

Newsletter 256 November 2016

Description

Friends of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP Newsletter 256 November 2016

Dear Friends,

Well what can I say about last Saturday's weed demolition job at Chiltern Valley No 2 picnic area and the two plantations? Two weeks ago the grasses along the walking track and around the hide area were reasonably low and manageable.

A visit there a week before the meeting day gave us a big shock seeing grasses and the sticky weed, Cleavers, almost as tall as members. An on the spot change of plans for the work day was made and the area is now transformed.

Weeds have been slashed, the chipped area was sprayed by Jan, the guards were removed from the well grown shrubs. The walking track has been slashed making the whole area more user friendly. The older plantation at the front entrance was tackled by Phillip and Richard. A track has been slashed along the boundary to allow access to the dam edge and the interpretive signage has been moved to the end of that track. Guards on the established trees have been removed and will be used elsewhere. Never was the customary bun so well deserved. Well done everyone.

Mid month the *Cryptandra amara* site was fenced off to deprive the browsers of tasty meals. Thanks to Richard and helpers we can now look forward to a 2017 spring display of this very attractive shrub.

The Chocolate Lilies are now fading but the display has been remarkable especially in areas of the Barnawartha block which was burnt. Taking their place in the colour stakes is the lovely blue Diggers Speedwell, another plant which has thrived in the very wet season. Along Depot Road it is creating a great show along with Grass-trigger Plants, purple Finger Flower and bushes of the bright yellow Wedge-pea.





It has been a spring to be remembered.

Bartley's Block

The block is slowly drying out after the heavy rains. Pleasingly the Vinca is dying and the Caper Spurge is under control for the moment. If you see Caper Spurge plants and wish to pull them out please be aware that the milky sap is a skin irritant. Jan's spraying of the thistles and Patterson's Curse in 2015 has resulted in just a few plants being found and easily removed.

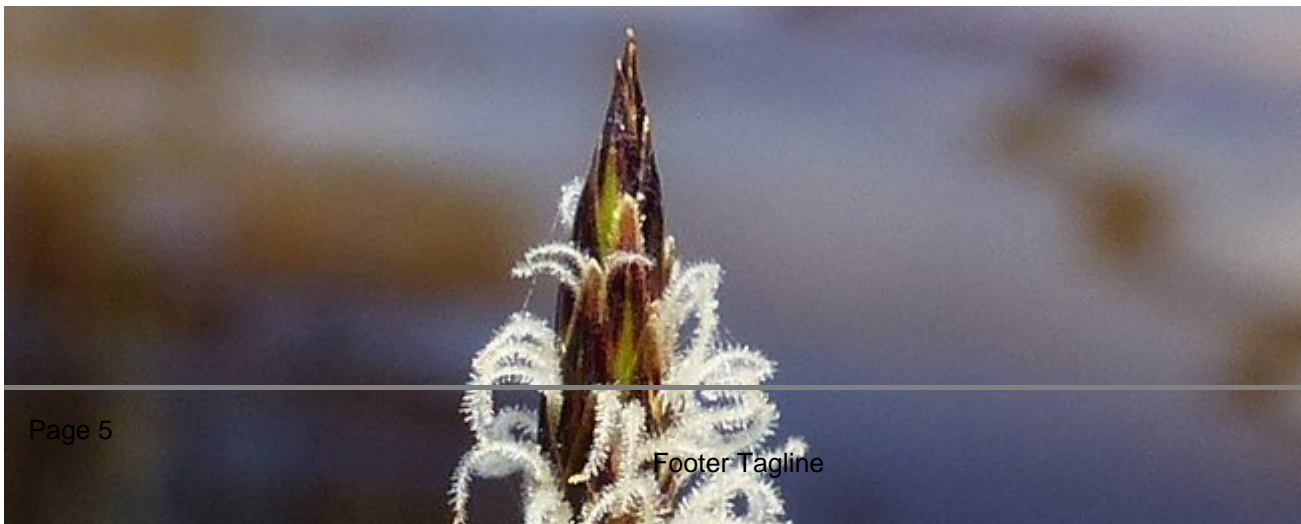


Painted Honeyeaters, Speckled Warblers, Gerygone White-browed Babblers and Rufous Songlarks are some of the birds to be found on the block and adjacent roadside.



The changing seasons from Neil

As spring turns to summer (Sprummer) it is the time for the more inconspicuous flowerings that take place in the Monocotyledons, the grasses, sedges and rushes. However they can be quite intricate in close-up. Neil has offered a selection of photos of native grasses, larger sedges and smaller rushes in flower. All were taken recently in the National Park.





Thank you Neil for this contribution.

Weed report

Mick and Tony have been putting in a constant effort at Mt Ochertyre Bushland Reserve. They have tackled olives, briars and blackberries and the block is now pretty well clean. Major Mitchell who named the hill would be pleased.

Rutherglen Natural Features Reserve

On Saturday October 29th nine of us worked at the reserve. The wet winter and spring produced a forest of milk thistles and weedy grasses. Mick slashed the working area before we began and that made the work much easier. The survival rate of the new plants was great, only two replacements were required. At the southern end of the block fifty extra hop bushes were planted. These plants were donated by Jill Dawson's nursery. The briars and St John's Wort will be sprayed by a Parks contractor as soon as the St John's flowers and can be easily seen. In the enclosure we were thrilled to find over thirty plants of *Pterostylis mutica*, the Black-tip Greenhood.



All were robust and tall and favouring the bare sections. Each was marked with a stake for monitoring in the 2017 season. In winter we trialed four plants of the little pea *Swainsona recta*. Three plants survived and one has and one is setting seed.



Feathertailed Gliders

I found a dead Feathertailed Glider in my garden. It was a female and in perfect condition. It was photographed and sent to Peter Penkhorst, who is a mammal specialist. My crime was to have disposed of it! Here are Peter's comments: I am pretty sure Eileen's animal is the Broad-toed Feathertail I can see broad toepads fairly clearly on a couple of toes and a pale fringe along the tail. Specimens of feathertails are now really valuable as we try to understand the distributions of the two species. Should anyone find a deceased Feathertail please freeze it and make contact with me. It is good to be able to contribute to research.



Records of interest

One Square-tailed Kite was seen just above the canopy adjacent to the park near Red Box Track on 31/10/2016. The only other one observed was at the same place 22/11/2015. The diagnostic pale head and bulls-eyes in wings, square tail and up-swept wings with broad primaries were clearly seen in both cases. A lone Bush-stone Curlew, thought to be a male, was photographed by Simon at one of the Rutherglen wineries. The local ones have disappeared from their haunt at the Research Station.



Thank you Simon for this report

Butterflies

During late October and early November we experienced an explosion of Caper White Butterflies, *Belenois java*. This species is not to be confused with the Cabbage White Butterfly a garden pest of cabbages.



From the ranger's office

Staff have commenced clearing tracks prior to fire season. A number of tracks have been significantly

damaged due to wet weather and will remain closed until they can be repaired. Slashing and mowing for fire protection and maintenance of visitor sites will be undertaken over the next few weeks. Works to construct access to Mt Barambogie have commenced and when completed erection of new fire tower will commence. Contractors have been engaged to undertake spraying of briars and St John's Wort at Grassland block and Rutherglen NCR starting in late November. A compliance program over Melbourne Cup weekend resulted in a number of infringement notices being issued, particularly for dogs in the park. Thank you Brian for this report .

A little bit of history

One hundred and thirty years ago on October 17th 1836 Major Mitchell passed through this area. His party travelled via Castlemaine, Violet Town and Benalla. A cairn marking the event is sited opposite the entrance to Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam. Mitchell and his party passed through what is now known as Cornishtown and climbed the low hill to view the land to the north. Mitchell named this hill 'Mt Ochertyre' after his patron, Sir George Murray, of Ochertyre, Perthshire, Scotland.

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Thanks to Neville the surrounds of the monument were cleared of grass.

Rainfall for September

113.6 mm Year to date: 873.5 mm. An exceptionally wet year indeed.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING SUNDAY DECEMBER 4TH

The year is coming to a close and we will celebrate our year's achievements with a Christmas Tea. The venue for this year's Christmas breakup will be decided closer to the day and will depend upon the weather conditions. BYO food to share, binocs, repellent, chair. Contact in the field 0407 486 480

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The 2017 calendars will cost \$20 plus \$ 9.70 postage This is now the flat rate for ONE calendar countrywide and includes the cost of a padded bag.

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Please add your surname to the transaction.

Advise Neville (neville@nrbartlett.com.au) when you have made the payment so that we can keep track of payments. Thankyou for your support.

Friends Facebook Group now has 255 members

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/556332777763388/>

We are a group of people interested in Chiltern Mt Pilot National Park in North-Eastern Victoria. People can find much more information on the Park, activities of the Friends and membership details at <http://friendsofchiltern.org.au/>

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