



18 MAR 1985



THE  
**GRANITE BELT  
NATURALIST**



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



Registered by Australia Post - Publication No. **QBH 1824**

**PRICE 10c**



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

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1984 - 1985

PRESIDENT	JEAN HARSLETT B.E.M. (833 585)
VICE-PRESIDENTS	JOHN O'DONNELL ROBIN McCOSKER
SECRETARY	JOAN STEVENSON (811 009)
TREASURER	DOT ARCHER (811 754)
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	JOHN O'DONNELL
NEWSLETTER SUB COMMITTEE	JANET HOCKINGS IAN JACKSON
PUBLICITY	MILLIE MARSDEN
LIBRARIAN	ESME LACEY
FLORA & FAUNA OFFICER	BRIAN MCDONAGH
GEOLOGY OFFICER	MAURICE PASSMORE
YOUTH OFFICER	ERROL WALKER
BUSHWALKING OFFICER	RAY MARSDEN
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	TOM ARCHER COLIN HOCKINGS LYLE THOMPSON DON LIGHTFOOT FRANK WILKINSON
AUDITOR	MRS. JOAN FERRIS

MEETINGS 4th WEDNESDAY of each month at the C.W.A. ROOMS at 8 p.m.

OUTINGS The SUNDAY PRECEDING the 4th WEDNESDAY of the Month.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single - \$6.00

Family - \$10.00

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.

THE MINUTES OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB MEETING HELD AT  
THE C.W.A. ROOMS ON WEDNESDAY, 27th FEBRUARY, 1985 at 8pm.

= Present 18 .....Apologies 8

The President welcomed all to the meeting with a special welcome to guest speaker, Brian Dodd.

✓ MINUTES - That the minutes be taken as read was moved by M.Marsden sec. J.O'Donnell. Carried.

BUSINESS FROM MINUTES

President Jean reported her attendance at the Unity Arts Network meeting but does not think it applies to our club.

Inspection of the Scout Den grounds was made by J.Harslett and D.McCosker and over 100 species of plants in the near vicinity of the Den were listed.

CORRESPONDENCE

INWARD was received from

1. A.C.F. re National Woodchip Campaign
2. Centre for Continuing Education, Monash Uni. re Mosses and Liverworts Course
3. N.S.W. Inst. of Technology - new book on effects of Pollution
4. Dept National Parks & Wildlife - 12 Press Statements
5. Govt in Focus - Vol 1 No 10 Nov 84  
Vol 2 No 1 Dec 84  
Vol 2 No 2 Jan 85
6. Contact - Vol 12 No 4 Nov/Dec 84
7. N.P;A. News - Vol 55 Nos 1&2
8. Q.N.C. News - No 142 Feb/Mar
9. Qld Naturalist - Vol 24 Nos 5&6
10. Richmond Valley Nats Newsletter - Jan & Feb
11. D.Downs Newsletter (Nats Club) - Nos 367 & 368 Dec & Jan
12. D.Downs Naturalist - Vol 7 No 2 Dec 84

OUTWARD was sent to

1. John Walter re 24th April meeting, guest speaker request
2. 4QS re meeting notice

That the inward correspondence be received and the outward endorsed was moved by D.Lightfoot sec. B.McDonagh. Carried.

FINANCIAL

November 30th, 1984 Bank Balance 188.44

Receipts

Nov.	Subs	22.00
	Bring & Buy	3.20
	Room Rent Collection	8.24

33.44  
\$221.88

Payments

Nov. 28/84	Room Rent	6.00
	Mag. Duplication	7.00
	Mag. Postage	11.00
Dec./84	Fed Tax	40
Jan /85	Fed. Tax	10
Feb /85	Fed Tax	10

24.60

Feb. 27/85 Bank Balance

\$197.28

MINUTES CONT.

D.Archer moved that a credit of \$197.28 be received and accounts for Rent \$6, Mag. Dup. \$7, Postage \$11.52 be passed for payment. Sec. B.Lacey. Carried.

OUTING REPORT

Jean Harslett reported on the outing to Jack Deutscher's property at Mt.Tully at which 31 attended. On arrival interest was shown in the yarding of cattle while morning tea was taken. The walk across paddocks was leisurely with interest in birds. Notice was taken of the leatherhead as it systematically went from dead limb to dead limb picking off the insects in the spiderwebs. A bearded dragon would not cooperate and open its mouth to show the bright yellow colouring of its mouth. The vantage point where lunch was taken provided an excellent view across to Bald Rock and valleys between and to the West where the Passchendaele ridge was prominent. The wildflowers were scarce but among the rocks were specimens of flannel flowers, Stypantra, Hovea. On the wet flats the Spirantes were in flower.

NEXT OUTING

This will be to Bluff River with Geoffrey Walker as leader. Cars will meet at Tenterfield Park near the swimming pool at 9.30am. It is an ideal family outing.

NEXT GUEST SPEAKER

(see later in Newsletter)

SPECIMENS

Specimens of coreid beetles were shown with the comment of their plague proportions then their sudden disappearance.

BUSINESS

There will be no change to room rent charge.

Note - Postal rates to increase on March 1st.

Report of concern with the increase of love grass prevalent in the Tenterfield area. This is a South African pest and becoming one here.

Show entries in "Best Native Bloom" had 5 entries and was won by member Judy Pfrunder with an excellent spike of kangaroo paw (red variety). Further thoughts will be given to extending the prize money for this section.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Speaker Brian Dodd revealed to the meeting the extent of the prickly pear menace some 50 years ago and the control measures used by his uncle, Allen Dodd O.B.E. by biological methods. Overall, it has been proved that our quarantine restrictions have prevented many unwanted problems from being introduced to this country. Thank you Brian for this interesting talk.

Joan Stevenson. Hon. Sec.

REPORT ON OUTING TO JACK DEUTSCHER'S PROPERTY by Jean Harslett

This Naturalist Outing for February was the first for a couple of months. There was a good roll up (after our two month annual break) of those people who enjoy the fellowship and outdoor pleasures. It appeared that all were enjoying being indulged again in our activities.

Mr & Mrs Jack Deutscher were our leaders and we journeyed via the Mount Tully road to their property in the hills. Some cattle were being yarded and provided interest for the children who perched like

OUTING REPORT CONTINUED

crows on the rails to watch the fun. Jack announced that he was a little concerned, as leader, that we were not headed for some special feature, however the day proved so pleasant and interesting, and certainly added emphasis to the point that no matter where we wander, if we are in tune with our surroundings, and observant, there are so many things to interest us and provide all with special joys. Tall timbers and varied undergrowth provided shade and glade like surroundings to walk through all day. Amongst the trees were some specimens of The New England Blackbutt (*E. andrewsii*) which belongs to the high country of the New England, especially just on the western watershed from the tops and border. It likes areas 600 - 1300 metres high, warm moist summers and cold winters with an occasional snowfall. Doesn't that describe well the habitats we walked through? The juvenile leaves are as round as those of the lovely silvery ones of the New England Box we so enjoy along the roadsides on Winter evenings, but instead of being silvery grey they are a rich green in colour.

Jack had erected a stile over the only difficult fence, for our comfort - thank you!

We met a very tight lipped Bearded Dragon which even after much persuasion, would not display his nice yellow mouth. He had lost part of his tail so perhaps had a bitter outlook on life.

Ladies Tresses orchids were beautiful in the wetter areas, tall and very handsome, as were the smallest of the trigger plants and dainty small species of Goodenias, both dwellers of damp places.

While resting near a huge dead tree which had a vast number of spider webs around its bare white limbs, many of us observed a leatherhead (frier bird), work very methodically each web, collecting dainty morsels from each, for nearly 15 minutes.

Tom Archer remarked on the tremendous boles on several trees with low limbs, telling the story of a much more open forest, probably several hundred years ago when they were young.

Near a gate (obviously hard to open!) we found a number of empty bottles. The large bottles (gallon size), had proved a special trap for quite a variety of beetles. Had they been attracted in while there were small quantities of wine still inside, or later? Many of the beetles were quite large and the bottles were lying on their sides or even sloping down. Why had the insects not made their escape? It seems the area of slipperiness was not very great. Had the poor critters become dis-oriented, as alas! do humans who indulge in the same nectar?

Across the paddock on the home lap, some folk gathered mushrooms for their evening meal.

It was a good day for us all and thanks to our leaders.

Jean Harslett.

Ed's Note -- The original of this article as written by Jean will appear in the Stanthorpe Handwriting Archives!



FEBRUARY SPEAKER; Mr. Brian Dodd, on The Control of prickly pear (Opuntia spp) in Australia by Cactoblastis cactorum.

Many species of cactus have escaped from gardens since settlement. Members of the genus Opuntia were introduced from South America early last century, as ornamentals and for their edible fruit. Early this century they were turning up as weeds in the brigalow areas of Queensland. By 1925 about 60 million acres were infested, and increasing at the rate of a million acres a year.

The plants grew in thickets, choking out most of the other vegetation, and were about "horse high" - surely a frightening sight. The seed was spread mainly by birds. There are grim stories of people trying to control cactus by manual means or with poisons such as arsenic - an incredible job taking around 6 weeks for a man to poison all the plants on one acre! The prickles in the legs and the effects of arsenic on the operator add to the story of determination and failure.

During the 1920's, entomologists visited South America and brought back various insects to be tested for biological control of pear. Brian's uncle, Allen Dodd O.B.E. made such trips - quite an undertaking in those days. Many species were tried, but only Cactoblastis cactorum was specific to Opuntia and could survive, breed and spread easily in the field. The grub lives inside the cladodes (leaves). The moth later hatches and lays eggs on new plants.

Chinchilla was the centre for work associated with the programme. In 1925 eggs were put on plants in various localities and the rest is history. By 1931 the cactus was just a rotting mess of dead cladodes. This experiment is said to be still the best example of biological control.

The cactus has not been completely eradicated, but has been kept at a very low density. One can still occasionally find plants, with grubs feeding inside the cladodes.

John O'Donnell

---

NEXT OUTING - Meet at Tenterfield Park, near the swimming pool at 9.30am. BLUFF RIVER, south of Tenterfield will be the delightful venue.

Bring morning tea, lunch and bathers for if the river is flowing. It promises to be a leisurely day with walks up and down the river, viewing attractive rock edged water holes. It should be an ideal family day with shallow swimming holes and a nicely grassed picnic area.

Geoffrey Walker who will lead this outing, is endeavouring to earn a scout venturer badge by organising this day and by encouraging this activity.

Reminder! - 24th March, 1985 at 9.30am.

---

NEXT GUEST SPEAKER - 27th March - J.O'D will show a few slides and talk about a short trip through Southern India and Malaysia.