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THE
**GRANITE BELT
NATURALIST**



**Monthly Newsletter of the
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club**



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

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1980 - 1981

PRESIDENT	Robin McCosker
VICE PRESIDENTS	Colin Hockings John O'Donnell
SECRETARY	Graham Greenup
TREASURER	Dot Archer
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YOUTH OFFICER	Ruth Greenup
BUSHWALKING OFFICER	Ray Marsden
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	Frank Wilkinson Lyle Thompson David Pfrunder Tom Archer Desley McDonagh Jean Harslett

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 - \$ 4.00

FAMILY - \$ 6.00

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.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING HELD C.W.A. 25th MARCH 1981.PRESENT:- 18... Apologies 7..(as per attendance book.)MOTION:- The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed, taken as read, moved by Mr.Don Lightfoot and seconded by Mrs.D. Mc.Cosker..... Carried.CORRESPONDENCE:INWARD: 1. "Warwick Walker", newsletter of the Warwick Bushwalkers Club.

2. "The Darling Downs Naturalist" Journal of the Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club.

3. Letter from Mrs.Bettina Buchanan, The Summit, suggesting a visit to Westray's Grave (Stinson Wreck at Lamington as a suitable outing for the club.

OUTWARD: 1. A letter to Radio 4QS with notice of outing and meeting and times.MOTION: Moved by Mrs.Joan Stevenson seconded by Mrs.May Prentice, that the inward correspondence be received and the outward endorsed..... Carried.BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

The meeting decided to act upon Mrs.Buchanan's suggestion, and thus a weekend visit to Lamington would be scheduled for June 21st and 22nd. Mrs Buchanan informs us that ~~Mr~~ Mr. Roy Buchanan of Lamington would be agreeable to participate as leader, so a letter shall be written to him. Camping may be possible at a National Fitness Camp and this matter will be looked into for members.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Moved by Mrs Millie Marsden and seconded by Mrs.Jean Harslett that a cheque for \$10 be sent to Mr. David Raff to help pay expenses incurred in travelling to Stanthorpe for the February meeting, at which he was Guest Speaker..... Carried.

Statement 25.3.81

Feb. 1981....	Credit Balance.....	\$262.16
	Receipts Rent collection..	\$4.15
	Rent.....	\$4.00
		<u>\$8.15</u>
	Total ...	\$270.31.
Payments..	Feb Mag. Postage.....	\$4.62.
	Feb Room Rent.....	\$6.00
		<u>\$10.62</u>

March credit balance.. \$259.69

Accounts to be passed for payment:

1. March Mag. Postage... \$5.10

2. March Room Rent..... \$6.00

3. P.O.Box Rent..... \$16.00

4. Magazine Covers \$49.22

5. Travelling Expenses

David Raff... \$10.00

APRIL 1981.FINANCIAL REPORT Cont.

Total expences passed for payment...#86.32.

Moved Mrs.Dot Archer,seconded Mrs Jean Harslett that the treasurers report be received and the accounts passed for payment.

Carried.

OUTING REPORT:

Mrs.Dore Mc.Cosker reported on the successful outing to Texas and Limevale areas at which approximately fifty people in a long convoy of vehicles attended.

A letter is to be written to Miss Hitchener thanking her for access to her property and in particular for her generosity in providing a sumptuous afternoon tea for the club.

Unfortunately only about twenty people attended the latter and an apology be forthcoming for this.

Appreciation was expressed to Mr Laurie Jeffrey for his assistance to Dore and his research and guidance on the excursion.

It was moved by Mrs Joan Stephenson and seconded by Mrs.Millie Marsden that Laurie and Joy be given an honorary membership/ for another year,to show our appreciation.... Carried.

NEXT OUTING:

Mr.and Mrs.Ray Marsden will lead the next outing to Horan's Gorge,Fletcher. Departure time 10am.Weeroona Park. NOTE PLEASE that this outing is a WEEK EARLIER than it would normally be because of Easter..SUNDAY APRIL 12th.

NEXT MEETING PROGRAMME: and Meeting. Q.C.W.A. Rooms April 22nd.

at 8pm. Jean Harslett will present an illustrated programme to follow the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.43pm.

An interesting selection of slides taken in Jordan,Israel and Egypt was shown and commented on by Desley Mc.Donagh. Frank Wilkinson thanked Desley very sincerely on behalf ~~the~~ of the club which showed its appreciation in acclamation.

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COMBINED HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND NATURALIST CLUB OUTING TO THE TEXAS %LIMEVALE AREA..SUNDAY 22nd. MARCH..1981.

BY MRS.DORE Mc.COSKER.. LEADER.

A good roll-up of cars left Weeroona Park in bright sunshine. The small accident to and causing damage to Chapman's car marred the beginning,but we were thankful that they were able to come w with us.

Our first stop- unscheduled - was to admire a deer with half gr grown antlers that was watching us from the roadside. It fled before the camera clicked.

Texas friends Laurie and Joy Jeffrey and Bill and Colleen Glassen met us at Bracker Creek just south west of "Warroo", a pleasant spot for bird watching.

At Nanny Creek, named after an aboriginal woman shepherd who was murdered thereabouts,we walked onto a small hill from which smoke was seen to rise for many years. Perhaps there is

REPORT ON TEXAS OUTING Cont.

a coal seam underneath. We noted that no grass= trees grow on it although every other rise is crowned by a clump of gums and native cypress.

An area of white sandy country quite different to the surrounding terrain was an interesting feature, on the short cut taken through a paddock to see the wedge-tail eagles nest in a tall iron bark tree. Small bones on the ground below indicate the diet of the young eagles are reared on. On this rocky ridge there are some peculiar small rocks of very light sandstone quite different from the predominant sharp traprock. We were fortunate in finding two specimens. The areas where the light rocks are occurring are locally known as "blow outs"

Small birds were plentiful around some pools in the scrubland and before we left we watched with wonder as several very large birds flew in leisurely formation at great height overhead. They were probably spoonbills. Hollowed out ant hills, termites, around here would have been just right for use as ovens by our pioneering ancestors.

While travelling to where Nanny's hut used to be I spotted a beautiful specimen of a fungus (*Podaxis pistillaris*) which grows in the termite hills. We left the party to photograph it and caught up with the party at a pleasant lagoon where three goannas were observed. The marked tree was the main point of interest, said to be "F.W." which stood for Finlay's Waterhole in the very early days. Jack collected a specimen of barb wire from a fence long buried.

After a late lunch on the river bank at Texas where some enjoyed a swim. We visited the well cared for and interesting museum, where the garden of native shrubs and trees will give pleasure for many years to come.

Returning to Limevale we wandered through the outcrops of marble and collected a few pieces that appealed to us. We carefully opened the door of a "trapdoor", but the spider did not come to invite us in. When that door was closed it would be nearly impossible to find the hole.

While some of us of us regaled ourselves with good food, good talk and several cups of tea, generously provided by Miss Hitchener in her lovely old home setting, others ended the day with a visit to the Red Bank area where the colours were vividly lit up by the setting sun.

Our time had run out so we did not see the historic sites of the old Brush Creek Hotel or School, the Carlton Hotel or those beautiful River Red Gums.

On my pre-outing visits I found a most attractive ground cover plant which I saw first at the Rockhampton Hospital Grounds where the S.G.A.P. members have taken over the planting and care of some of the garden. It was *Myoporum* and has a persistent variably coloured berry-like fruit of pink, purple and green.

Our Club is most grateful to our Texas friends for a most interesting and enjoyable day and I hope they have received some of the much needed rain.

Dore Mc.Cosker Leader.

THE MYSTERIOUS GOLF BALL and OTHER NATURE NOTES
FROM THE TEXAS OUTING...by Jean Harslett.

On the Texas outing on a very rough rocky hill between two Wedge-tail Eagles nest, with not a sign of humans having passed that way, member Frank Wilkinson picked up a perfectly good golf ball, almost in mint condition. How did it get there? Was it a "Birdie" or was it an "Eagle"?

On the same knoll several people were interested in the small tree with bright orange berries. Someone tasted them and really got the clue, it was the "Quinine Berry or more correctly, as John O'Donnell suggested *Petalostigma tri-se-*
~~-ulare~~*.pubescens*. They grow in open situations as an understory tree to open hardwood forests. The plants like dry well drained soil on hillsides of stony clay, which have a surfacing of small loose stones. What description could fit better the specimens we saw. It is very slow growing so these "Trees" would be exceptionally old. It will stay as a good dwarf potted specimen in cultivation in a very sunny spot in your garden.

Dore found the fruiting body of a very interesting fungus. Beneath these lies a very fascinating story. The nests of "white-ants" often remind people of tombstones, but each "tombstone" is a monument not to the dead, but to the living and may house millions of inhabitants. The strangest thing of all is perhaps the termites ability to eat wood and digest it. When the paths of Man and the Termite cross this wood-eating habit becomes a nuisance, and its a queer twist of fate for the poor old white ant was never meant to be nuisance. Indeed, Nature designed it to fulfill a very important soil-making function and only because man later and much later, decided to use wood did its very important status change somewhat. Termites hasten the making of new soil, and without their help, fallen logs and dead trees would encumber the earth for many years, before they disintegrated and continued and continue the cycle of life. But how I am digressing, carried away by these remarkable populations. The strangest thing is their ability to eat wood. Unaided they could not digest it and would just die of starvation. Thus they have to produce or introduce aids to this complex colony. One is the "cultivation" of this fungus, (*Podaxis pistillaris*) for the production of cellulose as an aid to the termites digestion of the wood. Just every now and then we see the fruiting bodies of this fungus. I missed this one on the Texas outing, but I never fail to be inspired and pause with wonder when I do see them, to think of the wonder of what is going on below and in utter darkness, and to be thrilled by the ever incredible and complex designs and functions. Ailsa Wilkinson pointed out a small section of a termites nest, where we could see the incredible patterns of design, too.

Jean Harslett.

NEXT OUTINGPLACE Horan's Gorge, Fletcher District.Date. 12th April PLEASE NOTE EARLY DATE? ITS BECAUSE OF EASTERTIME: WEEROONA PARK Depart at 10 am.LEADERS: RAY and MILLIE MARSDEN

Ray and Millie Marsden have done a pre-outing for us and from that they have decided upon the following plan. Meet at the Weeroona Park at 10am. Drive south along the highway to the Fletcher turn off where we will turn left (east) and drive quite a distance up through Mr. Rollie Forbes property (his permission has been given for this exercise) The property was previously Kelly's and previously Dents and Cohrs. Our leaders suggest leaving the cars where a cup of tea will be had. Then, taking our lunch in a pack (and tea or water) we will walk for about two hours up the valley along a track where walking will be reasonably level and back along the creek. There is plenty of rocky climbs on the northern side of the valley, if some of the party wish to do their own thing. Millie's father who knew the area prior to 1923 (when he went to Tamworth for 18 months) remembers great numbers of Rock Wallabies and dingoes. Later there were hardly any. David Townsend reports a few tree ferns in the upper end of the Gorge.

Horan's Gorge has recently been taken over as a reserve by The National Parks of Queensland, the Kelly's being largely interested in making over part of the property which was theirs. It will be an excellent opportunity for some of our members to get to know a little more of the area.

NEXT MEETING. C.W.A. Rooms 22nd April. 8pm.SPEAKER: Jean Harslett.Subject. Illustrated, "Designs in Nature".A JOURNEY THROUGH JORDAN, ISRAEL and EGYPT..

Our programme for the March meeting given by Desley Mc. Donagh. took us to many interesting places and names, so much a part of our early and basic education. Though places so well known to us by name, it occurred to me how rarely we see such an interesting pictorial record of these ancient areas, presented in slide form.

There are many fascinating books, but it is a much more unusual to have a personal account by a friend and a member of our club. Frank Wilkinson gave a very sincere vote of thanks that probably also reflected some of these thoughts, and certainly reflected the thoughts and gratitude, Desley of us all. As the pictures of the ancient lands were shown, so did Desley's personal thoughts were related, of desert, heat, hard living and simple living conditions, of oft read of places and buildings, of cities carved into cliffs, significant places 'in the birth of civilization' or the personal excitement, of the strenuous climb up, inside the Pyramid, and its size, or in comparison, the surprise how small the Sphinx was, by comparison.

Jean Harslett.