



Newsletter 022 July 1995

Description



FRIENDS OF CHILTERN PARK INC

Convenor: E. Collins 057 261 484

Newsletter No. 22 July 1995

Dear Friends

Despite the early morning chill and mist a group of Friends turned out to lay another Loo metres of walking track at the freeway stop. Almost one hundred millimetres of rain had fallen since the first part of the track was laid in June. We were pleased to see that the trackwork had only minor run-off problems which we hope to solve before next meeting. The shovellers, wheelers and rakers felt the effects of the rain in the weight of the gravel.

By 10.30 am morning tea was welcome, tea and Elephant's Foot was eagerly consumed. If you would like to experience the delights of Elephant's Foot just turn up to the next meeting. Mind you the toe is fought over!

The final seventy metres will be laid next meeting and it's the easiest stretch being flat and close to the gravel heap.

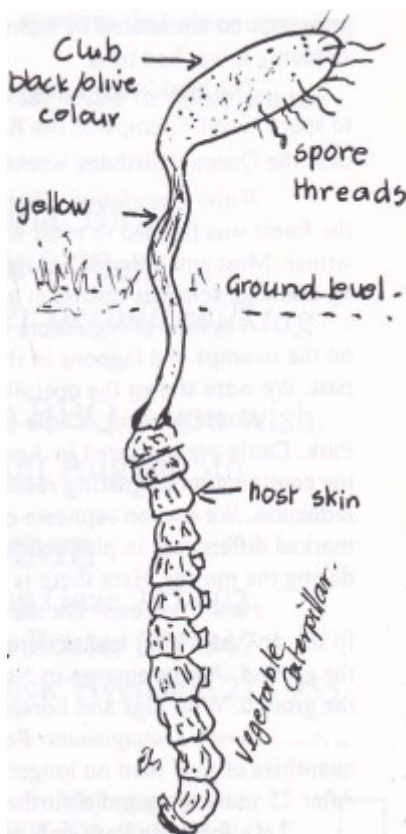
Once again lunch at the freeway facility proved a winner. The barbecued food soon disappeared as we enjoyed the warmth of the sun. Following lunch our walk took the form of helping Bruce and Bob to complete the nest log inspections. This was completed by 5pm just as the rain set in.

Around the park.

Orchid leaves and rosettes are abundant promising an interesting late winter and spring display. Wattle-birds, Little Lorikeets and many smaller honeyeaters are plentiful in the flowering Grey Box and Ironbark. No Friar-birds or Swift Parrots have been recorded for June,

Fungi, mosses and lichens are at their best in the moist, cool conditions. An interesting fungi which is plentiful this year is the Vegetable Caterpillar, *Cordyceps gunnii*. This fungus is found in areas of deep forest litter. It is especially interesting since it is parasitic. One host caterpillar of *C. gunnii* is the larvae of the Swift Moth.

Briefly, the life cycle is as follows: The moths lay their eggs on vegetation or just drop them as they fly. When they hatch the larvae tunnel into the soil. The spores of the fungus are either swallowed by the larvae or they stick to its soft body, germinate and enter the skin by means of a slender tube. Inside the victim's body the fungus multiplies until the whole body is filled with fungal threads (hyphae) which destroy the larvae leaving only the thin shell. When the *Cordyceps* has consumed the host body it develops its club shaped fruiting body. The fungi may reach a depth of 30cms in the soil, depending upon how deeply the host larvae had burrowed.



Information summarized from "Victorian Toadstools and Mushrooms" by J. Willis.

Dharnya excursion:

This was very successful. Thanks go to John Reeve for the organisation.

On the 17th of June a group of Friends went to Barmah State Park. We went on a few walks and looked at some big trees. It was wet underfoot in places. The camp area was great. There was a lot of space. There was a centre called Dharnya. It was full of aboriginal artifacts. There were weapons, stones, canoes and a lot of other things. On the way home we went to Ulupna Island and saw about 20 Koalas. It was fantastic. I had a great time and I'm sure everyone else did.

Thank you Mr Reeve.

Sally Walsh . .

Visit to Dharnya Centre and Barmah State Park

On Saturday 17 June, fifteen Friends and friends of Friends departed Corowa in perfect weather and

traveled to Barmah, After morning tea and a visit to “the smallest bottle shop in Australia” {maximum three Friends at a time, we proceeded to Dharnya and settled into the excellent accommodation.



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The big switch

Australia is richly endowed in sustainable sources of energy – sun and wind.

A lucky country indeed. But we are not so lucky when it comes to having leaders who are prepared to invest in a clean future.

In his book, *The Big Switch*, clean energy for the twenty-first century, Gavin Gilchrist demonstrates there are abundant resources and the technology to use them.

But our politicians and the chiefs of the energy industry are still locked in the coal based technology of the industrial revolution. (The burning of fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – is causing global warming.)

Gilchrist, the national medical and science reporter for ABC TV, writes: 'The energy services we really want from electricity – light, heat, refrigeration, power to move things – can all be provided for less energy.'

'But less energy means less sales and less profits to the power company. And since our power companies are publicly owned that means reduced profits to state governments who use their power authorities as tax collectors.'

Gilchrist believes companies and governments have agreed to an unwritten pact to not promote energy-efficient technologies.

Power companies and governments won't promote clean energy

'Our failure to use them has ensured that all consumers are being over-charged.'

Although electricity is promoted as the 'clean' fuel, over eighty per cent of Australian electricity is generated by burning coal.

The Federal Government has agreed to stabilise greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2000. But the power industry has growth plans for Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

This will take carbon dioxide emission levels to about 29 per cent above the nationally agreed target by 2000.

The book shows that alternative technology already exists. Now the authorities must be forced to adopt them.

In 1994 Australian scientists boasted the development of a world-class solar power station design and the world's best material for solar energy collectors.

They also developed the world's highest performing silicon solar cell, and designed and manufactured world-class electronics essential for the control of renewable energy systems.

All this technology is already being used on a wide scale in America.

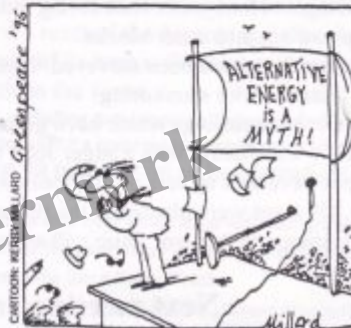
US power companies actually encourage the use of renewable energy resources, and large scale production already exists.

You can lease solar equipment. A number of companies offer up to 50 per cent rebates on the cost of solar hot water systems.

So, why isn't Australia making the big switch?

According to Gilchrist: 'What Australia lacks is governments and power companies which act on behalf of all the community rather than serving narrow sectional interests.'

• *The Big Switch* is published by Allen & Unwin and costs \$16.95



Did you know?

- The wind blowing across south-western West Australia could generate 45 times Australia's total electricity consumption.
- Every day in Australia 15,000 times more energy from the sun strikes the land than we use from all other energy sources.
- The winds of Tasmania could generate two-thirds of the country's needs.

From *The Big Switch*

1. Newsletters

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