengworden Road. It is managed by Trust for Nature. Most of the trees were Gippsland Red-gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis* subsp. *mediana*) with bluish leaves. There were the lilies Milkmaids and Bulbine Lily, Common Rice-flower, Spiny-headed Mat-rush, a bluebell and Tiger Orchid. A new orchid for the day was Midget Greenhood (*Pterostylis mutica*) which has a basal

rosette around the flowering stem with up to 4 flowers. There is an appendage at the base of the labellum which is dark green and curved upwards. A vocal bird was Noisy Miner. There were also stacks of nasty mosquitoes.

Plants:

Acacia melanoxylon Blackwood
A. paradoxa Hedge Wattle
Acianthus exsertus Large Mosquito-orchid
Ajuga australis Austral Bugle
Allocasuarina littoralis Black Sheoak
Arthropodium strictum Chocolate Lily
Austrostipa stiposa Quizzical Spear-grass
Bulbine bulbosa Bulbine Lily
Burchardia umbellata Milkmaids
Caladenia carnea Pink Fingers
C. catenata White Fingers
Chamaescilla corymbosa Blue Stars
Cheilanthes sieberi Narrow rock-fern
Comesperma volubile Love Creeper
Diuris pardina Leopard Orchid
D. punctata Purple Diuris
D. sulphurea Tiger Orchid
Drosera peltata subsp. *auriculata* Tall Sundew
Eucalyptus croajingolensis Gippsland Peppermint
E. tereticornis subsp. *mediana* Gippsland Red-gum
Glossodia major Waxlip Orchid
Hydrocotyle laxiflora Stinking Pennywort
Kennedia prostrata Running Postman
Lagenophora stipitata Blue Bottle-daisy
Lomandra filiformis Wattle Mat-rush
L. ??glauca Pale Mat-rush
L. longifolia Spiny-headed Mat-rush
Melaleuca ericifolia Swamp Paperbark
M. parvistaminea Rough-bark Honey-Myrtle
Microtis parviflora Slender Onion-orchid
Olearia lirata Snowy Daisy-bush
Pimelea humilis Common Rice-flower
Poranthera microphylla Small Poranthera
Pteridium esculentum Austral Bracken
Pterostylis mutica Midget Greenhood
P. nutans Nodding Greenhood
Thelymitra carnea Pink Sun-orchid



Twining Fringe Lily (*Thysanotus patersonii*)

PS

T. flexuosa Twisted Sun-orchid
T. ixioides Spotted Sun-orchid
T. rubra Salmon Sun-orchid
Thysanotus patersonii Twining Fringe Lily
Wahlenbergia sp. a bluebell

Birds:

Pacific Black Duck
 Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo
 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
 Crimson Rosella
 Fan-tailed Cuckoo
 White-throated Treecreeper
 Superb Fairy-wren
 Red Wattlebird
 Noisy Miner
 Yellow-faced Honeyeater
 Golden Whistler
 Rufous Whistler
 Grey Shrike-thrush
 Grey Fantail
 Grey Currawong

Mammal:

Black Wallaby

Reptile:

Jacky Lizard



Twining Fringe Lily showing growth habits
Photo by Dianne Weir

BUSHWALK TO THE CHINESE DIGGINGS, MELWOOD - 3rd November 2019**By Pauline Stewart**

For the previous week the weather forecast for our part of the world was for a good solid rain event on the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of November. The leaders watched the forecast to gauge whether the bushwalk would go ahead or not; on Saturday it looked like the system was going to slip south again before it got to Bairnsdale, however, we did have 8mm of rain on Saturday night and it was still raining very early Sunday morning. By 7.30am it had eased and was not looking likely that there would be heavy rain on the day, so the decision was made to proceed with the scheduled bushwalk. It turned out that the weather was very kind to us: it was overcast and humid but not cold with just light rain at the end of our walk.

Arriving at the picnic area to start our walk near the old Melwood school we alighted from the car to the melodious calls of numerous birds. Walking about 150 meters along the Peahill Road we were alerted to the strong, rapid cackle of several birds flying and interacting with each other high above a tall gum tree. They appeared to be robust, dark birds but because of the large white patches seen under the wings in flight plus a view of orange legs when alighting on a branch, the conclusion to the birds' identity was that they were Dollarbirds.

Walking along it was noted that the overnight rain had done its magic as the former dried out vegetation of the day before had been replaced with the various rich greens of lichens and mosses and the stunning shades of yellow and orange of the damp trunks of Mountain Grey Gum. Ferns beside the track were Maidenhair, Necklace and Sickle Fern. Birds seen and heard here were Wonga Pigeons, Laughing Kookaburra, Eastern Whipbird, Grey Shrike-thrush, Satin Bowerbird and Olive-backed Oriole. In a section of open farmland Crimson Rosellas, Willy Wagtails, Jacky Winters, Grey Currawong, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Red Wattlebirds and Australian Wood Duck were seen or heard. Enjoying the damp conditions, quite a few native land snails were observed making their way across the track

**Native land snail****PS**

Along this section beside the once gold rich Boggy Creek, were many shallow pits dug out by prospectors in the late 1800s early 1900s. These had been dug above where they had found alluvial gold in the creek. The diggers then went further up the bank and dug experimental holes trying to find the vein from which it had come.

A stop was made beside an old well-worked branch of the creek for morning tea. Fan-tailed Cuckoos and White-throated Treecreepers were seen and heard here; then on to the highlight of the walk: the Chinese Diggings.

The short-lived gold rush along Boggy Creek brought a thousand people to the area. A large number of Chinese miners followed to the lower reaches of the Boggy Creek, now known as Melwood. They built a dam and races to wash gold by the 'Long Toms' method. From the 1860s quartz reefs were discovered, leading to the establishment of a number of mines. The main settlement of Bullumwaal grew along Upper Boggy Creek. The Boggy Creek Diggings were almost deserted by the early 1880s, but the economic depression of the

**Shallow pits dug by gold miners****PS**



White-throated Treecreeper
Photo by Ken Russell

early 1890s brought many unemployed people to the area. A number of old mines were reopened, and four quartz batteries were in operation. By the turn of the century gold became worked out, mining became increasingly expensive as mines increased in depth, and ore values declined. By 1913 most mines had closed, though there was a short revival in the 1920s and 1930s during Depression times. At Melwood the most southerly of the Boggy Creek mining sites, the diggings were worked extensively by Chinese miners. They had a dam situated on high ground with channels leading from the dam to the mines. Above the dam, water races following a gradient of one inch in ten feet brought water from more the 3km away. Water was used to erode the face of the hill and sluices are still visible. Piles of rocks stacked by miners came from spoil removed from the mines. The extent of mining activity in the area is amazing and a tribute to the industrious and highly organized nature of the Chinese miners. At Melwood, at the site known as the Chinese diggings, there remains evidence of mining activity - water races and dry-stone walls.

Sitting quietly on a log near the Chinese Diggings listening to the birds in the colourful stands of Mountain Grey Gum and taking in the history of the area the members heard a group of people coming up the track towards them chatting to each other. Expecting them to also be visiting the diggings and to

come into view any moment, eerily all went quiet and nobody turned up. As up until now we had been the only people in the area with no other tracks leading off this was distinctly odd. Why would anyone coming this far into the bush not continue on to see this exceptional site? After pondering this mystery for a while, the answer became quite clear: ghosts from the past!!!

Light rain started to fall on the way back which made it quite a novelty to splish-splash in the puddles.

A Sacred Kingfisher was heard, and a little flock of Yellow-rumped Thornbills were seen on our return to the car.

Thank you Noel for a mystical day out in the bush.



Pondering the mystery! PS

Information for the Melwood Chinese Diggings was found on the interpretation board at the Melwood picnic area near the old school.



GRANT AND TALBOTVILLE - 17 November 2019

By Margaret Regan

On a day that varied in temperature from quite cold to quite warm, 11 intrepid Field Nats set off for the sites of the old gold mining towns of Grant and Talbotville, north west of Dargo.

Our first pause was near the corner of the Dargo High Plains Road and Grant Road. Being spring, the melodious calls of birds were much in evidence. We heard (mostly) or saw White-eared and Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Striated Pardalote, Grey Shrike-thrush and Olive Whistler. High overhead were the stark white trunks of eucalypts stricken in a long ago fire. Two daisy shrubs were white Sticky Everlasting (*Ozothamnus thyrsoides*) with dark green, somewhat sticky, narrow leaves and many flower heads clustered at the ends of branches; and Dusty Daisy-bush (*Olearia phlogopappa*) which has broader grey-green leaves and the flower heads have white ray florets and yellow disc florets. There were other shrubs, Mountain Pepper (*Tasmannia lanceolata*) with glossy hot-tasting leaves, cream flowers and black fruits; and yellow and red, and prickly, Gorse Bitter-pea (*Daviesia ulicifolia*) where the very pointed leaves are almost reduced to spines. Small spiky ground covers with white flowers were Prickly Starwort (*Stellaria pungens*); and white Prickly Woodruff (*Asperula scoparia*) with hairy stems, and separate male and female flowers. There was also mauve and white Ivy-leaved Violet (*Viola hederacea*); and the small lily Turquoise Berry (*Drymophila cyanocarpa*) with obovate leaves (wider away from the stem) and blue to purple berries. Two ferns were Mother shield-fern (*Polystichum proliferum*) which can bear tiny new plants at the ends of its fronds; and Fishbone water-fern (*Blechnum nudum*) with separate fertile and barren fronds with thick shiny black stalks (stipes).

In 1850 surveyor, John Wilkinson, was sent out by the Government to map the upper reaches of the Mitchell River, which meant following up to the Wonnangatta and then the Wongungarra Rivers. He reported the presence of gold in the rivers. However there were major finds at the time in Bendigo and Ballarat, so this report was ignored. It was not until 1860 that the Prospecting Board sent Alfred Howitt to look for a new goldfield to aid the flagging economy. He travelled beyond the Wongungarra to a tributary he called Crooked River, which he followed in zig zag fashion for several days. He found gold at Good Luck Creek. Most of his party resigned to take up claims, and by April 1861, 700 miners had reached the field. Over 200 hundred reefs were discovered and thousands of miners arrived.

A number of towns grew up in the area. These were Grant (Mt Pleasant), Bull Town, Hog Town, Howittville, Talbotville, Winchester, Stonewall and Theiltown. Grant was the most imposing and well laid out of the mountain goldfields. Its residents numbered up to 2000 and it had over 30 streets. There were 15 hotels, churches, stores, a medical hall, a police camp and a newspaper office. Harsh winters and a gold strike in New Zealand depleted the number of miners, but by 1865, the towns were well established. Talbotville with some flat open ground had a racecourse. As early as 1866, gold returns began to decline, miners left and businesses closed. By 1870, Howittville, Winchester and Hogtown had disappeared. By 1874, Grant was all but deserted. The last residents left Grant in 1916. Mrs Wilson and her daughter lived in the old Bank of Victoria, which then functioned as a post office and hotel. [She kept the post office open by writing the required number of letters to herself!!!] Talbotville, surrounded by large river flats suitable for farming, continued on until the last family left in 1950. We visited the renovated cemeteries at both Grant and Talbotville where some headstones still remain.



Grant cemetery

PS

At the Grant cemetery there are two headstones protected by decorative wrought iron fences and 31 grave sites have been marked out. A small tree was Broad-leaved Peppermint (*Eucalyptus dives*) with sub-fibrous bark and broad adult peppermint-scented leaves. A large finished wattle was Mountain Hickory (*Acacia obliquinervia*) whose broad leaves have their main vein close to the upper margin. Two other shrubs were Pale-fruit Ballart (*Exocarpus strictus*) with tiny scale leaves and tiny white flowers, which produce fruits whose short stalks swell to form a pale lilac juicy aril, attractive to birds; and Cluster-flower Geebung (*Persoonia confertiflora*) which had broad leaves and green fruits which turn blue. Of course there were birds, with White-throated Treecreeper, Rufous Whistler and Grey Shrike-thrush calling.



Clustered Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum semipapposum*)
Photo by Dianne Weir



Eyebright (*Euphrasia collina*) Photo by Dianne Weir



Podolepis decipiens

PS

We lunched where the township of Grant used to be, beneath some old specimens of Broad-leaved Peppermint and Mountain Gum (*Eucalyptus dalrympleana*) with pale gum bark, long fairly narrow leaves and buds in 3s. Presumably much of the forest was denuded during the gold mining to build structures, shore up underground mines, and for heating and cooking. Tiny plants seen were Common Bird-orchid (*Chiloglottis valida*) with two opposite flat leaves whose flower resembles a baby bird begging; and mauve Slender Speedwell (*Veronica gracilis*) with linear leaves and 4-petalled striped flowers. The many birds were Pied and Grey Currawong, Spotted Pardalote, Rufous Whistler, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Laughing Kookaburra, Fan-tailed Cuckoo and White-winged Chough.

The road from Grant to Talbotville is called McMillan Road. [Will this road be renamed after the recent backlash against the nefarious Angus McMillan?] The country was dry and rocky, but somehow we found interesting plants. Those at our first stop were the daisies Moth Daisy-bush (*Olearia erubescens*) where the branchlets and underside of the leaves are covered with whitish T-shaped hairs, and the flower heads have few yellow disc florets (7-13) and even fewer white ray florets (4-8); yellow Clustered Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum semipapposum*) where the small flower heads are held in terminal flat-topped clusters; and mauve Spoon Daisy (*Brachyscome spathulata*) with solitary flower heads and a basal rosette of leaves with round toothed margins. There was Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyna*), Grey Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia obtusifolia*) and a bluebell (*Wahlenbergia* sp.). More unusual plants were the rare small cream rice-flower shrub *Pimelea linifolia* subsp. *caesia* with an erect inflorescence where the tubular flowers are much longer than the subtending bracts; and the herbs, the native Sheep's Burr (*Acaena echinata*) with a cylindrical inflorescence with many spines and shiny green fern-like leaves; and a rare subspecies of the mauve Eyebright (*Euphrasia collina*) which has irregular flowers, is covered in glandular hairs, and is in the same family, Scrophulariaceae, as the snapdragon. The birds here were Spotted and Striated Pardalote and White-eared Honeyeater.

A little further downhill to Talbotville, the daisies were the shrub white Shiny Cassinia (*Cassinia longifolia*) with long shiny green leaves which have white cottony hairs below; and the herbs, yellow *Podolepis decipiens* which has solitary flower heads with the ray florets having toothed petals; white and yellow Hill Daisy (*Brachyscome aculeata*) with broad toothed lower leaves; the small yellow Variable Groundsel (*Senecio pinnatifolius*) with very variable shaped leaves; and yellow *Picris angustifolia* subsp. *merxmulleri* which is only found in subalpine to alpine environments. There were two very pretty perennial speedwells. Mauve Diggers' Speedwell (*Veronica perfoliata*) has grey-green opposite ovate leaves joined at the base and a loose inflorescence of up to 70 flowers, and is found on dry rocky slopes, often in auriferous (gold-bearing) areas, hence the common name. White Derwent Speedwell (*V. derwentiana*) has large toothed leaves and a tight inflorescence with up to 100 tiny flowers. This species is named after the Derwent River in Tasmania, where the type species (a specimen of Derwent Speedwell) was found and described. Two grasses were Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), a tussock-forming perennial with a reddish tinge; and a spear-grass *Austrostipa* sp. or *Dryopoa* sp..

Two species of pea shrub that we hardly ever see were scattered along in this section with flowers almost finished. They were the rare yellow and brown Small-leaf Bush-pea (*Pultenaea foliolosa*) with almost round hairy leaves; and yellow and red Grey Bush-pea (*P. spinosa*) which has ovate leaves in 3s, each with the midrib extending to a spine. A broom-like shrub in the same family Santalaceae as the ballarts, was Leafless Sour-bush (*Omphacomeria acerba*) whose leaves are reduced to scales and it has fleshy edible sour fruits. Like most of the family, Leafless Sour-bush is hemi-parasitic. It has the pigment chlorophyll in its stems, so they must photosynthesise. Smaller plants were mauve Black-anther Flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta*) whose long basal leaves have their margins turned under; yellow and brown Tiger Orchid



Talbotville cemetery

PS

(*Diuris sulphurea*); the apple-berry *Billardiera mutabilis* with narrow wavy-edged leaves, hanging flowers and smooth edible fruit; and the very pretty large-flowered Naked Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia gymnoclada*) with linear leaves, opposite near the base, but alternating above.

Alluvial gold was discovered on the Crooked River in 1861, and Talbotville was one of the settlements that sprang up along the river. It too has a small renovated cemetery. Near the cemetery and amazingly, considering the incredibly dry environment, we found three orchids. These were reddish Common Ruddyhood (*Pterostylis squamata*) with lateral sepals held down, and the ovate labellum with side bristles and attached by a sensitive strap; the rare yellowish-green Mountain Leek-orchid (*Prasophyllum* sp.aff. *montanum*) which has up to 50 small flowers crowded on a spike up to 80cm tall; and the flowering stalks of a hyacinth-orchid (*Dipodium* sp.) were

just appearing, like asparagus stems. There was also the small tufted yellow Wattle Mat-rush (*Lomandra filiformis*) with strap-like leaves. Birds at Talbotville were Noisy Friarbird, Golden and Rufous Whistler and a male Satin Bowerbird.

Retracing our steps back to Dargo, our last stop was just east of Jolly Sailor Spur Track in a much wetter environment than most we had visited that the day. Here we found three more orchids, which were Tall Greenhood (*Pterostylis melagramma*) which has up to 20 green and white striped flowers whose exposed yellowish-green labellum has a dark central stripe; white Mountain Caladenia (*Caladenia alpina*) whose labellum has reddish bars and spots; and burgundy Common Bird-orchid (*Chiloglottis valida*) with two ovate flat leaves and a heart-shaped mobile labellum with dark calli.

A very long, but very interesting day. Thank you James.



Plants:

Acacia obliquinervia Mountain Hickory
Acaena echinata Sheep's Burr
Asperula scoparia Prickly Woodruff
 ?*Austrostipa* sp. a spear-grass
Billardiera mutabilis an apple-berry
Blechnum nudum Fishbone water-fern
Brachyscome aculeata Hill Daisy
B. spathulata Spoon Daisy
Caladenia alpina Mountain Caladenia
Cassinia longifolia Shiny Cassinia
Chiloglottis valida Common Bird-orchid
Chrysocephalum semipapposum Clustered Everlasting
Daviesia ulicifolia Gorse Bitter-pea
Dianella revoluta Black-anther Flax-lily
Dipodium sp. a hyacinth-orchid
Diuris sulphurea Tiger Orchid
Drymophila cyanocarpa Turquoise Berry
 ?*Dryopoa* sp. a spear-grass
Eucalyptus dalrympleana Mountain Gum
E. dives Broad-leaved Peppermint
Euphrasia collina subsp. ?? Eyebright
Exocarpus strictus Pale-fruit Ballart
Hibbertia obtusifolia Grey Guinea-flower
Lomandra filiformis Wattle Mat-rush
Olearia erubescens Moth Daisy-bush
O. phlogopappa Dusty Daisy-bush
Omphacomeria acerba Leafless Sour-bush
Ozothamnus thyrsoideum Sticky Everlasting
Persoonia confertiflora Cluster-flower Geebung
Picris angustifolia subsp. *merxmulleri*
Pimelea linifolia subsp. *caesia*
Podolepis decipiens
Polystichum proliferum Mother shield-fern
Prasophyllum sp.aff. *montanum* Mountain Leek-orchid
Pterostylis melagramma Tall Greenhood
P. squamata Common Ruddyhood
Pultenaea foliolosa Small-leaf Bush-pea
P. spinosa Grey Bush-pea
Senecio pinnatifolius Variable Groundsel
Stackhousia monogyna Creamy Candles
Stellaria pungens Prickly Starwort
Tasmania lanceolata Mountain Pepper
Themeda triandra Kangaroo Grass
Veronica derwentiana Derwent Speedwell
V. gracilis Slender Speedwell
V. perfoliata Diggers' Speedwell
Viola hederacea Ivy-leaved Violet
Wahlenbergia gymnoclada Naked Bluebell
W. sp. another bluebell

Birds:

Fan-tailed Cuckoo
 Laughing Kookaburra
 White-throated Treecreeper
 Spotted Pardalote
 Striated Pardalote
 White-eared Honeyeater
 Yellow-faced Honeyeater
 Noisy Friarbird
 Grey Shrike-thrush
 Golden Whistler
 Olive Whistler
 Rufous Whistler
 Satin Bowerbird
 Pied Currawong
 Grey Currawong
 White-winged Chough

Reference:

Christie, R.W. (1993). Ghosts and Gold in the Victorian High Country. High Country Publishing Dargo.



Grey Bush-pea (*P. spinosa*)

Photo by James Turner



Grant information board

Photo by James Turner



Diggers' Speedwell (*Veronica perfoliata*)

Photo by Jennifer Wilkinson



Derwent Speedwell (*Veronica derwentiana*)

Photo by Jennifer Wilkinson



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Statement of purpose

- To further the awareness and study of all branches of natural history within the East Gippsland community through field excursions, regular surveys, specialist guest speakers and publications.
- To observe and strengthen the laws for the preservation and protection of indigenous flora, fauna, habitat and important geological features.
- To promote the formation and preservation of national and State Parks and Reserves.
- To collaborate with other groups and agencies with similar environmental interests.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP & RENEWAL FORM

As a member I/we support the Purpose of the Club above and agree to be bound by the rules of the Association under which the Club is incorporated.

Signature..... Date.....

I/we wish to become a member/members of the Bairnsdale & District Field Naturalists Club Inc. or

I/we wish to renew my/our membership of the Bairnsdale & District Field Naturalists Club Inc.

NAME

Adults

Children

CONTACT DETAILS

Postal Address

Email

Phone

Please complete the details above and forward your completed form to the Secretary or Treasurer in person, or post to Box 563 Bairnsdale 3875, or email a photo or scan of your completed form as a jpeg to info@bairnsdalefieldnaturalists.com.au

Please also ensure that you let us know in writing of any subsequent change to your contact details.

MEMBERSHIP FEE

Single membership \$30.00; Family membership \$45.00; Mid-year fee is half price for new members.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

- pay in person at any General Meeting
- pay by cheque made out to The Treasurer and post to the address above
- pay directly into the Club's bank account in Bairnsdale
- pay online via Electronic Funds Transfer

Bank Details: National Australia Bank BSB: 083 519 Account Number: 75 454 7416

When paying by EFT, please remember to include your name for identification purposes.

