



SEPTEMBER 1994
Vol. 263



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.

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	Kris Carnell	83 5268
	Mary Walters	83 5306
Secretary	Margaret Carnell	83 5268
Treasurer	Roger Logan	81 2493
Newsletter Editor	Geoff Walker	81 2008
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Julie Beddow & Patience James	
Publicity Officer	Patience James	81 1853
Librarian	Trish McCosker	83 5371
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.

OUTING REPORT, "AUVERN" 21st OF AUGUST

Sunday dawned grey, wet and COLD, but about 20 intrepid Rats rolled up to Greenlands School, and we set off westwards through driving rain. We travelled on the Inglewood road, via Waroo, to "Auvern", half way between Inglewood and Texas.

Arriving at about 10.30, much mud-splattered, we had smoko and then off for a walk. The wattle was at various stages of bloom and putting on a brave show. Jean gathered and definitely identified 6 species: *H. Semilunata*, *H. Cultriformis*, *H. Neriifolia*, *H. Flexifolia*, *H. Deanii*, and *H. Polypotria*, and there were three more that no-one could put a name to. Also quite a few *Alphitonia Excelsa* "Red Ash", a coastal species, which were looking sorry for themselves!

We walked down a rocky slope which our geologists thought might be gold-bearing, and past the site of an old homestead, burnt out about 50 years ago, all that remains are the stumps and the innards of an upright piano!

Back at the cars the rain had stopped, and we drove on for a km. or so but the tracks were so skiddy that vehicles started figure-skating, so we stopped on the first firm ground we came to for lunch. A large mob of interested sheep arrived, eager to share our sandwiches, and the sun came out!

In view of the state of the tracks we decided to drive no further and explore where we were. The party split up and some walked up the rocky hill in the middle of the property and peeked at the view between the trees, while others walked along Brush Creek (which was dry). Bird watchers saw several different honey-eaters, fly-catchers, robins, silver eyes, apostle birds, choughs, whistlers, cockatiels, cockatoos, galahs and many, many more! (Thanks to Margaret who wrote them all down).

The trees in this area are magnificent - ironbark, cyprus pine, yellow and other boxes, angophora, river gums - too many to list!

At 3.00 we climbed aboard and drove across the creek and out the front gate, returning home via the Arcot and Texas roads.

It turned out a beaut day in spite of an unpromising start!

Mary & Bob Clark.

Minutes of Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc. held in the
QCWA Rooms, Stanthorpe at 8 p.m on 24th July, 1994

Opening: President Rob McCosker opened the meeting and welcomed all present with a special, welcome to Richard Saunders.

Present: There were 21 present and 8 apologies as per attendance book.

Minutes: The minutes of the June meeting were moved as a true record on the motion of Gordon Davis, seconded Mary Walters.

Correspondence: Inward: 1. Bob & Mary Clarke & Doris Spence - subs; 2. Mallon - subs; Don Bingley subs; Z Newman- subs; Matrix Office System - account & invoice; 6. Toowoomba Bushwalkers - Footprint; Darling Downs Naturalist August; 8. Qld naturalist Club - change of address; Commonwealth Bank - statement; Una McCulloch - resignation from club; 11. Environment Today; 12. Mahlab Information - advertisement; 13. Community Development Services - sport & recreation expo; 14. Qld Naturalist Club - newsletter; 15. "Urimburra - August; 16. Peter Kerr - subs; 17. R. Luttrell - subs; H. & A. Gibson- subs; 19. Qld Tourist & Travel Corporation - advertisement.

Outward: 1. Consumer Affairs Dept. - Incorporation fees.
2. Victorian Field Nats - Register & logo; 3. Round the Ridges- August outing; 4. Community Billboard - August outing.

Dot Archer moved & Errol Walker seconded that the inwards correspondence be received & the outwards adopted.

Financial Report: Roger Logan presented the financial statement & moved it for adoption together with accounts for payment. Seconded Dianne Holley and carried.
Balance b/f 27.7.94 \$1143.02; Receipts: Subs \$367.00, Room Rent Collection \$6.70, Room Rent in Advance \$20.00, Donation G. Rayner \$20.00. Total \$443.70.
Expenditure: Room Rent \$12.50, Computer labels \$3.60, Projector stand & screen \$450.00, State Govt Tax 70c Total \$485.80.
Which left a balance of \$1100.92 at 24.8.94.
Accounts for payment: Room Rent \$12.50, R. Logan (receipt books) \$3.00, Matrix Office Systems \$84.00.

General Business:

Next Outing: Brian Dodd gave a report on the next outing which will be on 25th September. Cars will leave Weeroona Park at 9 a.m. to travel to Girraween National Park where the nats will walk to the Sphinx and across to the Mt Norman track. The full trip will take about 5½ hours and parts of it will be difficulty 8. Brian suggested we have two groups - the bush bashers & non bush bashers.

October Camp Out: As Kris Carnell will not be at the September meeting he gave a brief pre-outing for the Camp out in October, which will be at Bald Rock, not the Upper Clarence River as advertised. We will be combining with the Camera club and will have a photographic competition for anyone interested.

Outing Report: As Bob & Mary Clarke who led the last outing were not at the meeting Rob McCosker gave the outing report. The weather was wet and overcast, but about 20 people drove past Waroo station after meeting at Greenlands school to a property on the Inglewood Texas Road. We walked in a loop through a paddock taking specimens of various acacias and mistletoes, then drove to another spot for lunch and birdwatching in the afternoon, before driving home via the Arcot Rd.

Specimens: Jean Harslett sent specimens of a number of acacias and other plants gathered on the outing which she had identified. Margaret and Kris Carnell also had plant specimens from the outing along with some rocks, and a large nest of a predatory bird which had blown to the ground, the empty cocoons of some insects which had built them in a clump of mistletoe.

Rod Hutchin had 3 pots of orchids - 2 native and one exotic which is used to breed red colour in Cattelyas.

Gordon Davis had a picture of a local Gecko which is not the Granite Belt gecko we have been asked to look out for.

Tom Archer moved & Noor Davis seconded that the nomination of Jean Harslett for the Natural History Award be sent to the Queensland Naturalist Society.

Next Meeting: Mary Walters will present the program at the meeting on 28th September. It will include a section on South Africa.

Programme: Gordon Davis had prepared a natural history quiz where we divided into teams of four to answer several series of questions. It was a novel and most enjoyable way to spend the evening.

Rob McCosker moved a vote of thanks to Gordon and the meeting closed.

NOMINATION FOR QUEENSLAND NATURAL HISTORY AWARD

Jean Harslett was raised on an orchard and vineyard situated in a pleasant valley to the south east of Stanthorpe. The area abounds in wildflowers and bird and animal life. An ideal environment in which to develop an interest in nature and also conservation.

Her father, Alec Gemmell, was a keen naturalist and collector of insects. Thus the seed of a fascinating interest was sown early in her life. So from her earliest days there developed a keen commitment to field work which rather ideally fits in with the life style of rural living. Field work and observation are essential to sound entomological science but is often not always possible for professional entomologists. From the collection of insects made by Jean and her father all type specimens and rare Granite Belt species are kept in part of the of the extensive collection of insects housed by the Australain Entomological Section in Canberra.

Written records of insects, their habits, plant habitats, flowering periods and bird movements have been kept since 1938 - specifically of the Granite Belt region (a block of granite country of about 50 by 30 kilometers with the main population centre being Stanthorpe).

Plant specimens were sent to various herbariums to be identified and the compilation of various lists sometimes jointly with others has helped to stimulate local interest in the districts splendid flora.

Among these many activities Jean went on to specialize in Buprestids (jewel beetles) and five new species were named in her honour. Butterflies were also a speciality, not only collecting and identifying them but also in learning their unknown life histories. This she did by collecting eggs and larvae and feeding them their natural diet (whatever that proved to be). In due time they pupated and eventually hatched out into adults. She was then able to collect perfect specimens and also photograph them. (enclosed written contributions - butterflies from the Stanthorpe District)

Mr I.B.Common (Country Life 1977) then Australia's foremost authority on butterflies claimed" Mrs Harslett was among the country's leading collectors of lepidoptera"- not bad for an amateur. She has also put together and maintained a wonderful collection of butterflies and moths beautifully mounted in special trays. Jean is a foundation member of the Australain Entomological Society and a member of the Queensland Entomological Society.

In 1946 Jean was given the job of naturalist on a six month expedition from Sydney via Bourke to Western Queensland, The Gulf and down the Queensland Coast. This was financed by the Australain Geographical Society. During this trip she wrote articles for "Walkabout"

In 1971 Jean was on Fraser Island with a party of forty members of the Queensland Naturalist club when they made a survey of the flora and fauna of the Island. Jeans contribution was "Butterflies from Fraser Island." (enclosed)

From the Stanthorpe district over the years she has recorded 110 different different species of orchids and over 70 species of Acacias. Many of these were recorded for the first time in Queensland thus extending their known habitat. That is a lot of orchids and acacias from one district.

As mentioned Jean has always been an active naturalist and conservationist ahead of the times and has been able to promote her views by being actively involved in numerous activities. She was awarded a B.E.M. in 1983 for community service and then the following year she was again recognised for community service by the Stanthorpe Shire Council with the Australia Day Award and in 1985 made a Paul Harris Fellow.

She was a member of the Stanthorpe Junior Farmers Club (later Rural Youth) for twenty two years as an advisor and was awarded the Silver Plough from this organization. She was able to promote her strong views on conservation and on many of the aspects of nature connected with farming.

Jean was and is a foundation and very active member of the Stanthorpe Camera Club and has won many awards for her "nature" photography for which she has a particular empathy. Jean has also been made a Life Member of the Stanthorpe Agricultural Society, an organization dedicated to the well being of horticulture and animal husbandry and thus also conservation. She is a life member and a very active member of the Stanthorpe Historical Society.

Jean and her husband, Rob Harslett are very active in the International Agricultural Exchange Association and have taken many exchange students from all parts of the world on camping trips through South East Queensland. This has introduced the exchangees not only to farming in Australia but also to the many natural wonders we have in our bush and in our national parks which no doubt stimulated an interest in these things.

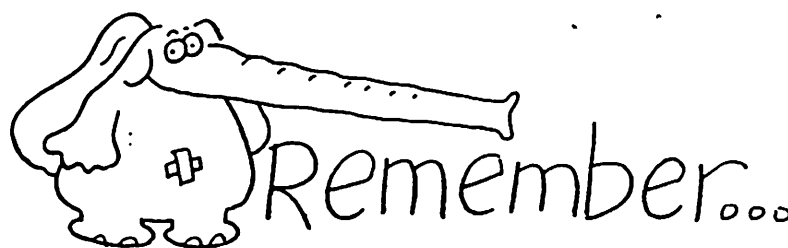
One of the accomplishments of which Jean is most proud is in having been successful in having made Girraween National Park accessible to the public. Girraween had been gazetted for some time but the "Pyramids", the main attraction, had been only partly included within the National Park boundary. To get into the Pyramids it was necessary to cross private property. Jean drew the governments attention to this shortcoming. Land was then acquired for the present picnic and camping area and headquarters. Since then the park has become very popular and has been greatly expanded. Jean also helped to give momentum to the establishment of the Sundown National Park.

Jean has for a long time been recognised in this district as the natural history expert. Also over the years she has been host to visiting entomologists botanists university students and various other academics interested in the natural sciences of the Granite Belt. Jean has a fine collection of gems found in this district and samples of alluvial tin from the many different mining areas. The "Old Timers" could tell from a sample of alluvial tin from which stream it came. She also has a collection of local aboriginal artifacts.

Jean has for her own interest and for other people sent many specimens of animals plants and reptiles away to be identified by the respective authority. Thus she has become aware of noxious plants surreptitiously moving into the area. Jean is in much demand to give slide shows on nature to visitors school children and various clubs etc. This all develops and maintains within the public an interest in the natural sciences and her wide knowledge and experience makes her an ideal person for the purpose.

More recently she prepared the botanical and general script for a now published book. This was "Australain Wild Flower Paintings". The paintings were the work of her late sister Dorothy Gordon who was tragically killed in a car accident.

Last but not least is the formation of the Stanthorpe Naturalist Club. At the inaugural meeting on 26.11.1969 at which the initiator Tom Chapman was elected president Jean was made vice president. She was the first guest speaker and the subject "The Purpose of a Naturalist Club". She also led the second outing. She has held various positions at different times, that of president for four years, vice president for five yeaes, bulletin editor for seven years and committee member for fourteen years and still participating actively.



**ANNUAL
SUBSCRIPTIONS
ARE NOW DUE**

SINGLE MEMBERSHIP - \$8

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP - \$15

Non-financial members will not receive an October newsletter

SEPTEMBER 25TH OUTING, GIRRAWEE NATIONAL PARK

The September 25th outing will be to Girraween National Park, when the ridge between the Sphinx and Mt. Norman will be explored. The first section is along a defined track to Turtle Rock but from then on degenerates to category 8 with a cross-country scramble of steep sections plus bush bashing through bracken, blackthorn etc. until the track to Mr. Norman is finally reached.

A small mobile reconnaissance party has taken 3 to 4 hours whereas a larger, slower party could be as long as 6 to 8 hours walking plus stoppage for lunch. Obviously, a slow party could mean being out on the walk until after dark, not to be recommended. Fortunately, there are plenty of other options at Girraween on defined tracks such as the Sphinx-Turtle Rock walk, Castle Rock, Mt. Norman track, First Pyramid and The Junction for interested persons.

Meeting place will be Weeroona Park at 9 a.m. Then drive to Castle Rock camping area on the right side of the road at Girraween. Time of departure from Park 10 a.m. Through walkers will need to carry their lunch and would need to keep up with the outings leader as far as Turtle Rock before the cross country section is tackled.

B C Dodd

Brian Dodd

GRANT APPROVAL FOR LANDCARE PROJECT

Approval for a Grant of \$2,800.00 has been received from the Australian Nature Conservation Agency for the project titled " Extension of Stanthorpe Shire Beautification of Creek " This grant has been made available under the " One Billion Trees Program " and the " Save the Bush Program ", a Federal Government initiative administered by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency through the National Landcare Program .

The activities for which funding has been approved are

- 1 - Provide suitable topsoil for further tree planting .
- 2 - Propagate shrubs and trees appropriate for the project and plant them out .
- 3 - Provide a sign for the Park name , Interpretive signs and plant name signs .

I think this is a very important project and a worthy one for our Club to be associated with . To quote from the original application " The project will provide the public with an insight to the past , allow plant species identification , recognize the value of our local flora and provide an historical and scientific educational outlet for the local schools ."

Rob McCosker.