



THE
**GRANITE BELT
NATURALIST**



Monthly Newsletter of the
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club



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

P.O. Box 154,
Stanthorpe, Q4380.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1987 - 1988

PRESIDENT	RAY MARSDEN (811 593)
VICE-PRESIDENTS	ROB MCCOSKER JEAN HARSLETT B.E.M.
SECRETARY	DOT ARCHER (811 754)
TREASURER	JOAN STEVENSON
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	MILLIE MARSDEN
NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE	DORE MCCOSKER LOUISE FISCHER TOM ARCHER
PUBLICITY OFFICER	JANET HOCKINGS
LIBRARIAN	BRIAN MCDONAGH
FLORA AND FAUNA OFFICER	COLIN HOCKINGS
GEOLOGY OFFICER	GEOFFREY WALKER
YOUTH OFFICER	ERROL WALKER
BUSHWALKING OFFICER	
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	Frank Wilkinson Roy Werner Esme Lacey Bob Lacey Ailsa Wilkinson Lyle Thompson

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

Donation .50c per family per
meeting to cover rent.

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 newsletter.

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD
NATURALISTS held in the Q.C.W.A. ROOMS, VICTORIA STREET on
25th November, 1987.

PRESENT 25

APOLOGIES

6

OPENING.

President Ray Marsden was in the chair and welcomed all present at the final meeting for 1987. He welcomed in particular the Guests Speakers for the evening Jack and May Bennie from Dalby, also a "welcome home" to Frank and Ailsa Wilkinson. Visitors Doris Spence, Val White, Flo and Don Taylor and Peter Kerr.

MINUTES.

It was moved by Rob McCosker and seconded by Bob Lacey that the minutes of the October meeting be taken as read in the November newsletter and confirmed. Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Inward correspondence from 1. Pam Harvey of Charleville enclosing sub. and donation.
2. Aust. Film Institute re video "The Last Stand".
Newsletters from: 1. Toowoomba Bushwalkers Club
2. Richmond Valley 3. Darling Downs Naturalist
4. Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club 5. Q'l'd National Parks and Wild Life and Annual Reports for 1985/86 and 86/87.
Outward: 1. Janet Hockings in P.A. Card and note.
2. 4QS re outing and meeting notices.
It was moved by Ailsa Wilkinson and seconded by Roy Werner that the inward correspondence be received and the outward endorsed. Carried.

TREASURER'S
REPORT.

Balance brought forward \$240.61
Receipts Subscriptions \$29.00 Room Rent \$9.70
Total \$38.70 Balance \$279.31.
Expenses Magazine paper \$37.50, Stencils \$29.76
Postage \$15.75, Duplication \$6.00, Rent \$6.00
Credit balance as at 25-11-1987 \$184.30.
Treasurer Joan Stevenson moved that her report be received and the following accounts passed for payment - Postage \$15.75, Duplication \$6.00
Rent \$6.00.
This was seconded by Bob Lacey and carried.

OUTING REPORT.

Leader Ray Marsden gave a report on the camp-out to Yarramalong on November 20, 21 and 22. A total of 30 took part with 25 members camping for one or two nights.

OUTING REPORT
continued

Ray thanked everyone for their co-operation to make it an enjoyable weekend.

CHRISTMAS
BREAK-UP

Sunday December 6 at Rob and Trish McCosker's property at Severnlea. "Nats" signs will be posted. BBQ tea- everyone to BYO.

NEXT OUTING

Rob McCosker offered to lead the outing somewhere in Girraween National Park on January 24, 1988. It is hoped that there will be a good roll up to get the Bi-Centennial year off to a good start. Meet at Information Centre at Girraween at 1pm. This is to be a half day outing, however some members may like to take a picnic lunch before moving off at 1pm.

SPECIMENS

Ailsa Wilkinson spoke on a black bean she had found on the last outing. Jean Harslett spoke on a book published as a tribute to her late sister Dorothy. The book contains paintings done by Dorothy of numerous well known native blooms.

GENERAL
BUSINESS

All present were asked to sign a card to be forwarded to member Janet Hocking who is recovering from major surgery. Meeting closed at 8.40pm.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Ray introduced Jack and May Bennie from Dalby who took us on an interesting trip to Lawn Hill National Park. Their photography was perfect and the showing wet our appetites to go and see the area for ourselves. Many thanks to you both for a most enjoyable program.

The evening concluded with fellowship over a cup of tea.

Dot Archer.

Hon. Sec.

000000000000000000

OUTING REPORT

from Ray Marsden

The final outing of the year was the campout to Yarramalong near Moogerah Dam on November 20-22. Thirty people took part in outing and we were pleased to welcome new members Jon Geeves and Megan Thomas who joined us for the trip to Spicer's Gap on the Saturday. Fred Simpson, a member from the Gold Coast also joined the group. Several members including Jennifer Single, Val White and Doris Spence had their first camp-out with the group.

The camping spot was very good, level ground, plenty of shade and wood and a lovely natural swimming pool. It is privately

OUTING REPORT(C't'd).

owned and just the place for a relaxing week-end.

On Saturday morning the group met at the Mt. Edwards turnoff and drove several ks to the begining of the Spicers Gap Road.

Spicers Gap Road was the first road built to connect the southern Darling Downs to the coastal strip. Before it was built (about 1850) produce from the Downs had to be taken to the port at Maitland for export. Allan Cunningham discover the gap during his exploration of the area in 1827. He returned south to New South Wales and on a later trek from the eastern side thought the gap now known as Cunninghams Gap was the same one. It would now appear that the first gap to be sighted was Spicers Gap.

The settlers in the souther Downs were becoming desperate for a road to the coast and decided, after some exploration, that Spicers Gap, between Mt. Mitchell and Spicers Peak, was the most suitable site. They put up the money to start building the road and later the Government helped. Apart from a steep pinch near what is now known as the Governor's Chair, a boggy strip through a patch of rainforest, it was not considered too difficult. They has to hand blast the steep pinch, paved the road with stone and built corduroy over the wet area. It is thought that the contractor was probably named Moss, hence Moss's Spring which must have been welcome to man and beast.

Four or five hotels were biult along the route and also several stockyards. We inspected one site of an old hotel, the Pioneer Grave site, Moss's Well and drank in the beauty of the view from the Governor's Chair. Some members walked across to see the view the other side of the ridge and the grandeur of the Scenic Rim was enjoyed from here.

Lunch was eaten in a picnic area close to the pioneer graves and a large goanna was seen eating his lunch also. There is a good camping area set up nearby, no water or facilities though.

In the afternoon many of the group climbed up to a vantage point on the top of Mt. Matheson and from here a splendid view of the Cunninghams Gap road was obtained. The road runs more or 1 less directly at this mountain before it turns away to the left at its base. One member completed the round trip to the Governor's Chair from this point.

After the evening meal, members gathered around the campfire and enjoyed some yarns, poems and singing before having supper of tea and damper and retiring.

On Sunday morning the group drove to Mt. French, which lies to the east of Aratula. To reach Mt. French a very pleasant trip through Boonah was enjoyed then the climb to the top of Mt. French where there are two main lookouts and a picnic area. The glorious view over the Fassifern Valley held everyone speld bound for a considerable time. We were further rewarded when an aircraft climbed to a considerable height near Aratula and four parachutists jumped. The members were able to watch proceedings from their vantage point, the parachutists landed on the airstrip near Atarula and the aircraft loaded up another lot of passengers.

OUTING REPORT Continued.

Before coming home, most of the party lunched at the superb picnic area at Moogerah Dam, thus enabling the children of the party to have a final swim.

It is possible to follow the Spicers' Gap road right through if equipped with 4WD, some of the party expressed the wish to return to the area of the gap and do a bit more exploring of their own. This road was the main access road for the area until the Cunninghams Gap road was widened during the second World War. Information has been received that the Cunninghams Gap road was built in 1926 and the first car to negotiate the new road was owned and driven by Mr. Win who had a garage in Warwick near the Grand Hotel.

Spicers Gap road remained open until the 1970's to service the Brisbane to Sydney telephone line. This was removed about that time and the road above the Governor's Chair was fallen into disrepair and is passable only by 4WD.

Members enjoyed the trip to Spicers and came away with a feeling of wonderment as to how the road was put through in the first place, with manual labour only and no machinery as they have today. We must applaud the skills of those early engineers and their labourers.

It was a good feeling to again be associated with Allan Cunninghams explorations as the trip through Girraween following his footsteps was enjoyed on a previous outing.

oooo00000oooo

Dore McCosker sent this interesting snippet.

Mrs. Irma Rickard, who often shares her interesting nature stories with us, recently reported this strange tale.

Her son was roused by the barking of the dogs very late one night. On investigating the cause of the disturbance he heard a scratching noise that led him to a tub used for a drinking trough for the stock.

To his amazement he found the culprit to be a platypus. As his house is up on a hill and about a mile from the nearest platypus inhabited creek, one wonders how often these animals travel away from water and how long they could survive on dry land.

Dore McCosker.

00000000000000

Condolences are extended to the members of the McCosker family on the passing of Mrs. Dora Burton. Mrs. Burton had a long life and was known to many of the members.