



THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST



**Monthly Newsletter of the
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club**

Registered Publication No. QBH 1824
Category B
If not claimed please return to
P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe, Q. 4380

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

OFFICERS OF CLUB FOR 1991-92

President	Kris Carnell	835268
Vice-Presidents	Rob McCosker	835371
	Jean Harslett B.E.M.	833185
Secretary	Desley McDonagh	813074
Treasurer	Julia Brown	
Newsletter Editor	Margaret Carnell	835268
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Val White & Dore McCosker	
Publicity Officer	Frank & Patience James	811853
Librarian	Esme Colley	812927
Management Committee	President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer.	

Meetings: 4th Wednesday of each Month at Q.C.W.A. Rooms at 8 p.m.

Outings: The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each Month.

Annual Subscriptions: Single \$8.00 Family \$15.00 per annum July to June

Rent: Donation per family per meeting.

SCALE OF DIFFICULTY FOR WALKS ON NATS OUTINGS

1. Flat walking road or track.
2. Road or track gentle hills.
3. Track some hilly sections
4. Track some steep sections
5. Cross country easy open forest, gentle slopes.
6. Track steep section common, with steps.
7. Cross country some hills, some thick undergrowth.
8. Cross country steep section with scrambles over rocks etc. Some thick undergrowth.
9. Cross country steep, hilly, rough, thick undergrowth.
- 10 Mountain climbing, hard going, higher level of fitness or plenty of time required.

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 & plants.
4. To assist where possible in scientific research.
5. To publish a monthly newsletter and post it to members.

ADDRESS CHECK

Could all members please check that their address is correct, and if not notify the secretary immediately.

OUTING TO CASTLE ROCK FEBRUARY 20, 1992

Owing to the fact that the Severn River was too high and flowing too strongly to make a comfortable crossing for the vehicles, the venue for the February outing was changed from Murphy's Gully to Girraween National Park. It was decided that Castle Rock would be the objective for the morning as the weather looked like closing in later in the day. Twenty-one persons started on the climb to the summit, while four elected to explore the surrounds of the picnic area and have a swim. Two of those who started the climb elected to call it a day at a high elevation, but not quite to the top.

A feature of the walk was the number of plants seen in bloom. It seemed that following the long dry spell, the rain had urged excellent re-growth, and unusual blooming patterns. Several ground orchids were seen but the berries were most prevalent - the seed pods on the wild cherry and leucopogon in vibrant red, dianella in brilliant blue and a creeper seed pod in yellow-orange tonings, all managed to brighten the dull weather conditions.

When the top of Castle Rock was reached, the views were enjoyed of The Sphinx, Turtle Rock, The Pyramids, Mt Norman, Bald Rock and many others were identified. Many flying "objects" were also vying for attention, butterflies, March flies of various sizes and hues and, of course, the flying ants.

Two leptospermums were in full bloom at the top of the Rock, one with the oriental characteristics of having grown in very harsh conditions - Leptospermum phylloides which has masses of stamens and was originally thought to be a Kunzea. Both these trees were swarming with large flying ants, which caused great interest. Some were examined very thoroughly and minutely. We read that "The race of ants is one of the most ancient orders on earth. They were running great cities of millions long before man appeared, and they have changed little since then. The winged ants live a life of relevant leisure in the colony until the time comes for them to leave the colony on the marriage flight, the one and only flight of their life. It is believed that these 'princesses' of which there are many thousands - very few are 'princes' - leave the colony to begin other colonies, a few become the egg-laying queen of another colony, while others become nurses, workers and soldiers of the new colony. Of course, many die during the flight."

Following a late lunch at the picnic area, members went walking, exploring or swimming as the mood took them. All enjoyed a leisurely afternoon at the park before returning home. It was quite a busy time there as the Tenterfield Scouts and Brownies had chosen it for their "Thinking Day", "Founders Day" outing, Crisps had two buses there with the members of the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra and scads of people were having picnic lunches.

Esme Colley

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON NESTING BIRDS BY ROB MCCOSKER

We have had the pleasure of watching the progress of a pair of Willy Wagtails in their nesting pursuits from late last year until mid January this year. At first they chose a low branch of a large apple tree next to the shed to commence building a nest. This was quite close to a garden tap which we had to use frequently during the dry spell and consequently we were often being chastised noisily by the studious nest builders. Unfortunately, just as we started to get to know each other, a violent storm struck and the unfinished nest was blown down. Undeterred, the "Black and White Minstrels" chose another site and began again, almost as if nothing had happened.

Observations on Nesting Birds Contd.

This time the site was high in a gum tree and it appeared to me that the nesting pair were being harassed by a Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike. After about a week, however, we discovered that the Cuckoo Shrike was also nesting in the same tree, on a branch even higher up. Of course every time the Shrikes changed over egg sitting duties the Willies protested noisily about the 'intruder', until it was settled on its own nest.

We left for a week's holiday at this time, travelling to the Yuragir National Park and a delightful spot on the shore of Lake Arragan. We were camped beneath some large spreading paper bark trees, providing shelter from wind and sun for us and to our surprise, for a pair of Willy Wagtails. They were at about the same stage of nest building as the pair at home and just as noisy when intruders flew past. Surprisingly the intruders once again were Black-faced Cuckoo Shrikes. Sure enough, on a branch higher up the tree the Cuckoo Shrikes had a nest as well. It seems an amazing coincidence. There was also a pair of Noisy Friar birds nesting in the same tree on a branch hanging well out over the water. When the Park Ranger called, he pointed out two nesting sites of the Osprey in adjacent trees. It was fascinating to watch these large eagles saunter along above the lake, dive to the surface and with a splash, pick up a fish, then fly off.

After returning home we were keen to see how our feathered friends were getting on. Alas, it seems that disaster had struck again, as there were no nests to be seen in the trees - both were lying on the ground with the body of a baby Cuckoo Shrike, being hungrily consumed by ants. We will never know what happened but we wonder if once again storms could have been the cause since almost 100mm of rain was recorded while we were away for the week.

To end on a happier note, we were excited to find the Eastern Spinebills raising a pair of chicks in a small ash tree, and Trish was delighted to discover that what she thought was a bit of dry grass hanging in a grevillia bush, turned out to be the entrance of a Double Bar Finch's nest. It's the first time we have seen them in the garden, and we hope the Noisy Miners and Butcher birds don't chase them away.

I must apologize for the pages of this magazine being in more than one type of print. My typewriter is not in full working order, so I've had to make other arrangements for typing.

Editor.

Genius is one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration.

Thomas Alva Edison

What we call "Progress" is the exchange of one nuisance for another nuisance.

Henry Havelock Ellis

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MEETING OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC. HELD IN THE C.W.A. ROOMS, STANTHORPE ON WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26TH, 1992 AT 8.00PM.

The Vice President Jean Harslett opened the meeting in the absence of President Kris Carnell who tendered an apology, as did Margaret. Jean advised that Kris and Margaret are now grandparents, and the club offers congratulations to them on the birth of a new grand daughter. She welcomed all present and in particular, visitors Alyson McCall and Andrew Cameron (nephew of Colin and Janet Hockings), and congratulated (in his absence) Frank James who has started a course at the University of the Gold Coast.

Present and Apologies - as per attendance book.

Minutes :- The minutes of the November meeting were accepted as a correct record on the motion moved by Millie Marsden, seconded by Val White and carried.

Correspondence :- Inward

1. Qld Nats - The Queensland Naturalist
2. Q.N.C - Newsletter
3. Richmond Valley Naturalists - Newsletter
4. Canberra Office of Sport and Recreation - Canberra 2 day walk.- info on walk to be held 7-8 March.
5. CUI Insurance - Account for \$77.09 for Incorporation Insurance
6. John Coulter - Environmental Information - Australian Democrats.
7. Australia Post - Changes to the rules for magazine postage.
8. Toowoomba Bushwalkers - Footprint.
9. Australian Conservation Foundation - Conservation News
10. State Library of Queensland - Receipt of Magazines
11. Darling Downs Naturalist.
12. Richmond Valley Naturalists - Newsletter.
13. Toowoomba Bushwalkers - Footprint.
14. Hotel Nikko Sydney - Conference facilities information.
15. Chinchilla Field nats - Urimbirra
16. Richmond Valley Naturalists - Newsletter
17. Australian Conservation Foundation - Annual Appeal.
18. Sue Kenna - Change of Address
19. Toowoomba Bushwalkers - Footprint
20. M. Maurer - Visions of Utopia - Art Project advertisement.
21. Saving Wildlife Zoological Conference - Currumbin Sanctuary 1992-4 - 10 April.
22. International Public Relations - The Green Guide
23. Biolinks
24. Pat Comben - Minister for Environment and Heritage - letter relating to Cunningham's journey through Girraween National Park.

Correspondence - Outward

1. 2 letters each to - 4QS - Round the Ridges and - Radio 963 - Community Billboards - with notes for broadcasting.
 2. C.U.I. Insurance - including \$77.09 insurance for Incorporation.
 3. Letter to Pat Comben (written by Jean Harslett as Acting-secretary) regarding Cunningham's trip through Girraween.
- Rob McCosker moved and Patience James seconded the motion that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted. Carried.

Jean Harslett explained some of the details with regard to the letter from Pat Comben and the Girraween National History Association.

Treasurer's Report.

Balance as at 27/11/91 - 26/2/92 \$688.60c

Receipts

Subs -	\$31.00	
Room Rent Collection -	7.80	
Change postage	0.77	

	\$39.57	\$39.57
		\$728.17

Expenditure

Room Rent	\$10.00
Magazine Dup	6.00
Magazine Postage	30.00
Insurance Incorporation	77.09

Federal Govt Tax	Oct 90c	
	Nov 45c	
	Dec 45c	
	Feb 15c	
	\$1.95c	
	\$125.04	\$ 125.04

		\$ 603.13

Balance as at 26/2/92 \$603.13

Accounts to be passed for payment - Room rent \$10.00; Mag Dup \$6.00; Mag Postage \$30.00; Petty Cash \$15.00.

Julia Brown moved and Herb Colley seconded the adoption of the Treasurer's Report, and the payment of the accounts. Carried.

Outing Report

Esme Colley reported on the recent outing. The venue had to be changed because of the weather - so the members went to Giraween Park instead of to Ballandean. There were 21 people present and they went to Castle Rock. There were a great number of wild flowers in bloom since the breaking of the drought.

Pre - Outing Report - Moogerah Dam Campout 21/21 March was presented by Peter Kerr and is included in the minutes.

May's meeting programme will be presented by Brian and Noela Dodd - National Parks of America.

Jean Harslett had a question to be answered - Has a python fangs? After some discussion and stories it was decided that they have sharp teeth.

There is an exhibition - Living with Insects - Friends and Foes - at the Queensland Museum till 15th March. Jean Harslett recommended that the exhibition is well worth visiting.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 25th March at 8.00pm, and the Programme will presented by Jack and May Bennie, and will be on Lorne Hill near Mt Isa.

Specimens

Rob McCosker had a blackfaced cuckoo-shrike's nest which had fallen from a tree. It was clearly seen how the nest was moulded over two branches.

Programme - Desley McDonagh presented a programme 'Reflections' which included not only reflections in water, but memories of days gone by, which was well received by the members.

MOOGERAH DAM CAMPOUT 21/22 MARCH

Leader: Peter Kerr

The lake is full, waterbirds plentiful, the grass green and lush in the Lake Moogerah Caravan Park (Muller Park Road). Van and tent sites \$7.00 per night.

I'm advised that young waterskiers can party late and loudly some nights, so for any early arrivals, the quietest place is lakeside, next to the Park entrance. Advise the caretaker that you're with the Nats.

The plan for Saturday afternoon is to leave camp for Moogerah Dam wall at 1.00 pm, for a stroll down the gorge to Flag Rock, with some detective observation called for en route. Then back to and across the dam wall to the Gorge Lookout on Mt Edwards (grade 6), and for those feeling energetic, the summit of Mt Edwards offers grandstand views over Aratula.

Sunday's the big day --- 8.00 am start for Mt Greville in as few cars as possible (because of limited parking). Ascend the very interesting northern gorge, and return via the south-east ridge.. Grade 9 because it's a long day with steep, rough sections, probably under muggy conditions. Smoko and lunch, some water to be carried. -- TICK & MOSSIE REPELLENT ---

Arrival and departure are up to the individual; those wishing to stay longer, or spend a lazy weekend, are welcome to do so.

There are no caravans for hire at Moogerah Caravan Park, but there is alternative accommodation at:

YARRAMALONG 075-637639. Fully self-contained cabins (DB and bunks) @ \$35.00 per couple plus \$10.00 per person per night. Booking and deposit in advance required.

GORGE ROAD CAMPGROUND 07-3996672. There's a hut @ \$25.00 per weekend, with basic communal facilities, shelter shed and BBQs.

Enquiries and confirmation of attendance, phone Peter on 611818.

or Kris on 835268

For those who think the Sunday programme will be too strenuous, an alternative programme will be organized. The details will be decided at the Camp-out depending on numbers and personal choice. Suggestions include Spicers Gap (if road conditions are O.K.), The Mt Alford school and Pioneer Graves

Kris Carnell

COMING EVENTS

March meeting
April Outing

Mr & Mrs Benny
C. Hocking Poverty Point

We need a programme for the April meeting as Gordon and Noor Davis are overseas. Please ring Kris on 835268 if you have any suggestions.

No child is born a criminal; no child is born an angel; he's just born.

Sir Sydney Smith

Happiness is unrepentant pleasure. - Socrates

