



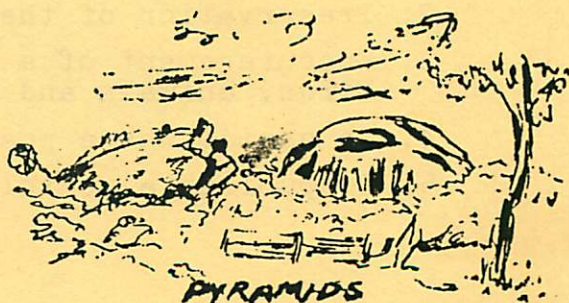
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THE
**GRANITE BELT
NATURALIST**



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)
VICE-PRESIDENTS	ROBIN MC COSKER JEAN HARSLETT B.E.M.
SECRETARY	DOT ARCHER (811754)
TREASURER	JULIA BROWN
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	MILLIE MARSDEN
NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE	DORE MC COSKER AILS A WILKINSON FRANK WILKINSON
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YOUTH OFFICER	ROBIN MC COSKER
BUSHWALKING OFFICER	ERROL WALKER
LIBRARIAN	VAL WHITE
HON. AUDITOR	JOAN FERRIS

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

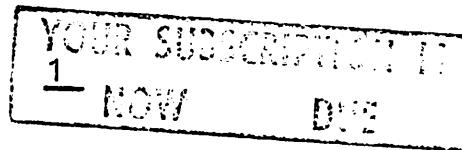
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

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 Stanthorpe and District Field Naturalists Club Meeting held in the QCWA Rooms Victoria Street Stanthorpe at 8pm on August 23 , 1989.

Present 17

Apologies 14

Opening.

President Ray Marsden opened the meeting and welcomed all present, in particular the guest speaker for the evening Brett Roberts. He extended a welcome back to Desley McDonagh.

Minutes.

Moved by Jean Harslett and seconded Esme Lacey that the minutes of the July 26th general meeting be taken as read in the August Newsletter and confirmed. C'd.

Correspondence. Inward received from 1. Barbara Power, Darre 1 Bamberry, Chrissie Plant and M. Mould enclosing 1989/90 subscriptions. 2. Invitation from GRASP to attend their annual meeting on September 5th. 3. Australian Conservation Foundation. Newsletter received from 1. Toowoomba Field Nats. Club 2. Chinchilla 'Urimburra' 3. Richmond Valley Nats. Club 4. Toowoomba 'Footprint' Outward forwarded to : 1. Joan Ferris 2. Stanthorpe Border Post 3. Brett Roberts. 4. Stanthorpe Agricultural Society 5. 4QS re outing and meeting notices. Moved by Rob McCosker seconded Errol Walker that the inward correspondence be received and the outward endorsed. Carried.

Financial Report. Treasurer Julia Brown read her report which showed credit balance as at July 26, 1989 \$ 75.27
 Receipts 129.30
 Expenses 42.74
 Credit balance as at August 23, 1989 \$ 161.83
 Julia Brown moved that the report be received and the following accounts be passed for payment Secretary Petty cash \$15.00; R. McCosker \$2.79 additional postage for August Newsletter; Magazine duplication \$6.00; Mag. postage for September \$21.00. This was seconded by Millie Marsden and carried.

August Outing Report. Leader Ray Marsden reported on the August outing to Bald Rock which proved very popular with 54 attending. Several guides joined the outing in order to obtain their Hikers Badge. Four Chalet visitors and their house-parent were also guests for the outing. All enjoyed the outing and lunched back at the picnic ground returning home by their chosen routes.

September Outing. Peter Kerr will be the leader to Sandy Creek. Assemble at Weeroona Park at 8.30am and again at the Pikedale Road turnoff on the left hand side of the road to Warwcik at about 9am. Peter will lead a 10k walk along Sandy creek from the Clare Hills road crossing to

September Outing. continued.

Rocklands Road crossing of Sandy Creek. A car shuffle will be arranged to transport walkers back to the cars at Clare Hills Crossing. Smoko will be taken at Clare Hills Crossing and lunch will be carried. Those not wishing to walk right through may go as far as they wish, go fishing or just picnic. Outing will be held on September 24.

September Guest Speaker. Our own member Mrs. Jean Harslett B.E.M. will present a program entitled "Insects and Birds". This program will be given at the September 27 meeting.

Specimens. None were brought to the meeting. Dot Archer spoke on the latest arrivals in the Archer garden the Eastern Rosella and Red Winged parrots. Pictures of these were shown from a bird book.

General Business. Errol Walker suggested that the secretary write to the National Parks and Wild Life at Glen Innes to request that the new route up Bald Rock needs a few more indications as to where to track lies. This is in regard to an area where the direction needs to be shown through the rock channel instead of straight ahead across the flat rock. It is so easy for people to miss direction at this point.

Meetings and Programs. The list of meeting topics and outing venues was presented to the meeting from the meeting of the committee. As some of these are yet to be finalised it was decided not to print them at present. Errol Walker requested that the June 24th outing to Severn River Falls be changed to a camp-out June 9-11th (the Queen's Birthday long weekend) as more time was needed to explore this area. All present were in favour of the change of date.

The Meeting closed at 8.40pm.

After Meeting Program. President Ray Marsden introduced the guest speaker who gave a very interesting address illustrated by superb photography on the local Girraween National Park. This was enjoyed by all and Brett was thanked with hearty acclamation.

Dorothy Archer.
Hon. Sec.

Outing Report to Bald Rock.

By Leader Ray Marsden

Though the Stanthorpe and District Field Naturalists left Stanthorpe in the usual? uncertain weather conditions for the outing to Bald Rock, and encountered several showers on the journey, the day improved dramatically to be fine and sunny. After a quick cup of tea in the picnic grounds, the group of 54 proceeded along the newly constructed route to the summit of the rock. National Parks have completed this graded path, which proceeds round the east of the base of the rock and thus makes the ascent very much easier. Formerly the route usually taken was straight up the face of the rock and therefore was suitable only for the more active members of society.

Bald Rock is the main feature of the Bald Rock National Park and is a magnificent dome 750m long and 500m wide rising 200m above the surrounding bushland. It is said to be the largest exposed granite type rock in Australia. Strictly speaking the rock is not true granite being classified as "Stanthorpe Adamellite". It is of Lower Triassic age showing marked phases in mineralogy and texture. The resultant soils are generally poor and sandy.

Early spring wildflowers were blooming in abundance and gave added interest to this walk. Several kangaroos were grazing close to the road on the way to the picnic area and the wattle was blooming in profusion beside the road.

On reaching the summit of Bald Rock a clear vista of the 360' panorama was enjoyed by all. Groups gathered together pointing out the features in the surrounding area such as Mt. Norman, the Pyramids, South Bald Rock, the TV antenna at Passchendeale and Storm King Dam. Several members of the Stanthorpe Girl Guides joined in the walk as part of their hiker's badge, four from The Chalet and their houseparents were also guests on this day. It is hoped that The Chalet residents will be able to join in many of our activities. We enjoyed their company and they enjoyed the outdoor activity.

It was felt that, in a couple of places, the track was not clearly identified and perhaps an unwary hiker could get off the beaten track. It was decided to write to the National Parks and Wildlife at Glen Innes with an suggestion that this could be rectified.

During the lunch break at the picnic area the birdlife emerged for their share. Kookaburras, currawongs and butcherbirds were plentiful and demanded their share of the food on offer. The male and female satin bower birds came out much more shyly for food, they moved away quickly as the other birds approached.

After lunch, the group dispersed in various different directions some went on to Tenterfield, taking in Thunderbolt's Hideout on the way. Others explored round the immediate area before returning home.

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What is a Leader!

Webster says ' A person who leads; directing, commanding or guiding head, as of a group or activity.

Oxford. ' One who leads or conducts; a commander.'

This is food for thought, I sometimes feel that we need to pause and remember that a leader has responsibilities and IS in charge of the outing. We should remember that he should LEAD. (Ed)

More food for thought. This time from Dore McCosker and entitled
Snippets - Bits and pieces we hear or see from time to time.

Vision T.V. As we regularly watch that beautiful picture of our regal Wedgetail Eagle being absorbed into the contours of what looks mostlike the American Golden Eagle, it appears as a clear statement of fact rather than just a vision.

7.2.89. Beyond 2000. Scientists are making a serious attempt to evaluate traditional cures used by Aborigines.

In Thailand the people are being taught how to recognise and use medicinal plants and to grow some as a cash crop. Includes traditional cure for arthritis.

In Japan 60 elements from our Australian brown snakes are used in medicine. The mortslity for the snakes through milking has been 100% until a new method was devised and is now in use.

Australia has the world's 10 deadliest snakes as well as the blue ringed octopus, boxjelly fish and red backed spider.

Kangaroo apple (*Solanum* species from North Queensland) is grown in Europe and especially Russia for the production of steroids.

Black Bean (*Castanospermum*) Extract from this plant was isolated by Australian scientists and tested overseas in conjunction with another drug and found to be beneficial in the treatment of AIDS.

Athel Tree. The large feathery sprays of pink flowers on the garden Tamarix in spring and summer are most attractive. However, *Tamarix aphylla* - the Athel Tree - growing to 7 metres was introduced from the Middle East because of its rapid growth, even in pure desert sand. In a climate like that of Broken Hill, where vast numbers were planted in the surrounding country to 'green the desert' it did well. Thousands of cuttings were grown at Gatton College and distributed among students. (It could not survive the frosts in this area I understand. Ed.)

Like so many introduced species which appear to be useful but get out of hand, the Athel is taking over the environment, choking native species and thus destroying the habitat of many birds and animals. It draws up salt which is deposited in its falling leaves on the surface of the ground, so that only a few salt tolerant plants will grow near them. Becoming even denser it is blocking waterways, forcing new channels, thus altering the course of rivers and streams.

Of course, we do not need to look past our own district to see exotics out of control. *Coryopsis*, from USA, has spread its ever widening carpet of gold throughout spring and summer. *Cosmos* from Mexico has been making its display in autumn since the mid 1930s. In the last ten years, the grass sometimes called firesedge, with its deep russet tones in winter, is changing the whole appearance of our countryside.

I can remember being driven to distraction by the endless mourning peep-peeping of the bronze cuckoo. However, when I saw its gleaming polished beauty as it perched on the garden fence, I forgave it. Don Seton, Garden Wise 25.2.89. advised that the Bronze Cuckoo eats the caterpillars which infest the white cedar and can be nasty in the garden. The cedar is an attractive deciduous native tree for the garden - apart from the caterpillars. In June I watched currawongs and a few parrots demolish the very numerous seeds that set on a young tree. This contrinution from Dore McCosker.

A few notes on the visitors to the Archer garden.
Red-winged parrot are usually seen in pairs or family groups, although flocks of about 20 birds may be seen during the non-breeding season.

Red-winged parrots feed on blossoms, nectar, fruits, nuts and seeds, as well as insects and their larvae. They are particularly fond of the seeds of the eucalypts and acacias and the berries of the mistletoe Loranthus. They spend most of the day in the treetops and come to the ground only to drink or feed on the fallen seeds or fruits. Their flight is slightly erratic, with full deliberate wing-beats. They are widely distributed along the north and eastern Australia, including some of the islands off the northern coast.

Eastern Rosella. These birds feed on seeds, blossoms, nectar and insects and their larvae. They are fond of cultivated fruits and can be trouble-some in fruit growing areas, but they make up for this in the way of destroying large amounts of seeds of weeds. They are often to be seen foraging along the edges of country roads for seeds. Eastern rosellas are commonly found in lightly timbered country in humid and semi-humid regions from the seaboard to the fringes of the inland plain. They are seldom found above 1250 m above sea level and they avoid forests.

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September Outing will be a 10k walk along Sandy Creek with Peter Kerr as leader. Cars will leave Wecroona Park at 8.30am on September 24 to re-group at the Pikedale Road turnoff on the Stanthorpe-Warwick road. Smoko will be taken at the Clare Hills Road crossing of Sandy Creek. From here the walk will proceed upstream through to Rocklands Road crossing of the Sandy Creek. Those who do not wish to make the whole 10k walk may walk upstream as far as they wish or may like to go fishing. A car shuffle will transport the walkers from the crossing at Rocklands back to Clare Hills Crossing. The easy walking conditions should enable the walk to be completed in a little over three hours walking time. Lunch is to be carried and will be eaten along the way.

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September meeting program will be "Insects and Birds" by member Jean Harslett B.E.M. Jean's knowledge and expertise with the camera ensure that this will be a most interesting program, it will take place after the meeting on Wednesday September 27.