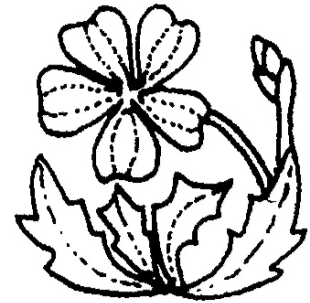


The Ballarat Naturalist

November 2008



Trailing Goodenia
Goodenia lanata
(Club Logo)

**VICTORIAN SCHOOL OF FORESTRY HERBARIUM
DR TINA BELL**



Dr Tina Bell is a Fire Ecologist in the Department of Forest and Ecosystem Science at the University of Melbourne campus at Creswick. In addition to her work in fire ecology she has taken on a project to 'sort out' the herbarium which fortunately still exists at Creswick. In her address she provided some background to the School of Forestry at Creswick and spoke about what she has discovered as a result of her work with the herbarium.

In 1907 the Forests Act established the State Forests Department in Victoria which led to the purchase of a doctor's residence at Creswick and the formation of the School of Forestry with the first six students in 1910. In 1973 the School of Forestry and the Faculty of Agriculture, Melbourne University merged forming a new Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry. In 2008 the faculty was named Melbourne School of Land and Environment having had other titles in the meantime but always having a presence at Creswick. More details of the history of forestry education at Creswick are on the website: <http://www.landfood.unimelb.edu.au/dean/book2/ch7.html>

The Creswick site over the years has built up a herbarium which currently is estimated to have between 10,000 and 15,000 specimens covering 2,500 to 3,000 species. This includes 115 acacias and 260 eucalypts. Specimens include native and weed plants with examples from all states. It is described as an exsiccate collection which means specimens are preserved by being dried. As a comparison, the School of Botany at the University of Melbourne has about 100,000 specimens.

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The herbarium has material collected by notable botanists including Ferdinand

von Mueller, Jim Willis, H B Williamson, J H Siemens and Winifred B Wright, better known as Winty Calder. There are also many student collections from the 1970s and 1980s. Although many specimens were remounted between 1969 and 1975 with the loss of some information and at times the collection has been ignored, it still exists and consequently preserves some interesting historical work which in other places may have been lost.

The von Mueller material is part of the examples which were distributed to places of education. Her had a network of collectors across Victoria including Daniel Sullivan who was a teacher at Moyston. Three volumes of specimens were published. The first volume had 50 sheets per copy, all original specimens showing flowers and fruit with scientific name, authority, publication of first description family and order. Forty three copies were distributed but they didn't all have the same specimens. In our area copies were sent to the Ballarat Mechanics Institute which still has its copy, Ballarat East Public Library, Sebastopol Mechanics Institute, Ballarat German Association and the Creswick Mechanics Institute which later went to the School of Forestry. Volume 2 was published in 1875 and went to the same places. Volume 3 came out in 1876. Thirty three copies were distributed but not to the same places. Copies were distributed as a result of written requests and as well as Victorian locations they went to USA, India and Germany.

Jim Willis was a student at the Victorian School of Forestry from 1927 to 1930. He wrote a "Synopsis of Indigenous Plants Occurring within 10 miles of Creswick, Victoria, Australia". Some of Jim Willis's original notebooks still exist and an honours student has put much of the data from these into an electronic database. Information about Jim Willis is on the website: <http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/guides/will/will.htm>

H B Williamson lived from 1860 to 1931 and contributed specimens to the Creswick herbarium between 1899 and 1918. It was Williamson who discovered a *Grevillea* in the Grampians which was described by von Mueller as *Grevillea williamsonii*. See <http://asgap.org.au/APOL2/jun96-4.html> for more information on this unusual plant. A note about Williamson can be found at the site: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/biography/williamson-herbert.html>

In addition to those already mentioned other collectors with specimens in the herbarium at Creswick include Edwin J Siemens (Principal from 1927 to 1951), Alfred J Lesley, Kevin Tolhurst and many other lecturers and students.

The herbarium is well worth preserving as a source of valuable scientific and historical information. It was very interesting to hear the herbarium still exists and is being valued. Appreciation of Tina's work and presentation was expressed by the members.

Peter Dalman

EXCURSION TO MT. BECKWITH RESERVE LEADER: JOHN GREGURKE

We had a somewhat momentous departure for this excursion as we left from our new meeting place at the Horticultural Centre carpark. On our way to Mt. Beckwith the countryside appeared fresh and green even though the rainfall for September had been the lowest on record for most parts of Victoria. We entered the reserve from the Eastern side via Mountain Creek Road.

Mountain Road Gate

Our first stop was just inside the gate where John outlined both the geological history and the more recent known items of the history of settlement. In Devonian times (400 million years ago) magma pushed up into the overlying deep-seated Ordovician rock and cooled slowly to form the large-crystalline rock, granite. Many eras of erosion of the overlying Ordovician rocks eventually revealed the granite rock and the mountain, Mt Beckwith and other granite mountains in the district. Then 2 million years ago basalt, from eruption points near Clunes flowed along low-lying areas such as valleys displacing the creeks to their edges of the flows to form what is known as *lateral streams*. Erosion of a lateral stream between the basalt and granite can be seen as you approach Mt Beckwith along Mountain Creek Road. In recent times, pockets of granite sands, formed by erosion of the granite in the reserve, were mined consequently leaving excavations. These, in better days are filled with water to form a number of dams both large and small.

The altitude of Mt. Beckwith is 634 metres when this is not increased by human construction of piles of stones on the summit!

John began the recent history with the note that in the 18th Century about 200-250 people of the tribe, Dja Dja Wrung populated the mountain and the surrounding area of 15 600 square kilometres. They called the mount *Nananook* or *Korerpunbrlite Gudidji*. The first white man's note of the area was from Major Mitchell when he passed through the area, Lexton to Dunach, 10km NW, in 26 September, 1836, describing it as "... being well-covered with trees". Two days earlier he named the mountain, now known as Mt Misery, Mt Beckwith (named after military colleague Gen/Col. Thomas Sydney Beckwith).

Misinterpretation by early settlers led to the location of Mt 'Beckworth' being set 13 km to the north-east.

In 1918 five *Pinus radiata* were planted on the summit and four were later cut down in 1945 to make way for an aerial survey beacon. The remaining pine had its lower branches trimmed to form the well-known, *lollypop tree* which can be seen up to 50 km away.

Other plantations included those of Pine, Black Wattle and Cork Oak. Before 1962 the Reserve was grazed, quarried and logged but then these activities ceased because of their degrading effects on the fragile granitic soils. At this first stop

we had hoped to see a variety of birds but we were disappointed. But we did hear and see a few including the Pallid Cuckoo, Yellow-tufted H E, Long-billed Corella, Fuscous H E and White-browed Wood Swallow.

For the plants sighted in this spot, including two orchids refer to the list. Because of the drought the trees looked stressed and a Long-leaved Box was covered with galls which when cut open showed the grub in its home. Growing on another Box was a mistletoe whose fruit is the feed for the Painted H E.

Manna Gums Picnic Area

On the way to this picnic area we stopped to examine a Sydney Golden Wattle which had been mentioned on Gardening Australia as once being a source of detergent for the indigenous people living around Sydney.

After morning tea we strolled through the bush and saw more flowers here than at the first spot. In fact we came upon a meadow of Blue Squills or Stars (*Chameascilla corymbosa*). Its colour, shape and the twilling lines on the bud explained the reasons for the common names. The Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpus cressiformis*) was in bud with only one ripe red fruit available for tasting. Refer to the list for other plants seen at this spot. When we returned to the picnic area we lunched at the table provided or in the nearby shade.

The Dam

At this next spot little water could be seen in the large dam, a mining for granite-sand excavation and possibly the source of water for the black wallaby we saw jumping through the bush. Other fauna we saw included a Wood White butterfly and a well-camouflaged lizard with the colouring of the surrounding litter and a very long tail. Hopefully Elizabeth Thurgood will be able to name it for us.

Again we came across meadows of flowers but this time they were filled with Waxlip Orchids (*Glossodia major*). These were all shades of mauve from very pale to deep purple. Some distance away John found a nearly white one which is not too surprising as albino specimens are seen in this area.

The Cork plantation

On the way to this spot John spotted a Little Eagle and we stopped to examine a Daphne Heath (*Brachyloma daphnoides*) in flower. We were then close to many Drooping Sheoaks (*Allocasuarina verticillata*). John pointed out that this tree is dioecious, having the male and female flowers on separate trees so that the woody cones form only on the female trees. The male trees are easily distinguished by the orange anthers which give the tree an orange colouration at flowering time.

(contd. P.6)

Our final observation was made when we parked near the cork trees and examined the very thick old cork bark. Bill Murphy then expressed our thanks to John for his leadership for the day and the sharing of his knowledge with us. Of course there were others who also shared their knowledge and experience, including Bill himself.

We made our way out of the reserve via a few farm gates and eventually passed

Mt. Beckworth Scenic Reserve Plant List - Some of the plants noted, Oct 5, 2008

East gate area

<i>Pinus radiata</i>	Monterey Pine
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Sweet Bursaria
<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	Hedge Wattle
<i>Glossodia major</i>	Waxlip Orchid
<i>Drosera glanduligera</i>	Scarlet Sundew
<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Black Wattle
<i>Eucalyptus gonio-calyx</i>	Long-leaf Box
<i>Hydrocotyle laxiflora</i>	Stinking Pennywort
<i>Caladenia phaeoclavata</i>	Brown-clubbed Spider
<i>Chamaescilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Stars
<i>Thysanotus patersonii</i>	Twining Fringe Lily
<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	Yellow Box

The Dam Area

<i>Thelymitra antennifera</i>	Rabbit Ears
<i>Wahlenbergia stricta subsp. stricta</i>	Tall Bluebell
<i>Drosera peltata subsp. auriculata</i>	Tall Sundew
<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>	Nodding Greenhood
<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman
<i>Diuris pardina</i>	Leopard Orchid
<i>Tetralix ciliata</i>	Pink Bells
<i>Calochilus robertsonii</i>	Purple Beard Orchid
<i>Gonocarpus tetragynus</i>	Common Raspwort
<i>Pimelea humilis</i>	Common Rice-flower
<i>Brachyloma daphnoides</i>	Daphne Heath
<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>	Drooping Sheoak

Manna Gums Picnic area

<i>Acacia longifolia</i>	Sydney golden Wattle
<i>Diuris lanceolata</i>	Golden Moths
<i>Leptospermum continentale</i>	Prickly Teatree
<i>Acacia laracillata</i>	
<i>Xanthorrhoea minor subsp. lutea</i>	Small Grass-tree
<i>Dianella laevis</i>	Pale Flax Lily
<i>Wurmbea dioica subsp. dioica</i>	Early Nancy
<i>Chamaescilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Stars
<i>Wurmbea dioica subsp. dioica</i>	Early Nancy
<i>Hypoxis glabella var/ glabella</i>	Star Grass
<i>Eucalyptus</i>	Roughbarked Manna Gum
<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Black Wattle
<i>Stylidium inundatum</i>	Hundreds and Thousands
<i>Chamaescilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Stars
<i>Diuris lanceolata</i>	Golden Moths
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Kangaroo Grass
<i>Acaena echinata</i>	Sheep's Burr
<i>Drosera peltata subsp. peltata</i>	Pale Sundew
<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	Swamp Gum
<i>Stylidium inundatum</i>	Hundreds and Thousands
<i>Hypericum</i>	St John's Wort
<i>Triptilodiscus pygmaeus</i>	Common Sunray
<i>Chamaescilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Stars
<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	Pink Fingers
<i>Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia</i>	Green Rock Fern
<i>Oxalis perennans</i>	Yellow Wood-sorrel
<i>Brachyloma daphnoides</i>	Daphne Heath
<i>Cymbonotus preissiana</i>	Austral Bear's Ears
<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i>	Cherry Ballart
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Sweet Bursaria
<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	Yellow Box
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia
<i>Leucopogon virgatus var. virgatus</i>	Common Beard Heath
<i>Diuris pardina</i>	Leopard Orchid

through Coghills Creek area where we viewed wetlands with little water in them or birds about them.

Fran Hanrahan

FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB OF BALLARAT INCORPORATED
No. A0014919P ABN 13 150 403 135
Minutes of the General Meeting **3rd October 2008.**

Opening and Apologies.

The President, Peter Dalman, opened the meeting and welcomed 23 members and visitors.

Apologies were received from Nina Netherway, Zelda Martin, Lyndsay and Lorraine Fink, Val Hocking, Dulcie Brooke, Maureen Christie, Denis and Elisabeth Thurgood

The apologies were accepted on the motion of Carol Hall, seconded Peter Billing.

Minutes of previous meeting were summarised in the Ballarat Naturalist and tabled.

Accepted on the motion of Bill Murphy, seconded: Greg Binns.

Business Arising from previous minutes:

nil.

Correspondence.

IN:

- Geelong FNC: Geelong Naturalist, September 2008.
- FNCV: Field Nats News, October 2008; Victorian Naturalist, October 2008.
- Bendigo FNC: Whirrakee, October 2008.
- Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club: Castlemaine Naturalist, September & October 2008.
- Environment Victoria: Green Action News, Spring 2008.
- RHSV: Gardeners Gazette. Spring 2008.
- Trust for Nature: Conservation Bulletin, September 2008.
- Bush Heritage Australia: Bush Heritage News, Spring 2008.
- Bendigo Bank: Statement.
- Irene Hooper: Apology for Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture.

Edwin Bedggood, Kevin Andrews: Acceptance for Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture.

Field Reports

- John Mildren: *Acacia aculeatissima* with bright yellow flowers at Linton. Prostrate plants spreading to a width of 2 metres.
- Chris Baulch: *Acacia pycnantha* seen flowering in early August along rail line in Werribee Gorge State Park. The plants did not flower in 2007, was this due to drought?
- Bill Murphy recalled that 40 years ago Jim Willis spoke at the club and said that in Central Australia plants shed leaves and boughs to survive drought.
- Carol Hall: The new terminal at Singapore Airport has a walk through butterfly garden with tropical plants, fresh fruit to feed butterflies and a pupae incubator.
- Fran Hanrahan: Ripon Street Croquet Club has a rabbit problem under and around the club house.
- Greg Binns: Mount Beckworth - Birds seen included Scarlet Robin, Rufous Whistler and White-throated Treecreeper. Waxlip, Golden Moth and Rabbit-ears Orchid flowering. Slatey Creek - Spring flowering of *Hardenbergia*, Early Nancy, Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea, and Sundew beginning.
- Peter Billing: Several clutches of cygnets at Lake Wendouree.
- John Gregurke: Lake Wendouree – 20 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, 15 Red-kneed Dotterel, 2 Black-fronted Dotterel, and a flock of Black-winged Stilt on mud flat near Windmill Drive. One Swan banded at Albert Park Lake has arrived at Lake Wendouree. At Basalt an upright form of *Acacia aculeatissima* has plants about knee high.

Excursion Arrangements:

Sunday 5 October 2008 to Mt Beckworth. Leaving at 9.30 am from Ballarat Horticulture Centre. Leader John Gregurke.

Mid-month excursion: 9.30am Tuesday 7 October to Haddon for Wattle photography.

Syllabus Item: Tina Bell “Use and History of School of Forestry Herbarium”.

Tina told us that the herbarium contains specimens collected by many well know botanists including Baron von Mueller and Jim Willis. She is researching the historical information behind the collectors and collection. Peter Dalman thanked Tina and presented her with a gift.

Supper

CALENDAR 2008

November

- Fri 7 **Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture**
Neville Walsh, Victorian Government Botanist.
Threatened Plants in Victoria—where we are and how we have progressed in looking after them.
- Sat 8 Excursion—*Bamganie*—the Cameron property—Greg Binns
Members can meet at the Horticultural Society at 9.30am or at Buninyong, on the north side near the UFS Dispensary.
- Wed 19 Mid month excursion—Haddon Common and Hillcrest Nature Reserve—full day
- Tues 25 Committee meeting at Les Hanrahan's, Ballan

December

- Fri 5 Dr Fran Hanrahan—Aspects of the natural history of Malawi.
- Sun 7 Bungal State Forest—Elsbeth Swan & Paul Norquay, Club Members

NOTE—Excursion Departure place is now the Ballarat Horticultural Centre, cnr. Gregory and Gillies Sts. (Our Friday meeting place)

Committee

President Mr Peter Dalman
Vice-President Mr Greg Binns
Secretary Mr John Gregurke
Treasurer..... Mr Les Hanrahan

Miss Helen Burgess..... Mrs Claire Dalman.....
Mrs Carol Hall Mrs Val Hocking.....
Mr John Morrish Dr Frances Hanrahan.....
Ms Nina Netherway (editor).....

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Meetings are held at Ballarat Horticultural Centre, cnr. Gregory & Gillies Sts (VicRoads 254 F8) on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm.

Excursions: Depart from Ballarat Horticultural Centre, cnr. Gregory & Gillies Sts (VicRoads 254 F8) at 9.30am unless otherwise specified.

A monthly publication of the Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat Inc.
Incorporation # A0014919P ABN 13 150 403 135