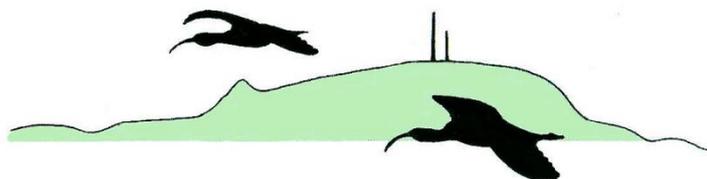


ORANGE FIELD NATURALIST AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc



NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2018

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 8th November, 7.30pm
SPEAKER: Colleen Farrow
TOPIC: LLS cat tracker project
NEW VENUE: Home & Community
Care Centre (HACC Centre),
286–290 Lords Place
(corner Lords Place & March Street - enter
from Lords Place)

No Committee Meeting this month

EXCURSION

Sunday, 11th November
Mt Canobolas SCA
– monitoring site set-up
Meet at 9am
at the Orange High Bus Bay
Bring morning tea and lunch

[OFNCS website](#)

Next Meeting

Colleen Farrow, Central Tablelands Local Land Services, will be talking to us about a project which they have been running for most of this year to track the movement of domestic cats. The results are quite surprising and, even if you love your pet moggy, somewhat alarming as well.

Xmas party

Lock Sunday 9th December into your diaries. More details in next newsletter

Next Excursion

Mt Canobolas SCA – monitoring site set-up. We will be setting up permanent markers for 24 quadrat sites planned by NPWS that will be used to monitor post-fire recovery.

Meet at the Orange High Bus Bay at 9am and bring work gloves, hard hat and hi-vis vests. You will also need to wear sturdy enclosed footwear and long trousers and be prepared for a bit of physical work and fun.

Bring lunch and plenty of water and sunscreen. Otherwise all equipment will be supplied.

Last meeting

Speaker: **Helmut Berndt**

Topic: Walking in Lamington National Park and the Blue Mountains.

Summary by Rosemary

Helmut's talk was mainly pictorial with occasional commentary on the tracks and the walks they did at Lamington and in the Blue Mountains. Most questions were about the maps for the places he had been.

Special mention of Amanda's sponge. Other than Helmut she was the only one of us to respond/remember his request to bring along nibbles.

OFNCS 11th October Committee Meeting

Summary

It has been decided that a summary of discussions at committee meetings would be useful to show members how much your committee has been doing on your behalf in the community.

Report from Rosemary Stapleton, Secretary, OFNCS

Over the last two months most of the Society's activity has related to Mt Canobolas:

- **Save Mt Canobolas Campaign** - activities that members had done as part of the campaign were reviewed. OFNCS made a detailed submission objecting to any proposal for an extensive mountain bike track network within the SCA.
- **NPWS Post Fire Planning Group** – members involved gave an update. NPWS have submitted an Animal Ethics Application to seek approval for monitoring of the fauna. The location of plant monitoring sites will soon be decided and fauna will also be monitored at these sites. The sites will be set up on 10/11 November and all agreed this would be the November

excursion. 23/24/25 March 2019 have been set as the dates for the first full-scale monitoring.

- **Accessing Mt Canobolas** - as most of the SCA is still closed and falling trees/branches are a danger, volunteers are required to notify NPWS and seek approval for any activity. If granted they also need to wear hard hats and safety vests when doing any monitoring or clean-up. NPWS are developing a new reporting system for volunteers to make it easier for them to keep in touch.

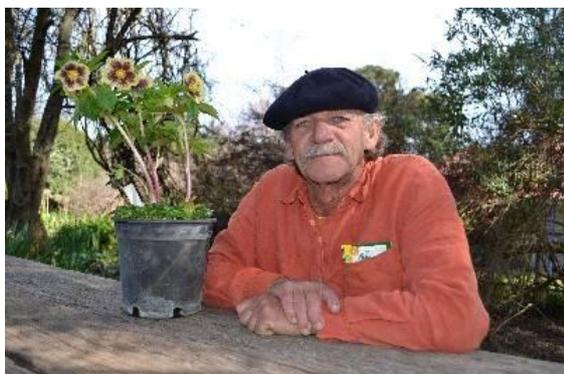
Other points discussed at the meeting were:

- **Open Cut Mine at Kings Plain.** Peter Toedter attended a meeting of the Kings Plains Residents Group and provided information. OFNCS agreed that the environmental issues might relate to contamination of water & isolated patches of woodland. OFNCS would review the EIS when it is released.

- **South Orange Activation Zone Workshop** - Peter & Nick attended a workshop that discussed possible development in the area close to the hospital.

- **Recreational Use of Dams** – the meeting discussed Orange City Council's proposal for the future use of Gosling Creek and Spring Creek Reservoirs and Suma Park Dam. It was agreed that a submission should be made and be informed by the excursion to Gosling Creek and the many years of data from bird surveys at Spring Creek.

Bob Griffin



[photo: www.blaynechronicle.com.au]

It is with regret that we report the death on Monday 15th of **Bob Griffin**, "the planthunter" of Cooramilla Nursery near Orange. Bob was a regular attendee at Society meetings for a few years and

presented two Cultivated Chats for the Friends of Orange Botanic Gardens on his plant-hunting trips to out-of-the-way places like Azerbaijan and Chile.

Breakfast with the Birds

Accompanying this newsletter is a flyer about a Woodland Bird Id Workshop called "Breakfast with the Birds" on Wednesday 14th November 2018. The workshop is being sponsored by Local Land Services and Birdlife Australia and will be presented by **Pete Evans**.

The workshop is free but you must register in order to attend. Details are on the flyer.

Cliefden Caves

From Harry Burkitt,

Save Cliefden Caves Association

"It's with great excitement that I pass on the news that we have won the campaign to save Cliefden Caves! The NSW Water Minister, **Niall Blair**, today announced the NSW Government will no longer pursue building a dam on the Belubula River, saying a dam at Cranky Rock would get tied up in too much "green tape".

This dam was always an ill-considered proposal that wasn't going to stand up to due process. No matter the dam design or location, we knew there would be serious impacts on Cliefden Caves if a dam on the Belubula River got the green light.

But if it were not for the 20,000+ supporters across Australia who joined the campaign over the last four years, the fight to protect this unique part of Australia's heritage would not have been possible. From signing petitions, making donations, attending events and writing to politicians, your support has been overwhelming.

Together we have been able to push the NSW Government into scrapping this destructive dam proposal once and for all."

Members' Notes

From Rosemary

Took time off one afternoon to see what was at Spring Creek. Lots of coots and about 20 swans but nothing unusual.

I turned around and when I was trying to see through the willows at some roosting ducks a Red-capped Robin flashed past.

When it landed it had an insect in its beak so I watched and it flew into a hawthorn bush. Had a delightful time watching both parents feed the two chicks. They were almost ready to leave the nest. Whilst trying to photograph them I noticed a Grey Fantail in the willow next to it and found that it was building a nest. The nest has a wonderful tail. The fantail nest is low down at the back of the tree that is on the western side of the hawthorn and is almost finished being built so I guess some eggs might be laid in a few days.

It was also good to see a Leaden Flycatcher and Dusky Woodswallow around the willows.... fortunately on the Spring Creek side so will add them as records for the reservoir.



Red capped robin female feeding her chicks at Spring Creek [photo: Rosemary Stapleton]

Also from Rosemary

I was surprised when driving slowly down the mountain [Mt Canobolas] one afternoon to see that the northern embankment of the road towards the bottom of the mountain had lots (hundreds) of these *Chiloglottis* orchids. I stopped yesterday after the orchid search and found when I got home that I had taken a photo of an insect as well.



Rosemary's *Chiloglottis* photo.

Col Bower has provided the following: The insect is almost certainly *Neozeleboria monticola*, the pollinator of *Chiloglottis*

valida. Good to see that they have also survived the fire.

from Col Bower

If you want a good read about the Night Parrot, go to:

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/fall-2018/a-naturalist-checked-past-rediscovered-long-lost>

from the Editor

I couldn't help giving you one of Vicki's lovely photos of the spinifex pigeons which hang about Kings Canyon Resort in the NT. Each morning one would turn up in the garden and coo quietly and others would gather until there were four or five foraging on the ground and grooming each other. Australia has some beautiful pigeons and this has to be one of the best.



Creature of the Month

Thorny Devil
Moloch horridus



Thorny Devil at Alice Springs Reptile Park [photo: Vicki Glover]

Australia is known for its quirky wildlife and there is none quirkier than the Thorny Devil. This small lizard, allied to the dragons, lives across arid parts of Australia and eats ants. It is also able to change colour depending on the temperature and its background and has a strange way of moving, rocking slightly back and forth as it walks. Once it finds an ant trail, it hovers over it picking off the ants one by one. It also has a clever adaptation for getting water. A capillary system has evolved over its entire body which means any dew that settles on it overnight moves to its mouth and it can also channel water to its mouth by dipping a foot into a puddle. They live up to 20 years and are popular exhibits at any wildlife/reptile park in Central Australia. They even have them at the Melbourne Museum where one is exhibited in a

chamber situated between an ants' nest and a chamber where food is placed so the ants are forced to pass the Thorny Devil's spot to supply their nest.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Payment of Annual Subscriptions is due following the Annual General Meeting in February. Please send your cheque or money order made out to "OFNCS" to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr Dick Medd, OFNCS, PO Box 369 Orange NSW 2800.

Subscription rates:

Single member – \$25

Each additional family member – \$5

Concession rate (emailed newsletters) – \$12.50

Concession rate (printed newsletters) – \$25

Note: concession rate is for *bona fide* pensioners and students only



Orchid hunters, led by Col Bower, gather on Mt Canobolas to search for species not seen in flower since the last major bushfire on the mountain in the early 1980s [photo: Rosemary Stapleton]

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