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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 OF CLUB FOR 1988 - 1989

PRESIDENT	RAY MARSDEN (811 593)
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MEETINGS - 4th WEDNESDAY of each month in the Q.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

Rent donation per family per meeting

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 general monthly meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalists Club held in the Q.C.W.A. Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe on Wednesday March 22, 1989 at 8pm.

Present 18

Apologies 8

Opening

President Ray Marsden opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

Minutes .

Moved by Frank Wilkinson and seconded by Doris Spence that the minutes of the February meeting be taken as read in the April Newsletter and confirmed. Carried.

Correspondence.

Inward was received from - 1. Australia Post; 2. Bob Lacey; 3. State Library; 4. Australian Conservation Foundation; 5. Fourth Wave Investments. Newsletters were received from - 1. Q'l'd Naturalist Club Inc; 2. Darling Downs Naturalist Club; 3. Richmond Valley Naturalist; 4. Chinchilla Field Naturalist Club Inc.

Outward was forwarded to 4 QS 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.

Treasurer Julia Brown presented her report which showed a credit balance of \$259.37 and she moved that it be received and that the following accounts be passed for payment - magazine postage \$17.00; room rent \$8.00; Magazine duplication \$6.00 Post Box \$24.00. This was seconded by Rob McCosker.

Carried.

Outing Report.

As the March outing was cancelled owing to rain there was no report.

April Outing.

It was suggested that the outing to Sun Valley be held and an invitation had been extended to have the outing as a camp-out or day outing as members wished. This will be on April 22 and 23. See the newsletter for full details.

April Meeting.

The meeting will be held on April 26 and the guest speaker is Rolly Hill who will present a programme on Mt. Isa.

Specimens.

Colin Hockings spoke on some Xylautes Moth eggs which he had, they were green in colour when first collected but have since turned black.

General Business Re change of format for the magazine cover - this was discussed and it was decided to continue with the present cover until present supplies of paper is used up when it will be necessary to change to a different paper size.

The abattoir situation was discussed and the secretary read the letter which president Ray Marsden and Colin Hockings had drawn up and a copy of this will be forwarded to the Shire Council with a copy of the letter which Colin had received from the Botany Dept. of the D.P.I.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

After Meeting Programme. President Ray introduced the guest speaker Tom Archer, who showed some very interesting slides during during nine trips to Tasmania. He showed various places of interest and some not accessible by the ordinary tourist. All present enjoyed this programme and expressed their appreciation with acclamation.

Dot Archer.

Hon. Sec.

Field Outing

Leader - Errol Walker

"The Haven" April 22/23, 1989.

As we all know, the March outing to "The Haven" was washed out, but the rain was most welcome wasn't it?

The meeting of 22/3/89 resolved that we try again for this outing to the area adjacent to Bald Rock National Park and make it a camp-out.

We shall leave Weeroona Park at 10am on Saturday April 22 and travel to the campsite where we can set up our "bush homes" before lunch. The camp will be near a small creek but please bring your own drinking water.

Organised activity for Saturday will include a short drive and an easy walk on a new track to Bald Rock. The Reed family (owners of "The Haven" have promised us an interesting evening observing wildlife.

Sunday morning will include an easy walk with views to Bald Rock Park and back to camp for lunch. The afternoon activity will be a first hand look at an aspect of pioneering life which I think few of us will have seen before. I'll keep you guessing on this one.

As I mentioned last month, this outing will cater for everyone, with no great exertion necessary to enjoy all there is to offer.

Please feel free to come just for the Sunday's activity if you can't make the camp.

ROAD DIRECTIONS. Travel from Stanthorpe along Sugarloaf Road to the Mt. Lindsay highway. Travel south along the Mt. Lindsay highway looking for a 'NATS' sign directing you to "The Haven" on your right. 4km past the Bookookoorara Creek Crossing. (Continued on Page5)

MISCELLANEOUS NATURE NOTES by JEAN HARSLETT.

The cancelling of the last outing because the area was inaccessible, means there is no outing report, so perhaps this is a good time to report a few small observations, which are hopefully of interest.

The Travelling Acacias

Acacia rubida described by Mr. Les Pedley in his *Acacia Review* in *Austrobaileya* Vol. 1. No. 3. is wide spread in south-easterly portion of Australia, but in Queensland it is restricted to the Stanthorpe area only, where it is not common. A small area at Passchendaele he visited in 1963 and first recorded it, & it is also found at Kyoomba and Racecourse Creek, usually in fairly limited areas.

Roadworks to widen and straighten old bitumen roads between Amiens & Stanthorpe and parts of the Stanthorpe Glenlyon Pikedale were completed a couple of years ago. A large quantity of gravel was imported from the "traprock" country, and what should later appear quite commonly along the verges of the road, but *Acacia rubida*. They are very distinctive, erect in character, very red stems, and sometimes the phyllodes are so colourful (as 'rubida' suggests) they almost take on an autumnal shades. They also retain the juvenile leaves for a long time.

A couple of observations, firstly the surprise of seeing this otherwise rather elusive species, along the roadside every time I go out, and so far from their known habitats. All others all strictly on granite, and these coming up on the verges where the "traprock" gravels have been imported. I have scouted around where the gravel came from, and nary a sight of one there. For a couple of years they have been thriving along the roadside, fairly sparsely spread, but for about 6 kilometers. Why in the traprock gravels when its not to date been recorded in them here?

Another attractive species *Acacia cultriformis*, which we do consider does belong to the western side of the district, and the traprock, has also appeared along these roadside gravel verges. This would be expected because of the import of the gravel, but one wonders once the roots get below the thin layer of gravel and into pure granite will they be so happy. Thirdly there were fires burning off cleared trees, but these took place before the gravel came in, so when did the seed get its "heat" treatment, or did they not require it? You can see as I travel back and forth to town I have plenty to ponder over and puzzle about.!!

This latter species of wattle is common on the traprock on the western side of the district and makes a splendid golden spring display. Locally its vernacular name is "Bendee" wattle. How could we steal this name so well known in western Queensland to such a totally different looking tree? Here it begins to appear in quantity near a well known, well established property by the name of "Bendee" *Acacia cultriformis* and *Acacia semilunata* (the latter is quite rare in this district) are rather similar, but the foliage of the latter is clearly hipped like a $\frac{1}{2}$ moon, as the name suggests, while *Ac. cultriformis* is more erect & like the sail of a boat.

On Gum Trees Cont.

Recently Mr. Tony Bean & his family visited the district, checking species of Eucalypts. He was interested & pleased to find the record of the Wallangarra White Gum, E. scoparia from Mt. Ferguson. Amiens was correct, this being the furthest west of any other known records & outside its known habitat of Wallangarra & Giraween Nat. Park areas. Also that E. deanei has extended, in very isolated instances as far west as Amiens (Cowie's Lane). The E. scoparia stand is only 13 trees, but some are large and very old, as well as some young trees.

For a long time there seems to have been confusion about the naming of the "Cabbage Gum" E. bancroftii with E. amblifolia. He was able to say the former was correct for our "Cabbage" or sometimes "Orange" gum, and also able to show me a single but fine example of E. amblifolia. Should anyone wish to see it, it is adjacent to the old piece of fence which remains where the old Catholic Church used to stand at Sugarloaf, and a young one just through the fence on the opposite side of the road. A few kms. further along, at the deep gully, before going up to the Sugarloaf Bofate, there is a small stand on your right, looking like slender "Snow gums", which in fact is the group where they belong. It is E. pauciflora and its common name - oh! dear! - is "Cabbage Gum". It stands severe winds and snow, and grows at 1,000 m and above.

The Swans

Swans frequently visit our dams, but only stay for short periods. This year for the first time a pair nested. It is an area of nearly permanent water. At first they were very shy lovers & the nest was built in a very secluded area, before we were aware they planned to stay, which proved to be for 7 months, before they felt the family was able to cope with the outside world. Seven cygnets arrived and all grew up. First small grey and fluffy and on their backs or under a wing sometimes hard to get a certain count. As they grew they became darker and at the "teenage" period viewed from the back, with light tips to their darker plumage they appeared to have frilled petticoats, complimentary to their age. At this stage they became much more drilled by parents, always moving in straight lines one parent in front and one at the rear. Obviously discipline was being introduced. Later still just at sunset they would be taken into the air for flying practise and formation drill, coming back to the water. This seemed only in the last 10 days or so. They would circle the dam a number of times, and do short forays into formations, the 9 of them making a nice pattern parents and youngsters. I was down there one evening, just to watch the pageant of colour reflected in the still waters, as the sun went down in a special display of glory. This evening the swans did their practise routine, but also some much bigger circles. I did not realise I was also farwelling them, for next morning they were gone. Somehow I felt glad that I happened to be there that evening, even though I did not realise it was farewell. Two days later an angry citizen with a dam 15 kms east of here reported in the local paper that he had found two dead swans, which had been shot, by some heartless. Certainly I tried to convince myself that it could not be any of our "teenagers" or their parents, and we hope some may return to their birthplace, someday.

Butterfly Notes

Somehow, quite by mistake, tried to fly away like a butterfly.' While on the February outing, as we emerged from a pleasant shaded valley, I was very interested in a particular variety of brown butterfly I saw on the wing. I returned early the next morning to the area, with the blessing of the owners, and to make more careful and patient observations. It proved to be Heteronympha paradelpa deervalensis (alas no common name). I had found a single female early in March in 1951, the only one ever to be recorded from Queensland. The type habitat, as the last name suggests is Deervale in the Dorrego district where it is taken only between heights of 1,200 and 1,500 metres. This small colony, quite numerous, but in a surprisingly small area, is an exciting find. By strange coincidence after not seeing a specimen for 38 years, and then only one, a specimen flew into the house here a day or two later. Despite a very good search in a fair radius not a single other one was seen.

Last week a scientific screed arrived questioning species I had recorded here, which also occur in N.S.W. They desire to list endangered species, by coincidence, this butterfly is to be listed. This decision because its only been seen in the one area in N.S.W. and a single specimen in Queensland. Maybe this sighting, suggests there are plenty of others out there, and at Amiens, but where have they been hiding for all those years ?. Mother Nature keeps her secrets very well.

Those Militant Soldier Birds

Our old friend the Boobook Owl stayed out longer than usual and camped in a thick tree in the garden, but not thick enough to avoid that noisy troop. They knocked him to the ground and were giving him a merry time when I intervened. As they flew up he made a rapid take off and bee line to his hollow limb nearby, & disappeared down it. Outmanoeuvred, they set up a noisy protest, and hardly left the tree or hollow for the rest of the day... How impertinent !

Jean Harslett

Road Directions for April Outing (continued from page 2)

Follow signs on private property past Reed's house to the campsite. We will start walking on Sunday morning about 9.30am. See you there.

STOP PRESS.

The rain just keeps on keeping on as I write this two weeks prior to the outing.

I shall be making a last minute decision on Thursday evening 20/4/1989 as to whether we shall camp or just enjoy the modified Sunday's activities. The road conditions on private property will dictate the activities.

Please ring for confirmation of the campout, otherwise just follow the road directions and we'll meet at "The Haven" on Sunday morning at 9.30am.

Errol Walker - Leader,

