



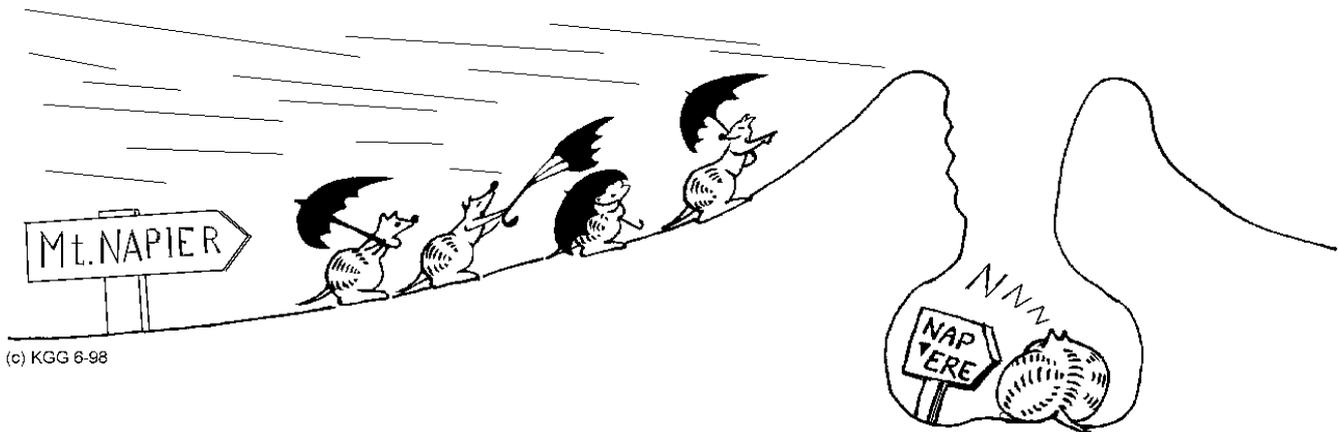
HAMILTON FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

NEWSLETTER June 1998

STOP PRESS: June excursion deferred to 28th

Owing to the inclement weather on 21st June, the planned excursion to Mount Napier has been postponed for a week. It will now take place on Sunday 28 June, with arrangements as before: i.e. meet at the Tourist Office at 10am. We plan to visit the Natural Bridge (not to be confused with the Natural Arch at Mount Eccles) as well as the Devil's Hole.

Neither of these requires much up-hill walking. As well, those who wish for exercise can follow the new(ish) track to the summit.



Forthcoming events

The next special meeting will be on Thursday 16 July, when Bob Hawkes will be telling us about studies on the Orange-Bellied Parrot at the Coorong. This will be followed by an excursion to look for the birds themselves on Saturday 18 July at Discovery Bay. Our previous hunts for this bird have been enjoyable but unsuccessful. This year at least we shall go armed with lots of information about our quarry. We'll meet at 8.30am at the Tourist Office.

In August our general meeting (on 20th) will include videos on roadside planting, and this will be followed on Sunday 23rd by tree-planting at the Wannan Falls Reserve. With luck, by that time the Falls may be worth viewing!

The speaker for our September meeting will be John Koutski on Alaska. We have to apologise to John, because somehow he appeared in our year's Program as "Bob" Koutski. The Editor would like to be able to blame this on computer error; unfortunately I suspect that the computer concerned was human. Perhaps Alaska made us think of bob-sleds.

Grampians National Park Draft Management Plan

This document was released last month for public comment. Submissions have to be in by the end of July. A lightning decision by the Committee switched the planned workshop on this issue with the excursion (see above), and Janeen Samuel is at present putting together all the resultant comments. If any of our members would like to read this Plan, we have

some copies available. We hope to have our submission complete in a couple of weeks. Ring Janeen at 5573-4503 if you have any input.

Opportunity...!

Did you play with trains when you were a youngster? Was Thomas-the-Tank-Engine one of your heroes? Here's your chance to combine your love of railways with an interest in Natural History. The former Hamilton-Coleraine railway line is now reserved for conservation and recreation, and given the right management could become a corridor for native wildlife. Already there are plans for fencing and planting the first 1.3 kilometres. Nominations have been called for a Committee of Management, which will have nine members representing various interests such as local landowners and CFA. It would be nice if one of the members could represent the Field Naturalists, and even nicer if that representative could be someone who's not already busy with Field Nats business. The commitment should not be too heavy, and no special expertise is required. Don't be too shy to nominate yourself. Nominations close on 7 July. Hilary Turner has been closely involved and can give you more information; ring her on 5575-2596.

Recent doings

Hair-tube trapping in the Grampians for the Tiger Quoll has been going on since March, and has involved about 37 volunteers, mainly from our Club and the Friends of the Grampians. They have renewed the baits fortnightly and have managed a total of 5,000 "trap nights". Only about 40 of these have yielded hair, and of those so far analysed most have been Rattus species or swamp wallaby - plus human, sheep (i.e. woolly jumpers) and insect legs. Perhaps all the quolls in the Grampians are bald? There will now be a hiatus until trapping resumes in the spring. If you are interested in participating, contact Dave Munro (5577-2268).

Our April excursion to Cape Bridgewater yielded spectacular views of huge breakers rolling in against the cliffs; most of us had never seen the seas so high there. There were seals nonchalantly leaping through the breakers, and more under the cliffs. The construction of viewing areas has certainly made it easier to watch the seals, although a few of us found that following a "road" for the whole walk detracted a little from the experience. But it is necessary if the area is to cope with increased numbers of visitors.

The May excursion to Mount Byron was notable for the trail of cars abandoned along our route as the road got more and more greasy. Why pay to go on the dodgems when you can drive to Mount Byron in the rain? Penny Moon in her Landcruiser saved the day for several of us. It was all worthwhile for the views from the top of Mount Byron and from Wild Man's Cave, and all the cars made it safely home again.

At our May meeting, Reto Zollinger gave us a highly entertaining tour of "Caves of Europe and Australia", which included the geography, geology and conservation of caves, as well as a "controversial" video. The evening was enjoyed by all, and we now know how the Swiss make the holes in their cheese. Reto is at present caving in the Kimberleys, so we are looking forward to an update when he returns.

If you are not reading this it may be because you have not paid your subs since 1996. If you are reading this, it may still be that you haven't yet paid for 1997. If you haven't paid, or are unsure (look at the address label on the envelope for a clue), please contact Ken Grimes on 5573-4503. Subs are \$15 for one person or \$20 for a family. If you know someone who used to be/would like to be a member, why not show them this newsletter and bring them along to Mount Napier on Sunday?