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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 1984 - 1985

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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, 24th APRIL, 1985 at 8pm.

Present 17Apologies 3

The President welcomed all to the meeting with special welcome to Ruth and John Walter.

MINUTES - That the minutes be taken as read was moved by A.Wilkinson
 sec. B.Lacey. Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

INWARD was received from

1. Helen Horton - date as guest speaker
2. N.P.A. News Vol55 No 3 April
3. Govt in Focus & Special Report Vol2 No 3 Feb
4. Democrat Party Senate Report on Cape Tribulation
5. Richmond Valley Nats Newsletter April
6. D.Downs Naturalist No 370 April
7. N.P. & W.S. 5 Press Statements

OUTWARD was sent to

1. Brian Dodd - Thanks as guest speaker
2. Helen Horton - asked as guest speaker
3. Mr.McCowan - Thanks for outing venue
4. 4QS re outing/meeting

That the inward correspondence be received and the outward endorsed
 was moved by C.Hockings sec. E.Walker. Carried.

FINANCIAL

March, 1985	Credit Balance Forward	\$187.08
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Receipts

Mar. 27	Room Rent Collection	6.90	
	Bring & Buy stall	8.00	
			14.90
			<u>201.98</u>

Payments

Mar. 1	Federal Tax	.10	
" 27	Room Rent for March	6.00	
	March Mag. Duplication	7.00	
	March Mag. Postage	13.00	
	P.O. Box Renewal	21.00	
	Mag. Wrappers	34.80	
April 1	Federal Tax	.60	82.50
April 24	Credit Balance forward		<u>\$119.48</u>

In the absence of the treasurer, M.Marsden moved that a credit
 of \$119.48 be received and accounts for Room Rent \$6, Dup \$7,
 Postage \$13, Stencils \$21.13 be passed for payment. Sec.B.Lacey.
 Carried.

OUTING REPORT

Rob McCosker reported on the outing to Lookout Mt. A good attend-
 ance of 37. The approach was made by following the Mt.Norman track
 for part of the way and then branching off. This led over large
 areas of bare rock that were crisscrossed by many dyke formations.
 Rock formations were with us all the way to the gorge. Before
 entering the gorge I think the leader was ensuring the party was
 well fortified - at least by lunch. Some of the party decided the

MINUTES CONT.

gorge wasn't for them and climbed the rock capped hill while the rest proceeded into the gorge. First part was filled by fallen rocks which had to be negotiated in the easiest way and not always elegantly. The rope came into use at times for the higher drops and for the not so agile the help of many hands was appreciated. Highlight of it all was the gnarled trunks of the large tree ferns across the ground and the lush green of their fronds growing to head height and more from these trunks. You felt you were in the tropics. On leaving the gorge the party used vantage points to view the surrounding country. Clouds gathered and the homeward trek was an interesting finish to a superb outing.

NEXT OUTING

This has as yet not been finalised. (Please see later in Mag.)

NEXT GUEST SPEAKER

Mrs. Helen Horton will speak on "The Islands of Moreton Bay" which should be most interesting.

SPECIMENS

A member reported a fall of hail at 11.30pm and in the pile in shade, the rear end of a frog was noticed. After 18 hours in this position the frog was hand warmed and continued on as normal.

BUSINESS

Members are asked to provide ideas for rules to be observed on outings and while in convoy so they can be published in the magazine.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm after which Ruth and John Walter gave a naturalists viewpoint of Tasmania. Excellent slides and commentary provided a most enjoyable programme. Thankyou.

Joan Stevenson. Hon. Sec.

REPORT ON THE APRIL OUTING TO LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN by ROBIN McCOSKER

Thirty-seven members and guests met at Wallangarra Lions Park and shortly after 9.00am set off for the National Park picnic area on the Paling Yard Creek Road. This road has recently been upgraded and the Shire Council must be congratulated for the fine job they have done without causing undue damage to the roadsides, in allowing access by car to this magnificent National Park area.

After a brief cuppa, we walked along the Mt. Norman track for some distance before leaving it to climb to the top of the smooth granite ridge which lies South-east of Mt. Norman. Seen here were the dramatic lines of dyke formations, and also the rather special Eucalypts of this area.

E. codonocarpa, a mallee type which was in bloom (it also grows on Mt. Barney) and the beautiful Wallangarra White Gum E. scoparia. From the top of this ridge it was a short walk through some interesting rock formations to the southern end of the gorge in Lookout Mountain, the main object of the outing. We stopped here for

OUTING TO LOOKOUT MT. by ROBIN McCOSKER CONT.

lunch with a view down the corridor-like gorge, hoping in vain that the thin cloud cover would clear so that as the sun reached its zenith we would see it shine directly to the ferny bottom of the gorge.

After lunch some of the party decided against the trip through the gorge, and I must thank Errol Walker for offering to take this group to the top of the Eastern peak of the mountain. Thanks also to Doug Mackenzie and Alec Harslett who helped guide our party through the gorge. The effort of scrambling up and down the jumble of rocks was well rewarded by the cool musty fragrance of the ferny glade at the northern end of the chasm, which was estimated to be 300m long and 50m deep. The tree ferns have obviously survived here for some time, as although their tops were only about two metres high, a number of them had trunks lying on the ground for two metres before rising vertically a further two metres.

At the end of the gorge we climbed to the top of the Western peak of Lookout Mountain to enjoy the view, and waved to the other members of the party on the Eastern peak. With the clouds darkening, we made our way back to the lunch spot, to retrieve our packs and then retrace our steps to the cars, arriving there as the first spots of rain began falling.

REPORT ON THE OUTING TO BLUFF RIVER by GEOFF WALKER.

There was a good turn up of people with everyone promptly arriving at the Tenterfield Park at 9.30am. This was the first outing that I had led so I would like to thank Jean Harslett in assisting me in calling everyone together to listen to what I had to say as I lacked voice strength and also the confidence. This outing passed a Venture Scout Badge for me called Environment.

After, there was a count of the 48 people and 12 cars and we headed on for about an hour to Bluff River. We tried to efficiently park the cars in the area available while also leaving enough grassed area for people to lay out and have morning tea while admiring the river and tall trees whistling in the wind. Then we were off for a leisurely walk down the river with Jean's sense of adventure finding her knee deep in water. Observed on the walk down was a perfect example of a bright red fungi which attracts insects. On arriving at an open granite area most people sat on the water worn rock edges of the river while the kids managed to find some deep water holes and waterslides where the water ran over some quite slippery rock.

For the people who ventured on further down stream Peter Langdon found a red bellied black snake very intent on fighting with a water dragon. We watched these two striking at each other. The snake eventually tired of the duel and slithered away under a pile of sticks. We then walked back up stream to the cars to have lunch. Unfortunately we had to leave early to connect up with Skennars afternoon bus.

Those who remained enjoyed looking around the area and walking upstream until the afternoon closed in and it was time to return home. A great day for the family with plenty of safe water for the younger

OUTING TO BLUFF RIVER by GEOFF WALKER CONT.

ones and a lot of bushland for the adventurous, and water too, hey Jean! I think most people voted it a spot to return to at a later date.

While driving down to Bluff River Mum reminded me that the last time we were here on a Nats Outing I was a small toddler of 2 years old.

Thanks to Jean Harslett, who keeps all the copies of her Nats Magazine. She discovered that it was just over 15 years ago that we visited Bluff River on a Nats Outing with Tom Chapman as leader. That outing was on the 22nd February, 1970. Thankyou Jean.

NEXT OUTING -

It is the aim of the Club to have many types of outings to enable members to choose which will suit them best. With this thought in mind, it has been decided to have the May outing as a leisurely walk along the Mt. Norman track from the camping area. Members are asked to assemble at the Information Centre at Girraween National Park at 10am. Lunch will be carried, members will be able to return whenever they wish but the proposed destination is the Sphinx area. Some may wish to go further along the track, there are many wonderful rock formations in this park of the park and the walk should be a perfect foil for last month's strenuous climb in the southern end of the park. The leader will be Ray Marsden.

A small group of members of Field Mats. staged a mini camp out over the May weekend and proved that the sun does not have to shine to make a good camp, nor do things have to have a high price tag to be enjoyable. Five of the group left midmorning on Friday, in showery weather and headed east knowing full well that the weather would deteriorate. The destination was "over the border" but within twenty miles of Stanthorpe. After leaving the main road and entering private property, several steep descents had to be made before the proposed campsite was reached. The wet conditions made the track fairly hard to negotiate and the drivers (both females) took extreme care. It was still raining when the camp site was reached but the beauty of the area was such that the weather simply did not matter. Soon a break in the weather came, and the tents were erected in record time and lunch was enjoyed. By the time the other three members of the party arrived at 5pm, the advance party had the fire burning, "outhouse" erected and the evening meal cooked. The wet conditions made it a positive haven for leeches and frequent inspections were made to oust these "things". Most of the people had leech attacks round the sock and boot area but Lyle had one under his watch band.

We had been told that platypus had been seen in this creek, imagine our delight when we approached the creek for the first time to fill the water buckets, we saw three of the little creatures. Everyone in the party had many opportunities to see the platypuses swimming about, sightings were made as far apart as half a mile so we feel that they are numerous in this creek.

Though dry kindling had been included in the "things brought from home" the men folk preferred to take up the challenge to get a fire going with the wet wood. Very adept at it they were too. Rain fell intermittently right up till Sunday night, however Monday morning dawned fine. With a group of eight people, each was able to do his own thing. Frank and Lyle chose to fish most of the time, (yes they caught four fish which went well for breakfast), Bob and Ailsa fished some of the time but also took time to explore down stream from the camp. Renie found some lovely areas of fern Maiden hair, fish bone and bracken types. Ray, Esme and Millie were the walkers in the party, they set out sometimes in the rain, sometimes between showers to give the place a good search out. Several old fruit trees, some honey-suckle and tansy fern were mute testimonies to the site of an early homestead. The corner posts and some of the fence posts of the house paddock and the site of the tennis court were still definable.

On the way in Esme and Bob saw a spiny ant eater and several large kangaroos. Ray also saw a spiny ant eater and was privileged to watch it for some time before it became aware of him. Bird life was plentiful and some of those seen were: yellow wee bill, magpie, crow, little grebe, wood duck, black duck, pied cormorant, restless fly catcher, helmeted friar bird, noisy miner, heath wren, little wattle bird, four honey eaters, crimson rosella, eastern rosella, plover, kookaburra, butcher bird, currawong and one evening a boo book owl alighted in a tree beside the camp to look us over. Not many flowers were seen just the odd daisy and banksia, acacias in full bud show

great promise for spring blooms. An old angophera, across the creek, looked lovely through the rain- shimmered beautifully in the moonlight (when the moon did peep through the clouds) and finally, on Monday morning, showed magnificently green in the sunshine.

The things we could have done without were the leeches, stinging nettles and bladey grass, the rain did not worry us at all and we all agreed that camping in the rain makes for a special kind of campout. Camp oven cooking was enjoyed, roast meals, fresh bread, scones, apple pies. A piece of corrugated iron from the old building was used to shield the ovens from the rain. Evenings were wiled away with good conversation, tales of the "olden days" jokes and Frank and Ailsa taught us a new card game.

The short spell of sunshine of Monday morning was not enough to make the exit from the camp site much easier. One vehicle had to have some assistance to negotiate the initial rise from the camp site and the second hill stopped all three vehicles. Nats, like Scouts, are always prepared and another road(involving a very narrow bridge) was found to be trafficable. One driver had a bit of difficulty in getting all four wheels on to the bridge at the same time, but finally made it across. The little red datsun again had a bit of trouble to make it up the next steep hill but it was towing a trailer filled with all the things that are NECESSARY when going camping for a wet weekend.

No, the sun does not have to shine to have a good camp but it sure does make it much easier if the sun is shining when it comes time to pack up to go home.

THE BIRTH OF A SEASON
from F. Simpson

The voice of the wind is a whisper,
A promise of coming spring,
There's a wake for the death of winter
In the warmth that is on the wing.
There's a call to the sleepy cicadae
Awakening from under the sod,
To lauch an insect armada
And sing to a new found God.
Where a drip from the dew of the morning
Is drunk by a warming earth,
A seed is a new life awakening
And a tree that is brought to birth.
The insect seeks in the flower,
For nectar there to be won,
Nature's indispensable father
Begetting new lives in the sun.
Born of death and destruction
In a cauldron of firey heat
Is the essence of life's resurrection,
Where e're a heart does beat.