



# Brisbane Ranges Friends News

FEBRUARY 2010

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Christmas at Stoney Creek Picnic Ground

The last chance to see summer orchids

A day in the "Bush"

## Upcoming Event

## Monthly Activity

Sunday February 14th, 10am at Anakie Community Depot, Ballan Rd, Anakie

### ACTIVITY

**10am:** Please bring a plate to share for morning tea

Brainstorm session on wording & artwork for interpretative signage

Clean up of hothouse (sorting out plants & potting out), depot gardens & FoBR storage shed

Afternoon walk in the Park

**BYO water & lunch**

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## Christmas at Stoney Creek Picnic Ground

A presentation was given to the group in the morning by Dr. Martin Fluker about track monitoring and the possibilities of using this system within the Brisbane Ranges.

The purpose of this project is to monitor the visual condition of specific sections of tracks and trails over time by having researchers, land managers and park users take digital pictures by positioning their own digital cameras in fixed fluker posts then submitting them to a central database in the PowerPoint presentation.

**FLUKER POST**

*An opportunity for you to contribute towards the care of this National Park through ongoing monitoring.*

Instructions:

1. Please place your digital camera in the cradle on top of this Fluker Post.
2. Take a date stamped photo of the track.
3. Email to [FlukerPost@gmail.com](mailto:FlukerPost@gmail.com)

To see past photos, go to:  
<http://www.slideshare.net/towbike>

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The visual effects of trail usage, trail design, trail repair, weed infestation and general erosion can be monitored over extended periods of time.

We headed down to Stoney Creek Picnic Ground for some yummy lunch and a good chat, followed by a walk down to the Lower Stoney Creek Reservoir.



Lower Stoney Creek

For information contact Dr Martin Fluker, Lecturer in Tourism, Victoria University at [martin.fluker@vu.edu.au](mailto:martin.fluker@vu.edu.au)

# THE LAST CHANCE FOR SUMMER ORCHIDS

Unless you travel to the alpine or subalpine area, you are unlikely to get many chances to photograph orchids during our hot summer months. There are a couple of exceptions in the Brisbane Ranges – one is the *Spiranthes australis* and the other is one of two *Dipodiums*.

Since the dry conditions have impacted on the *Spiranthes australis* flowering this season, the *Dipodium roseum* and *Dipodium pardalinum* provide the best opportunities to find and enjoy our orchids.

Hyacinth Orchids (common name) are impossible to grow in cultivation and usually pollinated by small bees or wasps. They offer no reward to their pollinator and, when pollinated, produce a copious amount of seeds which are dispersed readily because of their minute size and weight.

These orchids are saprophytic (leafless) and seem to have a symbiotic relationship with eucalypts. In fact, you are unlikely to find Hyacinth Orchids in a forest of other trees unless eucalypts are also present and it appears that the type of mycorrhizal fungus, on which the orchid depends, is also associated with the eucalypt roots.

Both orchids' flowers begin life with the labellum at the top of the flower.



(*Dipodium roseum* – newly opened flower)

As the flower matures, it turns 180 degrees so that the labellum ends up at the bottom of the flower (in the more traditional orchid flower look) so that the insect pollinator has someplace to land. Each has a central band of colourful hairs on the labellum.

*Dipodium roseum* and *Dipodium pardalinum* are both found in the ranges.



(*Dipodium pardalinum*)

At times the two plants can look quite similar, especially so since the *D. roseum* (usually rosy pink with small dark spots) can have plants with light pink flowers. The easiest way to tell the difference is the labellum. The *D. roseum* has a labellum with dark lines or stripes and the *D. pardalinum* has a labellum with dark spots.



These orchids can be up to 900mm tall with anywhere from 10 to 40 flowers per stem. Usually the flowers do not all open at the same time but occasionally you get a great specimen and the display is magnificent. You can even see them from the car window (if the driver is going slow enough).



(*Dipodium roseum* in full bloom)

In early December I walked in the Anakie Gorge with a friend who was visiting from the UK.

It had rained hard the day before. The smell of the trees and the sounds of the frogs sounded like a celebration! My friend said: "So this is THE bush! I never understood before, from watching TV or reading about it. Now I understand - it's about being on the land and listening to the sounds and taking in the smells".

So there's one more person going home who can take a real sense of the wonders of the Brisbane Ranges with her - despite it's poor soil, drought and slow return of growth since the fires.

Vicky Grosser

## Brisbane Ranges Sightings

A Growling Grass Frog heard at a small dam beside the track at the intersection of Loop Track and Bluff Track (western end).

Many Pobblebunks also heard. I also took a photo of a small frog still morphing from the tadpole stage. Ray Draper has identified it as a Ewings Tree Frog.

Duck orchids: *Calaena major* (Flying duck orchid) and *Caleana minor* (Small duck orchid). Seen at western end of Bluff Track. Large numbers of both orchids were seen and the sightings were made in early January.

