



SEPTEMBER 2012

In this issue

- Annual General Meeting
- Monitoring activities
- For Your Diary
- FoBR Survey
- Mt Rothwell
- Cathy's Column
- Fauna monitoring update

Upcoming Events

Sunday 9 Sept 2012

Grasstree monitoring and preparation for Back to Steiglitz Festival. Meet at old Parks Vic Depot, 2200 Ballan Road, Anakie at 10am - all welcome

Sunday 16 Sept 2012

Waterwatch springtime monitoring at Sutherlands Creek is an extra activity this month. Meeting point Steiglitz Courthouse at 10am - all welcome

These are all day activities so lunch, water, gloves etc will be required along with your smile, binoculars and camera of course.

FoBR events usually run from 10am to 4pm-ish but if you can only attend the part of the day you are always welcome to join in for whatever amount of time you can.

Friends of Brisbane Ranges inc
C/- Post Office
Anakie VIC 3221

Ph: 5366 0000

FoBR email friends_br@yahoo.com.au

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fobr/>

[FoBR Facebook](#)

ABN: 30 120 139 564 Reg No. A0032647M

Your new FoBR executive committee

Our 2012 AGM has held on Sunday 12 August at the Anakie Community House [thank you Heather!]. Thank you everyone who attended. A highlight of our Annual Report as usual is Boxy's report and his unique sense of humour - which sparked the interest of the Ballarat and Geelong radio stations. I would like to emphasise my personal thanks to Judy, Boxy and those on the executive who were a wonderful support during last year. Boxy then helped us with the elections and I get another chance to try to get it right as your President - and what a great group FoBR is! .

- **President - Carole (Caz) Bartholomew** - I think you know her
- **Treasurer - Elspeth Sharp** - thank you for agreeing to another year Elspeth
- **Secretary - Sher Swinden** - Sher was an executive member last year and luckily we did not scare her away.

Two **Executive members** - I know you will both provide some great new ideas for FoBR.

- **Deirdre Murphy** who is again looking after our Newsletter - thank you so much Dee!
- **Marilyn Blankley** - a warm welcome and thank you! You will all get to know her better when we talk Koalas soon!

Helena Lindorff has agreed to Co-ordinate the Wildflower Show again in 2013 - Exciting news particularly for some of us. Helena is a great organiser, a dedicated FoBR member and is keen to mentor others with this event - on the provision that there is plenty of support. The Wildflower Show is a well-loved highlight and we are keen to make sure it occurs every second year.

Colin Cook agreed to continue as our Vice President for another year. Thank you for all your work with the monitoring programs and support
Caz

A chat with Uncle David Tournier



Following our AGM we enjoyed a great morning tea and were then joined by Uncle David Tournier and additional guests who responded to our promotion of this special event. Uncle David set up a display of some local artifacts and Welcomed us to Country.

He kept us enthralled for more than two hours explaining many aspects of his life and Aboriginal Culture in this area. "From the mountain to the sea, the Wathaurong people lived in the *Jillong* (*Djillong*) or Geelong". Through educational swap cards he explained many of the plants used for food and medicine as well as other aspects of the

Wathaurong Culture, including the way the people lived with this land, history and bush foods. He explained totems and his own totem, the Curlew. We all took home a collection of the swap cards.

Hopefully we have provided an opportunity for more understanding and closer relationships. If you wish to learn more check out the website <http://www.djillong.net.au/>
A big thank you to Vicky Grosser who helped us organise this and Uncle David who was very interesting, generous and open in answering everyone's questions.

FoBR Monitoring Programs

We currently have a number of ongoing monitoring programs which are important to our knowledge and the health of our wonderful National Park and we are keen for more FoBR members to get involved.

Check out the details on page 4 and Colin can provide much more detail so give him a call 5286 1252 or email him eclipse.creek@gmail.com I know he would like the help with this important work.

Mammals - this can be carried out at a time to suit you if you have some spare time and would like to learn more about our native wildlife.

Reptiles - this is a new project we would like to get started - so anyone interested?

Phytophthora monitoring our grasstrees. This is done in conjunction with VNPA <http://vnpa.org.au/admin/library/attachments/PDFs/NatureWatch%20information%20booklet.pdf> and needs to be done in Autumn and Spring. Specific spots have been monitored in 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011 and Autumn 2012 and with all the rain we have had recently it may be even more important for us to monitor the health of our iconic grasstrees and the spread of this fungus.

Come along on the 9 September to check it out.

Waterwatch monitoring – preservation of habitat and good quality water is important for the threatened Yarra Pigmy Perch present in Sutherlands Creek. Water tests are conducted at Sutherlands Creek and Stony Creek quarterly to monitor the health of the waterways during times of drought and high flow.

Join us on 16 September!

We would like to get more members involved in activities both on event days and at other times to suit themselves. Please contact Caz if you have any interest at all friends_br@yahoo.com.au

FoBR Activity survey

The recent activity survey results will affect our activity planning for the coming year.

Thank you to all of you who responded to it, it has turned out to be a great planning tool - thanks Elspeth for the great idea.

We have a long wishlist of activities for another busy year and will organise this and plan to provide a calendar and more information next month

BBC at Mt Rothwell

Colleen Miller, facilitator of Western Melbourne Catchments Network Inc., initiated a web-site www.wmcn.org.au to providing information about threatened grasslands. Since then, the BBC has visited Mount Rothwell Sanctuary www.mtrothwell.com.au and have reported on the works done at the site. Follow these links below to the segments shown on BBC 2 Secrets of Our Living Planet Series and enjoy!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqUs9qVY_do&feature=relmfu

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rydu7ANcE0&feature=relmfu>

Photo Craig Cleeland



For your diary!

- **Sunday 9 September**
Grasstree monitoring and preparation for Back to Steiglitz Festival. Meeting place Parks Vic Depot, Anakie at 10am - all welcome
- **Sunday 16 September**
Waterwatch springtime monitoring at Sutherlands Creek is an extra activity this month. Meeting point Steiglitz Courthouse at 10am—all welcome.
- **Sunday 14 October**
Back to Steiglitz festival - FoBR stall and activity including Wildflower Walk
- **Saturday 10 November afternoon and evening**
FoBR 30th birthday celebrations back where FoBR began in Steiglitz. Presentation, guided tour, afternoon tea, bbq and more. Hoping to have ALL founding/ previous members attend at least part of this special occasion.

And did you know?

Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar 2012 “nature’s canvas” is being held at Dimboola Secondary College, Thursday 6th Sept , 9.30am – 9pm

The 15th Annual Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar is exploring the links between art and biodiversity. There will be writers, artists and photographers presenting during the day, focussing on insects, birds, frogs, native seed and much more

Prospecting in National Parks

Don't know if you've heard yet but the VEAC investigation into prospecting in National Parks has been announced (<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/conservation-and-environment/victorian-environmental-assessment-council/proposed-investigation-into-additional-prospecting-areas-in-parks>).

Deadline for comments on the terms of reference only is Friday 14th September. Please make any comments you feel necessary

What's your news?

Send in your written pieces, funny photos or freaky facts and we can post them here. Email us at Friends_email with your name and we will do our best to include your contribution in the next newsletter

Cathy's Column Grasslands and Mountains

Last year at this time I did a column with a little bit of information on my travels to the USA. I don't want to bore you with the intricate details of delays at airports, etc. but instead would like to take you on a journey of similarity.

I will start with grasslands. We don't really have a dedicated grassland environment in the Ranges but certainly to the east and west of us, there exists a unique habitat known as a grassland. In the late 1800s, the plains that surround our Ranges were dominated by Kangaroo Grass and brightly flowered herbs.

With this in mind, I sought out the Grassland National Park located in the state of Wyoming, USA. (Wyoming is also the state known for Yellowstone & geysers). One of the things all grasslands have in common, regardless of their name, is that grass is the naturally dominant vegetation. I found some fascinating plants including Blue Bells & Daisies.

The Blue Bells reminded me of *Wahlenbergia stricta* because the flower droops. A pale purple daisy plant was not dissimilar to the *Brachyscome multifida*. When I went for a walk last week, I discovered some already

flowering in the Ranges.

Some other things I found on my walk (specifically targeting the burned area off Ballan/Geelong Road) were some nice orchid plants. There will be some of the *Pyrorchis nigricans* in flower this spring – you may have seen the leaves because the plant is rather numerous in the Ranges but it seldom flowers without a fire event.

Once the flower is pollinated by a small native bee, the plant dries and turns sombre black thus giving it the common name 'Undertaker Orchid'. My speculation is that this occurs because the plant needs to survive for the seeds to be distributed and if it remains visible for too long, it becomes food for a passing herbivore. The blackening plant blends very well with the other 'burnt' looking things in the area. In the images below (Figure 1), the ovary is maturing (containing millions of seeds) but the plant looks very unappetising. Eventually, even the leaves turn black.

I also found a small colony of Helmet Orchids, *Corysanthes (Corybus) incurvus*, with some plants producing buds and others had open flowers. This orchid can be very difficult to find due to the leaf growing flat to the ground and not much larger than a ten cent piece. To add to the challenge is the fact that the leaves look an awful lot like a couple of plants that are not orchids. In the

Figure 2, the leaf in the middle is the orchid leaf, the others are not. When you find the leaf, look for a bud or flower (photographed).

One of the interesting features of this orchid is after pollination. Because the flower is so close to the ground, the flower stem starts to grow longer as the ovary matures (Figure 2a). Eventually, the ovary can sit on top of a stem up to 16cm high – this facilitates wind dispersal of the numerous seeds.

Of course, some of the other orchids making themselves known are the *Glossodia major* (Waxlip) shown in Figure 3. The leaves are appearing above ground and some even have buds forming. Be wary, however, because a plant that produces leaves similar (in the first instance) to the orchid is the *Ophioglossum lusitanicum* or commonly known as the Austral Adder's-tongue. We were recently walking with a group and some high hopes were quickly dashed when the plant was identified as 'not an orchid' (see Figure 4). The Adder's-tongue is a fern ally and its common name comes from the spore-bearing stalk that is thought to resemble a snake's tongue.

Well, so much for leaves and flowers. Now it is up to you to get out in our wonderful Brisbane Ranges and enjoy the challenges nature provides.

Until next issue.....



Figure 1 (left)
Photos clockwise from top

- a *P. nigricans* in bud stage
- b *P. nigricans* flower
- c The blackened flower
- d The blackened leaves



Figure 2 (right)
Photos clockwise from top

- a Plant stem lengthening
- b *C. incurvus* leaf
- c Flower
- d Bud

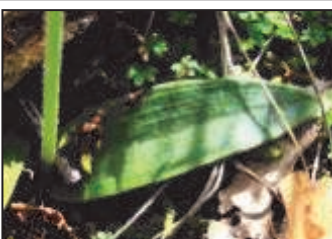
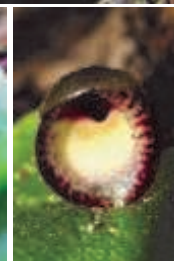


Figure 3
Photos left to right:

- a *PGlossodia major* leaf and
- b *Glossodia major* flower



Figure 4
Photos left to right:

- a Austral Adder's-tongue leaf
- b spore-bearing stalk



BACK TO STEIGLITZ FESTIVAL

Held every 2 years - Next festival:
14th October 2012
10am – 3pm

An old fashioned family fun day with many
activities & displays such as:

- Kids activities,
- Barbeque,
- Devonshire Tea,
- Steiglitz Historical Society Display
- Historical Buildings open to public
- Blacksmithing demonstrations
- Lace making demonstrations
- Gold panning
- Market stalls
- Cake Stalls
- Stationary Engines
- Billy Cart Races - Entry forms available on
our website
www.trueblueford.com/steiglitz

Entry to the festival is free!

Though some events are via gold coin donation



Healthy Parks
Healthy People



FoBR will be joining in to support and help in celebrating the Back to Steiglitz Festival.

We will host wildflower walks for the visitors and have an information stall also selling our books and hopefully some local plants as well.

Please encourage your friends and neighbours to come along to this special day in Steiglitz.

FoBR Fauna Monitoring Update

All the fauna monitoring activities are done to improve our awareness of the biodiversity in the Brisbane Ranges. The program gives members a unique opportunity to become involved, improve their own skills and knowledge and enable them to teach others about the natural values in the Brisbane Ranges.

Our mammal monitoring activities have all been approved by the Animal Ethics Committee and we have DSE Research Permits for these.

In 2010, only 2 Agile Antechinus were monitored at one location. In 2012, 16 Agile Antechinus and 6 House Mouse were found across 3 locations.

Remote Cameras

In May 2012 the Friends group purchased 3 infrared cameras for fauna monitoring. The cameras are usually positioned on a tree with a bait station located just in front. The bait is a mixture of peanut butter, oats and golden syrup. Fish oil is sometimes used as well. Animals have no access to the bait and are lured by odour only. Cameras are left in position for 2-3 weeks.



Sightings include kangaroos, wallabies, deer, Brush Tailed Possums, rats, mice, foxes, wombat, birds and Brush-tailed Phascogales.

One camera is located inside a box designed to only permit the entry of small mammals. However, the short length of the box meant that the focus was poor and positive identification of the smaller animals was difficult. Close range focus has been improved by placing a pair of reading glasses in front of the camera lens.

Reptile Survey

Reptile monitoring data for the Brisbane Ranges National Park is extremely sparse and old, with most records dating from 1960-1980. We are planning to set up and monitor reptile survey grids using roof tiles in the Park. Several grids will be set up and monitored over several years, in order to determine the occurrence and distribution of reptiles and possibly amphibians.

Bird call monitoring

Colin has been plugging away at a project to use digital sound recorders to record bird calls, then using SongScope call recognition software (<http://www.wildlifeacoustics.com/songscope.php>) to process the field recordings and identify birds of interest. I've processed known calls to build call recognition files for 93 of the 188 birds found in the Brisbane Ranges. Over the next few months we'll get some field recordings and hopefully start to monitor some of the more cryptic bird species. The system can also be used for frog and animal calls, so we may get some useful data on these fauna too.