

NOVEMBER 1996

Vol 285



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 OFFICE BEARERS 1996/97

President :	Kris Carnell	076 835 268
Vice-Presidents :	Rob McCosker	076 835 371
	Lincoln McPhee	076 811 651
Secretary :	Liz Bourne	076 836 374
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 and advise of any change needed.

COMING UP

1. NEXT MEETING will be held on November 27th at the CWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe at 8.00 pm. Gordon Davis will be presenting a programme titled 'Life on Earth - How?'

2. NOVEMBER OUTING - Sunday 24th November - Hardy's Gully & Donnelly's Castle. Leaving Weeroona Park at 9.00am. Further details inside.

PLEASE NOTE

1. DEADLINE DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER - NO newsletter until February 1997. Deadline date February 10th.

2. CHRISTMAS BREAKUP - 8th December - John & Sue Kenna's home. Further details inside.

3. JANUARY OUTING - 19th January - Quartpot Creek. Further details inside.

4. NO JANUARY MEETING. Next meeting Wednesday February 26th 1997.



The President & Members
of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc.

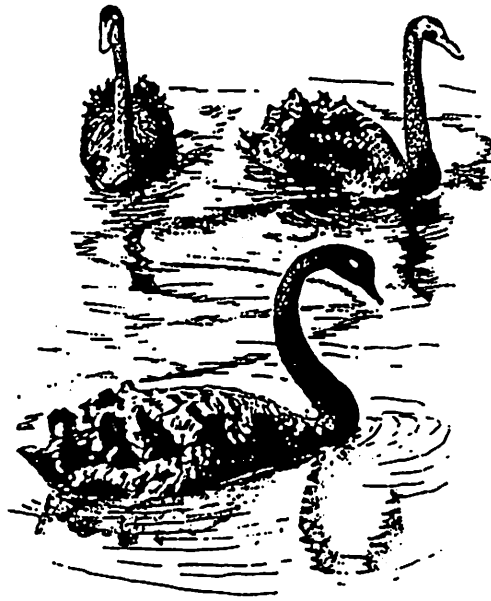
wish all readers

A Very Happy Christmas

&

A Prosperous & Joyful 1997.





BIRD LIST FOR INVERELL CAMPOUT

TINGHA GEMS CARAVAN PARK

Black ducks
Red rumped grass parrot
Starlings
Crested pigeons
Galahs
Yellow rumped thornbill
Superb blue wren
White plumed honeyeater
Magpie
Willy wagtail
King parrot
Peewee
Jacky winter
Grey shrike thrush
Welcome swallow

GOONOOWIGALL NATURE WILDERNESS

Rufus whistler
Yellow robin
Yellow tufted honeyeater
Little Cuckoo shrike
Grey crowned babbler
Wedgetailed eagle
Grey fantail
Wattle bird
Turtle dove (heard)
Dusky wood swallow
Eastern rosella
Eastern spinebill
Black faced cuckoo shrike
Superb blue wren

INVERELL LAKE RESERVE

Pelican
Dusky moorhen
Darter
Reed warbler
Black swan & cygnets
Crested grebe
Little pied cormorant
Superb blue wren
White plumed honeyeater
Little grebe
Little black cormorant
Purple swamp hen
Willy wagtail
Starling
Crow
Welcome swallow
White heron
Weed ducks
Sparrow hawk

ON THE ROAD

Galah
Bronzewing pigeon
Sulphur crested cockatoo
Magpie
Crow
Kookaburra
Peewee



A 'TINNY' CAMPOUT

(The editor, who on this occasion just happens to be the Campout leader as well, was given a choice as to the publication of this contribution. She has decided to do so but will exercise her editorial comment where SHE thinks it necessary).

'The campout that was to be - wasn't to be - and what a mistake. Copeton Dam was the original destination but was changed to Tingha. (Well, did you want to share spartan amenities with 200 fishermen for a fishing competition weekend? No on site vans or power either for those who lived it up in luxury at Tingha.)

The elements seemed against us right from the start as the Friday campers pitched their tents in the rain with a storm following during the night. (Actually, I pitched my tent with some very welcome help, only in very light rain, but it was interesting, to say the least, to lie awake listening to the rumble of thunder [and Fred's voice] and watch the lightning!) These were followed by more clouds, some sun and a strong cold wind which tried to deck the tents, while a near frost on Monday morning topped it off. (Some of us HAD to go to work on Monday - WE didn't see/feel the frost).

Several had problems with reading road signs properly eg missing Sinclairs Lookout (heads in the treetops instead) [The driver???], with others missing the Caravan Park streets (we weren't told there were two bridges). (I quote from the destructions in the newsletter - The Tingha Caravan park is on Swimming Pool Road - left off the Tingha Guyra Road after crossing Copes Creek bridge. I repeat - off the Tingha Guyra Road - not the Tingha Inverell Road!!!) Maybe we were confused by thinking we had to go on to the town common with the stock which seems trained to stay out of the town area by grids or the false grids painted on the roads. Another point was that compass points were debatable. (Our Bee Keeper Vice President does know the difference between a sparrow and a pelican but not between East and West. He was really confused when the sun came up in the East on Saturday morning !)

Progressively as the weekend went by we were prone to distractions. Maybe at Lake Inverell the horses should have been given that apple - (BUT IT WAS MY APPLE!) and keep them friendly, or entice the waterbirds a bit closer for easier viewing while the reed warblers said 'Catch me if you can'. The wildflowers there did co-operate and stay put.

*At Goonoowigall Reserve we were greeted (is that the correct word?) by swards of Mouse Bush (*Homoranthus flavescens*) in full flower (smell) but later got the sting from active bullants. The head buried in the info sheet led to a foot submerged in a rock puddle. For a while we thought the Dino Rock had captured Fred. The day's outing proved too much for one who was gracefully floored by a tent peg, much to some people's amusement. (It was such a graceful subsidence AND it was the editor/leader's tent peg!)*

The Club circle on Saturday night was a very chatty one interspersed by oohs and aahs when the ginger hotted them to silence. Nuts eaten by nuts could be thought appropriate by some people who don't put their eyes to the ground and sky but we also had the chocolate to sweeten us up. At the camp tragedy was suspected when we almost had to look among the stones in the bottom of the Cessnock fossickers'bucket to find our missing members.

On looking back, all the potential disasters made for a camp that was full of fun and the best company anyone could wish for. (I STRONGLY AGREE WITH THAT !)

Signed - One of the above victims.' (Is victim right?!)

CAMPOUT REPORT - INVERELL AREA

18/19/20 OCTOBER.

As several members of the club expressed their enjoyment of the weekend this seemed to me to be a successful campout. It was not a mountain climbing outing, but I'm sure that it was a good activity for naturalists.

Friday night there were 15 at Tingha Gems Caravan Park, 11 more arrived on Saturday night and there were 2 day visitors on Sunday. Considering that the weekend started off threatening very wet weather that was real commitment. I want to express my appreciation to those who braved the elements. I'm sure they found it was worth it and the weather turned out to be quite good.

The outing officially began with lunch on Saturday at 12 noon at Lake Inverell Reserve. Some nats walked quite a distance around the lake - actually as far as the river at the end/beginning of the dam. Some walked a shorter distance and just enjoyed the scenery and the company. Those of us (6) who walked the longest distance were rewarded with the sight of several intricately woven nests of the reed warbler. We also saw the birds which was a treat because they generally hide in the reeds and move too rapidly to be seen. There were quite a number of tortoises which stuck their heads out of the water every so often for air. We also listed quite a number of water birds we saw while at Lake Inverell Reserve.

After we left there a number of us went along the road to The Ponds. The road became worse and the ponds were either not to be seen or not very exciting so we gave that quest up and returned to Tingha. Saturday night was spent pleasantly sitting around enjoying each other's company and peanuts, ginger and chocolate.

Sunday morning we set out from Goonoowigall Wilderness Reserve at approximately 9.00 am to walk around the track. The round track was 5.1 kms and it probably made 6 km with the detours to the Junction and the falls and looked at the Slot. I'm not sure if anyone investigated Thunderbolt's Rock - there was some discussion about the number of rocks the Thunderbolt had anything to do with. The walking was easy but interesting and I'm sure that those who did it enjoyed it. The most noticeable flora was the mouse bush, *homoranthus flavescens*, was in full odor! We saw a goanna which ran up a tree and sat letting us observe it for some time. It was very well camouflaged. While the flowers were not as spectacular as they had been when I did the pre-outing, the creek had much more water in it than when I was there earlier in the year. A number of us lunched sitting in the shade of overhanging rocks overlooking the falls, while some lunched at the slot. The slot is a narrow man-made channel cut into a large area of flat rock, that channel believed to be the scene of a waterwheel as large iron spikes can be seen in the rock. There had been a small dam there once used to supply water for mining activities.

While the original plan was that we come home by convoy via Pindari dam, so many people didn't come home on Sunday that that plan was scrapped. I am pleased that so many enjoyed the Inverell area that they stayed another day. I thank the folk who came and made the weekend worth the effort of planning, and I was pleased to take my friends in the Nats Club to an area that I found beautiful. Although I have been there three times already I would hope to go again and spend more time there.

Desley McDonagh.

MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

FROM FRED SIMPSON - THANKS FRED!

'I thought these currawong capers may cause interest for the magazine. The neighbour's cat came across crying that it was hungry. The lady where I was working said "Go on, I've already given you milk this morning," but the cat persisted so another saucer of milk was put out on the lawn. Soon the cat returned meowing again. The lady was puzzled as to what was happening to the milk so the procedure was repeated. I noticed two currawongs waiting, sitting on the clothes line. As soon as the cat appeared, one bird would harass it to such an extent it could not get near its food while the other currawong drank it. As there were two pair of currawongs nearby we could only guess all the cat's food had been stolen in the same way.

Also :- That plover was in its usual annual position sitting on a nest in the median strip where the main road junction occurs on the way north of Stanthorpe, but I was told the nest or eggs had been accidentally destroyed by a mower previously this season? The bird must have realised it was only a mistake on the part of humans and trustingly returned with new eggs to its annual nesting place.'

Fred sends best wishes to all and thanks for a marvellous weekend. I quote 'Good company and friendship'.

AND FROM AUDREY RIDGE - THANKS AUDREY !

'Since we moved into town, the dogs and I have been taking an afternoon walk along the banks of Quatpot Creek, and enjoying watching the water birds. As well as the assortment of ducks and the swamp hens and cormorants, we have seen tortoises, a darter, egrets, white and straw necked ibis, three types of heron and on two occasions a pelican, and on the banks we always have galahs and plovers, and from time to time the red-rumped grass parrots.

I had always considered ducks to be gentle creatures but we have observed several quite fierce duck fights from time to time, and recently I observed a mother duck bravely defending her brood against a predator. It was the first duck family I had seen this season, and I was trying to count the ducklings, when I observed something swimming across the creek towards them. Only the head was visible and I could not make out what it could be. Surely not another duckling. (I had already counted eleven). Mother duck saw the intruder at the same time, and a fierce scuffle ensued, after which she gathered up her babies and swam away with the family intact. I was intrigued to see what could have caused the commotion, and eventually saw a long, thin lizard, at least 2 feet long, climb out of the water and spread itself upon a rock. A couple of weeks earlier I had seen three such lizards sunning themselves on the rocks on the creek bank, but I had not expected them to to fancy ducklings for dinner.

Footnote : At the time of writing there were still eleven ducklings in the family. Full marks to mother duck!!'

MINUTES OF MEETING OF STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.
held in Q.C.W.A. Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on 23rd October, 1996

Opening: The meeting opened at 8.04pm with President, Kris Carnell, welcoming members and visitor, Fred Simpson.

Attendance: There were 43 present and 6 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: These were received as a correct record of the meeting on 25/9/96 on the motion of Rob Mc Cosker, seconded by Patience James. Carried.

Correspondence:

- Outwards:** Notice of outing and meeting to *Round the Ridges* and *Community Billboard*.
Inwards:
1. Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club - *Urimbirra*, Sept. 96 and October, 96
 2. Toowoomba Bushwalkers Club - *Footprint*, Oct. 96
 3. P & D Langdon; Julia Brown; Ron and Peggy Travis; D M Spence; EZ Newman; JE Evans - membership renewals
 4. Matrix Office Systems - statement for photocopier use
 5. Consumer Affairs - Qld. - request for notification of registered office of club
 6. Power, Tynan - advising that they would be unable to continue as auditors for the club and suggesting other accountants who might be able to undertake this role.

This was received on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Margaret Carnell. Carried.

Business Arising from Correspondence:

1. Consumer Affairs

The recent annual return to the Department of Consumer Affairs omitted to supply them with a nominated registered office for the Club. Kris Carnell offered to pursue this matter with them as it usually the home of the secretary or president.

2. Power, Tynan

Kris Carnell will approach the other accountants suggested by Power, Tynan to see if they would be willing to become the club's auditors.

Financial Statement for 25/9/96 to 23/10/96

Balance as at 25/9/96 \$1102.42

Receipts:

Subscriptions	\$107.00
Room rent collection	<u>\$ 8.40</u>
	<u>\$115.40</u>

\$1217.82

Expenditure:

Room rent	\$ 12.50
Magazine postage	\$ 36.60
Receipt & account books	\$ 3.25
Govt. tax (2/9/96)	.50
Govt. tax (1/10/96)	<u>.75</u>
	<u>\$ 53.60</u>

(53.60)

\$1164.22

Balance as at 23/10/96 is \$1164.22

Accounts for payment:

Julie Beddow - magazine postage for October	- \$36.60
QCWA - room rent	- \$10.00
Matrix Office Systems	- \$40.00
Russell Carnell	- \$63.15

The financial statement for the month was adopted on the motion of Roger Logan, seconded by Frank James. Carried.

Outing Report:

Desley McDonagh reported on the Campout to the Inverell area held on the 19th/20th October which visited the Lake Inverell Reserve and the Goonowigall Wilderness Area.

Brian McDonagh gave a report on the half-day outing to The Bluff which was held on the 6th October and attracted 10 participants.

Next Outing:

Kris Carnell gave a brief outline of the proposed outing to Hardy's Gully and Donnelly's Castle on the 24th November. Donnelly's Castle will be visited for morning tea and then it is proposed to travel on to Tom Dunn's property and follow up a gully to some interesting rock formations. If time allows, it is also proposed to visit the site of the proposed Broadwater Dam.

Next Meeting:

Gordon Davis will be the guest speaker at the next meeting on 27th November.

Specimens:

1. A flowering native orchid found in north eastern NSW and south east QLD
2. "Rock" specimens from the desert in SA (later revealed to be fused sand from the Maralinga atomic test site)
3. Three flowering callistemon - mauve, yellow and little red - grown from seed by the Carnells

General business:

The removal of the memorial plaque from the seat in Heritage Park was raised as a matter of concern. Kris explained that the Shire Council was hoping to build an interpretive centre to explain the history behind the park and it was intended to put the plaque in there where, hopefully, it would be more protected from vandalism.

Guest speaker:

David Wilson gave a very interesting and informative talk on the geological history of the volcanic regions of Australia, illustrated by some excellent slides, covering such areas as the Undara Lava Tube, the crater lakes on the Atherton Tablelands, Mt Warning and Mt Gambier.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm.

OUTING NOVEMBER 24TH

The outing on November 24th will be to Donnelly's Castle and Hardy's Gully. We will leave Weeroona Park at 9.00 a.m. and travel to Donnelly's Castle through the northern fruit growing part of the Granite Belt. After smoko we will climb to the lookout where there are good views of the Granite Belt, a very easy walk. We will then drive to the property of Tom Dunn (snr), which has both Broadwater Creek and Cannon Creek flowing through it.

Hardy's Gully is a tributary of the Broadwater and the junction is a short distance down from where we will be parked. There may be time to walk down and back before lunch. This area is a popular fossicking spot and there might be some nice stones for your collection. This walk is a little rough in parts.

After lunch we will walk up Hardy's Gully to a very interesting section of the creek with rock formations, little pools, water running under rock slabs etc. Living in the pools are red crayfish, blue crayfish and purple spotted gudgeons (native fish). With a little luck the Happy Valley bottlebrush should be in bloom. On the pre-outing a number of wild flowers were out in the area.

Depending on the time and weather there is another ridge we can explore if we want. This area is a cypress ridge and very different from the gully. wildflowers likely to be out would include flannel flowers and large everlasting.

Lunch and smoky will be at the vehicles.

Rating: Donnelly's Castle - 3; Hardy's Gully downstream - easy 7 (some undergrowth and a little rock hopping), Hardy's Gully upstream 5.

Kris Carnell

BREAK-UP 1996 - John & Sue Kenna's Amiens Property
Sunday 8th December.

The Christmas Breakup will be held at John & Sue Kenna's Amiens property on Sonogo's Lane. Travel out on the Texas Road and turn right into Elks Lane, 11kms from Stanthorpe. A short distance later turn left into Spring Creek Road. Sonogo's lane is the 3rd road on the left. It is 2 kms from Spring Creek Road to Kenna's gateway and their driveway is about 1km long. Barbecue will be supplied, BYO food etc and a chair.

Members are invited to come from 3.00pm onwards. Depending on the day there are a number of short walks to take, also fishing or swimming in the dam. Those wishing to go on a longish walk please be there before 3.30pm. There is good bird watching round the waterhole from about 5.00pm.

The Barbecue tea will start about 6.00pm. For further information - Kennas 833241 or Kris Carnell 835268.

THE BLACK FRONTED PLOVER

Desley asked in last month's newsletter if anyone could remember when they first saw a particular bird. On the 18th November I was driving home from work when I saw two small birds, which proved to be Black Fronted Plovers or Dotterels, in the middle of the road junction of Beverley Road and Whiskey Gully Road. One of them was displaying and when I drove up froze in a crouching position. I noticed their red beaks and red eye ring and felt sure they were plovers of some sort.

According to my Simpson and Day Field Guide they often frequent stony river banks, so perhaps they thought that's what the road was. The next morning they were in the same place, but I have not seen them since. Kris has, however, on the wall of a dam nearby.

Margaret Carnell.

Thanks very much Margaret,
and I add some more bird observations -

I recently did a train trip out to Charleville. Train leaves Toowoomba close to midnight and arrives at Charleville about 12 hours later. During the daylight hours I watched out the windows and made a note of the birds that I could identify as we travelled. Was pleased to see a pheasant coucal, the usual galahs, crows, plovers, magpies, black faced cuckoo shrikes, wood ducks, quite a lot of emus - one father with eight young, and one plain turkey (bustard) along with white cockatoos and wedgetail eagles. There were also many I could not identify because we moved apart too fast.

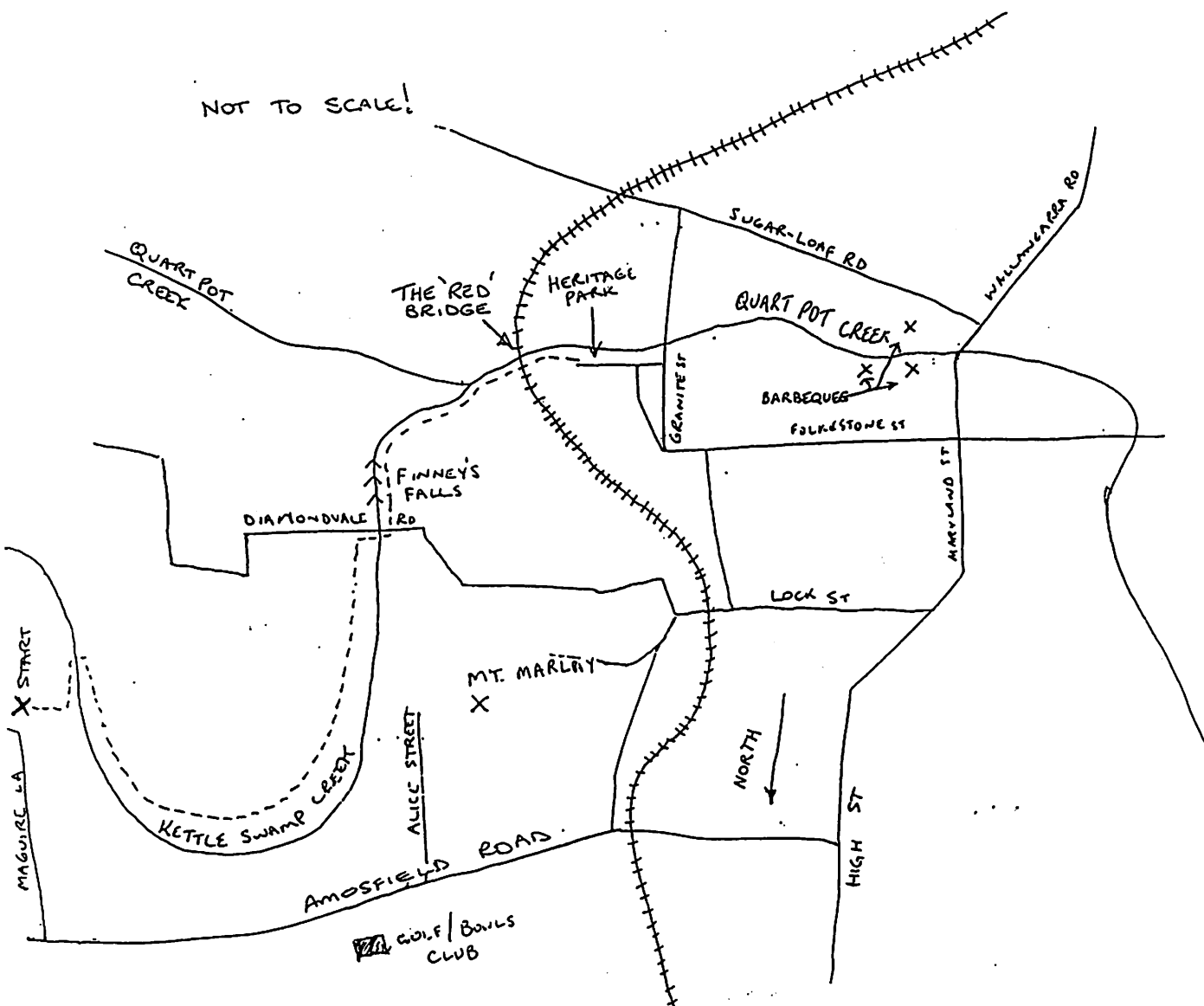
Don't let anyone tell you train travelling is dull and boring.
IT'S NOT! It's what you make it! Desley McDonagh

OUTING - QUARTPOT CREEK - 19TH JANUARY 1997

This outing, proposed for January is to be a through walk from Roger Logan's property along the Kettle Swamp Creek to Heritage Park. This is about 4 kms, mostly grade 5 (easy, with a few fences, one will have a ladder provided. On the way are signs of mining activities, a waterhole which may have been one of Stanthorpe's swimming holes, a long dam which provides a haven for wildlife, and Finney's Falls which is a cascade just before the junction with Quartpot Creek.

This will only take a couple of hours. There are further tracks which can be taken from Heritage Park and barbecues further along the creek if people are inclined to stay for lunch. It will be necessary to leave some cars at Heritage Park for ferrying drivers back to their cars.

N.B. Meeting time will be 9.00 am at HERITAGE PARK.



FROM THE EDITOR - an APOLOGY:- There are a number of contributions that I cannot fit in this issue of the Newsletter. Thank you very much!! They, and others will be in later issues - beginning in February.