



# HAMILTON FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

PO Box 591, Hamilton, 3300



## NEWSLETTER, March 2005

Belated New Year Greetings to all our members. Enclosed with this is the **Program** we have put together for 2005. As always, it may be subject to change at short notice owing to circumstances beyond the control of the Committee (e.g. the weather). Note that we are not yet certain of the availability of the speaker for November. Note also that three of our **Special Meetings** will be on **Friday** rather than Thursday nights. This is because the speakers have to travel to get here. (It also means members can go to Film Society showings if they wish. Which brings us to...)

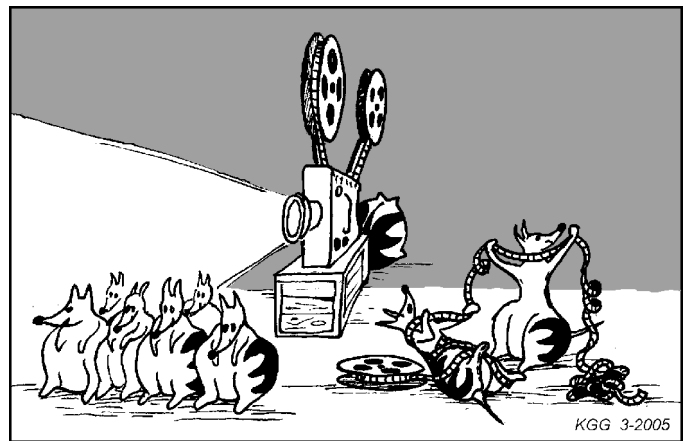
### ...A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

At our first **Special Meeting**, on **Thursday 17 March**, we will be watching three short films made by the late Grace Mcgugan in the 70s and 80s. They will be:

“**So Many Secrets**” about Mount Napier, Byaduk Caves and other local volcanic features;

“**A Man For Trees**” about Peter Francis and the early days of the Points Arboretum; and

“**Living Colour**” a close-up exploration of the natural world around us.



Grace’s daughter, Jill Frawley, has kindly agreed to come and show the films (thereby avoiding the kind of scenario portrayed by our cartoonist.) The films should be of interest to a wide range of people, so please bring along any friends/relatives/neighbours who might enjoy them.

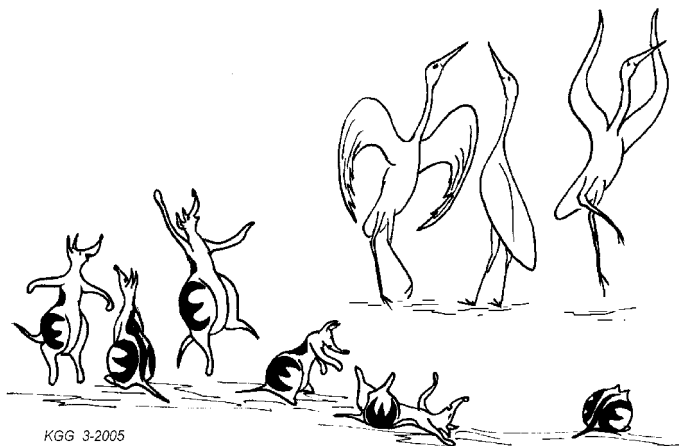
Following the Film Night, our **excursion** on **Saturday 19 March** will be to the **Byaduk Caves**. We visited this area last year but we think it will be worthwhile to have another visit following the film so that we can look at changes in the vegetation - both on the surface and in the cave entrances - in the last 30 years. We hope to visit some different caves from last year (with permission from Parks Victoria). If you are planning to come underground, don’t forget to bring a torch or headlight. We’ll meet at the Visitor Information Centre in Lonsdale Street at 9.30 am.

### FURTHER EVENTS

Our **April excursion** will be an overnight camp-out on the new Beripna walk near Mount Cole. The full circuit is 21 km, but there is the option of a shorter walk with car shuffle, and one camp site is accessible by car. What we choose to do will depend on the preferences of participants. If you are interested and can’t be at the March meeting, ring Yvonne and Reto on 55712544 to discuss the arrangements.

<b>Hamilton Field Naturalists Club.</b>	Subscription for year: .....
Name: .....	
Address: .....	
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I enclose payment of (\$15 single, \$20 family):	\$ .....

**May** will have a water fowl theme. Our speaker at the **Special Meeting on Friday 20 May** will be Rebecca Sheldon, on flocking habitat of **bralgas** in southwest Victoria. On the weekend (**Sunday 22 May**) we will visit Bool Lagoon in South Australia. This has water in it again after being dry for several years during the drought, and usually has a wide variety of water birds. Members may also wish to visit Bourne's Bird Museum, 10 km west of the Lagoon. Some members may drive over on the Saturday in order to go to the nearby Naracoorte Caves (well worth a visit if you haven't been there - or even if you have). Camping is available at the Caves or at the Lagoon. Others will meet on Sunday morning at the Hamilton Visitor Information Centre at 9:00 am (Eastern Standard Time).



In **June**, we will stay close to home and look at nature within Hamilton: in the Parklands and along the Grange Burn. The excursion will be on **Sunday 19 June**, two days before the Winter Solstice, and we will therefore meet at the civilized hour of 10:00 am. This will be followed by another watery theme in **July**, this time concentrating on plants. Our speaker will be Michelle Casanova, who is studying freshwater algae. This will be on **Friday 22 July**, and we hope that Michelle will be able to come on our excursion the following day (**Saturday 23**) to Cape Bridgewater and the freshwater springs there. Unfortunately, July is not a good time to be looking for algae, but we hope we may be able to find some of interest.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES AND COMMITTEE FOR 2005

The AGM was held as planned, during the Christmas party at the Wannon Reserve. Not only was it pleasantly brief but it was attended by several white-throated tree-creepers. Possibly as a result of their benign influence, we decided to hold the membership fees at \$15, or \$20 for a family. These fees are now due for 2005, so if you have not yet paid please fill in the strip and send it with your cheque to PO Box 591, or bring it to the March meeting. The tree-creepers having declined to stand for any positions, the following people were elected to the Committee:

President	John Cayley	Ph. (03) 5572 3737
Vice-President	Reto Zollinger	Ph. (03) 5571 2544
Secretary: Correspondence	Glenys Cayley	Ph. (03) 5572 3737
Secretary: Minutes	Diane Luhrs	Ph. (03) 5572 3874
Treasurer	Ken Grimes	Ph. (03) 5573 4503
Newsletter Editor	Janeen Samuel	Ph. (03) 5573 4503
Media Liaison	David Munro	Ph (03) 5577 2268

## HAVE YOU WIPED YOUR FEET?

Most members will have heard about the South African orchid, a new and alarming weed which is invading native bushland. We will be checking for this in the 18 Acre Reserve on our August excursion. The orchid's rapid spread is due to its production of huge numbers of tiny seeds, and we must assume that these are readily carried on boots and clothing, or on car tyres. This is just the latest example of how we can unwittingly spread harmful plants or diseases: the plant fungus *Phytophthora*, and the chytrid fungus that kills frogs, may also have been spread by walkers. We urge members to be aware of this problem and to wash their boots thoroughly between excursions. Probably we have not paid enough attention to this in the past. If any members have reliable information about the best way of decontaminating boots, packs, coats etc, perhaps they could bring it along to a General Meeting?