



November 1, 2013

From the President *Rachel Faggetter*



Challenging the brain is currently very popular. We are urged to use our minds more quickly and efficiently. Many programs to lift brain performance in memory, flexibility and concentration are available on the web. ABC-TV's recent program *Redesigning the Brain* demonstrated that there can be remarkable and rapid improvements, even though you might need access to the Institute of Sport and highly specialised help for best results!

I have been remembering the 'Speed and Accuracy' tests we did in primary school. Early in the morning we had to focus our brains on numbers and spelling. This was followed by show and tell which involved nature study and specimens brought in for identification and close examination. I remember what fun it was to draw and paint an Emperor Gum Moth caterpillar, vivid green with tufts of yellow and red bristles. It certainly concentrated mind and hand.

Being out in the bush at this time of year provides strong challenges to my ageing brain: the exacting memory work of plant names, speed and accuracy of bird identification, close observation of renewal and change, and the stimulation of all the senses: sight, sound and smell. And what a privilege to do this mind training in tandem with the joy of physical exercise in beautiful surroundings.

Yes, bush walking is good for the brain, especially at this time of year.

It is a powerful, and beautiful, challenge for the mind.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR

In 2009 we were very concerned to find the South African Weed Orchid *Disa bracteata* growing on the roadside verge in Fraser Ave, Anglesea. This was the first record of this invasive exotic weed orchid in the Anglesea district. It is unknown how it arrived there, possibly as a result of vehicles carrying seed from infested areas or on clothing of people who may have walked in infested areas. It first appeared in South Australia in 1988 spreading rapidly in the 1990's. It is believed to have escaped from orchid enthusiasts who were cultivating it as a curiosity. It was first recorded in Victoria near Bacchus Marsh in 1991. This year it has unfortunately appeared in the Great Otway National Park at Grey River where we estimate over 1000 orchids are growing in the cleared powerline easement. It looks as though it may have been growing there for a few years as it certainly has colonised. We have also had reports from Portreath Road (not in the Park area), Bells Beach and a few back in the original site at Fraser Avenue.

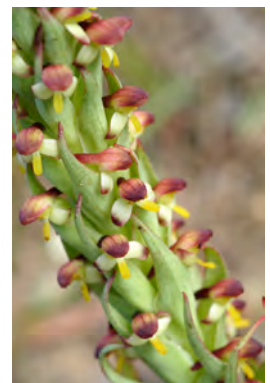
It is a stout perennial, terrestrial orchid with underground tubers, growing usually to about 30cm tall. It bears a flower spike which bears up to 60 closely packed tiny brown and green flowers with a prominent bright yellow labellum.



It has many attributes which allow it to successfully colonise outside its natural range.

These include:-

- the ability to self pollinate
- each plant can produce vast numbers of microscopic seeds which are readily dispersed over many kilometres by wind, and remain viable for up to seven years.
- its seeds are easily picked up on clothing and equipment.
- it is suited to a wide range of habitats from paddocks to bushland, grassland and native heathland, but is more often associated with disturbed areas.



The best treatment to eradicate South African Weed Orchids is to dig up the tuber and incinerate the entire plant. The large infestation at Grey River is being treated with herbicide by Parks Vic. Staff. We have been advised that this method may keep this aggressive intruder under control.

Please keep a watchful eye as you walk the tracks in the National Park or other areas and inform us if you find this 'unwelcome visitor' to our area.

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

MAMMAL SURVEY & WALK IN THE PARK

Grassy Creek

Saturday, November 16

9.30am – 2.00pm

Meet at Aireys Inlet Hall at 9.30am (Bring morning tea and lunch)

Contact: Lachie 5289 7029

Please note change of venue from Proposed Program of Events



We intend placing our four remote night time cameras in the Grassy Creek area where we have previously identified Long-nosed Bandicoots and Bush Rats. We have recently purchased a Reconnyx White Flash camera that we believe will help with obtaining clearer pictures.

Having placed the cameras, Lachie has agreed to leading us on the walk to Kelsall's Rock. The walk starts at Grassy Creek and then the track climbs for a couple of kilometres until we reach Kelsall's Rock, from where great views can be gained across the ridges. It is a steep climb, but is not difficult, and we will take it slowly. There will be an option after reaching Kelsall's Rock to continue along a rough track to the back of Big Hill where some cars will be positioned to take people back to Grassy Creek. This extended walk will add an extra 4 km to the walk.

END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Saturday, December 14

Combined activity with ANGAIR Inc.

Meet at the Moggs Creek Picnic Ground at 10.00am.

Short walk around the Moggs Creek circuit track where there is always a wealth of flora and many birds to observe or hear.

If you don't wish to participate in the walk, just come along to the Picnic Ground and join us for lunch at 12 noon.

Meat, sauce and bread provided.

Bring your own salads, sweets, drinks, plates, glasses, cutlery and fold-up chair.



We would love to see you there. Contact Kaye: 5263 2011

HEATHLAND ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDING

Our regular environmental weeding will remain on the Anglesea Heathlands for the summer months on the 2nd Tuesday of each month – 9.30am-11.00am. We will give ourselves a well-deserved holiday in January.

Our focus will be the Coast/Sallow Wattle that has grown as a result of the 2007 control burn. We have been working in the area for the past few months and it is a delight to see the quality of the heathland that we are now protecting.

Meet at corner of O'Donohue Road and Great Ocean Road at 9.30am Following all of these sessions we will visit one of the local coffee shops in Anglesea. We would certainly welcome some more helpers.

Contact Margaret 5289 6326

November 12 December 10 February 11

AN EARLY DIARY ENTRY

Annual General Meeting

Sunday, February 9 at 2pm ANGAIR Natural History Centre

McMillan St ANGLESEA



INFORMATION REGARDING FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

August 17 **Kalimna Falls Walk** *(Report by Joe Bolza)*

In an unusual brief lull during a particularly windy and wintry week, providence beamed blue skies and calm for the 16 participants on the Kalimna Falls walk.



A sunlit dappled track with plenty of puddles to negotiate formed the track alongside the Sheoak Creek. Some historical signs, a couple of tramway track remnants and several cuttings were a reminder that the route was used in the late 1800s for transporting timber to the Lorne Pier. Now the Eucalypts have regrown stately and tall, amongst the lucky few remaining wide girth survivors of that period. With the benign weather it made sense to head for the Upper Kalimna Falls first. Some slippery sections near the Falls particularly on the rubber matting were a definite hazard. However the walk was worthwhile as there was plenty of water flowing over the Cascades, picturesquely situated in a forest of ferns.

Lunch was taken in the extraordinary dry undercut cave of the Lower Kalimna Falls. Essentially we sat behind the waterfall itself, watching its flow into the rockpool below, the water so plentiful that its roar made either silence or shouting the only alternative to chatting. On the return trip, there were two antechinus sightings. The first was fleeting, and possibly identified as a Swamp Antechinus. The second was seen by the entire group, a Dusky Antechinus that stayed for several minutes on the side of the track, allowing lots of photographs to be taken. There was speculation that it was a male, post mating and late in its short life cycle.



The final leg of the 9km walk was along an alternative track back to the cars. This was a puddle-free stretch of old tramway with wonderful views high above the Little Sheoak Creek below. Later that afternoon, with everyone safely back home, the wind and rain returned in full force.

Saturday, September 21 & Sunday, September 22 **ANGAIR Wildflower Weekend**

Thanks to those members of the Friends' Group who helped with the preparation and implementation of the Friends' display at the ANGAIR Wildflower weekend.

We were very proud of the display that featured the birds of the Anglesea River and nearby Heathlands where we have implemented a Caring for our Country project over the past few years. The photos were taken by Marg Lacey, a bird photographer from Aireys Inlet.

The display attracted many visitors who were keen to share their bird experiences with us, and also often to endeavour to identify birds that may have visited their own areas.



It was pleasing to hear just how many people are providing bird baths for our feathered friends in their gardens.

September 17 & October 1

Caladenia maritima Surveys

As in previous years, two surveys were carried out to determine the population of this endemic orchid that is now included under the Victorian Flora & Fauna Guarantee Listing.

Our survey results for this year indicated a presence of 1208 flowering plants. Last year we counted 1272 orchids.

The results were very similar as we felt that the very windy conditions this year would have caused some orchids to have been destroyed, and therefore not counted in the surveys. The orchid population is very healthy, but it is a bit worrying that we know only of this one population that is endemic to the Anglesea district.

We have had a few reports of other observations in the district but the orchids have turned out to be *Caladenia catenata* White Fingers. This orchid does not have the labellum heavily stained and barred with purple.



Mammal Surveys

Mammal surveys using our remote cameras and sometimes hairtubes are usually carried out following Committee meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. We are always pleased to welcome any people interested in our indigenous fauna to participate in these activities. Over the last few months we have visited the Anglesea River Site where we have carried out our Caring for our Country Grant project over the last two years. We have captured images of Black Wallabies, Echidnas, Fox, Blue Wren, Shrike Thrush, Rabbit, and possibly a Southern Brown Bandicoot. We are hoping our new camera equipment will make identification easier.

Wildflower Walk in Brisbane Ranges Saturday, October 19

Despite a few hiccups in the preparation for our wildflower walk, the visit to the Brisbane Ranges was certainly one to remember. We had hoped to meet up with some of the Friends of Brisbane Ranges, and that they would join us as our guides, but this was not able to happen. Failing this, we decided that a small group of Friends of Eastern Otways would attend the Brisbane Ranges Flower Show on Sunday, October 13 and use that occasion to determine the program for our visit. But this did not really prove worthwhile, as the large bus we joined was not able to go on the smaller tracks, and the wind, rain and hail we experienced did not really help with viewing flowers. However Judy Locke, Ranger from the Brisbane Ranges helped us to plan our forthcoming visit.

Saturday, October 19 was just a perfect day – and an absolutely ideal day for showing off the beautiful landscape and flowers of this special part of Victoria, and the 17 members who came along could not help but be impressed with what they saw. Although we were able to identify many of the flowers, we were pleased we had the publication “*Wildflowers of the Brisbane Ranges*” by Clive and Merle Trigg that helped us to identify unfamiliar species. In the morning we stayed in the southern section of the Park near the Ballan Road. We were most impressed with the display of Fringed Everlasting *Chrysocephalum baxteri* and Dwarf Bush-pea *Pultenaea humilis* that were growing in profusion along some of the tracks. We do have a small colony of the beautiful Fringed Everlasting that grows near Forest Road but it is very rare in our area.

After lunch we drove up to the northern section of the Park and were just ‘blown away’ with the display of landscape and flowers. *Grevillea steiglitziana* Brisbane Ranges *Grevillea* (looking very similar to our *Grevillea infecunda*) was in full flower along the roadside. The Massed Bush-pea *Pultenaea pedunculata* and the Dwarf bush Pea *P. humilis* spread out along the inhospitable terrain.

The display of *Baekia ramosissima* ssp. *ramosissima* (now *Euromyrtus*) amongst the rocky landscape was just one of the highlights of this section.

We could have stayed much longer admiring the flowers, but it was time for us to return to our own beautiful part of the world.

Most likely what we envy most is the lack of environmental weeds in the Brisbane Ranges. The maritime climate and coastal soils of our district certainly encourage weed growth.

But what would we do with our time if we didn't have weeds to attack?



GENERAL INFORMATION

Caring for our Country Community Environment Grant 2013-14

We are very pleased to inform you that we were successful with our grant application for additional Federal funding of \$8500 to continue work in the Heathy Woodland and Riparian Woodland restoration adjacent to Anglesea River where we have been concentrating our efforts over the past few years.

We managed to have a contractor working on removal of Coast Wattle/Hybrid Wattle while it was still in flower so we are hoping that we have now removed the majority of this aggressive environmental weed. We will organise some combined working bees in autumn 2014 to concentrate on any areas that are still in need of our care.

Platypus SPOT

The platypus is one of Australia's most amazing animals. Unfortunately there is growing evidence that its numbers are declining.



Citizen Science for Platypus Conservation has invited a number of community environmental groups including Friends of Eastern Otways to contribute to their new SPOT website. The website uses citizen science to improve the understanding of platypus distribution and occurrence while at the same time raising awareness of some of the conservation issues facing platypuses. We have been asked to forward the following information to our members.

We're calling on everyone to keep an eye out for the elusive platypus in their local waterways and get involved in the new community driven platypusSPOT.org

We're asking everyone to play a role in the conservation of this iconic species. If you've been lucky enough to see a platypus, jump onto the new website (www.platypusSPOT.org) and let us know.

This website allows you to submit your sightings, upload a photo, view sightings in your local area, learn about platypuses, and interact with other 'platypusSPOTers'. Your information will contribute to a better understanding of platypus distribution and enable more effective conservation of this unique Australian animal. Follow us on Twitter: @platypusSPOT

Koalas need your urgent help

Each year as you would be aware the Friends of Eastern Otways carry out surveys of the koala population at Grey River. Over the years we have watched the woodlands of the Great Ocean Road gradually dying. The underlying causes are many and varied but the result is that unless some action is quickly taken to restore the balance, the chance to do so will have disappeared.

The Conservation Ecology Centre at Cape Otway is endeavouring to turn the tide – to change the future for koalas from swathes of old dying trees to healthy, diverse woodland ecosystems. They intend planting new forests next autumn and winter as well as coming up with ways to efficiently conserve and restore more habitat, and also research the underlying causes so that they can address them most effectively.

If you would like to help in planting days or make a gift to help in this important work you can contact the Centre on the following email or mailing address:

Conservation Ecology Centre lizzie@conservationecologycentre.org

Conservation Ecology Centre
635 Lighthouse Road
Cape Otway, VIC 3233

*Friends of Eastern Otways wish you and your family
a safe and happy holiday season.
We thank you for your help in 2013 and
look forward to your continued support
in 2014.*



We hope to see you at Moggs Creek on December 14



04/11/13

Hello Friends of Eastern Otways,

With our budgets finalised at the start of October staff have been busy working to get projects underway. A number of notable works completed, underway or planning commenced include the following:

Visitor facilities

Campground toilets: The toilet facilities at Allenvale, Hammonds and Big Hill campgrounds have had ongoing issues with regard to water leaking into the storage tanks, requiring regular pumping. To replace the tanks (as has been done at other sites across the state where they have had similar issues) would cost a significant amount so Darren Balderas has been working with a local plumber to address the issue through drainage works. These works will be complete by the busy summer season.

Ironbark Gorge walking track: Following the damage sustained to one of the bridges along the Ironbark Gorge walking track, the temporary re-alignment that was put in place to allow for the track to be reopened has now become permanent and the bridge removed. After assessment by experienced staff Sam Griffiths and Lachie Davis, and with approval from Frank Gleeson, it was decided that a bridge at this location was not warranted and a few stone steps have been installed in its place. Staff will continue to monitor the new crossing but in the long term this outcome will be more financially sustainable yet still provide a safe and enjoyable experience for walkers.

Erskine Falls handrail: stainless-steel wire balustrading has been installed along two sections of the Erskine Falls handrail to tie in with the stone step upgrade that was completed earlier this year. The next part of this project will be to replace the three seats along the track down to the falls, install further balustrading behind some of the seats and replace the sign acknowledging Bruce Waller. Michael Smith will be overseeing the replacement of Bruce's sign and will be liaising with the Friends on this project.

Walking track clearing: This season has seen an ongoing challenge of keeping the tracks clear of debris and fallen trees due to the frequent strong winds and wet conditions. Sam Griffiths was the lucky one who was called in to remove this giant along the Cora Lynn walking track – the visitors who reported it weren't kidding when they said it was a big tree.



Sam assessing tree along Cora Lynn



The master has completed his work

A contractor has also been engaged to commence the annual clearing of some of the tracks around Lorne. Whilst park staff keep the tracks clear of fallen trees, the annual contractor clearing is particularly valuable around Lorne where the wetter conditions often mean vegetation growth requires treatment with a brush-cutter to ensure the tracks don't become over-grown.

Otway Eden

New *Disa bracteata* infestation located

Darren Phieler and Pat Borgia were out working around a burn block near Kennett River when they noticed a plant that looked 'out of place' along the powerline easement, so they took a photo and showed me when they were back at the Lorne depot. Turns out their instincts were correct and Marg, plus others, confirmed that the plant was the South African Weed Orchid (*Disa bracteata*). Marg and myself visited the site on 9 October and determined that the infestation was too large for hand removal, and will require spraying. Despite our disappointment at the size of the infestation it was still a very important discovery due to its location and the implications for further spreading via slashing machinery. Thanks to Darren and Pat for reporting this new infestation.

O'Donohue Pest Plant Protocol Monitoring Plots

Following the data analysis of the Coast Wattle surveys conducted as part of the O'Donohue Pest Plant Protocol Monitoring, mulching of the remaining Coast Wattle is proposed for November. The only plots that will not be mulched are the hand weeded plots that are being treated by the Friends of Eastern Otways and the plots that have been previously mulched. Peter Hay is waiting for drier conditions at the site prior to scheduling the mulching and will keep the Friends informed as to when the works are scheduled.

Thank you from the East Otways staff

And finally, as we head towards the festive season, once again from Parks Victoria and all the East Otways staff we'd like to extend a sincere thank you to all the members of the Friends of Eastern Otways for the commitment and passion you show towards the Great Otway National Park and Anglesea Heath (not to mention the marine parks!). The contribution you all make is invaluable and the parks are in much healthier condition because of your work.

Wishing you all the best for the festive season and we hope to see you all at the end of year celebration BBQ 14 December.

Take care and enjoy the park.

Katrina

ANGAIR WILDFLOWER WEEKEND September 21 & 22, 2013



The Friends' display featured birds from the Anglesea River and Nearby Woodlands where we have implemented a Caring for our Country project over the past few years.

Photography by Marg Lacey