



THE
**GRANITE BELT
NATURALIST**

11 OCT 1985



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 1985 - 1986

PRESIDENT	JEAN HARSLETT B.E.M. (833 185)
VICE-PRESIDENTS	RAY MARSDEN ROBIN McCOSKER
SECRETARY	DOT ARCHER (811 754)
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COMMITTEE	FRANK WILKINSON DON LIGHTFOOT COLIN HOCKINGS LYLE THOMPSON ESME LACEY
HON. AUDITOR	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

Singls - \$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.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING HELD IN C.W.A. ROOMS, WED. SEPT. 25, 1985.Present 15Apologies 12.

President Jean welcomed all present and in particular extended a warm welcome to John Walter from Pittsworth.

Minutes - It was moved by Tom Archer and seconded by Dore McCosker that the minutes be taken as read in the Sept. Newsletter. Carried.

Correspondence - Inward - 1. Letter from Jean Harslett thanking us for our letter of Sympathy. 2. Letter from Attah Freepong Senior, Sunyani, B/A Ghana, West Africa asking for shoes exercise books etc. 3. Letter from Dept. Education with borrowing registration to be filled in. 4. Richmond Valley Newsletter 5. Govt. in Focus. 6. 5 Press Releases from Hon. Peter McKechnie 7. Letter with subscriptions from Aileen McAllister, Graeme Stringer and Zadee Newman. Outward 1. Letter thanks to Ben Reuben re Pikedale Outing 2. 2 letters to 4QS re Wild Flower Outing Sept. 8th and Rivertree Area outing Sept. 22 & Meeting Sept. 25th. 3. Letter of sympathy to Jean Harslett re her sister Dorothy. Moved by Lyle Thompson and seconded by May Prentice that the Inward be received and the outward endorsed. Carried

The letter from Attah Freepong Senior was discussed and it was decided we would not send anything. Secretary to write and explain why we are unable to help.

Treasurer's Report - presented by Dot Archer in the absence of Treasurer showed - Receipts - Subscriptions 84.00

Bring and Buy 5.90

Room Rent 10.00

Cr. Bal. as at 27/8.85 171.63 271.53

less Expenditures

Magazine Postage 13.00

Room Rent 6.00

Magazine Duplication 7.00

Stanthorpe Agric

Society 3.00 29.00

Credit Balance as at 20.9.85 \$ 242.53

Moved by Dot Archer that the report be received and the following accounts passed for payment Sept. Room Rent \$6.00; Mag. Duplication \$7.00 Sept. Mag. Postage \$13.00; Photocopying of Newsletter covers \$20.00 seconded by Brian McDonagh Carried.

Outing Report - The Rivertree Area & Graphite Mine Outing report was given by Dore McCosker and proved very popular with 45 people enjoying the beautiful day and interesting outing. Numerous orchids were seen and 30 species of wild flowers. Our thanks to young Margaret Passmore for bringing along an interesting green beetle for us to see. Dore expressed her thanks to the 4 wheel drive operators. Also seen was a McKay Swallow tail Butterfly.

Secretary will send a letter of thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Clem Fletcher for making this outing possible on their property.

NEXT OUTING a campout on October 19th & 20th to Wattle Farm Texas. Some will be leaving Stanthorpe 2 p.m. on Friday the 18th. Takes about 2 hours to drive out. - past the Beebo Weir.

October, 1985.

Next Outing continued:- Saturday morning do our own thing while waiting for any to come on Saturday. In the afternoon leave at 1.30 p.m. for a walk. Sunday a.m. another walk - dinner at camp then home.

NEXT MEETING - October 23rd - Program on Salvatore National Park by the combined Marsden, Lacey families.

Specimens None brought but Jean did have her Orchid Book on hand to show and identify some seen on Sunday outing.

General Business - Secretary reported she had received a verbal reply to a letter to Brett Porter re April 1986 meeting and May 1986 outing. He will be happy to be our Guest Speaker on April 23rd and will speak on Managing People in National Parks. However he will pass the leading of the outing in May to one of the Girraween Rangers and will join us on this. He will be in touch again early next year.

Meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

Program - Jean introduced our guest speaker for the night Don Lightfoot who had worked on Pikedale Station for a number of years. Don took us on a very interesting trip with slides from the time when he lived in Glen Innes up to his present home in Stanthorpe. Everyone joined Pam Harvey in a hearty vote of thanks to Don for a very interesting and enjoyable program. Thanks Don.

Dot Archer, Hon. Secretary.

* * * * *

LATEST ON THE BIRD LIFE AT ARCHERS ON CAVES ROAD.

Our bird family has increased since we moved up the hill 2 years ago. Our Wattle Birds still demand and enjoy their nectar bottle hung at the edge of the Patio above a feeding tray and what a pleasure it gives not only Tom and I but our visitors too to watch their antics. The Wattle birds also enjoy with the Magpies, Peewees and Bower Birds the bread and honey and water put out each morning on the feeding trays.

A flock of King Parrots have come to partake of seed and water -- alas for dessert they have eaten our almond crop. They are joined by numerous Rosellas who add much colour to the group. One King Parrot has a lovely orange head and I'm hoping one day he'll come to the seed tray on the patio as I'd love to capture his vivid colour on film. In the evening I've noticed lately a lone crested pigeon enjoying the seeds on the rock and also a group of Chuff regularly put in an appearance in the evening.

Four Kookaburras now sit daily in the Kurrajong tree and wait for pieces of raw meat to be put on the patio railings. They come down while I'm putting it out so are becoming quite tame. A pair of Butcher Birds zoom in for their share while the meat is being put out. Down at the creek we have ducks, Willy wagtails, wrens etc. It is hard to keep the patio clean, but we get so much pleasure from watching the birds we don't mind the cleaning chore.

* * * * *

WELCOME TO BRUCE GIBSON

Since the August issue of the Granite Belt Naturalist, the duties of the Newsletter Sub-Committee headed by Mrs. Dore McCosker will be shared by Bruce Gibson.

This came about by member Ray Rolland, who is Principal of the Newman Special School, suggesting to the Club that we consider giving Bruce the opportunity to participate in work experience through the compiling of the magazine. Both Dore and the Club felt that this chance should be given to him.

Bruce is 16 and is a State Ward residing at Kerridge Lodge in Stanthorpe. Part of the school curriculum is learning to apply skills, such as writing and clerical work in a useful way and as close to real life as possible. The feeling of achievement of assisting in responsible work must be of paramount importance and we hope that Bruce will benefit from this exercise and show the adaptability while at the same time enjoying the work and the challenge that goes with it.

Under mild supervision, Bruce will undertake the addressing of the wrappers, collect the printed pages from the printer, put them in order and attach covers, staple and date them and put on the wrappers. He will then sort them ready for posting and take them to the Post Office where he will use the bulk postage system.

As you can see it is quite responsible work and we trust Bruce will prove to both himself and the Club that success in doing small things can lead to success in larger ones. We feel justified in opening the door for Bruce to enter his adulthood with confidence.

Welcome to the Field Nats. Club, Bruce.
Thanks to Joan Stevenson for this article.

Rob McCosker has submitted the following report on the outing to Girraween on September 8th.

Some forty Nats. members and friends met at Girraween Park Office at about 1pm, and then drove on to the Dr. Roberts Waterhole area of the park. We set off on the Underground Creek track, admiring some eleven different species of acacia in bloom. The favourite was perhaps *Acacia brunioides* with its large golden flower balls contrasting with the bright green foliage held close to the stems. Before reaching the Underground Creek we branched off the track to the left and followed a natural granite pavement to quite a spectacular little bush garden. Pride of place was the mauve mint bush - *Prostranthera phyllifolia*. Some of the plants found nearby, in bloom, included *Phebalium*, *Olearia*, *Mirbelia*, *Hovea*, *Leucopogon* and *Heath*.

The gurgling sound of rushing water seemed to beckon our adventurous Nats, who were soon clambering under, over and through the jumble of water-worn rocks of the Underground Creek. We then made our way leisurely back to the cars for an afternoon "cuppa" to round off another enjoyable day.

REPORT OF OUTING TO THE CLIFF AND PLUMBAGO MINELEADERDORE McCOSKER

The first requirement for a successful outing is suitable weather. We were thankful for a perfect spring day on September 22nd when forty people in ten cars gathered at Weeroona Park in anticipation of exploring yet another unique corner of our district.

Before setting out there was much interest in a specimen of a member of the Christmas beetle family. It is similar in size, but seldom seen because its green colouring blends in with the leaves of the scrub apple - angophora - on which it feeds and it is very unusual in that it emerges in winter time. Thank you Margaret for sharing your find with us.

Where the large trees meet overhead driving along Rivertree Road is always a pleasure. With closer settlement in the area, the resultant traffic increase and the demand for a better road surface will soon cause that pleasure to be just another memory of the past. Already most paddocks are cleared to the fence line.

Arriving at the destination cars were parked and the owner of the property, arriving on a four-wheeled motor bike, shared a cuppa with us. Some years earlier, mill timber had been taken from here and the young folk found the huge stumps irresistible. Numbers had been stamped into the top of each stump and our knowledgeable foresters, John and Maurice, were able to explain that 72 over 34x108 meant that was the 72nd log to be taken and that it was 34 feet long and measured 108 inches around the girth (half way along the length).

Smoko over most people chose to walk to the Cliff, but some of us were most grateful for the 4WD transport provided. Thank you Brian, Maurice and May. Along the way golden *Oxylobium ilicifolium* flowers (the prolific holly leaved pea bush) replaced the showy purple *Hardenbergia* so evident on our pre-outing visit. In the grass, *Viola betonicifolia* and trigger plants *Stylidium grammifolium* were brightly coloured and the Blue Bells *Wahlenbergia* sp. - extra large.

At the Cliff, the view of Mt. Lindsay and adjacent mountains of the southern scenic rim, was very grand seen across the steeply undulating country of Rivertree about 2000 feet below us. To the left the water of the Maryland River gleamed in the sunlight as it flowed over its sandy bed towards the Boonoo Boonoo Gorge on our right. A mile or two further on when it is joined by the Koreelah Creek the stream becomes the Clarence River. As we sat taking in the view, a Macleay's Swallowtail Butterfly landed right in front of us to sip from the *Pimelea* flowers, and leisurely displayed the beautiful large triangle and smaller spots of green colour on its wings. Later a black bush cockroach with vivid orange bands was spotted as it scurried through the leaves on the ground. We gave jumper ants a wide berth especially as the green head ants at Weeroona Park had made their presence felt by some of our members.

In full bloom were cream *Hakea* (*dactyloides*?) bright pink *Indigophora australasica* and the *Leucopogon lanceolatus* - the one which carries small red fruit at Christmas time, pretty in a vase and edible.

After lunch we visited the mine site where the flora changed more to the rain forest type. The children got especially dirty fingers when collecting specimens of the soft black mineral called blacklead or graphite.

September outing continued.

Over the years soil and debris, washed from above, has partially filled the entrance to a tunnel in the hillside and dammed the water that seeps from the walls inside. Robin stepped inside to test the floor of the tunnel but no one was encouraged to follow. Bats have found the dark cavern a haven for many years and the turbid, stagnant water was, to say the least, not pleasant to the nose. Jack found, by contact, a young stinging tree close to the entrance and stood guard to prevent others coming into close contact with it.

Apart from the holes in the ground and heaps of rubble, only a few building poles still stand, some rusted metal pipes and small areas levelled for floors and built up neatly with rocks are the only indications left of the industry.

Ground orchids grew in the long grass, *Caladenia carnea*, and *Caladenia alba* - pink and white, Running Postman- *Kennedia rubicunda* was delivering its bright scarlet clusters of elongated pea flowers.

Two broad leaf species were the most common of the acacias in bloom, other flowers were two species of *Pterostylis*, *Diuris*, diminutive *Baronia polygalifolia*, *Hibbertia*, *Solanum*, *Senecio*, *Bossiaea schortechinii* were noted. On the Cliff face *Dendrobium kingianum*, *speciosum* and *teretifolium fairfaxii* and *galeola* were seen to be in bloom.

Having been cautioned many times about the danger of the high cliff, it was good to know we had a full head count on the return journey. My thanks to Mrs. Rickard for introducing me to this region to share with fellow Nats. and to Mr. Fletcher for permission to enter.

Back in Stanthorpe, I spoke to Les Beddow who told me his father left school at the age of twelve and his first job was at the Plumbago Mine. With his tomahawk he had to smooth the blocks of metal, apparently to allow them to stack more easily for transport on the waggons. Work there was not continuous as it depended on receipt of orders for the commodity. The ore was carted by Joe Johnson with his horse teams to Stanthorpe and used at tin mines or loaded on to the train.

Camp out to Texas. As many of the camping people are wanting to go out on Friday afternoon arrangements have been made to meet at Weeroona Park at 2pm. For those who will be travelling later here at the directions. From Texas take the Inglewood road for about two miles, turn left at the sign which states Yelarbon or Goondwindi or both. Stay on the bitumen road, then gravel. Pass through Beebo disregard sign to Cunningham Weir. Straight on to Brush Creek. The Campbell residence is the first on the right. Signs will be erected to show the camping area which is on the river on the left of the road. If in doubt go to the house and ask, Mavis and Ian's phone no. is 536162 if you really get into difficulties ring them. Hope you can follow the directions - I am not the best at giving instructions Hope to see a good roll up. Millie.

