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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 1986 - 1987

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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

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.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 24th, 1986.

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Present 15

Apologies 8

OPENING.

In the absence of President Jean, Vice President Ray Marsden took the chair and welcomed all present.

MINUTES.

It was moved by Mary Walters and seconded by Claude Walters that the minutes be taken as read in the September Newsletter and confirmed. Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Inward: Newletters and Journals were recieved from the following- Qld Speleological Society; Qld Naturalist Club; Oct/Nov. Qld Naturalist News; National Parks; Richmond Valley Naturalist Club; Darling Downs Naturalist; Chinchilla Field Naturalist Club.
Outward: Letter to 4QS re Outing and Meeting Notices. Moved by Ailsa Wilkinson and seconded by Errol Walker that the inward be received and the outward endorsed. Carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

Balance as at 27/8/86. \$63.38 credit.
Receipts; Subs \$108.00, Room Rent \$4.50, Bring and Buy \$2.60 Total \$115.10
Expenditure; Magazine Postage \$13.00, Room Rent \$6.00, Magazine Duplication \$6.00 Total \$25.00
Balance as at 24/9/86 \$153.48 Credit.
Treasurer Joan moved her report be received and the following accounts be passed for payment. September Room Rent \$6.00, Magazine Postage \$15.00, Magazine Duplication \$6.00, Correspondence Book \$5.75.
This was seconded by Frank Wilkinson. Carried.

OUTING REPORT.

In the absence of leader Brian McDonagh, Tom Archer spoke briefly on the outing on September 21st to Murphy's Creek. All present enjoyed the outing - orchids and other wild flowers were seen and several snakes. Secretary asked to write letters of thanks to Bruce Tullock and Stan Heath for allowing access to their properties.

NEXT MEETING.

will be on October 22nd and our Guest Speaker will be Mr. Stewart Watts, lecturer in geology at Warwick High School.

NEXT OUTING.

At the request of Mr. Watts, the outing will be held on the Sunday following the meeting. Please note this change of date to October 26th.

SPECIMENS.

Banksia seed pod(man's face) brought by Ailsa Wilkinson and also a segment of Black Boy showing resin content. Ailsa brought these from Riley's Hill near Ballina. Claude Walters showed a postcard from Solomon Islands showing a cocoanut crab climbing a cocoanut tree

Minutes (continued)

backwards. It shakes the coconut off and runs down to eat the coconut.

As there was no further business the meeting was closed at 8.30pm.

PROGRAMME. Ray introduced Tom Archer, who took us on a trip to Victoria via Dirranbandi and the Gold Mine at Stawell. All present enjoyed the programme and a vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

Dot Archer.
Hon. Secretary.

OUTING REPORT.

By Leader Brian McDonagh

Thirty people attended the September outing to Murphy's Creek area, west of Ballandean.

At the river crossing below Bent's weir, an interesting rock formation was examined, which demonstrated how molten rock intruded into cold rock can cause the minerals to segregate out, and if the rock contains valuable minerals, a commercial mine can result.

About half way between the river crossing and Murphy's Creek a stop was made for the usual "cuppa", then the group moved up the hill to the north. An interesting point about this spot was the extremely small size of the crystals in the rock, an indication that it had cooled very quickly. Many of the plants on the list were seen in this area.

On the way back to the cars, six black snakes were seen in about ten yards, around a small pool of water.

Lunch was taken at the junction of Murphy's Creek and the Severn River and after lunch the party disintegrated in all directions. Eventually they all came together and moved off to follow Murphy's Creek.

This area is very similar to the junction in Girraween National Park, with the creek running over rock for many hundreds of yards. The shallow soils on the rocks were showing many orchids as well as several species of heath.

Possibly the highlight was the cubical rock - 30'x20'x8' - sitting on a solid rock base with a large river oak growing horizontally from the side.

The wildflower list from the outing and some plants also seen on the outing.

Acacia prunosa	Acacia brunioides?	Acacia decora
Acacia pubifolia	Acacia juncifolia	Acacia viscidula
Acacia nerifolia	Acacia venulosa	Acacia adunca
Acacia florabunda	Acacia implexa	Acacia fimbriata
Caladenia carnea	Caladenia caerulea	Caladenia dilatata
Pterostylis mutica	Glossodia major	Boronia anethifolia
Logania albiflora	Choretrum candollei	Eristemon myoporoides
Phebalium stenophyllum	Prostranthera nivea	Lomandra sp.

Following Ailsa's specimen of the grass tree from Riley's Hill, I thought the time was ripe for the inclusion of this poem written by the late Mick Dwyer, who lived at Riley's Hill.

"The reference to "dissolved rubies" at the end of the first verse is the resin which seeps out and dribbles down the trunk of the grass tree. This resin was collected by early pioneers and mixed with methylated spirits to form a very hard stain for floors. Bush fires seem to force more resin than one would normally expect to see. In the bush at Riley's Hill some of the grass trees are estimated to be more than 150 years old, age is calculated by the height of the tree." The above information was supplied by Bess Dwyer, widow of Mick Dwyer, in the Mid Richmond neighbourhood Centre Newsletter of October 1982.

GRASS TREE.

From the writings of the late Mick Dwyer

The red sap sluggish in my fibrous veins
Has flowed for aeons of unwritten time,
Drawn as pale wine from the reluctant earth,
Transmuted by some secret alchemy
To scented liquid of dissolved rubies.

By evolutions whims untouched, unchanged,
As upstart neighbours that around me crowd,
I stand decrying this vulgarity
Of chanceful change; who am the same as when
I stood here in the dawn of life's beginning.

With eloquence of rustling silence yet
I speak the paradox of changing sameness,
And point with skyward thrusting blossomed spire
Where beat the flame-clad wings of questing birds,
Toward some goal of striving aspiration.

A FEW NOTES ON UNUSUAL BIRDS OBSERVED IN THE AMIENS AREA.

BY Jean Harslett.

Although I have only very occasionally seen Buff Banded Rails (*rallus philippensis*) in this district, last year a pair chose to call into our garden each day - during their pattern of feeding grounds. They continued to make a daily call for a couple of months.

They are very shy and any sudden movement or noise made them retreat rapidly to the thick cover of the chrysanthemum bed. Sometimes even the shadow of the crimson rosellas flying to the birdbath to drink, was sufficient disturbance to make them seek cover.

However, we had many opportunities to observe their quaint movements, beautiful feather patterns and rich rusty-buff colouring on the head and breast patch as they fed about our lawn.

Indeed, we became acquainted with them better than ever before when seen down at the creek in their natural habitat, where only seconds of viewing can be enjoyed at a time as they move in and out of cover and shade.

Unusual Birds in Amiens.(cont'd)

This year we were surprised to see another species of bird of similar ilk - a Marsh Crake(*Porzana pusilla*)- turn up. It is considerably smaller and quite dull in colour. Not recorded previously from this district(by me anyway).

It would appear they lean very heavily on camouflage and remaining still, for whilst cutting watercress it was seen- it remained quite still, despite noise and movement - to the extent of allowing itself to be picked up in the hand and brought to the house for a close comparison with its portrait in the Bird Book. At no time did it appear flustered.

When it flew, while feeding, it looked weak and fluttery, with dangling "limp" legs - but it showed that it could retract its undercarriage (legs) and fly with more definite character. It was seen again but it soon disappeared, maybe in the watercress or maybe to new fields.

BIRD DRAMA IN DENHAM STREET

by You know who.

One Sunday recently(when the lawn was supposed to be being cut at 46 Denham Street) there was quite a drama when Ray rushed in exclaiming "Do you know where my binoculars are?" The answer came quickly and sweetly "Just where you left them." A hurried search through the camera bag and the binoculars came to light and Ray made a hurried exit through the back door. After a few minutes he called "Come quickly, Dear, and have a look at these birds, I've never seen them before". Dear came quickly and looked at the lovely little birds and reached for pad and pencil. While Ray gave particulars, Dear wrote them down - buff on back, crimson face, black wings, yellow on wing, yellow bill, white around neck etc. etc. The birds were most considerate - they went about the business of feeding on the seeds in the "lawn" and then flew up to the clothes line when they preened for quite a time.

Ray was able to get out the bird book and identify the birds as a pair of European Goldfinches(*Carduelis carduelis*) and his last word on the subject was "I knew there was a good reason why I didn't mow the grass - if I had there would have been no seed there for the birds to eat and we would not have had the pleasure of seeing them". Ah well! We have not seen them again and perhaps we were just lucky to have had the feed available at the right time.

Readers Digest Bird Book tells us that the introduced European Goldfinch found conditions that suited its requirements and spread very rapidly. Breeds late September to March, the nest is a tightly woven cup of rootlets and soft fibre lined with down and often decorated with lichens, built on extremities of conifers or introduced trees, 2-12 m above the ground. Eggs of three to seven in blue-white with delicate mottling. Incubation by female only. Male feeds his mate while on nest. The European Goldfinch is primarily a seed eater, although it eats small quantities of insects, especially during the breeding season when the nestlings have high protein needs.

NEXT OUTING. Meet at Weeroona Park at 9.30am. Watch B.P. for details.