



THE  
**GRANITE BELT  
NATURALIST**



Monthly Newsletter of the  
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since the inception of our club the enthusiastic support and increasing interest of so many people has been extremely gratifying to me, to leaders of outings and to people providing programmes.

The most pleasing feature of our club is the wide range of interests and of age groups amongst members.

We have attempted to arrange outings and guest speakers to cater for the varying interests of members and I feel that thanks to outing leaders and speakers at meetings we have achieved this aim.

Catering for the various age groups does however pose some difficulties.

We have many young children who obviously don't want to be dragged through thick undergrowth in search of uncommon plants; we have a pleasingly-large number of young energetic people who want to climb rocks and explore new country; we have elderly people who want to spend a day out of doors but who obviously cannot walk 10 miles or climb up rock faces; we have some members with a sound knowledge of a particular subject anxious to concentrate on their main interest and we have many couples who enjoy spending a day with families and friends in pleasant surroundings and preferably seeing something different.

Providing interests for all these groups in one outing is difficult and we appeal for your cooperation. To hold the interest of our young members we must visit places, that in addition to being of general interest, provide scope for their energy but it is essential that we all realize our limitations. If it is physically impossible to participate in any particular activity please admit it and with so much of interest at any point that we visit, it should be possible for everyone to enjoy the day in their own way.

We have some particularly interesting excursions arranged and we will place more emphasis on providing alternative ways of spending the day to cater for everyone.

With your continued cooperation I am sure our outings and meetings can be even more successful and that our membership will continue to increase.

Finally I feel I should comment on one other matter.

As the places we visit are National Parks or other places of particular natural beauty, we have a moral, as well as legal obligation, not to spoil them in any way. Let us, as a club, and as individuals, endeavour to ensure that others can enjoy these places for many years.

"Let it not be said  
And said to our shame  
All was beauty here  
Before we came."



## OUTING TO MT. NORMAN

### General

Despite threatening clouds 65 people travelled to Mt. Norman on Sunday 23rd August. This is without doubt one of the most spectacular areas of rock in Australia. Unfortunately Brian Dodd, who was to lead the outing, was unable to attend. If he had been there the day would have been better organized but I will blame the unsettled weather for some of the indecision.

The biggest problem was too many alternatives.

To the south loomed the intriguing rock masses of South Bald Rock and West Bald Rock, these areas are to be visited on future outings.

Bald Rock in N.S.W. stood high on the horizon, bringing back memories of the enjoyable day we spent there recently. The rugged country viewed in reverse was just as impressive.

Near at hand on our right Mt. Norman beckoned us, while to our left large expanses of bare rock promised easy, interesting walking. Out of sight, but in the minds of all present, was the challenge of the planned walk through the Girraween National Park.

As many members hadn't been to Mt. Norman and others wanted to go again, the majority headed towards the rocky peak while others leisurely returned to the cars with much of interest to see on the way.

The moderately steep rocky slopes that we climbed were dotted with large boulders and slashed by crevasses of varying widths and depths. The great variety of native plants that flourished in inhospitable looking pockets amongst the rocks showed the effect of the drought but gave promise of what could be expected in spring after reasonable rains.

The weather cooperated long enough for many members to climb to the summit of Mt. Norman and for all to admire, and some to photograph, the Eye of the Needle and the other fascinating rocks in the area.

Lunch was enjoyed in the rock chambers and menus were remarkable for variety and ingenuity. If some one had produced a portable gas barbecue and grilled steak no one would have been surprised.

As if resenting our cheerful chatter the rain Gods blanketed the mountain with cloud and light drizzle. We all agreed not to complain as rain was so urgently needed, but one member, clad in shorts and shirt sleeves didn't sound very convincing as he shivered and munched on a block of energy chocolate.

After further consultations and heavier rain, most members decided to return to the cars and were soon scattered over the slopes like multi-coloured ants; while 7 determined (some might say pig-headed) walkers set off for Girraween. Some people consider naturalists "a little funny" while others say they are "quite queer". As I squelched along in soggy shoes through waist high saturated bush, I had to admit the latter group were reasonably right.



### Outing to Mt Norman cont'd

We negotiated a ferny gully and admired many overhanging rocks. The enormous unsupported awnings afforded complete protection from rain and no doubt sun, and prompted one member to remark what a terrific place it would be to park a fleet of buses. He was unable to say however how to get a fleet of buses into the area and what use they would be once they were there.

On the expanses of bare rock two miracles of nature could be observed. Throughout the Granite Belt the large areas of exposed granite have tiny creeks meandering over their surfaces. After a few minutes of very light rain every little gutter was a rushing rivulet. Grit and small stones were carried by the rushing water continuing the remarkable process whereby nature grinds out the little water courses in the extremely hard granite. These channels of crystal clear water answered our earlier query of how could plants survive in the crevices and pockets of soil in the rocks. As the life-giving water irrigated the natural gardens the plants greedily drank it, taking on new life before our eyes.

The fog and mist enveloped us but fortunately when I was getting anxious about directions ( it is hard to follow a route through the bush when all you can see is a few yards of sodden vegetation and rocks) the cloud dispersed and the "Sphinx" truly a remarkable rock formation, was doubly appreciated when it raised its head above the mist.

We passed through, over and under great heaps of rock of every imaginable size and shape piled up in enormous unruly heaps, carefully stacked or delicately balanced. Walking was easy and the great variety of rocks maintained our interest; there were enormous loaves of bread sliced by a giant knife; on patches of bare rock there were clusters of dinosaur eggs some perfectly round, others shattered as if their contents had hatched out; there were statues of diverse design sculptured by the great artist nature, and there were sheer rock faces, sloping rock faces, bare rock faces, orchid covered rock faces and every other imaginable rock face.

### (B) BOTANICAL NOTES

HOMORANTHUS VIRGATUS - this plant is interesting in its growth character, the bush is flattened out on top with flowers on the same horizontal plane. The plant has a strong mouse like smell.

MAKEA DACTYLOIDES - with interesting woody seed pods which split into parts and release two winged seeds.

ACACIAS - noted in flower

Ac. adunca (narrow leafed Black Wattle)

Ac. neriifolia

Ac. latisephala

Ac. myrtifolia (Myrtle wattle)

Ac. venulosa



## Botanical Notes cont'd.

The pungent fruit salad like aroma of Phebalium ambiens was noted as we climbed.

In the sheltered slopes leading up to the rest of the mountain Prostanthera lasianthus and Prostanthera prunelloids were noted (not in flower) but perhaps because of its situation suffering less from the effects of drought than most other native species.

## Programme for the Period September 1970 to February 1971.

### FIELD OUTINGS

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Cunningham's Gap	20th Sept.	R. Tremeer
*Salata Hill	10th Oct.	Mrs. Newman
S. Bald Rock	25th Oct.	Mrs. Harslett
McCoskers area (Wyberba)	22nd Nov.	Robin McCosker
Killarney Falls area	31st Jan.	Brian Dodd
Dr Robert's Water Hole	21st Feb	( W. Cathcart E. Walker

\* May be changed to fit in with Toowoomba Nats.

### MEETINGS

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Rocks and gems	23rd Sept	Mr. J. Anderson
Native plants	28th Oct.	Mrs. B. Harslett
Stars	25th Nov.	Mr. E. McCulloch
National Parks	27th Jan	( Mr. T. Ryan & D. G. Goebel
Galls	24th Feb.	Mr. P. Grant

Note It is proposed to hold a barbecue for members of the Nats. Club on Sunday 13th December at the Wilmot's Estate. More details later.

### FINANCIAL MEMBERS 1970 - 1971

Mrs. G. Bott	Mr. R. McCosker
Mr. & Mrs. C. Burton	Mr. N. MacDonald
Mr. & Mrs. B. Barnett	Mr & Mrs E. McCulloch
Mr. & Mrs. T. Chapman	Mr. R. Marsden
Mr. & Mrs. W. Cathcart	Mr & Mrs W. Newman
Mr. & Mrs. B. Dodd	Mr N. Newman
Mrs. B. Donaldson	Mr Nixon
Mr. E. Donges	Mr & Mrs J. Quinlan
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Mr. & Mrs. R.J. Francis	Mr D. Pfrunder
Mr. & Mrs. B. Harslett	Mr D. Passmore
Mr. J. Harslett	Mr & Mrs P. Power
Mrs. A. Haynes	Mrs Rushton
Mr. P. Higgins	Sisters of Mercy
Mr & Mrs L. Large	Miss P. Smith
Mr & Mrs W. McCosker	Mr & Mrs I Simcocks



## FINANCIAL MEMBERS 1970 - 1971 cont'd

Mr & Mrs M. Stevensen  
Mrs Smith  
Mr T. Spiller  
Mr & Mrs R. Tremeer  
Mrs J. Verrie  
Miss J. Westacott

Mr & Mrs E. Walker  
Mr & Mrs F. Wilkinson  
Mrs D. Wiseman  
Mr & Mrs J. Heaton  
Mr N. Butler  
Mr E. Ree

Note Any errors or omissions please inform editor or treasurer.

## GENERAL MEETING

Mr. W. Cathcart presided in the absence of the President, and submitted a verbal report of the Mt Norman outing of 23rd August. A short discussion took place on the good news of the decision to leave the Cooloola area intact from mining companies.

It was brought to the attention of all members by Mrs. J. Harslett and Mr. W. Cathcart that a number of empty bottles and tins had been left in the Mt. Norman area by members taking part in that outing. It was stressed that we, as a club, should set a good example and in future must see that we leave no rubbish.

Mr. W. McCosker brought along some interesting specimens of wild flowers which were identified for the benefit of all present and Mrs. Harslett demonstrated that only small pieces of plants need be collected for identification purposes.

An extra outing to Jolly Falls would take place on September 6th as well as the one to Cunningham's Gap on September 20th.

Mrs. T. Chapman's talk "Confessions of a Bird Watcher" with slides and tape recordings was much appreciated. Charts showing the evolution of birds and the names given to each part of a bird were interesting too. As were all the books and magazines which were displayed.

The meeting ended with a demonstration on a "didgereedoo" brought back from the north by one of our members.

## CONTRIBUTION

### A Visit to Fraser Island - Largest Sand Island in the World - 100 miles long.

We were camped at Eight Mile Rocks, Rainbow Bay and wanted to go to Fraser Island for a couple of days. After many enquiries we discovered that we could drive along roads built by the sand mining company to within two miles of Inseip where the little concrete barge would take us across. It was interesting to see healthy bush growing in the area which had already been mined. Crossing from the mainland to Fraser we saw porpoises (dolphins) chasing fish.

We camped near a beautiful freshwater creek running almost parallel to the beach; water lilies grew along its edges and the banksias looked rather like Christmas trees lit



## A Visit to Fraser Island Cont'd

up with candles as they were covered with fresh spring flowers. We also saw oaks and wattles. The air was filled with the singing of birds and the scent of flowers. It really is a beautiful spot!

While we were busy with fishing rods and lines our dog found a spiny ant eater - a delightful little creature with its most formidable armour and its beautifully delicate, long dark nose. While we caught eugarie by digging or exploring with our feet, we watched the smart little eugarie birds efficiently pull them out with their curved red beaks and lining up the pretty coloured empty shells rather like butterfly on the wet sand. There were many seagulls and even a dead baby whale along the beach.

We caught some big whiting, bream and tailor fish, the small swallow tails (Trevally) we had to throw back.

One very interesting sideline was watching the little "Endeavour" replica of Captain Cooks ship passing between Inseip and Fraser Island.

P. Fox

## CUNNINGHAM'S GAP - MOUNT CORDEAUX - MORGANS LOOKOUT

SUNDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 1970

Assembly Point - Park 9.15 a.m. Depart 9.30

Allan Cunningham, botanist and explorer, first set eyes on the pass which now bears his name in 1827. He was then approaching the Great Dividing Range from the west, having just discovered the McIntyre and Condamine Rivers and the rich black soil and abundant grass of the Darling Downs (named by Cunningham after the Governor of New South Wales, Lieutenant General Ralph Darling). Lack of provisions caused Cunningham to return to Sydney, but in the following year (1828) he sailed from Sydney to Brisbane with Captain Logan and tried to reach the gap from the east. However, thick scrub in the vicinity of Mount Lindsay persuaded them to return to Limestone (Ipswich). Cunningham then set out in a south westerly direction and on 25th August, 1828 he wrote in his journal ".... without the smallest difficulty, and to my utmost surprise, we found ourselves in the highest part of the Pass..... we now pushed through this extraordinary defile ..... and reached the opposite side of the main range". He then climbed Mount Mitchell, named in honour of the Surveyor General of the Territory, and "with no small pleasure passed my eyes over the beautiful tract of country at which my labours of the last year had closed".

The Stanthorpe Naturalists will not be retracing Cunningham's steps, but will instead climb Mount Cordeaux, on the Northern side of the Gap. This mountain was so named "as a compliment to William Cordeaux Esq., of the Surveyor General's Department". It is about 4 miles from the Gap. From there we will walk to Morgan's Lookout along a very narrow



Cunningham's Gap cont'd

open saddle, with wonderful views. This is a comfortable day's return walk.

Stout shoes or boots, and some nourishing tucker are recommended. (See MAP ON BACK COVER).

R.E. TREMEER.

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