The Clematis

Summer 2012
Issue No 90

Quarterly Newsletter of theBairnsdale & District Field Naturalists Club Inc A0006074C

The Newsletter of The Bairnsdale & District Field Naturalists' Club Inc.

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BAIRNSDALE & DIST FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

A0006074C

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General meetings take place at:
Noweyung Centre, 84 Goold Street Bairnsdale
General meetings take place: as per program at 7.30pm ***sharp***
Committee meetings take place: at members homes, at 4.00pm
(see program)

Group Co-ordinators:

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All articles for Autumn Clematis *must* be in by March 1st.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1. To further the study of natural history in all its branches, promoted by periodical meetings, field excursions and other activities.
2. To observe and strengthen the laws for the preservation & protection of indigenous flora and fauna and habitat and important geological features.
3. To promote the formation and preservation of National and State Parks and Reserves.

dews are carnivorous plants which supplement their photosynthesis in areas of low nitrogen, by capturing insects and digesting them. It is reported that early settlers used the liquid obtained from sundews as ink. If the plants were just green, would this work?? A Wombat skull was found. Birds we encountered were again Grey Shrike-thrush and Rufous Whistler, but also Brown Thornbill and Grey Fantail.

Further north up the same track the pea, yellow Creeping Bossiaea (*Bossiaea prostrata*), was twining up through the Spiny-headed Mat-rush. There were some small plants of Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica*). Early Nancy is often confused with the other small lily Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*), but the floral parts of Early Nancy have a distinctive purple nectary near their bases. The ground vegetation was dense and needs a burn. In a dampish area we found Austral adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum lusitanicum*). This strange little (just a few cm) plant is in a primitive family of ferns, the Ophioglossaceae. It has usually a single fleshy frond and a taller spike with 6-15 pairs of sporangia at the top. We heard a tiny Striated Pardalote high in a tree. These pretty birds aren't often seen, as they move about a lot, and are usually at height.

A pleasant day, thank you James.

☺

Schizophyllum commune
Photo by: Andrew Bould

stumps in this first earliest enclosure where trees had been removed and one was being digested by some very attractive specimens of the fungus Split Gill (*Schizophyllum commune*). Split Gill has white fan-shaped caps which are densely hairy above and with a lateral stem. There were some plants of Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyna*).

The counts in this area for the Metallic Sun-orchid were 28 inside the first original enclosure, 3 in the larger enclosure and 4 outside to the north, giving a total of 35 plants. Some of these plants had been damaged by frost and browsing. The season for flowering seemed to be late, and none of the plants were in full bloom, partly explained by the cloud cover – these are sun-orchids after all! Many only had buds. Previous numbers have been 23 in 2009, 20 in 2008, 136 in 2007 and 261 in 2005. Just outside the larger enclosure on its eastern side was a large specimen of Tall Leek-orchid (*Prasophyllum elatum*). This is the largest leek-orchid in Victoria and can grow to 150cm tall, with up to 60 upside-down greenish flowers. It mostly flowers prolifically after summer fire.

We saw a Crane Fly with very long bent legs and an orange body. These are flies with very long legs and slender bodies with a V-shape on the thorax. They form the largest family of flies in Australia with 704 species, and the greatest diversity of crane flies is found in southeastern Australia, often along creeks. The larvae are mostly aquatic.

We moved across the road where the cars were parked into Phiddian's Swamp which was dry. In 2007, the area we were examining had been under a metre of water for six months. A Wedgetail Eagle flew overhead. We saw a gorgeous 5cm long dragonfly with a brilliant blue tip to its abdomen, and the same blue on the thorax and eyes. In the swamp with dense Common Sword-sedge (*Lepidosperma longitudinale*), 33 plants of the Metallic Sun-orchid were found.

We moved further into the reserve where Red-beaks or Undertaker Orchids (*Pyrorchis nigricans*) had been found previously. The overstorey tree here was Black She-oak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*). Although we found some leaves, only one very damaged bloom was seen. The leaves can be very large (to 9cm), are heart-shaped, green with dark spots and have a red edge. It is believed that this orchid mostly flowers after a fire. "Pyr" is Greek for "fire". Other orchids were a Wax-lip (*Glossodia major*) and a Thick-lip Spider-orchid (*Caladenia tessellata*) in bud. There were many plants of Daphne Heath (*Brachyloma daphnoides*) and Silky Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia sericea*). Daphne Heath is a small shrub with blunt oblong leaves and sweet-scented white tubular flowers, while the other small shrub Silky Guinea-flower has gold flowers and hairy narrow leaves. Some Tall Sundew (*Drosera peltata* subsp. *auriculata*) were seen growing in dense shade and were completely green. All the sundews seen are normally red. Sun-

RULES TO OBSERVE ON FIELD TRIPS:

1. Excursions are cancelled on days of TOTAL FIRE BAN.
2. Participants to keep a visual on the car in front and behind.
3. When making a turn, give signal, and stay at intersection until following car has also turned.
4. If separated from other cars, stop, and stay with your car. Other members will return to find you.
5. The Car Pooling Cost Calculator is used to assist drivers and car pool passengers to share fuel costs.

SUBSCRIPTION FEES

Family membership	$30
Single membership	$20
Mid-year fee (new members only)	$10

Responsibility for the accuracy of information and opinions expressed in this newsletter rests with the author of the article.

LIBRARY INFORMATION - Librarian - Dot Prout Phone: 5153 1303

- **Books are generally borrowed for one month - however you can write on the sign-out sheet if you wish to have it longer.**
- **Should any library materials need maintenance, please make me aware of same.**
- **If you wish to recommend a book, this can be done by writing a short recommendation for the Clematis. This information could be from our library books or from other books that you believe our library could look at purchasing.**

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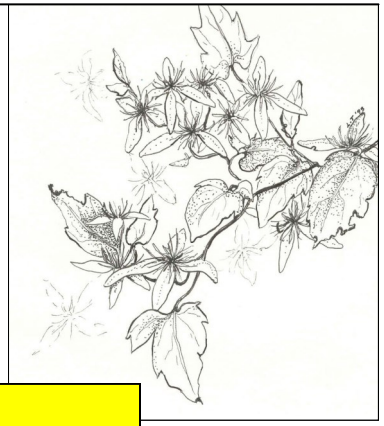
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY FOR BUSH WALKS

Easy	Flat, good firm track.
Moderately easy	Mostly flat, track in good to fair condition
Moderate	May be undulating, track in good to fair condition
Mod. difficult	May be some steep sections, track may be rough in places
Difficult	May have long steep sections, track may be non existent at times

Walks vary in distance from 6 to 14 km.
Contact the leader of the walk for a rating if it's not included in the program.

Please take note of safety procedures in your Bairnsdale & District Field Naturalists Club Inc. 'RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY' booklet.

The Clematis is printed and supported by Dept. of Sustainability and Environment, Bairnsdale.



Front Cover:
Mountain Ash and tree ferns at Mt. Elizabeth

Photo by: Fran Bright

BLOND BAY METALLIC SUN-ORCHID COUNT
2 October 2011

The rare Metallic Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra epipactoides*) was found in the Blond Bay Reserve by James Turner in about 1990. This orchid grows in mostly coastal areas in Victoria, in heathland, grassland and shrubby woodland, and a few inland localities with mallee vegetation. Most of their habitat has been destroyed for agriculture, and the orchids are also threatened by weeds and rabbits. DSE built a fence around the area with the greatest concentration of these orchids in 1997. A much larger enclosure adjacent to the original enclosure was added in 2005. Unfortunately the second enclosure doesn't seem to be as well built as the first, and the perimeter has been breached many times by wombats. Unsuccessful efforts have been made to close off the entry holes. There are now quite some number of entry points, and evidence inside the outer enclosure of both wombat and rabbit scats, and this year two wombat burrows were seen within the fence. The area was burnt before the Field Nats visit last year, to reduce the growth of wattles, eucalypts, grasses and sedges. The area outside to the west, which some years ago only supported a grassy layer (presumably after fire), has now many young Black (*Acacia mearnsii*) and Coast (*A. longifolia* var. *sophorae*) Wattles. To the north where we found 4 Metallic Sun-orchids, the shrubs Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) and Burgan (*Kunzea ericoides*) were taking over.

The air was filled with the calls of birds – it was spring after all! Those we recognized or saw were Mistletoe Bird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Superb Fairy-wren, Grey Fantail and Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo. On the walk into the enclosures we saw Hog Deer hoof prints and a number were spotted on our way back to the cars. These deer are encouraged in this reserve to provide "sport" for hunters!! Too bad about the environment!

Within the enclosures the ground cover is mostly Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*) and Slender Twine-rush (*Leptocarpus tenax*), with often small plants of bright red-flowered Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*) on the ground in between. The Slender Twine-rush is a delicate sedge-like plant with leaves reduced to sheathing scales. The brown clusters of male and female flowers are borne on separate plants at the end of the stems. The Metallic Sun-orchid is a large (to 50cm) orchid with up to 20 flowers which may be pink, blue, bronze, green or red with a metallic shine. The grey-green leaf is large, wide and fleshy-looking. The orchid was often found growing within the protection of the Spiny-headed Mat-rush. Inside the earliest enclosure on the eastern side, the Black Wattles, eucalypts and some Grey Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia cinerascens*) were densely growing again and impeding growth of the Metallic Sun-orchid. Grey Parrot-pea is a small erect shrub with grey round leaves, and small mainly-yellow flowers in cylindrical clusters at the ends of the branches. There were many

We had lunch on top of Mt. Elizabeth overlooking the hills & Valleys below – our lunch provided by DSE was as splendid as the view – the sandwiches were delicious!

We were able to ask questions during this break.
Next stop was below Mt. Elizabeth along the track near the Mountain Ash forest with its tree ferns & rainforest understory. So different to the drier woodlands higher up. (much wetter)

This forest type is less likely to be burnt by a low intensity fire but a high intensity event can still destroy it. We heard parrots & a Yellow Whistler while listening to our guide. So if planned burning can protect all this beauty for us to appreciate, then it is an excellent approach to environmental conservation. We were back in Bairnsdale by 3.30 pm after a thoroughly enjoyable day. We learnt much! Thanks to DSE staff for organising the event.

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A demonstration of field monitoring in Plot 1 by DSE staff

Photo by: Fran Bright

PROGRAM JANUARY TO JUNE 2012

It is your responsibility to contact the co-ordinator of each field trip to notify them of your intention to participate.
The co-ordinator can then notify you if the trip has to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances.

JANUARY

6,7,8,9th. Camp-out at Native Dog Flat
Contact: James Turner

FEBRUARY

Thurs. 9th. Committee meeting, 4.00pm at Margaret Regan's home.
Frid. 17th. General meeting, 7.30pm at the Noweyung Centre.
Speaker: Rohen Bilney, "Fur and Feathers".
Sun. 19th. Monthly excursion, meet at 9.00am at the Bridge Club for a trip to the Nuniong area.
Contact: James Turner
There will not be a bushwalk this month

MARCH

Thurs. 8th. Committee meeting, 4.00pm at Pauline Stewart's home.
Frid. 16th. General meeting, 7.30pm at the Noweyung Centre.
Speaker: John Hutchison, "Birds of South America".
Sun. 18th. Monthly excursion, meet at 9.00am at the Bridge Club for a trip to the Canni Creek area.
Contact: Margaret Regan
Sun. 25th. Bushwalk, meet at 9.00am at the Bridge Club for "The Junction", Lower Dargo.
Contact: Jen Wilkinson

APRIL

Thurs. 12th. Committee meeting, 4.00pm at Pat McPherson's home.
Frid. 20th. General meeting, 7.30pm at the Noweyung Centre.
Speaker: Grant Kuseff, "Butterflies and Moths".
Sun. 22nd. Monthly excursion, meet at 9.00am at the Bridge Club for the Fernbank area.
Contact: James Turner
Sun. 29th. Bushwalk, meet at 9.00am at the Bridge Club for the west side of the Mitchell River National Park.
Contact: Noel Williamson

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MAY

Thurs. 10th.	Planning meeting and Committee meeting at 4.00pm at Pauline Stewart's home.
Frid. 18th.	General meeting, 7.30pm at the Noweyung Centre. Speaker: Geoff Lay "Fungi".
Sat.19th.	Extra fungi excursion. Leader: Geoff Lay Contact: Andrew Bould
Sun. 20th.	Monthly excursion, meet at 9.00am at the Bridge Club for a fungi trip to the Lake Tyers area. Leader: Geoff Lay Contact: Andrew Bould
Sun. 27th.	Bushwalk, meet at 9.00am at the Bridge Club for the Avon Channels. Contact: Noel Williamson

Committee meetings and General meetings will now cease for the winter.

JUNE

Sun. 17th.	Monthly excursion, meet at 9.00am at the Bridge Club for Kenny Forest. Contact: James Turner
Sun. 24th.	Bushwalk, meet at 9.00am at the Bridge Club for the Fairy Dell

BAIRNSDALE & DISTRICT FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC
Reg. No. A0006074C
ANNUAL REPORT 2011

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Bairnsdale and District Field Naturalists Club for 2011.

Membership
Current member ship of the Club is 74.
Two of our long term members Bette Newman and Mandy Evans have moved away this year, but I am pleased to report that Bette has recently renewed her subscription and hope that Mandy too will also opt to keep in touch via The Clematis.

Committee
The following committee was elected at the AGM is December 2010:

- President: Pat McPherson
- Vice President: James Turner
- Secretary: Fran Bright
- Treasurer: Margaret Regan

MT. ELIZABETH LANDSCAPE BURN MONITORING FIELD DAY
27 SEPTEMBER, 2011

by Fran Bright

This field trip was organised by DSE Bairnsdale as a follow up to information sessions held earlier in the year. Three local groups were invited to attend ie. EGBOC, East Gippsland Native Plants Society, & B&DFNC.
Five members of our club participated – Kath Tisdale, Nancy McMurray, Trevor Caldwell, Jenny Hoogzaard, & Fran Bright. At 9.30 am we were off to visit several burn sites currently being monitored in the Mt. Elizabeth area. DSE provided transport by 4WD & hard hats for each of us. We all were keen to see how planned mosaic burn monitoring works & how appropriate fire regimes can help maintain eco systems & species.

I don't think many of us really understood what "fire mosaics," planned burning or site monitoring meant.
We arrived at Mt. Elizabeth around 10.30 am. A roadside briefing introduced the day's activities. It was explained that we would be shown several sites, some with sensor cameras set up to record visiting fauna, & DSE staff would demonstrate techniques for recording data about flora/fauna. (eg measuring girth of trees, fallen & standing, checking for tree hollows, noting which plant seedlings had emerged & when).

Fire Mosaic is the pattern successive fires make on a landscape over a period of time. Long term planned burning can have a profound influence on all species of flora & fauna. This is especially true for species of fauna which cannot flee (eg Koalas) high intensity fires. With mosaic burns some areas are left unburnt, which offer refuge & food. Over time a pattern of vegetative growth stages is created & high intensity fires are less likely. So planned burning is an important part of environmental protection.

We visited Plot 1, dry Eucalypt forest, with Grass Trees growing on stony slopes & ridges. This was burnt recently in March 2011. Sensor cameras placed there recorded fauna back in the area only a few weeks after the burn! A Brushtail Possum was first then a wallaby, a bush rat & later a lyre Bird. Plants were a little slower but the Grass Trees were apparently unharmed & new growth was springing up everywhere. (we were there 6 months after the planned burn) The photo shows DSE staff demonstrating measuring fallen tree trunks in plot 1. This monitoring has been carried out since the burn, & data recorded. The fire ecology assessment process assists in establishing appropriate fire regimes.

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beaks, Green-comb and Thick-lip Spider-orchids, and of course Wax-lip. There were large patches of Peisley's Spider-orchid, with one patch of about 50 plants. New were some almost finished Cobra Greenhoods (*Pterostylis grandiflora*).

A very interesting day, thank you James.

☺

Clarke's Caledenia *(Caladenia clarkiae)*
Photo by: Fran Bright

James Turner was Acting President between February 1st to July 31st whilst I was incapacitated and again between 14th August and 10th October whilst I was travelling and I do sincerely thank you for this James.

Meetings

Four committee meetings, two planning meetings and seven general meetings were held in 2011 with an average attendance of 19 members and visitors at the latter.

Guest speakers

Presentations were made by the following speakers at the general meetings:

Elden Marshall: *Trials and tribulations crossing the Simpson Desert*
Peter Marriott: *Australian moths*
Mike Duncan: *East African trip*
Faye Bedford: *Seabirds, shorebirds and wetland birds of the Gippsland Lakes*
John Zimmer: *Astronomy*
Jim Reside: *The Giant Burrowing Frog and the Movies.*

Field excursions

Monthly field excursions were once again ably planned and led by James Turner to Marlo Plains, Nunniong Plateau, Sale Wetlands/Swallows Lagoon, Buchan area, Tostaree (a fungi trip), Mitchell River National Park, Dead Horse Creek/ Fairy Dell/Kenny Forest, Clifton Creek, Tostaree fire area, Mellick Munjie, and Gelantipy area.

James also conducted the annual survey of Metallic Sun Orchids at Blond Bay in October and continued to lead Club members to photograph more native orchids for inclusion in the B&DFNC's proposed Field Guide to Orchids of East Gippsland.

James reports this season is, without doubt, way and beyond the best this century, thanks to the continuing wet weather after long years of drought. There has been one new discovery in the Genoa-Mallacoota area by a member of the Australian Native Orchid Society, that of a NSW Greenhood – the Sharp Greenhood.

Members have found a number of new populations of the rare orchids that we have been concentrating on thus extending their range. These include:

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- *Caladenia osmera* the Pungent Spider orchid. Until this year it was thought to only be in the Cann River area but new populations were found in the Orbost and Buchan areas

- *Caladenia ancylosa* the Genoa Spider orchid. A large population now occurs near Orbost.

- *Pterostylis acuminate* the above mentioned Sharp Greenhood

- *Pterostylis chlorogramma* the Green-striped Greenhood. Good populations were found in the Kenny Forest north of the Bruthen-Buchan road. Until this year populations east of Sale were unknown.

- *Thelymitra cyanae* the Veined Sun orchid of the high country. A new lowland population was found south east of Cann River which is very unusual.

Another rare discovery of a different nature was made by Jim Reside and his research team near Lindenow, that of the Great Burrowing Frog. These haven't been found for a number of years. Not only did the team find four, they were able to collect and grow their spawn.

Bush walks

Bush walks were once again ably planned and lead by Noel Williamson to Mt Hotham for three days in January, then monthly day walks to Pettman's Beach, Holey Plains, Old Man Hill, Blond Bay, Bruthen to Nowa Nowa, Moormung Forest, Old Mitchell River Weir, Clifton Rocks and Holey Plains.

Camp outs

A very successful combined excursion/bushwalk campout was held at Cann River in October.

Fauna survey

No fauna surveys were undertaken this year as Jenny Edwards is now working full time in West Gippsland as well as juggling her tour business.

B&DFNC data base

Scott Leech the Senior Biodiversity Data Curator at DSE with whom we have been liaising regarding our excursion data has advised that entry of this has resumed and will continue to be entered until June next year when the contract of

(*Wahlenbergia* sp.); the lily Blue Stars (*Chamaescilla corymbosa*); and Satin Everlasting (*Helichrysum leucopscidium*) with woolly stems and leaves, and flowers with white papery ray florets and bright yellow central disc florets. Orchids were again Wallflower, Leopard Orchid, and Thick-lip Spider-orchid, but also Peisley's Spider-orchid (*C. peisleyi*); Tiny Fingers (*C. pusilla*) which only grows to 10cm and the single flower is white or pink with pink stripes, and the column and labellum have red transverse stripes; and Mayfly Orchid (*Acianthus caudatus*) whose tiny burgundy flowers have incredibly long filamentous tepals (petals and sepals). We noticed that the Peisley's and Thick-lip Spider-orchids and the Mayfly Orchids were growing together in a patch of Waxlips. Perhaps they all share the same mycorrhizal fungus?? Lovely fresh Screw fern (*Lindsaya linearis*) was shooting up new unfolding fertile fronds. There were some 5mm diameter dark brown cup fungi with a pale rim. We found many scarab beetles which were fawn with blue-green spots, on the leaves of the eucalypts, which they were obviously feeding on. We also found what we thought may have been clumps of their eggs – pale with red stripes and little red horns; and also a pupa.

On Circle Road we again found Pink Fingers, but also Nodding Greenhood (*Pterostylis nutans*) and Blue Pincushion (*Brunonia australis*). Pretty Blue Pincushion is a herb with a basal rosette of hairy grey-green obovate leaves and a head of blue flowers with protruding styles with a tiny yellow indusium. The indusium is a cup-shaped structure surrounding the stigma, and before the flower opens, pollen is shed into the indusium which is carried upwards by the growing style. Then the pollen is pushed out of the cup by the expanding stigma. The stigma is presumably not receptive until the pollen is all dispersed, or no longer viable, to prevent self-pollination. Back by Circle Link onto Irish Waterholes Road again, and stopping here we found a large Wallflower, Green-comb Spider-orchid and Clark's Caladenia (*Caladenia clarkiae*). This delicate orchid grows to 15cm with up to 4 small pink to white flowers, each of which has tepals with pink tips and a trilobed fringed labellum.

We went to Circle Break Track to see an unburnt area. Here there were some shrubs beneath the overstorey of trees. There was Red Wattle (*Acacia silvestris*) with bipinnate foliage with a gland at the base of every pair of pinnae and 1-3 in between, and bright yellow globular flower-heads in racemes; Spreading Wattle (*Acacia genistifolia*) whose phyllodes are reduced to spikes, and the globular flower-heads are borne 2-4 in the axils of the phyllodes; and Snowy Daisy-bush (*Olearia lirata*). Smaller shrubs were Grey Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia obtusifolia*) and another tiny flowered erect Guinea-flower, Rough Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia aspera*), with obovate leaves with a dense whitish felt beneath, and flowers in which the 4 stamens overarched the ovary. Also Pink Bells (*Tetratheca pilosa*) with the first pink flowers seen on the day. Twining away was the delicate bright blue Love Creeper (*Comesperma volubile*). Orchids were again Noddies, Brown-

one pink flower at the end of the stem above the many insect-catching sticky leaves. Other species were Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyna*); Common Rice-flower (*Pimelea humilis*); a Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum vescum*) with bright blue blooms; mauve and white-flowered Ivy-leaved Violet (*Viola hederacea*); and the bright purple Hairy Fan-flower (*Scaevola ramosissima*).

Some trees had been completely burnt and had fallen to the ground. The coals so formed were being colonized by specific lower plants. The moss *Funaria hygrometrica* with rusty brown fruiting capsules, commonly forms large patches at the sites of fires, apparently associated with high potash concentrations. There were also large patches of the thalloid liverwort *Marchantia*. The flat green thallus has air pores on the upper surface, which are seen as tiny white dots. There were little cups containing small oval bodies which are the gemmae. Each gemma can produce a new *Marchantia* plant the same as the parent plant. All the plants seen seemed to be male, with their stalked reproductive structures having cavities on the upper surface in which swimming sperm are produced. There were also some tiny orange cup fungi which were probably Charcoal Discs (*Anthracobia muelleri*) which is always found in burnt areas, colonizing large areas after bushfires. On the trunks of the trees were many coloured cup moth caterpillars with projections from the sides of their bodies, and eight cavities on their dorsal surfaces containing whorls of stinging spines. These were held retracted, until the creature was disturbed, when they were raised in defence. Hundreds of these caterpillars have since been seen in other areas beneath eucalypt trees, which are presumably their food source.

A little further along Lower Tostaree Road, hearing Grey Fantail and Crimson Rosella on the way, we found several large Mantis Orchid (*Caladenia tentaculata*) with very long petals and sepals (to 30mm), and a green fringe on the edges of the crimson and white labellum; and Leopard Orchid (*Diuris pardina*) whose flowers are yellow with brown blotches and the lateral sepals are crossed beneath the flower. The main ground cover here was not Austral bracken but Common Sword-sedge (*Lepidosperma longitudinale*). On the edge of the road was also Prickly Starwort (*Stellaria pungens*). This small perennial herb has sharp pointed leaves, and white starry flowers whose five petals are split to the base, so the flower appears to have ten petals.

Past Hospital Creek on the Old Orbost Road and on to Irish Waterholes Road, to an obviously usually wetter area with signs of Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) regenerating. We had noticed banksias along the road re-sprouting along the branches (epicormic shoots) just like the eucalypts. Sheoaks were regenerating from roots near the surface of the ground. Some birds were Pallid Cuckoo, Shining and Horsfields Bronze-cuckoos, Flame Robin, Spotted Pardalote, Kookaburra and Yellow-faced Honeyeater. Some new plants were Bluebell

Doris, the person who enters these data, expires. At that time we will be advised of how much of the more recent data has been entered and what will be returned to us. DSE will keep all the older data which needs to be worked over as names of plants have changed etc and they will gradually enter these into the system over the coming years. These data are used a lot in re-vegetation processes.

In March 2012 the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas will come on line. We will have access to this online system and will be able to enter our future excursion data onto this Atlas via the Biodiversity Interactive Map (as well as recent data that DSE hadn't been able to finish).

Environmental issues of interest to the Club

There has been no action by DSE since January 2009 on the draft Action Statement developed by the Working Group (on which the Club was represented by Jennifer Wilkinson) which addressed reduction in bio-diversity of native vegetation by Sambar (*Cervus Unicolor).*

In February we made a submission to the federal minister for the Environment the Hon. Tony Burke to register our opposition to the Baillieu government's move to allow cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park.

We have recently made a submission to the East Gippsland Shire Council in response to their draft Roadside Vegetation Clearance Strategy, seeking to ensure that current destructive and inappropriate practices are reigned in and seeking to have performance indicators, time lines and accountability incorporated into the Strategy.

The Club is currently represented on the Macleod Morass Community Reference Group whose function is to ensure that the recommendations from the Macleod Morass Working Group are completed.

At the time of this report, the Club is involved in preliminary discussions with like- minded groups who are members of Habitat Network East Gippsland (HNEG) as to how to best address the continuing loss of biodiversity in East Gippsland. These discussions will be progressed in the New Year.

In September DSE held a Field Day at Mt Elizabeth for members of B&DFNC, East Gippsland Bird Observers Club and the East Gippsland branch of the Australian Plant Society. The objective of the field day was to provide environmental

groups with firsthand experience of DSE's ecological monitoring as part of their programme of Landscape Mosaic Burns (LMB). Notwithstanding this monitoring programme, the Club remains strongly opposed to any Spring control burns because (as with the current roadside clearing regimen) it is the main breeding time for wild life and the main flowering time for most flora species and many rare species are destroyed. We again made this point in our submission to DSE's proposed burn plan for 2011-12-13.

Life membership

The Committee is delighted to bestow Life Membership on Andrew Bould who has made a continuous contribution to the Club since 1994. He has served as President; he has and does lead excursions; he has and does make presentations at our general meetings which are always illustrated by his stunning photographs; he has and does set up Club displays in public places, in particular the splendid historical displays associated with the Club's 50th anniversary celebrations last year.

Andrew was responsible for the Club leasing and establishing a fenced site for the *Caladenia Valida* orchid on Raymond Island in 2002 which he has been meticulously monitoring since then.

Andrew constantly brings to our attention, and to that of the wider environmental/ scientific/research communities, anything in our natural environment that is new or unusual. These have included moths, insects, butterflies, spiders, birds and fungi as well as native orchids. Amazingly these things always seem to be found in his backyard on his beloved Raymond Island – what a wonderland that is!

The environment and all native species in East Gippsland has no greater friend and advocate than Andrew Bould. He brings great credit to himself, to his family and to the Bairnsdale & District Field Naturalists Club and it gives me great pleasure to confer life membership on him.

Thanks

I would like to close this Annual Report by recording my thanks to the management of Noweyung for the continued use of their building for our general meetings and to DSE for photocopying our Clematis newsletter.

I also thank all the members for their support and contributions to the activities of the Club during the year but in particular to the Executive and Co-ordinators

TOSTAREE - 18 September 2011

by Margaret Regan

This excursion was to see the reaction of the vegetation at Tostaree after the bushfire in February 2011. We turned off the Princes Hwy onto Lower Tostaree Road, and just past Old Tostaree Road disturbed four Emus who ran across the track. Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) was flowering everywhere, and the feathery white heads of spikelets glowed in the sunlight. Just past Humbug Road we left the cars to ferret around. The fire had been a severe crown fire, but despite this, almost every eucalypt tree was regenerating from its epicormic shoots. These arise from dormant buds protected beneath the bark during the fire. If the fire is really severe, these will be killed and unless the tree has a lignotuber, it will die. The lignotuber is a woody mass at the base of the tree containing many dormant vegetative buds. There was a lower layer of the hardy fern Austral bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*). Austral bracken regenerates quickly from its underground stems called rhizomes. All over the ground were small black insects, about 2.5cm long with hairy abdomens. There must have been plenty of food about as there were many birds to be seen or heard. (Thanks to Lucas and Aileen for most of the identifications.) Birds were: Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Grey Shrike-thrush, Superb Fairy-wren, Jacky Winter with a tiny nest on the outer reaches of a dead branch, Dusky Woodswallow, Pied Currawong, Musk Lorikeet, Varied Sitella, Spotted Pardalote, Brown Thornbill and White-eared Honeyeater.

For the orchid aficionados there was a feast: the lovely mauve Waxlip (*Glossodia major*) we saw all day; White Fingers (*Caladenia catenata*), a large specimen which has red at the back of the flower on the column and a yellow tip to the labellum; Pink Fingers (*C. carnea*); Early Caladenia (*C. praecox*) with small white hooded flowers with red glandular hairs on the outside; Thick-lip Spider-orchid (*C. tessellata*) with dense purple labellum calli; the lovely yellow Wallflower Orchid (*Diuris orientis*); and Brown-beaks (*Lyperanthus suaveolens*), the plants of which have a single long leaf and a stem bearing up to 8 brown or green flowers with yellow-tipped labellums and long floral parts. There were actually some other plants around of course, and being spring, many were in flower too. The lilies were Nodding Blue Lily (*Stypandra glauca*); the delicate mauve Twining Fringe-lily (*Thysanotus patersonii*); Golden Weather-glass (*Hypoxis hygrometrica*); and Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*). Daisies included the tiny Blue Bottle-daisy (*Lagenophora stipitata*); yellow Button Everlasting (*Helichrysum scorpioides*); and yellow hairy Shiny Buttons (*Leptorhynchos nitidulus*). A pea was Handsome Flat-pea (*Platylobium parvifolium*). Members of the grass-tree family Xanthorrhoeaceae were Small Grass-tree (*Xanthorrhoea minor*) whose trunk is almost entirely underground; and Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*). There were many plants of Tall Sundew (*Drosera peltata* subsp. *auriculata*) with

Just across the creek we saw the gilled fungus Yellow Belly Buttons (*Omphalina chromacea*) growing in soil. This tiny toadstool is all bright yellow, with a cap with a depression in the centre ('omphali' is Greek for 'navel'). Another gilled bracket fungus was Split Gill (*Schizophyllum commune*) which was colonizing the trunk of a dead wattle. Pretty Split Gill has a very hairy cap top and double-edged gills below. In several areas on the ground was a white feathery slime mould. These strange organisms have a creeping slimy mass called a plasmodium. This feeds on bacteria, fungi and decaying organic matter. At some stage the plasmodium is changed into a sporangium from which spores are produced. Each of these then produces a new slime mass.

Up to Jones Road with a new wattle for the day. This was Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*). This dense shrub has wavy-edged leathery phyllodes and solitary deep yellow globular flower heads. The most distinctive feature of this wattle is the stipules beneath the leaves are reduced to fine thorns – ugh! There was the small yellow pea, Creeping Bossiaea (*Bossiaea prostrata*). The Showy Violet flowers here were paler than those we normally see. There were Nodding and Trim Greenhoods, and the Narrow Rock-fern (*Cheilanthes sieberi*). The highlight was many bright beautiful flowers of Blue Fingers (*Cyanicula caerulea*). Our last stop was at a cross road part way along Jones Road, where there was a stunning display of Purple Coral-pea, with Trim and Nodding Greenhoods, and the daisy Austral Bear's-ear (*Cymbonotus preissianus*) which is a stem-less perennial with toothed basal leaves and yellow flower heads.

Lovely day, thank you James.

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Blue fingers *(Cyanicula caerulea*)
Photo by: Andrew Bould

who, year after year, keep us in business and keep our field work and activities relevant and I'll name them:

- James Turner who knows the East Gippsland bush like no other and leads us to endless discoveries
- Noel Williamson who delights in finding interesting (and sometimes difficult) walks to take us on and usually at high speed
- Margaret Regan whose excursion reports are masterly and who manages our finances carefully
- Pauline Stewart who produces the quarterly Clematis and enhances each edition with fantastic photographs taken by our very gifted members
- Fran Bright who admirably carries the duties of Secretary whilst juggling heavy domestic responsibilities
- Lorraine Davies who efficiently manages the suppers after our general meetings.

May they ever keep on keeping on because we simply couldn't function without them.

I extend to you all, every good wish for a safe and happy Christmas and for peace, good health and prosperity in 2012.

Pat McPherson

President ☺

Editors note:
On behalf of all our club members I would like to thank the executive committee for all their dedicated work throughout the year.
Special thanks go to Pat McPherson for leading the club as president with such professionalism and enthusiasm.
My thanks also go to The Department of Sustainability & Environment especially Irene who helps me with the sometimes cantankerous photo copiers to print out the Clematis.
Pauline Stewart,
Newsletter editor

CLIFTON CREEK - 21 August 2011

by Margaret Regan

Our original excursion was to have been up to Bullumwaal, north of Bairnsdale, but the road had been damaged by the recent flooding in the area. Instead, we headed a little further east and then north towards Clifton Creek. In Long Bridge Road near the corner of Waterholes Road, we were beneath an overstorey of White Stringybark (*Eucalyptus globoidea*), Red Ironbark (*E. tricarpa*) and Red Box (*E. polyanthemos*). Again the original idea of the day had been to see wattles in flower, so here we found Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) and Ploughshare Wattle (*A. gunnii*). Silver Wattle can be a tall tree in mountain forests, but in drier sites, such as this, it is a spindly shrub with grey-green bark and pinnate leaves, and bright yellow sprays of flower heads. The Ploughshare Wattle is a spreading shrub to 1m, with pointed irregular leaves (like a ploughshare) and large pale solitary flower heads. Sunshine Wattle (*A. terminalis*) was here too, but it had finished flowering and the plants were covered with pods. The normal pods, not yet ripe, were greeny-yellow. However there was one plant whose pods were smaller, red and curled. We assumed that the pods were insect-damaged. These pods were very obvious with the sun behind them, illuminating their red colour. All day we saw plants of the brilliant creeper Purple Coral-pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*). Another pea was Gorse Bitter-pea (*Daviesia ulicifolia*) which has pointed phyllodes and many mainly yellow flowers, and the characteristic triangular pods of the bitter-peas. A common tiny plant was White Marianth (*Rhytidosporum procumbens*), a shrub to 40cm, with deeply wrinkled ripe seeds. Two small shrubs which are commonly seen flowering, were Grey Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia obtusifolia*), which mostly only has one or two bright yellow flowers, and Hairy Pink Bells (*Tetratheca pilosa*). Orchids were the tiny Pink Fingers (*Caladenia carnea*), Nodding Greenhood (*Pterostylis nutans*) and the much less common Granite Greenhood (*P. tunstallii*). Granite Greenhood flowers, like all greenhoods, have the dorsal sepal and the petals fused to form the hood or galea. In the Granite Greenhood, the lateral sepals are quite broad, held straight down and fused for much of their length. The labellum is brown with a darker central stripe. An unusual fungus was orange Jelly Babies (*Leotia* sp.). These tiny Jelly Babies grow to 50mm and have sticky stalks. The fertile heads are globular and irregular. Some birds were Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Superb Fairy-wren and probably Brown Thornbill.

A little further along the road, on the road bank, and lush with the recent rain, were swathes of the moss *Dawsonia longiseta* mixed in with other mosses and lichens. This is a common moss of roadside banks. The *Dawsonia* had some plants with male heads where sperm is produced, and some with young sporophytes, with capsules still covered by their reddish hairy covers. The sporophytes are produced when an egg contained on a female plant is fertilised by a swimming

sperm. There were some old sporophytes with their bare capsules, showing the distinctive ring of hairs at the opening of the capsule, from where the spores are released. There were more wattles, beginning with the species we were to see all day – the Australian floral emblem, the Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*). Golden Wattle grows to 8m with wide leathery phyllodes and large sprays of bright yellow flower heads There was also Heath Wattle (*A. brownii*), a semi-prostrate shrub to 1m with thin phyllodes with prominent midribs, and solitary axillary flower heads; and Spike Wattle (*A. oxycedrus*) which can grow to 10m with stiff pointed phyllodes and flower heads in dense spikes. A box tree had been badly attacked by Yellow-tail Black Cockatoos searching for wood-boring grubs inside the trunk. The tree had reacted by exuding sap. This was attracting honey bees. Wattle Mat-rush (*Lomandra filiformis*) was flowering. The Mat-rushes are sedge look-a-likes, although they are in the same family as the grass trees, the Xanthorrhoeaceae. They have male and female flowers on separate plants. Wattle Mat-rush is quite small with strappy curved leaves to 50cm, with a branching spike of small yellow flowers among the leaves at the base.

Even further along Long Bridge Road was more Golden Wattle and Grey Guinea-flower, but also Handsome Flat-pea (*Platylobium parviflorum*). Small plants were Pomax (*Pomax umbellata*), a perennial stiffly hairy herb with flower heads in a terminal umbel, each flower head supported by a common reddish ring of bracts; the delicate twining blue Love Creeper (*Comesperma volubile*); Showy Violet (*Viola betonicifolia*); Tall Sundew (*Drosera peltata* subsp. *auriculata*); and the two orchids, Nodding Greenhood and Peisley's Spider-orchid (*Caladenia peisleyi*).

We then headed towards Mount Taylor along Orrs Road and turned into Boyds Road, and stopped for lunch near Clifton Creek beneath big old box trees. We heard or saw Red Wattlebird, White-throated Treecreeper, Superb Fairy-wren, Striated Pardalote and Eastern Spinebill. Last time we visited this site we were thrilled to find a Superb Fairy-wren nest low in the sedges, and watch an Eastern Yellow Robin on her nest just over head height on the trunk of a tree. There were quite a few orchids. Along with the now common Nodding Greenhood were three other greenhoods - Trim Greenhood (*Pterostylis concinna*); Blunt Greenhood (*P. curta*) which has a basal rosette of leaves, and the green and white striped flower has short partly fused erect lateral sepals, and the labellum is protruding and twisted at the apex; and Maroonhood (*P. pedunculata*) where the galea and tips of the erect thin lateral sepals are reddish-brown. Two other genera were Large Gnat-orchid (*Cyrtostylis robusta*) whose rounded green leaf is pale green beneath, and the tiny flower has an enormous labellum; and Dainty Wasp-orchid (*Chiloglottis trapeziformis*) which has two basal leaves, and a tiny flower with an obovate labellum with a central group of crowded stalkless calli.

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