



November 1, 2015

From the Immediate Past-President

Rachel Faggetter



We have just driven up Great Ocean Road from Port Fairy and called in to Loch Ard Gorge. It is always dramatic, poignant and very beautiful. Parks Victoria have done an excellent job in designing tracks and amenities to manage visitors in this high-pressure area. The vegetation, now protected by stout fencing, looks very healthy. The iconic Twelve Apostles is developed as the honey pot to attract most visitors. The other viewing points along the Port Campbell National Park coast are relatively quiet. We are so lucky.

I have just been watching eight New Holland Honeyeaters jumping in and out of the bird bath. On the rim they whizz their feathers before splashing in again, talking furiously. Droplets of water spray up in the evening sunlight. They have to be quick before a couple of wattlebirds zoom in and scatter the party. Wattlebirds with their raucous yodelling see off most intruders and even go after currawongs. It is just as Tim Low wrote in his fascinating book ‘*Where Song Began*’ about the vigour and aggression of Australia’s honeyeaters, the world’s first song birds.

This summer is likely to be difficult, long, hot and dry. A couple of bird baths provide important assistance, as well as constant pleasure for all. Water points can be made from all sorts of materials, but they need to be safe from cats. Big birds like relatively open places, smaller birds need overhanging bushes where they can find shelter quickly.

2015 Australian Natural History Medallion

*Awarded to Margaret MacDonald OAM
for her contribution to botany and conservation*

The Friends would like to congratulate Margaret on being the recipient of this prestigious award.

As quoted from the ANGAIR Newsletter October 15, 2015:

“The ANHM is awarded each year to the person judged to have made the most meritorious contribution to the understanding of Australian Natural History, and this year’s award recognises Margaret’s expertise, and her many contributions to the field of Natural History.”

She has contributed significantly to the protection of biodiversity in the district, and to the understanding and appreciation of the local flora, particularly of terrestrial orchids. She has generously shared her knowledge and love of the local flora and fauna with other experts, and with the wider community, including school and university students. In short, Margaret is an inspiring conservationist, and a most worthy recipient of the Medallion.”

Margaret would like to thank all members of the Friends, ANGAIR and the wider community who have worked alongside her in the field of conservation over many years. She feels she is sharing this award with so many people.

She would also like to thank the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria who recognise the importance of Australian Natural History and make this award available.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Environmental Weeding

Tuesday, November 10

Tuesday, December 8

9.30-11.00 am

Contact: Patrick 0437 561 702

Meet on corner of Camp Road and Coalmine Road

Our last two sessions for the year will see us return to working on Pipeline Track where we worked in 2014 with a team from Karingal and also Christian College. We will focus on both Boneseed and Coast Wattle. Parks have worked in the area since the control burn that was carried out there but there is still much to do. We hope to work with Karingal once again this year as we felt it was a very rewarding experience both for the Friends and the Karingal group.

Mammal Surveys

Mammal surveys using our remote cameras are usually carried out following Committee meetings on the first Tuesday of each month.

We are always pleased to welcome any people interested in our indigenous fauna to participate in these activities. Naturally we are keen to photograph rare and threatened species and a minimum of feral animals, but whatever animals we do locate are adding to the overall picture of the fauna population in the Park. Please make contact to find meeting place and approximate meeting time.

On November 3 we intend placing cameras along Portreath Road where we believe we have seen bandicoot diggings.

Walk & Mammal Survey

Saturday, November 21 9.30 am – 3.30 pm

Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Centre at 9.30am

(Bring morning tea and lunch)

Contact: Lachie 0428 897 029

The cameras for the mammal survey will be placed near the waterhole at the junction of Reedy Creek and Big Hill Tracks. Access to the mammal survey site will be by car via Lorne. After setting up the cameras there will be a 1.5 km walk along a ridge to Kellsalls Lookout with a magnificent view across the Grassy Creek valley. There is a short downhill and uphill to access the lookout at the end of the level ridge.

End of Year Celebrations

Saturday, December 12 10.00 am – 2.00 pm

Combined Activity with ANGAIR & Parks Vic.

Meet at the Moggs Creek Picnic Ground at 10.00am.

Short walk around the Moggs Creek circuit track where there is always a wealth of flora and many birds to observe or hear. If you don't wish to participate in the walk, just come along to the Picnic Ground and join us for lunch at 12 noon.

Meat, sauce and bread provided.

Bring your own salads, sweets, drinks, plates, glasses, cutlery and fold-up chair.

An Early Diary Entry

Annual General Meeting

Sunday, February 14 at 2pm

ANGAIR Natural History Centre, McMillan St Anglesea

INFORMATION REGARDING FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

Mammal Surveys

We have been concentrating our efforts on the heathlands along Coalmine Road in conjunction with Deakin University in the hope that we might track down the New Holland Mouse that has not been seen in the Anglesea district for many years.



One of the last records was from this particular area.

However we have had limited success. No sign of the New Holland Mouse, but we did find that the vulnerable Southern Brown Bandicoot is using this area. Other animals photographed were Black Wallaby with young in its pouch, and Eastern Grey Kangaroos. One of the kangaroos captured on our cameras was an animal tagged at the Golf Course. It has been identified by Graeme Coulson, University of Melbourne, as Durian, who was first tagged in the pouch in December 2012. His estimated date of birth is January, 2012. He has not been

sighted for about a year so Graeme was pleased to know he's still alive and well. We also gained images of an echidna, Pied Currawong, young fox and a Blue-tongue Lizard.

Environmental Weeding

Over the last few months we have been concentrating our efforts on removing Bluebell Creeper, *Billardiera heterophylla*, from the coastal heathlands at Moggs Creek. Bluebell Creeper must be one of the worst of our environmental weeds as it invades into the indigenous vegetation with many young plants being difficult to locate in the dense vegetation. A native from Western Australia it has escaped from people's gardens and spread far and wide.

Nevertheless we have had a great team of helpers and we have enjoyed working in this different environment with the magnificent coastal views as our backdrop.



Sabine Falls Walk Saturday August 15

Seven people set off in two cars for the long 70 km drive to the Sabine Falls Picnic Area. The day was fine and ideal for the 3.6 km walk through the rainforest to the Falls. The track commenced on a gradual grade to the historic Henry's Saw Mill site but after that the track descended steeply by means of well-made steps. There had obviously been no maintenance on the track recently. Just before the Falls lookout a large tree had fallen across the track. Trying to negotiate this large fallen tree, assuming the track continued on the other side, took up quite a bit of effort and time until we determined that the tree had fallen across a zig-zag of the track and that there was no need to cross the tree to access the continuation of the track. The rainforest contained many old growth trees including Blackwoods, Mountain Ash with an understory of treeferns and Blanketleaf. Many types of fungi were growing on the decaying wood and two live Black Otway snails were observed on the track during the climb back to the picnic area .

ANGAIR Wildflower Show Saturday September 19 & Sunday September 20

This year our large display featured A Year with the Friends encompassing a draft copy of our proposed Moggs Creek Picnic Ground sign along with other photos of Friends activities.

We also featured the story of the Moggs Creek Hooded Plovers and our successes with capturing images of the Southern Brown Bandicoot and Long-nosed Bandicoot on the foreshore at Urquhart Bluff. We would like to acknowledge the assistance given to our group by Margie Morgan who prepared the laptop presentations.

Thanks to those members of the Friends Group who helped with the preparation and implementation of our display



Caladenia maritima survey



The annual survey for our Angahook Caladenia *Caladenia maritima* was carried out on September 23 with a second count on October 6.

As could be expected with the dry conditions and the days of extreme heat at the beginning of October, the annual count was down in numbers. However this is typical of all orchid observations throughout Victoria this year.

Our final count was 410 flowers – 130 less than last year. In contrast we had 1272 flowers in 2012 and 1208 in 2013. We feel confident that the underground tubers did not develop due to lack of good autumn rains, and are hopeful that next year we may see the tubers stimulated and a return to good numbers of flowers. This is the only known population of this orchid that is endemic to Anglesea, so it has to be considered as critically endangered.

Wildflower Walk Saturday October 17

With the cold, dry conditions followed by a few days of extreme heat, the wildflowers around Anglesea have taken a battering this year and it was difficult to find a place for our wildflower walk on Saturday, October 17.

However the heathlands came to our rescue, and a short walk at the back of Anglesea on land that belongs to the Anglesea Golf Course, but is leased to Alcoa, provided some spectacular flowers, some of them not common in the district. The pea flowers were just brilliant – Smooth Parrot-pea, Showy Parrot-pea, Dwarf Bush-pea and Aotus were in full bloom. The beautiful pinkish-purple Heath Milkwort and the creamy Smoke-bush were greatly admired. The small eucalypt Shining Peppermint *Eucalyptus falciformis* was just covered with creamy-white flowers amongst the bluish-green foliage. Unfortunately there are a number of environmental weeds flourishing in the area but the masses of indigenous flowers certainly outnumbered the invaders.



It is just so great to have these remnant patches of heathlands on our doorstep. We hope they can be preserved for future generations to enjoy. The people who joined us for the walk certainly appreciated the experience.

GENERAL INFORMATION



August 2011



September 2015

Following the control burn in 2007, Coast/Sallow Wattle *Acacia longifolia* an environmental weed invaded the Anglesea coastal heathlands. The wattles were subsequently mulched, and the Friends and their helpers spent many hours cutting and painting the regrowth with herbicide. The expanse of indigenous golden Silky Guinea-flower *Hibbertia sericea* that appeared this year is amazing. Admittedly at this stage it is a monoculture, but a very beautiful one. We expect other heathland plants to return in the years to come, and yes we will be monitoring for any wattles that may dare to return!

Hooded Plovers

The Hooded Plover season is in full swing with three pairs sitting on eggs between Point Roadknight and Moggs Creek. Unfortunately the Moggs birds lost their first two eggs – we believe to an overhead predator – possibly ravens. They quickly established a new nest and are incubating and guarding their one remaining egg very diligently. Another pair of Hoodies that seem interested in the site are being told where to go in no uncertain terms by OM/RW the male who reared his family successfully last season. He has a new partner and we wish them every success.

The Guvvo's beach pair have not made a commitment to this stage.

Facebook

The Friends of Eastern Otways now have a presence on Facebook. We use it to post photos from the monitoring cameras, add news and activities from other groups that we think will be of interest to the Friends, and communicate information about events that do not fit the timetable imposed by the quarterly newsletter.

If you are on Facebook yourself, you can join the group, by sending a message to Margaret MacDonald or Patrick Flanagan and ask them to add you as a member. You can then load photos and post comments thus contributing to the site.