

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 24

February 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. Tremeeer	
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
---------------	---------------

Programme.Field Outings:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Undecided owing to weather	20th February	Mrs. J. Harslett
Swanfels	19th March	Mr. E. McCulloch
Undercliffe Falls - Rivertree	23rd April	Mr. F. Wilkinson
Tenterfield Area	April Extra	Mr. P. Ingram
Mystery Camp-out	20th-21st May	Mr. W. Cathcart

Meetings:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Bird Evening	23rd February	Mrs. I. Chapman with M. Fletcher and W. Goeble.
Antarctica	8th March	Mr. B. Lacy
Orchids	26th April	Mr. P. Grant
Basic Geology	24th May	Dr. Branch.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Minutes of General Meeting held 26th January, 1972.

The meeting opened at 8.12 p.m. with Vice President Mrs.R.Harslett in the Chair. Forty members attended the meeting with five apologies received.
Minutes of November Meeting: Moved Mrs.M.Jones, seconded Mrs.J.Paskins that the minutes of the November meeting be confirmed. Carried.

Inward Correspondence: (i) Newsletters from other Nats. Clubs.
 (ii) Press releases from D.P.I. Brisbane.
 (iii) Letter from Mrs. Suzy Fauntleroy complimenting the Nats Club on its publication - "The Granite Belt Naturalist".
 (iv) Letter from the Toowoomba Field Nats. Club advising us further of the moves being made to reserve the Jolly's Falls area as another National Park.

Outward Correspondence: Nil.

Moved Mrs. McDonald, seconded Mr. D. Pfrunder that the correspondence be received. Carried.

Business from Minutes: It was decided that in reply to the request from the Jaycess - Apex Clubs for us to supply and erect signs to and along the Mt. Norman road that we shall buy suitable material for the signs. Mr. Phillip Ingram has generously offered to do the necessary sign-writing free of charge.

Treasurer's Report: Balance in Hand - \$51.20. Moved Miss J. Westcott seconded Mr. T. Chapman that the Treasurer's report be received and accounts passed for payment. Carried.

General Business: It was resolved that our March meeting would be held on Wed. 8th March to co-incide with the Festival week. Mrs.R. Marsden expressed the confidence that the members have in the Executive and vice versa and moved the vote of acceptance of the change. This was seconded by Mrs. Wiseman.
 Mr.T.Chapman and Mrs. R. Harslett outlined the programme for the forthcoming festival and reminded the meeting that volunteers would be required to lead the bus tours and the bushwalks being offered by the club. All other Nats. Clubs with which we have an association will be invited through our Newsletter to our week of activities during the Festival. The Lions Club of Stanthorpe has offered its assistance in leading the bus trips.

Outing Reports: Mr.E.Walker reported on the January outing to Tooloom Scrub and falls which attracted 38 members. The outing was spoilt at times by severe rain and thunder storms.

Mrs. R. Harslett described the next outing, the venue of which is in doubt because of poor road conditions in the lower Boonoo Boonoo River area.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

Due to the unavailability of Mr. D. Hockings to lecture to the Club the programme was supplied by Mr. E. Walker. The subject was "Autumn and Winter aspects in New South Wales and Victoria" illustrated by a very interesting array of Errol's colour slides.

--oOo--

Did you know: it is estimated that 4 million acres of the State's 5.4 million acres of cultivated land are subject to water erosion?

--oOo--

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.STANTHORPE APPLE & GRAPE HARVEST FESTIVAL & CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.
Special programme for the Stanthorpe Naturalists.

Saturday 4th March - Depart 12.30 p.m. Scenic Guided Tour of District.

Sunday 5th March - Depart 10.30 a.m. Guided Tour of Apple Districts.
Depart 2.00 p.m. Guided Tour of District.

We have been asked to organise these tours for the Harvest Festival Committee, we require your assistance, if you can help please contact Mrs. R. Harslett.

Wednesday 8th March - Special Nats. meeting, C.W.A. Rooms. (in place of our regular meeting Wed. 29th March.) Guest Speaker Mr. B. Lacey (B. Sur. Qld. University) Subject - Antarctic 1955 Expedition

Saturday 11th March - 1.30 p.m. Bushwalking and Rock climbing at Girraween National Park.
7.00 p.m. Camp out.

Sunday 12th March - 9.00 a.m. Bushwalking and Rock climbing at Girraween National Park.

The co-operation of all Stanthorpe Naturalists will be much appreciated to assist the committee to make our part of the celebrations a success.

--oOo--

Report of Field Outing to Tooloom Scrub and Falls.

It was a fine day when approx. 40 Nats Club members and invited visitors left the Civic Centre for the outing which was going to show us some extremes of weather.

After travelling about fifty miles the car convoy stopped at Koreelah Creek where we all inspected an arc type concrete bridge which, when it was built in 1931, was the largest of its type to be constructed in Australia. Mr. Peter Higgins explored upstream for a distance where he was joined by several other members and the geology of the area was pointed out by Peter.

Morning tea was taken outside the local P.O. and then we headed up the ranges to the Tooloom Lookout and the adjacent Tooloom Scrub. Extensive views were obtained from the lookout where the whole Granite Belt Plateau was visible.

The more prominent mountains to be seen on the trip were Wilson's Peak, North and South Obelisk, Edinburgh Castle and in the distance could be seen Mt. Lindsay, Mt. Barney and the Lamington Plateau.

We arrived at the Tooloom Falls after travelling through the scrub and some forestry areas where some of us photographed the tall red-barked gums.

Some swimming was done in Tooloom Creek above the falls until storm clouds gathered and down came rain and hail accompanied by some very loud thunder reports. Dinner was taken sitting in the cars and there was not much of the afternoon left to explore. Most of the group broke up as the storms continued, heading home via Woodenbong.

The storms continued all afternoon but with the intermittent sunshine there were some very effective views into the distant valleys. Several cars travelled to Stanthorpe via Killarney and Warwick. This was one of the very few wet outings to be experienced by the club, but the activities were of such

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Report on Outing to Tooloom Scrub and Falls Cont.--

a nature that wet weather did not really hinder the appreciation of the scenery.

Further outings into this area are envisaged as there is still much to do and see in the Woodenbong area.

ERROL WALKER.

--oOo--

THE VENUE FOR THE FEBRUARY OUTING IS STILL UNCERTAIN OWING TO THE WEATHER. HOWEVER ALL MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN THE OUTING ARE REQUESTED TO BE AT THE TOWN PARK AT 9.30am. ON 20TH FEBRUARY PREPARED TO ENJOY THE DAY WHICH IS SURE TO BE A VERY ENJOYABLE ONE.

--oOo--

NOTES ON SOME STANTHORPE DISTRICT PARROTS:

Australia has been called a land of parrots and I wonder how many of us realise how very fortunate we are to have so many different types of these beautiful birds on our great continent.

When one considers that the parrot is not mentioned in the Bible and is also unknown in ancient Egyptian art and that there are no parrots or cockatoos in Europe or Asia, except India, none in Africa north of the Tropic of Cancer and only one in North America, then one can understand, to some degree, just how favoured we are to have nearly sixty species of parrots and cockatoos in this country.

Parrots in Australia are to be found from the dense rain forests of the coastal areas to the arid deserts of Central and Western Australia. Some of the loveliest of all are found in the driest parts of this vast continent and they range in size from about two inches to about two feet in length.

Australian parrots, in the main, nest in hollows of trees, hollow limbs, hollow stumps etc. One nests in rocky crevices or nooks in rocks, usually overlooking the ocean. Two nest on the ground amongst tussocks of grass and three nest in termites mounds. The eggs are invariably white and usually fairly round.

Some Australian parrots are very rare and unfortunately two species could be extinct. These are the night parrot, which has not been seen this century and the other is the gorgeous Paradise Parrot which probably has not been seen for at least forty years. However, even these two species could still exist in some places and all bird lovers would certainly hope so.

In Stanthorpe district we have some parrots which are here all the time and some which can be classed as visitors. Amongst the visitors one would see an odd white cockatoo, the crimson wing parrot and possibly the Quarrian and galah, though the latter would probably be classed as resident in some areas of the district. Amongst the resident parrots we find that the Lorikeets are represented by four species, the Must, Scaly Breasted, Rainbow and Little Lorikeets. In the Rosellas we have three, the Eastern, Crimson, and Pale Headed. Three of the eight species of Rosellas found in Australia is not a bad effort for one district. Also commonly seen are the black Cockatoos, both red glossy and Yellow Tailed, the brilliant King Parrot and the Red Rumped Grass Parrot. The Swift Parrot, though rarer, is usually with us during the blossoming season. The Budgerigar is sometimes seen in small flocks and of

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Notes on Some Stanthorpe District Parrots:Cont.--

the seven species of neophema Parrots to be found in Australia we have one.

The Neophema group of parrots, seven species in all, are a group of small parrots often referred to as beautiful Grass Parrots and they are amongst the rarest and most beautiful of all parrots. The one we have, Neophema Pulchella, is commonly called the Turquoise Parrot and is also, without a doubt, one of the loveliest of all parrots. The Turquoise Parrot, at one stage, was thought to be on the verge of extinction and even today is still classed as rare, being found in only a few places in Australia.

My own knowledge of the Turquoise parrot in the Stanthorpe district goes back to 1950. Prior to that I had never seen them in this district and the only other report I know of was a sighting by Dr. Spencer Roberts in 1923 which was published in the "Emu" the official publication of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union. I returned to Stanthorpe in 1950, after an absence of ten years, and on a bush trip I was absolutely astounded to see some dozen or so Turquoise Grass Parrots which I later discovered were nesting. I also found two nests of well grown young. All Ornithological knowledge on this species at this time pointed to the strong possibility that this bird was on the verge of extinction. How long these birds had been in the district or whether they had only recently arrived from somewhere else I do not know and I would be very glad to hear from anyone who can give me any information.

During the last twenty years the beautiful Turquoise Grass Parrot has extended over the district and can now be found in many areas.

This beautiful parrot makes a delightful aviary (aviary, not cage) bird and breeds quite readily. This means that, with the help of dedicated aviculturalists all over the world, the Turquoise Parrot will never again be on the verge of extinction. Unfortunately however, even though this parrot is fully protected, I would estimate that since it has been known in this district literally thousands of them have been illegally trapped and shipped away.

It will be a sad day indeed if, once again, the Turquoise Parrot becomes unknown in this, probably one of its last strongholds in Australia in a natural state.

BILL BARKER.

--oOo--

A SPIDERWEB:

What infinite beauty the slender threads spun by the one so ugly hold. Yet, this hideous creature, given rise to by God, skilfully weaves the silken threads into one of the most beautiful of natural works of art. Undistinguished in the dark, the web is awoken to its full glory as the rays of light gently caress its silver threads. These delicate strands of saliva though of unlimited splendour are vital in the existence of its creator. Fastened to the sticky substance, unwary prey are consumed hungrily by the trapper. It was the sight of one of these repulsive beings relentlessly trying to climb a fibre that inspired King Bruce to make a final attempt to retain his kingdom. He succeeded. So we see that man, so supreme as he may seem, can learn something of great value from the meek spider.

A.G.

--oOo--

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.BRIEF OUTLINE OF GRANITE BELT GEOLOGY by T.G. BIRTLES.Geological History:

To begin the story of the formation of the rocks of the Granite Belt, we must look back to Australia as it was about 250 million years ago. At this period of time, which is known as the Permo-Carboniferous Period, the coast-line of Australia was far different from the coast-line of today. The continent of Australia was smaller; Tasmania was a wide peninsula connected to the mainland and the East Coast of Australia was three hundred to five hundred miles west of its present position.

What is now the New England Plateau formed a large Mountainous island lying some distance from the coastline which lay somewhere between Cunnamulla and St. George (a second island lay north of Rockhampton). Coral Reefs extended from the vicinity of Tamworth to just south of Toowoomba and on the island several very active volcanoes were erupting lava and volcanic ash.

Most of the land of the Stanthorpe district was probably below sea level and the destructive action of rivers on the nearby island was continually washing hundreds of feet of sediment into the sea.

During this time, well below the surface of the island tremendous underground movements and earthquakes were occurring and large amounts of molten rock (magma) were pushed or intruded into the overlying rock.

The magma in a few places broke through the surface rocks of the island in its molten state to form the volcanoes already mentioned. Most of the magma cooled slowly and solidified below the surface as granite in huge masses called bathyliths. As the granite cooled, the bathyliths contracted in size. The tremendous internal pressure that accompanied the shrinking, split the rock into roughly parallel cracks (or master-joints) running mainly from north-west to south-east with smaller cracks intersecting these master-joints at right angles. During the process of the granite intrusion, the mountains of the island were raised further to form rugged snow-capped peaks.

For the next 50 million years thousands of feet of sediment were deposited in the sea as the mountains of the island were eroded away. By this time the sea had completely silted up.

About 10 million years ago, more volcanic eruptions occurred and small volcanoes (including the Glasshouse Mountains) were formed at intervals along the coast. At the same time the highlands along the east coast of Australia, including the New England Plateau, were built by a general upward movement of the underlying granite.

Since this period of uplift and continuing to the present day, the main type of geological activity has been the slow but constant erosion of the highlands formed. For example, the highest part of the highlands are the Snowy Mountains which were originally elevated to heights of about 10,000 ft.

Today the loftiest peak is Mt. Kosciuszko which has been reduced to a height of 7,316 ft. Structurally, the Granite Belt is an extension of the New England plateau and for most of this plateau the overlying sediments have been weathered away to expose the granite rock of which several hundred, and perhaps thousands, of feet also have been eroded.

The Granite:

The granite rocks of the district surrounding Stanthorpe show considerable variety in their appearance, especially with regard to the size of the mineral crystals contained in the rock. When the granite mass was first formed as a molten rock intrusion, some parts cooled more quickly than other areas. Where the molten rock solidified slowly - usually where the pressure

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Brief Outline of Granite Belt Geology Cont.

was greatest - the resultant granite has large crystals and is known as Stanthorpe Granite.

In conditions where there was some relief from pressure, the molten rock was able to cool and solidify rapidly and is named sandy granite because of its very small crystals.

Sandy granite is found most commonly in the north-eastern part of the Granite Belt and here, as many of the orchardists can tell us, soils are often fine-grained.

The fine-grained sandy granite, owing to the higher percentage of quartz it contains, is relatively more resistant to denudation by streams and atmospheric agencies than the more felspathic (containing more felspar crystals) Stanthorpe granite, and some of the more prominent landscape features of the Granite Belt owe their origin to the meeting of the two types of granite. For instance, Mt. Marlay consists of a mass of Stanthorpe Granite hardened and made more resistant to weathering by the intrusion of the more acid sandy granite.

The whole pattern of surface drainage in the Granite Belt bears a relationship to the direction of master-joints which are clearly the lines of greatest weakness in the underlying granite.

If we examine a detailed map of the district we may notice that the Severn River for most of its course over the granite, from the embouchure of Quart Pot Creek to the mouth of Washpool Creek, and many of the streams, especially those of the south-east portion of the district, exhibit this N.E.-S.W. trend most strongly. A secondary system of much weaker N.W.-S.E. joints also appears to have influenced the direction of several creek courses.

The fact that the granite commonly has three sets of joints all intersecting at right angles often causes the rock to weather into more or less cubical blocks called 'tors' which are particularly common near the crests of hills in the district.

Another feature frequently found is the flaking-off of the outer surface of large granite boulders to give an 'onion skin' appearance. This outer 'skin' of rock peels or scales off in curved slabs due to the varying rates of expansion of different parts of the boulders under conditions of changing temperatures and is particularly likely to occur if a hot day is followed by frosts at night.

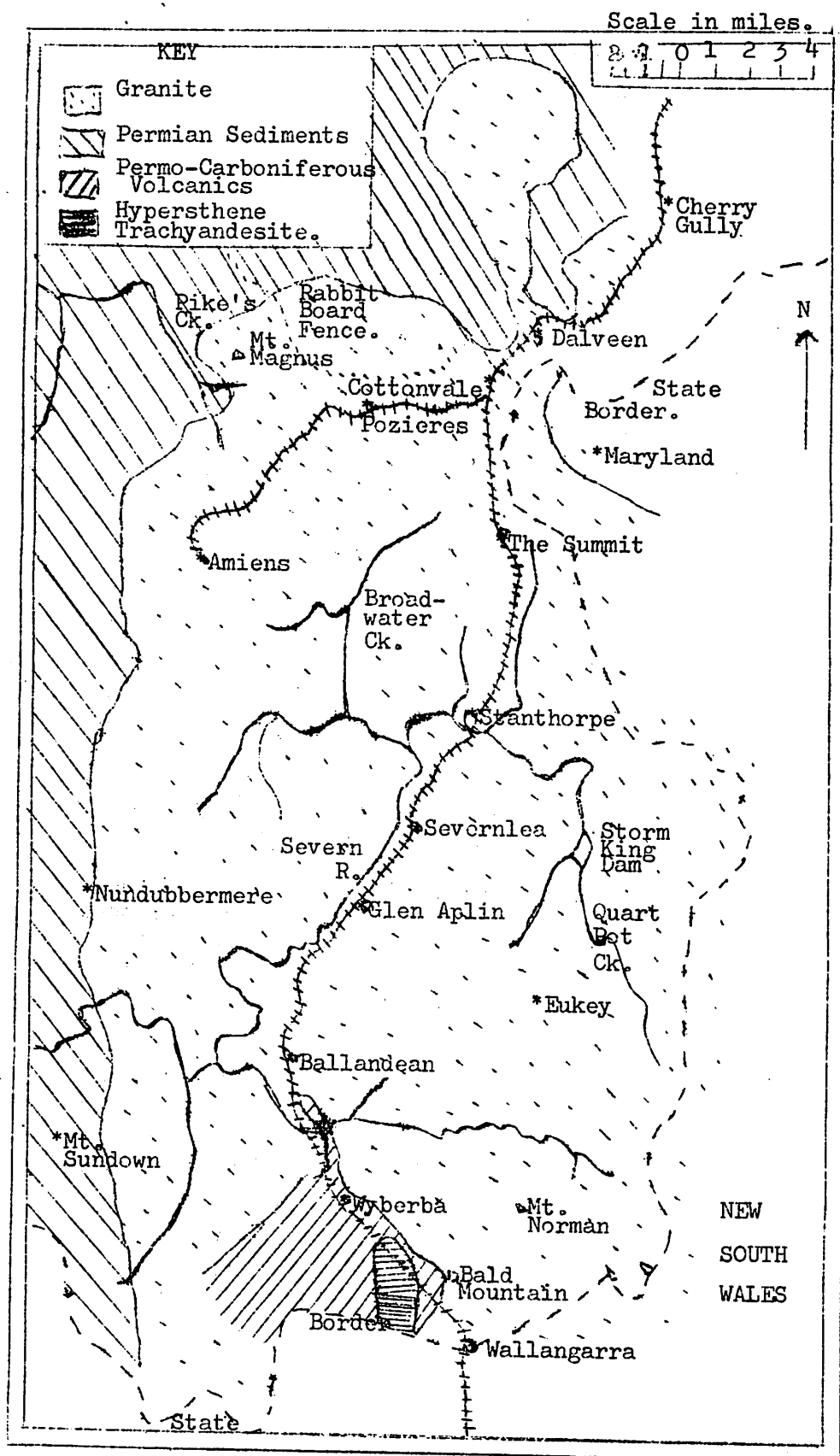
Rocks surrounding the Granite:

The accompanying map shows that marginal to the granite in the north, west, and south, is an assortment of older rocks which at the time of the granite intrusion probably covered the whole surface of the district. Because of their greater hardness and a blue-black colour, early miners mistook the rocks for basalts which commonly form true trap-rocks and applied the description "traprock".

The rocks surrounding the granite may be grouped broadly into:

- (i) Permain Sediments - consisting of dark slates (formed by the compaction of mud), conglomerates (a cement of pebbles and mud), and limestones (formed from the lime in the ancient coral reefs).
- (ii) Permo-Carboniferous Volcanics - consisting of rhyolites and rhyodacites which are rocks formed from the lava of volcanic outpourings. In the vicinity of the granite Belt the rhyolites are generally a fawn or dull whitish colour.

Near Bald Mountain there is an area of fairly level country made up of

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Brief Outline of Granite Belt Geology Cont. - MAP.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Brief Outline of Granite Belt Geology Cont.:

a bluish-grey rock which has been described by geologists by a variety of names, the popular term being 'Blue Granite'. In 1958, this rock was identified as being "hypersthene trachyandesite", a rather unusual volcanic rock.

It is hoped that the superficial glance we have taken may throw some light on the very early history of the Granite Belt.

Courtesy "Stanthorpe Border Post".

---oCo--

The Queensland Journal of Mick Pepys (Dwyer) Cont. from Dec./Jan. Issue.
A Country Gentleman of New South Wales.

Tuesday: Did bid our hosts farewell and set forth, pausing at the town of Warwick to buy some meat and other foods in tins, for ahead lay places where may be no stores. At Toowoomba Town we turned Westward and journeyed many a mile ere 'twas time to build our tent dwelling for sleeping in at night. Did place our grapes and other fruit upon the carriage top, and in the night a climbing beast named possum came down from his trees and eat his fill, but we begrudged him not and take pleasure in playing host to wild creatures. There is in this place a dreadful herb called aptly, needle bush with a multitude of sharpe thorns in its branches which wound the feet of the unwary sorely. And these dead branches with their thorns got into our attire and beds, and Lord a more uncomfortable bed-fellow I ne'er had. Upon proclaiming this my wife did ask how many bed-fellows had I slept with that I was able to say that this was the worst, and I to reply as oft before, none but she. This place where we slept was some miles from a place named Miles, and did make a merry pun upon't, but my wife, poor soul could see no humour in't. Did sleep but ill what with needle bush and trains roaring past upon their rails which ran nearby.

Wednesday: We continue Westward, stopping once to find petrified wood which abounds here near a place called Yuleba, and my wife who hath skill in these matters proclaimed this wood to be of excellent quality, so we must needs bring a peck of it with us. Methinks at this rate our motor carriage will soon sink into the ground of its weight of stones. At Roma Town we turn again North, and journey for many a mile and hour. At one village I must needs buy fuel for our carriage from the ale-house since 'twas sold nowhere else, and bought a beaker of ale from the bar-wench ere she came out with me to serve us petrol. Then must go to the food merchants to buy motor oil in a tin. We selected from the chart a road which had upon it marked Arcadia, but here were no Elysian fields with asphodels, and not a single swelling, so if Arcadia be here we saw it not. Further along the road we saw many of the strange leaping beast called kangaroo and since the light was leaving us drove most carefully as not to strike one. 'Tis said that hunters slay this beast to take away his tail, from which they make a broth which is much esteemed. Though it seems shame to kill the beast but for his tail, without his tail he would be in sore straits and mucht as well be dead. For it is the weight behind of this great tail which stays him from falling flat upon his face at every leap which he do-eth leaning over far forward.

Also did we see the great emu bird who having no wings to fly must needs walk wherever he may go. 'Tis said of these that the hen deems her duty done when she hath laid her eggs - such eggs being of great size as befits a

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.The Queensland Journal of Mick Pepys (Dwyer) Cont.-

bird so large - and walketh off, and the man-bird must crouch upon the eggs without food for many weeks until they hatch, and now must foster the young until they are grown to fend for themselves. 'Tis great good fortune that humans have not like customs.

After it was dark we came into the town named Emerald, several of the places hereabout being called for precious stones. It was raining whereat all but we rejoiced for the weather here had long been dry. I to an ale house to ask directions, and the bar-wench, very obliging and comely withal did speak of a place where one might on payment of a fine sleep in a caravan, and gave me the way.

But alas all caravans were taken, so must needs put up our tent-dwelling by the light of our motor-carriage - and an ill-done work, but it sheltered us from the rain. To bed in ill-content but slept well being weary of our long travel this day.

Thursday: Awakened to find the rain had stopped and this was good news since we wanted to travel this day on a road with part unsealed and according to repute not to be passed in the weather be it wet.

After we had left the town travelling west saw two great brolga cranes in a field and admired their graceful bearing. Also a bustard which walked across the road ahead of us, and this is the first time I have seen this bird which it is said to be very good to eat but now properly protected by great penalties against its slaying. To Anakie Village where I to the police house to buy for 50 pence a document called Miner's Right which will entitle me to pick up gold and all manner of precious stones if we should find any, and 'tis said that hereabouts the gems called sapphires abound, and many have been found of great size and worth a king's ransom. The officer, a helpful and courteous young man, and gave us good talk and advice on gem hunting.

And now on to Sapphire and further toward Rubyvale. On our sitting down by the roadside to take our lunch we were visited by a score of grey birds who carried on a mighty chattering and conversation among themselves. These are called apostle-birds and are very fearless, so that soon I had them taking bread from my very fingers, and all our bread was gone ere they were fed, for now four magpies came and demand their share, but were soundly scolded and driven off by the grey birds.

We now searched for sapphires among the old diggings near this place and found some small ones but none to make us rich.

(At this point we will leave the Queensland Journal of the late Mick Dwyer).

--oOo--

Did you know: The giant Atlas Moth (*Coscinocera hercules*, Family Saturniidae) of Northern Queensland and New Guinea has a wing-span of up to 10½ inches and is credited with being the world's largest moth.

--oOo--

PLEASE NOTE: To co-incide with the Apple and Grape Harvest Festival and Centenary Celebrations, our March meeting has been brought forward to March 8th, and will be held in the C.W.A. Rooms as usual. The March outing has NOT BEEN ALTERED.

--oOo--