



Understanding  
Our Natural World  
Est. 1880

# Field Nats News No 369



Newsletter of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc. Editor: Joan Broadberry 03 9846 1218  
Telephone 03 9877 9860

1 Gardenia St. Blackburn 3130 [www.fncv.org.au](http://www.fncv.org.au)

Newsletter email: [joan.broadberry@gmail.com](mailto:joan.broadberry@gmail.com)

(Office email: [admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au))

Founding editor: Dr Noel Schleiger

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December 2025/January 2026

## From the President

The Australian Natural History Medallion has been awarded to Roger Thomas of the Ballarat Field Naturalists for his contribution to Public Education, Conservation, Birds and Botany. Congratulations Roger! The presentation took place on 10th November. After receiving the award, Roger gave a talk titled



Moist conditions at Mortimer Reserve  
Photo: Faye Campbell

*“Ballarat’s Nature Noted— a retrospective of Nature Writing over the decades.”*

We did not find large numbers of invertebrates in general during the recent Invertebrate Survey Group excursion to Mortimer Reserve near Gembrook. However, the weather was cool, the vegetation was wet and leeches were out in large numbers as representatives of the Invertebrata.



*Trametes versicolor* on a decaying tree stump.

They were literally dropping from the vegetation onto the participants and varied in size from a couple of millimetres to circa 50 millimetres. The smaller, presumably younger leeches were no less aggressive. I am certainly no stranger to the depredations of the Hirudinea and have frequently needed to remove them when I was in forests and waterways in Papua New Guinea, Queensland and the eastern states of Australia.



*Chiloglottis valida*, or Large Bird Orchid, was everywhere in the leaf litter.

Unfortunately, I seem to have become highly sensitised to their bites and, on this occasion, experienced a rapid allergic response. The areas of the bites swelled enormously (oedema), became extremely hot (pyraemia) and bright red (erythaema). Swelling and extreme itching (pruritis) continued for about five days and has only now more or less settled down after nearly two weeks, leaving a number of small

(Continued on page 4)

The due date for the February issue of FNN will be: **Monday JANUARY 5th 2026**  
**Please use my home email**  
[joan.broadberry@gmail.com](mailto:joan.broadberry@gmail.com)  
Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all our readers. To our many contributors, seasons greetings and a huge thank you for your reports and articles and your support in regard to due dates.  
Joan & Sally



Roger Thomas (left) receiving his Australian Natural History Medallion from Ass. Prof. Rob Day representing The Royal Society of Victoria

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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.  
There may be changes to the program, for example due to extreme weather conditions or the unavailability of a speaker.  
Please check with the FNCV website [www.fncv.org.au](http://www.fncv.org.au) or contact person for the most up-to-date information

### December 2025

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> – Fungi Group No Meeting**

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Fauna Survey Group Meeting: Members' night, including reports of recent trips and surveys.** Contact: Ray Gibson 0417 861 651; [rgibson@melbpc.org.au](mailto:rgibson@melbpc.org.au)

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Party BBQ:** 6.30 pm in the hall. Join us and help to celebrate another wonderful year with your fellow naturalists. As usual there will be a stupendous raffle! [Invitation page 3.](#)

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> – Marine Research Group Meeting:** (8 pm –10pm) *End of year members' night - will be held on line via Google Meet and in the hall* Our members present a range of information, discussion and images on marine related topics and activities. Please register using this link: <https://forms.gle/cV18EBPVDjPza4Lj7>  
Contact: Leon Altoff 0428 669 773; [marine@fncv.org.au](mailto:marine@fncv.org.au)

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> - Invertebrate Study Group Meeting via zoom: Discussions and photos by members of recent observations and other items of interest.** Registration essential via email. Contact: Wendy Clark [inverts@fncv.org.au](mailto:inverts@fncv.org.au)

**Sunday 14<sup>h</sup> - Invertebrate Study Group Excursion:** Cranbourne Gardens Native Section (9.30am to 2pm). Last time we surveyed this in March with good results. December should have a different range of species before the heat dries it out. Registration essential via email: Contact: Wendy Clark [inverts@fncv.org.au](mailto:inverts@fncv.org.au)

*\*Closed over festive season – no meetings from 15<sup>th</sup> December to 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026*

### January 2026

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> – Marine Research Group Meeting: (7.30pm to 9pm) MRG Induction session - will be held on line via Google Meet.** Our permits and access to most of our survey areas require that we don't take untrained members on our surveys. Attendance of an induction session is mandatory prior to being able to attend any MRG field work. Please register using this link: <https://forms.gle/yLXY2AhPmQYGNgB37>.  
Contact: Leon Altoff 0428 669 773; [marine@fncv.org.au](mailto:marine@fncv.org.au)

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> – Marine Research Group 12:45pm. Fieldwork: Intertidal survey: Location Altona.** Meet at 12:45 (5 to 6 hours). Our permits and access to most of our survey areas require that we don't take untrained members on our surveys. Previous experience or attendance of an induction session is mandatory prior to being able to attend any MRG field work. Please register for the exact location details using this link <https://forms.gle/u753vqztRq4xd6KW9>  
Contact: Leon Altoff 0428 669 773; [marine@fncv.org.au](mailto:marine@fncv.org.au)

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> - Invertebrate Study Group Excursion: Mortimer Picnic Ground.** (9.30am to 3pm). We visited this site in October and were disappointed with the low number of invertebrates though what we found was interesting. The warmth of the summer should produce an increase in numbers and variety of invertebrates. Bookings essential via email.  
Contact: Wendy Clark [inverts@fncv.org.au](mailto:inverts@fncv.org.au)

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> – Botany Group No Meeting**

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> FNCV Council Meeting** 7.30 pm (note 3rd Monday of the month). Apologies and agenda items to Wendy Gare [admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au)

*(Continued on page 3)*



The policy of the FNCV is that non-members pay \$5 per excursion and \$3 per meeting, to contribute towards Club overheads. Junior non-member families, \$4 per excursion and \$2 per meeting.

**Calendar of Events—Continued from page 2)**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> - Invertebrate Study Group Meeting: *Members' Night*.** Bring your photos and observations for discussion. Discuss and view field trip results as well. This is 'Peak Season'. Contact: Wendy Clark [inverts@fncv.org.au](mailto:inverts@fncv.org.au)

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> – Day Group No Meeting**

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> – Marine Research Group Meeting: (7.30pm to 9pm) *MRG Induction session* - will be held on line via *Google Meet*.** Our permits and access to most of our survey areas require that we don't take untrained members on our surveys. Attendance of an induction session is mandatory prior to being able to attend any MRG field work.

Please register using this link: <https://forms.gle/yLXY2AhPmQYGNgB37>

Contact: Leon Altoff 0428 669 773; [marine@fncv.org.au](mailto:marine@fncv.org.au)

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> – Geology Group No Meeting**

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup>—Juniors Group No Meeting**

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> – Marine Research Group Fieldwork: *Intertidal survey*.** Meet at 13:55 (5 to 6 hours). Our permits and access to most of our survey areas require that we don't take untrained members on our surveys. Previous experience or attendance of an induction session is mandatory prior to being able to attend any MRG field work. Location: Barwon Heads.

Please register using this link for details: <https://forms.gle/u753vqztRq4xd6KW9>

Contact: Leon Altoff 0428 669 773; [marine@fncv.org.au](mailto:marine@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: [joan.broadberry@gmail.com](mailto:joan.broadberry@gmail.com) 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:

Joanne Colosimo, Jess De Silva, Richard Glasson, Clare Bruce-Gordon, Ben Travaglini, Cathy Xiong, Eric Barker, Brian Ross, Brenna Husband, Elle-Angelique Watharow, Mack Price, Kurt Price, Simon Watharow, Amelia Houghton, Bryce Watts-Parker, Jessica Cowling and Mariah Carroll.



### FNCV Christmas Party Saturday December 6th 2025



**Join us at 6.30 pm in the FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia St. Blackburn**

Relax and enjoy a BBQ with friends and members from all FNCV Special Interest Groups and celebrate another wonderful year of activities. All welcome!

- \* The club will provide meat, vegeburgers, bread and nibbles. Please bring a salad or a sweet to share. BYO drinks. Email the office [admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au) by **Friday 28th November at the latest** to let us know numbers coming and what food you are bringing.
- \* We will also be holding the traditional FNCV end-of-year fundraising raffle. **Donations of prizes would be much appreciated**, e.g. wine, knick-knacks, plants, books etc. Look deep into your 'present drawer'. Raffle prizes may be left at the office or, preferably bring them with you on the night.

Queries to Wendy Gare 9877 9860 or via email.

**NOTE: SIG representatives, please send 4/5 photos of the year's activities to the office by Monday 24th November, to be shown at the Christmas Party**

(Continued from page 1)



One of the leeches avidly seeking a warm body.

scars and a dark rash. I mention this as a safety matter for those visiting our moist forests and recommend that precautions are taken to limit ready access to uncovered skin for any blood sucking organisms since long term exposure can lead to more extreme reactions.

Mosquitoes, ticks, sand flies and March Flies can also cause unpleasant reactions. All blood sucking organisms have the potential capacity to transmit parasites, bacteria and viruses so it is wise to take basic precautions by using repellents and tucking trousers into socks. Leeches inject an anticoagulant so the bites keep bleeding for some time after removal, making the bite site look worse than it actually is. Leeches will remain very active for some time yet while we experience cooler moist weather and are, in any event, always in the leaf litter



The ciliate *Trochilia* running along a *Spirogyra* filament as it scrapes off bacteria for food.

ready to move. Leeches have never deterred my forages in the bush and shouldn't deter anyone interested in nature but it is advisable to protect yourself from their depredations. I must add that it was gratifying to see numerous fungi and orchids in Mortimer Reserve.

On another excursion I collected a small sample of *Spirogyra* from an urban pond and observed thousands of minute ciliates, *Trochilia* running along *Spirogyra* filaments like tiny cars on a freeway as they scraped off bacteria for food. The cilia are on the ventral side and they are used like minute legs to propel the organism up and down the filaments. They clearly have a sense of direction, respond to their environment, and are able to control the leg-like cilia. The astonishing thing is that the organism is a minute, single cell without a nervous system as we know it. Although larger terrestrial invertebrates seem to be more difficult to find of late, the microscopic world always offers a broad and diverse biota for interesting study.

Max Campbell

All photos by M. Campbell unless otherwise indicated

Facebook: 54,444 followers.

Why not have a look yourselves at the great photos and discussions that happen there?

Here is the link:



[bookshop@fncv.org.au](mailto: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.

## Advertising in the Field Nats News

VERY REASONABLE RATES

Contact Wendy in the Field Nats Office

[admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au)

9877 9860

(Mon –Tues 10 am—4 pm)

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

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

Thank you to all those who helped produce FNN 369  
Joan Broadberry, Sally Bewsher and Wendy Gare



## Invertebrate Study Group

Trip to Mortimer Reserve,  
Gembrook - 12th October 2025

The forecast of significant rain approaching caused us to finish the trip at 1pm instead of 3pm. We started off in drizzle which has its benefits as the insects are often hiding under leaves, and they don't move fast. It is also good weather for finding our native slug, *Cystopelta* of which we saw several. Leeches were also plentiful!

A small but enthusiastic group of people searched the foliage, ground and trunks for any invertebrates. Some were observers and photographically documented what we found (see link to iNaturalist below). We ended up with an interesting variety of invertebrates, but the numbers of each were quite low. We did find a large number of Bird Orchids in flower. As the morning progressed the drizzle lifted and the sun even came out. We then started seeing some more flying insects. Several Calibracon wasps gave us a merry chase, rarely stopping for more than a second, making it very difficult to photograph. Here are a few images of some of the invertebrates we found.



*Eurispa vittata*  
a member of Tortoise and Hispine Beetles



Derbid Planthopper  
Tribe Rhotanini



Plant Hoppers Genus *Cercopicesa*



*Cystopelta purpurea*

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Stoneflies Order Plecoptera



High-headed Arkys Spider  
*Arkys alticephala*



Subfamily Pseudachorutinaea  
member of Short-legged Springtails Family Neanuridae



Tribe Cryptinia  
member of Ichneumonid Wasps



We ended up having lunch in the sun and discussing the finds of the morning. It would be worth a visit in a few months when the weather is warmer. See the results of the survey on iNaturalist.

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fncv-2025-mortimers>

Wendy Clark  
Photos: W. Clark

Woodlouse Fly  
Family Rhinophoridae



## ISG Meeting Report *October 8th 2025*

The Zoom meeting was well attended, with several people sharing their observations. After a lumpy start with difficulty sharing screens due to Zoom updates, a few people had some very interesting photos to show and discuss. It was noted that although the invertebrates are starting to emerge, it was still dependant on the weather, and a cold spell would see the activity cease.

Some butterflies were starting to emerge with the Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui*, being the most common one seen. Andrew, however, was thrilled to find the Forest Brown *Argynnis cyrila* at Kirth Kiln and after a bit of a chase managed to get an excellent photo of it. He also showed a range of insects from Croydron. Of particular interest were the Katydid, *Caedisia simplex*, which is rarely seen these days, a large Swift Moth *Oxycaenus antipoda* and an unidentified wasp with a very long ovipositor.



Common Garden Katydid *Caedisia simplex*  
Croydon, VIC



*Oxycaenus antipoda* - a member of Swift Moths Family Hepialid  
Croydon, VIC



Forest Brown *Argynnis cyrila*  
Kurth Kiln Regional Park, VIC

Wendy showed different species of Psyllids including the cover, the juvenile and the adult. The Clamshell Psyllid was notable for the obvious shape of the clover. Also, another interesting find was the Octopus Spider that really did look like an octopus. Many other insects were shown as well. It was a very interesting Zoom meeting!

Gum Clamshell Lerp  
*Spondylaspis plicatuloides*



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Octopus Spider Genus Tmarus



Lasiopsylla adult Psyllid just emerged

Wendy Clark

## Psyllids – The Beauty Under the Lerp

Early Spring is psyllid hatching time. The adults emerge from under their covers, some of which are intricately patterned with translucent wings or interesting shapes. This year, I was lucky enough to see some adults emerge from their covers, which is the definitive way of matching up the Psyllid to the lerp. Psyllids are a sap-sucking bug. The nymph, under it's cover, sucks the sap from the leaf, hence the effected gum leaves having multi colours (see below). I first photographed one of these beautiful insects at the beginning of September some years ago as I was leading a trip after giving a talk on insects, on a private property in Clayton. It looked like a miniature cicada.

The next time I saw some was in Black Rock. I had gone there to find the Peacock Spiders, *Maratus tasmanicus*, on the foreshore and was quite disappointed to not find any, nor much of any insect life. So, I headed for a reserve nearby called Long Hollow Heathland, which had proved productive for insects before. Halfway along the track, I came across a large gum tree with most of its leaves multicoloured. This was caused by many tiny sap suckers feeding on them. Looking closely, I found the whole life-cycle. Newly hatched juveniles, nymphs under their covers, and emerging adults, both male and female.



Fungus Psyllid



Psyllids showing female, nymphs, nymph skin, cover (lerp) and mottled colour of leaves



Left: Female with nymph hatchlings

Right: Male (on right) and female

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This season, I started monitoring a small regrowing Eucalypt with many lerps on it. The first to grab my attention was the Clamshell Lerp – a new observation for me. I watched it regularly over the following weeks and one day there were bright orange dots on the leaf, which turned out to be the nymph in its final stage, emerged from its clam shell cover. It still had stubby black wing stumps. The next day, the wings broke free and were drying.



The following day, the Psyllids wings had dried and were folded neatly along its body



On the bush there were also some other types of lerps. On one I was pleased to find the newly emerged adult as well. If you look closely at the lerp, you can see the shape of a green nymph within.

Gum Clamshell Lerp *Spondylaspis plicatuloides*



Subfamily Spondylaspidinae with shed nymph skin



Subfamily Spondylaspidinae Lerp cover with nymph under it and an adult showing green underbelly

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There are many different types of lerps and psyllids. Each has a different shaped cover. Some are galls and have very odd shapes. Some of the galls have a different shape depending on whether it is the male or the female.

Below are some photos of other psyllids and lerps I have found. All these insects are tiny, often less than 5mm long. I have added a few images for size reference. Keep an eye out for these beautiful insects.



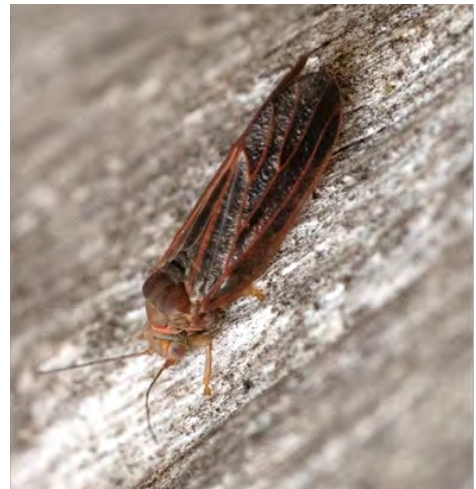
Genus *Australopsylla*



Genus *Glycaspis* sitting on my finger



Genus *Glycaspis*



Family *Psylloidae*



Psyllid on wattle stem with a Striped Looper  
*Chlenias banksiaria* hanging next to it



Same psyllid as in the image with the caterpillar.  
Are these male and female?

*Continued p 11*

## Definition of Lerp *ref Wikipedia*

In biology, a lerp is a structure of crystallized honeydew produced by larvae of psyllid bugs as a protective cover. These animals are commonly referred to as lerp insects, of which there are over 300 species in Australia.

Lerps are energy rich, consisting mostly of starch, with some proteins and fats. They are eaten by flying foxes, possums and birds such as pardalotes and honeyeaters. The word is derived from the Wemba word *lerep*. Lerps are traditionally eaten by Indigenous people, and can be stored as dry balls for future use.

### Lerps are a good food source for others

Here are some photos of insects I found eating lerps



Ant eating a *Glycaspis* lerp



Lady Beetle Larva (Coccinellidae) eating a lerp



Close up of Lady Beetle larva eating a lerp.  
It would most likely eat the nymph as well!

## What is a Psyllid *ref Wikipedia*

Psyllidae, the jumping plant lice or psyllids, are a family of small plant-feeding insects that tend to be very host-specific, i.e. each plant-louse species only feeds on one plant species (monophagous) or feeds on a few closely related plants (oligophagous).

Together with aphids, phylloxerans, scale insects and whiteflies, they form the group called Sternorrhyncha, which is considered to be the most "primitive" group within the true bugs (Hemiptera). They have traditionally been considered a single family, Psyllidae, but recent classifications divide the group into a total of seven families; the present restricted definition still includes more than 70 genera in the Psyllidae. Psyllid fossils have been found from the Early Permian, before the flowering plants evolved. The explosive diversification of the flowering plants in the Cretaceous was paralleled by a massive diversification of associated insects, and many of the morphological and metabolic characters that the flowering plants exhibit may have evolved as defences against herbivorous insects.

Several genera of psyllids, especially among the Australian fauna, secrete coverings called "lerps" over their bodies, presumably to conceal them from predators and parasites.

Wendy Clark

All images W. Clark

## Extracts from SIG reports given at the last FNCV Council Meeting

### **Geology Group: Meeting 24th September: Saini Samim spoke on *Volcanoes and Human Origins: Tales from Turkana Basin, Kenya.***

The context of Sani's research team's work is hominin evolution, which traces species that lived before and perhaps contemporary with *Homo sapiens*. From 4 Ma there were our first ancestors, 3 Ma stone tool users, 2 Ma *Homo erectus* walked upright and from 1 Ma migration out of Africa occurred. *Homo sapiens* date back to 300 ka.

In the East Africa Rift Valley human and other fossils have been found near present day Lake Turkana. Dated about 1.6 Ma, a near complete skeleton known as Turkana Boy, or Nariokotome Boy, is celebrated locally with a prostrate brass statue. The Nairobi Museum houses his bones.

Volcanic ash erupted around the age of the fossils and has been utilised for four decades in an attempt to determine dates. Incidentally, Lake Taupo in New Zealand has emitted huge amounts of such ash since 300 ka. Another case is when Vesuvius buried Pompeii 2 ka. A problem arose in the precision of dating of ash above and below particular fossil finds:

1.23 ± 0.02 Ma upper      1.28 ± 0.03 Ma middle      1.30 ± 0.03 Ma lower

Plainly, there is overlap in the precision of these three location dates.

The latest argon/argon dating method used to be called the potassium/argon method. Sample <sup>39</sup>K is first irradiated in a nuclear reactor in the USA to produce <sup>39</sup>Ar. Then at the University of Melbourne a mass spectrometer compares the ratios of isotopes <sup>40</sup>Ar/<sup>39</sup>Ar. Then the age of the rock sample can be calculated.

Updated ages: the Upper Nariokotome Tuff 1,233.1 ± 1.3 ka, the Middle Nariokotome Tuff 1,263.4 ± 1.2 ka and the Lower Nariokotome Tuff 1,285.8 ± 1.0 ka. S. Samim 2025 [below]. The accuracy is 15.4x better for the Upper site!

In addition to argon dating, the volcanic ash comprised of tuff and pumice can be characterised like a fingerprint, again with the mass spectrometer. A very small but representative grain is used for the study. Where major elements are not enough for a signature, trace elements high in the periodic table are identified by the mass spectrometer, such as Lanthanum and Zirconium.

Saini labels this her research question two. Saini was lead author in a paper in *Chemical Geology* "*An improved methodology for high-resolution LA-ICP-MS trace-element fingerprinting of tephra layers.*"

An issue for the west of Lake Turkana archeology project is the absence of volcanic vents. Because the lake level has changed historically pumices and tuffs are in fact alluvial deposits. Saini referred to her publication of 15 Sep 2025. (See below)

Research issue three seeks to understand why and when silicic magma chambers erupt. In a diagram like an inverted hour glass, some authors picture the upper chamber as silicic, while the lower one is mafic magma. At 450°C K-rich feldspars crystallise, as if it is 'cold storage' for the crystals. We may ask why these crystals leave the magma chamber, if they are stored for a long time with different magmas? It is thought magma mixing may cause an eruption. At this point, Saini used the analogy of stirring milk in a cup of coffee. Pumices can have high heterogeneity. In summary, there are multiple tuff signatures. Geo chem can recognise them. Precedence of deposits is significant. There may be a 20 ka cycle in Africa. *Attendance was 23.*

Saini Samim et al (15 Sep 2025) *High-resolution tephrochronology resolves stratigraphic complexities in archaeologically significant Nariokotome tuffs, Turkana Basin* <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2424142122>

16 Sep 2025 <https://theconversation.com/volcanoes-can-help-us-untangle-the-evolution-of-humans-heres-how-255013>

### **Meeting 22nd October. Rachel Kirby presented: *Meteorites - Records of our Solar System's history.***

As a planetary geologist, Rachel's field includes pre-solar grains, space dust and asteroids. Because of the gravity of Jupiter, the asteroid belt persists, between Mars and Jupiter.

Chondrules, often < 1 mm, are spherical and were once partially or totally molten. Comprised of silicates they form the common chondrite rocky meteorites. Other meteorites are metal, mostly iron. In space the asteroid Eros, called undifferentiated, is similar to an ordinary Chondrite meteorite. (A space probe actually landed on it.)

Differentiation refers to a history of being molten, which enables an iron and nickel core to form. The asteroid Psyche, diameter 220 km, is metal rich, but not all of metal. It is believed to be the exposed core of a planetesimal that would have undergone a collision. So iron meteorites on Earth are believed to be of similar origin.

Meteors arrive on Earth! Two were found in northern Africa. Erg Chech, is dated 4565 Ma, so it is older than any Earth rock. In contrast, NWA 1195, dated 347 Ma, is a Martian meteorite, meaning it is a basaltic rock that originated on Mars. So we know that Mars had volcanoes.

In the field, there are meteorite falls, (seen falling), and finds. The ratio is 1414 to 76 934. Rachel Kirby participates in the Australian Desert Fireball Network of 50 cameras as its geochemist. Cameras follow shooting stars and by triangulation specify

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a likely area, called a strewn field. So far, seven meteorites have been recovered with a high-accuracy trajectory and orbit defined.

Monash students spend a week annually searching ancient surfaces, (up to 30 000 ka such as the Nullarbor), for meteorite finds. Rachel found a rare large carbonaceous chondrite. (The 1969 Murchison meteorite fall was of this type.)

Rachel has published a paper on the Miles meteorite, found in Queensland in 1992. Classified an IIE iron meteorite, it was 265 kgm. It has felsic silicate inclusions. Using a mass spectrometer at ANU called Shrimp, its age was calculated as 4542 ±4 Ma. The meteorite was likely derived from impact of an H chondrite asteroid. It was hot, then cooled quickly.

Finally, intriguing work on meteorites on the surface of Mars was described. Looking at a stony Nullarbor meteorite using scanning electron microscopy, colonising bacteria were found in minute cracks. These cause iron to rust faster. This work is an analogue for the Mars surface. To be clear, there is no evidence that microbes have arrived on Earth in a meteorite. Antarctica, as another arid environment, has also proved to have findable meteorites. Rachel found an H chondrite there. Attendance was 25.

Ken Griffiths

## Invertebrate Study Group:

**Trip to Mortimer Reserve, Gembrook 12<sup>th</sup> October** Report pages 5-6

**Meeting October 8<sup>th</sup>** Report pages 7-8

Wendy Clark

## Microscopy Group:

**Meeting Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025.**

A large variety of specimens were available. The meeting was unusually poorly attended. However, we welcomed an enthusiastic new member to the club who was interested in attending several groups and particularly liked the microscopy and videos of freshwater organisms.

Philippa Burgess



## Mali Dunes

A camera trap image showing a Western Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus fuliginosus*), completely undeterred by the spines of the EPBC listed Jumping-Jack Wattle *Acacia enterocarpa*), having a meal that would have made the Glutton Club proud.

Andrej Hohmann

## From the Office

Dear Members,

Thank you for another year of making my job one of the best!  
I hope you all have a lovely break and come back refreshed and even more enthused for another year of understanding our natural world.

The office will be closed for nearly three weeks. My last working day will be 16th December and I will be back on 5th January 2026.

Seasons greetings to all,

**Wendy Gare**  
Administration Officer



**SIG representatives**, please send four or five photos of the year's activities to the office [admin@fncv.org.au](mailto:admin@fncv.org.au)

to be shown at the Christmas party—  
by Tuesday November 25th  
at the latest.



Ballarat Field Naturalists Club (BFNC) hosted the recent Spring SEANA get-together, Friday 17—Sunday 19 October. Eight FNCV members were among the more than 100 field naturalists who attended. The weekend produced ‘Goldilocks’ weather.

Excursions included: Bird walk at Lake Wendouree—highlights being male and female Blue-billed Ducks, Musk Duck, Magpie Goose and Whiskered Terns; Mt Buninyong crater, summit and Union Jack Reserve; Enfield State Park and Ross Creek State Forest; Clarksdale Bird Sanctuary and Devil’s Kitchen Geological Reserve; Chepstowe, Lake Goldsmith and Stockyard Hill; Bungal Historic area and Lal Lal Falls Reserve; Woowookarung Regional Park; Creswick Regional Park; Mt Beckworth and Lake Learmonth; Mt Elephant and Mt Emu Creek. There was long list of orchids recorded on one of the walks and a new plant species identified at another site. Judith Sise, one of the FNCV’s representatives on the SEANA committee, reported, “I enjoyed the activities and want to return to walk some of the places I did not attend.” BFNC members put in a huge effort and are to be congratulated on the success of the get-together.

In the absence of the SEANA President, Deborah Evans, Judith chaired the SEANA General Meeting on Saturday in which the new Rules for the Association were carried unanimously by a show of hands. The minutes will be posted on the SEANA website [seana.org.au](http://seana.org.au) Judith will email a copy to any interested persons. [judesise@gmail.com](mailto:judesise@gmail.com)

Geelong Field Naturalists Club will host the SEANA Autumn Camp 13-15 March 2026 and Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club will host the Spring Camp 9-11 October 2026. SEANA is looking for a host for the 2027 Autumn Camp.

Portland Field Naturalists Club is celebrating its 80th anniversary on 13 December 2025. If anyone is interested, Judith has the details.

The winner of the 2025 Australian Natural History Medallion was announced at the Saturday night dinner held at the Ballarat Golf Club. It was awarded to Roger Thomas, BFNC member, for his contribution to Public Education, Conservation, Birds, and Botany. Congratulations Roger!



**Guest Speakers**

*Friday 17th October 2025*

Nicole Kearney is the manager of the Biodiversity Heritage Library Australia (BHL) and communications director for the global Biodiversity Heritage Library. BHL Australia is a national project working to digitise Australia’s biodiversity literature and make it openly accessible online on the Biodiversity Heritage website.

BHL began operations in 2010 with just one organisation, Museums Victoria, but has grown to a national consortium of over 60 contributing organisations and publishers across the country. The digitisation operation is located at the Melbourne Museum. It is funded by the Atlas of Living Australia. Nicole showcased BHL’s online resources, their recent project “Capturing the history of Victoria’s Field Naturalists Clubs” and the various ways to search for information of interest to field naturalists. She also promoted opportunities for FNCs to share their natural history information with the broader public online through the library. To browse this extensive online library of 550+ titles, 70000+ volumes contributed by museums, herbaria, universities, state libraries, royal societies, government organisations, field naturalists clubs and societies, visit

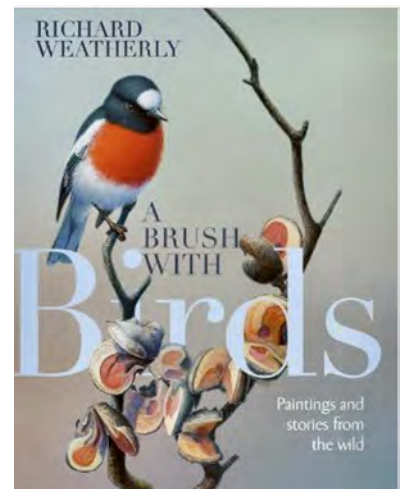
[biodiversitylibrary.org/collection/bhlau](http://biodiversitylibrary.org/collection/bhlau)



*Saturday 18th October 2025*

Well-known artist, ornithologist, author, conservationist and regenerative farmer Richard Weatherly OAM was the guest speaker on Saturday night. Richard is an Australian environmentalist and artist specialising in natural history subjects, especially birds. He was the foundation president of the Society of Wildlife Artists of Australasia.

Richard has travelled widely including to Zimbabwe where he assisted in wildlife research. He has undertaken fieldwork in Australia and New Guinea, studying all species of malurid wrens, jointly publishing a monograph in 1982. He also spent several months based at Mawson Station in Antarctica helping to set up a research project and studying Adelie Penguins.



Richard lives and works at Connewarran in Western Victoria near Mortlake, the area where he was brought up. His presentation detailed how and why “Connewarran” became a Regenerative Farm. He documented four generations of changing management at “Woolongoon” and “Connewarran” and its effects on the ecosystem and wildlife. He also shared his experience as a wildlife artist.