

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

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1983 - 1984

PRESIDENT	John O'Donnell (852 344)
VICE-PRESIDENTS	Frank Wilkinson Robin McCosker
SECRETARY	Joan Stevenson (811 009)
TREASURER	Dot Archer (811 754)
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Jean Harslett B.E.M.
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YOUTH OFFICER	Errol Walker
BUSHWALKING OFFICER	Ray Marsden
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	Colin Hockings David Pfrunder Tom Archer Ailsa Wilkinson Lyle Thompson Roy Werner
<u>AUDITOR</u>	Mrs. Joan Ferris

Handwritten:
No blackness. Editor!
Sorry about missed pages!

MEETINGS 4th Wednesday of each month at the C.W.A. Rooms at 8 P.M.

OUTINGS Each SUNDAY PRECEDING the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of the Month.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single - \$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 STANTHORPE AND DISTRICT FIELD NATURALIST CLUB.
MEETING HELD Q.C.W.A. ROOMS WEDNESDAY 25th. JUNE 1984 at 8pm.

Present..18. _____ Apologies 10.

The president welcomed all to the meeting ,with a special welcome to visitor Pam Harvey

MINUTES:- That the minutes be taken as read was moved by M.Marsden and seconded by J. Harslett and Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

- INWARD: 1. Film Library renewal of subscription.
 2. Neta Noakes reply to Clubs condolences.
 3. Alex. Gilmour re rainforest vertebrate survey N.S.W.
 4. Govt. in Form No.1 Vol4. May
 5. Press Statements Dept. Wildlife and Nat. Parks etc.
 6. Qld. Conservation Council can nominate lands for reserves parks etc.
 7. Richmond Valley Newsletter June.
 8. Record of Government Oct.83-Mar.84 No.2.
 9 Darling Downs Naturalist. June Vol7.No.1.
 10 Darling Downs Nats Newsletter No 361 June.
 11. N.P.A. News Vol54.No.4. June 1984.
 12 Q.N.C. June/July No.139.
 13 Chinchilla Urimbirra Vol.11 No.9 Vol.18 No.4. Vol.18 No.5.

OUTWARD was sent to:-

1. Terry and Thelma Rayner Thanks for being Guest Speakers.
2. Graham Saunders Nat. Park & Wildlife thanks for the Sun-down Amenities Block.
3. 4QS Outing and Meeting notices.
- 4 Wilf and Zaidee Newman Congratulations on 50th. Wedding Anniversary.

MOTION

That the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted and endorsed was moved by R.Mc.Cosker seconded by D. Lightfoot...Carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

May Credit Balance Forward _____ 52.10

RECEIPTS

May 23rd. Room Rent Collection	_____	2.75	
June 1st. Bank Interest	_____	4.24	
June 15th. Sub. 1984 and 1985.	_____	10.00	16.99
			69.09.

PAYMENTS.

May 23rd. Room Rent	_____ R	6.00	
May 23rd. Magazine Postage		11.00	
May 23rd. Magazine Duplication.		5.00	
June 1st. Federal Tax.	_____	50	22.50

Credit Balance....

46.59.

Dot Archer moved that a credit balance of \$46.59 be received and the following accounts be passed for payment, June Magazine postage 11.00; June Magazine Duplication 5.00; June Room rent 6.00; Stencils 15.30 seconded by R. Mc.Cosker.....Carried.

OUTING REPORT Jean Harslett reported on a good outing very well attended, which was held at "Mountain View". Joan Stevenson adds, "After a delicious morning tea supplied by Jean the party broke up into 2 groups. The smaller group went bird watching on the dams and several species of waterfowl were reported upon. The larger group went up Ferguson's Lookout which is the highest point at this northwestern side of the district. There were many interesting features rocks, wildflowers early wattles and a superb view of the grazing country to the north and west. After lunch a divided group went to their respective points of interest. One to Alec and Denise Harslett's garden, which features many native plants and shrubs, while others went to "Rats Castle" to scramble among many rocks and crevices.

Thanks to Jean and Rob were made by the President and supported by M. Marsden, with special thanks to Alec and Denise garden display and Peter and Rosie whose garden we admired on the morning walk.

NEXT OUTING This will be to Lookout Rock which is at the southern end of Girraween National Park. It will entail an 8am. start from Weeroona Park or 8.30 from the Beehive Dam at Wallangarra. Lunch will have to be carried.

NEXT GUEST SPEAKER. As this will be our Annual Meeting members are asked to bring their slides taken on outings the previous year.

SPECIMENS. Jean Harslett brought a mopoke that had been killed - a road casualty - A close view of its features was appreciated.

Flora specimens from the outing were shown by Millie Marsden and discussed.

Tom Dunn asked for identification of a small 'owl' seen at Nundubbermere. Answer-Owlet.

GENERAL BUSINESS. Secretary Joan reported with a meeting with the visiting Recreation Officer. Guest Speakers cannot be supplied, only suggested. No finance available unless on a workshop.

M. Marsden would the Club be involved with an outing to promote the "Year of the Family"? Details to be made later (in the programme of incoming executive).

Specimens of dead birds found in Stanthorpe town area were sent away for examination and traces of parathion were found in each.

Room rent finances need a boost and members are asked to pay 50 cents per family for attendance at meetings.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm. after which Gabrielle Brown gave a most informative address with specimens on Herbs. Members joined in the discussion and sampled several lesser known ones. I'm sure greater notice will be taken of their pleasure and remedies as Gabrielle explained to us. The history of herbs certainly assured in the diet and medical world.

Joan Stevenson

Hon. Secretary.

ABOUT BIRDS

Tom Dunn asked about a little owl like bird he saw and its, identification.

The Owlet or more correctly Owlet-Nightjar is a very diminutive member of this group of birds, as other names it shares suggests "Fairy Owl" or "Moth Owl". Oddly enough it is found throughout Australia, Tasmania and N.G., where suitable conditions occur, yet it is quite infrequently seen. Perhaps this is because of its small size as a night bird, and its day-time habit of resting in hollows, making it difficult to see.

Occasionally it either has a "night out" and does not get home to its, and is seen either on a limb or on the ground, and it is then that we observe this little chap, and to wonder what it is. Another way it sometimes gives itself away is its habit of "talking in its sleep" eg. a couple of sort of double notes like "chirk" "chirk" can be heard from a hollow limb and the curious investigates.

The nightjars being ground dwellers also nest on the ground, and produce only one egg, very mottled and well designed to evade detection. But this little chap lives and nests in the hollows, and like owls have white eggs and several of them. White eggs that can be seen under ill-lit conditions.

The reply from the pathologist re dead birds submitted by myself upon the request of some town dwellers is as follows.

Dear Mrs. Harslett,

Post mortem examination of the four birds submitted to us revealed no lesions, however toxicological examination of pooled gut samples from these birds showed the presence of parathion.

Parathion is an extremely toxic organophosphorous type pesticide and the levels in the stomachs were consistent with the ingestion of a lethal dose of the chemical."

Some discussion took place as to how we can best rectify this serious problem. However it is not entirely straight forward, but we know a great deal more now and probably how these birds came in contact. We certainly plan to try and stop this activity.

Jean Harslett.

President John O'Donnell erected his telescope down near the dam on the June outing and got some really pertinent viewing of the actions and feeding antics of the Spoonbills which he shared with us in description, and with those few close to him in observation. The Musk ducks were sighted by a couple and a number of other species observed.

The unusually heavy fall of snow puzzled some of our bird life which was quite comical to observe. Our birds are "babes in the wood" when such all over white conditions are presented. In the middle of the day a Robin (redbreast) was observed by the road and I could pick it up. After sharing what warmth cupped hands could offer for a period, it seemed quite happy to face the world normally, again. Perhaps others have some observations which should be recorded.

Jean Harslett

NOTES ON THE FIELD OUTING - SUNDAY 22nd JULY by ROBIN Mc.COSKER

The Peak known locally as Lookout Mountain is shown on the National Park map of Girraween due south of Mount Norman, and at an altitude of 1236 m, which is 30m lower than Mount Norman.

The walking distance from our cars at the Beehive Dam on private property, to the peak is probably similar to that of the Mount Norman track, which is mostly graded and cleared, whereas we will have to make our way through thick scrub etc.

Notable features of this mountain are the 30m (plus) deep chasm with its luxuriant tree ferns and vines, many wonderful specimens of the Wallangarra White Gum (*Euc. scoparia*) and of course the views.

To those members not up to the climbing of the mountain I can recommend that you join us part of the way up the gully with some splendid trees and bird life and then return at your leisure to perhaps explore around the dam and downstream from it, where you can inspect the remains of the "Swimming Pool" built for the occupants of the Army Base.

Please note the EARLY START 8am from WEEROONA PARK.

Lunch and drinking water will have to be carried by those climbing Lookout Mountain.

There is plenty of scope for more sedate walking and birdwatching around the Beehive Dam.

LEADER Robin Mc.Cosker...Tel.835217.

DATE Sunday 22nd July.

TIME. Weeroona Park 8am Beehive Dam 8.30am.

PERSONAL

Greetings from Frank and Ailsa Wilkinson to all members. They are having a great time, discovering miles of hedge bordered Kentish lanes, beautiful in spring growth and bluebells. ~~Hardy~~ ~~hardy~~ in Scotland and Ireland's green (only an odd day of "shirt-sleeve" weather. Now amongst the Vikings as their card suggests, and enjoying Norway. We are glad you are enjoying some well earned relaxation.

New Zealand travellers Errol, Annette and Sussie Walker also send greetings, are enjoying their travels and delighted with the area around Doubtful Sound. We will be skiting about "our snow" when they return with all those great "snow pictures" and hope the cold air travelled across the Tasman to give them some special effects too.

We are indeed sorry to learn of our member, Janet Hockings father's hospitalization at the P.A. in Brisbane. Wally and Betty Mc.Kenzie have been wonderful friends of our club, and given us much pleasure and interest by sharing some of their extended trips with us in description and photographically. Members join in wishing you, Wally a speedy recovery.

JULY 1984

While on the subject of snow, do you remember when it fell? There have been some wild guesses, so perhaps a few major falls of which there are records may be interesting. There would appear to have been a very heavy fall in 1900 or 1901. Then in 1923 there are some good black and white photographs in The Summit area and at the Pikedale Soldier Settlement at Amiens showing the countryside blanketed with snow. The next fair fall seems to be on 4th June 1949, followed by another 29th July 1959 and now this one 2nd and 3rd June 1984. Some mistake the dramatic ~~map~~ picture in Maryland St in 1955 for snow but that was hail. Fairly evenly spaced except for one eg. 23;26;10;25 years apart respectively, so on a very rough average about 25 years apart for a good fall, not good enough for local shops to keep a bumper supply of film!! We do of course see a few flakes in between. Snowmen outside business houses were rather fun, for example telecom complete with phone, the "postie" in full regalia, the fruit and vegetable "featured" snowmen outside similar businesses, electrical outside the right shop, and one definitely not white and in need of a clean near the laundry! Perhaps most memorable was the way in which young and old large or small joined in the joyous spirit of it all.

REMEMBER LAST YEAR..JULY PROGRAMME.

Now to remember last year, and to make a good programme please all remember to bring slides of activities and scenes of last years outings, and Robin will fashion them into an "instant" programme. Its fun to see as many different members memories as possible, so bring them along and to remind you here are the outings of last year.

June 1983 Kelvin Falls area gullies and other falls John O'Donnell was the leader.

July 1983 Mount Hutton area, Jones Ck interesting rock formations history, new plants, dramatic fire aftermath.

AUGUST 1983 Reliving Cunningham's Track with Bill Goebell as the Leader. Historic landmarks, scenery, a great day.

SEPTEMBER 1983. Mole River area leader Jean Harslett. Water undulating mountain scenery old mines, large reptile!

OCTOBER 1983 The Eastern escarpment leader Frank and Ailsa Wilkin-son, John Dark's property, tropic growth, tree ferns lush gullies, mountain valley scenery.

NOVEMBER 1983 Severn River Campout leader Lawrie Jeffry. dramatically sculptured water worn river rocks, rain, stalwart campers and toast makers, agile climbers like Lawrie, Joan Stevens and Helen Neal who were to be pathfinders for next day but rain beat us. Fruity Tree pears etc.

DECEMBER 1983 John O'Donnell's Christmas Party

JANUARY 1984 Acacia Plateau leader Jean Harslett. a crystal day for mountain scenery, red volcanic soils, butterflies and beetles, scrub plants and the rich colouring of gums adjacent to the scrub, golden dingoes.

FEBRUARY 1984 Crows Nest Campout with Ray and Millie Marsden, walks falls etc.

MARCH 1984 Eukey-Girraween Through Walk with Errol Walker as leader, stattice farm, unusual glimpses of the National Park landmarks, Belfords hill and panorama view etc.

REMEMBER LAST YEAR CONT:

APRIL 1984 Easter Sunday with the Marsdens as leaders, at Aspinalls property where they had camped over Easter and sorted out some nice aspects for the party. ovely rock pools.

MAY. 1984 Nine Mile Rock leader Brian Mc. Donagh, entirely new terrain for us, so must be some photographs.

June 1984 Ferguson's Lookout and Rats Castle leaders Bob and Jean Harslett

Now there is no excuse not to remember some of the pictures you took, the only snag could be finding them in your system of storage.

THANKS

We have had a very good and regular coverage of our activities in the Warwick Daily news both in picture and in story thanks to Ray and Millie Marsden.

As this is my last bulletin for the year I'd like to thank those closely associated and so helpful. Joan Stevenson has assisted a great deal by providing the minutes immediately after the meeting, this allows you, if you are organized to get part of the stencil cut. Ian has been most faithful in duplicating promptly, and then almost by magic it disappears to re-appear in the post. The collecting the putting together of the bulletin folding addressing and the posting is all done by Janet Hockings (and occasionally family conscripts) Your bulletin has always been on time thanks to Janet's efficacy, and that's a pretty good record. (If late, you can blame the transport arrangements, and its only isolated copies.) Thank you team for a job very faithfully done everyone likes getting their bulletin and may not realise how many faithful hands it passes through. We know they like getting it for we hear very promptly if they miss one !!

Thank you to all the executive for arranging good outings and Guest Speakers. The leaders and speakers have done a great job, several doubling up in their energies.

I'd also like to mention the last Guest Speaker Gabrielle Brown who I think would have to be amongst one of the most reluctant starters, but who would probably win the banner for the most audience participation.

Some with the beauty of their pictures seemed to leave us spellbound or rather speechless, but none the less appreciative.

We certainly all have a much greater appreciation of our local points of beauty and interest, the privilege of visiting private property and hearing about individual interests, and some great relaxation. For this I believe each member feels gratitude, for membership.

Yours in Nats Jean.

Small I call this a supplement, Gabrielle's talk stimulated so much interest, that a copy may be enjoyed, a supplement because its just come to hand.....Thank you!!

HERBS FOR HEALTH AND ENJOYMENT

Throughout history and throughout the world herbs have played an important part in the development of mankind, providing him with, food, medicine, perfumes, cosmetics, cloth dyes, insect repellants and in helping to increase soil fertility.

Earliest recorded history in Arabia, Egypt, Greece and Rome tells of the use of many herbs. During the Roman conquests herbs were used extensively in cooking and medicine, but it was not until much later in Britain and from the Monks with their practical knowledge of agriculture, health and nutrition that the people gained an understanding of the many uses of herbs.

In Britain towards the end of the 15th. & into the 16th. century herbs from other lands became better known & interest in the health value of British native plants was stimulated. One of the best known of British Herbal Healers Nicholas Culpeper (in early 17th) effected an amazing number of cures using herbal treatments & was much ridiculed for his efforts by Schools of Medicine at that time.

During the Great "ars" herbs were used when medical supplies were difficult to obtain. Nettles with their iron content were used for loss of blood and Lavendar oil was used as a surgical antiseptic. An Israeli lady, Juliette Levy, a herbalist with a world wide reputation lived for many years with so-called 'primitive' peoples in order to learn from them their herbal lore. She gathered information from gypsies and American Indians on the rearing of healthy families and livestock under very poor conditions without the use of artificial foods and medicines. Their health & vitality even in old age, showed how lacking is our so-called informed society, so plagued by ill health.

Two worthwhile books by Levy are, "A Herbal Handbook for Farm & Stable" & A Herbal Handbook for Everyone. Faber & Faber.

There happened A Dark Age of Herbal lore & craft during the 18th & 19th's due it seems to the development of modern technology. Perhaps it is now ending, I feel, partly because scientific research has authenticated that which was previously understood from experience and partly as a reaction to our synthetic, machine governed lives. Interest in herbs is reviving, it appears as people are becoming more ecologically and environmentally aware.

Nettle (Urtica dioica..U. incisa..Australian native).

Has many valuable properties - excellent source of iron and phosphorus - useful for tired people with low blood pressure and poor circulation. ...N.B.! can increase blood pressure for tense worriers.

Good vegetable dye, shoots boiled give green permanent dye for wool. It is interesting to note that Urtication the traditional European method of treating rheumatism, flogging with nettles, also appears in Dr. Cribb's "Wild Medicine in Australia", and the same procedure was used in Aboriginal medicine.

Nettle is very good for compost - likes moist manured soil.

Take as a tea (leaves fresh or dried) or steam shoots and tips as a green vegetable. Boiling water destroys stinging properties.

HERBS FOR HEALTH AND ENJOYMENT by GABRIELLE BROWN CONT.Angelica. (*Archangelica officinalis*)

One of the oldest known herbs - grows up to 180cm. and all parts of the plant are used. Tea is good for digestion, and helps with all the problems of cold, and damp environments. The stems are used in a crystallised form for cake decorations, and in the cakes. Seeds are used in Chartreuse and in perfumes. Roots were chewed for protection from the plague in England. It is a native of Iceland and Russia so thrives in cold conditions. The seeds have a very short viability period of only a few days. However that is no problem once you have a plant established.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

A native of the Mediterranean coast. It is a hardy perennial liking much sunshine, which builds up the stores of oil. In late winter white or pale blue flowers appear, and it can grow to 150cm. Tea from it is an effective muscle relaxant, and it's a good inhalation herb. Oil of rosemary on the temples is excellent for tension problems. It's a good breath sweetener, shampoo and hair rinse it can be used. It is also a major ingredient in true Eau-de-Cologne, and an ingredient in herbal tobacco, and is useful for chest and lung conditions.

Fresh or dried leaves can be made into a tea.

Salad Burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*)

Salad Burnet is often called the cucumber herb. Serve with cucumber to aid digestibility, or it can be used as a tonic and a blood purifier. Do not cook. Use in salads, fruit dishes or fruit punches. A perennial plant and for some reason single plants do not usually do well, and the flavour of the herb is better if not permitted to flower.

Yarrow (*Archillea millefolium*)

Yarrow is an excellent compost activator and grown near other vegetables etc it increases general health, and aromatic qualities of those plants. The tea has a powerful tonic effect so is best suited to occasional use when the boost is really needed. I have personally observed weakened animals eating yarrow leaves. Dye can be made from flowers and leaves. A perennial and may have pink, white and yellow flowered varieties. The variety *Archillea millifolium* is the best species for medical use.

Gabrielle Brown.

Stop Press bird watching from John O'Donnell

" Gabrielle and I set up the telescope (75mm refractor) on the bank of the older dam, where we had a view of the never dam too totalling about 30ha. of water surface.

With overcast conditions, the image was very clear at a magnification of 75 diameters, and many water birds were observed without disturbance. A cormorant and a darter hung wings out to dry, and washed respectively, while yellow spoonbills fed on the far side and white eyed ducks sneaked amongst the tree covered islands. Several other types seen eg. dusky coots, water hents, wood ducks and white faced herons. Very enjoyable time while the rest of the party climbed Mt. Fergusson.

John O'Donnell

