

118 OCT 1970



THE
**GRANITE BELT
NATURALIST**



Monthly Newsletter of the
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club



PYRAMIDS

MORGAN'S
LOOKOUT.

cunningham's gap national park

GAP CK.
FALLS.

MT. CORDEAUX
3725'

Palm Grove Track

GAP CK

MONUMENT

CUNNINGHAM'S
GAP

BRISBANE
66M.

HIGHWAY

BOX FOREST
TRACK

NEW ENGLAND

FORESTRY CAMP

PICNIC AREA

WARWICK
25M.

MT. MITCHELL
WEST PEAK

MT. MITCHELL
East Peak

CHAINS

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST

Monthly newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

NO: 10. October 1970.

P.O. Box 154 S'tpe.

CUNNINGHAM'S GAP.

Allan Cunningham was obviously fascinated with the Gap which ~~now~~ bears his name from his first sighting of it on June 11th 1827. In his journal for that day he refers to it, as 'a very deeply excavated part of the main range', and later he wrote 'so remarkable a hollow in the principal range I determined not to leave unexamined, since it appeared it might prove to be a very practicable pass from the eastern country to the Darling Downs and thus form the door of a very considerable grazing country.' When he actually crossed over the range at this point in the following year (August 28th 1828) he recorded '.... without the smallest difficulty, and to my utmost surprise, we found ourselves in the highest part of the Pass ... we now pushed our way westerly through this extraordinary defile and reached the opposite side of the main range.'

This must have been a great moment for Cunningham. He had been appointed to the post of Collector for Kew Gardens to work in Australia at the instigation of Sir Joseph Banks, who had great faith in the 'habits of industry, attention and frugality' common to all young Scots. His faith was not misplaced, for Cunningham made a firm impression on Australian development as botanist and explorer. Indefatigable at collection and note taking, he contributed enormously to his scientific disciplines, selflessly devoting his short life to his mission.

Having successfully crossed the range, Cunningham climbed the mountain at the Southern head of the Gap, and named it Mount Mitchell 'in honour of the Surveyor General of the Territory (N.S.W.), whilst the north head was entitled Mount Cordeaux, as a compliment to Wm Cordeaux Esq., of the Surveyor Generals Department.'

About 40 members of the Stanthorpe Nats were very conscious of Allan Cunningham when they set off to explore the Mt. Cordeaux area on Sunday 20th September. Despite unpromising weather at the start, conditions later proved ideal for walking and climbing. A relaxed climb took most of the group to the narrow saddle which links Mt Cordeaux with the ridge terminating in Morgans Lookout.

One of the fascinations of this walk was the contrast between the dense rain forest and the open forest with hardwoods. Some of the more interesting plants and birds are listed elsewhere in this Newsletter, so I will only comment on a few which particularly impressed me. The Rock Lily, Doryanthes palmerii, was very conspicuous on the rock faces. We passed through an incredibly beautiful grove of tree fern, of two types, the

Cunningham's Gap cont'd

familiar upright variety and an interesting creeping type. Eventually most of the party reached Morgan's Lookout (3,852ft) and were rewarded with splendid views. The return journey to the Gap was leisurely and full of interest and the nine mile walk proved a comfortable days exercise.

Note

For further reading on Allan Cunningham, see 'Early Explorers in Australia' by Lee, and a recent book 'Allan Cunningham' by W.G. McMinn, Melbourne University Press. A local authority is Mr. Ossie Hall of the Summit.

R.E. TREMEER.

BIRD NOTES.

Would you like to see a lyre-bird suddenly emerge from thick scrub and pause on the track just ahead of you? You could watch as well as listen while he runs through his repertoire of mimicry. On this occasion Kookaburra whip-bird and grey thrush interspersed with his own song and much beak clacking. If you would, try the graded track which gradually winds through lush rain forest and on up to the top of Mount Cordeaux. If you tippy-toe quietly through the forest you might be as lucky as one of our club members on our last outing. The sound of the Prince Albert Lyre-bird was heard by quite a few but only one sighting was reported. Two other birds noted by ear but not by eye were the whip-bird and Cat-bird. This latter to my ear sounded somewhat like an ancient car horn running off a low battery.

Currawongs and Satin bower birds, including several beautiful glossy dark-blue males were at the picnic area. They were very tame and obviously expected to share some of the picnic lunches. Other birds noted in the scrub area at the Gap are here listed.

White-browed Scrub Wren (*Sericornis frontalis*)
Buff - breasted Scrub Wren (*Sericornis laevigaster*) - obviously larger with black and white on face noticeable.
Scrub -Turkey ; Fantail Cuskoo; Swallow; Yellow - faced honey-eater; Grey Thrush; Grey shafted Fly Catcher; Silver-eye; Brown Pigeon; Wonga Pigeon; Little Friar Bird; Lewin Honeyeater; Noisy Friar bird; Pardalote; Crimson Rosella; Yellow Robin.

En route to Cunningham's Gap quite a variety of bird life was also observed and this list includes:

White Ibis	Pee Wee	Crow
Black Shouldered Kite	Galah	Spurwinged Plover
Eastern Rosella	Noisy Miner	Magpie
Apostle Bird	Nankeen Kestrel	Starling
Willy Wagtail	Butcher Bird	

Our Laughing Kookaburra is the largest kingfisher in the world. In the early days of settlement it was called the "Settlers Clock" and the "Laughing Jackass. The name Kookaburra is an aboriginal

Bird Notes cont'd

word and was finally selected from more than forty-five names in use amongst various aboriginal tribes. Here are just a few examples:

Kowburra, Kookooburra, Cowurburra; Kangroburra, Googooburra, Gurgaga, Gookergaka and Arkooburra.

Z. NEWMAN.

Plant Notes - Cunningham's Gap.

Our outing to Cunningham's Gap and subsequent climb to Mt. Gordeaux and Morgan's Lookout took us into very different surroundings and even those not particularly interested in botany cannot but help noticing the plants about them. All are effected by the serenity of a jungle track, the incredible variations in pattern and design by nature not only depicting incredible shapes and forms but also every shade of green imaginable. How beautiful are the shaded tracks, rich brown soil and leaves contrasting with the deep greens, often a shaft of sunlight presenting another vivid contrast.

The giant stinging trees, the "Gympie Gympie" (Laportea Gigas) were quickly noted and avoided, but also noted was the large leafed "Cunjevoi" - so often growing nearby. The Sap from the lower part of this plant gives some relief to the sting of a "Gympie Gympie".

One of our members has a special appreciation of palms and I'm sure her day must have been brightened by the many lovely specimens and species seen. We soon saw some "Walking Stick Palms" (Bacularia Monostachya) - the red berries of which kept survivors of the Stinton crash alive. The lady who admired palms was able to give this one its aboriginal name - The Midgen - and show us the section of other trees which would be selected to cut a boomerang.

Another member was interested by the long flexible aerial roots reaching out from the figs and in particular the lattice like pattern of these roots, as they engulf their host trees. Several examples were seen, which resembled lead-lights and cathedral windows. She also found a splendid and complicated knot in one of the aerial roots.

As we entered the scrub and again as we emerged further up we were delighted with the smooth pink limbs of the Tristanias contrasting with deep greens. The Tristanias are first cousins of the Eucalypts and this one is often called the Brush or Pink Box (Tristania Conferta).

Staghorns, Elkhorns and Crow's Nests were noted and they are epiphytes like many of the orchids and are rooted to the host but draw nourishment from the air.

We saw several fine specimens of Hoop Pine (Araucaria Cunninghamii) a valuable soft wood and easily seen by its jagged silhouette on the crests of the ridges. Small Hoop Pines were plentiful. They belong to such an ancient order of plants that they have close association with fossil species.

The forrester in our party was able to tell us much about the identification of scrub trees, the under bark colour and aroma being an important feature.

Plant Notes - cont'd

We admired many trees flanged and buttressed at the base, noted fallen flowers and berries which we found hard to associate with the correct tree, from the maze mingling above us.

The Flame Tree (Brachychiton Acerifolium), we feel more at home with recognizing it as belonging to the Kurrajong clan.

Emerging above the scrub line we saw plants more familiar to us, Oaks, Banksia, Blackboys, Bulbine Lily and Sarsparilla, to mention a few. A rice plant proved to be Helichrysum Paraliu. We saw also handsome Red Spear Lilies (Doryanthes Palmerii) showing odd huge red flowers in bloom.

Black boys (Xanthorrhoea sp.) fringe the top of Mt. Cordeaux and look like rows of people looking over the side of the cliff face. Casuarina Torulosa, the forest oak was noted on top. Some specimens were very old knarled and windswept. In the Cunningham Gap area this species sometimes has rich russet to claret colouring - a mountain characteristic. It differs from Casuarina Cunninghamiana (the River Oak seen in the streams below). by having only seven leaf-teeth and also in the cone.

Orchids noted in flower were terrestrial "Pinkies" (Caladenia Carne) and epiphytes, King Orchid (Dendrobium speciosum - in bud), Pink Rock Lily (Dendrobium Kingianum), Pencil Orchid (Dendrobium Teretifolium) and the Orange Blossom Orchid.

On the walk on to Morgan's Lookout highlights noted were lovely lichens, a splendid group of tree ferns and golden everlasting daisies. (Helichrysum sp.) A patch of stunted pines (Callitris sp.) at the lookout itself was a surprise.

JEAN HARSLETT.

JOLLYS FALLS.

So it was my turn to lead an outing.

Jollys Falls? I'd seldom seen the place. Oh well, that was my chance to explore and I had a wonderful time meeting people and learning much of interest about the early days but little about directions.

The day arrived and I received a message recommending the view from the top of the hill beyond the falls! With no flow of water the falls are not so attractive although the rock formations are truly fascinating and well worthy of inspection.

About 25 of us made our way slowly up the slope passing flowering shrubs of Phebalium rotundifolium with their showy golden heads, Olearia, the much loved star flower daisy, Leacopogous, sometimes called white beards, Boronias, Epacris and some lovely Acacias.

On the damp southern slope many small annuals have survived the drought and the lobliars in particular promise a fine show in the summer.

One and all were delighted with the view of the northern "suburbs" on reaching the top and voted the climb well worth while.

On returning to the cars we learned that the few stone grubbers in the gully had not been rewarded with any great treasures and we all enjoyed our late "cuppa".

(Mrs) D. McCOSKER.

REPORT OF MONTHLY MEETING.

There were 38 people present at our September monthly meeting. After the usual business it was reported that the Chinchilla Nats. would be visiting our area in November and they have suggested a combined outing with this club. This suggestion will be more fully discussed later and plans published.

Members of the R.A.C.Q. - N.P.A. have their annual trip to Girraween on 11th October and Mrs. W. McCosker proposed that our additional outing with the Toowoomba Nats. on that date be a combined one. We could be present as a club on both the Saturday and Sunday afternoons - time of guided tours to be published in the paper. It was suggested that we get in touch with the N.P.A. advising them of this plan. The outing to Salatas Hill is now cancelled because of the shortage of wild-flowers in that area this season.

The club was advised by the secretary that the official address of the club is now P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe.

Mrs I. Chapman requested further volunteers to take part in a bird count. The count is so far successful but a wider coverage would be an advantage.

One or two very fine lists were brought to the meeting and examined with great interest.

Mrs. F. Tremeer suggested that members who have books on Natural History interests and are prepared to lend them could provide the librarian (Mr. M. Fox) with a list of titles and members would then feel free to borrow such books.

Mr. J. Anderson gave us a very interesting talk on his experiences of "Rock Collecting" in Northern Queensland. Great interest was also shown in his specimens of rocks and minerals. Many present were extremely envious of his 'finds'. Mrs. Z. Newman moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Anderson.

PROGRAMME - FIELD OUTINGS.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Jolly's Falls with Toowoomba Nats.	25th October.	John Harslett
McCoskers Area (Wyberba)	22nd November.	Robin McCosker
Killarney Falls Area	3rd January.	Brian Dodd.
Dr. Robert's Water Hole	21st February.	W. Cathcart and E. Walker.

Note. - It is proposed to hold a barbecue for members of the Nats. Club on SUNDAY 13th DECEMBER at the Wilmot Estate. More details later.

MEETINGS at C.W.A. Rooms. 8P.M.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Native Plants	28th October	Mrs. B. Harslett
Stars	25th November	Mr. E. McCulloch
National Parks	27th January	Mr. T. Ryan and Mr. B. Goebel
Galls	24th February	Mr. P. Grant.

ADDITIONS to the list of FINANCIAL MEMBERS.

Miss Wendy Bertram 17 P.O. Box Applethorpe
Mr. & Mrs. D. Croston
Mrs. E. Carter 18 Bridge St., Stanthorpe
Mrs. E. Goebel and Mr. B. Goebel
Mr & Mrs. G. Hamlyn-Harris 51 College Rd., Stanthorpe
Mr. & Mrs. Jamieson 17 Connor St., Stanthorpe
Mr. & Mrs. J. Van Klaveren
Mrs. A. Kent 25 Bridge St., Stanthorpe
Mrs. McAllister 9 Symes St., Stanthorpe
Mr & Mrs. B. McDonagh
Miss S. Newman 101, Sugarloaf Rd., Stanthorpe
Mrs. N. Nixon
Mr. M. Passmore
Miss P. Smith
Mr. Scott Wilmot.

Note. Any errors or omissions in this, or previous list.
please inform editor or treasurer.

CONTRIBUTIONS.

GEMSTONES - A Different Slant

The link between superstition and gemstones is a very ancient one. Mummies from as far back as 4000 B.C., have been found in Egypt festooned with necklaces and carved amulets containing turquoise, carnelian, almandite garnet, amethyst, green jasper and other gems. The Greeks of 400 B.C. recommended carbuncle and chalcedony, rock crystal, beryl, coral and some agates as charms to protect sailors from various perils of the deep and the Chinese wear rubies, diamonds and emeralds in amulets to "lengthen life". Rubies, because of their red colour, have been associated with war, as have hermatite, carnelian and garnets. Emeralds and other green stones have been used as antidotes against poisons; while onyx was said to be very good for breaking down and cooling off love affairs - beryl rewakens love! And so it goes on

Britains Crown Jewels contain the best part of the world's largest diamonds - the 3106 carat Cullinan, presented to Edward VII and cut into nine large and 96 smaller stones. One of these is the 83 carat Star of Africa.

Nearly all gemstones are minerals, and collecting these can be a fascinating and, sometimes, a lucrative, hobby. A properly arranged collection is a thing of great interest and beauty as well as being of educational value.

Mr. J. Anderson gave the Field Naturalist Club a very fine talk on his trip to Northern Queensland recently and showed some beautiful and interesting pieces which he and his wife collected. Give yourself a treat one day soon by going to see his really wonderful collection in College Road and find out for yourself about Australian gemstones from a real expert. Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Anderson for a most enjoyable and inspiring evening.

CONTRIBUTIONS (cont'd)

Fossicking at Doon Doon Creek.

Mr. and Mrs. John Verri and myself spent a very enjoyable day fossicking at Doon Doon Creek whilst on holidays at the Gold Coast. The main aim of our trip was to search for chalcedony.

We left Miami early one morning and travelled to Murwillumbah. From here we journeyed to Uki, where I went to school, as a friend from Riley's Hill, near Woodburn was to meet us. The assistant teacher there was a friend. He was away but the Headmaster showed me a few specimens of rocks and minerals found in that area. It was unfortunate that it was holiday time in New South Wales as the best specimens had been removed for safe keeping. He showed me a relief map of the area and gave me some helpful advice.

We journeyed on a short distance to Doon Doon Creek which is on the main road from Uki to Nimbin. My friend Mrs. Dwyer met us there and we went under the bridge at the creek and fossicked amongst the gravel and water in the creek bed. We found several pieces of chalcedony and Mrs. Verri found a thunder egg.

On one of her previous trips Mrs. Dwyer had found a piece of chalcedony large enough to make a beautiful table lamp. This piece was found under a bridge on the road to Mount Warning. This trip is a very pleasant one and makes a good day's outing. The scenery is very beautiful and the view of Mt. Warning most spectacular.

Ailsa Wilkinson.

Note: Contributions from readers and friends will be most welcomed.

Please remember to hand your list of books which may be borrowed from your private collection to the editor or librarian.

Editor.

NOTE. AMENDMENT TO PROGRAMME.

As the Toowoomba Naturalist Club are visiting Stanthorpe on Sunday 25th, our proposed trip to South Bald Rock for that day has been cancelled. Instead, Leader John Harslett will be taking us to Jolly's Falls with our Toowoomba guests. Since the recent rains it is reported that the wild flowers there are magnificent.

The party will leave the Park at 10 a.m. prompt and will follow a devious route to Jolly's Falls, via Donnolly's Castle.

Editor.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1970 - 1971.

President	T. Chapman	ph.232
Vice Presidents	J. Harslett & W. Cathcart	
Secretary	E. Walker	ph 888
Treasurer	J. Westcott	
Editor	F. Tremeer	ph 651
Librarian	M. Fox	
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Distributor	C. Van Klaveren

POSTSCRIPT.

One problem that always concerns a club such as ours is the risk of going the wrong way.

Recently a visiting scout spent a very cold night out in the bush when he wandered away from the main party. We haven't had to send out a search party for any members yet but at the recent Cunningham's Gap outing two of our members were temporarily lost. They were so engrossed in their discussions that they didn't realize they had taken the wrong path until they were startled to hear a male voice say "If you don't mind please ladies!! "

This shows the importance of being sure of directions and taking notice of signs particularly such as, LADIES AND GENTS.

Tom Chapman.