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

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1983-1984

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AUDITOR	Mrs. Joan Ferris

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- $5.00 Mag. Only Sub $5.00 Family - $8.00

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 newspaper.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 24th. 1983. at C.W.A.

PRESENT 19. APOLOGIES 7.

The President welcomed all to the meeting with special mention of visitors present.

MINUTES:- That the minutes had been taken as read was moved by Tom Archer and seconded by Peter Langdon. Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE.. Inward was received from:-

1. Zaidee Newman re sub. and greetings.
2. Desley Mc.Donagh re sub. and greetings.
3. Brookvale Park Aug,27th.-4th Sep. re Qld.display
4. Glen Aplin School P & C re Fair Oct.28th.
5. Richmond Valley Newsletter
6. Qld. Nats Club Newsletter Aug/Sept No.135.
7. Nat Park Assoc. News.
8. Down under Vol22 No.2 Aug.

Outward was sent to :-

1. Rover Scouts ..Thanks for printing Magazine.
2. Mr.Whitford ...Thanks for outing on his property.
3. Mr.Beaver Ditto above.
4. 4QS re meeting and outing.
5. Mr.Bill Goebel .. thanks for Aug.Outing.

Moved by J.Harslett and seconded by B.Mc.Donagh and carried that the inward be received and outward endorsed..Carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: To 24th Aug. 1983.

JULY 27th. 1983 Cr.Bal. forward		$5989
Receipts July Subs	$155.00	
Room rent Donations	14.60	
Room rent Collection	4.30	
Aug. Subs	31.00	$204.30
		$264.19.
Payments July 27th 1983		
Room rent	6.00	
Mag.Postage	8.04	
Mag Duplication.	5.00	
Stencils	15 .30	34.34
Aug 24th. Credit Balance.		=$229.75.

Moved by Dot Archer ~~moved~~ that the report be received and the following accounts passed for payment,Room rent $6.00;Mag.Dup. $5.00; Mag.Postage $8.04;Mag wrappers and covers $88.08second--ed by R.Marsden... Carried.

OUTING REPORT:Jean Harslett gave a brief report on the outing to Girraween,(in the absence of Bill Goebel,who was unable to be present) Bill Goebel led club members over part of Allan Cunninghams trek through the Park in 1827. After leaving the graded tracks to the Sphinx area,we became aware of the rugged country and the hazzards the explorer met with. Leucopogon and Acacias were the floral highlights.

MINUTES CONT:-

In all it was a most interesting day.

NEXT OUTING:- This will be led by Jean Harslett to the Mole Rive and Silent Grove area. Cars can either meet at Weeroona Park at 9am or 9.30am at Wallangarra ,Sunday 24th.September.

NEXT GUEST SPEAKER. Next Guest speaker will be Mr.Roy Werner and will take us to Mornington Island,and speak on life there.

SPECIMENS Jean Harslett read the report from the Herbarium of th Zieria found at Numdubbermere,on the previous outing,classed as Zieria fraseri.

BUSINESS Brian Mc.Donagh reported that he will lead a party to Donnybrook on Sun Aug.28th,all weldome to join in.

Following a request for our magazine only from distant members D. Archer moved and D.Stevenson seconded that a subscription to cover paper,duplication,stencils and postage of $5. be charged Carried.

The nomination of Gabrielle Brown to the committee by Jean Harslett was made and accepted.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45 after which Jean Harslett gave a most interesting and humerous account of her ~~received~~ recent visit of England, Scotland and Denmark.. Many thanks Jean.

Joan Stevenson Hon.Sec.

CUNNINGHAM'S TRACK WITH BILL GOEBEL?OUR AUGUST OUTING.
BY JEAN HARSLETT AUGUST 14th. 1983

Our August Outigg under the leadership of Mr.Bill Goebel will be ome long remembered for various reasons of its make up mentally and physically stimulating,combining interesting hist--ory,and the recording of challanging work done by Bill in the preceeding years,the culmination of which must be very satisfy--ing to him,and certainly is to those he has shared the experienc with,thank you Bill for your efforts on behalf of our club,both in the pictorial lead - up at the meeting followed by this exer--cise.

Mr.Bill Goebel in company with the late Mr.Mervyn Fletcher had obtained photo copies of explorer Allan Cunningham's orig--inal Journal and notes,in his hand writing, and Allan Cunningh--am's report to the Governor of New South Wales Colony of the 1827 discoveries. To-gether with intimate details of exact de--tails in the diary of distances travelled to each point of the compass (each change recorded) elevations and latitude and the longitude, readings etc. With some service and advise from a surveyor,but it has mostly been done by Bill's determination crossing and re-crossing rugged terrain,until it all added up with the descriptions.Probably few could have done this better than Bill with his splendid knowledge of the area and his quiet,patient yet tenacious endeavours to leave no facet un--turned in the search to match features described and measure--ments. Our club was priveleged to share some of the findings, and to ,perhapes,traverse the exact paths of Cunningham's frustrations .

CUNNINGHAM'S TRACK CONT.

It would have been interesting if we had had weather record for that early period (1827) the diary suggests earlier a dry period and an exceptional wet winter. Plants which Cunningham actually described botanically for the first time, were in fact on this day in profusion, mamely Leucopogon species, and Acacia species. He described the countryside with the abundance of flora was similiar to the sandstones of the Blue Mountains.

To quote he said, "the spongy swamps overflowing with late rain were exceedingly soft and boggy, so much so my horses had frequen-tly to make many circuitous digressions from our line of course!"

We set off from the Information Centre, through the new camping ground, alive with rich orange and blue tents set in a fairy ring of gold Acacia neriifolia, whisps of blue smoke drift-ing up from morning camp-fires, providing a scene to touch the chords ofthe hearts of anyone with Australian blood coursing in their veins.

Along the well made trail past Castle Rock to Turtle Rock = =Bill enlivening the route with asides off the track, to special features; whale rock' and others with not such inviting names, plants of "Golden Wedge Pea (Gompholobium sp,) From the higher ridges we viewed the valley Cunningham came up from on the way from his tree day wet camp at Undercliffe area. .."at mid-night when a change taking place, the clouds were driven back to the coast, and established fine weather followed"..(yes even that could describe the few days leading up to our outing too)

At that point near the "Sphinx" we had a short time trying to capture the wonderful lights on this interesting shape, before plunging off the tracks and into a more rugged terrain.

Here Cunningham's own words describe the scene, 26th. June 1827, "Tracing the swampy valley southerly, with the fullest expectation of it proving a pass to an open declining country in that direction, we had scarcely proceeded five miles, before a bold rocky region of the most wild and frightful aspect effectively stopped our passage." As we climbed through some magnificant crevices in the rocks and huge boulders no way for pack horses we could easily relive some of his prob-lems. Tall timbers were glimpsed through the narrow openings and deep ferns filled the area we dropped into.

Cunningham went on to say. "Large detatched masses of granite of every shape, towered above each other and standing in many instances on points in such apparently tottering position, that one might suppose them to have been placed by supernatural means, and constituted the barrier immediately before us; beyond which a deep ravine formed a curve from east to S.W. which was itself bounded by a rocky ridge at least 250 feet high faced with vertical rocks of very rugged appearance.... Observing from a commanding eminence I had ascended" so Cunningham continued. and yes we dined with our easy pack modern convenience lunches beside and beneath huge boulders which answered to the above description, and then climbed the "commanding eminence" to ponder upon his route

CUNNINGHAM'S TRACK CONT.

and his decisions of 156 years previously. Cunningham spoke of the necessity of stopping several times to re-shoe and tighten horse shoes which suffered over these few days, of seeing stringy-bark trees with bark recently removed by aboriginies, and finding a human scull which bore marks of damage to the back of the head. Its a full report and I cannot give it all, but hope this may build a picture in your imaginations of some of the problems he had.

We ofcourse were always secure in the fact that Bill our leader knew just where he wanted to take to find a course out how long it would take, and if we felt a little physically tired a hot shower awaited us, only a short time ahead, and even those first out on the track could use a telephone to nominate time of arrival home. All in all it was a 'beaut' day and made us ponder and 'Dip our lids' to men of the calibre of Cunningham and his team, who paved the way for the pastoralists who followed. Our esteem for Bill and the others who have done so much to trace this track over a long period of effort was warm also.

Jean Harslett.

Mention has been made of the Zieria specimens which were sent down from our Aug. outing, that it has only been recorded from Mt. Ernest and Mt. Maroon many years ago and that it was Z. fraseri. The Herbarium replied also that the genus is to revised. With this in mind fresh material of all the Zeria species recorded from this district were sent down, namely Z. fraseri; Z compacta; Z smithii; Z. aspalathoides and Z. aspalathoides var. intermedia; Z. cytisoides; Z. arborescens; and Z. laevigata which is a pretty respectable representation from a district. I also sent a small sample of the Nundubbermere one to Jean Galbraith (Victoria) and she promptly sent a piece to the Zieria expert at the Sydney herbarium, and a small spray to Bill Cane for cuttings, thus it has been joyously recorded.

BIRD NOTES.

Recently there was a query about what was probably a Pied Butcher Bird. Now the Grey Butcher Bird always nests here & usually makes its whereabouts well and truelly known at this time with its unfriendly overtures if you go to close to its home territory. However have any of our members had records of the Pied Butcher Bird nesting in this district ? Please tell us if you have.

Member Dot Archer has kindly prepared an article on their very successful feeding bottles for attracting birds, which some of you may care to try for yourselves.

BIRD FEEDING AT THE ARCHERS -

Early morning here at the Archer residence is quite a noisy spot with our feathered friends letting us know that it is not only our breakfast time but also breakfast time for them.

As well as bread (wholemeal of course) honey & water and grated cheese on their feeding trays, we have two bottles of 'Nectar' which is a mixture of sugar, water and pentavite. One bottle is hung on the flowering peach tree and the other one hung just outside the dining room window. Here, while eating our meals we are entertained by a variety of birds feeding from the trays but particularly by the Wattlebirds drinking from the bottles.

When Tom first gave me the recipe from an agricultural journal I thought it would take several days or more to get the birds to drink from the upended bottle of 'juice' with a pin hole in the bottle top but to our amazement it was only a matter of minutes before the bottles were being used and enjoyed. The wattlebirds drink from the bottle in the tree by standing on a lower branch but the bottle hanging from the eves near the window is a different proposition - sometimes they cling to the wire which holds a feeding tray, but othertimes they hang upside down from the wire holding the bottle while others beat their wings and hover just under the bottle - quite entertaining to watch.

Should the bottles empty and I haven't noticed - I am told in no uncertain terms by one of the birds who sits opposite the window and in bird language asks for more.

I've often seen Kurrawongs and Magpies examining the bottle to see what they are all about and then they fly off. One day, however, a female Bower bird approached the bottle in the tree and I thought it would be for examination only but when I noticed bubbles go up through the liquid I realized it was drinking it. Naturally the wattlebirds objected very strongly to the Bower birds drinking their 'Nectar' and sent them on their way - however the Bowerbirds still come back when the coast is clear. I have to replenish the bottles more frequently now with all the extra drinkers.

So you can share the enjoyment we get with the birds drinking from the bottles here is the recipe for the 'Nectar'

1 litre of water with 1 cup of white sugar dissolved in it and a few drops of Penta Vite.

I use a 'soda water bottle' with a hole the size of a pin in the skrew top. Upend it on a wire hung where ever you can watch the birds.

Happy bird watching

Dot Archer.