

JUNE 1994  
Vol. 260



# THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST



Monthly Newsletter of the  
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club

## 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 and post it to members.

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Meetings: 4th Wednesday of each Month at QCWA Rooms at 8.00pm.  
Outings: The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each Month.  
Subscriptions: Single \$8.00 Family \$15.00 per annum July to June.  
Rent : Donation per family per meeting.  
Address: Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc., P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe Q 4380.



## OFFICERS OF THE CLUB FOR 1993-94

President	Rob McCosker	83 5371
Vice-Presidents	Desley McDonagh	81 3074
	Mary Walters	83 5306
Secretary	Millie Marsden	81 1593
Treasurer	Julia Brown	
Newsletter Editor	Geoff Walker	81 2008
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Julie Beddow & Patience James	
Publicity Officer	Patience James	81 1853
Librarian	Esme Colley	81 2927
Management Committee	President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer.	

## 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.

## STATE FOREST CAMPING CODE

Camping In State Forest Parks will be more enjoyable for you and other visitors if you observe this simple camping code.

- All plants and animals are protected - please don't disturb or damage them.
  - Keep your camp clean and tidy and respect your surroundings. At the end of your stay, make sure the site is tidy for those who follow.
  - Tables and fireplaces are for all to use - please don't monopolise them.
- Leave waterfront areas clear for everyone - pitch your tent well back from the creek bank.
- Light your fire only in the fireplaces provided. Use firewood sparingly.
- Be sure your fire is out before leaving.
- Avoid polluting creeks and lakes with soap, detergents or shampoo. Draw water in containers for washing purposes and dispose of used water well away from the stream.
  - Be aware of plants and creatures that might make your stay uncomfortable for example, leeches, ticks and nettle.
  - Don't leave clothing or footwear out on the ground overnight - biting insects, spiders or centipedes may crawl in. Always knock out your shoes before putting them on.
  - Take care when swimming in creeks and waterholes - before entering the water check for depth, snags or other obstructions.
  - If you go bushwalking, always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
  - Camping is limited to two weeks. If you wish to stay for a longer period, please contact the local Forestry Office.

This code applies to most places where Nats. go on outings.

# Glen Lyon Dam - "Texas Caves"

## OUTING REPORT

A handful of members chose to camp at the Glen Lyon Dam Caravan Park on the Saturday night. It is a great place to camp with excellent facilities, plenty of bird life and of course the friendly wildlife.

The dam was only 6.5% of capacity which prompted the Nats visit in the first place. Being at its lowest level since it was built about 20 years ago most of the limestone caves which were inundated by the dam are once again accessible.

Approx 64 members and visitors started walking from the dams high and dry boat ramp which appeared to be at least 50 metres above the water

The walk to the limestone ridge containing the caves took between one and two hours depending which route was taken and how interested the varied parties were in their surroundings. All sorts of souvenirs were collected along the way including lures, sinkers and fishing lines. Most of these were originally snagged on treetops when they were submerged.

Most of our group entered 'Russenden' cave which even after 20 years inundation showed little alteration to the dripstone formations. What was noticed was about 2 or 3cms of extra silt on the floor and the result of deliberate vandalism of the formations prior to flooding.

The stalactites must have been souvenired because there were no remnants lying around the floor. One of the lower passages still retained water. This particular passage was the lowest of all and used to be renowned for the stale air in the earlier days of the caves exploration. (Candles would go out and canaries would fall off their perches). A nearby 'pothole' or vertical shaft led a few of the lesser responsible adventurers to explore Margot's shawl. It was without doubt the finest shawl formation in the whole cave system. One third of the shawl has been destroyed and a large portion is loose but still showed the fire that most of us remembered all those years ago.

While the underground formations showed little sign of water damage, the same could not be said for the limestone on the surface. The action of water washing on the sharp erosion ridges had worn the stone so that it was quite smooth enough to sit on.

In many places around the caves, the limestone rock contains fossils of Crinoids. Crinoids are animals, forms of which are still living today, eg sea-lillies and feather stars. They have a compact, cap-shaped body, five flexible arms (simple or branched) and a stem which attaches the body to the sea floor. The internal skeleton consists of calcareous plates.

It is fossils of these plates or discs, mainly from the stem, which are visible in the rocks at the caves. They appear as white circles or rows of white bars which are sections of stem seen side-on. The earliest geological record of Crinoids is from the Palaeozoic (up to 600 million years ago). They are abundant as fossils in Silurian rocks (400 to 450 million years), Devonian (350 to 400 million years) and Carboniferous (about 275 to 350 million years ago).

Fossils of a bi-valve mollusc were also found. They are particularly abundant in one small area about 100 metres N.E. from Russenden Cave.

Reference "The Elements of Palaeontology"  
Rhona M Black  
Cambridge Uni Press 1972

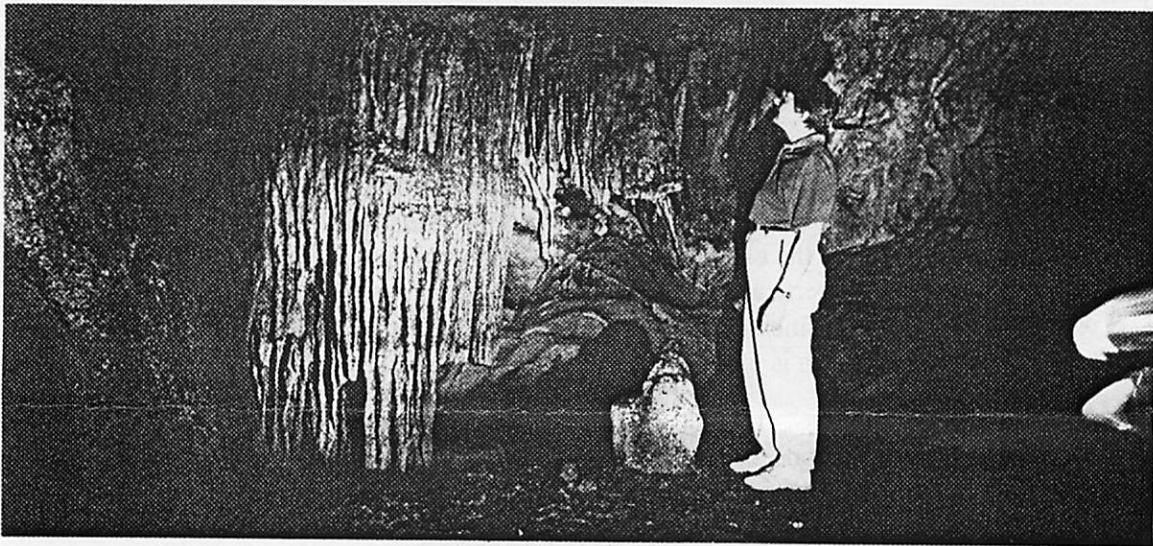
As we headed back to the cars, some by water craft but most on foot, we saw the circular arrays of stones on the ground near the entrance to what was 'Main' cave. These were the campfires around which us amateur spelios used to sit between twenty and thirty years ago. Wonderful memories of those silly younger days when we used to spend all day squeezing tight passages with carbide lamps hoping to find a new cave system which may have persuaded the government not to build that dam.

*Col Hockings & Errol Walker*

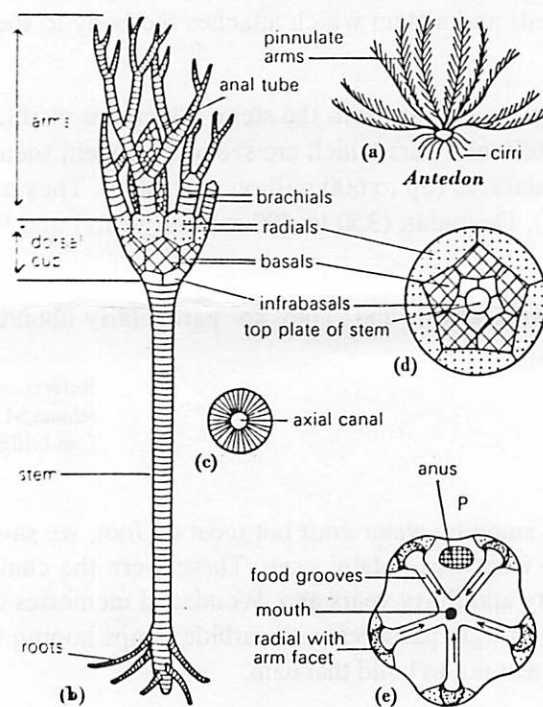




Margot's Shaul



Inside Russenden Cave



Crinoids

MINUTES OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC. MEETING HELD  
IN THE Q.C.W.A. ROOMS AT 8pm ON MAY 25th, 1994.

Opening. President Rob McCosker opened the meeting and welcomed all present including a visitor Stuart Rayner specially welcomed.

Attendance 29 Apologies 9 as per attendance book.

Minutes. Noor Davis moved Herb Colley seconded the motion that the minutes of the April meeting as circulated, be accepted as a true record. Carried.

Correspondence. Inward:- 1. Peter Kerr outing report. 2. Richmond Valley Nats- May and June. 3.QNC- May and June. 4.Chinchilla Nats-May. 5. QNC-Natural History Award. 6.S.E.Q.A.C.C.-Photocopier hire 7. Former U3A-donation of funds. 8.Commonwealth Bank-Cheque Book. 9.Crana Inc.-Workshop in Cairns 10. Dept. of Environment and Heritage Approval of grant. 11. Toowoomba Bushwalkers-May.

Outward. 1. Round the Ridges-May outing. 2. Community Billboard-May outing. 3. Matrix Office Systems-payment of account. 4.Caretaker Woody Head Camping Area-deposit of camping fee.

It was moved by Frank Wilkinson seconded errol Walker that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted. Carried.

Business Arising. The matter of the Natural History Awarded was discussed and the matter of the nomination was left in the hands of Tom Archer.

Financial Statement.Treasurer Julia Brown presented the statement which showed :- credit balance b/f \$307.04; Receipts of room rent \$13, Woody Head deposits \$45- total \$58.00. Expenditure Room Rent \$10, Geoff Walker \$15.90, Woody Head deposit \$100, Matrix Office Systems \$28, Bank charge for 3 bank statements \$21,FGT 75c total \$175.65. Balance as at 25/5/94 \$189-39. Julia moved the statement for adoption and that accounts of room rent \$12.50, \$28 Matrix Office Systems be passed for payment. Seconded Ailsa Wilkinson. Carried.

Business arising. Nola Dodd queried the \$21 for statements. Treasurer did not receive the statements therefore the charge should not have been made. Rob McCosker will talk to the Bank officers about this charge.

Outing Report. Colin Hocking reported that the outing was attended by 64 people, most elected to walk but some went by canoe and boat. The caves were found to be mostly intact even though they had been submerged for many years. Colin suggested that we should tighten up safety and security measures on our outings. People must wait for the leader, as leader he has responsibilities and cannot exercise proper care if people rush off ahead.

Specimens. Many fossilized shells and sea-lilies were seen during the walk to the caves. One piece of stone was shown to show these fossils. Tom Archer brought along a marsupial mouse which had come to grief in his seed feeder. Tom talked about the differences from the field mouse - marsupial mice have a sharper nose, very efficient teeth and have a jumping gait with tail held erect.

Next Outing. Lincoln McPhee had more details about the camp-out to Woody Head and the Ranger has offered a guided walk along the shore-line at low tide on Sunday. This incurs a cost of around \$5 per person. Lincoln took numbers of those wishing to participate and will make the necessary arrangements, details will appear in magazine and in the papers and over the radio. Cars will leave Weeroona Park at 7.30am on Saturday June 11, morning tea at Bonalbo turnoff. Travel through Casino, Coraki, Woodburn to Woody Head. Set up camp after lunch.Return on Monday June13.

Next Programme. This is to be presented by National Park personnel. As there have been many changes at Girraween, it was thought that perhaps Peter Haselgrove be asked to present a Programme. Rob McCosker will arrange this and if not suitable, will arrange a replacement programme.

General Business. Joan Stevenson reported that Lawrie Jeffrey of Texas is concerned that the clearing being done by Whyalla Park could be affecting the habitat of some of the more rare birds of the area. He would like us to be aware that this is happening.

July Programme. Will be 'Remember Last Year' so now is the time to sort out your slides for this presentation.

July Outing. Listed to be a clean-up on the way to Scott Jamieson's property 'Karalea' to be led by Kris Carnell. Kris will have more information if this is to place as planned by the next meeting.

Programme. The programme was presented by Herb and Esme Colley on a trip to Western Australia last August/September. Esme said there were not too many blue skies in her slides as the weather was windy and wet. Rob McCosker moved a vote of thanks to Esme and Herb for their programme and this was carried by acclamation.

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## LEADING AN OUTING - a more serious note

It was apparent to many of us on the Caves outing that a few common courtesies of field outing protocol were not extended to the leaders.

A leader tries to assume the responsibility to safely lead a group of people to an area of interest by a route which best suits the average capabilities of those present. It was recognised by the leaders that some people had a burning desire to get to the caves quickly and knew the way.

Many people did not know the way on the easiest route. Though the leaders tried to guide from the front and the rear at the same time it became impossible to know where everybody was. Some of the group tended to follow the faster people only to be left behind to guess the way. The point to be made is that those wishing to do their own thing should have the courtesy to advise the leaders who could then make allowance regarding a head count of their own group.

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*Remember* 

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON JULY 27TH**

Bring along your slides taken on Field Nats outings over the last year and come and enjoy a great night

# WOODY HEAD OUTING

Proposed outing to Woody Head is planned for the long week-end on June 11, 12 & 13th  
230 kms from Stanthorpe.

## POINTS OF INTEREST AND ACCOMMODATION

Caravaning and camping accommodation is provided at Woody Head camping area.

This delightful sheltered fishing haven caters for extended holidays. Water and all facilities are provided.

Accommodation has been arranged at a group tent site for \$5 each per night up to 20 people, \$2 each over 20 & one cabin to suit 4 at \$10 a night each.

## SATURDAY ACTIVITIES

Leaving Stanthorpe 7.30am Saturday morning from Weroona Park we will travel via Tenterfield on the Bruxner Highway east resting at Bonalbo turnoff for morning tea about 9.30am. Continuing on to Casino then through Coraki to Woodburn on the Pacific Highway turning south to Woody Head turn-off arriving at Woody Head for lunch. People wishing to travel on their own accord can meet at Woody Head.

Set up group camp after lunch with the afternoon for relaxing, bushwalking, fishing or perhaps a 4WD trip along the beach.

## SUNDAY ACTIVITIES

**MORNING** - A walk to Iluka rainforest along the beach being 5kms in length with a difficulty rating of 1 out of 10 returning by car to tent sites. Iluka littoral rainforest is one of the last remnants of rainforest that was more extensive along NSW coast. This tiny area of beauty was the centre of a bitter conflict between the mining and conservationist. It was eventually resolved in 1964 when the State Govt decided not to grant a mining lease. It is now a world heritage listed sanctuary.

**11am** - Ranger to lead an exploration of Iluka Bluff.

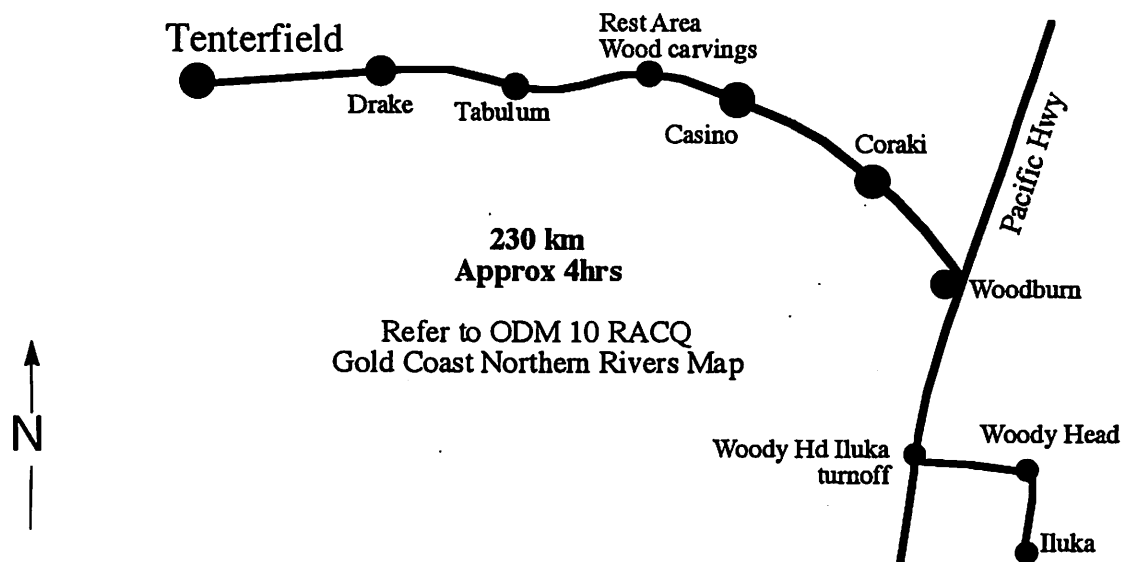
Various other outings for a few people with 4WDs could be arranged to Black Rock via Jerusalem Creek returning via the beach depending on tides. (Saturday afternoon 3pm low tide).

## MONDAY ACTIVITIES

Relaxing and fishing, bushwalking as you please. Return home after lunch on Monday.

For further information contact Lincoln McPhee on (076) 81 1651

Bundjalung National Park. Woody Head camping area. Phone (066) 46 6134



# THE NESTING TREE

Recently one Friday afternoon we packed our food and a few clothes into "Cozy Coaster" and set off for Mingoola Crossing to visit friends who are on the staff of the Stock Inspection Gate there. The weather was ideal for lazing in the sun chatting with friends and doing the odd bit of fishing. Several fish were caught over the weekend and we did have 13 millimetres, but it still remains very dry.

One of the points of great interest to us was a very heavily laden mandarin tree. The fruit was still quite green and the tree, with a number of thorns on the lower part, was about eleven foot high and about six foot through. Doug pulled aside a branch and there, sitting very proudly on her nest was a Peaceful Dove. It was not a pet and had not nested there before and apart from the first time when Doug looked at her, she hissed and puffed herself up, but after that was quite happy for us all to have a look at her. On a closer look into the tree I found it was not only laden with fruit but also bird nests. There were fourteen all told, mostly belonging to Double-bars and Finches. This nesting tree was set right in the middle of the back ward almost touching the clothes line. There were hedges on both sides of the yard, one only ten yards off the main road, and the house at one end and the staff hut cum office at the other end.

I have tried to describe that this tree is in the busiest part of the yard and what ever the task, one has to pass by it. These trusting little birds must surely know that the thorns and Doug's love of birds and nature will protect them.

*Esmé Colley*

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## LONG WINDED PROVERBS

Here are the answers to last month's long winded proverbs. How well did we all do?

1. Twinkle twinkle little star
2. Birds of a feather flock together
3. Look before you leap
4. Don't cry over spilt milk
5. You can't teach an old dog new tricks
6. Where there is smoke theres fire
7. Too many cooks spoil the broth
8. A rolling stone gathers no moss

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## BIRDS SEEN ON THE GLENLYON DAM OUTING 22/5/94

Noisy Miner, Raven, Grey Butcherbird, Pelican, Silver Gulls, Swamp Harrier, Black Swan, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Grebe, Willie Wagtail, Tree Martin, Red Rump Parrot, Diamond Firetail Finch, Brown Tree Creeper, Pallid Cuckoo, Fantail Cuckoo, Striped Honey Eater, White Plumed Honey Eater, Wood Duck, Little Black Cormorant, Darter, Royal Spoonbill, Jacky Winter, Pipit, Galah, Peewee, Cockatiel, Great Cormorant, Wedgetail Eagle, Grey Crowned Babbler, Restless Flycatcher, Hooded Robin.