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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – March 2016

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>
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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter.

If you want to get out into the park there are more Green Walks scheduled over the next few months. Each 60 minute guided walk has a meeting time of 10.00 with the walks departing at 10.10 am. The next Green Walks planned in Morwell National Park are:

Wednesday 23rd March

Foster's Gully Walk

Meet at Kerry Road picnic

Thursday 21st April

Billys Creek Weir

Meet at the Baniff's Road car park

Registration at www.walking.heartfoundation.org.au/events/event or call the Heart Foundation's Health Information Service on 1300 362 787

John's Jottings

This month, John's Jottings will have a break. It should return next month.

Recently Matt and Ken hosted a reporter and photographer from the Latrobe Valley Express. The article from that discussion appearing in the Morwell and Churchill Advertiser on Monday 8th February. For those who did not see the article, it follows on the following pages.

A neighbouring natural attraction

BY EMMA WATSON

ONE might wander through the Morwell National Park without realising the natural wonders he or she is passing.

But right on Latrobe Valley's doorstep, more than 500 identified species of moths, 100 species of birds and close to 30 different mammals call the Parks Victoria land home.

Among the trees and flowing through its creeks are years of

stories to tell of the park, established in the 1960s on the back of local cries for conservation and environmental protection.

For 30 years it has thrived off the passionate attention of Friends of the Park members, whose faces have changed but whose love for the park has essentially remained the same.

"(The park's purpose) is to preserve a little pocket of the natural vegetation, but most

particularly because of the fairly rare butterfly orchids," Friends of the Park founding member and vice president Ken Harris said.

"It (the butterfly orchid) has one of its few places in Victoria in this park."

Having moved to the Latrobe Valley in 1985, Ken's lengthy involvement in the group since it formed in '86 has made him become one of the area's most knowledgeable, self-taught

botanists. He can name just about every plant one comes across while wandering the park's tracks, while his sharp eye and commitment to regular surveys are to thank for updated records of the park's flora and fauna.

"I've got a great love for nature and I sort of fell in love with the park. On my first weekend in Victoria, I chanced upon (it)," he said.

"It's given me an ongoing

involvement in the park over 30 years."

Current Friends of the Park president Matt Campbell joined about four to five years ago when he purchased land nearby.

Although he says his background doesn't quite match Ken's, spending his childhood playing in the park and his passion for "fish, frogs and reptiles" led him to eventually get involved.

Continued on page 2

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

President: Matt Campbell

Vice-President: Ken Harris

Secretary: Beryl Nelson

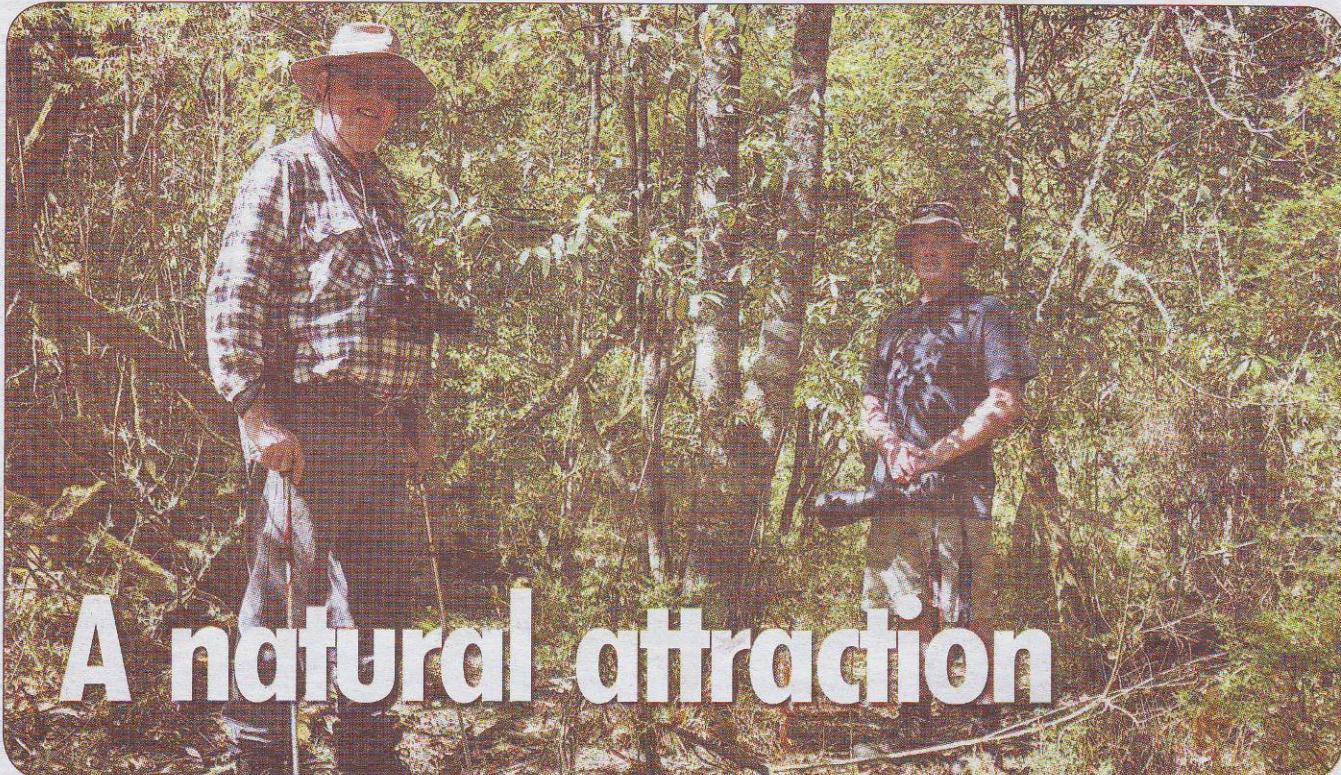
Treasurer: John Barker

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Public Officer: Beryl Nelson

Newsletter Editor: Darren Hodgson, hodgson.darren.d@edumail.vic.gov.au

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



A natural attraction

■ Friends of the Park vice president Ken Harris and president Matt Campbell standing alongside a butterfly orchid in the Morwell National Park.

Continued from page 1

"I've got no background other than I've been into it since I was a kid," Matt said.

"Mine was just a love of fish, frogs and reptiles since I was a kid and from there you just sort of notice the rest."

"I'm in here all the time, so I just sort of feel, once every now and then you give a little bit back."

Friends of the Park consists of between 20 to 30 members who receive monthly newsletters and have the chance to attend regular working bees.

On a chosen Sunday, group members usually meet from 10am at either Kerry or Junction roads before maintaining tracks, removing weeds or counting the number of certain animals.

Annual butterfly orchid and koala surveys are open to the public, while Ken's love for surveying moths had a small group spending all-nighters in the park to identify the different species around.

"We set up a sheet tied between trees and I've got a

generator and 250 watt mercury vapour light," Ken said.

"We hang the light in front of the sheet, sit back and see what comes."



"Once we went in along the Grand Strzelecki Track almost as far as you can go and stayed out all night. We got 165 different moths in one night."

Activities vary from month



■ Matt Campbell inspects a butterfly orchid in the Morwell National Park.

to month with barbecues and a Christmas function also on schedule.

The pair invites anyone with a love for the park or the bush to join in.

"They're not a big day and they're not a hard day - you can come to as many or as few as you want," Matt said.

"If you like the place and you

come out here or you've got an interest in it, feel free to come out here and sign up.

"Or just come along for a day or two first and see if it's for you."

Email Ken via kennedyh@iinet.com.au or Matt via sooty@netspace.net.au for more information.

To keep updated on monthly activities, head to the group's website www.morwellnp.pan-gaeon.net

February Activity Report

At this activity we had Matt, Tamara, Ken, Yuto and Darren. We had a smaller group than usual possibly because of the activity being in a different week. Activities are normally on the third Sunday each month, but this activity fell on the second Sunday of the month. This may have affected how many people could attend the activity.

In the car park, Matt briefed the group about things that have happened over the last month. The chainsaw was back after being serviced and it along with all of the safety gear will be stored in the shed. Last month the need for our own bush cutter was discussed, and the quotes for the bush cutter have been done and the best quote decided. The bush cutter is currently being purchased.

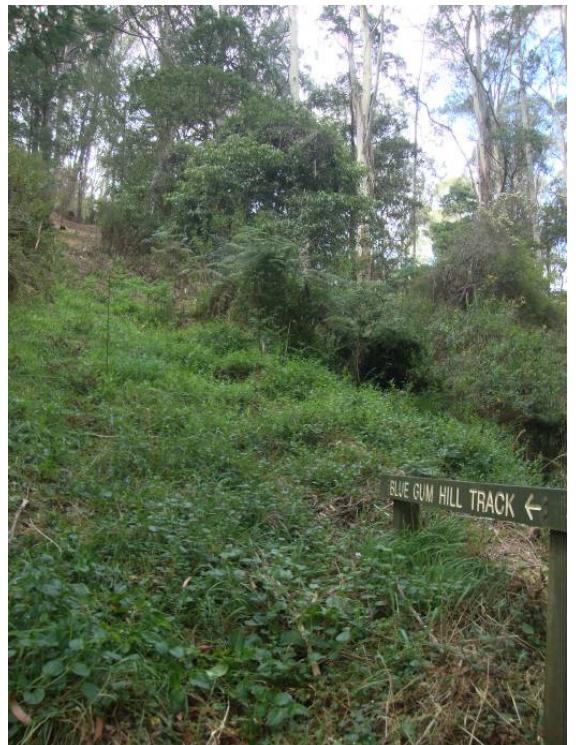
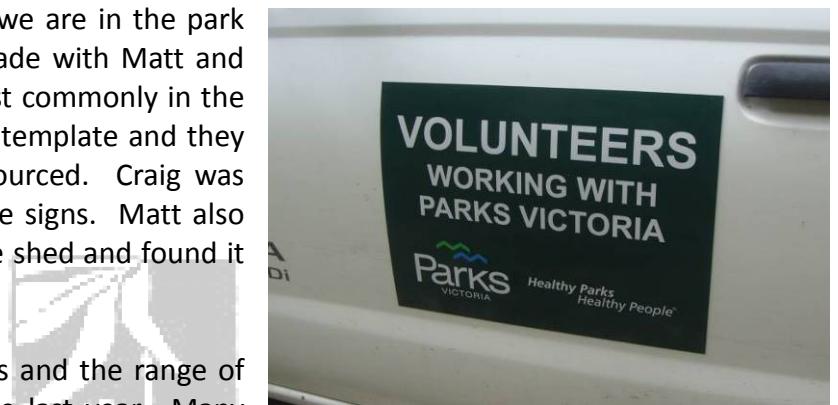
The magnetic signs for our vehicles while we are in the park have been made. Four sets have been made with Matt and Ken keeping a set each, since they are most commonly in the park. The signs are from a standard Parks template and they printed them using a printer that Matt sourced. Craig was surprised that we didn't already have these signs. Matt also followed up about getting more keys to the shed and found it is not possible to get more cut.

We spoke about motion detection cameras and the range of animals Matt has found on them, over the last year. Many animals common in the park have been sighted along with a Bush Rat which was not previously identified in the park. The camera has helped to add at least one new species to record for the park. Hopefully more species will be added in the future.

Ken left after the meeting since the track would be very difficult to travel. The remaining group could all fit into the same vehicle and we travelled to the base of Blue Gum Hill spur track. We got out the chainsaw and safety gear and slowly carried the gear (and ourselves) up the steep slope. Walking up the slope was very difficult with debris moving under our feet and many breaks were needed. There were a few trees and branches across the track and these were cleared as we worked up.

Closer to the top there was a large tree and many branches across the track. A few years before, this had fallen and blocked the track requiring a diversion around it. Now the thick vegetation had died back, making it possible to clear the track. It took a bit of work and Matt's skilled use of the chainsaw to clear the track. Much care needed to be taken with cut round logs rolling down a steep hill.

After clearing the track we carefully worked our way back down the hill. Lunch was a good time to break and part ways. With the small group, fence removal would have been very difficult. No fence removal was attempted, this will need to be left for another activity.



March Activity

Sunday 20th March 6pm

The group will meet in the Kerry Road picnic area for a BBQ, spot light walk and moth survey. You will need to bring clothing and footwear suitable for the evening outdoors and the weather conditions. For the BBQ; a seat, cutlery, plates, drink, etc. would be very useful.

