

Reports from field outing to Bluff River:-

On Sunday 22nd Feb. eight cars with 30 people travelled to Bluff River Road. Another two carloads forgot to take their instructions and failed to catch up with the main party, but still managed to have an enjoyable day. This provides us with a valuable lesson for future outings - everyone should try to be punctual and all leave the departure point together.

At Bluff river members followed a two mile loop in the river and it proved to be a very interesting walk. Bird life was plentiful but hard to identify without prolonged halts, however the characteristic call of the Scissors Grinder left no doubt as to his identity. The day was ideal for walking, cloudy but pleasantly warm and everyone found something of interest; fascinating driftwood, bright dragonflies skimming the water, enticing water-holes to be pushed into, or strange things to photograph. The river itself was a stream of crystal clear water moving lazily over clean white sand or hurrying over sculptured rocks. On completion of the river circuit a late lunch was enjoyed on the grassy banks of a water-hole where an Azure Kingfisher delighted us with his flashing iridescent colour. After lunch and general discussion we returned to Bluff Rock on the Highway.

During the afternoon most members spent an energetic two hours climbing Bluff rock and its neighbouring peak. Although fairly strenuous the climb was most enjoyable with everyone setting his own pace and finding his own route to the top. Those who hadn't climbed higher than their front steps for years felt particularly elated as they looked down on the tiny cars and ant-like figures of fellow members below or watched a pair of Wedge-tail Eagles soaring round the lofty rock on which they stood.

The descent was certainly much easier but no quicker as members investigated the rocky outcrops and interesting plants. Patches of fern with attractive young pink and bronze growth were particularly lovely. It is a hackneyed expression, but we did return home tired but happy and the unanimous verdict was that it was well worth the effort. We hope to spend many similar days with an increasing number of friends to share the pleasure with us.

Bird notes:- Bird observing was rather erratic at our last outing but two interesting observations were made along Bluff river during our morning walkabout.

Quite a number of people joined me in watching a party of Blue Wrens (*Malurus cyaneus*) flitting through the undergrowth. These are most entertaining birds and easy to observe as they are not at all shy. As is usually the case there was only one fully coloured male present, the rest of the party consisting of young birds and females clad alike in dull brown. The young males only gradually attain full colour, beginning with their tail feathers, and they are about three years old before they become the beautiful jewel like birds one sees pictured in nature books. Dedicated naturalists have spent many hours recording the behaviour of these birds and it is believed that all birds in the party assist in feeding the nestlings although they belong to only one female. The young appear to stay with the family party for a considerable time until they finally mate and raise broods of their own.

The other interesting sighting was unfortunately not shared with anyone else. I was wandering through a riverside thicket when a bird flushed from the grass tussocks in front of me. A largish dark bird with long pheasantlike tail, it made no attempt to fly, but raced for cover some way ahead. The thicket was practically impenetrable where it disappeared and I failed to flush it again but I had seen enough to identify it as a Pheasant Coucal (*Centropus phasianinus*). This bird



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frequents swamps and other damp heavily grassed areas and is extremely shy. Its most interesting feature is that although it is a member of the cuckoo family it does not lay its eggs in the nests of other birds but builds its own large nest in a tussock of tall grass where it lays from three to five eggs. J.A. Leach tells us that the nest, which is formed by drawing the tops of the grass together and lining the inside with leaves, often has two openings, through one of which the bird's long tail projects while it is brooding.

### Report of the Feb. meeting

At the general meeting held on 25th Feb. a fair number of members attended to join in the discussion on recommendations concerning a constitution for our club. One acceptable to everyone present was adopted and we hope ~~to everyone present was adopted and we hope~~ to have copies printed for members at a future date.

After the business was completed all present enjoyed Jean Harslett's interesting selection of slides. Many of us learnt a lot from her observations and comments. A few specimens collected on the last outing were discussed. It is hoped that members will bring along more specimens in future and so share their joys and interests with a wider circle of people. Specimens are of particular interest to those who were unable to attend the outing.

### Report from the Apple and Grape Harvest Festival

Members have every reason to feel proud of our club's efforts during the festival. The decorated shop window was excellent and truly illustrated the purpose of our club. Our thanks to Errol Walker and Scott Wilmot for a fine idea well carried out.

The bus tours were an outstanding success and very popular with visitors and locals alike. Once again our grateful thanks to those who helped organise and conduct them.

### Contributed

A few members attended the Bunya Nut Festival held on Sunday 15th March at the Bunya Mountains 36 miles N.E. of Dalby. Not only was the festival interesting but the fascinations of the rain forest surrounding the area were fully appreciated. Large numbers of people were seen staggering along the tracks with armsful and sacksful of the bunya nuts which are considered to be good eating when boiled - they are not unlike chestnuts or sweet potatoes. The nuts are in fact contained in giant cones, the fruit of the Bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) and good harvest can be expected only once in every three years. Before the days of White settlement the good seasons were the occasion for great feasts and corroborees among the aborigines.

(Notes or snippets of news from any member who discovers interesting things or places will be much appreciated. They help to make our newsletter more "readable" - Ed.)

### Reminders

Don't forget the date of our next meeting - 25th March C.W.A. rooms at 8pm. This should be particularly interesting as Errol Walker will be giving an illustrated talk on Tasmania. Entries in the name and cover design for our news letter will also be judged that night so get busy with your entry now.

Members are reminded that there will be an outing to the Amiens area led by Jean Harslett on the 19th April and on the 22nd April a meeting with guest speaker.

Suggestions for future outings and leaders willing to organise them



will be very much appreciated by the committee.

Members are reminded that the following subs. apply:-

- a) Ordinary members \$1 on joining and a further \$1 per annum
- b) Junior members 50c on joining and a further 50c per annum
- c) Family membership \$1-50 on joining and a further \$1-50 per annum

Please pay your sub if you have not already done so and fill in the form below and return it to the Editor so that you can be sure of receiving your monthly newsletter.

VERY IMPORTANT:-

Details of field outing to Texas Caves Sunday 22nd March 1970

Texas or Pikes Creek caves will be the venue for this outing. Cars will depart from opposite the Civic Centre at 8-30 am sharp. Please meet at 8-15 as this is a long trip. The round trip of approx 115 miles will be in convoy form as the old route to the caves is closed and we shall be following a new track.

Transport or further information required? Ring Stanthorpe 888

What to take:-

- .....Lunch (water available)
- ..... Your oldest clothes and a complete change
- ..... Tin helmet or thick felt hat
- ..... Torch for every person - a must - be sure batteries are fresh
- ..... Candles and matches to light large caverns
- ..... Flash gear for photographs
- ..... 20ft of stout rope could be handy for enthusiasts

Features:-

- A large "walk-in" cave for young and old alike.
- Pot-holing for the adventurous.
- An interesting river-cave.
- Delightful limestone formations.
- Scenic Pikes Creek for swimming.

PLEASE

Take only photos,  
Leave only footprints,  
Think of those who follow.

Leader Errol Walker

Hope to see you all there. Remember these caves will soon be inundated so this may be your last chance to explore them.

Flo Tremoer and Irene Chapman  
Editor Assistant

.....  
Please place my/our name on the club mailing list.

Name .....

Address .....

..... Phone .....

Type of membership - Ordinary - Family - Junior (17 and under).

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