

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 23 December 1971/ January 1972 P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe.

Officers and Committee 1971 - 1972.

President	Mr. W. Cathcart	Ph.812
Vice Presidents	Mrs.R. Harslett and Mr. T. Chapman	
Secretary	Mr. E. Walker	Ph.888
Treasurer	Miss J. Westcott	
Editors	Mr. D. Pfrunder	Ph. Pozieres 219
	and Mrs. D. Orr	
Librarian	Mrs. R. Tremeer	
Publicity Officer	Mr. F. Wilkinson	
Bushwalking Representative	Mr. R. McCosker	
Geology	Mr. P. Higgins	
Flora	Mr. B. Dodd	
Fauna	Mrs. Z. Newman	
Youth	Mr. G. Marsden	
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Mrs. B. Krautz and Mrs. W. Cathcart.	

Activities.

Meetings	4th Wednesday of each month
	C.W.A. Rooms 8 p.m.
Field Outings	Sunday preceeding 4th Wednesday.

Annual Subscription.

Single \$1.50	Family £2.00
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Programme.Fielding Outings:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Girraween Park		
Christmas Barbeque	19th December	McCosker Family.
Toooloom Scrub	23rd January	Mr. E. Walker.
Boonoo Boonoo River Crossing	20th February	Mrs. J. Harslett.
Swanfels	19th March	Mr. E. McCulloch.

Meetings:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
To be arranged	26th January	To be arranged.
Bird Evening	23rd February	Mrs. I. Chapman
		with M. Fletcher and W. Goble.
Antarctica	22nd March	Mr. B. Lacy.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Minutes of General Meeting - 24th November, 1971.

The meeting opened at 8.10 p.m. with Vice President T. Chapman in the Chair. There was an attendance of 38 with 9 apologies received.

Minutes of October Meeting: Moved Mrs. F. Tremeer, seconded Mrs. S. Krautz that the minutes of the October meeting be confirmed. Carried.

Inward Correspondence: (i) Letter from D.P.I. Brisbane, regretting unavailability of Mr. Hockings for our January meeting.

(ii) Letter from Adult Education discontinuing sponsorship of Club activities for months of December and January.

(iii) Letter from Festival Committee asking for representative at a meeting on 18th November.

(iv) A request from the Jaycee-Apex Sub-Committee to supply and erect tourist markers to the recently completed Mt. Norman Road.

(v) Newsletters from various Nats. Clubs.

Outward Correspondence: (i) Letter to Toowoomba Adult Education advising of November's outing and meeting and requesting a supply of films for that meeting.

(ii) Letter to D.P.I. Brisbane, requesting the services of Mr. Hockings as a lecturer for our January Meeting.

The Correspondence received and endorsed on the motion of Mr. D. Orr seconded by Mr. F. Wilkinson. Carried.

Business from Minutes: The acting President reported that the Apple and Grape Harvest Festival Committee has requested the March Meeting of the Nats. Club to be held to co-incide with the second week of festivities.

Our Club will have to finance the hire of the hall for the next two meetings because of the lack of support by the Adult Education. Advertising of the Meetings and outings will be made by means of the Newsletter.

Mr. P. Ingram is to be contacted regarding the supply of suitable markers for the Mt. Norman Road project. The Jaycees-Apex sub-committee is to be written congratulating them on their work.

Treasurer's Report: Balance in Hand \$46.98. Moved Miss J. Westcott seconded Mrs. J. Harslett that the Treasurer's Report be received and accounts passed for payment. Carried.

Outing Reports: 40 persons attended the outing to Boonoo Boonoo Falls which was led by Mr. P. Ingram.

The outing for December will be the Annual Christmas Barbeque organised by the McCosker Family.

General Business: Mr. D. Pfrunder requested more material for the Newsletter and also that it be made available by the second Wednesday of the month.

The Meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

Two films "In your Hand" and "Beyond the Ice Cap" were the programme for the evening.

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Did you Know: A new National Park of 61,300 acres on the northern end of Fraser Island was approved by the Executive Council on 2nd December 1971.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Report of Field Outing to Boonoo Boonoo Falls:

On Sunday, 21st November, 41 people set out in perfect weather conditions to Boonoo Boonoo Falls.

The route taken from Stanthorpe was via Amosfield and then South along the Mt. Lindsay Highway to the Boonoo Boonoo Falls turn-off and then along a bush road with some rough creek crossings for about 9 miles to the picnic area near the top of the falls, arriving at approximately 11 a.m.

The party had a walk up the river section above the falls through some very unusual rock formations. The strata of the Granite here raised considerable interest. Later in the day in the gorge below the falls several places where the rock had been flaking off from pressure were noticed.

With lunch over the energetic walkers set off down the steep track leading to the bottom of the falls. The falls are located on the Boonoo Boonoo River in New South Wales, falling in cascades over the granite cliff for 695ft. The Boonoo Boonoo Falls must rate with some of the highest in Eastern Australia. Although the visit was made during a dry spell, a reasonable amount of water was coming over the falls to satisfy the numerous camera enthusiasts. The large and pleasant rock-pools below the falls were most welcome for cooling of feet and swimming by quite a few members.

The steep climb back to the top was hot work with the sun beating down on us against the cliff-face.

On the way home (on the Falls road) the party walked a short distance along a creek to an area where there had been mining operations (possibly tin) many years ago.

The outing was most interesting and enjoyable.

PHILIP INGRAM.

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Discovery of World's Highest Falls:

Angel Falls, a cataract 20 times higher than America's Niagara, was discovered in 1935 in the un-explored mountains of Venezuela.

The story of its discovery is fascinating in itself.

A World War 1 air pilot named Jimmy Angel was the first man from the outside world to view this natural wonder. Like so many other trail blazers he was unrewarded except for the satisfaction of giving his name to the falls.

Angel had been hired by a prospector to fly over the uncharted mountain wilderness of Venezuela in search of gold. After one trip the prospector died, but Angel returned in an attempt to locate a river where nuggets of gold had previously been found. Flying between the walls of a deep canyon, Angel one day came upon "an unbelievable sight - a vertical river plummeting from the clouds above him, its roar drowning the sound of his motor".

Angel descended perilously close to the jungle floor and guessed that the width of the fall was about 500 ft. He then climbed and, reading his altimeter, calculated the cataract's height at somewhere between a half & one mile.

In 1949 a National Geographic Society expedition found that the great falls were 3,212 feet high.

Angel had made a layman's guess that "there was nothing like this in the world", and he was right. This area is so inaccessible that very few people have seen Angel Falls from its base.

Per kind permission, "Stanthorpe Border Post".

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Bird Observations at Mt. Banca and Little Broadwater:

The bird list from our outing on Sunday, 24th October, might with accuracy be entitled Birds of the Garden, as the first twenty-one listed were all noted from the garden at Westcott's Nursery. These birds certainly know a good thing when they see it. Not only masses of colourful blooms flowing with nectar and attracting their quota of tasty insects, to please the honey-eaters, but there are seeds for the finches and bird tables spread with an interesting supply of goodies to cater for a wide variety of avian tastes. Those birds who enjoy a morsel of steak are not forgotten either and they come regularly for their titbits.

Last, but not least, a most attractive bird bath, designed to please not only the birds, but to delight the human garden-lover too. Fashioned from carefully chosen local granite with appropriate hollows to hold water and with mosses and small trailing plants thriving in the damp crevices it was the centre of an admiring and probably envious circle.

Following is the bird list:

Silver eye	Little Wattle bird
White-eared Honeyeater	Pee-wee
Magpie	Kookaburra
Currawong	Blue Wren
Greybacked Butcherbird	Grey Thrush
White throated Tree-creeper	Eastern Spinebill
Spotted Pardalote	Crow
White throated Warbler	Red Wattle Bird
Dollar bird	Noisy Miner
Double-bar finch	Striped Honeyeater
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Jacky Winter
Rufous Whistler	Wedgetail Eagle
Eastern Rosella	Sacred Kingfisher
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Little Thornbill
White-naped Honeyeater	Leaden Flycatcher.

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To bring the Queensland bird list up to date, five more species have now been recorded from this state giving us a total of 550 with New South Wales close behind with 530.

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Editors Note: Due to the approaching holiday period this magazine will be a combined December 1971/January 1972 edition.

Our Christmas Barbeque will be held at The Junction again this year on Sunday, 19th December.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no meeting for December.

Our January Outing to Tooloom Scrub on Sunday, 23rd January is outlined in this issue and the January monthly meeting will be held as usual in the C.W.A. Rooms on 26th January, 1972.

Due to a change in plans our after-meeting programme for that night has to be re-arranged, but an interesting evening is assured.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.The Magnificent Spider:

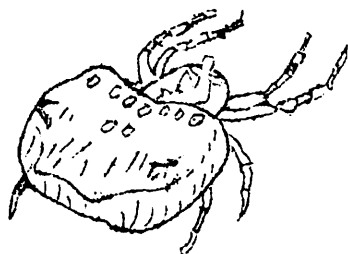
During our last outing at Little Broadwater, a cluster of six elongated spindle shaped egg sacs were found, pale brown in colour and about four inches in overall length. Hanging from the middle of a cluster of dead eucalyptus leaves they were quite inconspicuous. The descriptive name "cow's teats" is sometimes applied by children to these egg-sacs which belong to the Magnificent Spider (*Decrostichus furcatus*) who has been described as the "Queen of Spinners".

A great deal of interesting information about these spiders may be gleaned from the book "Australian Spiders" by Keith C. McKeon. For instance each sac is likely to contain up to 600 eggs. Multiply this by the six egg sacs and you have over three thousand eggs. In spite of this enormous number of possible babies these spiders are far from common and it has been estimated that the balance of nature is usually maintained by the survival of only two babies.

A very full description of the Magnificent Spider is also given and I quote "In appearance she is a beauty, fully justifying her name; her body is about the size of a large Barcelona Nut; it is cream coloured above with a bluish white reminiscent of skim-milk. Along the front edge of the abdomen is an intricate mosaic of fine lines and small salmon pink dots. The whole of the upper surface is marked with fine wavy brown lines. Two prominent tubercles upon the back are of a delicate primrose yellow. The cephalothorax the head and thorax welded into one piece as in all spiders - is surmounted by a kind of imperial crown, alabaster below and tipped above with a rich wine colour. Few of our spiders possess such beauty and delicacy of colour.

These spiders are also described as Spider Anglers. They spin no web but catch their prey on a slender filament about 1½ inches long with a blob of a very viscid matter on the end. This filament is held out on one of the front legs, bearing a quaint resemblance to a fisherman's rod and line. They have been observed to catch moths by rapidly whirling this apparatus, having first, it is assumed, attracted the moth by some means, perhaps by scent or colour. This description concludes with the observation that this departure from usual spider methods of trapping prey with webs or by sheer speed and cunning, must surely be one of the most remarkable developments in nature.

Z. NEWMAN.



THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Arrangements for Christmas Barbeque:

On Sunday 19th December, we will hold our annual Christmas Barbeque. Location this year is again The Junction.

Those desiring to partake of some walking or enjoy some swimming before the big "cook-up" may make their way out at any time to suit themselves during the afternoon.

The Junction is located before the main camping area at Girraween Park on the Wyberba-Girraween Park Road, so signs will be erected to guide those not familiar with the location.

Mr. & Mrs. Bill McCosker and family have generously arranged Barbeque facilities for us.

All Nats. and their friends are welcome to attend and the Barbeque will get under way about 6 p.m.; so bring your favourite Barbeque steaks, sausages or whatever other delicacy you prefer and join us in the big annual "Cook-up".

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Forthcoming January Outing to Tooloom Scrub:

On Sunday, January 23rd, our club secretary Mr. Errol Walker will lead what promises to be a pleasant days outing to the Tooloom Scrub area. Cars will depart from the Stanthorpe Park at 9 a.m. and a pleasant drive is envisaged via the Mt. Lindsay Highway. We will visit the very interesting Tooloom Scrub, enjoy the mountain scenery and waterfalls. There will be delightful picnic areas for lunch.

It is anticipated to arrive back home around 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Bring your lunch, cameras, binoculars etc. and with the prospect of a swim to cool-off at this time of year, to include your togs may be an advantage.

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Mt. Norman Crossing Project:

Two service clubs, Jaycees and Apex, combined their resources and the efforts of their members over 4 weekends to construct a crossing at Paling Yard Creek to provide better access to the Mt. Norman area.

Mr. Noel Newman as chairman of the project had his fellow men working hard to be able to finish the crossing in 4 weekends. Work on the crossing was carried out under the supervision of the Stanthorpe Shire Council who also co-operated with the clubs in forming and grading the road to the crossing, and in the supply of materials.

The crossing is 50ft. long and 8 ft. wide with three 18 inch concrete pipes to take the flow of water. The cost of the project to each club, \$115.83/

The following are deserving of mention and thanks for providing material and services for the project at little cost:-

L.E. Eldridge - Sand and Gravel, and use of his truck for its delivery.

Rocla Pipe Company, Brisbane - for the 18inch pipes supplied.

Stanthorpe Shire Council - supply of materials.

Zanatta & Co. - use of tractor and trailer; Pidgeon & Co. - Boxing timber.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Mt. Norman Crossing Project Cont.:

Thanks must also go to Mr. Jack Armstrong for blasting at the site, and his advice and equipment; and also to Mr. George Hendry and Mr. George Hendry Jnr., for their services and advice and Mr. Bill Reilly, the Shire Engineer. Thanks also to all those who helped on the project.

Formerly, the main route of access to Mt. Norman was via Wallangarra. Local people and visiting tourists can now enjoy a drive either along the Eukey Road past Storm King Dam to the 8-mile turnoff from where it is 3 miles to the Paling Yard Creek Crossing and 6½ miles to Mt. Norman; or use an alternate route through Girraween National Park.

Mt. Norman with an altitude of 4156 ft. is the highest point in the Granite Belt. The summit is a massive rock jutting from many acres of great rocky shoulders. Points of interest at Mt. Norman are the Eye of the Needle, large displaced rocks, a wealth of bird-life, wildflowers and a superb view from the summit.

At the time of completion of the Crossing the wild-flowers were at their best.

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ARE YOU A CONSERVER OF NATURE?

It holds an air of beauty - all its own, as it stands softly swaying in the breeze. Vivid orange-crimson contrasting against the grey-green of the surroundings and cobalt sky, but lost for ever at the tug of the hand and flick of the finger - the Christmas Bell - a beautiful wonder.

Australia is a land of many wonders. A country unique in its features, background and history. Unique wonders in its natural beauty, flora, fauna, geology and geography. A great deal has been written and spoken about our wonderland, and equally as much has been said about the amount we are losing or destroying. It is this loss many people use for their soapbox and band wagon.

You are not a naturalist, we are told, unless you make an effort to conserve nature. You are not a bushwalker if you do not walk. You are not a person if you are not an individualist, and so we can go on.

The average naturalist and bushwalker is not a conserver of nature. A rash statement, but true. How many times have you picked a bloom of the bush, in so doing disturbing its root system, bruising its branches, depriving the plant of its ability to reproduce and multiply?

How many logs of wood have you built your fire from - destroying the home of insects, the greeding ground of fungi, taking away nature's natural barrier to soil wash?

How many ferns, branches, trees and grasses have you broken down in an effort to conquer the jungle and scrub; or to obtain a better photograph? How many birds, insects, animals, fish etc. have you stuffed, dried, pickled and pinned?

Can you count the number of times you have cursed when you kicked your toe against a rock or stump, destroying the clean clear beauty of the air?

"The man is mad - tell him to shut up," you say, - "We will not be able to do a thing if he keeps up".

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.ARE YOU A CONSERVER OF NATURE? Cont.

The average bushwalker and naturalist may not be a preserver of nature, but he has helped in the strengthening of some species. It has been found that many plants have grown in many places, thanks to the help of man. You pick a flower or a pod of seeds, as you continue your hike, unbeknown to you, seeds are falling from the pods - later these will be plants, so this plant now covers a wider area, and far quicker than by natural means. In Central Australia, many plants growing around water holes have grown there with the help of Aborigines. The tribe collected seeds and branches for food. Some were spilt while others were pushed into the ground to keep. As a result these have since grown, boosting the species, over a wider area and in larger numbers.

The catching and killing of birds, insects etc., I feel should be studied closely. Once dead these have lost the chance to build up. Certainly, some may be pests, but the sparrow is rarely found in Central Queensland and would be rare indeed further West. Nothing is a pest if the whole of the country is taken into account. Only when something affects the biological life of any species should we make some attempt to ease the situation so both can live in harmony, but never totally destroy one type.

We all know nothing drastic can be done about the human voice destroying the cleanness of the air. One can only count ten more often, or pay more attention to his bruised toe instead of vividly describing the rock!

Use of a large log for a fire when a couple of small sticks will do the job, is only fools' play. A small fire with concentrated heat is far better for cooking or billy boiling than a bon-fire to which no one can get closer than six feet.

Next time you go hiking ask yourself:

Am I helping this plant if I take a piece or its flower?

Will I destroy this species of animal if I take this one?

Say how pretty the rock is instead of telling the world otherwise.

Don't use nature as your "band-wagon".

There is a place and time for everything.....

ROSS ALLAN DAVID.

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Did you know: There is a legend that the Cross on which Jesus was crucified was made of wood from the aspen. As a result, the leaves of this tree will never cease to shiver. We have read that Jesus stumbled under the weight of His Cross, and that a strong man named Simon of Cyrene came forward to carry it. Wood from the aspen is fairly light, and it is unlikely Jesus would have stumbled unless His burden was very heavy. A tree common to Judea at the time was the oak, and it is likely that the Cross was made from this heavy wood.

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Another National Park of 2,288 acres of tropical grassy woodland, 15 miles south-east of Cairns was declared by the Executive Council on 2.12.71. This area supports a diversity of bird fauna, with high concentrations of breeding populations.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.THE QUEENSLAND JOURNAL OF MICK PEPYS (DWYER).A Country Gentleman of New South Wales.

A-foot betimes this day, being the long waited first day of my yearly vacation. My wife, poor wretch, has laboured mightily toward this hour, packing all manner of goods which she thinks might be wise to take into this new wild land of Queens Land. And I, a dutiful spouse as all know, have spared time from my labours to help her in divers ways and have with mine own hands packed my fishing lines and cigarettes and razor. And so with deft driving of our motor carriage we head to the Northward, not without misgiving but bravely withal.

Lord how silly are some motorists who plague our roads, making threat upon the lives of honest folk who drive with faultless skill. And if one repoach them they do but bawl in loud and profane manner most unseemly to the ears of gentlefolk.

Near to the frontier a guardman deems me suspect of carrying with bad intent a load of the ticks which are a plague upon cattle, and looks with suspicious eye into the trunk of our motor carriage but finding none. Lord what next that a Justice of Her Majesty's Peace and citizen of faultless character such as I should be deemed a smuggler of these evil small beasts, and to what purpose I know not.

Arrive at Stanthorpe Town o'er the southern frontier of Queens Land near 5pm., and here we have friends we must visit, but not knowing where in the town is their dwelling, I cunningly visit an ale house, explaining to my wife that such is the best place for a traveller to ask the way. Ordering from the bar waiter a beaker of ale, and while sipping this - a fine ale which did give my palate much pleasure, asked if any should know the whereabouts of Master Wilk his swelling place, at which a large gentleman who had imbibed much ale did loudly proclaim his knowledge and gave me directions many times. Whiles one behind me plucked my coat, and upon my turning said that he had mistaken me for another, so turned back to my large gentleman and had once more the way to Wilk his house in voice loud to make my head ache and must needs have another beaker of ale to cure it. And now the one behind me plucks my coat again but cunningly forbear to turn to him, for I had noticed the first time that he had a raffle book and knew that to speak to him again would cost me pence. And so with the large gentleman telling me twice more the way did return to the motor carriage where my wife awaited.

Find without trouble the place we need, and are made welcome by my good friend Wilk and his good wife Mistress Ailsa and their pretty daughter. Did stay up late after dinner in friendly talk, though Wilk and I could say but little since our wives must needs tell each other how they and all their children had fared o'er the years since they last met. And so at last to bed, some what bemused by wives talk but in good content that only one day of my vacation has gone.

Sunday: Late to rise being fatigued from travelling and late abed, last night, and having broken our fast did all set forth in Wilk's motor carriage to a park which is out from the town. Here be great rocks like mountains which some climb for sport, but such a task did make me sweat to think on't, though doubtless in my youthful folly I once might have climbed, as people do for no reward other than the doing.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.THE QUEENSLAND JOURNAL OF MICK PEPYS (DWYER) Cont.

The pretty daughter of the Wilks named Clare did take her guitar from the carriage and play and sing most sweetly for our pleasure, and soothing to the ear in these wild surroundings.

After a goodly lunch of meats cooked over a fire in the open we set forth to the place of a friend of Wilks - a Master Verri, who hath great vineyards and groves of fruit trees. Master Verri and his sons and hirelings were plucking and packing for market more grapes than ever were seen before, and he to insist that we take baskets and pick of his grapes to our full desire to take away with us, and Lord never have I eaten such sweet grapes or so many. Then heard much discourse on the making of wine, and this excellent good man did bring forth a bottle of his own making and that eighteen years old. 'Twas a wine like to claret with slightly the fuller taste of Burgundy and right good wine. And at the end of its flavour a small roughness that the fanciful might say was of the granite hills whereon 'twas grown. And so back to the home of our host and again sit late in talk and jest, and told some of my funny tales whereat much laughter.

Monday: We all set forth to look for gems which are said to abound in this region, though who 'twas said it I know not, and must have looked in other places than where we looked, else found them all ere we were there. All we had for our hours of diligent searching were pieces of quartz and other nameless and worthless things.

And afternoon the others set forth again undaunted to search in other places, returning with nought for their pains. Having had my full of searching unrewarded I stayed to have the motor carriage charged with fuel against the next days travel, and looked around at the shops of Stanthorpe Town, and the ale houses of which there are many.

Two different ales may be had here, one marked with 4 X's and the other named Bulimba, which methinks is a word from the tongue of the wild black people who once roamed this land. Both ales are pleasing and although I tasted them both I could not say which is best. (to be continued).

Our thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Frank Wilkinson for making this section of the journal of the late Mick Dwyer, which pertains to this area, available to us. Some members may remember him from earlier outings. Please refer back to "Man of many Interests" in our September edition.

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Our President and Committee join in extending to all our readers and friends:



Guinea Flower

* SEASONS GREETINGS. *



Christmas Bells

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