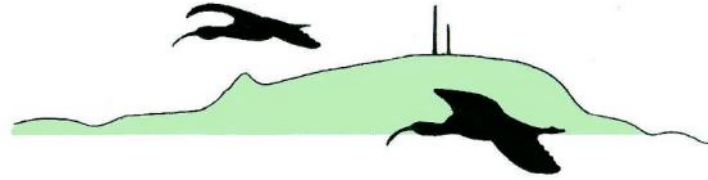


ORANGE FIELD NATURALIST AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023

NEXT MEETING

Thursday 14th December 7.00 pm
2024 Program Planning Meeting.

Face to face at the Environmental Learning
Centre (ELF),
Showground, Leeds Parade.

Christmas Get Together
with ECCO
Sunday 17th December 5.00 - 7.00 pm.
Also at the ELF.

Next Meeting

Thursday 14th December 7.00 pm at the ELF
2024 Program Planning Meeting.

All members of Field Nats are welcome to attend this committee meeting that will plan the program of talks and excursions for 2024. There will be no guest speaker.

If you are unable to come but have a suggestion for a talk or excursion, please email it to orangefieldnats@gmail.com

Christmas Get Together

Sunday 17th December 5.00 – 7.00 pm

Come and share some Aussie festive spirit and relax with ECCO members at the ELF. (Hats and decorations are not required.)



BYO everything – nibbles and food to share and your own drinks, and utensils. If the weather is hot or stormy, we can sit inside or if a great day we can relax outside on the deck or under the oak tree. The ELF has a kitchen.

Last Meeting

The Big Night Sky A Visual Approach.

Speaker John Zimmer.

John's interest in astronomy and the night sky started in childhood and has continued to this day. You could sense this in his enthusiasm during his talk, the wealth of knowledge he shared and the stories he told from the history of astronomy. He kept us entertained by talking of stars, suns, planets, moons, comets, nebula, and wisps of gas or distant galaxies.

The summary and images from John Zimmer.

Our night sky is an important part of our natural environment and people, since ancient times, have looked up and wondered how it all worked.

The history of the Night Sky begins with an Earth-centered system, consisting of a flat earth and a dome of stars in various patterns, together with five wandering "stars". We touched on the various legends including the Seven Sisters (Pleiades) mentioned in many cultures and the Australian Aboriginal Dark Emu.



The legendary Emu in the Sky with the Southern Cross at its head and the Milky Way for its body. By watching the movement and position of these stars Aboriginal people knew whether they should be out hunting for emus or collecting their eggs.

Ptolemy of Alexandria around 150 A.D established an Earth-centered system which lasted 1400 years until Copernicus of Poland (1530), Tycho Brahe of Denmark (1570) and Johannes Kepler (1600) put forward the concept of a Sun-centered system.

Galileo of Padua (below) caused a sensation, in fact a revolution, when in 1610 he turned the newly invented telescope to the skies and noted, in particular, the movements of the four major moons orbiting Jupiter.



Further improvements in the telescope during the 1700s and 1800s led to the accurate mapping of the stars for navigation, and accurate time keeping, including adjustments to the calendar....and the discovery of "fuzzy" objects.

[Then followed a brief description of what could be seen in the sky with a telescope, including the cratered Moon, planetary detail, and those mysterious fuzzy nebulae.]

The work of Albert Einstein, Henrietta Leavitt, and Edwin Hubble further revolutionized the concept of our Universe by using modern distance-measuring methods in the 1920s. This led to the concept of a Universe which is vastly larger than previously thought ... and the galaxies seemed to go on forever...

[A brief mention was made of the proposed Planetarium for Orange, an educational facility and tourist attraction.]

We can now have a Galilean experience by looking through a telescope at Jupiter to see its 4 satellites (moons) and at Saturn's rings. These should be able to be seen on the excursion.



This image from space of Jupiter shows the shadow of one of the moons (the back dot) and the red spot, which is an eternal storm about the same size as the Earth. The stripes are weather belts.



These images taken over a six-year period by the Hubble Telescope, show how the angle of Saturn's rings changes as seen from the Earth. Courtesy NASA/STScL.

Finally, we reflected upon the "Pale Blue Dot", an image looking back to the tiny blue dot of Earth taken by Voyager 1 in 1990 (launched in 1977) on its journey into interstellar space. **"That is our home! That's all we have. We must look after it!"** See the image and find out more about the pale blue dot at <https://hubblesite.org/home>

Last Excursion

An evening of star gazing with John Zimmer.

Report by Nigel Hobden, photos by Rosemary Stapleton.

It was a sketchy day with the possibility of the afternoon clouding over and members stayed tuned to their email accounts to check whether the weather was going to be favourable for an evening under the stars. Members and friends gathered at the Mud Hut, Homestead Close at Clifton Grove around 8pm for what was anticipated to be a most different Field Nats excursion.



John beside his telescope explaining what might be seen in the night sky. Left to right: John, Kylie, James, Nigel, Tony, Sandra, Penny, Eric, Chris, Hai and Glen at the Mud Hut. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

Whilst waiting for the night sky to darken, as the sun sank well below the horizon, John chatted about the rotation of the Earth, the Sun, and its Solar system. John talked about the Giant Emu (Milky Way), as he did in his presentation, pointing out that the Milky Way was nearing the end of its season. This meant that it was almost too low down in the western sky, close to the horizon to see at this time of year. It will soon not be visible in the Southern Hemisphere. It will rise again to its prominent position, beginning in the pre-dawn summer sky, rising higher as the new year progresses to autumn and winter.



John lining up his telescope on Jupiter and its four moons. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

Like any other activity in nature, it's a game of will we see it, what will we see or will it not appear. Birdwatchers, orchid flower chasers, and fauna enthusiasts all suffer the same will weees. John introduced us to his telescope and spoke about where and how to look for objects in the sky.

Once set up we had two telescopes of differing magnitude to observe the heavens, as Nigel's

partner Kylie and her son, James, had brought along their scope to share.

Before it became too dark John focused on Jupiter in the eastern sky with its four moons and atmospheric bands visible. As it became darker, he picked out Saturn further away. We could all clearly see the rings although very white and not like images in glossy magazines or on the web. A couple of Saturn's major satellites could be seen however its atmospheric bands were less obvious. The reflected light from Saturn takes a mere 1 hour and 57 minutes to reach us on Earth.

After everyone had a turn or two at looking at Saturn's rings we then focused on Pleiades (Seven Sisters) and tried to count all seven. The clouds started rolling in, in wisps, and some of the skies 'twinkles' started to be obscured. We caught a break and John focused his scope on the Andromeda Galaxy M.31 our closest other big galaxy, at a distance of 2 million light years (a light year being the distance light would travel in one year at 300,000km / second). This means we were seeing the galaxy as it was 2 million years ago. John also mentioned the galaxy NGC (New General Catalogue) 213, another Milky Way, estimated at 8 million light years distant, even further than the Andromeda Galaxy M.31.

The cloud continued to roll in blanketing the sky and so it was time, at around 9pm, to head for home and crawl into bed under our own blankets and dream of what might be out there beyond our current reach.

Thanks to John for sharing his knowledge, and telescope with us. He also generously showed Swee the night sky on Friday as she was unable to come on Sunday. It must have been clear that night as the night sky entertained them until 10pm.

First Meeting in 2024 - Thursday 8th February, 7.30 pm, at the Senior Citizens Centre.

This will be the AGM of the Society. It will be followed by a '2023 Show and Tell' PowerPoint of members' photos. Please take some time during the holiday break to select six of your 2023 photos to share. More details will be in the February 2024 newsletter.

Details of the excursion on **11th February** have not been decided.

OFNCS Committee News

We welcome new member Katrina Skirka and welcome back Bruce Hansen.

OFNCS was invited to a consultation meeting of neighbours of the Bloomfield Health Precinct on 6th November. Rosemary attended and Nick King represented ECCO.

Orange City Council are working with Regional NSW to develop a concept plan for this precinct. The area is bounded by Forest, Huntley, and Bloomfield Roads. It includes Hinton Reserve, the bushland, Riverside and what remains of the golf course. The golf course and some Crown land is in the process of being transferred to Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council as part of the finalisation of land claims.

Along with others we highlighted the need to retain Hinton Reserve, the bushland area, and the old hollow-bearing trees elsewhere on the site. These areas contain at least 1 EEC and 6 threatened species have been recorded in them. Keeping the land publicly accessible and promoting it as such was another key item along with tree retention. Also raised was who, and with what funding, will the land be maintained.

Many of those present wished to see some of the area developed and the existing unoccupied buildings updated. It was suggested that all buildings should meet sustainable building principles and that there were more environmentally sensitive surfaces for car parks than bitumen.

Once the plan has been developed there will apparently be an opportunity for comment.

CWEC Report

Rosemary Stapleton,
OFNCS CWEC Rep.



Representatives from ten environmental groups joined the 5th November meeting. Key points were:

- Picnics for Nature – successful picnics were held at Mudgee, Lithgow, Dubbo and Orange.
- Trish Doyle, Parliamentary Secretary to Penny Sharpe. All agreed the meeting with CWEC reps on 29th September had been very helpful in establishing contact with the NSW government. On 18th October

Trish gave a speech to Parliament on this meeting

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-136623/link/123>

- Ongoing battles over new and existing mines were reported on. Some actions by groups are making the EPA and politicians on the Health Effects of Mining Inquiry aware of the significant impact on communities and that evidence from experts does not appear to be considered by the IPC. The Inquiry's report is due on 15th December.
- Another concern was that expansion plans for existing mines, often coal, are being broken up into many applications for small modifications. These are easier to get through the planning process as they avoid the need for an EIS and an IPC hearing which would occur if all the modifications were combined.
- Water issues. The Murray-Darling Conservation Alliance (made up of State Conservation Councils from across the Basin) is campaigning to improve the Federal Government amendments relating to the Water Act and Basin Plan. The campaign focuses on amendments that recognise First Nations water justice and the need for more water in the North Basin to keep the Darling/Baaka alive.
- The challenges of the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone were highlighted. These are between the need for renewables and the loss of habitat and biodiversity associated with developments. Of particular concern was the CWREZ transmission project for high voltage lines north of Gulgong past Ulan and Wollar.

Gaanha bula Mt Canobolas Update

Several weeks ago, Col Bower began his annual post fire monitoring of the endemic Canobolas Leek Orchid, *Paraprassophyllum canobolense*. None of the plants he had tagged close to Orange View Lookout were flowering however he found five flowering plants in an area along the Fern Gully Trail. They were in a quadrat he had established back in 2018. Of the five, one is a tagged plant and four are new. As the area was surveyed in 2018/19, Col suggests that the new plants seem most likely to have resulted from seed produced after the fire.

Col generously offered to take orchid enthusiasts Swee and Hai to see them. As the flowers don't last very long or get predated he felt it had to be the weekend that was wet and foggy. This didn't dampen Col. We headed to the mountain and found two spikes still out.



Col pointing out a *Canobolas Leek Orchid* flower to Swee and Hai, in less than ideal conditions. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

As Swee had never seen flowers of a Cinnamon Bell Potato Orchid, *Gastrodia sesamoides*, we also checked out one that Hai had found. Another new orchid for Swee was the Large Bird Orchid, *Chiloglottis valida*. While we were a few weeks late to see the flowers a number had been pollinated. Col thought it meant there were a good number of the pollinator species about. This species deceives the males of the Thynnine wasp *Neozeleboria monticola*.



A pollinated *Chiloglottis valida* flower spike that was over 10 inches tall. Photo R Stapleton.

In recent weeks Hai has found flower spikes of *Gastrodia sesamoides* in several other

locations on the mountain. It seems that the other Potato Orchid, *Gastrodia procera* is having a year off as there are no flower spikes at one of the known locations. In his walks Hai has also found a developing flower spike of *Dipodium roseum*, the Rosy Hyacinth Orchid.



Gastrodia sesamoides found by Hai along Mt Canobolas Road. Photo Hai Wu.

Peregrine Falcon News

from Cilla Kinross.

Both peregrine nestlings made successful fledges on Tuesday 14th November, the female (Marri) and the male (Barru) in the afternoon. I have been able to watch the little male in some roost trees about 500 m southeast of the nest box in the water tower. He was in the same tree as his father, so I was able to blow up the photo and take measurements. Males are 15-30 % smaller than females. Since then, I have only seen one juvenile at a time, either in the trees or on the tower roof and judging size on the roof, even with our wonderful new tower cam, is very difficult. So, I'm not certain whether we still have one or two surviving fledgelings. And if only one I am unsure which one it is.

After they fledge, they may return to the box after a few days (or not). Either way they stay in the area for a month or two learning to hunt. And the parents still feed them during this period if needed.

Cilla's web update from 20th November says:

We know that one fledgeling is doing really well. Flying from tree to tree and even up to the tower. Being fed by the adults. Not hunting yet, and still a bit clumsy (dropped the prey at one point!). But after a week I would have expected to see two fledgelings flying around and chasing each other and we've only spotted one.

On the 5th December Cilla said she hadn't seen either juvenile for a couple of days, but thought it might be in the shade because of the heat.

All the livestreams can be found if you google 'Livestreams FalconCam Project'. The new tower cam is now functioning well and there is lots of new interest in the site. Best times are early in the morning when there is likely to be some falcon action such as this: <https://youtu.be/81H4kjBSNSI>



Image of adult female taken through the new tower cam.

Glossy Black Cockatoo (GBC) Surveys

Report by Rosemary Stapleton.

Several OFNCS members joined in these surveys in November. Nigel surveyed at Frosts Dam in Goonoo National Park (NP) on the 11th November and had five Glossies come in. They waited in the nearby trees for a while and then flew down to drink at dusk. Libby McIntyre (CW LLS) reports that the count for Goonoo NP was 31 Glossies with another 12 counted on two adjacent farms.



Glossies drinking at a dam in Goonoo NP. Photo Nigel Hobden.

Nigel, Steve, Bruce, Rosemary and Catherine joined the surveys in Goobang NP on one or both survey days (17/18 November). Unlike the surveys in the Pilliga and Goonoo the surveys in Goobang NP this year were to identify *Allocasuarina* feed tree sites and

potential nesting hollows. The aim for Friday was to drive as many of the fire trails in the park as possible to map such areas and to note any Glossy sightings. Libby McIntyre (CW LLS) and Jack Fry (NPWS) had organised detailed maps and instructions.

Nigel and I drove from the Baldry Road at Sawpit Creek and surveyed the Spring Creek, Hervey and Currumbenya Trails. We left the park at Lake Metcalfe near the Parkes Manildra Road. It was a great opportunity to drive through areas not usually accessed by the public and see the varied forest habitats along the trails. Other volunteers, LLS and NPWS staff drove trails in the east and north of the park. Sadly, we only spotted a family group of three Glossies whereas those who surveyed in the northern areas saw a total of twenty.

On Saturday, the aim was to return to the mapped *Allocasuarina* sites and head into the bush looking for chewings. These are the remains left by Glossies after they have fed on the tiny cones. The colour of the chewings can give an indication of the time since the Glossies have fed there. Catherine and I went with Steve on the Hervey and Currumbenya Trails, while Bruce went with Jack on trails to the east. The only place we found chewings was near where Nigel and I had seen the Glossies the day before. As the chewings were whitish, they may have been from these birds feeding. It was probably a 'taste test' as there weren't a lot of chewings! I think we all concluded that the Glossies are very choosy as there were many trees with cones and no evidence of chewings.



*Catherine and Steve about to survey for chewings at an *Allocasuarina* site. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.*

As he drove Steve related the history of burns and fires in the park as well as the challenges of the trails in wet seasons. After lunch we joined Jack and Bruce and left the park via the

Deep Creek Trail. One old chewings site was found and mapped on this trail.

Steve returned to Tracy at their camp at Greenbah while the rest of us drove back to Orange via Parkes. As we had to pass the Bumberry section of Goobang NP we decided to do a few surveys down the Staircase Trail. We managed to spot one site with a moderate amount of chewings that were orange under one *Allocasuarina* with scattered older chewings under other trees.

Other interesting sightings we had over the 2 days were Musk Lorikeets feeding on flowering eucalypts in many parts of the park, a Great Egret at Lake Metcalfe, a goanna and the Bearded Dragon that is Creature of the Month.



Musk Lorikeet having a break from feeding along the Snig Trail. Photo Nigel Hobden.

Strange structures on the top branches of young *Allocasuarina* trees have been identified by Dick Medd as galls. There were occasional flowers of *Leptospermum*, *Philotheca* and some *Dampiera*. Along part of the trail in the Bumberry section the Flannel Flowers were a white carpet while they were much more scattered in the other parts of the park that I visited.



*Galls on *Allocasuarina diminuta* in Goobang NP. Photo Catherine Stapleton.*

Steve summed up his time by emailing 'We had a day, largely of "nil results" on Saturday looking for chewing and GBCs. However, at dusk that night I hit the jackpot at Greenbah Camping Area with at least seven (including at least one juvenile) GBCs roosting in the trees overnight. A pair with a juvenile was seen by a couple from Parkes NPA on Friday evening. I mustn't have been paying attention.'

Lovely dawn chorus both mornings. Friarbirds, Red Wattlebirds, King Parrots, Kookaburras, Galahs, Corellas, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Tawny Frogmouth, Eastern Rosellas, Magpies and Eastern Greys. At night Southern Boobooks and Cuckoos. Also saw an Emu and 4 goats further south of the camping area.'

Dates for your Diary

2024 Cowra Woodland Bird Survey dates are February 17/18, April 6/7, July 27/28, and October 19/20. Contact Sue Proust for more information or to register for surveying at sueproust@bigpond.com

World Wetlands Day Walk, Sunday 4th February. World Wetlands Day is on Friday 2nd February. The Ploughmans Wetland Care Group will hold a wetland walk on the Sunday to celebrate how important wetlands are for biodiversity as well as people.

Sightings around Orange

If you see anything interesting, please email orangefieldnats@gmail.com or post it on Facebook.

Things with Wings

Some interesting sightings of birds have been made in the last month.

On 9/10 a **Nankeen Night Heron** was seen at the dam in Somerset Park by Col Bower.

In mid-November, a **Buff-banded Rail** was spotted by Nick King while walking in the parkland west of James Sheahan High School.

A late staying **Scarlet Robin** was seen at The Falls, Mullion Ranges, by Hai on 26/11.

Superb Parrots can be seen and heard in Orange most days at the moment. At Ploughmans Wetland, Jack Brabham Playing Fields, and Bloomfield they have been seen feeding on the ripening seed pods of planted

Acacia shrubs. Nigel has again assisted McLean Cobden with his research work on measuring Superb Parrot nestlings and tracking them once they fledge. On the way to the Glossy surveys several flocks of up to 30 Superbs were seen feeding along the roadside just west of Cumnock. Maybe some grain had been spilt from a truck following harvest.



Nigel with a Superb Parrot nestling being monitored by McLean Cobden.

In the last month or so Brian Williams has been watching a *Brown Goshawk* nest with two chicks at his property near Vittoria.



Young Brown Goshawks almost ready to fledge. Photo Brian Williams.

Male **White-winged Trillers** are still being seen with one at Bowman Avenue on 20/11 along with a **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** and hovering **Black-shouldered Kite**. On 4/12 Cilla reported a triller at Fourth Crossing and said 'he was trilling! Autocorrect keeps telling me it should be 'thriller'!!'

Plants

Flowering *Olearia chrysophylla* was seen by Hai on one of his walks on the mountain. It is one of four *Olearia* species found in the SCA and is uncommon. Dick Medd was pleased to see that it had survived the 2018 fire. The more

common species that was flowering last month on Watts Pinnacle is *O. phlogopappa* subsp. *continentalis*.



Olearia chrysophylla. Photo Hai Wu.

Along the first straight part of Towac Way on the upslope side, you may see the pretty white racemes of a Speedwell or *Veronica* species.

Little Red Flying Foxes (below) have now joined the Grey-headed Flying Foxes in the colony on Ploughmans Way.



Little Red Flying Fox. Photo R Stapleton.

Insects

Hai photographed this amazing moth (below) near Orange View in the SCA on 19/11. He has had it identified as a Snout Moth, *Genduara punctigera*.



Creature of the Month - Eastern Bearded Dragon, *Pogona barbata*.

Text by Rosemary Stapleton, photos by Catherine Stapleton.

This dragon is the Creature of the Month because of a sighting on the Glossy Black Surveys in Goobang NP. Catherine spotted a lizard standing over a hole in the middle of a sandy part of the Hervey Trail. She took a photo out of the passenger window (Photo 1) and a few seconds later several more when she noticed the lizard had changed from yellow to a dull brown colour (Photo 2). This colour change was surprising and chameleon-like. As the dragon didn't run away, we wondered if it had laid eggs in the hole. Fortunately, it hadn't been there the day before as Nigel and I had driven the trail.



Photo 1 taken at 10.26 am.

Photo 2 taken at 10.28 am.

Why the colour change?

The web reveals some answers as colour change in bearded dragons was researched by Katie Smith at the University of Melbourne. <https://www.unimelb.edu.au/newsroom/news/2016/june/bearded-dragons-change-color-on-different-body-parts-for-social-signals-and-temperature-regulation>

Quoting from this link the research found that 'bearded dragons are able to partition colour change to specific body parts, depending on whether they are responding to temperature or communicating with other lizards. It revealed that colour change in the neck area was only linked to social interactions with other bearded dragons, but by changing their backs to a darker colour in cool weather, the lizards were predicted to save approximately 85 hours of basking time during the energy-intensive breeding season.'

Ms Smith said "The ideal internal body temperature for a bearded dragon lizard is 35 degrees centigrade. In order to maintain this temperature, a bearded dragon can change its back to a light yellow colour when it is hot to a dark brown colour when it is cool. Interestingly, the chest and beard do not change colour in response to temperature but change dramatically from cream to jet black during social interactions, accompanied by head-bobs and push-ups. Our results suggest that a bearded dragon lizard can balance all of its colour change requirements by only changing colour on the back for regulating temperature (which appears to be beneficial as it is exposed to the sun), and only changing the beard/chest colour for social communication (which is the region displayed to other lizards). The lizards also changed to dark colours very quickly, indicating that this may be an important adaptation for rapidly warming body temperatures."

Interestingly the research didn't mention colour change in the legs or the response to other threats such as humans.

You will see these Bearded Dragons in dry forest and open woodland habitats. They are diurnal and semi-arboreal and are often seen warming up on stumps, fence posts or in the middle of a dirt road. In NSW they are widespread although absent from the south and lower north coasts and adjacent ranges. In the Far Western Plains they are replaced by the Central Bearded Dragon.

Other information from Swan, G., Sadler, R and Shea, G. 2022. *A Field Guide to Reptiles of NSW*, 4th Edition.

Speech given by Chris Pratten, OAM, BSc, MA, Founding President (1974-1984) of the Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society, at the launch of the *Orchids of Central Western NSW*, by Dr Col Bower and Dr Dick Medd, at Orange City Library, 17 October 2023.

When asked Chris kindly provided a hard copy of his speech for the newsletter. It is copied below with a few very minor changes to help with clarity and formatting.

Good evening, all Members of the Orange Field Nats.

Good evening, all Distinguished Guests, wherever you may hail from.

Good evening, Celebrated Authors — what a Gem of a Book you two have created! May I extend my heartfelt thanks to you both for inviting me to be present here tonight for the launch of the *Orchids of Central Western NSW*.

It is almost 40 years since I have stood before a meeting that has gathered within a Cooe! of Old Man Canobolas. I am very pleased to see that the Field Nats are still using the logo that was suggested by Committee Member Derek Woolcott all those years ago.

While I am speaking on the Field Nats I would like to offer a big THANK YOU to **Rosemary Stapleton** for all the work she puts in to making the Society's NEWSLETTER the excellent little publication it has become. Every time I receive an issue I read it avidly to see what all of you have been up to.

I would now like to say a few words about the book that Dr Col and Dr Dick have produced. First and foremost, it is a beautiful little critter!

I have read all the general text twice since Dick posted me a copy a few weeks ago, and I have not seen one single thing that I could point a finger of criticism at — **not one thing**.

A great deal of stuff these days is so shabbily put together that it is an ordeal to try and read and understand it. But not so this volume. I repeat — I have seen not one thing that I would wish to criticise. What particularly surprises me with the book is the relative ease with which this 89 year old man read the text in such a small font size [9 pt] — a size no doubt chosen in order to fit so much information into such a small page size!

And now I come to the highlight of my address — a bit of Show and Tell.

I want to draw your attention to a few things I saw in the BLUE BOOK [as I'm calling it]. First off, a few titles on page 257, REFERENCES and FURTHER READING, caught my eye:

One was this little number [holds aloft] *Australian Wildlife*, of May 1961, in which W E Giles, of Springside, Orange, published *A Census of the Native Flora of the Orange District*. Now I met old Bill Giles once or twice in my early years living in the Orange area and I knew something of his long interest in the native plants of our district.

Another reference in the list that caught my eye was this little book [holds aloft] *The Flora of Mt Arthur Reserve* by G W Althofer and G J Harden.

I knew both these authors quite well: George Althofer, the pioneer Native Plant Nurseryman, of *Nindethana*, Dripstone, near Wellington, and Gwen Harden, who went on to join the staff of Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens, and who worked so tirelessly over the next few years to see the wonderful four-volume *Flora of New South Wales* completed and published.

Yet another title was *The ORCHIDS of NEW SOUTH WALES*, by the Rev H M R Rupp — not the 1969 Facsimile Edition (as referenced) but the original edition, which was published in December, 1943, at a time of great wartime restrictions. [holds aloft an original edition and offers suggests the authors call him to see the original rather than the facsimile.]

I met this author too, but only once. It must have been when I first acquired his book (1952), and I remember Dad lending me his Humber *Snipe* so that I could drive to Northbridge to meet the old retired clergyman. What a trusting father Mr Pratten must have been!

Another small reference that intrigued me was found on the very last page of the Blue Book *Orchids of Central Western NSW* inside of the back cover among the biographical notes — where I read that Col was awarded the "R D Fitzgerald trophy by the Australasian Native Orchid Society in 2011."

I am sure that you will all know who R D Fitzgerald was. Or will you?

[At this point in the proceedings several members of the audience responded to the speaker's urgings and proved that THEY, at least, knew who Mr Fitzgerald was.]

Robert Fitzgerald was the Deputy Surveyor-General of New South Wales when he died in 1892. But, more importantly, although he was meant to be surveying, he was the man who created this work

[At this point the speaker moved to a nearby table and held up a copy of Vol 1 of *Australian Orchids*, by R D Fitzgerald, F.L.S., which was printed by several different Government Printers of New South Wales, and which is dated on the title page, **1882**.] I have Vol 2 at home too (printed in 1894), but unfortunately it was not well enough to travel to Orange! (Fitzgerald died before Vol 2 was completed). Although I have not personally seen them, I understand Mitchell Library hold many plates not included in the two published Volumes.

I have always been fascinated at the thought of this man travelling the backblocks of NSW in some sort of horse-drawn vehicle looking for orchids.

I must always remember that it was my father who gave me these two Volumes of *Fitzgerald's Orchids*. He did so as a 'reward' for passing the Leaving Certificate in 1951 — he paid his brother-in-law, my Uncle Keith Kirkland, 25 pounds for the volumes. (Actually Uncle Keith wanted to buy the Volumes back a few years later! He had a rich American orchid expert coming to Australia to meet him and he wanted to give the Fitzgerald Volumes to this guy as a gift.)

But THEY WERE NOT FOR SALE!!

Please feel free to come up after our meeting finishes and look more closely at the Show and Tell items, including the RARE original volume of Fitzgerald's Volume 1.

But now it is time for me to ask you to join in the **launch** of the *Orchids of Central Western NSW*, by Colin C Bower & Richard W Medd. I propose that we do so by giving three cheers for the authors who produced such a worthwhile gem:

Hip! Hip! Hooray!
Hip! Hip! Hooray!
Hip! Hip! Hooray!

THANK YOU



Chris Pratten launching the 'Blue Book'. Photo Helmut Berndt.

Remember the book is available locally at Collins bookstore and at centralwestorchids.com



Peaceful waterhole along Spring Creek Trail, Goobang National Park. Photo Rosemary Stapleton.

To join 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.

EFT payments to: BSB 802 129: Account 100014678: O F N & Cons Soc Inc.

Please be sure to identify payments with your name and send confirmation to orangefieldnats@gmail.com

Subscription rates:

Single member – \$25

Concession rate (emailed newsletters) – \$12.50

Each additional family member – \$5

Concession rate (printed newsletters) – \$25

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

This Newsletter is produced for OFNCS by the Editor, Rosemary Stapleton. Views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Society. Items should not be reproduced without permission of the Editor.

Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, including the people of the Wiradjuri Nation, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society, PO Box 369, Orange, 2800
orangefieldnats@gmail.com www.orangefieldnats.com www.facebook.com/ofncs/