



Field Nats News No.232

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.
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Understanding Our Natural World
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July 2013

From the President

I would like to welcome all of our members to the July FNN. It certainly has been a busy time since the AGM, for me at least. I had a ten day trip to WA to do some fencing and upon returning to Melbourne, I spent the next four weeks undertaking vegetation surveys between Euroa and Benalla. Thank you to Robin Drury for chairing the May council meeting in my absence.

I have to say that it was very nice to wake up each morning to Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, whilst staying in Dwellingup amongst the Jarrah Trees *Eucalyptus marginata*, rather than Common Mynahs at home. While erecting a picket fence, I had great views of Red-capped Parrot, Western Rosella, Western Spinebill and Long-billed Black Cockatoo, (four WA endemic birds), along with a range of other species. I didn't get a lot of time to go bird watching, they came to me instead.

While in north-east Victoria, I had plenty of time to look at plants and the occasional bird, reptile, frog and even a Yellow-footed Antechinus. So although my last month and a half has been busy, there have been some real natural gems along the way.

The Photographic Competition has proven popular again this year with over 73 entries for the judges to ponder. Our thanks to those FNCV members who have agreed to act as judges. *Details of the Exhibition July 12—14th p6.*

After the AGM in May, the FNCV

Council has taken on a new look.

Leon Altoff, Audrey Falconer (Marine Research Group representatives) and Alan Yen, Past President, Vice President and Terrestrial Invertebrates Group representative, have retired from their positions. I would like to thank these three people for their valued contributions and service to the Club through their Council membership over many years.

I would also like to welcome to the Council, three new members Maxwell Campbell, Terrestrial Invertebrates Group representative, Philippa Burgess, Microscopy representative and Su Dempsey, Councillor. I look forward to their input into the leadership of the FNCV.

John Harris

INSIDE—Find out what this beautiful Australasian Grebe in doing in Wendy Clarke's living room - page 3 - *Members' Observations* And don't forget to send FNN news and photos of natural history subjects that catch caught your attention during the month. We would love to hear from you.



Due date for FNN 233 will be 10 am **Tuesday 2nd July** We will go to the printers on 9th July with collation on the 16th.

The capture and handling of all animals on FNCV field trips is done strictly in accordance with the Club's research permits.

Index	Page
From the President	1
Calendar of Events	2, 3
Members' news, photos & observations.	3
Club Notices: Library News	4
SIG Reports to Council	5, 6
From the Office	6
Photographic Competition Exhibition	7
Fungi Group News: Foray Toorong Falls, Noojee	8
Terrestrial Invertebrate Group News: <i>Describing the Unseen Windmills of the Victorian Alps</i>	9
Day Group News: <i>Naturalising in Cape York</i>	10, 12
Marine Research Group News. Review of Recent Fieldwork.	11
Photographic workshops -adv	12



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All meetings are held at the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn at 8 pm., unless otherwise indicated. On days of extreme weather conditions, excursions may be cancelled. Please check with leader.

July

Monday 1st – Fungi Group. Meeting - *Molecules in Mushrooms*. Speaker: Bill Leithhead. Bill is a retired Organic Chemistry lecturer and a member of the Fungi group. Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775.

Tuesday 2nd - Fauna Survey Group. Meeting - *Frogs and fire* - impacts of the 2009 bushfires on frog communities in the Kinglake region. Speaker: Dominique Potvin, Museum Victoria. Contact: Robin Drury 0417 195 148; robindrury@hotmail.com

Sunday 7th – Fungi Group. *Fungal Foray* -10.30 am, Blackwood Car park at Garden of St Erth, Jack Cann Reserve, Simmons Reef Road, (MEL Edition 37 X909 E11). Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775.

Monday 8th – Marine Research Group. Meeting – *Marine Research on the Falkland Islands*. Speaker: Mel Mackenzie, speaking on her recent trip to the Falkland Islands working with local marine researchers. Contact: Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773.

Friday 12th – Sunday 14th Photographic Exhibition. Come and see the Exhibition of entries from our Club Photographic Competition. Grand Opening on Friday night; general exhibition on Saturday and the Award Ceremony on Sunday. Join the fun and excitement of this whole of Club event. Contact: FNCV Office 98779860; admin@fncv.org.au *See invitation p6.*

Sunday 14th – Fungi Group. *Fungal Foray* – 10.30 am, Upper Yarra Reservoir, Reefton. (MEL Ed 37 X 912 U2, VIC ROADS Ed 8. 80 G4). Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775.

Sunday 14th – Juniors' Group. Excursion - *Dingo Discovery Sanctuary and Research Centre*. Toolern Vale at 11am. Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclair@gmail.com

Tuesday 16th—Collate FNN 233. Starting about 10.30 am. All welcome. Contact Joan Broadberry 9846 1218.

Wednesday 17th – Terrestrial Invertebrates Group. Meeting – *An Introduction to Terrestrial Invertebrates, with special reference to leaf-litter fauna*. Speaker: Maxwell Campbell. Contact: Maxwell Campbell 0409 143 538.

Wednesday 17th—Grey-headed Flying Fox Survey. Meet at Yarra Bend Golf Course carpark, Mel 2D G7 at 7.45 pm. More information from Rod Van Der Ree (rvdr@unimelb.edu.au), Jo Ainley (j.ainley@unimelb.edu.au) or Ian Kitchen (iankitchen@optusnet.com.au)

Thursday 18th – Botany Group. Meeting - *Saltmarsh and estuary vegetation of Victoria, with reference to Mud Islands*. Speaker: Jeff Yugovic, Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055 071.

Sunday 21st – Fungi Group. *Fungal Foray* -10.30 am, Bunyip State Park, Gembrook, Mortimer Picnic Ground, off the Gembrook – Tonimbuk Road, (MEL Edition 37 Page 14 R12). Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775.

Sunday 21st – Botany Group. Excursion - 10 am., The Inlets Waterway Reserve, Koo Wee Rup, 5.2 km past Tooradin. South Gippsland Highway, 40 m immediately after Cardinia Creek bridge (which has a sign), turn left onto vehicle track and park car on grass in front of gate. Bring gum boots Leader: Jeff Yugovic. Contact: Sue Bendel 0427 055 071.

Tuesday 23rd – Day Group. Meeting – *Our disappearing bryophytes: a battle for survival*. Speaker: Dr Maria Gibson (Deakin University). Meet at 10.30 am for coffee and an chat. Speaker at 11 am. Contact Gary Presland 9890 9288.

Wednesday 24th - Geology Group. Meeting - *A canary in the coalmine of climate change: Dramatic reductions in Arctic sea ice*. Speaker: Professor Ian Simmonds, School of Earth Sciences, University of Melbourne.

(Continued on page 3)



The policy of the FNCV is that non-members pay \$5 per excursion and \$2 per meeting, to cover insurance costs. Junior non-member families, \$2 per excursion only.

(Continued from page 2)

Contact: Kaye Oddie 9329 0635; koddie@bigpond.com

Friday 26th – Juniors' Group. Meeting 7.30 pm– Reptiles and Us. Speaker - Simon Watharow.

Contact: Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairref@gmail.com

Saturday 27th – Fauna Survey Group. Equipment Day and get-together. All help appreciated and visitors welcome. FNCV Hall 10.30 am - 3 pm. BYO lunch. Contact: Russell Thompson 9434 7046 AH.

Sunday 28th – Fungi Group. Fungal Foray -10.30am, Greens Bush - Baldry Crossing Mornington Peninsula, (MEL Edition 37. 254 G6). Contact: Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775.

Monday 29th - FNCV Council Meeting - 7.30 pm sharp. Agenda items and apologies to Hali, 98779860 or admin@fncv.org.au

Members' news, photos & observations

We always have space for member photos and natural history observations. Please share with us what you have noted in your daily life, travels or garden. Email: fnnews@fncv.org.au by the first Monday in the month.

Groups of Bronzewing Pigeons

I have only ever seen Common Bronzewing Pigeons in ones or twos, usually looking pretty cryptic and dashing back into the scrub or flying off, flashing their bronze feathers in the light.

This week, after the heavy rains, I have seen one group of five and the following day, a group of three. It was around 8.30 am and they were feeding on the path alongside Gardeners Creek in Box Hill South near Station Street. What they were foraging for I could not see. They were quite unconcerned about people and dogs and we got very close before they walked off.

I will endeavour to go back tomorrow with a camera and see if they are once more in a group.

Wendy Clark

Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 232

Joan Broadberry
Platon Vafiadis
Hali Ferguson
Sally Bewsher

A Little Grebe Stopped for a Rest

A few weeks ago, I was driving down Middleborough Rd Box Hill South and turned into a side street. There in the middle of the road sat a small bird. I promptly jumped out and picked it up. The bird did not protest, as I checked it for injuries – it had none. It was also quite fat so it wasn't starving. I tucked it into my jacket and drove on to my Tai Chi class where I showed everyone the beautiful creature and found it a box to sit in. Within an hour it was starting to protest so I took it home to find out more of its needs and also to photograph it

Its feet were an amazing green colour and were also paddles, so this was definitely a water bird. It turned out to be a Little Grebe (Australasian Grebe) – a male in full breeding plumage. From what I found out, it is not uncommon for these birds to become exhausted when flying from one water source to another and when that happens they just stop and rest – wherever they are! They like to catch their own food – little fish and other water creatures so it was important to release him as soon as possible.



After his photo session and checking to see he had fully recovered, I released him at Wurrundgerri Park in Blackburn which has a beautiful stream with lots of little pools. I had also seen grebes there before. He very happily swam away.

Wendy Clark

SOLAR PANEL REPORT



Since the solar panels were turned on in mid-October 2012, up to the 11th June 2013 we have generated a total of 6311 kilowatts of electricity. Our average daily usage for this period was 4.86

kw. Therefore, on average we have been generating 21.88 kw per day above our needs. This is put back into the grid.

Our last bill from AGL covering the months of March, April and May 2013 showed us to be \$106 in credit.



Library News

Recent Acquisitions

The following books have been acquired recently:

Plants of Melbourne's Western Plains (2nd Ed) Australian Plants Society, Keilor Plains Group;
Flora of the Otway Plain and Ranges 2 Enid Mayfield;
The Bush Stone-curlew in northern Victorian, S. Sleight, *et al.*

These works have yet to be catalogued, but will be available soon for loan.

Recent periodicals:

Australian Journal of Zoology 60(5) has articles on the Tasmanian echidna, koalas, squirrel gliders, antechinus and platypus;
Australian Wildlife Vol.2 / 2013 reports efforts to conserve the bush stone-curlew in NSW and the decline of quolls in Tas. There is a feature on the Stirling Range in WA;
Fungimap newsletter 48 has a study of the puffball genus *Pisolithus* in Queensland.
Australian Journal of Botany 61(2) includes a provocative paper entitled 'Flammability is not selected for, it emerges'.

The latest periodicals are displayed in a rack in the library. You can borrow these, as well as previous issues. Don't forget to fill in the borrowing book.

Gary Presland
Honorary Librarian

Free

Photography Seminar

29th June 2—4 pm

Free

'Tips on How To Take Better Photos'

by **Wendy Clark** Prof Photographer CPP AIPP

Topics: avoiding blur, getting good exposure, making people look good & more.

Plus: Information on Short Courses & 1/2 day Workshops.

Where: Field Naturalists Club of Vic Hall 1 Gardenia St
 Blackburn **When:** Saturday 29th June 2—4pm

NB. No Obligation, No Hard Sell – just information for those who love photography

Thanks to those who helped collate and label FNN 231

Emily Noble
 Margaret Brewster
 Joan Broadberry
 Margaret Corrick
 Andy Brentnall
 Hazel Brentnall
 Edward Brentnall
 Keith Marshall
 Bob Rowlands
 Sheina Nicholls
 Pieter Boschma
 Ian McDonald

Special thanks to those folk who stayed on to prepare the four monthly calendar mail out.

Andy Brentnall, Hazel Brentnall, Edward Brentnall, Keith Marshall, Margaret Corrick, Keith Marshall, Ian McDonald.

Update on the FNCV Garden



Only three members attended the most recent working bee, continuing efforts to weed and clear the Club garden.

No date has been set for a further working bee for the moment, but should anyone have the inclination to come along at their leisure to prune, weed, pick up rubbish and continue our efforts it would be much appreciated

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the FNCV.

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting



Botany Group

Steve Sinclair from ARI presented on "Grasslands on the Werribee Plains: Botany, biogeography and conservation". The volcanic plains had recent geology with fertile clay soils. They are in the rain shadow of the Otways, so have a low cool-season rainfall although they receive occasional large summer rains. This favours drought tolerant species. The heavy soils discourage trees resulting in Grasslands. The lava flows created stony rises and wetlands. The areas of the plains with more recent lighter soils developed woodlands. Sheep were introduced in 1835. In the 1850s rabbits, foxes and pasture plants were introduced and trees were planted as windbreaks. Many small mammals became extinct, altering soil disturbance regimes. Also mosaic burns by the indigenous people ceased occurring in the 1830s. Savannah woodlands were cleared. In the 1890s there was a shift to introduced pasture species and the use of fertilisers.

Recent conservation activities in 15000ha of "Western Grassland Reserves" managed by Parks Victoria. Conservation goals rely on research, conservation management and education of the public. Adaptive management uses limited resources by setting measurable goals, planning and implementing management, monitoring and altering management as a result of learning. Grasslands are managed by strategic burning, as well as the use of herbicides and strategic grazing to control weeds. Some regeneration occurs through natural recruitment and some reseeded.

On Saturday May 18 Steve Sinclair showed us the grassland at Truganina Cemetery, which is about to undergo an ecological burn. We saw the endangered *Rutidosia leptorhynchoides* there. We also visited Mt Cottrell Conservation Reserve which is part of the Western Grassland Reserves. There is a translocation site here for *Pimelea spinescens*, which has its own rabbit proof fence despite the whole reserve being protected by a rabbit proof fence. Half this reserve has been burnt recently and we were lucky enough to see *Lotus australis*, which is only known from about six plants, and *Stackhousia subterranea*.

Fauna Survey Group

On 7th May, Mel Hardie from the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas presented an overview of the new web-based system. The aim is to bring all the current biodiversity records under one umbrella. The process has been lengthy and continues. Those members of the FSG involved in data entry are able to register and we are checking through the records to make sure our previous efforts are assigned to the FNCV.

18th to 19th May we had a weekend at Rushworth checking nest boxes and also left 3 cameras out to see if we could add to our species list. The numbers of nest-box occupants were down on last year's count.

Eastern Melbourne Parks vertebrate fauna survey. This survey has moved up a notch, with the camera and hair-tube survey taking place most Mondays (any help being appreciated). Over 70 volunteers and Parks Vic staff have shown an interest and we have four groups formed – image identification, birds, frogs and reptiles and bats and spotlighting. A Parks Vic grant of \$6150 has been approved. A further \$1500 has been made available for us to spend.

Fungi Group

Since the beginning of April, the Fungi Group has held one meeting and four forays.

The meeting was held on 6 May, when John Walter gave a very interesting presentation about some of the fungi that he has found in Wombat State Forest. One of the fungi John talked about was *Mycena thunderboltensis*, so named because it was first discovered near Captain Thunderbolt's hideout in the Tenterfield area, NSW. It is unusual for a *Mycena* because its dark-coloured cap and stem both contain watery white latex.

The forays were held at Gembrook (8 members attended), The Beeches, near Marysville (10 members attended), Neds Gully, Cathedral Range (6 members attended), and Toorong Falls, near Noojee (16 members attended). In contrast to the first three sites, the Toorong Falls area was damp and fungal fruit-bodies were abundant.

In late April and early May, Jurrie and Virgil Hubregtse spent 12 days near Rawson, searching for suitable foray sites for people attending the Fungimap VII conference to visit. The area was mostly dry and unproductive, but 18 sites were selected on the basis that they would be good if rain falls.

Geology Group

Dr Stephen Carey, School of Science, IT and Engineering, University of Ballarat spoke on the 24th April at the Geology SIG on "Megafauna and Trace Fossils: An Alternative view of Pleistocene Vertebrate Diversity of Australia". Dr Carey described trace fossils as e.g. burrows, nesting depressions, feeding trails as well as scratches and bite marks on bones.

He described in detail the 700 footprints and trace fossils found in a Western District site and dated at 60 to 110, 000 years ago. The prints were made by 5 different animal species including Diprotodonts and a marsupial lion. The different dating methods of this evidence were discussed, as was the likely geological conditions for the preservation of these fossils.

Dr Carey is searching other Australian sites with similar geology to the Western District one for further evidence of footprints etc.

Thanks to Kaye Oddie for organizing such interesting speakers for the SIG.

(Continued on page 6)

Welcome
Welcome

Warmest greetings to these new members who were welcomed into our club at the last Council meeting: *Lucy Johanson, Mary Thorpe, Matt Reardon, Michael Cullen, Meghan Cullen, Iris Li, Max Li, James Allen, Ken Hancock, Michelle Hancock, Alannah Dunstan, Judy Prowse, Simon Prowse, Daniel Prowse, Nicholas Prowse, Michael Prowse, Bruce Cameron and Michael Cameron.*

From the Office.....



Lift required:

An older member of the Club has contacted me asking for a lift. The member, who lives in Ashburton, no longer drives but would very much like to continue attending the Newsletter fold up and the Day Group. If you would be able to help with lifts to these Club days please contact the office and I will pass your details along.

Calendar of Events:

The Calendar of Events was sent out with the last newsletter. Anyone who would like some copies to pass out at other groups or clubs, please let me know. I wish to thank the members who came for the FNN fold up and stayed to finish the Calendar mail out. This job would be much larger without your help.

Photographic Competition:

Entries for the 2013 Photographic competition have closed and judging is taking place.

Photographic Exhibition:

The FNCV Photographic Exhibition for 2013 will be held on Friday 12th 8.00pm to 10.00pm, Saturday 13th 9.00am to 3.00pm and Sunday 14th July 1.00pm to 4.00pm. I hope to see you all there.

Donations for Hall:

This month we would benefit from receiving: Longlife milk, Toilet paper, Gift cards from Coles, Safeway or Officeworks.

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(Continued from page 5)

Juniors' Group

At our April meeting, Sue Bendel, from the FNCV Botany SIG, spoke to us on Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation. The meeting was well attended and the subject related to the children, as several of them have been involved in rehabilitating animals at home. Sue told us about her work with Wildlife Victoria, highlighting the local statistics of animals that need rescuing and why, and some of the attention the animals require before being released. Sue very kindly brought along some posters from Wildlife Victoria for the children to take home.

Our May excursion was on the 18th where a group of 31 of us met at Mt Rothwell Biodiversity Interpretation Centre for a night walk. It is the largest predator-free ecosystem in Victoria. The 400 hectare property has been established for the management of high conservation value flora and fauna species, which involves breeding and research programs. We were taught about the extent of the feral cat and fox problem in Australia which has led to many of our smaller mammals now being extinct on the mainland. We were then led on a guided walk where we got to see Rufous Bettongs, Eastern Barred and Southern Brown Bandicoots, Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies, Eastern Grey Kangaroos, and a Brush-tailed Possum. It was a very still, beautiful night – cool, but no rain.

Microscopy Group

At the April meeting Ian Smith (Zoology PhD, Melbourne University) spoke on the Trichogramma Wasp. Ian has been working with the wine industry in grape growing and with fruit growers. His main focus at present is on a native parasitoid tiny wasp that lays its eggs in the eggs of the Brown Apple Moth. This moth is the biggest threat to agriculture at present. Too much clearing of forests has resulted in fewer host insects for the Trichogramma wasp. When fruit trees and vines lose leaves, there are no moths for the wasps to lay eggs. Increasing diversity of shelter belts will lead to increase of hosts for the wasps. Ian is discovering what vegetation benefits the wasps helping to reduce the use of pesticides. For every agricultural pest species, there is at least one predatory or parasitological species. Ian sets sticky traps at regular spaces throughout the study area, also taking into account wind levels close to the shelter belts and takes a record of those insects found. Ian brought his sticky traps in for us to examine under our microscopes. His work is producing much useful information aiding in beneficial integrated pest management for the agricultural industry.



Welcome to
The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc
Natural History
Photographic Competition 2013

Exhibition

All Welcome

at the FNCV Hall,
1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn.

Grand Opening 8.00pm to 10.00pm

Friday 12th July

Cost \$5.00 per person. Supper provided.

9.00am to 3.00pm

Saturday 13th July

Gold coin donation entry.

1.00pm to 4.00pm

Sunday 14th July

Gold coin donation entry.



Come and vote in our "People's
Choice" Awards on Friday and Saturday.
Prizes will be awarded at 2.00pm on Sunday 14th July.

Enquires: FNCV office, Monday or Tuesday 9.00am to 4.00pm, 9877 9860.





Fungi Group

FNCV FUNGI GROUP FORAY
12th May 2013

**Toorong Falls, Noojee
Wet Sclerophyll Forest with
small patches of Myrtle Beech
and Tree Ferns**

What a wonderful surprise – a damp environment and lots of fungi!

The numbers and varieties of *Mycena* species were outstanding with 11 species being identified. The first to attract attention was the tall brown-purplish capped *Mycena cystidiosa* which also proved to be widespread throughout the area, along with their whitish sterile stipes twined amongst the litter.

There are two different rhizomorph-like structures associated with *Mycena* species. The first are the long whitish strands with a tiny cap-like structure at the apex: these are *sterile stipes* and *M. cystidiosa* has these. The second type, also whitish, lacks the tiny cap at the apex, these are *criniform stipes*, e.g. *M. maldea*. Our old friend the blue *Mycena interrupta* was found growing on several logs. Also on top of a Eucalypt stump was the fawn-coloured *M. fumosa*.

Interestingly, apart from the obvious colour difference the two have a similar morphological structure and habitat but *M. fumosa* has a pale brown disc attachment at the base of the stem, while *M. interrupta* has a blue one, and *M. carmeliana* (buff in colour) has an orange disc. Small to minute (to 5 mm cap diameter) white *Mycena* species were both abundant and a headache. We identified *M. albidocapillaris* growing on a log by its dimpled cap, tallish stem with a few scattered hairs and a stem which emerges directly from the substrate with no disc (institious).

There is still a difficulty with identification of other minute white *Mycena* species – perhaps a group project!

On the end of a fallen log was a group

of cream-pink fungi with the appearance of brackets. However, closer inspection showed them to be *Podoserpula pusio*, but not in the typical pyramidal form with tiered layers of caps on a common stem. These specimens were attached to stems, had the characteristic blunt gill folds but gave the appearance of random growth. We have seen this



Podoserpula pusio

Photo: De'ana Williams

form on earlier forays.

A small (15 mm diameter) yellow fan-shaped *Crepidotus* species was growing on a small dead branch. The yellowish cap was covered with fine hairs, had moderately close brown gills (close to Sienna) with lamellulae and a fluffy white attachment. CA Grgurinovic (*Larger Fungi of South Australia* 1997, p 62) gives a description of four species, and based on the characters and the microscopic work of our species, *C. sphaerosporus* seems a credible fit.

Several tiny stalked disc fungi (height to 4 mm, diameter to 3 mm), were found growing on a twig. These cup-shaped discs had a smooth yellow inner surface and a brown outer surface and stem, both covered with long bristly hairs. This is a *Torrendiella* sp., and while a number grow on leaves there appears to be two wood inhabiting species – *T. madsenii* on *Nothofagus* and *T. clelandii* on *Eucalyptus* (web-site - virtual mycota: NZ fungi identification). As there is *Nothofagus* in patches at Toorong Falls it is likely our species is *T. madsenii* (see Fungi-map 41, colour insert). No description could be found for *T. clelandii*.

A wet log was home to some unusual green to brown disc fungi (to 22 mm diameter), that Paul George thought might be *Neobulgaria* sp or *Bulgaria inquinans*. However, although *B. inquinans* is similar in shape and texture to our green discs it is black at all growth stages (D. Arora, *Mushrooms Demystified*, 1986, p 876). They were soft and gelatinous in texture and graded from tiny globose fruit bodies (young) to discs and finally merging into a Tremella-like mass. A short internet search described *Neobulgaria* species as 'gelatinous, pale lilac to salmon or yellowish' (web-site Mycokey). Our specimens do not match the colour, but we have given them the name *Neobulgaria* sp. 'green discs'.

Ed Grey

Correction: FNN 231 p7, the photo by Paul George should have been named *Cortinarius australiensis*. The correction arrived after FNN had gone to the printers.

Neobulgaria sp.—Green Discs Photo: Pat Grey





Terrestrial Invertebrate Group

TIG meeting May 2013

Alan Yen introduced the three members who will now be jointly running the TIG. They are Maxwell Campbell, John Wainer and Michael Nash.

Max then took the chair for the evening which commenced with the traditional discussion of items of interest reported by members.

One member presented a photograph of a spider and its egg sacks. This was most likely a species of *Caelenia* which preys on small male moths by attracting them with female pheromone analogues. This generated discussion about the presence of spiders in gardens and their periodic increase in numbers. It was also reported that *Pseudomantis* spp actively prey on European wasps.



Maxwell Campbell

Pseudomantis spp.

“Describing the Unseen Windmills of the Victorian Alps”

Speaker: Michael Nash

Michael Nash delivered an interesting and informative presentation entitled, “Describing the unseen windmills of the Victorian Alps”.

The discussion included:

- the species interactions and biodiversity of unique mountain islands climatically discon-

nected since the last ice age (11,000 years).

- islands surrounded by species ready to invade as climate warms.
- the problems of adaptation facing sub-alpine/alpine communities which are already at the available limits of altitude and cannot move higher to compensate for climatic warming.
- investigation of important alpine orders of terrestrial arthropods including their function and response to warming.

In particular:

- * ground beetles (Carabidae: Coleoptera), Springtails (Entomobryidae: Collembola), Moths (Psychidae and Hepialidae: Lepidoptera)
- * Grasshoppers (Acrididae: Orthoptera)
- * Bees (Apidae, Colletidae, Halictidae, Hymenoptera)

In conclusion:

- So far highly diverse site-specific communities have been found; often containing a large number of undescribed terrestrial invertebrate species. Hence there is a need for a great deal of basic research to name, study and hopefully better under-



MA Nash 2013©

Bicolour native bee on Senecio

stand the unseen windmills of the Victorian Alps.

- Small scale differences between isolated communities need local management
- The small windmills need appreciation
- We need to understand:
 - what is present
 - the function of each group
 - the mechanisms of dispersal
 - How these unique communities will adapt to environmental change

The meeting showed its appreciation of the presentation and the members had many questions for the speaker. Alan Yen presented the speaker with the traditional FNCV mug.

Maxwell Campbell



Carabid beetle

MA Nash Copyright



Day Group

Naturalising on Cape York

Speaker: Anne Morton

Anne Morton is well known to us as the Executive Editor of *The Victorian Naturalist*. Anne and her husband John are also award-winning producers of DVDs, including Corporate & Promotional, Concerts & Performances, Special Events, Weddings and Travel Documentaries. Their work is available through *Lifestyle Video Productions*. (Check the internet.)



In May the FNCV Day Group was fortunate to welcome Anne as speaker. Her topic was *Naturalising on Cape York*; the story of a 4WD trip to the Tip of Cape York (and more), taken in mid 2012.

Anne's presentation, illustrated with stills and DVD footage, was rich in the detail of Cape York's history, exploration, landscapes, rivers, vegetation, settlements and wildlife. I have not sufficient space in this short report to do justice to the wealth of information she presented, so I will focus on one of the most exciting parts of the journey, the challenging 4WD Telegraph Track.

In early 1880's a line of communication between Brisbane, Cape York and Thursday Island was urgently needed. John Bradford, an experienced surveyor, of the Queensland Postal Department in Cooktown, set out in 1883 with six men to

blaze a route for a telegraph line. The task was arduous, but telegraph stations were eventually established at Musgrave, Coen, Mein, McDonnell and Paterson at Peak Point. The line and the underwater cable were completed in 1887, joining Thursday Island to Brisbane sending Morse code via repeater stations. This line served Australia for almost 60 years until the outbreak of war when better communications were urgently required. In 1942 1200 Army Signal Corp men and 600 Australian Army Signalers worked frantically for four months upgrading the line from a single to a

multi-wire system, with new cross-arm poles. It was closed in the 1980's when modern telecommunications took over, but the route remains with memorabilia of the line still to be found.

Anne and John travelled in a convoy of eight, well equipped 4WDs. From Port Douglas they visited Mt Molloy, Split Rock Art Gallery in the Laura area, Hann River Roadhouse, and Musgrave, one of the original telegraph stations. Standing in front of the roadhouse at Musgrave is a telegraph pole made of Queensland Ironwood dated 1887.

The journey continued through Coen where the local museum, Heritage House, contains a display on the building of the telegraph line. Heading always north, the group crossed the Archer then Wenlock Rivers before arriving at the Junction Roadhouse at Bramwell Station. This is the point at which the Development Road and the Old Telegraph Line (OTL) diverge. The Development Road curves east and then west following the watershed, thereby minimizing

creek crossings. The OTL is a rough, but direct route accessible only during the dry season with many formable creek and river crossings to negotiate. (See the red dotted line on the map). As Anne put it, "the Development Road misses out on all the fun stuff."

Only three kilometres along the OTL, the Palm Creek crossing provides the first challenge. Its steep and slippery entrance quickly sorts out the intrepid. In armchair travel mode we then followed the convoy across Dulhunty River (great for swimming and camping), Bertie Creek, Gunshot Creek, Cockatoo Creek (sticky mud) to Sheldon Lagoon (turtles). Gunshot Creek deserves special mention as vehicles are required to enter the crossing at a startlingly acute angle, although Anne reassured us it was a 'controlled fall'. At Sheldon Lagoon the Development Road crosses the OTL providing access for less intrepid travellers to some of the highlights of the route such as Fruit Bat, Eliot and Twin Falls which all have idyllic scenery and camping.

At Cannibal Creek Anne and John photographed pitcher plants. Much of the Cape soil is very low in nutrients and pitcher plants and sundews that supplement their nutrients by trapping insects, are widely distributed. Continuing on the OTL, the convoy crossed Cypress Creek, Logans Creek and Nolans Brook. This last being a scenic but treacherous crossing that has claimed many vehicles because of its deep water and soft sandy bottom. At the Jardine River the Old Telegraph Track once again meets the Development Road. To continue towards the Tip, all vehicles must cross the Jardine. Those seeking an extreme challenge may attempt to ford it, but most use the ferry.

This was not the end of the trip or of Anne's presentation. There was much more:

- a walk to the Tip and a helicopter ride to film it from the air
- boat trips to Thursday and Horn island
- history, including Edmund Kennedy's journey in 1848
- 4WD side-trips to Somerset, Vrylia and Captain Billy Landing

Of particular interest at Vrylia Point on the Gulf of Carpentaria was the wreck of a lightship, rusting away on the beach

(Continued on page 12)



Marine Research Group News

Report on the MRG meeting Monday 13 May 2013. This was a members' night, with topics largely focussing on MRG and personal fieldwork. In order of presentation:

Margaret Rowe showed images from Stony Point of the decorator crab *Anacinetops stimpsoni* (this species has mottled chelipeds, delicate fingers and is densely decorated with very fine algae), the hermit crabs *Paguristes pugil* (setate chelipeds each bearing a prominent round red swelling—an exciting new find for the group) and *Paguristes sulcatus*. From Dutton Way, Portland: unidentified amphipods found living in tubes—identity to be confirmed, and the flat isopod *Maricoccus brucei*.



Paguristes pugil, Stony Point, 30 April, 2013. Photograph: Margaret Rowe.

Barbara Hall showed images of various anemones from Hobsons Bay and northern Port Phillip Bay, as well as images of small amphipods, isopods, ostracods, tanaids and the crabs *Cyclograpsus audouinii*, *Pilumnus monilifer* and the shrimp *Hippolyte caradina*.



Pilumnus monilifer, showing its distinctive anterolateral carapace beading. Photo: Barbara Hall

John Eichler showed images including the heart urchin *Brissus agassizii* from San Remo; the shrimps *Distosquilla miles* (Stony Point) & *Philocheras intermedius* (McHaffies Reef, Phillip Island); the pea crab *Pinnotheres hickmani* found living inside the mussel *Mytilus galloprovincialis planulatus* (San Remo), *Paguristes pugil* (Stony Point),

Nectocarcinus integrifrons (McHaffies Reef), *Mictyris longicarpus* (Rhyll—a significant range extension as per MRG page, FNN 231), and John also found *Petrolisthes elongatus* from Cat Bay, Phillip Island. The latter is a New Zealand species introduced into Tasmania circa early 1900s. **This is an important first record for Victoria (and possibly also for the Australian mainland).**



Petrolisthes elongatus, Cat Bay, Phillip Island, 31 March, 2013. Photograph: John Eichler

John also showed an acorn worm (Port Fairy) and several mollusca including *Haliotis laevigata* and *Haliotis scalaris emmae* (Port Fairy region), *Paradoris dubia* (Kitty Miller Bay), the chitons *Loricella angasi* (Stony Point) and *Rhyssoplax calliozona* (Port Fairy). Echinoderms shown included *Meridiastra medius* and *oriens* in various colours (Port Fairy) and the sea star *Uniophora granifera* (Stony Point).

Leon Altoff and Audrey Falconer showed many images beginning with the group at work in the field, and some man-made items and changes including spent munitions from the second world war on the beach at Point Addis, and sand-pumping near the mouth of the Portland Harbour (with the spoil unfortunately almost completely smothering the once-rich reef at Andersons Point). Live images focussed largely on anemones, comb jellies, an assortment of flatworms, polychaetes, nemerteans, echinuran worms, acorn worms and sea stars.



Unidentified nemertean, Pt. Addis, 12 January, 2013. Photograph: Leon Altoff.

Audrey provided commentary on many of the images and discussed her research work, particularly on the nemerteans, and showed interesting compound microscope views of a great variety of nemertean stylets.

Platon Vafiadis presented images focussing on the mollusca recorded during the Port Fairy excursion. These included the olive shells *Alocospira fusiformis*, the micromolluscs *Gabrielona nepeanensis*, *Cystiscus obesulus*, *Zafra fulgida* and *Syrnola tinctoria*, the rarely seen turrid *Marita compta* and the volutomitrid *Waimatea obscura*. Also shown were the 'opisthobranchs' *Diaphana tasmanica*, *Oxynoe viridis*, *Elysia* sp., *Ilbia ilbi* and *Edentellina typica*. Nudi-branch images included *Phyllodesmium macphersonae* and *Scyllaea pelagica*.



Zafra fulgida, Sisters Point (near Killarney), 5 March, 2013. Photograph: Platon Vafiadis

Overall, a very rewarding and interesting evening was had by all. Thanks also to the presenters for making images available for inclusion in the newsletter.

Acknowledgement of the contributions of the late Dr. Noel Schleiger

The MRG was greatly saddened by the passing of Noel Schleiger on 24 April, 2013 at the age of 86, as reported in FNN 231:4 by John Harris and Rob Hamson.

We also wish to record with appreciation that Noel joined the MRG in September, 1987 (before it was amalgamated into the FNCV on 10th February, 1997) and he served the MRG well in a variety of important roles. These positions included that of president (1989), vice-president (1990), research coordinator (1989-1990) and MRG representative to the Conservation Council of Victoria (1991-1992). Farewell and thank you Noel.

P. Vafiadis

