



September 2023

# Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club Newsletter



*Hakea grammatophylla* is a near threatened species because of its limited distribution. It grows only in the MacDonnell Ranges on the higher rocky areas. Thank you to Peter McDonald for the photo.

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month  
(except December and January) at 7:00pm  
at the Olive Pink Botanic Garden.

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The next newsletter will be published on 1 October 2023.  
We appreciate all contributions, articles and photos both local and elsewhere.  
Please have them to Lisa McLean [lisamclean@outlook.com](mailto:lisamclean@outlook.com) by 23 September 2023.

## **ALICE SPRINGS FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 7pm** – Speaker night at Olive Pink Botanic Garden. **Dorothy Latimer** speaking on *Photographing Birds and Other Subjects*.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September** – **Rainbow Valley**. A wonderful place to look at the wildflowers. Leader Barb Gilfedder.

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October** – Tour of Traeger Museum at Old Timers 2.30-4.30 pm. Leader Megg Kelham.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October** – Speaker night. Fiona Walsh talks about termites, including cultural aspects.

## **AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY – ALICE SPRINGS**

[apsalicesprings@yahoo.com.au](mailto:apsalicesprings@yahoo.com.au)

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 6.00pm** –at Olive Pink Botanic Garden. Spring tour of Olive Pink Botanic Garden with Ian Coleman (at right). After good winter rains OPBG has spring flowers and plants bursting with life. Ian will talk about some of the innovative techniques he has applied during his tenure as Curator at the garden. This will be followed by a social get together and supper to farewell Ian. Please RSVP to above email address and bring a plate to share. **This is a combined APS AS and ASFNC event.**



**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September** – Members only (APS & ASFNC) wander through Helen Kilgariff's front paddock at White Gums. Leave by 8 am from information bay at Old Timers. Enjoy a ramble through the daisies followed by shared morning tea. **This is a combined APS AS and ASFNC event.**

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October** – Speaker night. Steve Morton: Plant ecology of Australia deserts.

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October** – Plants of sand dunes. More information closer to the day.

### **Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club** **Committee Members**

<b>President</b>	Marg Friedel	0417 849 743
<b>Vice-President</b>	to be appointed	
<b>Secretary</b>	Lisa McLean	0412 642 987
<b>Treasurer</b>	Neil Woolcock	0428 521 598
<b>Property Officer</b>	to be appointed	

<b>General Members</b>	Wendy Mactaggart	0434 495 903
	Peter McDonald	0427 177 450
	Jill Brew	0437 223 203

<b>Public Officer</b>	Anne Pye	0438 388 012
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### **Other Club Responsibilities:**

Newsletter – Lisa McLean / Barb Gilfedder

Facebook Organiser – Meg Mooney moon3@iinet.net.au

Website controller – position vacant

### **Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club**

#### **AGM**

A big THANKYOU to our previous committee. You will see from the new list of committee members that we have retained some but others have moved on. We wish them well. Congratulations to our new committee members. See President's and Treasurer's reports on pages 9 and 10.

#### **HELP NEEDED**

As you will notice, there are a number of vacant positions in the Club. Why not join the committee and be part of a friendly team working together for the Field Nats.

Maybe you have an idea for an interesting field trip, walk or suggestion for a speaker night.

The Club is always looking for volunteers to write up the monthly speaker night talks, short pieces on activities, and of course photo contributions.

If you'd like to make any sort of contribution, be it ideas, photos, articles or a committee position please contact Lisa McLean.





Lovely pic by Anne Pye showing *Acacia bivenosa* in front of Corroboree Rock.

## Corroboree Rock trip – 19 August 2023

### Report by Marg Friedel

The mid-August fire in the West Macs meant the cancellation of our planned trip to Wallaby Gap and Euro Ridge. Instead, we headed to the East Macs and Corroboree Rock on 19 August to enjoy what we could find there.

A Crested Bellbird greeted us on arrival. Flowering shrubs were plentiful, large and small. The group set off to walk clockwise around Corroboree Rock, although we soon wandered off the track to investigate the stony flats and rises to the west. The first encounters were with *Eremophila christophori* (Dolomite Fuschia Bush) and *Scaevola glabrata* (Fanflower), with their flowers in shades of blue.



Above: *Eremophila christophori* (Marg Friedel);  
Below: *Scaevola glabrata* (Joy Taylor);  
Right: *Eremophila freelingii* (Jill Brew).





Closer to the hills we found *Eremophila freelingii* (Rock Fuschia Bush) and *Dipteracanthus australasicus* (Native Petunia), whereas Sennas and Acacias were everywhere in bright yellow flower. Grasses (Enneapogons, Aristidas and Spinifex) were abundant after several years of good rain but in amongst the tussocks were *Ptilotus obovatus* (Smoke Bush) and another *Ptilotus* – *P. sessilifolius*.



These two photos by Jill Brew illustrate the similar but different - *Ptilotus obovatus* and *P. sessilifolius*.

Rosalie Breen observed that the northernmost hill, possibly comprising dark dolostone, supported white-trunked *Corymbia aparrerinja* (Ghost Gum), but the more southerly hills nearby, of a paler limestone-related rock, supported a different *Corymbia*, possibly *opaca* (Bloodwood) or *eremaea* (Hill Bloodwood).



Above: Different hills, different *Corymbias* (Marg Friedel);  
Left: Sunshine personified in many *Senna* species (Jill Brew).

At the lookout, where limestone was prominent, we saw *Streptoglossa odora* (smelly!) and *Anemocarpa saxatilis* (Hill Sunray), and read the description of Corroboree Rock itself. The Rock “is an eroded remnant of an ancient rock strata [stratum?] known as the Bitter Springs Formation...estimated to be 800 million years old.” The dark brownish-black colour of the rocks, which contain dolostone or magnesium carbonate, is the result of weathering. The orange and white colours, visible where outer rocks have fallen away, indicate tropical weathering that occurred about 60 million years ago.

And we didn’t just encounter rocks and plants! Butterflies were appreciating the abundant flowers and Mary Murtagh was quick enough to photograph a dragonfly.

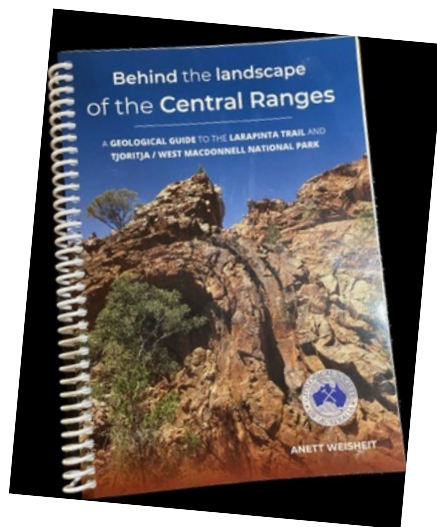


While the name Corroboree Rock may be an invention of westerners, the outcrop is nevertheless an important part of the Eastern Arrernte Perentie Dreaming and deserves respect. Lisa McLean adds: "While the word 'corroboree' comes from the Eora nation (Eastern NSW), its use to describe ceremonies involving gathering, songs and dances has become widely accepted across the country. The area is an important part of the living cultural landscape of Eastern Arrernte Perentie Dreaming, and cultural information about the rock is restricted to senior male Traditional Owners. We made sure to respect this by walking on the marked tracks, and of course, by not climbing the rock."

Joy Taylor summed up the experience: "Lovely morning exploring the hillsides around Corroboree Rock. Some infestation of Buffel grass, but large areas undisturbed. So much in bloom after the rains."



You have to look hard to see the wings of the dragonfly (Mary Murtagh).



## Behind the Landscape of the Central Ranges

A geological guide to the Larapinta Trail and Tjoritja/ West MacDonnell National Park

Review by Rosalie Breen

Saturday 12 August was the launch of Anett Weisheit's eagerly awaited book, at the Telegraph Station. I was impressed with the interest shown by the big crowd there, also to support National Science Week (so plenty of young ones). The more people who have knowledge and appreciation of our unique central Australian environment, the more active will they be for its preservation.

The morning was organised by the Geological Society of Australia and we were greeted by a display of the many rock types to be found along the Larapinta Trail. Also a number of other groups had stalls, including our own Field Naturalists there to catch a few more members; thanks especially to Marg, Lisa and Barb. Glenn Marshall, who has presented at several Field Nats meetings, brought his display.

Amber Jarrett from GSA in Darwin chaired the proceedings. Angus Robinson, Coordinator of Tourism from Australian Geoscience Council emphasised the use of the book as a tourist attraction so that many could appreciate and understand the landscape; Reg Ramsden from Remote Education Tours considered the book perfect for use in camps for school kids learning of their surroundings; and Marg Friedel expressed the Field Nats' support for the book.

Anett's talk was mostly on how to navigate through all the information in her book. It is set out for ease of use and looks so inviting. It is a field guide showing double pages of almost 60 identifiable locations. It explains the geology of the rocks in each, and includes photos and diagrams. There are also bits about biodiversity, ecology, culture and history. Other features are the icons for each site, many maps and "the age of the Earth along your arm" pictures. You will learn such a lot, a little at a time as you read.

Lastly Anett took a group on a guided field trip close by.

Below: The Field Nats stall attracted new members and the sale of flora brochures was brisk (Barb Gilfedder).



Alice Springs Field Naturalists Club





## Members' Night

After the AGM on Wednesday 9 August, we held our usual Members' night when everyone is invited to bring a contribution. Marg Friedel showed a selection of photos from a recent trip to Newhaven (see October newsletter) and Barb Gilfedder introduced us to the Beddome Ranges.

### Barb Gilfedder – In search of *Acacia latzii* in the Beddome Ranges

Sorting out old photos I found this collection from May 2011.



It was a private trip that seven of us made down to the Beddome Ranges.

I had found a reference to *Acacia latzii* growing there and we wanted to see if we could find them. Beddome Ranges are on New Crown Station, east of the Stuart Highway near the South Australian border. I couldn't remember if we travelled down to Kulgera and then east or down to Finke and then west. Connie thought the Finke route.

We camped in the ranges and in the morning explored, climbing the shaley hills, then walking to where we thought the trees should be. We were so excited to find them, beautiful stately trees with younger ones growing among them.



Left: Hugging the breakfast fire – Jim, Allan, Pat, Connie, Steve and Jenny. Right: A mature *Acacia latzii*.





The road cuts across this shallow lake when it is dry, but on this trip we had to make a long detour.

From there we continued east to Old Andado. The swamp near Old Andado was full of water (a rare occurrence), with a view of the homestead on the other side and a good detour around to it (the track usually goes across the middle). We enjoyed the Orange Chats busy chasing insects on the water's edge. There were beautiful red sandhills to go over or around and lots of interesting plants to discuss and photograph.



There is a certain magic about red sand hills. This one was looking fantastic with lots of interesting plants growing on it after recent rain. The *Crotalaria eremaea* subsp *strehlowii* was flowering beautifully. We were thrilled to see this Inland Dotterel on the roadside.





Above: Two ants inspecting the flower of *Crotalaria cunninghamii*. Right: *Dicrastylis costelloi* in bud.



We called in to inspect the *Acacia peuce* trees at the Mac Clark reserve and at some hills to find the rare *Eremophila* sp. Arookara Range. It is such a beautiful shrub only occurring in a very limited area. This specimen was well-hidden among Buffel Grass, while others grew higher on the hills.



Left: *Eremophila* sp. Arookara Range which is still not named. Above: Connie and Jenny searching for it among the Buffel Grass. Below: *C. cunninghamii* – this petal had landed perfectly on the leaf, intriguing the ant.



It was a lovely trip and finding and showing the photos brought back happy memories for me.





### 2023 President's Report

*Eremophila christophori* near Corroboree Rock (Marg Friedel)

After 13 years of stability on Barb Gilfedder's watch as President, the Club has had two Presidents since the last AGM. Clare Pearce stepped in at short notice and undertook not only the role of President but also that of Newsletter editor. After six months, work and family necessitated a move to Darwin and Clare resigned her position in February. The Committee then asked me to step up and fill the President's position.

Despite these hiccups, we had a busy and enjoyable year in 2022/23. Our speakers were as diverse as always. In 2022, Bill Low outlined how he undertook ecological surveys, Adam Yates brought us up to date on central Australian megafaunal discoveries, and Glenn Marshall introduced us to his stamp collection featuring volcanoes. After the Christmas break we heard from Alex Vaughn about Singleton Station developments, Clare Pearce gave us her parting talk on citizen science, Peter Yates and Pamela Bladon introduced us to bees and bee-keeping (including samples of their produce), Peter McDonald and Alistair Stewart described efforts to locate and research central rock-rats, Joe Schofield outlined the Newhaven (faunal) species reintroduction project and Dave Albrecht took us through the challenging task of naming a new plant species. We thank every speaker for sharing their knowledge and time with us. Thankyou too to those members who suggested them, or provided supper for the participants (a special mention here to Connie Spencer for maintaining the tea and coffee supplies), or wrote up the talks for the Newsletter. And of course a big thankyou to Ian Coleman and Doug McDougall who have welcomed us throughout the year, making Olive Pink Botanic Garden available to us for meetings, helping us to run them, making display space available for our Newsletter and generally making us feel at home.

We had some great trips: Standley Chasm with Barb Gilfedder, bird counting with Clare (twice), Kuyunba with Neil Woolcock, pollinator searching at Emily Gap (Clare again), Ilparpa claypans sunset (Neil again), intertexta forest (Barb again), Conlons Lagoon (Marg Friedel), Serpentine Gorge on the third attempt (Neil) and Birthday Waterhole with Charlie Carter and Deb Clarke. Thankyou to all the leaders.

Something that has enriched our activities has been sharing events with the Australian Plants Society – both speaker nights and field trips. Some of the APS field trips we've shared included a sand dune ramble, Henry's secret garden and a walk from Jessie to Emily Gap. I'm really grateful to Suzanne Lollback for encouraging the collaboration, especially through both clubs sharing information about future activities to ensure there are no date clashes or duplication of speakers or topics.

The Committee has kept the Club going amongst the changes in leadership. I am particularly appreciative of Neil's support as Treasurer, when we worked to restore the finances of the Club after discovering that a significant number of members were unfinancial. It was impressive to see the response when those members were notified – thanks to all of you who responded. Thankyou to Bec Duncum, who audited our finances again this year, as she has for many previous years. Thankyou too to Suzanne Bitar in her role as Secretary, and the Committee and all members for putting forward ideas for activities and speakers. A special mention is due to Suzanne and to Jan Black, who both stepped in at very short notice and are now moving on. Wendy Mactaggart has continued to contribute with valuable suggestions, but Claire Norman has had to withdraw due to ill health in recent months – thankyou Claire for being our Property Officer. Last, but not least, we welcomed Lisa McLean, a recent and very active member, to the Committee. There has been no Vice President since I moved into the President's role.

There are a number of other roles outside the Committee that keep the Club in the public eye or otherwise running smoothly: Meg Mooney manages our Facebook page, Robyn Grey-Gardner uploads the Newsletter to our website, and Anne Pye as Public Officer ensures we meet our legal obligations to the Territory Business Centre – thankyou all. In the absence of a website manager, I took a crash course in website editing (thanks to Matt Skoss, Pam Keil and Robyn Grey-Gardner) and revised and simplified the website as recommended by a planning meeting in February. Finally, the Newsletter. Barb Gilfedder and I have been able to produce what we believe to be an interesting monthly bulletin, full of your stories and photographs. It's been gratifying to see all your contributions roll in and then to receive happy messages from readers. Thankyou everyone, especially Barb.

One final acknowledgement of the Committee and all Club members – it's been a pleasure spending time with you all and helping the Club to flourish.

Marg Friedel



## Treasurer's report for the 2022 – 2023 financial year

The Financial Report, audited by Rebecca Duncum, is presented for approval. Bec undertakes this task in an honorary capacity and we thank her very much for this.

The club's account balance was \$1,173.64 as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (up from \$873.81 in 2022).  
The club recorded a gain for the year of \$299.83.

Income for the year was \$1,184.00.  
Membership subscriptions were \$1,139.00 (up \$66.50 on last year).  
We received \$45.00 in donations.

The major outgoings for the year were \$495.88 for public liability insurance, \$179.44 for Bean Tree Cafe vouchers and thankyou cards that we present to our speakers and a PO Box fee of \$148.00.  
The 1st aid kit was refreshed by St. John for \$41.85.

We received 53 payments for memberships for the 22/23 period, plus 2 that were paid in advance last year making a total of 55 (58 last year). Many payments were family subscriptions. We have 6 life members, 4 of which have been awarded, and two have been paid for. Life memberships are 10 times the normal subscription but well worth it. We also provide 4 complimentary memberships to people who provide assistance to the Club at no cost. We attracted 5 new memberships to the Club during the year, some of which were family memberships. Some others have moved on or have not renewed.

Membership subscriptions for 2023/2024 are now due.  
These subscription payments will boost the club's funds to about \$2,500.  
We can expect expenditure for the year to be about \$1000, leaving a balance of about \$1,500 that will allow the club to support appropriate programs of our choosing, or to purchase items for the club.

The fees below, which are a \$5 increase on last year, have been agreed to by a majority vote of club members. These fees will now apply to the 23/24 membership year.

Family membership \$35. Concession\* \$30

Single membership \$25. Concession\* \$20

A life membership can be taken out at 10 times normal fee.

Newsletter only for past members who move interstate remains at \$10 – no fee increase

Half subscriptions after January for new members.

\*Concessions are for students and unemployed/retired members

The club is in a position to pay normal expenses and remain financially secure in the coming financial year.

Neil Woolcock

*Diptercanthus australasicus* near Corroboree Rock (Joy Taylor).

