

PO Box 19  
Churchill  
3842



# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – December 2014*

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeaan.net>  
A0016319X

Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. We have received a \$5,000 Local Landscape Enhancement Grant for the construction of a bridge across Billys Creek. Over the last month, Parks have started investigating what permits are required for the construction of the bridge across Billys Creek. When this is done it will help to determine the construction process to be followed.

Traralgon College and Matt have checked the motion activated cameras we have had around the Park. On viewing the footage, a new species to the Park was located. A bush rat was seen and this is the first sighting of a bush rat in the Park. Sadly, a cat was also recorded on one of cameras. Although cats are common in the surrounding area (with many private properties bordering the Park), this is first sighted in the Park. Matt has moved our cameras to a new location to see what can be seen in this new location.

At a recent mothing activity, Matt sighted a water rat. This also is the first sighting of a water rat within the Park. It is interesting that there are still new animals to discover in the Park which has been well travelled and explored over the last twenty/thirty years. Matt also spoke about the recent Green Walk around Foster's Gully where six koalas were sighted in the first twenty minutes of the walk. This group almost sighted more koalas than we did in the koala survey last month. The Park very definitely changes from day to day.

The next Green Walk will be on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December. This walk will around Foster's Gully and start at 10am. Meet in the Kerry Road car park if you are interested in completing this walk.

The lichen brochure featuring the lichens of Morwell National Park has been completed. It is now available to the public. If you would like a copy of the lichens brochure, they are available from Ken for \$2.00 each. Ken showed the group at the last activity and they commented about the good quality and great presentation of the brochure.

Friends of Morwell National Park Inc: PO Box 19, Churchill, 3842, <http://morwellnp.pangaeaan.net>.

**President:** Ken Harris

**Vice-President:** Matt Campbell

**Secretary:** Beryl Nelson

**Treasurer:** John Barker

**Publicity:** Brenda Chetham

**Public Officer:** Beryl Nelson

**Newsletter Editor:** Darren Hodgson, [hodgson.darren.d@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:hodgson.darren.d@edumail.vic.gov.au)

**Other members:** Mary Austin, Margaret Barker, Mike and Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Kerry Campbell, Peter and Wendy McDonald, Joan Sikkema, Neil Slater, Wendy Steenbergen, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

## John's Jottings

John has continued with his historical collecting and this month his snippet is on the formation of the Park, which was lifted from an article: THE MORWELL NATIONAL PARK by Dr. L.H. Smith, M.Sc., D.Ph. (Oxon), F.R.A.C.I. Director of the National Parks Authority of Victoria.



*Continued from last month .....*

"One of the principal reasons for having this reservation made was to preserve the Butterfly Orchid (*Sarcochilus australis*), sometimes known as Gunn's Orchid, which occurs on the trunks of trees."

"A relic of the ages when jungles covered Southern Australia, it survives now only in a few dense gullies. The flowers are usually yellow-green with a coloured labellum, several on a drooping stem. The Butterfly Orchid is an epiphyte; that is, it lives on trees. It is not a parasite, but merely uses the tree for support. Only a few of our orchids are epiphytes, nearly all being terrestrial. The name 'Gunn's Orchid' derives from that of its discoverer, Ronald Campbell Gunn, said to be the most famous amateur botanist Tasmania has produced. Gunn collected his first specimen near Burnie in Tasmania, and the species was known for many years by the scientific name of *Gunnia australis*. Unfortunately, this beautiful orchid is now quite rare in the two Australian States where it was once common.

On the other hand, the area contains a considerable number of other plants and birds. Members of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club have identified 97 vascular species of plants, not including grasses, sedges, rushes, lilies and small ephemeral herbs. There is also a wide variety of mosses, liverworts, lichens and fungi. A preliminary bird list includes 41 species with sightings of particular interest including nests of Wedge-tailed Eagle and the Peregrine Falcon. Lyrebirds are reported to be numerous."

*To be continued next month .....*



## November Activity Report

At this month's activity we had Beryl, Wendy S, Matt, Ken, Peter, Wendy Mc, John, Margaret, Helen, Darren and Ranger Craig. Helen was along for her first activity. After many conversions with Mary Austin, Helen has been encouraged to come along and join in the activities. Hopefully this will be her first of many activities.

The day was overcast, with a fair bit of rain overnight and during the morning before the activity. At least 30mm had fallen. It was good to see such a large group on a day which promised more rain. The group meet in the car park to discuss the news from the last month.

The group split up with Ken and Matt working on the Butterfly Orchid survey while the rest of the group did track maintenance around Stringybark Track. Firstly Ken and Matt needed to get the GPS to help them locate each of the five sites to be surveyed.



The Stringybark crew loaded the chainsaw onto the Ute and walk in to Stringybark Track. The group worked along the track removing the occasional tree across the track along with branches growing into the track. The group split and looped around different parts of the track. Craig and Peter drove around in the Ute and cleared the further parts of the track. When the group was finished they returned to the car park for lunch. After lunch the sky darkened and threatened rain. It was a good time for this group to leave before rain came. That still left Matt and Ken completing their Butterfly Orchid survey.

### December Activities

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December

**Activity 1 – 10am Junction Road Car Park:** Nesting box survey. We will use the pole-mounted camera to view the animals in the different boxes.

**Activity 2 – 10am Kerry Road Car Park:** A Green Walk of Foster's Gully. As part of the Green Walks program there will be a community walk around Foster's Gully.

For either activity you will need to bring clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

Later the Christmas BBQ celebration will start at about 1.00pm.



## **Friends of Morwell National Park Christmas BBQ**

Come along and enjoy in a BBQ lunch to celebrate another successful year of activities for the Friends of Morwell National Park

**When:** Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December

**Time:** 1.00pm

**Where:** Kerry Road picnic area

**What to bring:** BYO plate, cutlery, cup/glass and bring either a salad or sweet.

Please come along.