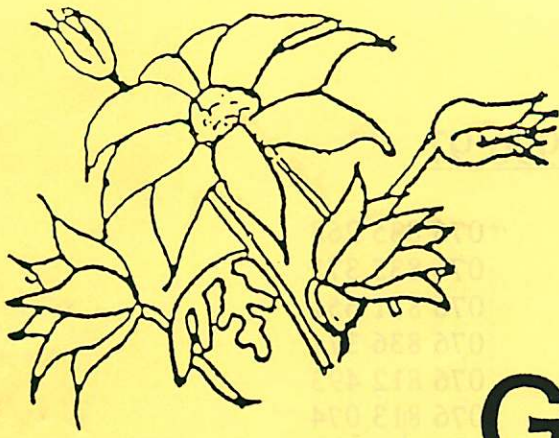


APRIL 1997

Vol 288



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 Wednesday, April 23rd at the CWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe at 8.00 pm. Narelle Crawford will present a slide show on the Flinders Ranges.

2. APRIL OUTING - To Mt Matheson in the Main Range area. Leaders :- Warwick members David Wilson and Narelle Crawford. Departure time from Weeroona Park 8.00am (PLEASE NOTE TIME) Sunday 20th April. More details inside.

PLEASE NOTE

1. DEADLINE DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER - Monday May 12th. The editor thanks those responding so promptly to set deadline dates. Contributions are very welcome - send them to the club's address or to me at 4 Pierpoint Street, Stanthorpe, 4380.

2. Please remember that, when the club is travelling as a convoy, (particularly in unfamiliar territory), each driver is expected to make sure that the next car is in their sight.

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.

TALE OF A MOUSE

Some time ago we were having mouse trouble and so set some traps. One morning Dot brought me a mouse in a bucket to look at and it appeared dead. It had been lying beside a discharged mouse trap. Apparently it had not jumped back quickly enough and had been hit a glancing blow on the head. This mouse did not quite look right. It was a little larger than normal, had a more pointed nose and an excellent set of teeth. Later when we saw it scurrying for shelter, it had more of a galloping action than a smooth run.

We left it in the bucket for disposal later but next time were surprised to see that it had very much recovered. I let it go about 50 metres from the house and by that night it was back in the house. We were a bit reluctant to try and trap it and so it became a regular visitor for about a year. It was more clumsy than the usual mouse. It kept knocking things down, especially the top to the sugar bowl. Perhaps it had a sweet tooth. Its droppings were different from that of the normal mouse, in that they were slightly larger and longer and not so compact.

Then it became an irregular visitor and we had a plague of normal mice which we depleted with a trapping programme and no sign of the marsupial mouse.

Quiet then reigned for a while until a more audacious mouse began raiding the food cupboard which goes from the floor to the ceiling with a number of shelves. At first it was thought that he took opportune moments to get in while the cupboard door was left open. Dot was highly annoyed, took everything out of the cupboard and washed the shelves. The door was kept shut but he was in again that night. A careful inspection of the ceiling revealed that he had bored a hole through the plaster where it was difficult to see beside a plastic electrical conduit in the corner. This I stuffed with steel wool and for a while no more trouble.

About a week later a smell developed in the cupboard which got progressively worse. Another look at the ceiling and we could see that he was stuck in a new hole and very dead. I got a pair of metal tongs and after a fair pull he came out with a rush and a flash of light. There must be a motto in all that somewhere.

Jean Harslett informs me that it was probably a yellow footed marsupial mouse. (This one had dirty feet.) ANTECHINUS FLAPIDES and is native to S.E. Qld and NSW. It feeds on insects, blossom nectar, seeds and smaller animals if it can catch them. It is noteworthy that sometimes it eats the innards out leaving the skin rolled up.

Tom Archer.

MORE MOUSE TALES/TAILS

When I read this contribution I was reminded of a mouse which took up residence in the lounge room at Wyberba many years ago. Brian and I have had some discussions about it and this is what we remember together. It was a native mouse, bigger than a usual mouse, smaller than a rat, dark grey with a white bib. It built a nest under the piano. Mother let it stay, I think till the babies were born. Brian remembers that it took potatoes from the back table and rolled them under the piano. It was different in that it must have been a vegetarian.

AND - quite a few years ago I visited the Grampian Mountains in Victoria. The highest point, Mt William, has a road to a communication tower but a locked gate some way from the top. A friend and I drove to the gate and I walked on alone. I saw two marsupial mice while I did this walk. One saw me and continued to cross the road at a slightly faster pace, but the second, very nearly at the top of Mt William was unaware of my presence. I stood very still and observed it for quite a while and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

There are a number of native mice listed in a couple of very old and very outdated books in my collection -

1. Broad footed marsupial mice - several genera & species
2. Narrow footed marsupial mice - *Sminthopsis* of several species.
3. Brush-tailed pouched rat - *Dasyuroides* sp.
4. Brown
5. Dusky
6. Yellow footed

Looking through one of those books titled *Naturecraft in Australia*, ('An introductory handbook to the Fauna and Flora and to the Australian environment for the use of the bushwalker, student, teacher, field naturalist and conservationist' arranged and edited by Thistle Harris B.Sc., M.Ed., for the Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia; Angus and Robertson 1956.) I notice how far we have come.

Chapter 8 'At Home in the Bushland' amongst other details given - a list of equipment and clothing that is considered necessary for a day walk in summer.

How things have changed - here's the list :-

Shorts and a light shirt or blouse; Waterproof windjacket; Hat; Stout rubber-soled shoes and light woollen socks; Handkerchief; Light haversack; Hand-lens, strung on a tape round the neck. (These are otherwise easily mislaid); Money in pocket of haversack (if needed for fares); Matches; Newspaper; First-aid outfit; Food - 1 chop, 1 egg, 6 slices of bread, butter in a light container, half a pound of shelled peas, 1 small potato; 2 pieces fruit, and milk or an orange drink. Utensils - 1 knife, cup, light plate, light pan.

There's a fascinating section on tents also.

(Editor)

MINUTES OF MEETING OF STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.
held in Q.C.W.A. Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on 26 March, 1997.

Opening: The meeting opened at 8.06pm with President, Kris Carnell, welcoming members and visitors, including Peter Zaneberge, Mr and Mrs Andrewartha and Dan Manahan. Greetings from Esme and Herb Colley who are staying for Easter with Beryl and Roy Werner.

Attendance: There were 26 present and 10 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on 26th February, 1997 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Patience James, seconded by Frank James. Carried.

Correspondence:

Outwards: Notice of meeting and outing to *Round the Ridges* and *Community Billboard*.
Letter to International Parktours re information on their future trips.
Matrix Office Systems - payment of account

Inwards: 1. Qld Naturalists Club - newsletter
2. Senator Meg Lees - asking whether we wish to be on the mailing list for environmental information from the Australian Democrats
3. Toowoomba Field Naturalist Club - *Darling Downs Naturalist* - March '97
4. Toowoomba Bushwalkers - *Footprint* - March '97

This was received on the motion of Margaret Carnell, seconded by Jean Harslett. Carried.

Business Arising from the Correspondence:

It was agreed that we would go on the Democrats' mailing list.

Financial Statement for 26/2/97 to 26/3/97

Balance as at 26/2/97 \$894.04

Receipts:	Subscriptions	\$16.00	
	Room rent collection	<u>\$12.20</u>	
		<u>\$28.20</u>	<u>\$922.24</u>

Expenditure:	Room rent (Feb)	\$10.00	
	Magazine postage (Feb)	\$33.75	
	Magazine postage (Mar)	\$34.50	
	Post box rental	\$44.00	
	Petty cash for secretary	\$10.00	
	State Govt tax (March)	<u>\$ 0.60</u>	
		<u>132.85</u>	<u>(132.85)</u>
			<u>\$789.39</u>

Balance as at 26/3/97 is \$789.39

The financial statement was adopted on the motion of Roger Logan, seconded by Rob McCosker. Carried.

Outing Report:

In the absence of the trip leader, Liz Bourne, Desley McDonagh and Kris Carnell reported on the campout to Boonoo Boonoo National Park on 22/23 March. There was a short walk on the Saturday afternoon out to a rock with good views over the eastern escarpment while 29 people climbed Mt Prentice on the Sunday. There were still quite a few flowers out and good views all around. Fortunately, it didn't rain. May Prentice explained that Mt Prentice was named after her husband's family and that the Army had put the trig station on top. Millie thanked everyone who helped her with her trailer at the camp.

Next Outing:

David Wilson is intending to lead a trip to somewhere in the Warwick area - probably Mt Mathieson in the Spicers Gap area.

Next Meeting: Narelle Crawford will be the speaker.

Specimens:

1. Frank James had a photographic book of Japan.
2. Desley McDonagh had prints of the last two outings.
3. Jean Harslett had photos of a swarm of bees around a branch in Passchendaele State Forest.

General Business:

A sign has been erected at Heritage Park.

Program:

Millie Marsden showed slides of Central Australia.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm.

OUTING REPORT

BOONOO BOONOO NATIONAL PARK - 22/23 March, 1997

While most people travelled to Boonoo Boonoo National Park on the Saturday, a few went on Friday evening and thus were able to enjoy an early morning swim in the river and the pleasant surroundings of our campsite at the Cypress Rest Area. After setting up camp and lunching, we drove a short distance eastwards through the State Forest which adjoins the park and then left the cars for an easy 10 minute stroll through the bush. This brought us out onto some exposed granite rocks with good views to the south and east over the Gilgurry Creek valley. There were still quite a few wildflowers about, including white everlastings. A few people walked back to the campsite while others explored the river, swam or just socialised. That night, we were treated to the delights of Millie's magnificent damper before a light shower of rain sent us all hurrying to bed.

The next day, 27 adventurous souls set off for Mt Prentice while the less energetic engaged in other pursuits beside the river. After some wet feet crossing the Boonoo Boonoo River, we headed westwards through open eucalypt forest admiring the diversity of understorey vegetation in this section of the park. After a few rest stops and smoko, we began the climb up Mt Prentice, soon reaching granite boulders and a wonderful array of orchids and ferns. A scrubby saddle before the peak had lots of *Banksia spinulosa*. Closer to the top, the country opened up into granite slabs interspersed with heath and there were quite a few wildflowers still about, including a pale yellow *Callistemon*. At the top, we were greeted by Alex and Denise Harslett who had walked over from Girraween National Park that morning. Fortunately, although it was a bit overcast and rain was falling to the north, we were able to have an uninterrupted lunch and admire the excellent views in all directions. A two hour descent brought us back to the river crossing where some opted for a swim before heading back to camp to pack up. I hope everyone enjoyed this campout as much as I did - a lovely campsite, plenty to see and do and, most importantly, great company!

Liz Bourne

From Learning for Pleasure

Local artists, weavers and interested members of the Community are invited to participate in this Community Arts Project supported by the Cultural Industries Development Sub-Committee and the Granite Belt Enterprise Association.

There will be a meeting (has been) at St Joseph's Hall, Stanthorpe at 7.00pm on 9th April to discuss that project. All local artists interested in collaborating in the design process, weavers and any interested members of the community are welcome to come and find out more about the project. Tapestry weaving workshops are planned, and beginners will be welcome.

Drawings and paintings done on the Artists Day 'Under the Red Bridge and Beyond' will be considered as an initial resource material for the collaborative design. A further Creative Drawing Workshop will be held on Sunday 27th April. The drawings created in the workshop will be photocopied, and collaged together to form a final design for the tapestry. The cost to each participant in this workshop will be \$10. There will be limited places available for this workshop.

To find out more about this project or to book a place for the Creative Workshop please ring Dorothy Clews on 076 841217.

April Outing to Mt Matheson

The April outing will provide an opportunity to explore another of the less commonly visited areas of the Main Range. As the Cunningham Highway winds its way down to the east from Cunninghams Gap, the road skirts around the base of Mt Matheson and the ridge that connects it to the Main Range. This is the area we will be investigating.

A rough walking trail leads from the Pioneer Graves picnic area on the Spicers Gap Road to the summit of Mt Matheson. Good views can be gained to Cunninghams Gap and to the highway below. The track continues along the ridge, past an old timber jinker to eventually meet up with the convict built section of the Spicers Gap Road, west of the Governors Chair. The circuit is about 8 km in length and passes through mostly open forest with a few sections of rainforest. With stops the walk will take around 4 to 5 hours. Much of the walking trail would be grade 6 to 7. There is a short rock scramble where the ridge climbs back into the rainforest. The Spicers Gap Road would be about grade 2 to 3.

For those who may choose not to walk to Mt Matheson, it is suggested they continue onto the Governors Chair picnic area and perhaps walk along the convict section of road along which the more adventurous of us will be returning.

Departure time will be 8:00 a.m. from Weeroona Park to meet the Warwick members at 9:00 p.m. at Jackie Howe Park (300 m on the left past the Condamine River crossing.) Travel distance to Spicers Gap is about 70 km. A 4WD is not necessary.

We hope to see you there on Sunday 20 April.

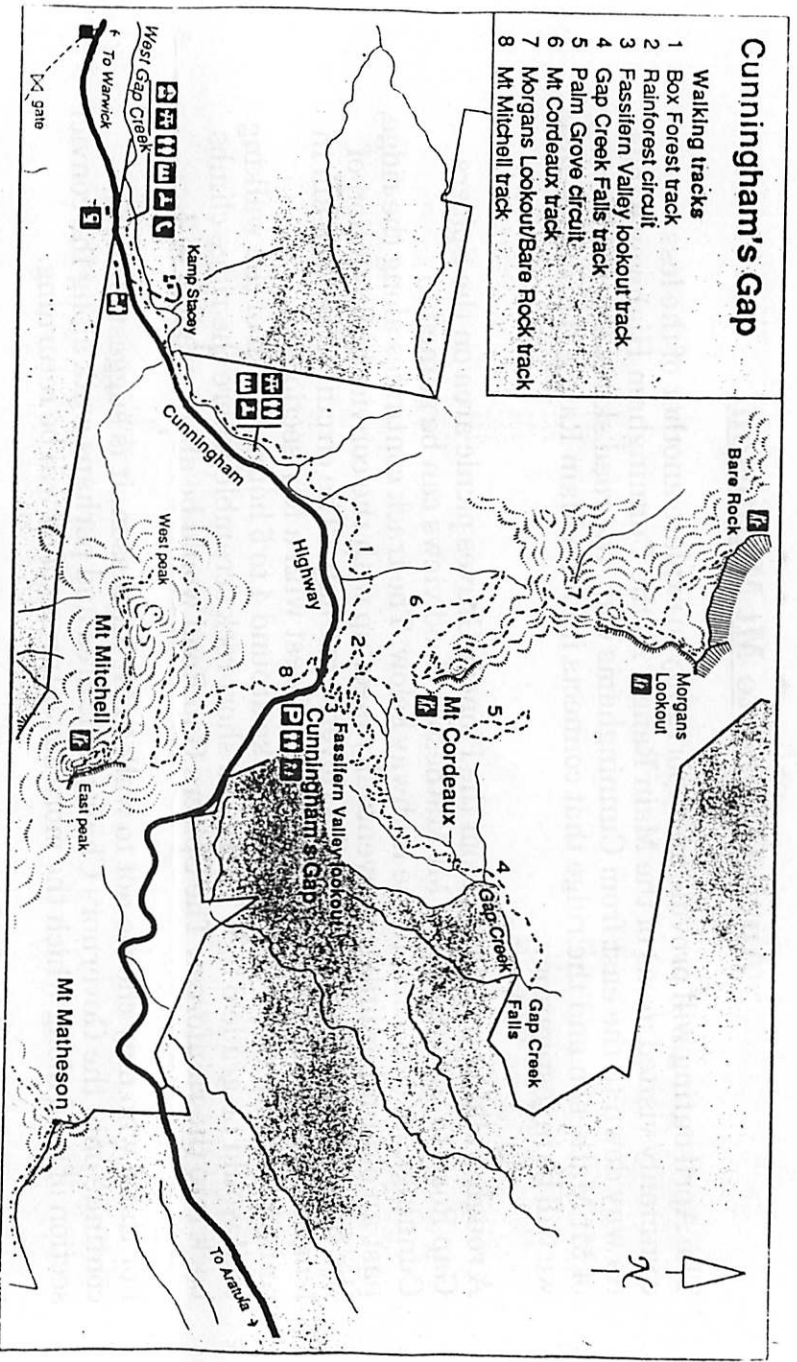
Contacts: David Wilson 612839
Narelle Crawford 614651

April Meeting

The guest speaker for the April meeting will be Narelle Crawford who will be presenting a slide show on the Flinders Ranges.

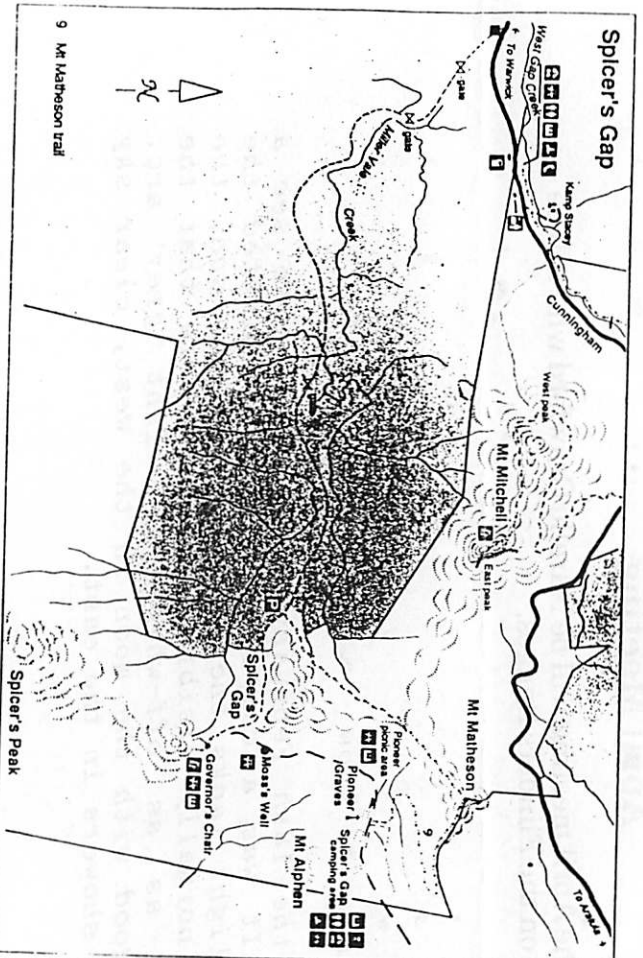
Brian Dodd would like to know

On the night of the 18th February, did anyone else see a lunar rainbow? It was a complete arc and dominated the sky, but as moonlight lacks the intensity of the sun, the spectrum colours normally visible were so feeble that the rainbow appeared as an off-white or light grey arc. Conditions were good with the moon in the west, clear sky above and drizzle showers in the east.



OVERVIEW OF APRIL OUTTING

AREA



Mt Matheson trail

This is a rough marked trail rather than a graded walking track, which commences opposite the Pioneer picnic area. The walk to Mt Matheson is the best defined section of the trail and is relatively easy (3.6km, 1hr return). Koalas are often seen in this area. To continue beyond Mt Matheson, follow the footpad and the trail markers. This trail eventually emerges on the road, west of Governors Chail. The distance of the circuit (returning by walking the road) is 8.1km and takes three hours.