



Understanding
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Field Nats News No 323



Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc.

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October 2021

From the Vice President

Dear FNCV members,

A significant opportunity has become available for the FNCV to purchase a large 621 hectare property, known as Mali Dunes, located on Millers Road Yanac, 45 kilometres north-west of Nhill near the big Desert Wilderness. It is an area of sandy, mallee woodland. In the past it has been lightly grazed and partially cleared.

In 2003 Mali Dunes was bought by Sue Hayman and her late husband Bernie Fox. They undertook a major restoration project and Mali Dunes has made a remarkable recovery. It is now home to iconic species of birds, mammals, reptiles and flora such as Malleefowl (there are five confirmed mounds) and Rosenberg's Monitor. It has been fully protected under a Trust for Nature covenant and has recently been put on the market.

All FNCV members will shortly be receiving by email, (or by post for those few without an email address), an *Information Document outlining a Proposed Plan to purchase Mali Dunes* for our Club. The document sets out the case for acquiring the property and a detailed plan for financing its purchase.

Further information will be available via the FNCV website www.fncv.org.au and through two Zoom presentations titled, *A Digital Visit to Mali Dunes*. The first of these will be the Day Group meeting scheduled for Tuesday 28th September at 10.30 am. The presentation will be repeated in a pop-up slot on Wednesday 6th October at 8.00 pm. All are welcome. Please use mcam7307@bigpond.net.au to receive the link.

The due date for contributions to FNN 324 will be as usual, the first Tuesday of the month, 4th October 2021
Use joan.broadberry@gmail.com



Photo: M Campbell



Malleefowl on mound Photo: A McCutcheon



Photo: M Campbell

In line with our Constitution, a **Special General Meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday the 13th of October at 8.00 pm** at which two special resolutions will be put forward. Such a major decision by the club can only occur if members vote overwhelmingly in favour of the purchase. All members will receive an invitation to the meeting.

The FNCV president, Maxwell Campbell, is withdrawing from direct involvement in the decision making process because he perceives a potential conflict of interest due to his friendship over many years with Sue Hayman, the current owner and his long involvement with Mali Dunes. Therefore I will act in my capacity of Vice President during this process as an impartial office holder of the FNCV.

Philippa Burgess
Vice President

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS OCTOBER 2021

Unless otherwise stated, Zoom meetings are scheduled to begin at 8 pm. However to avoid disrupting the speaker please click the link and join the meeting a few minutes earlier.

Sunday 3rd – Juniors' Group Excursion: *Tree planting day at Yellingbo*. This will be rescheduled at a later date. Contact: Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au

Monday 4th - Fungi Group Meeting: *Members' night and planning for 2022*. To be held remotely via Zoom. More information: Melvin Xu fungifncv@gmail.com
Please contact Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au who will email you the link.

Tuesday 5th - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: *Using eDNA to detect aquatic fauna and assess biodiversity*. To be held remotely via Zoom. Speaker: Josh Griffiths, Senior Wildlife Ecologist, Cesar Australia and EnviroDNA. More information: Su Dempsey: sudempsey@bigpond.com 0437 172 333 Please contact Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au who will email you the link.

Wednesday 6th - Pop up Meeting: *A digital visit to Mali Dunes*. To be held remotely using Zoom. Using images and video, Max Campbell will showcase the beautiful property, Mali Dunes located on the edge of the Big Desert Wilderness. Once farmed, it has been restored and turned into a haven for wildlife and education. NOTE: *this is a repeat of the presentation given to the Day Group on September 28th*. Please contact Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au who will email you the link.

Monday 11th - Marine Research Group Meeting: Cancelled.
Contact: Leon Altoff: 9530 4180 AH; 0428 669 773

Monday 11th to Friday 15th - Fauna Survey Group Survey *Coopracambra National Park, East Gippsland*. This trip will be postponed with new dates to be determined.
Contact: David De Angelis d.deangelis@latrobe.edu.au

Wednesday 13th (7.30 pm) FNCV SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING at which two special resolutions will be proposed. To be held remotely via Zoom. All members should have received an information pack regarding this meeting by email or express post. Please contact Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au who will email you the link.

Wednesday 20th - Microscopy Group Meeting: *Practical evening using compound, dissecting & digital microscopes*. This will be rescheduled to a later date. Contact: Philippa Burgess: 0409 866 389.

Thursday 21st – Botany Group Meeting: *Vulnerable yet resilient: the Enfield Grevillea (Grevillea bedgoodiana)*. To be held remotely via Zoom. Speaker: Stan Wawrzyczek, PhD candidate, La Trobe University. Prior registration essential, until 5pm— Email Ken Griffiths: botany@fncv.org.au who will ensure you receive the link.

Monday 25th - FNCV Council meeting, to be held remotely via Zoom. Apologies and agenda items to Wendy Gare admin@fncv.org.au Max will email all councillors the link.

Tuesday 26th – Day Group Meeting (10.30 am) Meeting to be held remotely via Zoom. *The fascinating wildlife of the Blackburn Creeklands*. Speaker: Wendy Clark, naturalist and photographer extraordinaire, will share the diverse and captivating natural history discoveries she has made in this special place. More information: Joan Broadberry joan.broadberry@gmail.com or 9846 1218. Please contact Max Campbell mcam7307@bigpond.net.au who will email you the link.

Wednesday 27th – Geology Group Meeting: *Stardust Memories: 50 years of the Murchison Meteorite*. To be held remotely via Zoom. Speaker: Dermot Henry, Deputy Director, Sciences, Museums Victoria. Prior registration essential, until 5pm— Email Ken Griffiths geology@fncv.org.au who will ensure you receive the link.

Friday 29th – Juniors Group: Meeting: *To be advised*. Contact: Patricia Amaya juniors@fncv.org.au

Saturday 31st October to Tuesday 2nd November - Fauna Survey Group Survey: *Warby Ranges*. Prior bookings essential. Contact Russell Thompson: 0413 835 067; rusthompson@iprimus.com.au It is hoped this trip might go ahead depending on Covid restrictions, ParksVic and FNCV policy. *To be advised*.

The FNN October calendar has been prepared on the assumption that Melbourne's Covid restrictions do not allow face to face meetings in the hall or excursions and camps.

There have been many changes to the October program originally advertised in the four monthly Calendar of Events (COE).

A number of activities have had to be cancelled or rescheduled. However, it is fantastic that so many meetings are going ahead remotely using Zoom.

Registration for an invitation to a Zoom meeting can be done directly through Max Campbell using mcam7307@bigpond.net.au

You may also register with your SIG contact who will pass your details on to Max or send you the link.



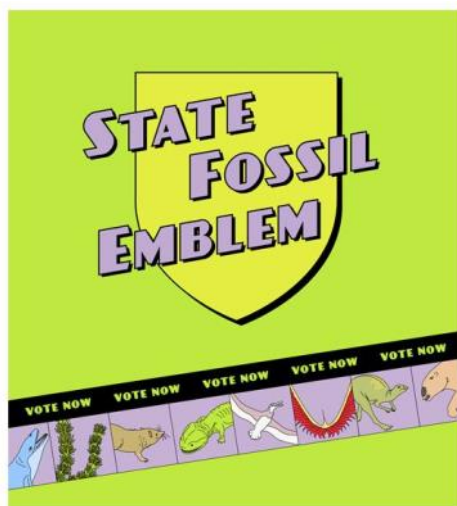
Members' news, photos & observations

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
Welcome

Warmest greetings to these new members who were welcomed into our club at the last Council meeting:

Mr Michael Cook, James Driscoll, Lucy Holmes, Ray Cowling, Rochelle Jardine, Patricia Welsh and Lucille Watterson,



Nancy very kindly emailed FNN—

I thought... that you could send this link to all members. Voting is now open to choose from a list of 8 candidates for the State Fossil Emblem.

I just did it with my child and it was a fun experience as they have a short video on each candidate and then you get to submit your vote.

[State fossil emblem - Melbourne Museum \(museums.victoria.com.au\)](http://museums.victoria.com.au)

Voting closes on the **4th October**, so don't miss out.

Photo below.

Wendy and Colin Gare discovered and photographed a beautiful Huntsman spider living under the PVC collar that protects their Liquid Amber from possums.



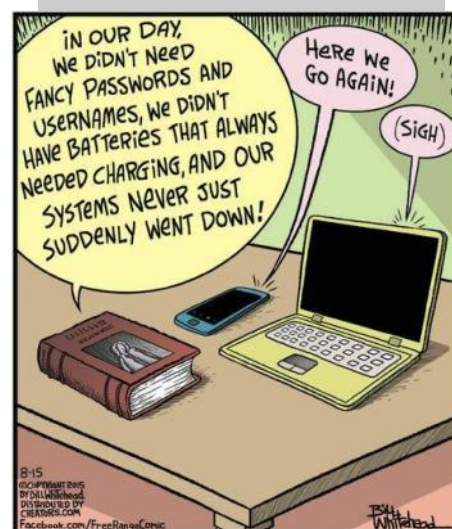
W Gare

Max Campbell



The little *Chorizema diversifolium* (Climbing Flame Pea) that I bought from the Australian Plant Society some months ago in the hall, has grown and flowered.

M C



**FNCV has 19,584
facebook followers**

bookshop@fncv.org.au

for any orders or bookshop queries.

If you don't have access to email, the FNCV office will pass on your message. Kathy will then be in contact with you.

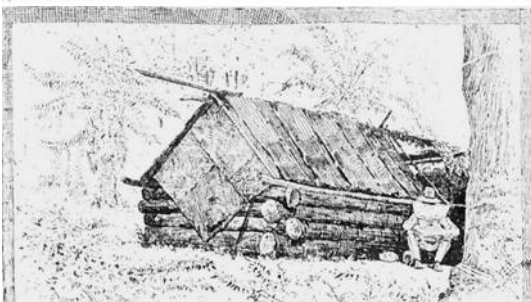
**Thanks to the
editorial and layout
team who put
together FNN 323**

Joan Broadberry
Wendy Gare
Sally Bewsher

*The views and opinions expressed
in any material including websites
and newsletters are not necessarily
those of FNCV Inc.*

IN SASSAFRAS GULLY, DANDE- NONG RANGES.

At the ordinary monthly meeting of the Field Naturalists' Club, held in the Royal Society's hall on the 13th April, Professor Baldwin Spencer in the chair, Mr. R. S. Sugars read an account of a trip to Sassafras Gully he had made in conjunction with Mr. A. J. Campbell. A track through the gully recently cut by Mr. Perrin, the conservator of forests, for the convenience of tourists, proved of immense service to the excursionists, and although they missed seeing the giant gum known as "The Baron," the excellent photographs taken by Mr. Campbell (two of which we reproduce) in illustration of the paper gave evidence that this somewhat unknown stretch of country contains glade and scrub of extreme beauty which will well repay a much longer sojourn than the present party were able to make. Mr. Campbell's first view, "A Hatter's Hut," is a thoroughly characteristic bit of woodland scenery. The foundation of the dwelling is made of fern stems, with the ends "mortised" half through to allow of their fitting close together; sheets of bark cover the roof, and sacking forms the gable end. It may be explained, by the way, that a "hatter" is a man who works quite by himself, whether at splitting, rabbiting, or fossicking for gold. It is the ordinary custom in the bush for men to be "mates," and a very necessary one, too, as, for instance, in cases of illness or snakebite. But the "hatter" chances all dangers, and loves to live as far away from his kind as possible. He is generally a man of taciturn disposition, and if you happen to come on him suddenly in the bush, instead of being glad to see a fellow-man, and eager for a yarn, he is scarcely civil, and looks at you as if you had done him a wrong by trespassing on his reserves. Such a one has been living a hermit-like life on Mount Bismarck, near Marysville, for many years. When the hatter dies no one knows anything about it until one day a skeleton is discovered, sitting, perhaps, at the foot of a tree, and by its side, probably, a pannikin with a name scratched on the bottom, all the information the dead hatter has condescended to communicate to the outside world about himself. The second view discovers the patient and harmless fisherman waiting in the most charming of nooks for those bites that never come. He will toil after the manner of his kind from morn till night, and go home as happy and cheerful with an empty basket as with a full one. As a rule, the angler doesn't look to catch fish; he simply goes fishing for the sake of a day's outing.



FNCV excursion to Sassafras Gully, April 1891.

Contributed by Reiner Richter



Sassafras Gully, Hatter's Hut

Photo: A J Campbell 1891



Sassafras Creek

Photo: A J Campbell 1891

At their monthly meeting in the Royal Society Hall on April 13th 1891, the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria reported on a day excursion to Sassafras Creek in the Dandenong Ranges. Today this area is close to the Beagleys Bridge Picnic Area.

A report subsequently appeared in The Australasian newspaper on May 2nd 1891. It contained a write up and two sketches. The sketches were from photos taken by FNCV member Archibald James Campbell. In 1891 they were not able to easily reproduce photos in newspaper print.

Editor: Reiner attached copies of the original photos, which, unlike in 1891, reproduce in FNN far better than the sketches.

One sketch is included (left) for interest and comparison.

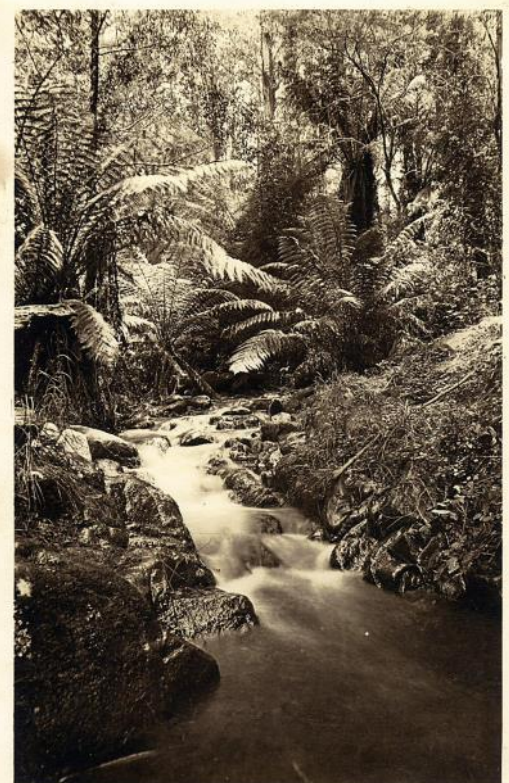


PHOTO SERIES, P.C. 879

SOUTH SASSAFRAS, VICTORIA.
THE CASCADES, SASSAFRAS CREEK.



Fungi Group

The Field Nats group met in the car park behind the milk bar, and young Cameron spotted *Amanita xanthocephala* growing along the fence. Their orange-red caps with a few scales were distinctive, and the bright orange rim to the volva was visible. It was interesting to see so many just along here.

David Barton, Friend of Wanderslore, talked about the background to the property: Constance Coleman set up the sanctuary, buying up the blocks that were originally going to subdivide the land. Her studio is the old railway ticket office, retrieved when the train line closed down. The property consists of 10.05 hectares with vegetation including Manna Gum, Mountain Grey Gum, Red Stringybark, Brown Stringybark, Messmate, Common Peppermint, and Soft and Rough Tree-ferns.

Near the shed Sue found a *Clavulina vinaceocervina* Dark-tipped Coral (Fig 2). This was pinky-brown with dark tips at the end of the branches – typical for the species. Lowdown on a tree behind the ‘eating area’ Cameron found a *Laetiporus portentosus* White Punk – a large soft and spongy bracket (ca 200 mm diameter). The upper surface is whitish to beige and the lower surface pores lemon yellow to buff. The soft spongy flesh is the food of certain insect larvae, and old and fallen brackets are riddled with the resulting tunnels looking like polystyrene which we saw later (Fig 3). Dry smouldering brackets were reportedly used by Aborigines to transport fire.



Fig 3 Old, fallen *Laetiporus portentosus* looking like polystyrene

Also in the ‘food area’ Cameron pointed out an old rotting ‘banana’. This turned out to be the smelly remains of the bolete *Phlebopus marginatus* (Fig 4). The soft, fleshy tissue is a favourite breeding ground for fungus flies, the maggots of which cause rapid putrefaction of the fungus. This is the largest terrestrial fungus in Australia, and a weight of 29 kg was recorded for one specimen from western Victoria. It used to be called *Phaeogyroporus portentosus* which sounds large. It has a brown smooth cap, and yellow-brown pores.

The sanctuary area was a carpet of colour with clubs of corals and gilled *Hygrocybe*. The clubs of the corals were *Clavulinopsis* species, *Clavulinopsis sulcata* Flame Fungus which is completely red (Fig 5), and the pink and red *C. corallinorosea*



Fig 5 *Clavulinopsis sulcata*

FNCV FUNGI FORAY REPORT Wanderslore Trust for Nature Sanctuary Launching Place, 4th July 2021



Fig 1 *Hypocreopsis amplexans*



Fig. 2 *Clavulina vinaceocervina*



Fig. 4 *Phlebopus marginatus*

Rosy Coral Club that has a pink fertile club but a red stem. Close scrutiny is needed. Yellow clubs were also in abundance, and again a close look was needed to determine whether they were *Clavulinopsis amoena* or *C. depokensis*. The former is a simple, all-yellow club, occasionally flattened, while the club of latter is often flattened and twisted with brownish tips. The clubs were all smallish and David said that they were small and young, and needed some more time to develop.

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(Continued from page 5)



Fig 8 *Phaeohelotium baileyana*
(discs on the ground)

Large numbers of *Hygrocybe* species included the yellow *H. aurantiopallens* and *H. chromolimonea* (Fig 6). *Humidicutus lewellinae* Mauve Splitting Waxcap (Fig 7) were scattered about. Yellow discs were seen growing on the ground in numerous groups. This species used to be called *Discinella terrestris* (discs on the ground), but is now named *Phaeohelotium baileyana* (Fig 8).



Fig 6 *Hygrocybe. Chromolimonea*. Fig 7 *Humidicutus lewellinae*

On the ground on dung of wombats, kangaroos and wallabies there were also numerous clumps of bright yellow/orange very tiny discs with hairs around the margin – *Cheilymenia raripila* Dung Fungus (Fig 9). The discs can get to 2 mm across, are saucer-shaped and sessile (stalkless). The spore-bearing surface is smooth, orange, and the margin fringed with minute pale brown hairs. They are gregarious on herbivore dung. However, Peter Thompson notes that within this genus there are a number of very similar looking species all consisting of small yellow to orange discs; for positive identification microscopic features need to be examined. A quick field guide is that *C. coprinaria* is found on cow dung, *C. raripila* on cow and rabbit dung and *C. fimicola* on cow, deer and rabbit (*Ascomycetes in Colour*, pp 32- 35).

We also saw on the ground a number of *Cortinarius* species which included *C. sinapicolor* Slimy Yellow Webcap (Fig 10) (yellow cap with orange centre, very glutinous; stem slightly bulbous base with whitish to pale yellow mycelial threads), *C. rotundisporus* Elegant Blue Webcap (glutinous cap, bluish with a yellow centre; gills pale lavender; stem blue at top, white to yellow near base). And there were a number of brown Corts with distinctive zones of brown around a domed cap.

However, forayers were very keen to find the rare *Hypocreopsis amplexans* Tea-tree Fingers that was discovered here on an earlier foray which was the first new Victorian location for *Hypocreopsis* in the 25 years since the initial batch of discoveries were made near Nyora. The species favours *Kunzea* logs and was growing on the dead branches *Kunzea leptospermoides*. *Kunzea* is a newly recorded host and the habitat is somewhat different to other known Victorian sites Those doing scientific studies on the specimens here left pink tape where the fungus had been found, but we didn't see any of the species, just a couple of disintegrating specimens (Fig 11). Then one of the forayers found some new specimens growing on a dead branch leaning against another *Kunzea* which was exciting, (see Fig 1 page 5). Here there were even some very young buds just developing (Fig 12).



Fig 9 *Cheilymenia raripila*



Fig 10 *Cortinarius sinapicolor*



Fig 11 *Hypocreopsis amplexans*
– old and deteriorating on wood

Wanderslore is a delightful place to look for fungi. Other forayers ventured further around the property and found a lot more fungi species, the photographs of which can be seen on the iNaturalist site.

Pat Grey (All photos: Pat Grey)



Fig 12 *Hypocreopsis amplexans*
– young and developing

Spring in Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary

Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary in Sandringham is a 2.2 ha conservation reserve owned by Bayside City Council. Since Dr Jim Willis opened it in 1981, volunteers have maintained a tradition of conducting Sunday afternoon wildflower tours during spring. Sadly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions, these tours have been cancelled for the last two years. Here instead are a few characteristic photos, mostly taken during 2020.

The Sanctuary has two EVCs: Sand Heathland, which is categorised as Rare in the Gippsland Plain bioregion, and Heathy Woodland, consisting mostly of *Eucalyptus viminalis* ssp. *pryoriana*, interspersed with *Acacia mearnsii* and an understory of bracken.

In August, the heathland blazes yellow, firstly with acacia coming into flower (*A. suaveolens*, *A. ulicifolia* and *A. paradoxa*), and then pea plants—*Bossiaea cinerea* followed by *Aotus ericoides* in September, *Platylobium obtusangulum* and *Dillwynia glaberrima*. Greenhoods orchids (*Pterostylis nutans* and *P. concinna*) line the narrow paths.

As September progresses, the view over the heathland is predominantly pink and white from flowering tea-tree *Leptospermum myrsinoides* and *L. continentale* interspersed with *Ricinocarpos pinifolius*, the tall flowering stems of *Xanthorrhoea minor* and soft plumes of *Austrostipa mollis*. In between, you can find Wallaby (*Rytidosperma*) grasses, sedges such as *Lepidosperma concavum*, plus *Burchardia umbellata*, *Stylidium graminifolium*, *Thelymitra brevicaulis* and various lilies—*Dianellas*, *Arthropodium strictum*, *Thysanotus patersonii* and *Caesia parviflora*. Yellow *Hibbertias* reliably flower for many months of the year whereas orchids such as *Caladenia carnea* and *Glossodia major* are seen only occasionally.

John Eichler and others have been steadily photo-documenting the biodiversity of the Sanctuary on iNaturalist Australia

(Continued on page 8)



Opening of Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary with Dr Jim Willis (1981).

Photo: Pauline Reynolds



Sweet Wattle (*Acacia suaveolens*) and Coast Manna Gums (*Eucalyptus viminalis* ssp. *pryoriana*) lining the southern fire trail.

Photo: Sue Forster

(Continued from page 7)

since early 2020. Sixty-three per cent of the 588 species now listed comprise insects and arachnids, including some with only a two or three records elsewhere. Fungi species now number 108 and plants 71. You can see John's stunning photos using the website's Explore function or by going direct to:

<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/bay-road-heathland-sanctuary>

For those who can visit, the locked section of Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary remains open to the public from 7am to 2pm on Thursdays.

Sue Forster
Convenor,
Friends of Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary



Showy Bossiaea (*B. cinerea*) with the heathland viewing platform in the background.
Photo: Sue Forster



Left: Silky Tea-tree (*Leptospermum myrsinoides*), Twiggy Tea-tree (*L. continentale*) and Soft Spear-grass (*Austrostipa mollis*).
Photo: Sue Forster



Wedding Bush (*Ricinocarpos pinifolium*)

Photo: Sue Forster



Grass-trigger Plant (*Stylidium graminifolium*).
Photo: Sue Forster

Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

Juniors Group:

Our tree planting day at Yellingbo (an activity close to my heart and that I suggested to the Juniors, will be in our calendar in August for the years to come, at least while I am their coordinator). We were told that due to covid restrictions the trees were not ready as the volunteers had not been able to meet to prepare them for planting. The earliest we will be able to have our tree-planting planting will be in October.



Our Meeting with Andrew Christie, postponed from June to August has been postponed again. No new date yet as it all depends on when universities are allowed again back to on-campus learning.

The last Friday in August was our Birthday Party, so we had a ZOOM gathering instead. A first-time a party via ZOOM. All went well. I trust September will bring us some luck out of the lockdowns.

Patricia Amaya

Fauna Survey Group:

Meeting: Tuesday 6th July 2021

The speaker was Michael McBain, Master of Geographic Information and Remote Sensing, on 'Making Maps from your Data'. There is a multitude of mapping resources available these days which the user can access and add your own information or even create your own maps. Data that can be mapped is collected in various ways, GPS records, photos, written notes, or photos from drones. There are a number of maps and sources of spatial data such as Vic map with scope files of contours, roads and watercourses, EVC maps, cadastral (property boundary) maps, Google Maps and Google Earth. Accuracy of maps and measurements vary; typical hand held GPS or phone is about 4 m, whereas a more expensive differential GPS, that has a fixed or user provided base station for correcting movements in the signal that obtain accuracy in cm (RTK). Correcting signals can also be sent via internet if available (NTRIP).



Google maps have about 1m resolution at best, whereas NearMap, a subscriber product, is about 15cm, and not available everywhere.

Photogrammetry is used to create a high resolution map from a mosaic of photos from a drone, and Michael showed examples of his maps. Powerful GIS software is available commercially such as Arc GIS, Map Info and Global Mapper and a free one is QGIS. There are a number of sources of maps and spatial data freely available including ABS, NSW spatial map user, Natural Resources Info WA, SA resource gateway, Geoscience Australia, US Geological survey, Open Street Map, Natural Earth data Portal, ESA Copernicus open access hub.

Meeting: Tuesday 3rd August

This was an online meeting. The speaker was Jules Farquhar, on 'Exploring the Basis of Range Limits in the Delicate Skink (*Lampropholis delicata*)'.

All species have distribution limits, often represented by distribution maps. There is a fundamental niche of abiotic conditions such as temperature and rainfall where it could survive and within that range is a smaller niche realised by ecological variables, in which it actually survives.

The Delicate Skink is a common and widespread species in moist areas of Eastern Australia. The study area was in the Hunter Valley at Coolah Tops and Liverpool Range areas of the Great Dividing Range. Delicate Skinks were found at high elevation sites up to 1100m and at mid elevations and not at low elevations. The micro habitat where they are found is complex with leaf litter, decorticated bark, and humid most of the time. At low elevations there is less cover, a greater temperature range and the amount of sun would be enough to cause overheating problems at times. Laboratory tests were undertaken to determine the range of temperature limits preferred by the skinks, and these helped support the field observations.



Ray Gibson

Day Group: Meeting 24th August: *Up the creek with Gary.* Speaker Dr Gary Presland spoke about Gardiners Creek. Summary see p11-12. Attendance via Zoom was 36, a near record for the group. **J Broadberry**

Marine Research Group, Microscopy Group, Terrestrial Invertebrates Group: No meetings.



Members' Photo Page Spring in the Royal Botanic Gardens & Westgate Park

Hazel and Edward Brentnall



Bauera sessiliflora Showy Bauera



Pterostylis curta Blunt Greenhood



Acacia denticulosa—the leaves are like coarse sandpaper.



Isopogon anemonifolius Little Drumsticks

**Four images taken
in the Royal Botanic
Gardens**

Last year I attempted to introduce a members' photo page to FNN. All I succeeded in doing was publishing a few series of my own photos. Recently, I was surprised and delighted to receive a lovely set of photos from Hazel and Edward Brentnall who are lucky enough to live close to the Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) and the beautiful Westgate Park. This has allowed FNN to revisit the idea of a members' photo page. Thank you so much Hazel and Edward.

We have all visited the RBG but Westgate Park, under the Westgate Bridge, is not nearly as well known. Almost exactly a year ago I spent a day there and wrote an account in FNN 311 Sept. 2020, "*An oasis in the heart of Industrial Melbourne*" p 10-11. When we are unlocked, do yourself a favour, pack a lunch and plan a visit. I promise you will be impressed with the transformation of this once derelict place. **Editor**



Wattles around one of the ponds in Westgate Park

**Three images
taken in
Westgate Park**

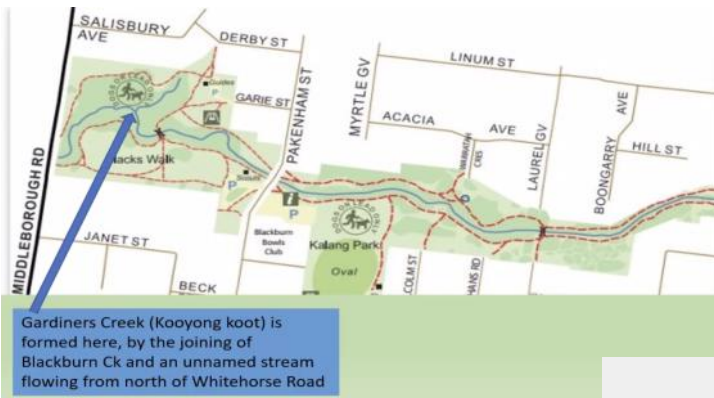


Left: The Westgate bridge is just visible

Above: Clematis



Day Group



Gardiners Creek is the most significant south-eastern tributary of the Yarra River, both in length and catchment area, being 16 km long with a catchment of 114 square kilometres. Its headwaters are between Blackburn and Nunawading, (see map above). A ridge running in an east-west direction approximating the line of Cotham Rd/Whitehorse Rd creates a watershed between two drainage basins. With one exception, the streams that begin on the northern side of this divide such as Mullum Mullum, Koonung Koonung and Ruffey Creeks are all direct tributaries of the Yarra. On the southern side of the ridge almost all the water flows into the Yarra by a single stream, Gardiners Creek.

Gardiners Creek was known to the aboriginal people as *Kooyong koot*, meaning "haunt of the water-fowl". For its first nine kilometres it flows to the south-west through a broad, fertile valley, then makes a right-angled bend towards the north-west to join the Yarra. Kooyong koot's wetlands provided a rich food source and a natural thoroughfare for movement of aboriginal people. It also formed the boundary between Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung clans.

John Gardiner, (1798-1878) overlanded with 300 cattle from Sydney to the Port Phillip District in 1836. He was the first European settler on the creek that now bears his name. A commemorative cairn was erected in 1935 on the Glenferrie Rd frontage of Scotch College, Hawthorn, the site of his homestead, a sketch of which appears below.

Gardiners Creek has undergone many changes since European settlement. Extensive clearing of vegetation for agriculture and timber has resulted in severe erosion. Beginning in the 1880s, major engineering works were undertaken to control its flow and reduce the effects of flooding. These included constructing weirs, retarding basins, diverting parts of the creek underground and canalising some of the waterway, (photo below right).

Gary went on to give an historical perspective, using photos and art-works, of the many bridges that have spanned Gardiners

(Continued on page 12)

UP THE CREEK WITH GARY

24th August, 2021—via Zoom

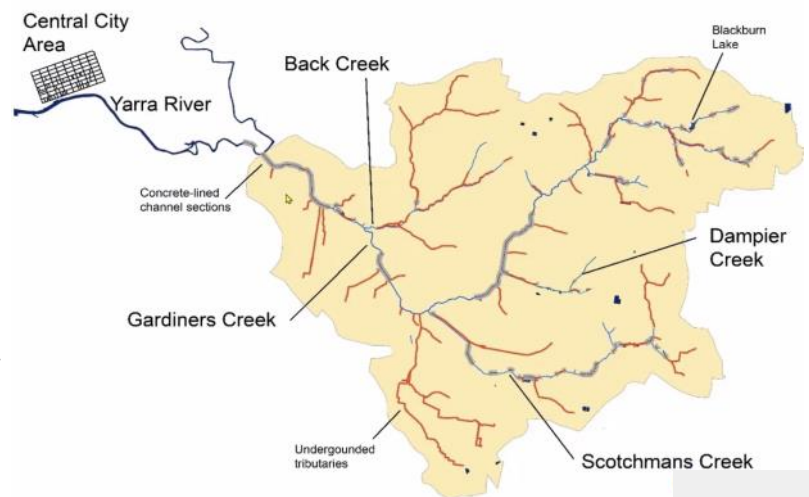


Gary Presland PhD FRHSV

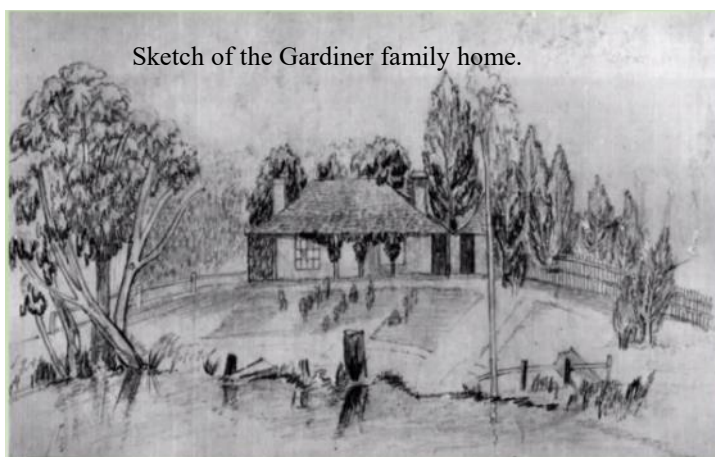
Hon Fellow
School of Geography, University of Melbourne



The course of Gardiners Creek



Catchment area of Gardiners Creek



Canalising the course of Gardiners Creek

(Continued from page 11)

Creek. The very early wooden bridge painted by Tom Roberts, (right), was at Glen Iris. The black bridge, (image below), built by John Monash, was so called because the pylons were coated with tar for preservation. A more recent example is the pedestrian bridge linking two parts of Deakin University, known as the Burwood Link, (below right).

We were treated to some fascinating history. An example was an image taken from the air of the Burwood drive-in theatre. It



The 'Black Bridge', built by John Monash in 1889 to carry the line of the Outer Circle Railway across Gardiners Creek and its flood

was situated close to the creek and operated from 1954 to 1983. A commemorative marker, visible from the walking track, indicates the spot where the screen was placed,

Gardiners Creek was beloved of artists. Buvelot painted *'The Big Tree'* in 1869, (image below). Although much of the tree cover had been removed, this mature specimen remained. The Box Hill artists group held a camp by the creek on weekends from 1885 to early 1889. Gary chose Jane Sutherland's painting *'Field naturalists'* painted in the area, as the cover of *'Understanding our Natural World'*, (below right).

For those who want to learn more about Melbourne's rivers and creeks, I would highly recommend Gary's book, *'The Place for a Village'*, Chapter 3, p 61, Melbourne's Streams and Wetlands.

Thirty-six people registered, close to a record attendance for the Day Group. It was obvious from the number of questions and discussion, that the audience thoroughly enjoyed being *taken up the creek*. The images used in this report are screen-shots taken with Gary's permission during the Zoom presentation. (thus a small photo of Gary often appears in the corner.) Once again, many thanks must go to our speaker. Thanks also to Max Campbell for his help with the technology.



Tom Roberts (1885) 'Winter morning after rain, Gardiner's Creek'



Pedestrian Bridge, the Burwood Link

The Burwood Drive-in Theatre (below)



The Drive-in operated for almost 30 years, from February 1954 until 1983.



Sign marking the spot where the screen was placed



Louis Buvelot 'The big tree, Gardiners Creek, c. 1869'



Jane Sutherland 'Field naturalists'. Although dated to about 1896, this work was at least begun while Jane was a member of the Box Hill school of painters. They camped in the area of David Houston's property, through which r Creek.

Joan Broadberry

