

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 27

May 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. Tremeer	
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
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Programme.Field Outings:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Mystery Camp-out	20th-21st May	Mr. W. Cathcart
Texas Caves	25th June	Mr. D. Bluhdorn ?
Spicers Gap - Saturday		
Camp-out	22nd-23rd July	Mr. T. Chapman
Harsletts' Area	20th August	Mr. J. Harslett

Meetings:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Basic Geology	24th May	Mr. P. Higgins
National Parks	28th June	Mr. T. Ryan
Subject of Own Choosing	26th July	Mr. B. Dodd
"Remember Last Year"?	23rd August	Film Night.

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

The meeting opened at 8.05 pm. with 32 members present. 5 apologies were received.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Minutes of previous Meeting were confirmed by

Mr.R.McCosker seconded Mr.D.Pfrunder.

Carried.

Inward Correspondence: (i) Newsletters from other Nats Clubs.

(ii) Press releases from D.P.I. Brisbane.

(iii) Advice from University of New England re schools available for 1972.

(iv) Letter from New England National Park Trust informing our club that Ranger Robson will be unavailable to lecture here on 28th June 1972.

(v) Letter from Mr.E.Sutton requesting transport from his home by any club members going on field outings.

(vi) Letter from Toowoomba Adult Education with details to be followed when applying for lecture fees.

Outward Correspondence: (i) Letter to Adult Education with advice of our April meeting and outing.

(ii) Letter to New England National Park Trust requesting services of Ranger Robson to lecture to us on the 28th June.

Moved Mr.F.Wilkinson seconded Mr.R.Leiseman that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted.

Carried.

Treasurer's Report:

Balance March 20th 1972 \$46.06

Expenditure 6.56

\$39.50

Moved Miss J.Westcott seconded Mr.J.Verri that the Treasurer's Report be adopted.

Carried.

Business from Correspondence: It was resolved to let Mr.Sutton know that he was welcome to travel with any members on outings but it was pointed out that only a couple of members live south of his house and he may have to make alternative arrangements on trips when these members were not participating.

Tom Ryan is to be asked to lecture to our club in place of Ranger Robson on the 28th June.

It was moved by the President and seconded by Mr.F.Wilkinson that we write to Mr.P.Grant wishing him a speedy recovery from his illness.

General Business: Mrs.J.Harslett volunteered a report on the Easter visit to the Granite Belt by the Brisbane Nats.

Thanks were expressed by the President for the support given the bus tours during the Festival Week.

Mr.Peter Higgins will lecture to the club in lieu of Dr.Branch on the night of the 24th May. The subject Basic Geology.

It was moved by Mrs.J.Verri and seconded by Mr.Burton that meetings held May to September commence at 7.30pm. On a show of hands for voting the motion was lost 9 - 18.

Some members have suggested extra outings of a more rugged nature and these will be organised by the President and the members advised accordingly.

Outings Reports: Mr.F.Wilkinson reported on the outing to Undercliffe Falls/Rivertree at which the attendance was 62.

An extra outing led by Mr.P.Ingram 7.5.72 will cover Tenterfield area. Mr.Cathcart reminded of the Mystery Camp-out on 20-21st May.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm. Mr.Cathcart then addressed on the propagation of Orchids and some other natives. Mr.P.Grant unable to attend because of illness.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.AUSTRALIAN GROUND ORCHIDS:

Immediately the word orchid is used most men think of a beautiful, but expensive flower that their wife would like to receive on their wedding anniversary or wear as a corsage for an important or special occasion, consequently while most wives live in hope, most husbands find it expedient to have little interest in them.

Most people are familiar with the exotic orchids such as the Cymbidiums and Cattleyas, but in Australia we have many types of Orchids of which many are endemic.

There are about 750 different species in Australia, including Epiphytes, which are found mainly on the warm north-east coast. One such type is the Dendrobium species which includes the well known "Cooktown" orchid. We also have many hundreds of terrestrial or ground orchids, many of which are found in the Stanthorpe District and these small orchids grow in sheltered gullies or in the most appalling gravel and sandy country; also in the mountains and on grassy flats, each one is suited to its own position.

Like all plants the main function of the orchid flower is to produce seeds, which will enable the plant to replace itself. The flower of the orchid differs from most other plants. The flowers of most plants have a stamen which consists of a stalk or filament with pollen producing antler at the tip. The sexual parts can be seen with the naked eye and the anthers are usually yellow with pollen.

The flower of the orchid consists of two petals, the third petal or lower petal differs from the other segments and is called the labellum, which means "little lip". The upper segment is called the Dorsal sepal, it is often larger and may be hood shaped, below the two petals are two lateral sepals. Below, or at the back of the segments is the ovary, which looks like a swollen portion of the flower stem, it is here that after fertilisation this part develops into a seedbox.

In the centre of all orchids is the column. This and the labellum make the orchid distinct from other flowers. It is the column that bears the reproductive parts. The stalkless anther situated in a depression near the top consists of cells containing pollen grains. The walls of the anther cells are very thin and when the flower matures, are easily broken, thus releasing the pollen. Bundles of pollen adhere to the pollenating insect when it visits the flower, to be carried away to fertilise another flower. In many species the labellum and the column are made in weird and wonderful shapes to ensure that the right insect performs the function of fertilisation. The labellum also provides a landing platform for the insect.

It is a rather wonderful thing that certain ground orchids have utilised the services of insects to ensure that they keep perpetrating themselves. Some orchids look more like insects than a flower, so much so that it attracts the attentions of the male Ichneuman wasp. Some think that it may be the scent that lures the male wasp to approach the flower and go through all the motions of mating with the labellum. In so doing pollen becomes attached to the tip of his abdomen, then the insect approaches a second flower and mates with it, thereby transferring the pollen from the first flower to the second flower to fertilise it.

The orchid makes use of many different agents to assist it in the act of fertilisation.

The Greenhoods (Pterostylis species) of which there are a number of different types in the Stanthorpe district, makes use of the curved stem of the labellum which is elastic and very sensitive, a touch will make it spring

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.AUSTRALIAN GROUND ORCHIDS Cont.

over, trapping the insect inside it. Here Gnats and mosquitoes assist as pollinators. Entering into the hooded flower the insect springs the sensitive labellum which closes and traps the insect. In trying to escape, the gnat must crawl through a tunnel formed by the sprung labellum and over the column, picking up pollen or depositing the pollen bundles on its way out.

The tiny ground orchid has made use of many means in order to survive and to ensure that its species is maintained. I think that it is up to each and everyone of us to assist the plants to do just that; so even though it may look pretty and cute, the best advice is to leave them where they are - nothing can be gained by picking them. The best record is a colour slide which will last forever!..

From the address by Mr. W. Cathcart.

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COLLECTING BIRDS' EGGS IS ILLEGAL:

A warning that collecting birds' eggs in Queensland is illegal was issued by the Minister for Primary Industries, Mr. J.A. Row.

Mr. Row was speaking about recent Press reference to a large private collection of birds' eggs.

Responsible for administering the "Fauna Conservation Act of 1952", Mr. Row said he wished to make it clear that birds' eggs were regarded as fauna and were therefore protected.

Except for a handful of pest species, all native birds in Queensland were protected, he said. The taking of any protected bird, its skin, feathers, carcass, eggs, nest or young, without a permit, was an offence. The selling of such items was also prohibited.

The recent closure of the open seasons on birds also meant that the eggs of these species could not be legally taken.

In the past, Mr. Row said, some of the finest naturalists had had their interest in wildlife quickened by collecting birds' eggs. To-day there were more people and the population pressure on the environment was too great to permit free collecting.

The camera and notebook could provide just as much interest as could the actual collection of birds' eggs.

Press Release statement by the Hon. J.A.

Row, M.L.A., Minister for Primary Indust.

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BUSH COMPANIONS:

Birdwatching can sometimes be quite hilarious.

Some years ago I was living in the West. The nearest woman lived two miles away - and - she was stone deaf! While my husband was at work, I spent much of my spare time on watching the wild life.

Kangaroos and wallabies came in the mornings, emus strutted about during the afternoons, and kookaburras were always about waiting to be fed. One day, at feeding time, I dropped a piece of chewing gum. A jackass pounced on it, and got its beak well and truly stuck. The others crowded round him as he flapped his wings, and almost tied himself in knots in his anxiety to rid himself of the sticky morsel. He eventually did so, and all flew away never to return. Next day a group of squawking apostle birds came, but I didn't like their noise, so I was punished for my carelessness.

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D. WISEMAN.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Report on outing to Undercliffe Falls/Rivertree on 23rd April 1972.

Our outing for 23rd April was well attended, over 65 members and friends, lured out by the beautiful day, converged on Undercliffe Falls, about 17 miles East of Stanthorpe. Most went in convoy, leaving the Park about 9.15 am., and on arrival at the Falls area were greeted by the roar of the tumbling waters.

A rather steep track led to the Pool at the bottom, but several ropes were fastened to convenient trees and made the descent and eventual ascent comparatively easy.

The Falls had more water than usual and made an impressive sight. Mersons Creek and Jenners Creek join the Bookookoorara before it goes over the Falls. They all head in the area around the Border and Bald Rock.

My wife, daughter Clare and granddaughter Kim, the previous week helped me mow and clean up the picnic area and with hoe, reaping hook, saw and secateurs, clear a track along the Creek above the Falls. This allowed fairly easy walking to delightful rock pools and cascades.

Lunch was partaken now, and afterwards Mr.E.D.Bonner, on whose property the Falls are located gave a short talk on the various watercourses which merge and find their way down almost 2,000 feet to Rivertree, where we planned to visit later in the day.

These, plus Koreelah Creek, form the start of the North Arm of the Clarence River.

Mr.E.Sutton then gave us his reminiscences of the twenties when he took Francis Radcliffe to Rivertree. R. was studying Flying Foxes with the view to their control. He later wrote a book, "Flying Foxes and Drifting Sand" which tells of this time, of Diamond, Maddern and their sawmill, the logging teams etc. and is well worth reading.

Our thanks to these two gentlemen.

Leaving Undercliffe, (which incidentally is located in an area designated on two old maps we had with us as "Lunatic Goldfield") we followed Mr. Bonner who led us to the Eastern end of his airstrip, where we were pleasantly surprised at the magnificent view dominated by Mt.Lindsay, 60 miles away.

On to Rivertree, where we crossed the Bookookoorara or rather, drove through it on a concrete slab, a very pretty place. Further on we stopped to inspect two small mines (silver lead) on the N.side of the road while on the S.side over the creek could be seen the big brick chimney stack at the mine, long abandoned. Continuing for about 2 miles, we came to where Koreelah Creek moves through lower country, it is reputedly about 10° warmer than the Booky., and some of our younger members took advantage of this and despite the lack of swim gear, dived in. A request is made for the finder to return a pair of U.P's. lost in this manouvre!

Mr.John Verri here produced a case of grapes which were made available to all and were much appreciated. Thank you John.

Most cars left for home from here, but four or five crossed the Booky over a nearby wooden bridge and adjacent concrete crossing which spans a gravel bed where waterworn granite stones can be found. Continuing on up into the hills we inspected Dunlop's shaft, about 65 ft.deep, and also abandoned. As the road was very narrow we were obliged to travel another mile before we were able to turn, and so back to Stanthorpe, after a most enjoyable day.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Report on Outing to ? Mystery Camp-out:

The Mystery Camp-out is a R E A L Mystery!

The only details we can give is that it is 20th - 21st May.

*DEPART TOWN PARK 10am 20th*

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FAUNA OF THE GRANITE BELT:

I quote from an article about "Fauna of the Granite Belt" in the April issue of the Nats. Magazine,

"The gliders, all five species surely belong to the realms of the fairy tale, yet no Australian author as far as I am aware has thought fit to introduce them to children" end of quote.

In the children's section of the Shire Library is a much used copy of "Flip the Squirrel Possum", which is full of charming little illustrations drawn in black and white by a very competent artist, Miss Noela Young.

This is as it should be in order that the rising generation can learn to appreciate high art, and learn to love the little creatures which live in the Australian bush.

There are other books dealing with the adventures of a Muddleheaded Wombat for the tinies, also some suitable for older children, which tell of the aborigines, and their tales of the Dreamtime.

D. WISEMAN.

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KANGAROO POPULATIONS SAFE:

The Primary Industries Minister, Mr. Row, said he was particularly pleased with recent reports from his Fauna Conservation Branch officers on the kangaroo situation in Queensland. He said that although in recent years much publicity had been given to the fears of conservationists for kangaroo survival very little publicity had been given to the behind-the-scenes work of his officers in monitoring kangaroo populations and studying their habits.

It was not possible to count kangaroos in the wild, Zoologists in his Dept. have devised another means of keeping tab on populations. This method is unique in Aust. It involves sampling the kangaroo populations regularly and determining the age and sex of each animal in the sample. Mr. Row said that kangaroos are aged on their teeth and the method had been developed by Dr. T.H. Kirkpatrick at the Hermitage Research Station. From this information it was possible to determine the age and sex composition of the population. For example it is accepted that a shooters' sample of kangaroos containing at least 10% of the individuals ten years of age and older is an indication that the population is in a sound condition.

By continually monitoring the age composition of the kangaroo population in all areas of commercial harvesting, his Dept. was in an informed position. In fact Q'ld. was leading in this type of approach to the supervision of the commercial exploitation of wildlife.

Mr. Row said that natural factors were still dominant in controlling kangaroo populations in this State.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.KANGAROO POPULATIONS SAFE Cont.

The natural mortality of the young of any species of wild animal was normally very high. By removing the surplus population through commercial harvesting, many joeys which would normally die, are allowed to develop. Mr. Row said that his officers anticipated a large build-up of kangaroo populations following good seasonal conditions.

Press Release statement by the Hon.L.A.  
Row M.L.A.Minister for Primary Indust.

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Report of Extra Outing Sunday 7th May 1972.

The arrangements of our May 7th. extra outing, leader Philip Ingram for the outing to Gerard State Forest, east of Tenterfield were marred by the weather when rain in this area made the Forestry roads slippery and unfit to travel on. Philip then set about and arranged an alternate outing involving a round trip from Stanthorpe of approx. 160 miles.

Unfortunately, Sunday morning was dull and misty and only a small hand-full of members turned-up at the assembly point. The weather continued dull and after contacting Philip, it was decided to call off this outing to the Tenterfield area for the present.

Still, some people just won't be beaten and a number of enthusiasts assembled at the packing shed of Mr. David Townsend at Glen Aplin where the Ray Marsden's were fully occupied packing tomatoes (and very excellent tomatoes they were too!)

It so happened that none of those present had traversed the Mt.Norman road since the Jaycee and Apex Service Clubs had completed the crossing at Paling Yard Creek, so when the packing operation had been photographed, helped hindered and completed at about 11.30 am., three car loads set out along the New England Highway for Bee Hive Dam - the source of Wallangarra's water supply - where a leisurely picnic lunch was enjoyed in quite a picturesque setting.

The outing was then continued in showery conditions past Mt.Norman which was mostly shrouded in mist, but one car load passing at the right moment when there was a break in the clouds was able to catch a glimpse of the "eye of the Needle". Further on a rock-fall, believed to be the result of a lightening strike a few years ago, captured the interest of those who had not previously passed this way.

The road north of the Paling Yard Creek crossing has been widened by the Stanthorpe Shire Council and two concrete inverts have been completed.

Sunday's party took the road through to Eukey and returned back through Ballandean. This is the second occasion that the "Mt.Norman Road" has provided a popular outing alternative. The ruggedness of this country holds its appeal again and again and the area is well noted for its bird-like. A few kangaroos bounded into the bush at the approach of the cars; a colony of bees was noticed in an unsound cypress pine about 2 feet from the ground and there were still some wild-flowers - the Flannel Flowers noticed must be somewhat out-of-season! Perhaps the highlight of the outing was the bright Autumn colours of the vineyards and sone-fruit/pear orchards in the Ballandean area and along the main highway to Wallangarra. These Autumn tonings were certainly at their very best. Despite the showery weather the route provided a very pleasant drive. It is hoped for kinder weather for the next Tenterfield outing.

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D.P.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Do any Nats. ever feel like this?

I wish I were a little rock  
a-sitting on a hill  
Doing nothing all day long  
But just a-sitting still.

I wouldn't eat, I wouldn't sleep,  
I wouldn't even wash,  
But sit there for a million years  
And rest myself, by gosh!

Author Unknown.

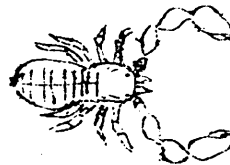
Contributed by D.Wiseman.

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PSEUDO SCORPIONS: In general shape these tiny Arachnids, seldom more than ¼" long, look like Scorpions which have lost their tails. To compensate for this, the pincers of the palps are greatly enlarged to be almost as large as the rest of the body, but surprisingly they are well controlled by the tiny animal. The body is very flat, smooth and glossy in shades of brown. The legs are fairly small and slender allowing a smooth gliding motion. It retreats into small cracks (usually in bark) moving just as fast backwards as forwards.

They have silk glands with which they build small nests. The silk is not used to catch prey.

In some countries Pseudo Scorpions are found in books or old papers and are called "Book Scorpions".



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REMEMBER THE MYSTERY CAMP-OUT 20th-21st MAY, 1972.

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Did you know: The only poisonous mammal in the world is the male Platypus. The poison glands are near the thighs and long tubes go from these glands to grooved spurs on the hindlegs. The poison is very much like snake venom. The male probably uses it in fighting other males during the mating season.

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Once upon a time there were three bears who lived in a cottage in the woods - thus started pollution!!!!

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All contributions to be in the hands of the Editors by the second Wednesday of the month. The Editors would like to keep the content of the Newsletter high in original contributions from Nats members.

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