

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB

P.O. BOX 154,  
STANTHORPE, Q., 4380.

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MEETINGS - 4th WEDNESDAY of each MONTH at the C.W.A. ROOMS at 8P.M.

OUTINGS - Each SUNDAY PRECEDING the FOURTH WEDNESDAY.

SINGLE - \$3.00      ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS      FAMILY \$4.00

AIMS OF THE CLUB

1. TO STUDY ALL BRANCHES OF NATURAL HISTORY.
2. PRESERVATION OF THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF QUEENSLAND.
3. ENCOURAGEMENT OF A SPIRIT OF PROTECTION TOWARDS NATIVE BIRDS, ANIMALS AND PLANTS.
4. TO ASSIST WHERE POSSIBLE IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.
5. TO PUBLISH A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER.

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MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 25th.1978.Present 25      Apologies 7

The President extended a welcome to all present with a special welcome to guest speakers Mr. and Mrs. W.D. McKenzie, and visitors Mr. and Mrs. Burns of Mornington Victoria.

Minutes. It was moved by Mrs. McDonald and seconded by Mr.

E. Walker that the minutes as per the October magazine be taken as read..... Carried.

Correspondence...

Inward Correspondence. Two press statements National Parks and Wildlife Service. Mrs. D. Brown (S.G.A.P. Flower Show) thanks; Australian Conservation Council Foundation (re Habitat Magazine); Magazines from N.P.A. Vol. 48 No.6. Down Under Vol. 17. No.4.

Outward was forward to= Mr. L. Jeffrey; 4QS. It was moved by Mr. T. Archer and seconded by Mrs. McAllister that the inward be adopted and the outward endorsed.... Carried.

Finance. Mrs. D. Archer moved that the credit of \$129.37 be received and accounts for the October magazine \$5.76; C.W.A. for rent \$4.00; Rover Scouts for duplicating \$6.00 be passed for payment. Seconded by Mrs. Harslett ... Carried.

Outing. Report. Mr. E. Walker reported on the most enjoyable, outing to Finney's Falls to which 24 members and friends attended under the leadership of Mr. Bill Humble. Members browsed over the 30 acres in full display, with a variety of wildflowers particularly ground orchids. The morning's outing came to a very pleasant close with a picnic lunch and a cup of billy tea.

Next Meeting. Date Wednesday November 22nd.

Guest Speaker Mr. Mark Hockings Interpretive Officer at Girraween National Park.

Topic. "Small Mammals".

Next Outing. Pl. South Bald Rock.

Leader. Mr. Bill Goebel.

Date. Sunday November 19th

Meeting Place. 9.30 at the wire gate above Girraween National Park (see Map)

General Business.

It was moved by Mrs. Archer and seconded by Mrs. Harslett that the club subscribe to the Habitat Magazine a publication of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

The President Mr. C. Hockings reported on the combined campout with the Queensland Naturalist Club to Canungra on October 14th.-15th. on the property of Mrs. M. Curtis. The six members of the club here who attended thoroughly enjoyed the programme.

Mrs. J. Harslett expressed here thanks to Mrs. D. Archer who was responsible for publishing the monthly magazine in her absence

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25 p.m. to be followed by a slide programme encompassing Kangaroo Island, the Flinder's Ranges and Ayer's



GENERAL BUSINESS Cont.

Rock which was presented by Mr. and Mrs W.D. Mc.Kenzie who came up from Brisbane.

Janet Hockings

Hon Sec.

REPORT ON THE CAMPOUT TO CANUNGRA by Mr. Colin Hockings.

The combined campout with the Queensland Naturalist Club on the 14th. and 15th. of October, at Mrs. M. Curtis' property at Canungra was attended by approximately 70 people.

Stanthorpe's contingent of six represented the only visiting Club to attend.

The camp site was a flat area around the old homestead. The area was surrounded by tall trees and a steep drop on one side led to the beautiful clear Canungra Creek, whose pools are the home of numerous platypus.

Saturday's programme in the morning, despite the overwhelming heat; was spent taking a short walk up the hillside behind the campsite.

Threatening clouds kept us in camp 'till mid-afternoon however they passed around us leaving us to undertake another walk on a different section on the hillside behind us.

Light rain set in on Saturday evening making it necessary to hold our "camp fire" on the verandah of the old cottage and under electric light ! The exhibits for the were many and varied, the most excitement being caused by several snakes exhibited by Doug Binns.

The walk on Sunday morning took us through an area of rain forest, returning across cleared hillsides where a small tree, "Fairy's Paint Brush (*Pithecelobium grandiflorum*) was found, its branches adorned with the curled seed pods peculiar to this tree. When ripe the pods are a bright yellow and split open to reveal shining black seeds inside. This tree is known to me from my childhood on Springbrook. where its masses of cream "paint brush" flowers, dipped in red stirred my imagination.

On each of the three half-day walks many interesting features were observed, in particular trees of various shapes and sizes. Perhaps the most outstanding tree was a magnificent specimen of Tulip Wood (*Harpulia pendula*) covered with orange-red fruit. When mature the seed cases open to reveal two shiny black seeds.

All those who attended the camp would like to extend their thanks to the Queensland Naturalist Club and Mrs. Curtis our hostess for an enjoyable relaxing and most informative weekend.

Colin Hockings.

Speaking of trees a little verse by Ada Jackson may interest members.

The Boab Nut.

This is the song of the Boab Nut

That grows on a Boab tree;

It is sung with a sigh as the wind swoops by,  
and the kernal rattles free.



O! I am a nut in the far far north,  
But I swing in constant dread  
Of the fatal day when a black gin may  
Pound me up for her daily bread.

Oh! I am a nut on a great high branch,  
But I sigh though I'm free  
For I soon must fall, and a nigger tall  
May carve queer things on me.

O!h! I am a nut tha's ripe and brown,  
But p'raps when I fall to earth,  
If Fate is kind I'll be left behind  
And a Boab tree have birth.

Notes from Gardiner's reports which were written in the 1850's which are early times for our part of the world and when our Severn River was more commonly referred to as the "Sovereign River" than the Severn River. (This is as it had appeared on explorer Cunningham's map and the Severn River was to the south of that which we know to-day) Gardiner's reports contain a great variety of interest to read today and he wrote on a great variety of things as well as his official duties which makes them very interest to read. I feel this description of a platypus he happened upon is of interest to us as naturalists and the detail about this strange beast which he noted rather fascinating. Quote, "This animal is from 18 to 20 inches long and has a double coat of fur similiar to a seal, the colour of which is dark brown, the fur underneath is very fine.

It has a bill like a duck from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inches broad and round at the point, which is black and similiar to the softest tanned leather. It is web footed having five claws. The hind feet are similiar to the feet of a seal. In the male a spur similiar to the spur on a common fowl is in the hind legs. The peculiarity of which is a recess which receives the spur at the animals pleasure.

The tail is very broad and flat and is about a quarter to a third of the length of its body and is one complete mass of fat. This animal emits a very pure oil possessing a peculiar odour similiar to fish oil, and with which it anoints its body. The food of this animal appears to be small red worms obtained from the gravel beds of deep pools, eels shrimps and fish.

The internal structure of this animal presents a most strikingly curious contrast. It possesses a heart liver, lungs and kidney precisely similiar to a hare or rabbit. The lungs are small in proportion to those of other animals of a similiar size and the interior has a smell like a pig. It has no stomach but merely one internal canal similiar to that of some fish, the thicker part which is furnished with a coating of the stomachs of those of other small animals



Platypus description Cont.

The skin is nearly one eighth of an inch thick, and upon skinning this animal a thin fleshy filament adheres to the skin, all over the body, excepting the tail. "

That is the end of his quote. However I think it interesting that in the course of his days work reporting on grazing and land problems Mr. Gardiner paused to make such detailed and careful observations. The sort of observations that few of us pause long enough to do with such thoroughness to-day. Nor do we pause to commit to paper to be enjoyed perhaps as this is 127 years later.

Jean Marslett

PLANT of the MONTH

After our outing to Finney's Falls perhaps it should read Plants of the Month especially since we observed no less than eight species of ground orchids in flower, thanks on several occasions to Mr. Joan Stevenson's careful searching which revealed at least two or three species which would have otherwise been by-passed. These included two species of "Greenhoods" the diminutive flowering (but reasonably tall spiked) one seen early in our travels, *Pterostylis mutica* and later the "Red" Greenhood *Pterostylis rufa*. More commonly called "The Ruddy Hood" (but not on a Sunday!) The yellow *Diuris* orchids no less than three species, but hard to separate without careful observation were in special display. This much loved little fellows have several names in the vernacular, such as "Donkey Orchids" referring to the lateral sepals which look a little like the ears of a donkey, also "Donkey Ears" or Doubletails, the latter also referring to the sepals but in this case the lower ones. Waxlips with their lovely star-like purple flowers (*Glossodia major*) and their smaller counterparts in pink and white, which in fact though they may look superficially alike belong to yet another genera (*Caladenia carnea*.)

Amongst the more unusual in design were The Bearded Orchid (*Calochilus robertsonii*) and the lovely little Spider Orchid (*Caladenia dilatata*) and few realized how closely related it is to the little pink fellow mentioned above.

Whilst on the subject of orchids what an amazing looking species Brian Mc. Donagh introduced us to in the rare "Greenhood *Pterostylis woollsii*. The botanists waxed eloquent on its description "The lower sepals united more or less erect at the base, then suddenly deflexed in front of the ovary and widely expanding forming a concavity ..... then suddenly contracting and the free portions produced into filiform caudae" which in simple terms produced these incredible long 'tails' which we all marvelled at. Why ever this incredible design?

The other plants on this outing that were in superb display were the Wild Iris (*Patersonia sericea*) and they were greatly admired by our Gatton visitor Mrs. Sempf. and the two enthusiastic Brisbane photographers who joined the party. It was interesting to see their technique in



action in photographing wildflowers close-up.

Jean Harslett.

Bird of the Month.

I'm afraid you've let me down, or are you all too busy observing them. Don't let them escape you at South Bald Rock.

South Bald Rock Outing

Roll up! Roll up!! Bill will provide you with a challenge and beauty. Remember your torches if you wish to go on the underground part or you may meet the local bunyip unawares. Once we go on to private property Bill has warned the road deteriorates. How about filling the cars and taking as few cars as possible over this section.

REMEMBER THE MEETING PLACE AT THE WIRE GATE ON THE NORTHERN SIDE OF THE NATIONAL PARK AT 9.30 a.a..

CHOOSE ALTERNATE ROUTES OF YOUR  
CHOICE TO WIRE GATE - (VIA GARRAWEN OR  
ECKAY -)

