

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 C.W.A. ROOMS at 8 P.M.

OUTINGS.- Each SUNDAY PRECEDING the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of the Month.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

SINGLE- \$3.00

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 25th APRIL 1979.Present. 31.Apologies 3.

The President extended a welcome to all present with a special welcome to our Guest Speaker Mrs. Helen Horton.

MINUTES:- It was moved by Mr. Wilkinson and seconded by Mrs. Harslett that the minutes as per the April Magazine be taken as read Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE: INWARD:- 1. Q.N.C. Newsletter April and May.  
2. own Under Vol. 18 No. 1.; 3. 1 Press Statement Nat. Parks & Wildlife; 4. Australian Conservation Foundation brochure re -  
Protection Environment Acts. 5. Mrs. Horton and Dr. Ewart re programmes.

OUTWARD:- Mrs. Horton; 4QS; It was moved by Mrs. Marsden and seconded Mr. Errol Walker that the inward correspondence be adopted and the outward endorsed. Carried.

FINANCE:- Mrs. Archer moved that the credit of \$100.54 be received and that the following accounts be passed for payment, Lees News-agency Stencils \$23.50, Duplication Paper \$50.40, Magazine postage \$7.42, C.W.A. Rooms Rent \$5.00. Seconded by Mrs. Stevenson Carried.

NEXT OUTING. PLACE:- WELLINGTON ROCK.

LEADER :- MR. ERROL WALKER.

DATE:- SATURDAY 19th May PLEASE NOTE SAT. NOT SUN

MEETING PLACE:- To leave 9.30 am "LIONS PARK" TENTERFIELD ( TENTERFIELD ).

Those attending are asked to bring drinking water and a cut lunch to carry on the walk.

NEXT MEETING:- DATE:- WEDNESDAY 23rd May.

GUEST SPEAKER:- Mr. DAVID HOCKINGS.

TOPIC:- PESTS? PARASITES and PREDATORS of NATIVE PLANTS.

OUTING REPORT:- In the absence of Mr. Chapman the President reported on the Jolly's Falls outing. About eleven energetic members walked down Broadwater Creek and up Cannon Creek to the wier, a walk of about eight miles. Enroute we were all very interested to see what we believed to be a sheep dip, hand dug and lined with granite slabs, cemented together. The variety of birds together with the varying terrain we walked through all added up to a most enjoyable outing.

GENERAL BUSINESS:- MR. T. Archer reported on the Queensland Nats. Easter Camp to Mount Lindsay. Those who attended thoroughly enjoyed the walks organized for each day of the camps duration. Mr. Frank Wilkinson exhibited an interesting vine, with stems welded together where ever they touched. No one ventured a name for it. It was resolved that the literature from A.C.F. be discussed by the Executive, before an opinion was given. There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30 pm. & Mrs. H. Horton presented a slide programme on the "Kalkadoon Country"

..... Janet Hockings Hon. Sec.  
It has been well said, "the study of Nature requires two qualifications of the mind, which at first appear to be opposed- the comprehensive view of a bold genius that embraces the whole, and the minute inspection and careful recording of an unwearied industry that lives and dwells upon the smallest objects."

George Day F.R.M.S. London.



WELLINGTON ROCK OUTING 19/5/1979.

East of Tenterfield in the mountain ranges north of the Bruxner Highway is a remarkable granite outcrop towering above the Cataract River. Its shape resembles a Wellington Hat and the familiar silhouette is visible from the road from many miles around.

I have identified it from Bald Rock and the high country west of Tenterfield as well as from the road well to the east of the rock towards Casino.

Robin Mc.Cosker and I have been to this rock, eleven years ago but it was very hard going, walking in from the Bruxner Highway.

On this outing we have the advantage of the local knowledge of Mr. Bob Perrie of Tenterfield who often frequents the area. He has access to private property and roads to enable a close approach to be made by vehicle, from where it is only an hours walk.

Bob will have ladders for those who wish to attain the top of the rock, but the views from the base of the rock are just as good for those (like myself) who would rather keep their feet on terra firma.

We will meet, ready for a 9.30 a.m. departure from the Lions Park Tenterfield which is next to the Tenterfield Swimming Pool. This special outing will be on SATURDAY 19th. May 1979 and NOT SUNDAY which is our usual outing day.

Members and friends are asked to organize amongst themselves to bring a minimum of vehicles as parking space may be a problem. Bring lunch and drinking water.

ERROL WALKER (Outing Leader.)

BROADWATER, CANNON CREEK WALK. by DORE Mc.COSKER.

Apart from occasional clumps of *Wahlenbergia gracilis* which looked really beautiful in full bloom, the wild flowers were very scarce and tired-looking in such dry conditions. Paper daisies, (*Helichrysum*) and small *Podolepis* were noticable and we saw the last flowers on the *Lobelia gracilis* and the small ground green-hood orchid *Pterostylis daintiana*. There were occasional flowers on the *Bursaria spinosa* and the *Lythrum salicarias*.

Dainty pale yellow bells hung from *Billardiera scandens* and *Styphelia viridis* while some had fruit (five Corners) large enough to ripen. Some of us supped the delicious honey from the *Melichrus procumbens*. *Brunella vulgaris* and *polygonum* (smart weed) grow in the wet banks of the creek.

*Melaleuca alternifolia* is plentiful in this area, and blossomed in such profusion this year that it truly earned its charming common title of "Snow in Summer". Though not in flower at the moment, it is interesting because of the antiseptic oil which is extracted from the leaves and used commercially in some household cleaners, usually titled under another fresh bushland aroma.

Dore Mc.Cosker.

Next time you have time to pause and watch a "Water Boatman" on your nearest pond note how early man copied the system locomotion in the design of the oars, in particular, and the boat.



Cont. To Quote from "Nature's Teachings to Inventors", "Now the swimming legs of the "water-boatman" are the exact analogues of the oars of a human rower. The internal muscles at the junction of the leg with the body supply the place of the rowers arms, the leg itself takes the office of the oar, and the body of the insect is the weight to be moved and the water supplies the fulcrum. Even the broad blade at the end of man's oar, is anticipated by the fringe of bristles at the end of the leg, and also its sharpened edge by the shape of the insects limb. Besides these resemblances, there is another worthy of notice. A good oarsman knows he must "feather" his oars (ie. Turn the blade edgewise as soon as it leaves the water) The Water boatman does not lift its leg from the water, but there is an even greater need for "feathering, on account of greater resistance offered by the water than the air and this "feathering is effected by the arrangement of the blade bristles, which spread themselves against the water as the stroke is made and collapse afterwards, so as to give as little resistance as possible as the stroke is completed."

These observations are available to everyone right near home and maybe the children may care to look for this during the coming holidays..... Have a happy holiday.....

Jean Harslett.

#### APRIL PROGRAMME REPORT

Those privileged to see Mrs. Helen Horton on the Kalkadoon Country were not disappointed. The Kalkadoon Country embraces quite a large area of country the home of the group of aborigines of that name. They inhabited the harsh mountaneous countryside which surrounds Mt. Isa and also extends for some distance north and south. These people guarded their waterholes very fiercely. The introductory maps put us all in the picture, plus the good discussion of the geology of the terrain. We then saw in her pictures a very comprehensive collection of the wildflowers of the area. Plants so remarkably adapted for those exceptionally hard conditions. We heard most interesting facts about these, and throughout, and with her enthusiasm, became aware of how Mrs. Horton and her family had grown to love and respect this unique and harsh sector of the countryside of Queensland. Splendid pictures of reptiles introduced us to some of their habits. From bird banding, which her husband carried out some unusually close views of birds were shown of birds that sometimes we can only enjoy from a distance. The programme had a very wide and varied natural history content, which had something of appeal for everyone. It was delivered with an enthusiasm and love for both nature and the countryside. Thank you Helen for a programme which was tops.

Jean Harslett.

#### REPORT ON THE JOLLY'S FALLS OUTING BY TOM CHAPMAN

At 3.30. in the afternoon of Sunday 22nd. April eleven nearly tired, rather tired, or very tired members of the Nats. Club scrambled up the patch of rocks to the weir on Cannon Creek.

We had left Jolly's Falls about 9.45 am. and walked down the Broadwater, which is the head of the Severn River, and the water of which eventually reaches the Murray River. We followed the Broadwater to its junction with Cannon Creek which we followed up to the Weir, built by Wally Brooks, for irrigation for his farm.

It wasn't an unduly strenuous walk but we had to keep moving

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BIRDS OF THE MOUNT MITCHELL OUTING IN MARCH

(We have enjoyed quite a feast of thoughts on birds (and thought exercising ones, from the pen of member Tom Chapman and we thank him for the effort in getting these together for our interest. They are written in a way that challenges us to think of our own reactions to our personal "watching")

To continue:- On reaching the summit, with its sheer drop off to east, south and west, we were rewarded not only by the spectacular views in every direction but by the fascinating sight of a Wedge Tail -ed Eagle, a marvellous spectacle of nature in motion, as he effortlessly circled above our heads. Colin had the lucky sighting of three of these majestic birds "standing" on the track in the saddle of the two peaks (he and Janet being the first to reach the point). He certainly appreciated the close-up view of these birds but the wide sky above is their true environment where they are the perfect epitome of effortless grace and perfection of gliding design.

Welcome Swallows zipped around the walls of the mountain, scrub wrens hopped and scratched in the undergrowth while a skink munch-ed on a piece of apple we threw him during lunch. But once again it was up in the clear sky above that the real action took place, as a Peregrine Falcon so effortlessly rode a thermal around and around up and up. As I watched him, so far above, through binoculars, in a display of sheer nonchalance he bent his head to his talons and either picked his teeth, scratched his eyebrow or nibbled his toe nails, in a way that made me marvel at the complete power he had to utilize his environment.

On the return trip to the gap several "rare birds" all proved to be Satin Bower Birds and more elusive sightings were made in the rainforest. In the vicinity of the picnic area to the west of Mount Mitchell our thirst for bird action was partially satisfied. Where the open Eucalyptus country slopes to the rainforested gully, with its gurgling stream the Bell Birds maintained a continuous clinking of melodious little bells and were so prevalent and so interesting that they had to be rated the "Bird of the Month". For sheer numbers and activity they were closely followed by the Satin Bower Birds, who with their suave confident brilliant blue-eyed males in black suits with a purple blue sheen, so different to the rather drab female in her stripey green grey dress. They were all about at the picnic ground looking for hand outs and surely must intrigue even the most disinterested picnickers.

A commotion amongst the Bell Birds led us to an interesting sighting of a pair of Little Lorikeets, identifiable by the large splash of red on cheeks and forehead and a much shorter tail than the Scaly, Rainbow and Musk Lorikeets. Friends of ours had a pet Little Lorikeet and naturally became very interested in the species. George always maintained that if you clapped your hands when a flock of Lorikeets was flying over that if they immediately zoom earthwards then continue on their way, then it was a flock of Little Lorikeets. He was convinced that it was an easy way to identify them on the wing. I have tried it many times and have certainly seen drop suddenly out of their line of flight, but I cannot guarantee it as an identifying technique to separate the various species of Lorikeets.

In the same area we were able to observe very closely the beauty of the Fantail world when a Rufous Fantail went through the



BIRD NOTES OF MOUNT MITCHELL OUTING Cont.

full range of fantail antics, while displaying his beautiful orange-rufous on the lower back and the exaggerated fanning tail. White -  
-Naped Honeyeaters, White Eared Honeyeaters, Blue Wrens and a White Throated Treecreeper added to the variety of birds in the area and their activities at feeding time delayed our departure.

A neat and tidy Black Shouldered Kite trod air over a grassy paddock as we returned to Warwick and typified so much we had admired in the birds we had seen during the day. It displayed beautiful effortless power in a perfectly designed natural machine and the ability to adapt to the environment.

LOLLY'S FALLS OUTING Cont.

Tom Chapman.

except for a short lunch stop, and the weather was exceptionally warm for the time of year.

As much as was practical we followed the watercourse & that meant leaping from rock to rock in places but was easier than scrambling through undergrowth & flood debris. Naturally, keeping to the main stream, we were stopped by various obstacles, our course, if plotted would have looked like the meanderings of an inebriated centipede. Some of the older & wiser members developed the technique of keeping just far enough behind to cut the corners & detours of forced retreat. Under the circumstances of constant walking & crashing through the bushes few birds were recorded, but included; Azure Kingfisher, Pied Cormorant, Rufous Whistler, White Naped Honeyeater, Currawong, White-eared Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill., White throated Treecreeper, Easter Rosella, Fantail cuckoo, Red Browed Finch, Double-bar, Willie-Wagtail, Red Wattle-bird, Blue wren, Grey thrush, Scarlet robin, Grey fantail, Yellow-faced also tufted Honeyeater, Scissors-grinder, White faced heron, Wedge tail Eagle, Kookaburra, Magpie and Brown Flycatcher. Had it been possible to stop at suitable places, a fairly comprehensive <sup>list</sup> would have been obtained. The creek & environs were good habitats for a wide variety of birds & I hope to prove it sometime.

The main feature of the walk were the beautiful waterholes in both creeks, some surprisingly large, and fantastic outcrops where flood-times must provide spectacular displays of rushing water. As we approached secluded pools, we heard many splashes, but no sign of the animal responsible, but suspected Water Dragons. Eventually, it proved to be correct, when a beautiful Eastern Water Dragoon (*Physignathus lesueurii*) didn't dive & disappear at our approach, but calmly stayed motionless & tried to stare us out. His most striking feature was the length of the tail, in proportion to body length about 2:1. Eventually, he dived & despite the fact we were all watching him his movements were so quick he was gone from sight before we realized he had moved.

Along Cannon creek we saw the remains of old tin workings & Tom Archer explained the principle of washing sand from tin & spoke feelingly of the back-breaking task of raking the slurry enabling the tin to sink, being heavy, and thus accumulate. While we were not surprised to see signs of tin mining the next find was a surprise. A few posts standing in the scrub, near a large waterhole proved to be the remains of a draining yard for washing sheep. The Dip, a deep narrow trench dug in sand was faced with large flat slabs of granite cemented. Quite a task, even more so as it had been built in a curve. Was that done to slow the sheep down, so that they didn't leap in & plunge to the other end before getting wet? Its intriguing to think of people dipping sheep in such an isolated and un-sheeplike area. The weir & brewed billy tea was a fitting end to a good outing. Tom Chapman.