

Newsletter 112 October 2003

Description

Dear Friends,

Friends ramble in the Barambogie Range of the greater Chiltern-Mt Pilot N.P. provided participants with a selection of springtime glory in some of the lesser visited areas of the park.

Early morning rain and dark skies hung over the convoy as it departed Chiltern and headed for the hills. Upon arrival at the first rambling point the skies cleared, the sun peeped through the clouds and the weather improved steadily.

Our aim was to explore a dry rocky hillside strewn with granite boulders, the vegetation being dominated by ancient 8-12 metre tall trees of Catkin Wattle (*Acacia doratoxylon*) with mature Drooping She-oaks (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) and White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glauophylla*) as minor components along with Box and Stringybark. The understorey consisted of many species of annulas such as purslanes, stonecrops, daisies, sundews, orchids and buttercups.

The drifts of Scarlet Sundew were particularly impressive as was the large specimen of Creeping Mistletoe, (*Meullerina eucalyptoides*) an uncommon species. Several minutes were spent comparing the differences between two species of Greencomb Spider Orchids found growing together, the common Greencomb, (*Caladenia tentaculata*) and the smaller poorly known *Caladenia Parva*. Birds noted in the area included White-throated Warblers, Red-capped Robin, Horsefieldâ??s Bronze-cuckoo, Pallid Cuckoo, Turquoise parrot, Black-chinned Honeyeater. A fungi of note was a layered bracket fungus of the *Ganoderma* species found growing on the Catkin Wattle; the furrowed bark of this tree being a difficult substrate to colonise. Also inhabiting this area was a species of hairy caterpillar and a snappy colony of red Bull-dog Ants which provided some light-hearted humour.

The run-off zone at the base of the hill was wet, open grassy forest and this was duly explored. Clockwinder Frogs (2 species) and Pobblebonks were in good voice, a double century vintage Red Box drew the admiration of all, plus the finding of ground hugging Woolly Heads and Midget Greenhoods around a seasonally inundated depression concluded our wander of this interesting area.

Further rambling saw the group walking in an area of open grassy forest which was a carpet of Early Nancys, buttercups and orchids. The Golden Moths, (*Diuris chryseopsis*) were in such profusion that at times it was difficult to know where to place oneâ??s feet. A few species of hybrid double-tailed orchids, (*Leopards and Golden Moths*) attracted attention as did the white flowered form of â??Blue Oatsâ?•, (*Stypandra glauca*).

An enjoyable day was had by all. Make a note to come on the next ramble! Thank you John for this report.

Rainfall:. Total for September was 50.4mm which fell on 15 days. Yearly total to end of September: 481.2mm over 79 days

Around the park:

Noted on the Barambogie Ramble: A very wet area which had been severely damaged by a woodgetter and a beautiful tree which had been robbed of its huge burl.

The Chocolate Lilies are ready to colour the park purple as the days warm up. The Bee-eaters, Orioles, Dollar-birds, Kingfishers and White-breasted Woodswallows have returned. There are Freckled Ducks and rafts of Pink-eared Ducks on Chiltern Valley No 2 and Black-tailed Native Hens around the Pit Road wetlands. Shovelers, Teal, Black Ducks, Wood Ducks and Swans have all been seen with young. The Regents appear to have left the park, Turquoise Parrots are nesting and hard to find, and the greatest surprise of all is that the White-fronted Honeyeater seen in April has been seen again in the Grevilleas at the Motel! Don't know for certain it's the same one of course but it is a very odd record for a cold September!

Visitors from USA, South Africa and interstate visited the park last month and Phillip and Eileen hosted a group of 26 U3A visitors from Knox Shire who were interested in birds and flowers.

Friends said farewell to Susie Duncan and Barry Traill who have moved to Queensland. Barry and Susie have made great contributions to this area and Friends thank them for this and wish them well in their new surroundings.

REMINDER OF CHANGE OF DATE FOR DECEMBER MEETING : The December meeting has been changed to NOVEMBER 30TH as Natasha is unavailable on the original date. .

IRONBARK FESTIVAL SUNDAY OCTOBER 19TH. Parks Victoria will have a marquee and the Friends display will be placed in it. Assistance to monitor the display would be welcome.

FRIENDS OF REEF HILLS: A new group supporting the Reef Hills Park near Benalla has been formed. This gives us three Friends groups in the area.

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY NOVEMBER 1ST . MEET AT CHILTERN POST OFFICE 9.00AM

Weeds at Bartley's and Howlong Rd sites. Afternoon walking, birds and flowers.

BYO gloves, sunscreen, repellent, binocs, lunch and energy. Contact: June Gotham 03 57 261 619

Category

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