

Newport Forest

November 30 2000

2:30 - 4:00 pm

**Weather:** cool 10C (2C in London!), mixed sun/cloud, no breeze

**Purpose:** to try the new bridge and collect plants and fungi

**Participants:** Pat, Kee

On the drive down from London, we noticed the same phenomenon of last week's visit here: While it snowed (a bit, this time) between London and Melbourne, it snowed not at all south of Melbourne and there was little or no snow to be seen anywhere. Driving along the Beattie Line, we noticed large flocks of crows about, most of them out in the bean fields, gleaning, we supposed. (We hoped the GHOs in Harvey's and Eva's woods were keeping a low profile!) coming onto the property we spotted a large hawk sitting in a tree by the ravine forest, watching us. Silhouetted against the sun, it was impossible to ID, but was probably the Redtail that we so often see coming in (and going out). We parked the van by the old log at the head of the Fleming Creek Bluffs and headed down the hill. Along the way, we noticed a few (very few) very small, isolated patches of snow.

What a surprise! Not only was the creek rather high, but it had turned a faint, milky green, colour due to algae, thought Pat (hopefully). We picked our way to the bridge, grateful to discover that its upper surface was still a foot above water. Pat went across without undue difficulty. From that point on, it turned into (mainly) a fungus-collecting trip. Pat found lots of Wingstem on the east bank and noted several wild clematis (Virgin's Bower) on the other side, but little else of interest. I found some old friends and made some new acquaintances in the New Floodplain Forest. An orange mushroom on an old snag turned out to be Velvet Foot and a brown crust on a dead and leaning smaller tree was (confirmed at home) Reddish-brown Crust, familiar from A'Nowaghi. On another, much larger dead Willow, we collected some (oldish) Pear-shaped Puffballs.

As we strolled through the NFF, I made note about the most common (young) trees. This area is recovering pasture land which, since about 1975, has not been grazed on. Consequently, the whole (new forest) is filled with Hawthorns, but we found a great many Bitternuts coming in, some of them already up to 40 and 50'. As well, we found the odd Black Walnut and, along the creek, the usual white Ash, Hackberry, and Black (?) Willow.

We were photographing an old Willow snag (terribly picturesque), when the Redtail (?) flew over to check us out. (Again, the silhouette.) We also photographed some "Orange Jelly" fungus and discovered a new, jelly fungus

growing on the bark of a dead tree. This one was organised into leafy growths and sported a dark purple-brown colour. I collected some. (At home I quickly discovered this to be Jelly Leaf fungus.)

We recrossed the bridge. At the “root-end,” I took some measurements for stairs and probed the soil with our bog-probe, to check for hollow or weak areas under the proposed stairway. The stairs would have to be about 60” long, and take an angle of 45 degrees. The bottom, however, must meet the bridge at an angle of about 10 degrees (in plan view), so there will have to be some tricky bias-cutting to get it right.

Climbing back up the creek bluffs, I noticed plentiful leaves of Red Oak, White Oak and Black Maple, our three principal species along the top of the bluffs. Pat wasn't too tired at this point, so we wandered on down Edgar's Road to check out the river. It was high, over the gravel bars. Suddenly, Pat spotted two GBHs, taking off from the point just upstream and across the river. Shortly after this, we began to hear some squawking calls from the woods behind the point. Pat thought it might be the GBHs, I thought it sounded like a woodpecker or flicker of some kind.

Returning along Edgar's Road to the calls of Chickadees, we stopped at an old willow, where I had seen plentiful bird-poop splashes last week, now greatly reduced. Pat hoped to find some owl pellets here, but we decided to wait until the snow was down. I collected what looked like a Turkey Tail fungus, with its attractive zones of orange, white and brown, from a dead willow branch. Coming out, the Redtail was waiting for us, perched on one of the high-tension wires of the hydro line.

**Species Observed:** Redtail (?), Crow, Chickadee, Great Blue Heron, Velvet foot (*Collybia velutipes*), Turkey Tail (*Trametes versicolor*)

### New Species

|                      |                                      |     |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Jelly Leaf           | <i>Tremella foliacea</i>             | NFF |
| Reddish-brown Crust  | <i>Hymenochaete badio-ferruginea</i> | NFF |
| Pear-shaped Puffball | <i>Lycoperdon pyriforme</i>          | NFF |
| Witches Butter       | <i>Tremella mesenterica</i>          | NFF |

