Field Nats News No.243

Understanding Our Natural World
Est. 1880

Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.
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July 2014

From the President

Hi members, welcome to the July FNN. It is hard to believe that we are already into winter as the weather has been anything but winter so far.

As you will have read over the past months, I have been doing a bird-a-day throughout 2014. Well on the 4th of May my attempts to see a different bird every day ceased. Too many long hours at work had finally caught up with me. On the 5th, while undertaking an environmental audit, I saw six birds that I would have been happy to see the day before.... Oh well, it was fun while it lasted.

As was mentioned in the June FNN, the AGM approved a number of changes for the FNCV especially to the Club's constitution. Please allow me to once again thank Barbara Burns, Robin Drury and Jurrie Hubregtse for their many hours of deliberations over the format of the new constitution.

There have been a number of changes to Council, as also mentioned in the last newsletter Thank you to Robin, Phillipa, Virgil and Jurrie, who have all stepped down, for their work on Council over the past few years. Their contribution has been invaluable.

There are still vacancies as SIG reps for the Day Group and the Fungi Group and also two general positions on Council, so we are looking for people to fill these positions as soon as possible.

I look forward to catching up with many of you throughout the year at the various Club activities. There are a number of events coming up that we will need volunteers to help with, such as the Whitehorse Spring Festival and Yarra Plant Show. (More details p3)

We are also looking for people who, in conjunction with Council, would be able to help organise the FNCV annual Biodiversity Symposium. If you can give some time to any of these, please contact Wendy in the office.

When you are in the hall, keep your eyes open for new books that are regularly appearing, including a new section of books for children.

John Harris

INSIDE—TIG report and more gorgeous images of spiders on p 9.
Below: Golden Orb-weaving Spider

The deadline for the August newsletter will be **Tuesday July 1st at 10 am**. FNN 244 will be going to the printer on the 8th of July, with collation on the 15th.

Desert Wolf Spider Spinning Egg Sack

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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

Tuesday 1st - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: ***Fauna of Equatorial Guinea and the conservation challenges it faces.***
Speaker: Dr Mark Antos, Parks Victoria. Contact Robin Drury 0417 195 148

Sunday 6th – Fungi Group Foray: ***Woodlands Historic Park, Greenvale.*** (Melway Ed. 37 Map 178 C6) WHP 101 entrance off Somerton Road. Meet at 10.30 am, first car park. Contact Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

Monday 7th – Fungi Group Meeting: ***Fungi of the Surf Coast Shire.*** Speaker: Richard Hartland, a very active member of the Fungi Group who travels widely to record many different and interesting fungal species. Contact Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

Friday 11th – Juniors' Group Excursion: ***Moonlit Sanctuary, Pearcedale.*** Meet at 6:30 pm. Children $18. Adults $25. Bookings essential! Contact Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

Saturday 12th—Botany Group The Botany Group invites all club members to visit beautiful Toolangi to look at flora, fauna, fungi and invertebrates. Meet 10.30 am the intersection of Sylvia Creek Rd & Myers Creek Rd, Toolangi . Contact Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

Sunday 13th – Fungi Group Foray: ***Badger Weir Healesville.*** (Melway key map 10 R5) (Vic Roads 80 B4)
Meet at 10.00 am in the carpark. NOTE earlier start time. Contact Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

Monday 14th – Marine Research Group Meeting: A ***trip to South Australia to work with the South Australian Research Divers looking at inter-tidal and sub-tidal marine invertebrates.*** Speaker and contact: Leon Altoff 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669773

Tuesday 15th—Collate FNN. Starting about 10.00 am. Some folk come a little earlier. Contact Joan Broadberry 9846 1218

Wednesday 16th - Microscopy Group Meeting: For details contact Philippa Burgess 0409 866 389

Thursday 17th – Botany Group Meeting: David Cameron "***Rare and threatened flora of Victoria***"
Contact Sue Bendel 0427 055 071

Saturday 19th - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: ***Equipment stocktake and maintenance.*** From 10.30 am to 3 pm, FNCV hall, 1 Gardenia St Blackburn. Contact Robin Drury 0417 195 148

Sunday 20th – Fungi Group Foray: ***Starling Gap, Yarra Ranges National Park*** .(Melway Ed 37 X912 T3)
Travelling east from Yarra Junction the turnoff is 6km on the left from the Powelltown General store. It is Big Creek Road and unsealed.
Travel 11 km to a divergence with Smyth Creek Road – veer right and stay on Big Creek Road. This is Starling Gap. Meet at 10.30 am.
Contact Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

Tuesday 22nd – Day Group Meeting: ***Victorian volcanoes.*** Speaker: Associate Professor Bernie Joyce, University of Melbourne. Meet at 10.30 am for coffee and a chat. Speaker at 11 am. Contact Gary Presland 9890 9288.

Wednesday 23rd – Geology Group Meeting: ***Two plates colliding: Unravelling the hidden processes of plate tectonics.***
Speaker: Dr. Fabio Capitanio, School of Geosciences, Monash University. Contact Kaye Oddie 9329 0635; koddie@bigpond.com

Friday 25th – Juniors' Group Meeting: ***Leadbeater's Possum*****.** Speaker: Sue Bendel.
Contact Claire Ferguson 8060 2474; toclairef@gmail.com

Sunday 27th – Fungi Group Foray: ***Wanderslore Sanctuary.*** 2180 Warburton Highway, Launching Place (Melway Ed. 37 287 H6) Park between the Hotel and the Launching Place Store. The entrance to Wanderslore is off the rail trail up the hill behind the store. Meet at 10.00 am (NOTE earlier starting time) and we will move as a group up to the Sanctuary to be introduced to Geoff Durham and other members of the Friends Group. Contact Virgil Hubregtse 9560 7775

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 excur-

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.

Welcome

Warmest greetings to these new members who were welcomed into our club at the last Council meeting:
Robert Winters, Travis Winters, Eric Winters, Melissa Yuan, Lewis Baell, William Baell, Oliver Baell, Wendy Baell, Jonathan Baell, Michael Young.

Helmet Shells

Whilst walking on the beach at Wilson's Promontory recently at Norman Bay I discovered two empty shells on the sand. The longer I walked the more I found. Their delicate pale pink colour and perfect formation of the shells drew my attention to them.

I discovered these univalve shells to be a common species along he Southern coast. It was the Helmet Shell (*Semicassis semigranosum).* sometimes called the Half-grained Bonnet. They get their name Helmet as they supposedly look like an ancient Roman Helmet. Depending on the species they may live in deep water or some of them live in mud flats or sand.

They feed on other animals such as Sea Urchins or Sea Stars, they are common in Southern Australia and Endemic to Australia. (a lovely photo exists in Edgar, Pge 254). The rows of fine "beads" around the upper part of the shell and the stout lemon lip around the base makes this shell easy to recognise. The specimens I found were 30mm long but in tropical waters can grow up to 63mm in length.

It certainly shows that a walk along even very familiar beaches can still turn up something new to the observer setting us on a trail of new discoveries and learning.

Cecily Falkingham

FUNGI - *Cecily Falkingham 2014*

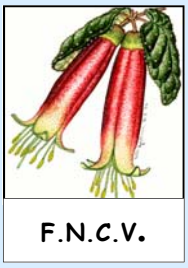
The stage is set
for the emergence
of a miracle
water oozes, trickles, gushes
a cornucopia
of colour
soil soaked, enriched
re-activates
its treasures
thrusting
from earth's
dark recesses
heaving its way
upwards
to salvation
lighting our way
to the joys
of Autumn
and the fungi season.

Penny Richards writes,
"There has been much emailing as to what the name of this fungi (above) is, including this one -(*Hi all, Sharing a pic of a mushroom next to Pinnacle Lane Dixons Creek that Malcolm Calder and Tony Fitzgerald had also seen. That's a 1 litre water bottle next to it, and I'm pretty sure there were larger ones in the paddock nearby. Our region is well known for its fun guys. Who can name the species for 10 points? Regards, Rob Fallon)*

It has been confirmed as *Phlebopus maringatus*. Being a bolete, it has pores instead of gills. "

Minutes FNCV Annual General Meeting14th May 2014

Welcome
John Harris welcomed 34 members and 4 visitors.



Apologies
There were 14 apologies: Geoffrey Paterson, Sally Bewsher, June Anton, Edward Brentnall, Hazel Brentnall, Peter Fagg, Rod Bird, Douglas Jinks, Virgil Hubregtse, Jurrie Hubregtse, Ed Grey, Pat Grey, Joan Dixon and Robin Drury.

Minutes of 2013 AGM
Motion: to accept the Minutes of 2013 AGM as true and accurate record of the events.
Moved: Andy Brentnall, seconded Bob Rowlands - Motion Carried.

President's Report
As per full President's report taken from the Annual Report 2013. *(Copies available from FNCV office.)*
(Summary) John spoke about "an interesting year for the FNCV". He mentioned Wendy Gare's smooth transition into the position of Administration Officer vacated by Hali Ferguson whom he thanked for her contribution. The many roles that Dr Noel Schleiger and Dorothy Mahler filled in their years with the FNCV were acknowledged with thanks as were their bequests to the Club. The Club hosted a number of events, including the VNPA vegetation changes discussion, the Bat weekend and the Biodiversity Symposium as well as being represented at community events during the year. The long hours spent by the 4 sub-committee members in revising the FNCV constitution were recognized as was the work on new FNCV website and the development of the bookshop. Also the diligent work put in by the editors of the *Field Naturalist News* and the *Victorian Naturalist* was acknowledged.
Motion: to accept the President's Report for 2013.
Moved: John Harris, seconded Maxwell Campbell - Motion Carried.

Treasurer's report FOR YEAR ENDED 31/12/2013
The treasurer presented the Annual Accounts as set out in the Annual Report 2013
Motion: to approve the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31/12/13 as presented to the meeting.
Moved: Barbara Burns, seconded Bob Rowlands - Motion Carried.

Appointment of Auditor
Motion: to accept Susan J Harkin as Honorary Auditor for 2014.
Moved: Andy Brentnell, seconded Su Dempsey - Motion Carried.

Notice: Special Resolution
Motion: That this General Meeting of The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc. adopts the Rules of the FNCV, as previously circulated.
Moved: John Harris, seconded: Sue Bendel
For 45 (including 11 proxy votes), *against* 0 - Motion carried.

Notice: Special Resolution
Motion: That this General Meeting of The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc. approves a 5% increase to the current membership fees to commence on 1st July 2014, as recommended by Council.
Moved: Max Campbell, seconded: Su Dempsey - Motion carried.

Environment Fund Recipients & Reports: As per Environment Fund report from Annual Report 2013 (See FNN 242 p10)

Presentation of Long Term Member's Certificates: (See report in FNN 242 p3)

Election of 2014 Council: (See FNN 242 , p1)

Dr Gary Presland mentioned that the Whitehorse Council's Biodiversity Strategy is open for public consultation. Submissions close on 16th May.

Guest Speaker: Dr Euan Ritchie from Deakin University gave a most interesting talk on his research in PNG: *TheTenkile Project— New Guinea Tree Kangaroos.* A report on this presentation can be found in the current FNN p10.

Meeting closed 4.15 pm and was followed by afternoon tea.

Day Group

Island Hopping in the Galapagos Islands

Lynsey Poore

In June 2013 Lynsey Poore with her husband Gary enjoyed a wonderful week cruising amongst the Galapagos Islands. She was kind enough to share this trip with the May Day Group. Lynsey packed so much of interest into her presentation it is only possible to select some of the highlights.

The Galapagos Archipelago was discovered by accident in 1535, when Tomás de Berlanga, the first Bishop of Panama, drifted off course while sailing to Peru. They straddle the equator and lie about 1000 k east of Equador.

The Poores' trip was organised through Columbus Travel, Quito. They first flew to the inhabited island of Santa Cruz (22,000) and were taken to see very large species of Galapagos Tortoises, Lynsey described as 'waist high'. They also visited the Darwin Research Centre where they saw Saddleback Giant Tortoises. These have curved shells which allow them to stretch up their heads and thereby access more vegetation. Various species of Darwin's Finches were common around the town. There are four species of mockingbirds endemic to the Galapagos. Lynsey photographed the Grey Mockingbird and made the point to us that Darwin had used the mockingbirds before the finches when formulating his theory of evolution. Other animals seen on Santa Cruz included Galapagos Sea Lions and the large and colourful Sally Lightfoot Crabs.

The remainder of the trip was aboard a comfortable boat that cruised at night and anchored during the day to allow shore excursions and snorkelling. As a botanist Lynsey took a special interest in the vegetation. Just as species of tortoises and birds are endemic to particular Galapagos Islands so are plants, for example Cactus and Scalesia, in the family Asteraceae. Lynsey photographed many species of cactus including the Tree Cactus which has a 10 foot stem, evolved to make it very difficult to browse. On Floreana Island she photographed *Scaleia pedunculata*, a daisy the size of a tree which fascinated Charles Darwin. Much of the arid landscape is vegetated by the Incense Tree, leafless at that time of year.

Bartolome Island. Gray Matplant Tiquilia nesiotica (endemic) Considered rare, this spectacular gray-coloured plant thrives in the sand and volcanic ash of Bartolome island. Has small white flowers

In the 19th century whalers and buccaneers kept a wooden barrel at Post Office Bay Floreana. As ships called, mail was picked up and delivered all over the world. Cards are still placed in a barrel and visitors sift through them to continue the tradition of delivering them by hand.

Isabela is the largest Galapagos island. Its outline on a map resembles a seahorse. It has five active volcanoes. Lynsey and Gary visited Sierra Negra (Black Mountain) which is a large shield volcano 1600m in height. Part of it is covered by lush vegetation consisting of ferns, mosses and lichens which obtain a lot of their moisture from the condensation of mist. The tour group were able to look down into the caldera of Sierra Negra. It is nine kilometres in diameter. On Isabela they walked on rope lava and Lynsey photographed the endemic Lava Cactus which is adapted to colonizing almost bare rock. Another widespread plant that can tolerate volcanic slopes is the delicate *Tiquilia nesiotica*. Eleven sub-species of Giant Tortoises are still to be found on the Galapagos. The sub-species seen on Isabela, Alcedo, is one of the smallest.

Lynsey had taken some stunning photos of birds, included Greater Flamingos, a pair of Blue-footed Boobies engaging in a courtship display, Elliot's Storm Petrel dancing just above the water and the beautiful dark Lava Gull. Images shown later in the presentation were of Flightless Cormorants strengthening their pair bond with gifts of seaweed, the endangered Galapagos Dove, breeding colonies of Frigate Birds and the nocturnal Swallow-tailed Gull.

Flightless Comorant (endemic) *Phalacrocorax harrisi.* Stunning turquoise eyes and stubby wings make it unmistakable: feeds on eels, octopus and fish.

Right: Lava Cactus (endemic) *Brachycereus nesioticus.* Found on bare lava, the orange tipped stems are distinctive. Larger plant clumps may well be more than 100 years old.

The boat anchored in Darwin's Cove

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Fungi Group

FNCV FUNGI GROUP - FORAY 27 *April 2014*

BUNYIP STATE PARK, MORTIMER RESERVE

Riparian Forest and Scrubby Foothill Forest.

This foray started well with the discovery of two Fungimap Target species growing along side the toilet block. The stately Rooting Shank *Xerula gigaspora* with typical flattish viscid cap and white gills was next to the hard woody fruit-body of a Red-staining Stalked Polypore *Amauroderma rude*.

Fungi of interest included a massed display of the bright orange caps of *Flamulina velutipes* on a small stump (the same one as last year) and our old friend *Ganoderma australe* on a rotting log at the start of the nature trail. This year it was hard to see because the log is rapidly rotting and the vegetation is growing up around it. Janet McClean spotted several groups of the rare Grey Jockey *Asterophora mirabilis* (Fungimap Target species, (photo right) growing on rotting *Russulas* (all the same species). Jurrie Hubregtse made a collection of this for the Herbarium as well as the Trogia found nearby.

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Next to the *Russula* and *A. mirabilis* were a couple of large yellow fungi, a quick look under the cap indicated that the spores would be brown, so it was thought it might be a Cortinarius species. However, this is what Virgil Hubregtse discovered with her research at home - 'macroscopically its large size (cap over 50 mm diam), sturdy stature, fibrillose cap, and gills turning brown on maturity as well as the microscopic characters identifies it as an Inocybe. The yellow colour is unusual in Incocybe usually they are some shade of brown and the only similar-looking one I found is *I. citrifolia* (nom prov.), which grows in just one county in California! I don't know what is in Australia, but Neale Bougher and Brandon Matheny are going to publish a book on 100 Australian Inocybes this year, I believe'

Sally & crochet stinkhorns Photo: Pat Grey

Asterophera mirabilis Photo: Ed Grey

Janet's keen eyes also spotted *Mycena sp.* 'tiny blue lights' on a dead frond stem of the Smooth Tree-fern *Dicksonia antarctica*. Small pieces of wood were home to a few groups of the grey-white disc *Hymenoscyphus sp.* (used to be known as *Cudoniella pezizoidea)* with copious black rhizomorphs. With the young green-grey specimens on bark, it was possible to see the tiny stalk which becomes hidden when they flatten at maturity. Two Lachnum species were found – *L. pteridophyllum* on dead frond stems of the Rough Tree-fern (*Cyathia australe)* and *L. lachnoderma* on wood. Both are somewhat similar-looking: inside cup yellow, outside with very white hairs, but the substrate differentiates them.

Over lunch Sally brought out her crochet 'Stinkhorns' (photo left). Paul George who had recently been to Queensland and saw a lot of stink horns wrote – "Quite a mix here and some wonderful creatures! The pink, white, red and orange ones in the middle are beyond me, but the others (from left to right) look like: *Colus hirudinosus, Ileodictyon cibarium, Phallus indusiatus, Lysurus mokusin, Clathrus archeri, Phallus multicolour*, ?,?,?,?, *Phallus multicolour, Aseroe rubra, Colus pusillus*, ?, *Ileodictyon cibarium, Phallus multicolour, Phallus rubicundus*. Of course, Sally would know best! Did she get spore prints?"

Growing on the cut end of a fallen log was a large group of young, pink fruit-bodies of *Fomitopsis lilacinogilva*, that typically stained red when scratched. Nearby was a stunning *Entoloma? sp.* with a sky-blue cap, white gills and blue stem, darker than the cap.

In the afternoon our trail went through the scrubby foothill forest where we saw a variety of Amanita species. We recognised a young *A. ochrophylla* by the apricot patches on the cap and the veil high up on the thick bulbous stem, and the Vermilion Grisette *A. xanthocephala* (Fungimap Target species) which had a bright orange cap with orange patches. It had not grown tall enough to see the orange rim on the volva. Grisettes are distinguished from other Amanita species by the radially grooved cap margin, lack of ring on the stem and a brightly coloured rim to the volva.

The shaggy head of a *Boletellus emodensis* was spotted, this was a very young specimen and the membranous veil still covered the gills. The yellow pores on this species turn blue when bruised or cut It was collected for Gregory Bonito at the RBG and although he is working Austroboletus right now, and not Boletellus he emiled that 'I am currently in New Zealand with Teresa Lebel, Roy Halling and Kentaro Hosaka collecting truffles and mushrooms….. and we did have a good discussion on *Boletellus emodensis* the other day. It is looking like there is quite a bit of molecular diversity within the emodensis group throughout Australia and SE Asia.' We look forward to hearing more about this.

The Brown Oyster *Pleurotus australis* (Fungimap Target species) was an unexpected find, and the first for our group (it was not noted in any of the species lists going back to 2004). This is a fleshy, shell-shaped species with a brown cap which has an inrolled margin (mostly the

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(Continued from page 6)
young fruit-bodies), and cream to brown gills run down the short, stubby, white lateral stem. The species was found low down on a fallen log, along side the Gembrook-Tonimbuk road. Two other Fungimap Target species were seen in the area: a small gelatinous, convoluted mass of Yellow Brain *Tremella mesenterica* on a fallen dead branch, probably of Banksia. This young jelly was still yellow and had not yet aged to orange; several groups of Large Banksia Discs *Banksiamyces macrocarpus* were found on old Hairpin Banksia *Banksia spinulosa* cones growing between the seed capsules.

Down in the riparian forest section hidden just below the ferns were several small Apricot Chanterelle *Cantharellus concinnus*. Its all-over bright orange/pink colour which has a faint odour of apricot.

We have listed 77 species - 62 in the Riparian zone and 15 in the Scrubby Hills Forest and 15 Fungimap Targets. Thanks to all the photographers (Wendy Fortington, Ed Grey, Pat Grey, Virgil Hubregtse, Janet McClean,) who supplied photos for the report and species list.

Ed & Pat Grey

(Continued from page 5)
allowing walks to volcanic landforms including Darwin's Crater and Saltwater Lake. High on the cliffs, graffiti, hundreds of years old, can still be read. Groups of dark, dragon-crested Marine Iguanas sprawled over each other as they basked on the lava rocks. Dr. Gary Poore, a marine biologist, experienced a tour highlight when he snorkelled with them and was able to watch the reptiles diving for seaweed. Sightings from the boat in the crystal clear water were of a Sperm Whale and the largest bony fish in the world, the Sunfish.

The youngest Galapagos Island is Fernandina, estimated to be 700,000 years old. Here were many fascinating sights, including, lava tunnels, endemic Galapagos Fur Seals, a different species of Iguana and an endemic Acacia. Bartolome Island which also has very recent lava flows, appears barren and rocky, but wonderful views, taking in Pinnacle Rock, are to be had from its high point. On this island the tour group found endemic Galapagos Penguins, the only penguin that breeds near the equator.

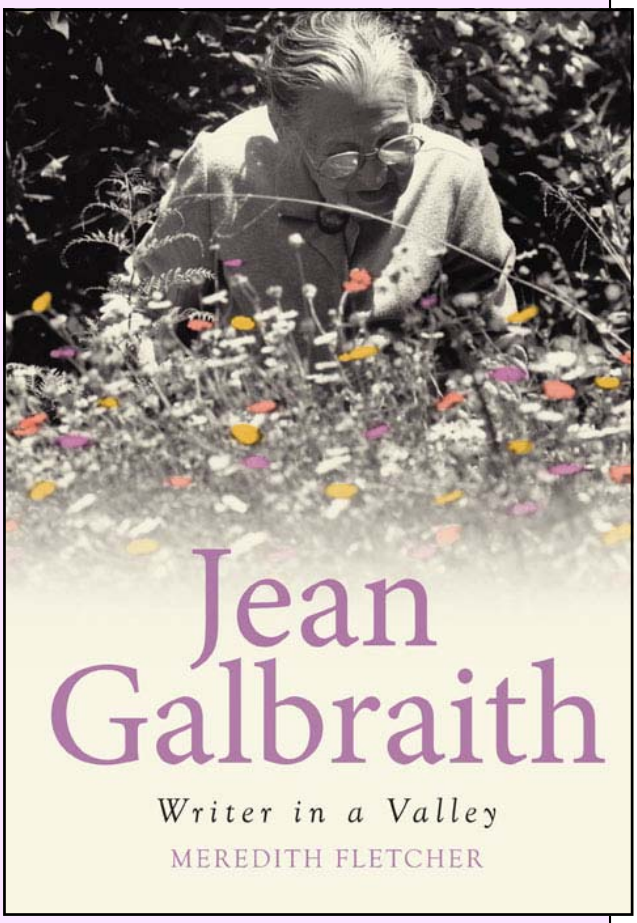
Once again, on behalf of the Day Group I would like to express our thanks to Lynsey. At the close of the presentation everyone in the audience wished they too could experience such a trip. We had enjoyed armchair travel at its best.

Joan Broadberry

Biography of Jean Galbraith and <u>invitation</u> to the launch

It was a magical moment for sixteen-year-old Jean Galbraith when she walked into the Melbourne Town Hall in 1922 on her first visit to the FNCV Wildflower Show. By the end of the day she had gained an entrée to a botanical community and a mentor, the show's organiser H.B. Williamson. Williamson began a detailed botanical correspondence with Jean that guided her study and laid the foundations for the botanist she was to become.

During a 70 year writing career, Jean Galbraith wrote accessible field guides to Australian wildflowers, nature study stories for children, botanical articles for the *Victorian Naturalist* and other journals, and articles in nature magazines such as *Wild Life* and *Walkabout*. She was an influential promoter of growing native plants in home gardens and she also wrote extensively on conservation issues as she watched the wildflowers disappearing from her beloved valley. As a writer, she evoked the beauty of plants for her readers to share.



Members of the Victorian Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria are invited to the launch of *Jean Galbraith: Writer in a Valley* by Meredith Fletcher, to be launched by Jane Edmanson. The book is published by Monash University Publishing

Thursday 31st July, 5.30 for 6 pm
Hill of Content Bookshop, 86 Bourke St, Melbourne
RSVPs essential to sarah.cannon@monash.edu
Telephone 03 9905 0526

Exhibition: 'Jean Galbraith and Friends: a Shared Passion for Nature'

To coincide with the launch of Jean Galbraith's biography, the Latrobe Regional Gallery is hosting an exhibition on the work of Gippsland botanist and writer, Jean Galbraith.

Latrobe Regional Gallery—26 July – 21 September

Extracts from SIG reports given to Council

Botany Group: Speaker cancelled at the last minute, so the meeting did not go ahead.

Fauna Survey Group: The group was nominated for a Kookaburra Award for "Connecting People & Parks".

Fungi Group: The Fungi Group has held one meeting and four forays this month. The forays included a weekend at The Grampians, which attracted two members of the Adelaide Fungal Studies Group to join us.

At our well attended meeting on May 4 Nimal Karunajeewa, who is responsible for curating the cryptogamic groups at the National Herbarium, Melbourne, gave an interesting and detailed presentation titled "Making collections for herbaria", which showed us the processes involved in this activity. Nimal handed out paper copies of instructions, and brought along some examples of fungi which were, or were not, suitable for using for a herbarium collection. Fruit-bodies need to be in good condition, preferably in groups showing all stages of growth, and there need to be enough of them to be useful. For example, if they are small, as many as 20 to 50 are required.

Forays have been conducted at Toorongo Falls (near Noojee), Gembrook (post-fire), the Ada Tree (Yarra State Forest), and at four sites in The Grampians, viz. Fyans Creek Loop Walk (Halls Gap), Mount Rosea car park, Silverband Falls, and Sheep Hills track. Despite the dry weather in The Grampians, plenty of fungi were found, including some that we hadn't seen before. One of these, *Hypocrea gelatinosa*, caused much excitement. This ascomycete grows on dead wood and consists of clusters of very tiny yellow gelatinous 'cushions', dotted with green spore-bearing structures that are visible with a x10 hand lens.

All our forays have been well attended, and so many pairs of eyes searching ensures that plenty of fungi are found. Some collections have been made for the Herbarium. **Editor**. *Reports of these excursions will appear in FNN in due course.*

Juniors' Group: **Meeting 25th April** with James Murray, Mount Burnett Observatory Field Officer.

Look into the night sky. What can you see? So many stars, planets and other objects are up there, and they're everywhere! Did you know the word "Planet" comes from the Greek language - it means "wanderer". People have been seeing pictures in the night sky since ancient times and these pictures are known as constellations. They are formations of stars that will move slowly across the sky, but there will always be constellations in sight for you to spot. Have you ever noticed how stars may seem to be different colours? Well, a star's colour can tell you how old the star is, because different colours show different temperatures and different temperatures mean different ages.

Now, you've heard about the moon affecting our tides, but did you know that it has also slowed down our rotation over time? This means that our days used to be a lot shorter (many years ago) but the moon has such a gravitational pull that it has dragged our days out longer, and still is. And here's something to remember - the lower the air pressure, the lower the boiling point of water. On Mars, the air pressure is so low that water is either frozen or gas, with nothing in between! So many new things are happening in our skies even now and it can all be very relevant to the beginning of the universe and how Earth was formed. If you're into Astronomy, check out these two apps that you can download; "Celestia" and "Stellarium". You can learn about the most amazing things! - *Written by Tara Bergin*

Thanks to those who helped collate & label FNN 242

Keith Marshall
Andy Brentnall
Sheina Nicholls
Ian McDonald
Joan Broadberry
Margaret Corrick
Margaret Brewster

This was a smaller group than usual with a big job to do as the 4 monthly calendar had to be folded into the newsletter and then posted out to be distributed around Melbourne.

I am so pleased to be able to report that everything was finished by 1 pm including all the tidying up.
A fantastic effort.

Thanks to the editorial and layout team who put together FNN 243

Joan Broadberry
Wendy Gare

May Excursion report: On Saturday the 24th 40 Juniors, families and friends visited Mt Burnett Observatory as a follow up excursion from having heard James Murray, their field officer, speak at our last meeting. He and 3 of his volunteers ran a session for us first in two groups – one going up the steep steps to view inside the observatory and the other learning about the Dobsonian telescope. We then watched a video clip on the launch of "Curiosity" and made rockets out of film canisters, vinegar and bicarb soda before viewing Saturn (complete with rings) through the Dobsonian telescope. After a mostly cloudy day we were lucky to have a partly clear sky for this viewing at the end of our fascinating visit

Day Group: The Day Group continues to attract a good audience, averaging more than 20 attendees each meeting. The most recent meeting (April 2014) was treated to an interesting presentation on the natural history of the perimeter of Port Phillip Bay, by Graham Patterson. This was the subject of a very informative and well-presented book, which is already in its second print run.

Terrestrial Invertebrates Group

Urban Spiders

May 21st 2014

Members who attended this meeting were treated to some fascinating aspects and stories of Urban Spiders. Wendy Clark and Max Campbell were the speakers for the evening. They delivered presentations on the natural history of a broad range of spiders supported by many macro-photographs and videos. Red-back spiders and their allies, huntsmen and badge spiders, orb weavers, jumping spiders, net-casting spiders, ambush spiders, funnel webs, white-tailed spiders, wolf spiders and nursery spiders were amongst those covered in detail.

There are many spiders living in the urban environment ranging from large, common huntsmen to minute jumping spiders.

- The web spinning spiders display a broad range of webs and hunting strategies.
- The ambush spiders blend into the environment using astounding camouflage strategies and may resemble bark, flowers, rock and even their prey.
- The free roaming hunters such as jumping spiders, wolf spiders and huntsmen have enlarged front facing eyes to see prey and judge distance. The jumping spiders in particular have very large, paired anterior eyes which have movable retinas to enable them to track and fix the position of prey without moving their bodies until they are poised to attack.
- Dinopis, the net-casting spider has enormous eyes to allow it to detect and accurately locate prey to be netted.
- Spiders may show high levels of parental care for their young. Wolf spiders carry their egg cases with them and when hatched, the young can be seen being carried about on their mother's body.
- Many different and minute spiders can also be found amongst leaf litter.
- Spiders may show some degree of specialization in their preference for prey eg. White-tailed spiders hunt other spiders and some web spinning spiders attract moths using pheromones or attractants.

Above: Dolophones enjoying a ride on a car aerial—see also below left, Dolophones in its normal position.

Above: A huntsman enjoying a

Above: A Red-back Spider and its egg case

Above: A jumping spider with its enormous anterior eyes.

Left: Net Casting Spider, Female, building a net

Guest speaker AGM -*A PNG Adventure*

Photo: Barbara Burns

Editor: Dr Euan Ritchie, Senior Lecturer in Ecology, Centre for Integrative Ecology, School of Life & Environmental Sciences at Deakin University, spoke at the FNCV AGM. His talk was titled *A PNG Adventure.* Upon attempting to report on this riveting presentation, with a simple google of his name and PNG, I discovered that Euan had placed a vivid account, in two parts, on the web. I will therefore take the liberty of using his own words to retell his PNG adventure. Many of the images Euan showed at the AGM are also to be found on the internet.

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10th November 2013

"This week I'm embarking on a journey to Papua New Guinea's remote Torricelli Mountains. It's part of a crowd-funded project, Discovering Papua New Guinea's Mountain Mammals that is a partnership between myself at Deakin University and Jim and Jean Thomas of the Tenkile Conservation Alliance (TCA). Together we will count and identify mammals as part of conservation efforts in the region, including some very special species of tree kangaroo.

Who or what is a Tenkile?

The Tenkile (pronounced ten-kee-lay) is one of 14 tree kangaroo species found in the tropical rainforests of New Guinea and Australia. In 2001 there were only 100 Tenkile left in the Torricelli Mountains of PNG. To put that in perspective, there are thought to be around 1600 Giant Pandas in the world today. That made the Tenkile one of the world's most endangered animals. The reason they're still with us today is largely thanks to the work of the Tenkile Conservation Alliance.

The Conservation Alliance sets itself apart from many others by focusing on causes rather than symptoms of extinction. The Tenkile had become endangered due to over-hunting, so rather than ignore the needs of local people, the alliance places a strong emphasis on these communities who share the region with the Tenkile.

The reason for the bounce back of Tenkiles is a switch from hunting to more sustainable and reliable sources of protein, including farmed rabbits and chickens. Along with improved education about the local community's wildlife, and health and living conditions, there has been a real reversal in the once dire trajectory of the region's wildlife. Thanks to these actions there are now more than double the number of Tenkile there were in 2001.The Tenkile Conservation Alliance has a community-based approach to conservation.

Professor Tim Flannery, himself no stranger to the wilds of PNG, wrote: *A decade on, the Tenkile Conservation Alliance is the most successful conservation organisation in Melanesia … and no other organisation I know of in a developing country has had anything like this degree of success.*

What do we hope to achieve in PNG this time?

Our upcoming trip will take us to the north-western Torricelli Mountains near the Waliapilik area in Sanduan Province. Over two weeks we'll place 35 remote, motion-sensing cameras out along lines and an elevation gradient ranging from 500 to 1500 m above sea level. These will help us determine a number of things, including:

- Are tree kangaroo species (including the Weimang, Tenkile and Yongi) found within the region?
- If present, how many individuals of each species are there?
- What habitats are most important for each species?
- Are species only found at specific elevations and in particular climates, and hence how susceptible could species be to the impacts of global climate change?

When we retrieve our cameras in a few months time it's going to be exciting to see what we find, and it's almost guaranteed that there will be many firsts for science. Because camera traps detect and record anything that moves past them, we'll collect valuable data on a large range of species.

20/12/2013

I have just returned from the jungles of Papua New Guinea, where for two weeks a team of us have set camera traps that will collect vital information about the biodiversity of this remote region.

What's it like working in the PNG jungles?

We were working in a remote region of PNG known as Yauoru. I knew the place was remote — most of PNG is — but I hadn't appreciated just how remote. Beginning our five day walk Jim Thomas from the Tenkile Conservation Alliance (TCA) turned to one of our support staff and asked if any white people had been here. The answer was no, never. Being allowed to visit such a special area was an immense privilege.

That five day walk was undoubtedly the hardest walk I've done, a genuine test of endurance. The first day we walked from Ningal to Uwei (villages close to Yauoru), where Samuel Kabau, a local Uwei villager and Tenkile Conservation Alliance staff member lives. Along the way we passed through cocoa plantations, lowland rainforest and made our first of many river crossings. This took a little over six hours. But that was just day one. After leaving Uwei we began a long, long walk up the river Obin, crossing raging rapids, leaping over boulders and navigating narrow canyons. I gained an appreciation for the

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Marine Research Group News

Reports on MRG field excursions. This year's field trips were focussed on the central Victorian region, with many localities providing some notable highlights.

Saturday 4 January, 2014: Barwon Heads: This picturesque locality comprised rocky reef and sandy pools. Highlights included the trochids *Cantharidus ramburi* (relatively uncommon) and *Cantharidus pulcherrimus* (more common), many colour forms of the chiton *Ischnochitonm elongatus* (including the 'decorata' form), the microgastropods *Pisinna approxima* and *Anabathron lene*, and many *Aplysia parvula* sea hares with egg strings.

Ischnochiton elongatus—'*decorata*' form, approx. 20mm. Barwon Heads, 4/1/14. Photo: P. Vafiadis

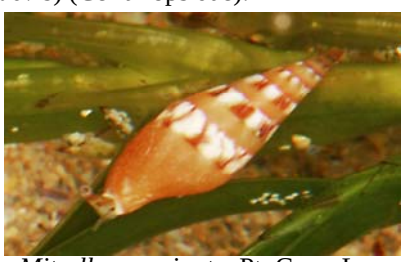
Wednesday 5 February, 2014: Eagle Rock, Aireys Inlet. This was high energy exposed rocky reef just below the Aireys Inlet lighthouse. It was a very good low tide and this, together with good algal cover, and loose rocks to turn, all provided interesting records. These included the limpet *Patelloida victoriana* (found low down amongst the holdfasts of the bull kelp *Durvillaea potatorum*), the seastar *Nectria ocellata*, and the opisthobranchs *Roburnella wilsoni*, *Janolus hyalinus*, *Janolus* sp., *Verconia verconis* (one of which was orange instead of the expected pink), *Noumea haliclona*, the very rare *Polycera* sp.1, and the microgastropods *Hedleytriphora basimacula*, *Alvania hedleyi* and *Eatonina sanguinolenta*.

The estuary that we walked along to get to the coastline was also sampled and John Eichler discovered the hymenosomatid crab *Amarinus laevis* there. Also seen in this habitat were the microbivalves *Arthritica helmsi*, the valves of which bore the egg capsules of the brackish water microgastropod *Ascorhis tasmanica.*

(Above) *Patelloida victoriana* (approx. 25 mm long) in its habitat and up close (below). Aireys Inlet, 5/3/2014. Photos: P. Vafiadis.

Above: The crab *Amarinus laevis*, Aireys Inlet estuary, 5/2/2014. Photo: John Eichler.

Thursday 6 February, 2014: Point Gray, Lorne. The rocky reef sampled was the south-western aspect of Point Gray and yielded many interesting records, including the microgastropods *Pisinna circumlabra* and *Anabathron lene* (Anabathridae), *Hedleytriphora fasciata* and *Monophorus angasi* (Triphoridae), *Eatoniella puniceolinea* and *Eatoniella galbinia* (Eatoniellidae) and a probable *Zaclys* (possibly *semilaevis*) (Cerithiopsidae).



Mitrella acuminata, Pt. Grey, Lorne, 6/2/2014. Shell approx. 10-15mm long. Photo: P. Vafiadis

The columbellid *Mitrella acuminata*, was a pleasing record. This species is commonly seen as dead shells along open Victorian shorelines but is only rarely seen alive in the intertidal zone.

Friday 7 February, 2014: Urquhart Bluff. This was an exposed rocky reef at the western end of a surf beach, with sand, rockpools and seagrass beds providing a variety of habitats to explore.

A small to medium-sized *Octopus maorum* provided a highlight, spotted under a rock in a lower littoral pool. This is the largest octopus in southern Australia and can attain a length of 1.2 metres.

Octopus maorum, Urquhart Bluff, 7/2/2014. Photo: P. Vafiadis

The small elongate chiton *Stenochiton cymodocealis* was seen in its expected habitat, living on the 2 or so millimeter wide stems of the seagrass *Amphibolis antarctica*. This seagrass was also habitat for a number of opisthobranchs, namely *Polycera janjukia*, *Doto ostenta*, *Tergipes* sp., and an undescribed *Eubranchus*. John Eichler also had the foresight to ask the local fisherman what sort of bait they were pumping from the sand—it was callianasid shrimps, possibly *Biffarius ceramicus*.

Biffarius ceramicus (?), approx. 50mm long, Urquhart Bluff, 7/2/2014. Photo: P. Vafiadis

Reports will be continued in upcoming MRG pages.

Platon Vafiadis

From the Office…..

Item needed for the Hall:

- Packets of nice biscuits
- Toilet paper

We need volunteers please to man the stalls for two festivals which FNCV will be attending in order to publicise the Club.

- Australian Plants Expo at the Eltham Community Centre on the weekend of 13th & 14th September; and ...

- Whitehorse Spring Festival on the Civic Centre Lawns, Nunawading on Sunday 19th October.

Both festivals run from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

You need only donate a couple of hours of your time on one day if that's all you have available, although the more the merrier. You'll be there to wave the flag for your club and then have a look around at all the other stalls once you've done your stint.

Please contact Wendy in the office to have your name put down for the day/s and time when you can attend. Ph 9877 9860 or email admin@fncv.org.au

Regards
Wendy Gare

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strength of local Papuans as compared to myself. While I plodded with waterlogged boots, drenched to the bone by tropical rains, the locals carried heavy gear and pulled me through rapids so I wasn't swept away, all in bare feet. And all the time chewing betel nut and smoking cigarettes. After five hours I got my hopes up that we were close to base camp, but I was sadly wrong. After leaving the river, we walked and crawled up the side of a mountain at an angle exceeding 45 degrees. Again my local friends — weighing 50-55kg — stepped in to help lift and shove my 75kg frame up the slope.

We arrived at base camp where some of our team had gone ahead and built a hut and boiled a billy — which in this case was a bamboo stem. Eat your heart out coffee snobs, I've had coffee from a bamboo stem on top of a remote PNG mountain**.**

On day three Jim and I trekked to the top of the mountain to place cameras (the exact location is a secret). We put out 26 cameras, ranging from 1100m to around 1400m above sea level.
We'd planned for 36 and at a greater range of elevations, but technical issues (more commonly known as Murphy's Law) prevented us. Below 1100m the mountain was too steep to stay upright! Some of the cameras were baited with peanut butter, honey, and vanilla essence for animals who have a sweet tooth; that's tree kangaroos. Others we baited with tuna oil for predators such as Salvadori's Monitor, which reportedly can grow to greater than four metres. The locals describe it as a crocodile that climbs trees. Fortunately I didn't encounter the monitor at night, but I hope our cameras do.

Now the waiting game begins. Our cameras are set to be retrieved in February next year. Animals are most likely walking past our cameras right this moment, but we'll have to wait several months to find out just which ones. While helping to conserve endangered tree kangaroos, hopefully the project will show the positive effects of work by the TCA and the hunting-free zone the organisation has established in the Torricelli Mountains. It also demonstrates how vital local communities are for conservation. Without them, our expedition would have failed."

Editor: *When Euan spoke to the FNCV, the camera data had been retrieved. He was able to report on what was found and show us many of the photos taken. This is a brief summary.*

There were many exciting finds, included birds such as the Dwarf Cassowary, Cinnamon Ground-dove and Spotted Catbird; bandicoots; pademelons; New Guinea Quoll; Large Eared-Mouse; PNG Jumping Mouse; Short-furred Dasyure; Ground Cuscus; Weimang tenkali (photographed during the day); Yongi (photographed at an elevation of 1400m, higher than previously recorded.)

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