

Walking in the Wimmera

A monthly journal of the orchids seen in the Wimmera Region

November 2009 by John Richards

In the last issue stated that we would look at *Thelymitra reflexa*. A friend and member of the Horsham Camera Club has become interested in the challenges of orchid photography. She wanted to know the where orchids might be found in late October, between Dimboola and Kaniva. My thoughts were to meet at Kiata and look in the usual areas then go to where *Orthoceras strictum* or the Horned Orchid would be if nothing else was found.



The reserve around the Cemetery was devoid of any orchids in flower, due mainly the hot days previously and the lateness of the season. The Picnic Ground a few kilometres away was worth a look. On the way the blue of the *Thelymitra* (left) was obvious from the road. The photo shows some damage but that is how things are at the end of the season.

Soon it was time to move on and as we slowly drove along we were seeing more

blue highlights of the *Thelymitra* among the otherwise very bland landscape. All of a sudden there was one that was different. Was it the colour or was it the shape? Both of us parked and walked to the same orchid. Although I frequent that area often it is always earlier and maybe that is why I have not seen it before. That night Cindy put her photo on the internet via Red Bubble and soon she was given the name of *Thelymitra reflexa* (Right).

This name was disputed by a well credentialed orchid authority, as it has not been recorded in this area. It certainly looks like a carbon copy of one shown in a recent ANOS (Vic) bulletin. I am just happy to be able to look at another attractive orchid. Certainly I will return to that area next year.

We moved on to the location where I have previously found horned orchids. The numbers have dwindled during the years of drought but they were still there and actually more than the last couple of years. Unfortunately we were a few days to early a return trip would be needed.

As I have said previously many of the Wimmera orchids grow among the low shrubs and trees on the side of the road. The *Thelymitra cornea* photographed near Lake Lonsdale (Stawell) has a small bright flower and this one was among low shrubs and grasses in almost full sun.



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It was the 12th of November before the Kiata area was revisited this time with a different friend and a little trade was underway. You show me yours and I will show mine. The photo on the right shows a fire access track where I find the *Orthoceras strictum* orchids. This is in the Salt Lake Track area where most of the ground is sand often covering hard clay. As is also common most of the orchids are on the edge of the track and directly under one of the shrubs. .

The district went through a period of exceptionally hot and dry days. The cereal crops in the nearby suffered severely. The orchids were wilting a little but still producing a display. That night the area received some rain which should not only revive them now but also ensure a better start for the next season.

The trade off took us about 100 kilometres along the Western Highway to a spot near Dadswells Bridge and once again orchids were growing in clay that has been baked hard by the sun.

I am sure many people have walked past these orchids as without the flowers they look like the grass and then the flowers blend into the surroundings.

