

# **THE FIELD NATURALIST**

NEWSLETTER NO. 118: March, 2014.



ALBURY-WODONGA FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB INC.  
Reg. No. A0023416K

## **PROGRAMME: 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2014 – 27<sup>th</sup> JULY 2014**

### **March**

**Sat 8<sup>th</sup>**

#### **West Albury Wetlands & Wonga Wetlands**

Meet 9:30 am Boat Ramp, Kremur St, West Albury.  
BYO refreshments for the day.

Leader – Veronica Robertson, ph: 6021 2120

**Sun 23<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **Corowa Sewage Ponds & Lake Moodemere**

Meet 9:30 am SS&A Club car park, Wilson St,  
Albury.

BYO refreshments for the day.

Leader – Gail Steed, ph: 6032 9874

### **April**

**Sat 12<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Pheasant Creek**

Meet 9.30 am, Acacia Car Park, Hume St, Wodonga.  
BYO refreshments for the day.

Leaders – Bernie & Glenda Datson, ph: 60 208104

**Sun 27<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Winton Wetlands**

Meet 9.30 am, Acacia Car Park, Hume St, Wodonga.  
BYO refreshments for the day.

Leader - Neil Blair, ph: 6021 2097

### **May**

**Sat 10<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Beechworth / Stanley area**

Meet 9:30 am Acacia Car Park, Hume St, Wodonga.  
BYO refreshments for the day.

Leader - Neil Blair, ph: 6021 2097

**Sun 25<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Chiltern State Forest**

Meet 9:30 am Chiltern Post Office.

BYO refreshments for the day.

Leader - Phillip Seely, ph: 60 215 313

### **June**

**Sat 14<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Kentucky Forest**

Meet 9:30am, SS&A Club carpark, Wilson St, Albury.  
BYO refreshments for the day.

Leaders - Phillip Seely, ph: 60 215 313, & Stephanie.

**Sun 29<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Warby Ranges**

Meet 9:30 am Acacia Car Park, Hume St, Wodonga.  
BYO refreshments for the day.

Leader - Neil Blair, ph: 6021 2097

### **July**

**Sat 12<sup>th</sup>:**

#### **Social Outing –lunch (1 pm); Venue TBC**

Meet 10am am Acacia Car Park, Hume St, Wodonga.  
Probably Yackandandah; details to be confirmed.

Veronica Robertson, ph: 6021 2120

**Sun 27<sup>th</sup>:**

#### **Georges Creek**

Meet 10am Cnr Ebdon St & Wodonga Place, Albury.  
BYO refreshments for the day.

#### **PRESIDENT**

Neil Blair  
(02) 6021 2097

#### **VICE PRESIDENT**

Robert Robinson  
(02) 6024 2904

#### **SECRETARY**

Veronica Robertson  
(02) 6021 2120

#### **TREASURER**

David Bird  
(02) 6059 8452

#### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Gail Steed  
(02) 6032 9874  
ggadsteed@aapt.net.au

#### **OTHER COMMITTEE:**

Richard Andrews  
David Coleman  
Stephanie Jakovac  
Phillip Seely

#### **Email:**

[awfnc@yahoo.com.au](mailto:awfnc@yahoo.com.au)

**ANNUAL  
SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
**FAMILY - \$30.00**  
**SINGLE - \$20.00**  
**CONCESSION**  
**\$15.00**

By direct transfer or  
sent to the Treasurer,  
PO. Box 251, Albury,  
2640  
Make cheques payable  
to: Albury-Wodonga  
Field Naturalists' Club  
Inc.

Contributions to this  
newsletter are  
welcome and should  
be emailed as above,  
or posted to the  
Editor, PO Box 251,  
Albury, 2640.

Leader - Phillip Seely, ph: 60 215 313

*Please confirm outing details in Saturday's Border Morning Mail and contact the outing leader in the week prior if you need a lift.*

~~~~~

**Subscriptions are now due & remain as per 2013 (see page 1)**

Many were renewed at AGM. However, for anyone still wanting to support the group or rejoin us this year, please see renewal information on page 1.

**Electronic Payments**

Payments to the club can now be made electronically, so details for those wishing to pay via Internet banking are:

**BSB:** 803 070

**Account No.** 61019

**Account Name:** ALB WOD FIELD NATURALISTS INC

*(Please note, the account name should be written in its abbreviated form as shown)*

**SEANA Notes:** (details can be obtained from Veronica)

**SEANA 2014 Autumn Camp, Marysville: 2-5<sup>th</sup> May**

Hosted by Upper Goulburn FNC.

**SEANA 2014 Spring Camp, Portland: 26-29<sup>th</sup> September**

Hosted by Portland FNC.

~~~~~

Another year has slid into modern history, & a quick review of my last 6 month's efforts has shown a couple of trends – I reliably get to one outing per month & have got lazier with my camera. So your contributions to the newsletter are not only welcome, but essential!

Glenda is recovering well from her recent health scare. We hope she is well on the way to being better than ever & look forward to her & Bernie's company & expertise soon.

As noted at the AGM, our 2013 outings were varied and well-planned. Thanks to everyone involved & I look forward to seeing you all 'en plien air' in 2014. Although the first half program has been compiled, any further suggestions are welcome. A Mt Beauty walk is still on the drawing board, and occasional speakers have also been suggested.

Also, if you come across something of possible interest, please let us know. We try to keep members informed and many of us have been able to enjoy some extra-curricular activities this way.

Perhaps not surprisingly, a hot weather policy has been formulated by the committee. The decision to cancel the outing will be the responsibility of the activity leader and, if needed, other committee members will assist with the notifications.

Once the AGM formalities were over, Neil (our new President) took us through the evolution and geology of Mt Buffalo expanding on our trip during the year and drawing from his accumulated experience. Mt Buffalo has its own water supply & is also a plateau. Its granite boulders and tors have been formed from being worn in two planes and, at 1700 m, is well over the 1000 foot requirement. It has over 600 plant species including 3 which are unique – Fern-leaf Baeckea, Buffalo Sallee and Buffalo Sallow Wattle. Its flora most resembles that of Mt Baw Baw and Neil brought its diversity alive with a 'snapshot' from his collection of slides. So, in consideration of its many varied and accessible walks and its diversity (a richness equal to that of the broader Alps), we are fortunate to have Mt Buffalo on our doorstep.

At Leneva in August last year, we wandered from Boyes Rd along the creek in the Council-owned WRENS block to the DSE-owned block and then through the WRENS block off Castle Creek Rd. This area was planted about 30 years ago by the Albury-Wodonga Corporation. After earlier rain, the frogs sounded like the happiest local residents, but the bird tally was good too. I think a Hooded Robin was seen (although not by me!) and a pair of Speckled Warblers was caught on camera by Peter Spencer. Small birds were quite active, but shy. Just as group debate was becoming animated about which Thornbill we were looking at, he stopped, turned, displayed himself very obviously and flounced off (we clearly needed all the help we could get).



Later in August, the group visited Wonga wetlands. I missed this one; many thanks to Peter Spencer for the photographs. Birds seemed to be the order of the day.

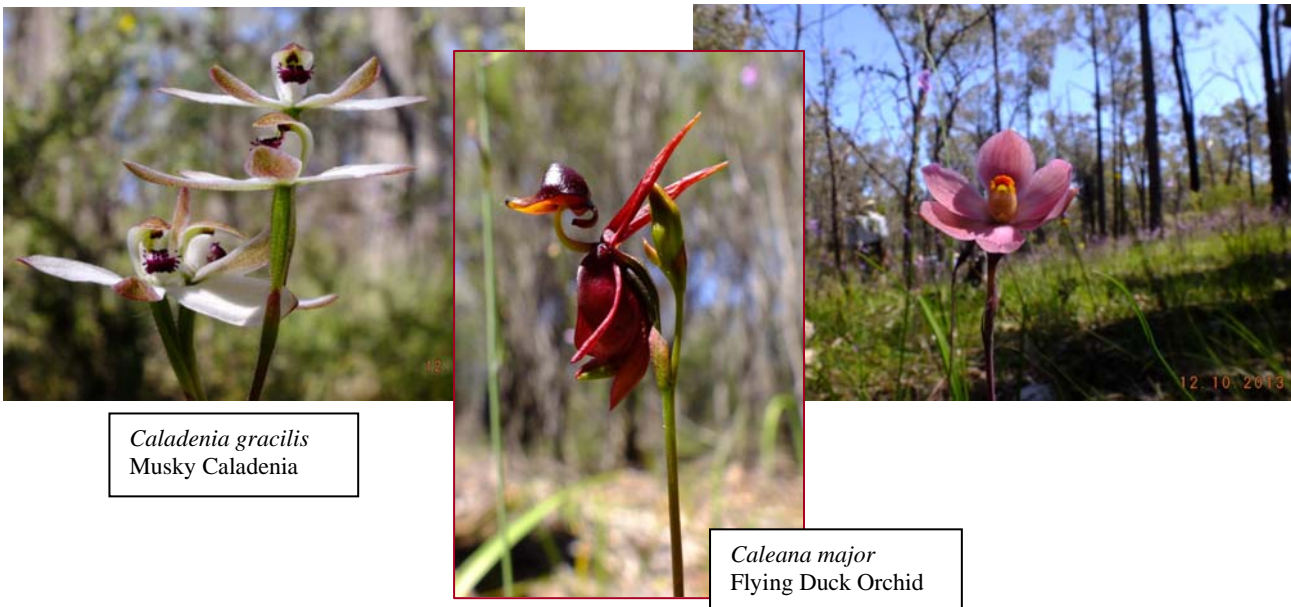


...and then he said.....

Early in September, a small group led by David Coleman explored Faye & Chris McKenzie's 20 ha covented property at Springhurst. It is quite an open, sloped block in a splendid location and has a seepage dam. Birds were quiet but plants noted were *Hibbertia stricta*, Nodding Blue Lilly & Broad-leafed Wattle. We were a little early for the Fairies' Aprons, Chocolate & Vanilla Lily flowers. Thanks to Faye & Chris for sharing their block with us.

In October, the group spent the day at the Chiltern /Mt Pilot National Park led by Phillip & Neil, while I ventured westward to Numurkah for my first SEANA Spring camp, hosted by the Broken Creek Field Naturalist Club. The activities were varied and included River Redgum forest & swamp, Murray River wetlands & river cruising, Barmah Lake, a Cadell Fault tour, birding at Wyuna Reserve.... There was something for everyone really & the trick was choosing! The company was good, organisation & food were excellent and I now know a bit more about what's on my doorstep (as well as how to pronounce Wunghnu). The river level was high and birdlife along the banks was scarce, however, the compensation was seeing numerous raptors and water birds. My highlights were a wonderful, leisurely viewing of superb parrots, spotting a Rufous Songlark, seeing the the Peron's Tree Frog up close, and an unexpected sighting of a bush stone curlew pair. They were unexpectedly spotted on private property en-route to an outing, and created a lot of excitement for both locals & visitors. (How anyone could see them from a moving car, I have no idea)

And as you can see from just a few of Peter Spencer's photos below, the native spring orchids at Chiltern forest were stunning.



The Little Desert trip was next up, organised by Glenda & Bernie Datson. Dick Andrews sent a few of his photos showing some of the diversity seen.



We headed to cooler country in November, and explored Mt Big Ben on a joint outing with Kiewa Landcare group, again organised by Glenda & Bernie Datson. We were shown some of the various Ecological Vegetation Classes of the area and were accompanied by Belinda, Jenny, Paul & Pam. It was a really interesting day – all new territory for me. The plants and floral displays were particularly abundant, as can be seen in the photographs below.



*Viola betonicifolia*



Caper White Butterfly



*Chiloglottis valida*  
Common Bird Orchid



Near the end of the day Peter noticed an 'asparagus' plant emerging. Neil identified it as a Yellow Hyacinth Orchid, which is listed as Threatened in Victoria, and its location was recorded. Unfortunately, when Neil and Phillip returned a fortnight later, they found a hungry herbivore had eaten the top off. Maybe next year it will get a chance to flower...

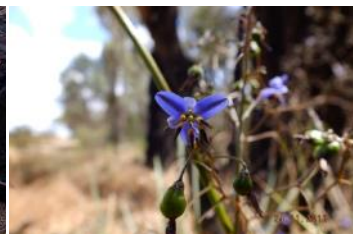


A Chiltern Box Ironbark/Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Parks trip led by Neil, found many more spring flowers & colourful regrowth (photos provided by Peter Spencer & Dick Andrews).

Blue Finger Flower



Post fire regrowth



Late-flowering Dianella  
*Dianella tarda*



Blue Pincushion



Fairies' Aprons

Our last activity for 2013 was organised by Neil and well-attended. Again Mt Buffalo didn't disappoint. First stop Eurobin Falls, and the very pretty Ladies Bath where the cicadas were deafening and a Flycatcher was spotted on her nest. A 'Christmas' lunch at Lake Catani was followed by the Lakeside walk. Not only were the various plant communities fascinating, an interesting range of insects, fungi & aquatic mammals presented themselves.



Water Rat & unidentified butterfly (Jan Heywood)



Royal Grevillea



Stinkhorn



Green Satin Forest Moth



the pack in action...

[Not only have I run out of paper, I've run out of puff. The 2014 Falls Creek trip will wait until the next newsletter Ed].

Just before I close however, Bernie has compiled the following tribute in memory of May Pagenstecher.

### **Vale May Pagenstecher.**

**26.2.1918 - 22.10.2013**



On a hot summer's day in 1985 I was bird watching in the hills at the top of Centaur Road, Lavington not observing much and wondering if I was not perhaps a bit mad, lonely loitering as I was on such a day. Then, to my great surprise I encountered a lady sitting on a log and wearing binoculars. Another bird watcher!

After discussing the paucity of our feathered friends she gave me some advice. Sit down and let the birds come to you she said. Before long she alerted me to a single high pitched sound and said "that's a Diamond Firetail". I had met May Pagenstecher, and from that day shared many enjoyable hours with her and members of the Field Naturalists, the club she encouraged me to join.

In memory of May it is hoped the following will help to better appreciate the life's experiences that were hers.

May was born on the 26th February 1918 at Glenellen on Dead Horse Creek near Jindera to Carl and Anna. Her earliest memories were of life around a kerosene lamp, sometimes wearing odd shoes to school, having much memory work to do and getting a celloid doll when about twelve. May was the second last of a large family and as such remembers being "as jealous as anything" when her only younger sister Alice was born and being "really naughty" for a long time until Alice started to play with her. One early big event for May was a trip to the weir in her older brother Eddie's car, a big change from horse and cart travel.

While May's father was a teacher at the Lutheran School the family relied on picking cherries and prunes in Jindera orchards. May remembered being paid sixpence a pound for cherries and was proud to have made earnings of nearly six pounds in her first season. May worked in a number of domestic situations and in fact in 1934 was working for a policeman in Gerogery who was working on the pyjama girl case. May's experiences were quite diverse and ranged from preparing food for shearers (and even on occasions filling in for a 'missing' rouseabout) to caring for the newly born on various properties. The bush fires we experience today were by May's accounts very much also a thing of the past. During WW2 she remembers having to leave a house with "what we could carry or cram into prams". On that occasion the servicemen whose families were affected were honorably discharged to come home and rebuild. Moving away from home May ventured to Queensland picking peanuts at Kingaroy and again displaying her flexibility, worked as a domestic for 'people of higher society'.

Due to her Mum's ill health May returned home as a domestic at St. Paul's Lutheran School where she started cleaning dormitories and, as we would expect by now, finishing as head cook. On the move again May worked as Deputy Matron in a girls' home (Murray Vale Shalem College) where years before she had been a cook. Deservedly May was offered a job caring for a wealthy widower at Tallangatta on a beef cattle property where she had the pleasure of chauffeuring her boss in a Rolls Royce, accompanying him to Newmarket and other shows, where he sometimes "topped the sales". Not to be outdone May herself won a show championship award for her jam, jellies and cookery. Current practices on Field Nats outings are for us to try and outdo each other with afternoon tea delights and I'm sure this can be traced back to May's efforts in the 80s and 90s.

May returned from Tallangatta (without a Rolls Royce I'm afraid) and took up a flat near the Lutheran Rest Home where she often (as was her nature) helped in the hostel and kitchen. She became more heavily involved in the School for Seniors and the Field Nats Club.

By now May's spare time was spent "fishing and visiting the haunts of my beloved feathered friends, the birds of the Albury area, my favourite hobby".

May spent her final years at Dellacourt until 22 October 2013. May was mentally and physically active over many decades. She had great memories to share as for example, as a child in Culcairn, seeing a group of Crimson Chats hopping along a street gutter and later seeing Pied and Black Honeyeaters at Jindera. May is sadly missed by the Field Nats. She is survived by numerous god children, nieces, nephews and greats!

Bernard Datson  
(with thanks to May's niece, Stephanie Hanckel).