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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST



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6 Pierpoint Street
STANTHORPE Q 4380



POST TO US
AND \$ 30
YOUR MAIL

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.

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.

WOODY HEAD OUTING REPORT 12TH JUNE

The long weekend (12-13 June) proved a good opportunity to avail ourselves of a study of different environment from that of the area nearer at hand. The ocean shores being new to a number of our members proved a rewarding new experience. The services of the local ranger adding finesse to the venture. The walk through the last remaining littoral rainforest revealed introduced species of fern. The last time we observed skeleton fern was in the Wallangarra area and one specimen seen growing on a tree was a surprise also to the ranger. Bees were busy harvesting a heavy flow of honey from a lone tuckeroo tree. We were all surprised to see wild lemons growing where someone must have left a pip on a walk many years back. Two varieties of lily pilli yielded some fruit. A very attractive fungi almost glowed in the gloom of the rainforest floor. Ray Marsden attempted to photograph its pale cream formation but failed because of faulty flash. The calls of wonga, brown and bronzewing pigeons were heard but on account of not being able to observe those it was not possible to list them. An echidna waddled across the road in search of ants for its dinner. Several of the less able members waited resting at the end of the walk to be picked up by vehicles and returned to the picnic area where we all had lunch. Low tide around the Iluka bluff revealed gardens of green sea lettuce. Cunjevoi also growing on the rocks provided interest as few realised these started life as a free swimming animal before attaching themselves and growing a tough leathery skin to protect their red flesh so savoured by most aquatic creatures. A fisherman landed a large golden trevally another beautiful creature yielded its edible flesh to humans.

Bitu bush covered all five sand mined areas. Although this introduced species proved efficient in preserving denuded sand dunes as a result of mining it is not altogether unfriendly to fauna providing dense cover and food for numerous species. There not being any members of the primate family in Australia to feed on its succulent new growth thus unrestricted its tendency to compete with natural flora is unacceptable. Various methods of control are being tried both parasitical and herbicidal, 'Roundup' having been a proven chemical at certain periods of the year.

Sunday afternoon most members spent studying the rockpools at low tide. Hidden within the fronds of 'neptune's beads' were two species of sea cucumber, numerous crustaceans, orange coral, small fish. Sedimentation of areas past told an interesting story of time long ago layers revealed periods of siltation, clean sharp sand, water worn pebbles ranging from quartz to granite and basalt washed down by rivers and deposited in their respective beds and cemented by time and hardened by iron oxide mainly. This erosion by sea action has been very rapid. The use of these rocks to build retaining walls has not proved successful because of limited life needing constant replacement. Due to the fact that areas covered by rainforest generally contained heavy deposits of valuable rutile ilmenite etc great difficulty was faced by conservationists to pressure the release of these very important areas for posterity. It is an extremely valuable reward we now enjoy shared with seabirds and tranquilly becoming a long sandy beach. Good comradeship around a shared fire, good old Aussie damper and cocky's joy handed around. Happily tired at the end of a perfect day. Thirty sleeping bags fully occupied.

Fred Simpson

MINUTES OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC. MEETING HELD
IN THE QCWA ROOMS AT 8pm ON JUNE 22nd, 1994.

Opening. President Rob McCosker opened the meeting and welcomed all present with a special welcome to Roger Logan and Frank James.

Attendance. 19 Apologies. 9 as per attendance book.

Minutes. The minutes of the May meeting were moved as a true record on the motion of Tom Archer seconded Joan Stevenson. Carried.

Business Arising. R. McCosker reported that he had approached the bank about the charges and they will stand.

Correspondence:- Inward. 1. D. Jones - Sub 2. DPI Landcare Conference 3. Darling Downs Naturalists 4. Camera Club half share of post box. 5. Matrix Office Systems. 6. Toowoomba Bushwalkers 7. Eastlink. 8. NPA Discovery Activity.

Outward:- 1. Round the Ridges 2. Community Billboard 3. caretaker Woody Head 4. Matrix Office systems.

It was moved by Patience James seconded Rod Hutchin that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted. Carried.

Financial Statement. Julia Brown presented and moved for adoption the state ment which showed Receipts of \$550-18 bwing subs \$15, Room Rent collection \$10.80, Photocopying \$359.20, Donation \$100, Woody Head Camp Deposits \$55.00, Bank interest \$60.18 Expenditure:- \$42.20 being Rent \$12.50, Postage Magazine \$55.50, Matrix Office Systems \$28.00 FGT \$1.70 and credit balance of \$697.37. Seconded G. Davis. Carried. Accounts for Rent \$12.50, Matrix Account \$55.50 were passed for payment on the motion of J. Brown seconded G. Davis. Carried.

General Business. Patience James moved that letters of thanks be forwarded to Border Post and Daily News for the publishing of the newsletters.

As the renewals for subscriptions will be forwarded with the next magazine Kris Carnell moved that the single membership be increased to 410 and that the family subscription remain at \$15. Kris outlined his reasons for the increase. The motion was seconded by Gordon Davis. After discussion the motion was put to the meeting and was lost.

Rob McCosker reported that member Errol Walker had presented several books for the library and he was thanked for same.

Desley McDonagh reported that she had made enquiries about the stand and screen and felt that the amount of \$450 as received for the grant would cover the costs of a 1½metre square screen and a stand.

Outing Report. Lincoln McPhee reported on the outing to Woody Head. 30 people had attended the first camp-out to a seaside destination and had enjoyed all the activities. Report will appear in the magazine. A letter of thanks is to be forwarded to Ranger Bill Sansom for his interest and guidance.

Specimens. Some of the rocks from the Woody head outing were shown Tom Archer brought along several specimens of introduced grasses and spoke on their distribution in this area. Frank James brought along a piece of ironbark wood in which was imbedded a wasp. One wonders just how and why it was imprisoned there and when.

Next Outing. is under the leadership of Kris Carnell and will be a 'working' outing. Members will meet at the new Granite street bridge at 9am on July 24 when work on the newly constructed pathways along Quart Pot Creek will be further enhanced. Kris will supply the barbecue if members wiould like to bring along a barbecue lunch. Work will include cleaning up of the area, perhaps completing work on restoration of old roads. Implements will be supplied but bring gloves as the work could be rough on the hands. It was suggested that the

minutes cont...

young people, involved in the LEAP scheme may be invited to lunch. Jean Harslett reported that the young people have done a wonderful job during their 12 week involvement and are proud of what they have achieved. It was felt that the scheme has been a great advantage to Stanthorpe and the Field Naturalists would like to further their involvement.

Next Meeting. This will be held on Wednesday July 27 at 8pm and will be "Remember Last Year". Members are asked to make themselves available for positions on the executive as this is the annual meeting. Please bring along slides and photographs of the outings held over the past year. Robin will collate this programme.

Members are asked to bring along a plate of supper.

Programme Robin McCosker presented a programme of slides provided by the National Parks and Wildlife officers at Girraween. This was enjoyed by all and showed every aspect of this wonderful National Park which we are fortunate to have on our doorstep.

BIRDS AT WOODY HEAD & ILUKA

The Nats camp out at Woody Head gave wonderful opportunities for bird watching. Kris and I stayed overnight at Casino on the Friday which gave us time to call at the Black Rocks camping area to have a look around on our way to Woody Head. We had lunch at a picnic table and saw thirteen different species of birds while we were there, including the Scarlet Honeyeater.

When we arrived at Woody Head there were Ibis walking about, and birds in the trees as well. Wherever we went there were plenty to see and hear. The following is a list of the birds we saw over the weekend at Woody Head and Iluka.

Swifts	Sacred Ibis	Welcome Swallow
Little Wattle Bird	Straw-necked Ibis	Pelican
Silver Gull	Black Tern	Pied Cormorant
White-faced Heron	Brahminy Kite	Little Eagle
Lewins Honeyeater	White-eared Honeyeater	Blue-faced Honeyeater
White-cheeked Honeyeater	Silver Eye	Golden Whistler
Grey Fantail	Spur-winged Plover	Bar shouldered Dove
Willie Wagtail	Crested Pigeon	Pied Oystercatcher
Sooty Oystercatcher	Emerald Ground-dove	Spangled Drongo
Rainbow Lorikeet	Magpie	Rufous Shrike-thrush
Topknot Pigeon	Sandpiper	Butcher Bird
Whip Bird (call)		

Margaret Carnell

One night a guy took a short cut through the cemetery on his way home, when he fell down an open grave. Some hours later a drunk took the same short cut when he heard a cry of "Help me, I'm freezing".

The drunk went over to the open grave and said "What's the matter buddy".

The first man said again "Help me I'm freezing".

The drunk said, "I know your problem buddy, you've kicked all your dirt off".

ENVIRONMENT OUTING - 24th JULY, 1994

The outing on 24th July will be to the Red Bridge area in Stanthorpe. The Nats club has been involved in the planning and supervision of the construction of walking tracks in the area by L.E.A.P. trainees. It appears that there will still be some work to be done when the trainees finish, so we'll have a working bee to help finish the project.

Activities on the day may include any of the following: finish building the wooden bridge, painting bridge, marking tracks, fencing, rehabilitating old walking tracks and work areas with brush matting and removing feral trees. All Nats members will be able to help on the day. Bring a pair of gloves, and if I require anything else I'll be in touch.

A barbeque lunch has been planned and the L.E.A.P. trainees will be invited, so bring your steaks etc. The day will commence at 9.00 a.m. and we will meet just upstream from the new Granite Street Bridge.

Kris Carnell

ARTIFICIAL BIRDNESTS

During the last 5-10 years there seems to have been an explosion in the population of Crimson Rosellas and King Parrots possibly because so many people are feeding them these days. Our local birds would appear to have an appetiser course here about 6am then off to another place for first course and so on.

It occurred to me that their nesting sites in hollow limbs must be getting a bit scarce and that they might be interested in artificial nests. So I made up a couple of boxes a while ago the same style that they make in England.

With the help of Glen & Patrick McCosker I nailed them high up in a Messmate tree.

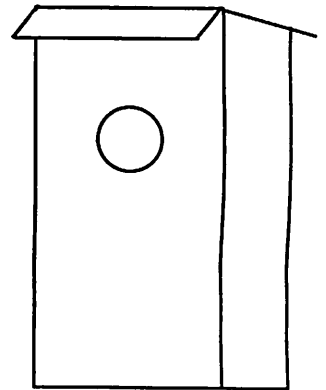
Nothing was seen to happen until recently when a pair of birds (Starlings I presume, although they don't frequent this particular area) started taking an interest.

This couple then became very busy for a few days carting nesting materials, leaves, bark & grass it appeared. Then for a couple of weeks one bird at a time used to spend hours just perched on the power line not far away.

Then there was great activity, coming and going as the birds carried food to the nest. The young birds could be heard urging their parents onto greater activity, more food, more food.

At least a couple of times during this period the local Kurrawongs took great interest in this activity and standing on top of the box bent over to peer in. During these interruptions the parent birds perched unconcerned nearby with their catches securely in their beaks and waited till the Kurrawong departed and then went back to their job.

After a couple of weeks there was silence and no activity. Whether they successfully raised a family and left or the predators won I don't know.



Tom Archer

A Layperson's Guide to the Geological History of the Main Range

(or, Where did that Runaway Rock Come From?)

This is the report on the geology of the Main Range area that you couldn't find in last month's magazine. A desire to have this information as accurate as possible meant delays which made me miss last month's deadline. So here it is. I trust you find it informative.

The mountains of the Main Range have been taken to heart by many of us. In this rapidly changing world, they stand as a symbol of the past. They seem so permanent, so eternal. The only rapid but minor change we may see may be the occasional delinquent boulder that careers down mountain sides, threatening to flatten any unsuspecting Field Nat. (or slow moving tree!)

If we could hitch a ride on H.G.Wells' time machine and go back in time about 22 million years, we would see anything but a symbol of permanence. It was no doubt a place of rapid changes, of explosive violence and of incredible primeval beauty. The whole of the area stretching from the Main Range to the coast and for up to 100km either side of the border would have resembled the big island of Hawaii today. The area would have been studded by literally dozens of volcanic vents. Activity was probably centred on two major vents: Focal Peak, west of Mt Barney, and Mt Warning.

Most of the lava that flooded from these volcanoes cooled to form layers of basalt hundreds of metres thick. The basalts of the Main Range probably came from vents and dykes still buried beneath the basalt. At some stage, a different type of lava started erupting from vents to the east of the Main Range. The lava from one or more of these vents flowed across the Main Range of today, and cooled to form the light-coloured and hard rock called trachyte. In places, the trachyte is up to 165m thick. Erosion has now exposed this rock as cliffs at numerous places such as Queen Mary Falls, The Steamers, Wilson's Peak, Mt Cordeaux and Mt Castle.

It is trachyte I believe is found at Hell Hole Gorge. I say "believe" because I have conflicting material that on one hand lists it as trachyte, but on the other, identifies it as the lighter volcanic rock, rhyolite. Trachyte won 3-1.

I have so far been unable to find any definite information on how Hell Hole Gorge was formed. One source suggests it is part of a ring dyke. This is where magma rises and lifts a large block of rock. The magma flows out as lava from a circular crack around the block of rock as it is lifted. It is similar to a simmering stew lifting the lid of the pot and oozing over the rim.

Another theory involves the gorge originally being a high ridge of softer rock that was surrounded by trachyte flows. Erosion has since removed the ridge leaving steep trachyte cliffs on either side.

I have found nothing to support my theory (now down-graded to a guess) that the creek follows a fault line.

The next time you travel to Brisbane along the Cunningham Highway and stop for a cuppa at the picnic ground at the Boonah turnoff, try casting a new eye at the land around you. You are standing on Jurassic sandstone about 150 million years old. (Would that make the picnic ground Jurassic Park?) Due to volcanic activity 22 - 24 million years ago, all this land would have been covered by hundreds of metres of volcanic rock that would have been considerably higher than the present Main Range. The present gaps in the range (e.g. Cunninghams Gap) are the remnants of valleys formed by westward flowing rivers that had their source perhaps somewhere above where you are now standing. Unlike the western side of the range where rainfall has always been less, the considerably more active coastal streams have removed nearly all the volcanic rock east of the Main Range with the exception of the volcanic vents. The massive landslide at Teviot Gap is evidence of the dramatic effect erosion is continuing to have on the rugged eastern escarpment of the range.

The well-known peaks around you such as Mt Edwards, Mt Fraser and Mt Greville are the remnant volcanic vents. They are volcanic plugs—the solidified interiors of volcanic vents. The lava from one or more of these vents produced the trachyte that flowed across the range to later become the trachyte cliffs already discussed. Nearby Mt French is not a plug but a trachyte sill. A sill forms when magma flows beneath the land and cools without necessarily reaching the surface.

So there you have it. We are so lucky this volcanic activity took place all those years ago. If it hadn't, the soils would have been a lot poorer and the country may well have resembled the featureless plains that extend westwards forever. It would also have probably narrowed our options for Field Nat's excursions.

David Wilson

LEARNING FOR PLEASURE - CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The Italian Language Group has finally started with four eager members. They meet weekly and learn from a "Teach Yourself Italian" book which is very easy to follow and fun to learn from. Noor Davis is the convener and hesitant tutor of the group. When enough vocabulary is acquired it is hoped that we can set up a conversation group with local Italian speakers.

The Experimental Craft Group started with experiments in paper mache and in paper making. We hope to continue experiments with interesting variations using recycled paper.

The Current Affairs Group meets monthly and is convened by Mary Walters. We discuss a variety of topics currently in the news, over coffee, and rarely confine ourselves to these topics. It is a very enjoyable session.

The French Group is convened by Pat Whelan and meets fortnightly. They follow a "Teach Yourself" High School book. Over coffee the group discusses world events 'en Anglais' and then sometimes 'parlent en Francais'. This is the third year they meet so they must be enjoying it.

The History Group meets monthly and has been greatly entertained and educated by seeing a series of six videos. These trace the history of civilisation from its early beginnings in the Middle East to that in China, Greece, Rome and finally The West.

The series concludes with the proposition that the Western culture now spreading over the whole planet leaves much to be desired. It carries grave risks for the planet's future unless it can reform and revive itself through dialogue with those older, still existing cultures. The documentaries draw in interesting comparison between the ecological and moral state of modern cities and the present condition of the first known city which was in Sumeria (Iraq). What was 5000 yrs ago the Garden of Eden and the first human civilisation is now a barren desert.

Anyone interested in starting a new group is encouraged to do so. The greater the variety of subjects the more interesting Learning for Pleasure will be.

You don't have to be an expert to start a new group, and if you want an expert, try and find one.

Any queries please contact
Mary Walters 83 5306