

Mr. A. Baker showed specimens of "imprisoned rocks," worn into smooth surfaces and many curious angles by the action of water in a confined space (pot-holes, etc.).

Mr. R. Lee spoke on seaweeds, and showed slides to illustrate his short talk. These plants are conveniently divided into three sections—the reds, browns, and greens. They differ from land plants in having neither vascular structure, flowers nor roots, reproduction being by water-borne spores, and very complicated.

Mr. Crosbie Morrison showed a film of the fruit-eating bat ("flying fox") and pointed out the comfortable manner in which it wrapped itself up in its wings and rocked itself to sleep.

Mr. A. D. Hardy spoke on auto-parasitism of a giant dodder-laurel (*Cassytha melanthera*), and showed that by experiment it had been proved that the haustoria on the twining stem *did* penetrate into its own tissue. He also reported the case of a "Bewildered Grey Box," which had sent down a branch 30 ft. long towards the ground. The foliage on this branch appeared to be that of grey box, but the flowers and buds were something between a grey and yellow box!

Mr. A. Swaby made some interesting comments on *Anquillaria dioica* (Early Nancy), *Burchardia umbellata* (Milkmaids) and *Dichopogon strictus* (Chocolate Lily), with regard to the purposes of certain floral appendages.

Mr. Willis read a note from Mr. C. French telling how in 1892, on an excursion to Oakleigh, he had discovered beneath some tea-tree a patch of Golden Leek-orchids (*Prasophyllum Dixonii*) and *Corybas unguiculatus*, a small helmet-orchid—both new records for mainland Australia, and the former new to science.

[The type of *Prasophyllum Dixonii*, in Melbourne Herbarium, has been critically examined recently by Mr. W. H. Nicholls, who pronounces it to be merely a pale form of *P. nigricans*; so the species must lapse into synonymy.—Ed.]

Mr. Muir, of Dimboola, reported that the habitat of *Prasophyllum fusco-viride* (Dusky Leek-orchid) in Victoria has been extended by another 40 miles. It is now known from Dimboola (the type area), Diapur, Portland, from Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas in South Australia, and from near Dripstone, on the central-western slopes of N.S.W.

ORCHID DISCOVERIES OF SIXTY YEARS AGO

By T. S. HARR, Croydon.

During a walk through well known country at Cheltenham in December, 1888, I visited a remarkable circular hollow known to us as "the amphitheatre." A small area of flat ground encircling the lagoon afforded specimens of the orchid *Cryptostylis subulata*, until then not known to me. Hence it became the subject of one of my first attempts at identification with the Baron's *Key to*

Victorian Plants, which had just been published. *Orthoceras* was found there a few days later. As it happened, these two orchids were particularly easy to name. Dr. C. S. Sutton apparently did not locate this occurrence. It was not Cheltenham Park, but a water reserve off Wetherall Road nearby. It passed into private hands about 30 years ago.

I recall also a squat form of the greenhood orchid *Pterostylis cucullata*, found in 1892 on the low cliff at Hampton. Plants were to be seen as late as 1912, but traffic and other causes have probably obliterated this patch long since. The soil is quite different from the ordinary sandy soil of the district and carried a few other unusual plants. The Baron, I think, noted the orchid as at "Brighton Bluff"; actually, it is on the long gentle curve between Brighton and Picnic Point.

Many years ago I found close to Centre Road, Clarinda, a small *Caladenia* whose labellum clearly put it with *congesta*, but not the much larger *C. congesta* known to me. I showed it to the Baron and did not understand him further, in my inexperience, than a small form related to *C. congesta*; "possibly," I have in my notes, "a new variety." Last spring, while looking at fresh *C. iridescent*, the thought struck me, "that looks like the labellum of my Clarinda orchid."

EXHIBITS

Miss E. Raff: *Acacia leptosa*, garden-grown at Hawthorn.

Mr. J. S. Seaton: *Leptospermum scoparium*, var. "Lambethii," garden-grown at Caulfield.

Mr. Allan Carter: Cone shells—*Conus marmoreus* L., S.W. Pacific; *C. capitaneus* L., N. Qld.; *C. senator* L., Barrier Reef; *C. princeps* L., Mexico; *C. aulicus* L., Qld.; *C. virga* L., Philippines; *C. guerinianus* Hwass, Philippines; *C. literatus* L., Philippines; *C. quenekei* Lam., Victoria; and *C. stellatus* Reeve, Qld.

Mr. K. Atkins: Collection of *Acacias* from Botanic Gardens—*A. aduncata*, *A. alata*, *A. Baileyana*, *A. calamifolia*, *A. decurrens*, *A. elongata*, *A. Howittii*, *A. Jamesii*, *A. longifolia*, *A. myrtifolia*, *A. prasocarpa*, *A. pycnantha*, *A. rupicola*, *A. verniciflua* and *A. vestita*.

Mr. and Mrs. Eric Muir (of Dimboola): Four cases of mounted eucalypt fruits and buds.

FEATHERTAIL NOTE

When walking down a bush track at Kalorama one night in August, I heard a rustle in the scrub and shone my torch light among the bushes. There was a little Pygmy Phalanger or "Feathertail" gliding from branch to branch (on a *Pultenaea* bush). In order to examine its feather-like tail, I was able to approach within a few feet of the tiny creature. I then stepped back as it glided from the bush to a gum tree about a yard away and so disappeared. After watching that beautiful little sprite for the first time, I felt happy to have seen one of Nature's most charming pictures.

F. M. COLLIER.



Hart, Thomas Stephen. 1948. "Orchid discoveries of sixty years ago." *The Victorian Naturalist* 65, 107–108.

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