

TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

established 1904.

BULLETIN

<http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/tasfield/>

Editor: Don Hird. (email dhird@kih.tas.edu.au)

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The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist* annually in October. People with a range of ages, background and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) or Don Hird (6228 9702) for further information, or mail us at GPO Box 68, Hobart, 7001.

Program

General Meetings start at 7.45 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting outside the to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance in Macquarie Street. Bring lunch and all-weather outdoor gear.

If you are planning to attend an outing but have not been to the prior meeting, phone to check as to the timing of the excursion (with Genevieve Gates; 62 278 638 or Don Hird 6228 9702). Unforeseen changes sometimes occur.

Thurs. 1 November. 7.30 p.m.: PLEASE NOTE Change of Plan from previous Bulletin.

See the Notice at the top of Page 2. November weekend Rather than a traditional excursion, we will be taking turns attending to our display at the Plants Australia biennial Flower Show at the City Hall. A roster of time stints has largely been filled, but a few spots remain. Please contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) if you can help.

Thurs. 6 December Members' Night. As usual, members are encouraged to contribute a personal item of natural history interest, e.g. some slides of a private or club trip, a specimen or etc. Around 10 minutes is suggested. Contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) to advise of your presentation. Our Christmas supper is customary -; please bring a plate.

Sat. Dec 8 Excurs. 9.00 a.m.: Chauncy Vale is both a longstanding venue for Field Nats excursions and an interesting mix of southern midlands habitats. A range of walks is available. Bring lunch (BBQ?). Read *They Found a Cave*, by Nan Chauncy, for background to this venue.

Subs for 2002 are due by 31 December. Rates are unchanged from this year, Anna McEldowney is Treasurer

Instead of Pat Quilty as speaker for the November meeting, we are going to Stanley Burbury Theatre (University Centre) at 7.30pm to hear Dr. Mary White talk. Pat will address the club at a later time TBA.

No meeting or excursion is scheduled for January.

‘Listen....Our Land Is Crying’

A Public Lecture by Dr Mary White,

distinguished Sydney-based author, palaeobotanist and conservationist exploring critical issues of land and water use in Australia, and the ancient origins of our landscapes

Thursday 1 November, 7.30 pm, ADMISSION FREE

Stanley Burbury Theatre, University of Tasmania

Mary White is the author of ‘The Greening of Gondwana’, ‘After the Greening- the Browning of Australia’, ‘Listen... Our Land is Crying’, ‘Running Down- Water in a Changing Land’, ‘Time in Our Hands’ and ‘Reading the Rocks’. She has documented the true nature of our ancient landscapes, the problems created by many of our agricultural practices, the perilous state of many of our environments and river systems, and the urgent need for action if any sort of balance is to be restored between man’s activities and our natural ecosystems.

A rare opportunity to hear this distinguished speaker.

Jointly sponsored by: Australian Plants Society Tasmania Inc.; Geological Society of Australia Tasmania Division; Australian & New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science.

The lecture will explore critical issues of land and water use in Australia from the perspective of the ancient and fragile nature of our landscapes and soils, and the urgent need for action to restore a balance between man’s activities and our natural ecosystems.

On Friday 2 November at 12 noon, Dr White will officially open the Australian Plants Society’s Wildflower Exhibition “Spirit of Gondwana” at the Hobart City Hall. This exhibition will showcase native plants for the garden, but will also celebrate the origins of the flora on the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana and display some of the geological history associated with plant evolution. The exhibition will run for three days from November 2-4, with free admission.

Mary White was raised by botanist parents, educated in South Africa, married a field Geologist, and carried out field surveys in Zimbabwe and Somaliland before migrating to Australia in 1955. She worked as a palaeobotanist with the Bureau of Mineral Resources for many years, and has been a consultant and part-time museum curator before retiring to become an author and lecturer. Her first book, ‘The Greening of Gondwana’ (1986), documented the evolution of plant life on the Gondwanan continents and the development of Australia’s flora as we drifted north, and has been an international best seller. This was followed by an account of Australia’s drying-out and desertification, and the development of many of the ancient landscapes, after our separation from Antarctica, and of man’s initial impacts, in ‘After the Greening- the Browning of Australia’. Then came a more detailed account of the devastating impact of man’s inappropriate land-use practices in ‘Listen...Our Land is Crying. Australia’s Environment- Problems and Solutions’, and a closer look at water use in ‘Running Down - Water in a Changing Land’. Other books have included ‘Time in Our Hands’ (featuring Tasmania’s fossil flora from Lune River), and ‘Reading the Rocks’. All the books are beautifully illustrated, with simple explanations of scientific issues.

Mary White has documented the true nature of our ancient landscapes and soils, the problems created by many of our agricultural practices (particularly large-scale irrigation), the perilous state of many of our environments and river systems, and the need for urgent action if any sort of balance is to be restored between man’s activities and our natural ecosystems.

Some quotes: “Sustainable management of our land and water resources can only be achieved if the ancient history of the continent is taken into account and the limitations set by this unique land itself are recognised”.

“Only humans, by virtue of their technology, have had the ability to live outside the rules which apply to all other creatures - natural laws which forced them to operate within bounds

which maintain the balance”. “...sustainable development is an oxymoron”.
 “If we are holding the continent in trust, borrowing it from our children and grandchildren, we have an enormous responsibility, and the solution of problems cannot wait any longer”.
 Although Mary White presents something of a lovable grandmotherly image, she has an enormous energy, a great depth of knowledge and experience of Australia’s landscapes and geology, and a great love of the country, and the courage to speak out fearlessly for the future of the environment. She is also a brilliant writer, committed to bringing an understanding of science and scientific issues to the general readership. She is currently working on another book dealing with the origins of life and the importance of such things as bacteria in determining ‘the ground rules for life’. She is also a charming and approachable person.

EXCURSION REPORTS

Cape Queen Elizabeth Walk: Bruny Island 4th August 2001.

Maggie Cashman-Bailes

Dr Karen Edyvane from D.P.I.W.E. spoke at the club meeting about *Macrocystis* sp., Giant Kelp, its ecology and conservation status, which led to the ‘Kelp Watch’ program monitoring Giant Kelp forests in Tasmania. Information on the program is available through the club or D.P.I.W.E.

Tasmania has the largest Giant Kelp forests in Australia. Giant Kelp is of huge ecological significance because of the associated high biodiversity, its hydrological and light environment effects, and its importance as a habitat for other organisms both in situ and on beaches. Decline (in just 30 years) due to pollution, the introduced Japanese kelp, increase in water temperature and other causes was explained by Dr Edyvane in the context of the importance of the Kelp Watch program.

Eight of us set out on the Saturday to search for *Macrocystis* and other things. Dusky woodswallows were seen at Kettering, early in spring for these seasonal nomads. We set out from the northern end of The Neck making, with usual diversity of observations. Notes were made for the new Atlas of Australian Birds of the usual species plus Bassian Thrush, Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos, Chestnut Teal, Black Fronted Dotterel, Double Banded Plover, Flame Robin, a Hooded Plover, and the Fiordland Penguin (dead) which Kevin had announced at the meeting. I returnee early leaving John, Gilbert, Anna, Genevieve, David, Don and Kevin to search on.

A Pademelon surprised me. Scratches on many trees indicated bush creatures. Scats of all kinds and prints, and numerous skeletons were evident. A pair of Sea Eagles perched side by side in the distance. I wonder what the other intrepids would find.

Footnote: on a previous visit to the area I had noted scats resembling those of wombats, a species not officially recorded from Bruny Island. Despite intense searching for other signs (such as burrows usually easily found in sandy coastal country), no reliable indication of wombats was found in a habitat which would otherwise be expected to support them. Don Hird.

Fungi list for Cape Queen Elizabeth on August 4th 2001

Ascomycete, brown cup, olivaceous centre	<i>Coltricia oblectans</i>	<i>Entoloma</i> sp.	<i>Hygrocybe graminicolor</i>
Ascomycete, stalked, grey	<i>Coprinus</i> sp.	<i>Hydnum repandum</i>	<i>Hygrocybe chromolimonea</i>
Ascomycete, stalked, clear honey brown	<i>Cortinarius</i> sp	<i>Hygrocybe</i> “vine top”	<i>Hygrotrama</i> sp., brown with mothballs odour

<i>Clavulinopsis amoena</i>	<i>Descolea recedens</i>	<i>Inocybe</i> sp	<i>Pisolithus macrocarpus</i>
<i>Lepiota</i> sp.	<i>Psathyrella</i> sp.	<i>Stereum hirsutum</i>	<i>Thaxtergaster</i> sp., brown glutinous earthball
<i>Marasmius elegans</i>	<i>Nidula emodensis</i>	<i>Russula clelandii</i>	<i>Mycena</i> sp., on wood, white, translucent, no odour, adnexed gills
<i>Russula</i> "citrine"	<i>Omphalina chromacea</i>	<i>Psilocybe</i> "bruni islander"	<i>Mycena</i> sp., "bleach sulcate on wood"
<i>Laccaria</i> sp	<i>Trametes versicolor</i>	<i>Tubaria</i> sp	<i>Xylobolus illudens</i>

T.F.N.C. Outing to "Seaford" on September 9th, 2001.

Rice grass management officer, Andrew Sullivan from DPIWE, led this excursion to the Dyke family's property "Seaford", at Freshwater Bay, Little Swanport, on the East Coast. Col, Sue and Hayden Dyke are oyster farmers so they are very concerned about the quality of the waterways and have spent a lot of time and money supporting the Rice Grass (*Spartina anglica*) Eradication Project as well as doing land rehabilitation on their property. Using one of the work barges, seven Field Nats. explored the tributary, inspecting the rice grass infected areas that had been successfully treated using an herbicide. After a time of zooming around the bay we noticed a lone figure waving to us from the shore. It was the intrepid Maggie with whom we had failed to rendezvous at Sorell. Although she had no map as to where we were going, she had explored every road leading to the water from the top of the bay, until she came to one with a 'Land for Wildlife' sign on the gate. This happened to be the right place so she was able to join us for the remainder of the excursion. After lunch on terra firma, Sue and Hayden were very keen to show their property to such an interested and enthusiastic bunch of bird, snail, spider, fungi and orchid experts.

It was most encouraging to see an introduced pest being successfully controlled and to meet landowners who are interested and take pride in conserving their property AND as a bonus we have been invited back to do some more exploring and surveying!!!

Fungi List

<i>Agaricus</i> sp.	<i>Amanita</i> sp.	<i>Calocera</i> sp.	<i>Coltricia oblectans</i>
<i>Cortinarius</i> sp.	<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i>	<i>Inocybe</i> sp.	<i>Laccaria</i> sp.
<i>Nidula emodensis</i>	<i>Omphalina chromacea</i>	<i>Piptoporus portentosus</i>	Purple corticioid
<i>Stereum hirsutum</i>	<i>Trametes versicolor</i>	<i>Tyromyces pellicolus</i>	<i>Xylobolus illudens</i>

Orchids....Sue has found 38 species so far.

Bird list (from John Reid)

Australian Magpie, Great Cormorant, Chestnut Teal, Forest Raven, Hoary Headed Grebe, Australian Pelican, Pied Oystercatcher, Masked Lapwing (Southern form), Little Pied Cormorant, Eastern Rosella.

Striated Pardalote Noisy Minor Pacific Gull Great Egret Grey Butcherbird

Welcome Swallow Silver Gull Swamp Harrier Sea Eagle.