

NOVEMBER 1995

VOL 275



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.

CLUB OFFICER BEARERS 1995/96

President :	Kris Carnell	076 835 268
Vice-Presidents :	Rob McCosker	076 835 371
	Lincoln McPhee	076 811 651
Secretary :	Mary Walters	076 835 306
Treasurer :	Roger Logan	076 812 493
Newsletter Editor :	Desley McDonagh	076 813 074
Magazine Committee :	Julie Beddow & Wendy Donges	
Publicity Officer :	Patience James	076 811 853
Librarian :	Trish McCosker	076 835 371
Management Committee :	President, Vice- Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer.	

ADDRESS CORRECTION NOTICE

Please check your address. If it is not exactly as it should be, for your satisfaction, but more importantly, correct for Australia Post delivery - PLEASE ADVISE THE CLUB BY PHONE OR MAIL. IF YOU HAVE A MAIL SERVICE OR A POST OFFICE BOX NUMBER THAT WE DON'T KNOW WE NEED IT!

FOR YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE !!

There are no meetings in December or January - first meeting for 1996 is on February 28th.

The December activity will be our Break-up at Rob and Trish McCosker's at 'Shortlands' Severnlea on December 10th - starting at 2.00 pm. Check the article in this magazine for details.

January Outing 21/1/96 is in the capable hands of Kris Carnell. PLEASE NOTE - Departure time 11.00 am to Basket Swamp. Check the article in this magazine for necessary information.

Next newsletter will be February's and will give you details of that month's outing (Poverty Point) and meeting (Bees - Lincoln McPhee).

To Our Readers



The Very Best For The Christmas Season.

AND -

May The Rain That So Many Of Us Are In
Desperate Need Of Come In Abundance.

A Very Happy And Wet 1996.



Mole Station Outing - November 19th

Leader Helen Hartman (Ph. 067 361423)

This property is near the Bruxner Highway west of Tenterfield.

We will drive to Mole Station via the Gibraltar Road, stopping at the Mole River Crossing for morning tea.

The next call will be at some old timber tobacco drying barns beside the road. These are worth at least a quick look and a photo or two and are listed on the Register of the National Trust.

We then proceed to Mole Station which is also home to the Mole Station Native Nursery, owned by Sarah and David Caldwell. The area is also interesting because, in some of the sheltered gullies there are remnants of dry rainforest vegetation. We will walk up one such gully, Tableland Creek, which is normally dry; walking on the stony creek bed poses the usual hazards.

On our return to the station homestead, Sarah will tell us something about the rationale and organisation of the nursery for which they propagate virtually all the plants. These are destined for farm woodlot and amenity planting and the horticultural industry. Those interested will be able to investigate the nursery more thoroughly and we will have lunch on the nearby river bank from which the willows have recently been cleared ("our own little bit of landcare"). The more energetic can climb the hill behind the nursery to inspect the seed plantings and the bud and foliage plantation.

After lunch there will be a visit to a derelict arsenic mine also on the National Trust Register. This is a rather eerie place but (I think) great for photography and there is quite a lot of exploring that can be done. Those who cannot resist picking up bits and pieces may wish to bring water for handwashing and, perhaps, an old pair of shoes which can later be washed.

There is also a small cave which can be reached after a short scramble and a pleasant walk along a level track which gives pleasant views of the river and adjacent country.

On a visit in mid October we saw

- a whalebone tree (*Streblus broniana*)
 - three different mistletoes on one Casuarina - one of them was parasitic on another mistletoe.
 - at least two, possibly 3, varieties of Clematis.
 - a family of wrens having flying lessons.
 - in the nursery garden, *Grevillea scortechinii* (black) and *beadleana* (red toothbrush) looking splendid.
- The former was grown from a cutting obtained by a wild plant at Cottonvale and *beadleana* is native to the Torrington area.

Departure time from Weeroona Park is 8 a.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC HELD IN
THE CWA ROOMS STANTHORPE ON 25TH OCTOBER 1995.

Opening :- President Kris Carnell welcomed everyone present to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to new member Carmen Nevin.

Attendance :- 20 present, 11 apologies as per attendance book.

Minutes :- The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record on the motion of Lyle Thompson, seconded by Tom Archer and carried.

Correspondence :- Inward :-

1. Dept of Environment & Heritage - replacement books. 2. Subscriptions from Fred Simpson, S & R. Amos, Mr & Mrs H.D. Gibson, B.Mallon, 3. Fred Simpson - Invitation 4. South East Queensland against East Link - seeking support. 5. Footprint. 6. Australian Naturalist Expeditions - advertising tours 7. A & J Ridge change of address.

Outward:-

1. Department of Consumer Affairs - additional information supplied. 2. Project Manager, Young Australian of the Year Award - Complaint 3. Community Billboard and Round the Ridges - particulars of outing and meeting.

The inward correspondence was received and the outward adopted on the motion of Mary Walters, seconded by Jean Harslett Carried.

Business Arising from the Correspondence:-

1. Fred Simpson extended an invitation to members to stay at his home at 35 Blundell Boulevard, Tweed Heads South. 2486 Phone 0755244965. Thank you Fred.
2. It was decided that no action would be taken regarding Eastlink.

Financial Statement

Acting Treasurer Rob McCosker moved and Ray Marsden seconded that the Financial Statement be adopted and that the following accounts be passed for payment. Room rent \$10.00; Magazine Postage \$35.05. Carried.

Balance as at 27/9/95 \$3866.45

Receipts 45.55

\$3912.00

Expenditure 293.44

Balance as at 25/10/95 \$3618.56

Business arising from Finance :-

Kris Carnell stated that we have started to spend money from the Heritage Park Grant and that the balance stands at \$2,250.

General Business

1. The October 8th outing was cancelled on account of the rain. This was the second outing arranged by Brian Dodd to be cancelled on account of rain. It was suggested that Brian be asked to arrange many more outings.

2. Outing Report :- As Lincoln McPhee was away, Desley McDonagh read report on the Campout at Urbenville.

3. Next Outing :- The outing on the 19th November to Mole River will be led by Helen Hartman.

4. Next Meeting :- Change of speaker. Judy Heil will be our guest speaker. Judy Heil has a Land Care Grant to enable her to work on a Program on the Remnant Vegetation of the Granite Belt.

5. Lord Howe Island :- Members, including those not going to Lord Howe Island, are invited to a briefing on the tour. A representative from Harvey World Travel and Errol Walker will present the programme which includes a slide show. Venue :- Vines Conference Room. Date :- 10th November. Time :- 7.30 pm.

6. Management Committee Meeting :- The next meeting will be held at 7.30 pm in the CWA Rooms prior to the monthly meeting on 22nd November.

7. Tagalong:- Millie Marsden suggested that as a club activity some members might like to join in a tour of this region. Millie will write an article on the subject for this magazine issue.

8. Heritage Park:- A working bee was held 3 weeks ago. 30 trees were planted and a roof placed on the shelter.

Over a period of time it is hoped to obtain trees and shrubs which conform to the character of the four different gardens. In the meantime, trees and shrubs will be planted to give colour and to provide ground cover. Some of these may have to be pulled out later.

More work needs to be done on the paths because of problems with water. Use will be made of compacted deco and pine bark to minimise soil erosion. Weeds are becoming a major problem. Members will be asked to help.

Specimens:-

1. Gathered by Tom Archer on our Urbenville outing :-
Wonga Vine - Tecoma family (Pandorea Pandorana) Flowers & seeds
Native Frangipani (Hymenosporum Flavuum) Flowers.

2. Brought in by Rob McCosker :-
Sacred Kingfisher - no apparent cause for its demise.
Skeleton Fungus -

A plant for identification (not identified)

Program John Sommerlad gave a fascinating talk on the history and culture of the Aborigines of this region. John also spoke briefly on the European settlers.

(The Moombahlene Local Aboriginal Land Council is at 299 Rouse Street Tenterfield NSW 2372 Phone (067) 363 209 Fax (067) 361 486. The Council runs Woolloomoolool Aboriginal Culture Tours. These tours are suitable for all ages and include such things as :-

- * Experienced driver with aboriginal guide at your service.
- * Lunch with billy tea. * Boomerang throwing demonstration
- * A guide with first hand knowledge of Australia's unique flora, fauna and bush tucker.)

BIRD LIST FOR CAMP OUT OCTOBER 21/22

This list compiled by Margaret Carnell - The following birds were seen either at the campsite or close by on the way home. There may have been others observed by other members of the club which I do not know about. There were certainly a number of calls heard and not identified by me.

Bowerbird Satin	Magpie
Butcher Bird Pied	Monarch Black Faced
Cat bird (call)	Pigeon (heard, glimpsed but not identified)
Cockatoo sulphur crested	Rosella crimson
Crow	Rosella eastern
Currawong	Thornbill (not sure which)
Dove bar shouldered	Whip bird
Fantail grey	Whistler golden
Fantail rufous	Willie wagtail
Finch fire tailed	Wren red backed
Honeyeater Lewins	Wren superb blue
Kookaburra	

ANYONE FOR TAG-A-LONG TRIPS ?

Would there be any interest among members for mini 'tag along trips'?

Recently Ray & I joined the Wilkinsons in a trip which took us to some interesting places and, as usual, when we see something special we wish we could share it with others. Our trip was over three days and it took us to overnight at Dalby, Miles and Goondiwindi. Leaving Stanthorpe at 8.00 am we travelled through Warwick and thence to Leyburn passing through 'history' as we went - the old Sandy Creek Pub, Leslie, Cunningham with the historical cairns, Pratten noted for gold and latterly for Danpork, to our morning tea break in Liberator Park Leyburn. Here we were serenaded by fourteen magpies, in return for scraps from our table - of course.

We then passed through the cotton growing areas surrounding Cecil Plains and on to Myall Creek in Dalby where we lunched amid the antics of many geese and their delightful offspring. We overnighted at Lake Broadwater where former members, Jack and May Bennie provided hospitality and a superb slide show.

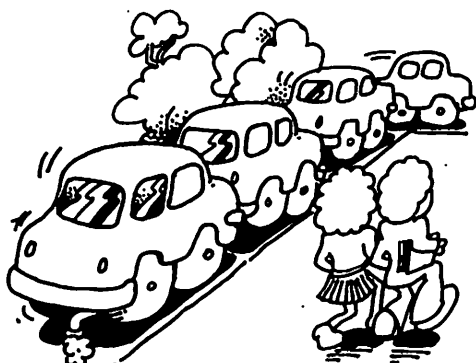
Next day we travelled to Miles, arriving about 11.00 am and spent several hours inspecting the museum and historical village. The attractions there are so diverse that it is hard to make choices about what to see first. We went on to our overnight stop at Possum Park which is 20 kms along the Leichhardt Highway.

Possum Park was originally RAAF Kowguran Sub Depot to No.3 Central Reserve Explosive Store during World War 2. It comprises 20 concrete underground bunkers which David and Julie Hinds are converting into modern self contained motel units. David and Julie bought the property in 1985. Troop train accommodation is also offered along with superb camping facilities and caravan park. One bunker has been converted into a games room, another houses RAAF memorabilia. Bush walking is also available so there are plenty of activities on offer.

Our next day took us through Condamine, Moonie and on to Gundy where we lunched with Gunsynd on the banks of the river. A visit to the museum proved interesting and their garden was quite superb. We were told that the Rose Spectacular was being held in the lovely Golden Age Centre so we were able to see that also. After a restful night in a motel we headed for home the following morning.

We never know just what we will see when we set out on our 'mystery trips'. Is any one interested either in organising such a venture or joining in a 'tag-along' at convenient times?

Millie Marsden



CHRISTMAS BREAKUP - 10TH DECEMBER 1995



At Rob & Trish McCosker's property "Shortlands" Severnlea.

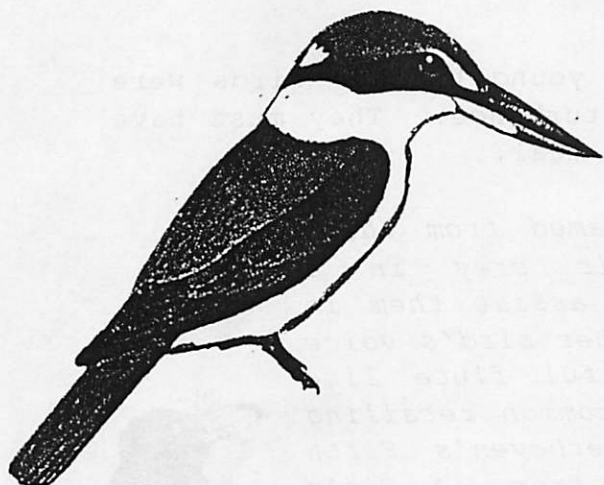
Arrive at 2.00 pm if you wish to take part in a short bushwalk along Bamerry Creek then up a neighbouring hill for the views of Severnlea.

Arrive at 5.00 pm for Bar-B-Que - tables, chairs, hotplate and cook supplied - BYO everything else.

Directions - Turn off highway at the Blue Topaz Caravan Park approx 5 km south of Stanthorpe. Cross bridge and continue west through crossroads to T intersection, turn right at Lofaro's Road, then left at Jones' Road. Take next roadway left signposted "Shortlands".

Caution - we have some vicious bindiis in the garden and three friendly big dogs. (Rob & Trish McCosker).

SACRED KINGFISHER



The specimen found on our property is, according to The Readers' Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds, the most familiar of the smaller Australian kingfishers. It is as land kingfisher found in all types of open, wooded country, near dams and even in mangroves. Usually it is a solitary bird, pairing only for breeding and then forming family groups for a short time before dispersing in Autumn.

Nesting takes place between September and March in the form of a burrow above ground in a termite mound, hollow limb, earth bank, and even a fence post. Both sexes excavate the nesting burrow. They make the initial impression by flying at the site like guided missiles, then dig by using the bill as a pick and clawing out debris with their feet. The bill seems to be much too large in proportion to the rest of the bird. No doubt this also enables the kingfisher to readily catch its food which consists of small lizards, crickets, beetles, grasshoppers and of course, fish.

We have no idea what was the cause of death, as there was no sign of damage and we are sad that we will no longer be seeing this one perched on the branches of our white cedar tree, sitting very still except for the occasional bob of the head as it watches for prey. Rob McCosker.

(Editor's note for those who were not at the October meeting - Rob brought a dead Sacred Kingfisher as a specimen.)

IT PAYS TO BE OBSERVANT

A short time ago I found the skeleton of a sparrow hanging by its head in a fork of one of the bottle brush trees in my front yard. I noticed it but did not give it another thought.

This morning I observed an immature pied butcherbird struggling with something in the same tree. I watched and noticed that the butcher bird had a dead sparrow in its beak. It was trying to carry the sparrow up the tree which took several attempts. When it had the sparrow with its head firmly fixed in a small branch it proceeded to pull it apart. Unfortunately, I was unable to get a photograph, not only because the bird was a bit shy of the camera, but because it wasn't easily seen in the tree anyway.

The butcher bird came back several times while I was around the house and garden and tore the bird's body apart. It must have come back again because I noticed this afternoon that there were only a few small feathers left in the fork of the tree.

I had noticed previously that the young butcher birds were around the house and causing a disturbance. They must have been trying to catch sparrows for a meal.

'Butcher birds are so named from their habit of wedging their prey in a suitable branch fork to assist them in feeding.' The pied butcher bird's voice is described as 'Beautiful flute like calls, one of the most common recalling the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony' (These quotes from A Field Guide to Australian Birds - Passerines - By Peter Slater published by Rigby.)

There are 4 butcher birds :- the Pied, Grey, Black backed and Black. We have the Pied and Grey in this area, while the Black-backed is found in Cape York north of the Palmer River and in southern New Guinea and the Black is found in Northern Australia and New Guinea and satellite islands. The Pied butcher bird is the most common and found in most of mainland Australia.



Dasley.

JANUARY OUTING - 21/1/96

The January Outing will be to Basket Swamp and will be led by Kris & Margaret Carnell. We will leave Weeroona Park at 11.00 am (PLEASE NOTE TIME) and travel to Basket Swamp picnic area for lunch. After lunch there will be an opportunity for those who wish to have a swim. Others can explore up the creek or the hill opposite. We will drive to the falls for afternoon tea and a bit more of a walk or swim. Any queries phone (076) 835 268

SPEAKER - NOVEMBER MEETING 22/11/95 8.00 pm CWA ROOMS

There has been a change to the November meeting programme. Our speaker will now be Judy Heil. Judy has undertaken a Landcare funded project to identify the remnant vegetation in the Stanthorpe Shire.

Before the next stage of the study can be undertaken i.e. how to preserve and manage the vegetation, there has to be public feed back on the project so far.

As well as the information Judy has gathered it is also hoped to have maps prepared by the Forestry Department on display.

OUTING REPORT - CAMPOUT 21/22 OCTOBER AT "LEVUKA"

The outing was attended by 26 members arriving at Levuka Camp Site. The camp was situated close to Beaurie State Nature Reserve.

Owner of the property, Mr Rob Clark, led a walk to very interesting features on his farm and adjoining area. We visited a 50 year old hoop pine plantation, passing many species of scrub trees, including red cedar, teak (or crow's ash), booyong, strangler fig and many other huge trees growing in their natural state. We arrived back at the camp site in time for afternoon tea.

A few keen Nats travelled to the Lookout for a view of the mountains as the shadows lengthened in the late afternoon, observing Mt Barney, Mt Lindesay, Nightcap Mountain, Courts Crown, Edinburgh Castle and South Obelisk.

The evening was fine and warm, so we all gathered around the campfire for a chin wag. Many tales were told! The blessing of the Marsden damper was performed!

Sunday morn broke cloudy and drizzly but by 7.00 am it was fine and hot. A walk was immediately arranged, leaving at 8.30 am to Apple Tree Lookout. The mountains were spectacular covered in early morning mist. (Mt Lindesay had disappeared overnight!!)

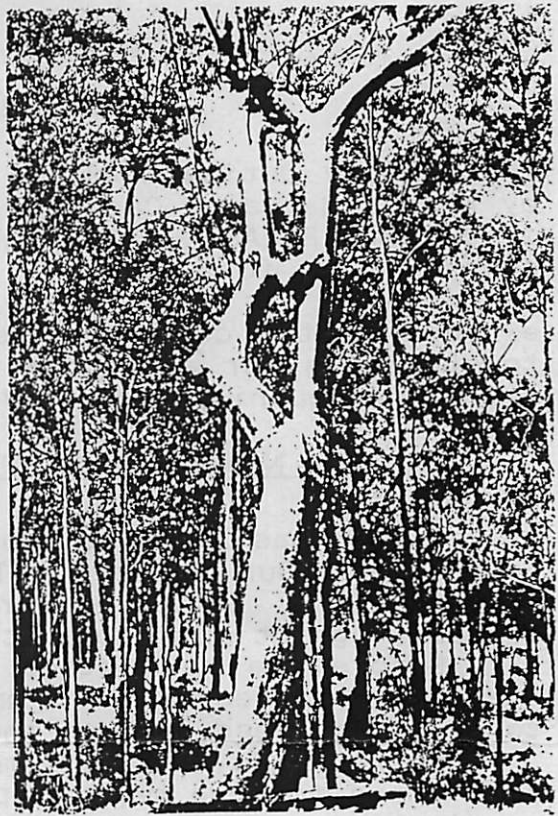
We returned to the camp site via a small waterfall where hanging birds' nests were seen. Our procedure was interrupted by a black snake crossing the track. Many people thought it was black polythene hose until it moved! A turkey's nest being constructed was observed.

After lunch, most of us broke camp, very happy with the weekend. Bird Calls heard at the Campsite were - Owl, cat bird, pigeon, pheasant, king parrot and whipbird.

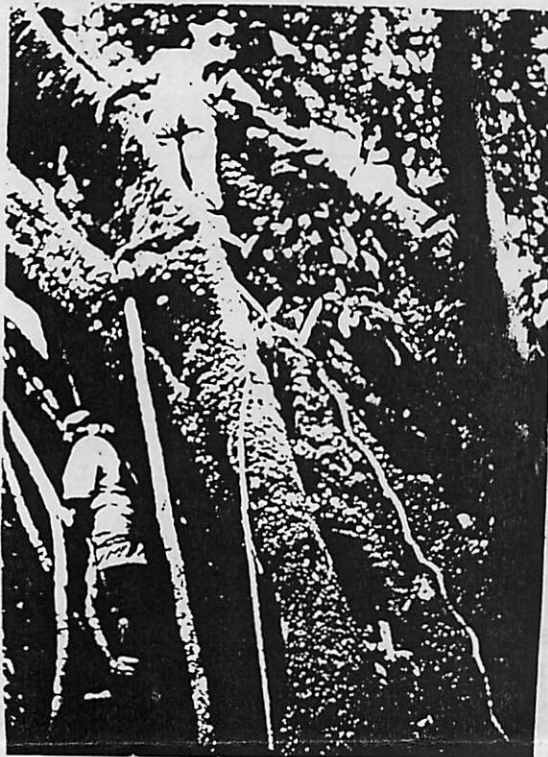
Thanks to Margaret Carnell for compiling the bird list for the weekend.
Lincoln McPhee



*Lincoln Jennifer McPhee at Todoom
Picnic Area with large Pelled tree.*



Interestingly shaped tree.



Strangler Fig



Campsite at "Levuka"

The Last Word -from the Editor

The campout. What a great weekend! Peace and quiet and friendship; good company in pleasant surrounds. What if the amenities left something to be desired? Did it really matter?

Not a radio or TV in sight or hearing, telling of all the murders, fires, mayhem wars etc. - for a few beautiful hours my whole world was a peaceful one. There should be more of it!

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Thank you to the contributors to this newsletter. Editing it will be enjoyable and rewarding if you continue to do so and the newsletter will be more interesting for us all. THANK YOU VERY MUCH !

Jesley.