



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 1990 - 1991.

PRESIDENT

KRIS CARNELL. (835268)

VICE-PRESIDENTS

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JEAN HARSLETT B.E.M. (833185)

SECRETARY

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YOUTH OFFICER

ROBIN McCOSKER. (835371)

BUSHWALKING OFFICER

ERROL WALKER (812008)

LIBRARIAN

ESME COLLEY (812927)

COMMITTEE; NOMINATED OFFICIALS WITH POWER TO CO-OPT.

HONORARY AUDITOR.

JOAN FERRIS.

MEETINGS - 4th. WEDNESDAY of each MONTH at the Q.C.W.A. ROOMS
at 8pm.

OUTINGS - The Sunday PRECEDING the 4th. Wednesday of each Month.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

SINGLE . \$8.

FAMILY. \$15. per annum.

Rent donation per family per meeting.

AIMS OF THE CLUB.

1. To study all branches of Natural History.
 2. Preservation of the Flora and the 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 and post to members.
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MINUTES OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB HELD IN THE C.W.A. ROOMS 22/8/90

Present: 26 Apologies: 5

President Kris opened the meeting and welcomed all present, particularly Paul and Brigitte James as visitors.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record on the motion of Rob McCosker, seconded by Colin Hockings, and carried.

Correspondence: Inward:

1. A.C.F. Leaflet on Ozone layer.
2. Footprints - Toowoomba Nats.
3. John O'Donnell - resignation as member.
4. Division of Sport and Recreation - Committee of inquiry into women's sport.
5. H. & A. Gilson - sub for 1990-91.
6. N.J. & W. Donges - Sub for 1990 -91.
7. D. Bamberry - resignation as member.
8. Umbirra
9. Newsletter of Queensland Nats.

Outward 4QS for 'Around the Ridges'.

Motion That the inward correspondence be received, and the outward adopted Moved Desley McDonagh, seconded Dore McCosker and carried.

Treasurer's Report: Moved Julia Brown, seconded Val White that the Treasurer's report be adopted and the accounts be passed for payment. Carried.

Statement for July 25 - 22 August 1990.

Bank balance as at July 25 \$279.64

Receipts

Subscriptions 251.00
Room rent Collect 26.00
Bring 'n buy 5.00

282.00

\$ 561.64

Expenditure

Room Rent 12.50
Magazine Duplicating 6.00
Magazine Postage 22.00
40.50
Balance at Aug 25 1990 521.14

\$561.64

Bank balance August 25 1990: \$521.14

Accounts to be passed for payment: Room rent \$10.00; Magazine Duplication \$6.00; Magazine Postage \$23.00.

Outing Report: Brian McDonagh presented a verbal report on the outing to Wanstall's and moved that letters of appreciation be sent to Alan Wanstall & John Cusack.

Jean Harslett seconded the motion which was carried.

Appreciation was expressed to Brian and Mignon for organizing the outing.

Specimens- Dore McCosker had a magnificent spider and egg sacs, in a bottle.

Desley McDonagh spoke of a koala, probably blind, seen at Nundubbermere.

Discussion: was held on the 1990 - 91 programme; and suggestions were called for programmes and outings for 1991 - 92. President Kris asked for people not to leave the suggestions to the planning committee.

Wrappers for the magazine will finish with the September issue and new covers are needed. Kris showed the meeting a suggested wrapper, incorporating the Australia Post requirements. M. Marsden moved & F. James seconded that the cover as presented be approved. Carried.

September Outing: September 23. Details will be in the magazine, as will be details of the half day outing at Hocking's.

Incorporation:

Motion: Moved Bob Harslett, that we become incorporated. Seconded Colin Hockings and carried.

Motion: Moved Margaret Carnell, seconded Rob McCosker that we appoint Kris Carnell to prepare application for incorporation. carried.

Motion: Moved Ray Marsden, seconded Brian McDonagh, that the names The Stanthorpe Field Naturalists Club; The Stanthorpe and District Field Naturalists Club; and the Granite Belt Field Naturalists Club be submitted for the club's incorporation. Carried.

New Constitution Model Rules Discussion

These were presented by Kris Carnell.

Moved Bob Harslett, seconded Gordon Davies that the club accept the committee's discussion on the model rules. Carried.

Membership: Any person shall become a member upon payment of the annual fee or part thereof as determined by the Management Committee.

Jean Harslett expressed appreciation to Kris Carnell for his work for incorporation of the club. Club members were all in agreement.

Insurance was discussed. It is to protect the club against legal action for any damage on outings. It covers members. The cost will be \$77.00 annually.

It was agreed that the club will hold a half day outing to Amiens on November 11.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m. after which we viewed the programme prepared by Jean Harslett titled "Birdsville and Beyond". Jean presented her excellent photography in her usual delightful way. We would have been happy to have more to see and hear. Thanks Jean!!!

OUTING FOR SEPTEMBER 23RD

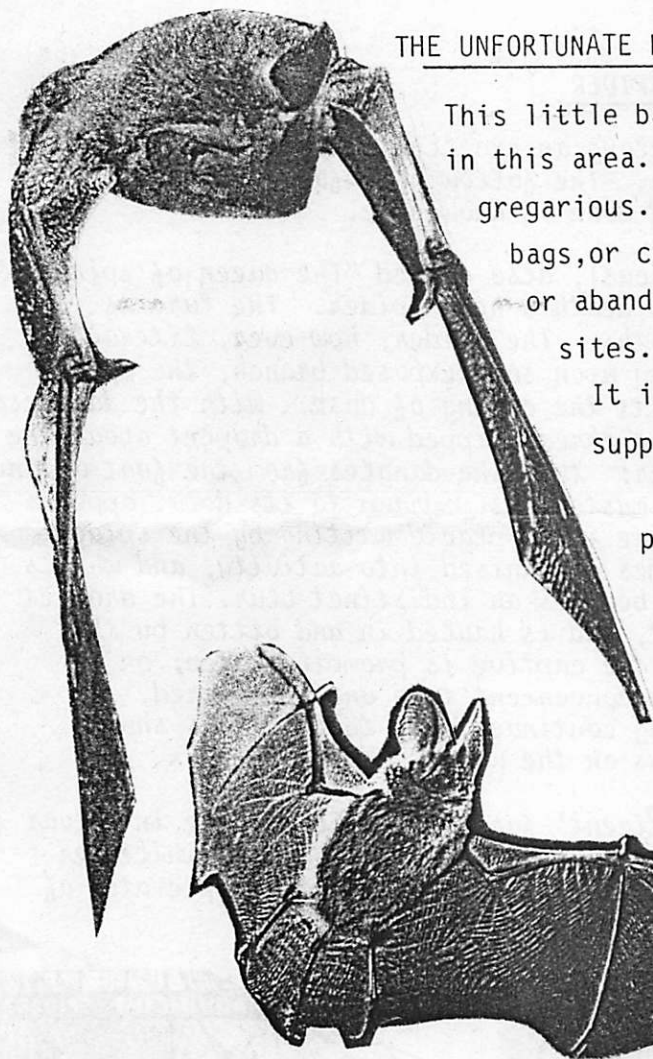
The September outing will be led by Ray Marsden. Because the Basket Swamp district is not at its best for flowers at the present time, owing to recent fires and a large goat population, the venue for the outing has been altered.

Members will now meet at Weeroona Park at 10.15 a.m. on September 23rd for the outing which will begin at Jolly's Falls. The outing will be ideal for those interested in the wild flowers of the Granite Belt, and with Jean Harslett, Dore McCosker and Colin Hockings being well versed in the flora of the area, as well as other members including Brian McDonagh, a lot should be learned of what the northern Granite Belt has to offer.

Lunch will be eaten at the picnic area and afterwards we will be let by John Graham to another wildflower area in close proximity. Walking should be relatively easy.

A stand can be made against invasion by an army; no stand can be made against invasion by an idea.

Victor Hugo (1802 - 85)



THE UNFORTUNATE DEMISE OF A LESSER LONG EARED BAT.

This little ball of brown fluff is seen quite regularly in this area. They roost singly or in pairs, & its not gregarious. It chooses unusal places, under bark, in bags, or coats (left hanging too long in one place) or abandoned fairy martin's nests, to mention a few sites.

It is hard to believe that such a small frame supports such large wings, when seen extended.

This particular chap found an unusal place to roost in a large electrical drill. Members Peter Langdon & Doug Rigden were at work erecting a small shed and hung the drill up, to use the next day. Next morning they switched on the drill. The poor little chap's demise was instant, but it was thrown clear and looked quite undamaged.

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THE SETTLER'S CLOCK.

A group of Kookaburras, roosting very close to our house, each morning indulge in their joyous chorus. We have become very interested in their timing and what triggers off the moment for six kookaburras to all commence laughing. One would perhaps think it would be inspired by the degree of daylight. However, the times recorded suggest otherwise. On consecutive mornings it only varied by three minutes and went up and down, not always co-inciding with cloud and sunshine. Eg. The times read such, 5.49am., 5.47 am., 5.49am., 5.50am., 5.48 am., 5.51am., 5.47am. 5.47am., 5.49am. At the end of a fortnight it had only varied to 5.40am. This would be considerably less than the increase of daylight time.

Did the old timers, frequently very observant of bush lore, know that the Kookaburra kept good time ? Hence the title of "The Settler's Clock."

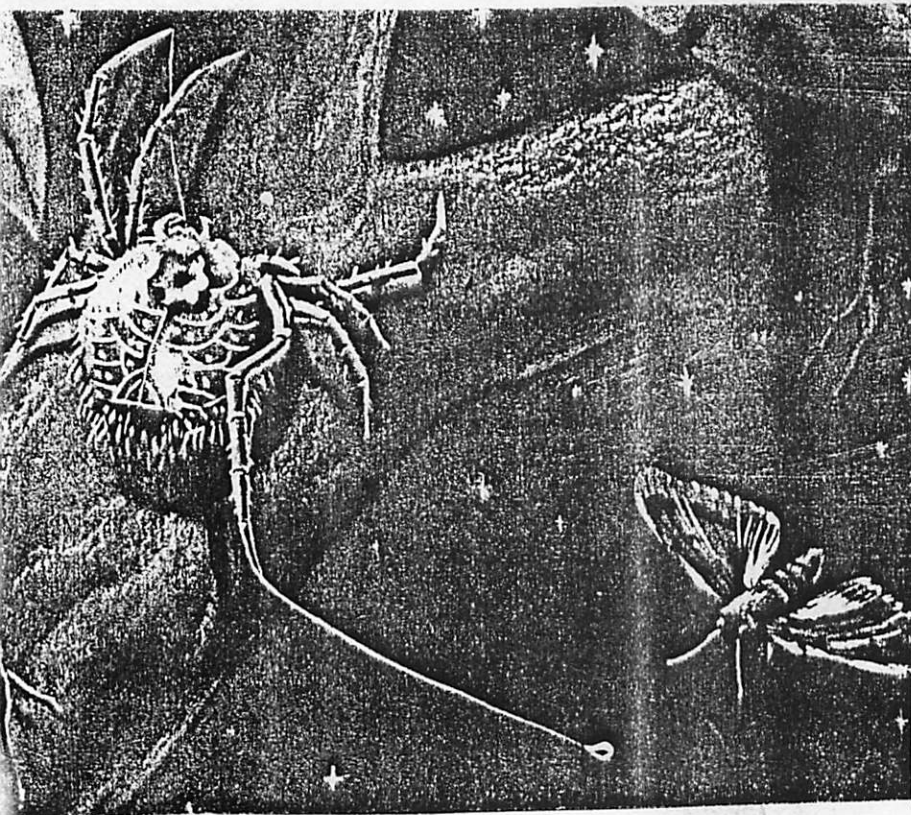
Jean Harslett.

MAGNIFICENT SPIDER

At our August meeting Dore McCosker brought along an excellent specimen of the spider and egg sacs of the Magnificent Spider. The following information and illustrations come from the Australian Wonder Book of Knowledge.

"The magnificent spider (*Dicrostichus magnificus*), also called "The queen of spinners" has elaborated on the methods employed by the death's head spider. The lure is apparently similar, and the prey are again moths. The spider, how-ever, literally angles for her prey. Sluggish by day, resting upon some exposed branch, the spider fishes for her prey, for it is always a female, awaits the coming of dusk. With the darkness or by the light of the moon, she spins a short thread tipped with a droplet about the size of a pin's head of highly adhesive matter; this she dangles from the foot of one of her second pair of legs. Again the moth, mysteriously drawn to its doom, appears and circles the waiting spider. But, now there is no placid waiting by the spider for its prey to enter her embrace. She becomes galvanised into activity, and whirls the droplet-tipped thread so rapidly that it becomes an indistinct blur. The droplet hits the moth, which immediately becomes fast, and is hauled in and bitten by the successful angler. If the spider is hungry, the captive is promptly eaten; or it may be suspended in a neat wrapping from some convenient twig until required. In any case, another line is prepared and fishing continues, for the night is short, and moths of the kind preferred are not always on the wing.

The spider truly deserves the name of 'magnificent' for she is milky-white in colour with two raised bosses of bright yellow or pale orange upon her abdomen, while her cephalothorax bears a coronet of orange. Her mate is an almost microscopic atom of life; he has only recently been discovered.



The Magnificent Spider prepares to whirl her line to capture an unsuspecting victim, drawn within range by some strange, invisible power.

It is not only as an angler that the magnificent spider deserves fame, but also for the pre-natal care of her young. Her egg-sacs, and there may be a bunch of up to a dozen of them, are spindle shaped and woven of a pale creamy-buff silk, which darkens with age and exposure to the weather. The external wrapping is very densely woven and has an almost papery texture. This is practically water-proof, and forms an all-weather covering. On opening the sac, the spindle is found to be filled with a soft mass of fluffy, whitish or creamy silk, which forms an insulated eiderdown for the rounded receptacle lying in its centre and containing the eggs. The whole is an extremely intricate piece of weaving, and it is for this that she has gained the title of "Queen of Spinners". The pale spiderlings emerge through holes cut in the outer silken casing."

REPORT OF AUGUST OUTING

By Brian McDonagh

For once we had perfect weather, rather surprising after the last few weeks. A total of 41 people, ranging in age from 3 to a big question mark, arrived in 16 cars.

Three miles south of Wallangarra we turned onto Brushabers Road. At the Wanstall home there were two ringtail Possum nests in trees and shrubs in the garden, but no sign of their owners. Much interest was caused by an old slab shed, probably built about 1914, originally with a bark roof. Like all old established farms there was a good collection of old machinery, particularly a corn planter designed to plant an even distance apart, so that the crop could be cross-cultivated.

Cattle breeds are of only passing interest to Nats members, but the herd of pure-bred Red Polls, a rare breed in Queensland, was noted by many of us.

After the usual cuppa, we examined a pile of rocks, literally covered with large fig trees, with the roots going down over and around the rocks. The McCosker boys did the usual Tarzan act.

The walk to the Sunnyside Trig station was along a property road, and except for a few rough spots, a car could negotiate it. I had expected the country to be like the ridge immediately to the west - The Mt Norman to Arrow Rock area, but was surprised to find very few rocks, just an open forest of Stringybark and yellow box, with a few Apples and Blackbutt.

Sunnyside Trig has an elevation of 3,488 ft, an almost immediately below us was the end of the Stanthorpe Granites. To the south the view extended over Tenterfield to Bluff Rock and the Bolivia Range - to the south-east the Spirabo Area, while to the west the Roberts Range and Donnybrook - a superb view.

Evidence of goats was seen on the King Orchids. Bulbophyllum was present, but not in flower.

September 1990

Wildlife seen was at least two kangaroos, 2 wallaroos, 2 swamp wallabies, 1 prettyface wallaby and of course an echidna, found right at the trig at lunchtime. It must have been one of the most photographed echidnas in history. One member had a camera with a noisy shutter, which made the animal jump each time an exposure was made.

Wildflowers were rare. Snowflakes (*leucopojon*) were there, and one little wattle (*A. nerifolia*) was in flower. *A. fimbria* occurred near the trig, but not yet in flower. Surprisingly absent was the Wallangarra wattle (*A. adunc*). The most interesting plant seen was the parasitic mistletoe (on another mistletoe) called *Notothixis Subaurus*, with a tiny bright green leaf, golden on the underside.

Our thanks go to the Wanstall family, our hosts, and the Cusack family, who gave us access to their property.

MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 26th

Guest speakers for our meeting on September 26th will be John and Ruth Walter. They will be showing slides and speaking on "Bird Watching in Kenya". As they have to return home to Pittsworth that night, we will be having their programme first, commencing at 8 p.m.

OUTING ON OCTOBER 7th

The venue for the half day outing on October 7th has been changed owing to the unavailability of Colin Hockings on that day. Frank James will now be our leader for a wildflower trip to Amiens. This was to have been in November. Cars will be leaving Weeroona Park at 1.30 p.m. Afternoon tea will be carried.

DIARY OF A VERY AMATEUR BIRD-WATCHER

Day 1: While checking a fence line I spied a strange bird: too far away, no binoculars, no note book and what I remember doesn't match any illustration in the book.

Day 2: Being in the general vicinity with 5 minutes to spare I decided to investigate again. On the way I discovered a flock (30!) of spotted pardolates. While watching it started to rain lightly. I noticed that the pardolates were feeding in the rain, on the underside of the gum leaves. I saw the strange bird from a distance: no binoculars etc., and I'm soaked.

Day 6: Well prepared, binoculars, note book, pencil and field guide. I saw a Rufous Whistler and a Grey Fantail feeding together, a pair of tree creepers, and a large flock of crimson rosellas eating my apricot blossom! No strange bird!

Conclusion: Bird Watching is a very rewarding, if sometimes frustrating pastime.

Kris Carnell

PROGRAMME 1990/91

<u>Date</u>	<u>Outing</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Aug 19	Wanstalls	B. McDonagh	Aug. 22	J. Harslett Birdsville & Beyond
Sept 23	Jolly's Falls	R. Marsden	Sept 26	J. & R. Walter Birdwatching - Kenya
Oct 7	Amiens ½ day	F. James		
Oct 24	Gibsons	Gibsons	Oct. 24	Marsdens Northern Territory
Nov 11	Mt Norman ½ day			
Nov 24 25	Camp Out Sovereign Hills	J. Harslett	Nov 28	T. Archer Russia
Dec 9	Break Up at	C. & M. Walters		
Jan 20	½ day to be decided			
Feb 24	Killarney	R. Stevens	Feb 27	G. & N. Davies
Mar 29	Camp Out	C. Hockings	Mar 27	E. Walker Western Australia
Apr 21	Blue Gorge	G. Leahy	Apr 24	D. Sullivan Nepal
May 19	Dr Roberts Waterford	R. McCosker	May 22	D. Hockings
June 23	Fossicking	T. Archer	June 26	First Aid
July 21	Mt Spirabo	K. Carnell	July 24	Remember Last Year
Aug 25	Wildflowers to West		Aug 28	P. Hazlegrove

I recently threw a large shaddock (a member of the citrus family) into the compost heap, after it had been cut in half. The currawongs have now eaten all the pulp and left the skin as clean as a whistle. Now that we have no grapes I can encourage them with a clear conscience.

Now the currawongs are attacking her orange tree and I'm laughing.
 Editor
 Editor's Husband

No. 220

PROGRAMME 1990/91

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