

Reports from field outing to Bald Rock 21st June:-

Again a very good turn-up for the field outing, this time to Bald Rock. The weather was ideal for climbing and even our oldest members reached the top. The younger ones made it in the shortest time so all ages had a successful time.

We were interested to receive a photo and the following write-up from a local paper:-

Bald Rock National Park just across the N.S.W. border from Stanthorpe is the highest granite outcrop above sea level in Australia. Unknown to many people, at 900ft high above the surrounding terrain and the highest point in the Granite Belt, it is the second largest single rock in Australia. The largest of course is Ayers Rock, 1100ft above ground level, south-west of Alice Springs in the N.T. A marked track leads to the top of Bald Rock, which provides sightseers with extensive panoramic views of the surrounding Great Dividing Range in the border areas, across the Granite Belt and northwards to the edge of the Darling Downs.

Bird notes:-

Unfortunately because of sickness I did very little bird observing on our last outing. However we did spend some time on the summit of Bald Rock observing a pair of Wedge tailed Eagles as they planed and soared around the steep sides of the rock, now rising in a wide spiral then plummeting out of sight to the scrub below, taking full advantage of every current of air.

It is unfortunate that the sight of one of these majestic birds arouses in most Australians only the desire to reach for a rifle. Eagles are always suspect to the grazier and have been credited with attacking and carrying off all manner of stock, some of which would be far beyond their powers to lift.

where eagles were

We grazed sheep for many years in country ~~and never once did we~~ common and never once did we see one carry off a live lamb. Mostly they seemed to feed on carrion. A neighbour of ours who was a keen naturalist as well as a grazier had a pair of eagles nesting among sandstone ridges on his property. These birds were never molested and we were able to observe them at the nest over several seasons.

Their nest was placed high in the branches of a Spotted Gum, Euc. maculata which stood near the base of a sandstone cliff. From the top of the cliff we were able to look straight at the nest. The bones found discarded around the nest proved conclusively that lambs played a very minor part in the diet of these particular eagles, even though



ewes were lambing in paddocks not far away. Rabbit, rodent, small marsupial and bird bones formed the bulk of the bones in the debris below the nest. The only meat consumed from domestic stock came from carcasses.

*Aquila audax* -(bold eagle)- Wedge tailed Eagle is a noble bird, the fourth largest eagle in the world with an average wing span of over 7ft (specimens to 11ft have been recorded) As with most eagles the female is somewhat larger than the male. The nest is a large platform up to 8ft across made of sticks and lined with leaves and soft bark. One, two or three eggs are laid, usually in June-July. The nest is repaired and used year after year.

#### Botanical Notes:-

The area is rich in plant life and some of the plants which we observed are listed below.

*Eriostemon queenslandicus* showing a few early blooms  
*Isotoma anethifolia* flowering daintily in sheltered rock crevices  
*Phebalium ambiens* called fruit salad phebalium because if the leaves are crushed they smell like *Monstera deliciosa*  
*Solanum amblymerum* at base of rock, prickly plant with few mauve flowers and small green tomato like fruit.  
 Orchids were seen on most sheltered rock faces.  
 Tongue orchid - *Dendrobium linguiforme*  
 King " " *speciosum*  
 Onion " *Gastrodia sesantoides*

Report of meeting held in C.W.A. rooms 24th June 1970 at 8pm:-

There was an attendance of 29 with apologies from 9 people.

Newsletters were received from the Qld and Chinchilla Naturalist Clubs The Board of Adult Education Advised that 200 copies of the constitution were being prepared and it was hoped that this would not involve the Club in any expense.

The president reported that 9 members visited the Qld.Nats. camp at Spicers Gap on the Sunday of the Queens Birthday Weekend. 55 people attended our club outing to Bald Rock.

It was suggested that the club organise two outings each month during spring to make the most of the wildflower season. The committee will discuss this at their next meeting.

It was decided that tea and biscuits will be provided from Club funds at meetings when we have a guest speaker.

Michael Fox and Robin McCosker requested that names be attached to contributions to the magazine. It was agreed that this be done unless the contributor requests otherwise.

Specimens were shown and discussed and then Mr Chapman gave a short talk and slides on the Carnarvan Ranges. This replaced Mrs Chapman's scheduled talk as she was sick.



Programme for next two months:-

19th July Outing, - Swanfells area, leader Edgar McCulloch  
 22nd July Meeting - Annual - Guest Speaker Dr. T Kirkpatrick (note change)  
 23rd Aug Outing - Mt Norman & Castle Rock, leader B. Dodd  
 26th Aug Meeting Talk postponed from June I Chapman.

NOTE Please make a special effort to attend the Annual Meeting to elect your new committee.

The following nominations have been received for the committee:-

President	T. Chapman	Librarian	M. Fox
V.-Presidents	J. Harslett	Flora Rep.	B. Dodd
	W. Cathcart	Fauna "	I. Chapman
Treasurer	J. Westcott	Youth "	S. Wilmot
Secretary	E. Walker	Geology "	Z. Newman
Editor	F. Tremmer	Bush-walking	R. McCosker

CONTRIBUTIONS

Two views of the Spicers Gap Trip:-

Braving inches of frost, nine enthusiastic members of our club left Stanthorpe at 8am on Sun. 14th June to rendezvous with Brisbane Mats at Spicers Gap. The trip was smooth and uneventful until we left the highway about two miles this side of Fisher Park. We took off optimistically along the old Spicers Gap road which according to reports was in quite fair order. This road was once an alternative route to Brisbane but one soon gets the impression that it was first engineered with the pace and mobility of the bullock dray in mind. One also gets an equally strong impression that no member of a maintenance gang has leaned on a shovel in the vicinity since the turn of the century. This however I think is a mistaken impression because as recently as 1934 we were advised to take the Spicers Gap road in preference to the Cunninghams Gap Highway, indicating that some loving hand had smoothed the rougher patches. The fact that we were bogged up to the axles for 24 hours in the black glutinous mud of the infamous Black Pinch is quite incidental. Still this is by the way so now ignoring with dignity all under-wheel happenings we enjoyed the splendid rain forest, the bird life and the height of Spicers Peak at our elbow.

On arrival at the camp-site we enjoyed a cup of coffee and admired the glorious view over Moogerah Dam and surrounding countryside from a strategically placed clifftop. Our president then led us quietly off on a leisurely stroll up the side of Spicers Peak. We estimated the distance as about two miles and the grade eventually as about one in one, which unexpectedly makes for much more convenient observation of the local flora and fauna. While ones nose is pressed into a grassy tussock it is surprisingly simple to study at close quarters a curling fern frond or maybe a lurking Blue tongued Skink. A bonus advantage is that one can choose with great precision the exact spot to



place the foot on the end of the knee now under one's chin. No one actually reached the top but ambitions to do so have been aroused. The view from even our lesser vantage point was most rewarding. The peak itself is 4,000ft which is the highest in that area as Mt Mitchell on one side of Cunninghams Gap is 3,757ft and Mt. Cordeau on the other side is 3725ft.

We came home over a more civilized road on the Brisbane side of the Gap and for no other reason than we were there and so was it we circled the Moogerah Dam. This alone would have made our day as the swampy eastern end of the dam had the most magnificent collection of water fowl one could wish to see. The stately Black Swans were there in their hundreds, the grey limbs of drowned trees were decked with cormorants a stately egret and pale-headed stilts paced the mud flats and the water was in a state of constant swirl and flurry with ducks, coots and myriads of dabchicks. We tarried and observed till almost sunset.

From there a swift and effortless journey home and as a final comment, at least one of our drivers should do us proud in any car rally. He led us confidently where the rocks were the biggest and the ditches the deepest, the hills the steepest - then, inspired by the smooth ribbon of road winding into the dusk, after a rapid flight he made a perfect touchdown in Maryland Street.

Z. Newman

There was some indecision before our party chose the shorter route to Spicers which leaves the highway this side of Fisher Park. Although certain references were made about the person who suggested this road it was found to be passable and proved interesting for the bird watchers. We found the camp of the Qld. Nats. in the gap but as we expected, the only people there had, like us, come for the day. The others had made an early start on the day's activities.

After a brief stop we walked to Mt Spicer where we found some of the climbers at various stages of collapse and height as we climbed the relatively easy first part. Not being a keen rock climber I did not press on with the others. Although they did not reach the summit I am told that one was so proud of her effort that she had to be discouraged from leaving a bright marker to show the point she had reached. We returned to camp for lunch after spending hours climbing.

We then continued through the gap to Moogerah Dam where we found the upper reaches covered with bird life. It seems that this trip would be well worth arranging as a club outing in the future.

M. Fox

#### Banksias

Many plants perpetuate the name of the person concerned with their original identification. Probably no one deserved nor received a more fitting memorial than Sir Joseph Banks through one of Australia's most attractive plants, the Banksia.

Sir Joseph Banks, a noted English naturalist, collected botanical



specimens many of which had not been collected before. Either at his own expense or in his capacity as honorary director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew he sent collectors to many parts of the world. His herbarium was one of the most important in existence and is now in the British Museum along with his library consisting mainly of valuable works on natural history. He accompanied Captain Cook on the Endeavour's voyage around the world and his notes on the journey are extremely valuable. He collected the first specimens on the shores of the bay that Cook named Botany Bay because of "the great quantity of new plants that Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander collected in this place". The genus *Banksia* was subsequently named in his honour.

*Banksia* is an Australian genus of about 50 species of evergreen trees and shrubs and is a member of the family Proteaceae. This family is almost confined to the Southern Hemisphere and includes such well known plants as the Waratah, the spider-flowered Grevilleas and the Proteas. The family name was derived from Proteus the sea god said to be able to change his form at will, referring to the great diversity found in the family and even within the same genus.

The genus *Banksia* is confined to Australia except for *Banksia dentata* which extends to New Guinea. *Banksias* are distributed throughout all states of Australia but with a predominance in Western Australia where there are 43 species and most of these are found nowhere else. There are 6 species in Queensland and two on the Granite Belt; *Banksia integrifolia* and *collina*.

*Banksia integrifolia* is spread throughout the district and some large trees reach a height of 50ft but it is more commonly seen as a shapely shrub or small tree bearing many pale yellow flower spikes six inches long. The leaves are dark glossy green with matted felty silvery under surfaces. The specific name is from "integer" complete and "folium" a leaf, referring to the unbroken leaf edge.

*Banksia collina* is a bushy shrub or small tree growing to 10ft. with attractive silky young branches. The leaves are fairly narrow, usually toothed and white underneath. The flowers are 3 to 6 inches and in this district golden yellow in colour but at Springbrook there are red and black forms. It flowers in late spring and attracts honey eating birds. The specific name refers to its tendency to grow on hill sides.

T. Chapman

### Birdwatching With a Difference

From my kitchen window I can watch many varieties of bush birds and at the same time wash dishes. This dry season a family of Blue Wrens with a Willie Wagtail apparently helping to mind the youngsters turns up at lunchtime and Tomtits with their bright yellow breasts are also regular visitors in mid-afternoon. All these are tame enough to get close to. A small greyish bird, very similar to a sparrow has a habit of hovering while searching for titbits.

Lately a pair of rather shy robins has appeared, the male has a pinkish breast, and they search for moths and other insects. From time to time I have seen robins with very vivid red breasts. This



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come also and dig in the dry earth for frogs which may have sealed themselves up until the rains come.

Magpies and Peewits are daily visitors and the Kookaburras perch on telegraph poles laughing at their own private jokes. All this goes on under the eyes of my old toothless cat - if looks could kill his would.

VERY IMPORTANT

E. Wiseman

Details of field outing to Swanfels area 20 miles from Warwick  
leader Edgar McCulloch

Assemble at HOSPITAL PARK WARWICK at 9.45am

It is most important to be at Warwick by 9.45 am as the concy will move off promptly at 10 am and we have no details of the route from there.

PLEASE BE PUNCTUAL

Any interested "rock hounds" please bring picks etc.

Bird watchers, bush walkers and plant enthusiasts should all find something of interest too.

FLO TREMER  
Editor

AND

IRENE CHAPMAN  
assistant

ADDRESS MAIL TO  
PRIVATE BOX NO  
IT EXPEDITES  
DELIVERY

well known plants as the Waratah, the spider-flowered grevillaeas and the  
Prinos.