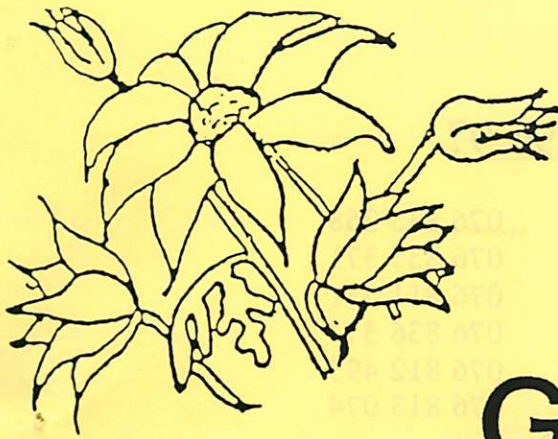


MAY 1997

Vol 289



# 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, May 29th at the CWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe at 8.00 pm. Rob McCosker will be showing slides of a six day trip he did to Hinchinbrook Island in North Queensland.

2. MAY OUTING - Rob McCosker is leading an outing to Girraween NP. Meeting place Wallangarra Lions Park - Time of departure 9.30am. (PLEASE NOTE !)

3. JUNE CAMPOUT - Long weekend in June 7th - 9th. This is before the June Newsletter will be published. Details inside. Mark these dates in your diary and come. This campout is always very enjoyable and it's warmer down there !!!!

## PLEASE NOTE

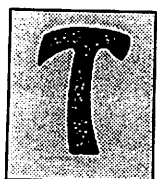
1. DEADLINE DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER - Tuesday June 10th. Contributions are welcome - send them to the club's address or to me at 4 Pierpoint Street, Stanthorpe, 4380.

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.

# HERITAGE PARK



This Park was established in 1995 - 1996 as an extension of the Stanthorpe Shire Beautification of Quart Pot Creek program. The Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club received funds from a grant under the National Landcare Program to construct the Garden Beds and interpretive Shelter. It is hoped that the information contained here about our Pioneering Botanists and the Aborigines will be of value to residents and visitors throughout the coming years.

The Seats provided adjacent to the Garden Beds were dedicated on 12th May 1996 in loving memory of Ray Marsden, Member of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club since it's inception in 1970, past President and Committee Member for many years and tireless worker for the Club and Stanthorpe District.

The above is a copy of the text now found in the interpretive shelter referring to Heritage Park and the seats placed there by members of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club in memory of Ray Marsden.

-----

This list of outing and meeting dates for the rest of the 1996/7 year may be of interest to members and friends.

May 25	Outing	. Girraween N P	. Rob McCosker
28	Meeting	. Hinchinbrook	. Rob McCosker
June 7/8/9	Campout	Northern NSW	. Lincoln McPhee
June 25	Meeting	. Quiz	. Desley McDonagh
July 20	Outing	. Doctors Creek Falls	. Brian McDonagh
July 23	Meeting	.	. B & N Dodd
August 24	Outing	. Tenterfield area	. Helen Hartman
August 27	AGM	. Remember Last Year	. Bring slides & prints
Sept 21	Outing	. Nudubbermere Falls	. Liz Bourne
Sept 24	Meeting	. Maps	. Eric Andrews

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.**  
held in Q.C.W.A. Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on 23 April, 1997

**Opening:** The meeting opened at 8.10pm with President, Kris Carnell, welcoming members:

**Attendance:** There were 24 present and 8 apologies as per the attendance book.

**Minutes of the previous meeting:** The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26 March, 1997 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Patience James, seconded by Rob McCosker. Carried.

**Correspondence:**

**Inwards:**

1. Chinchilla Field Naturalists - *Urimbirra* - March 97
2. Chinchilla Field Naturalists - invitation to launch of their book, *Going Bush with Chinchilla Nats*, on the 10th May
3. Office of Sport and Recreation - newsletter
4. Directory of Australian Associations - latest listing
5. DPI Forestry - *Between the Leaves* - Summer 97
6. Australian Naturalist Expedition Society - information about their organisation and planned expeditions

**Outwards:**

1. Notice of meeting and outing to *Round the Ridges* and *Community Billboard*.
2. Response to Directory of Australian Associations

This correspondence was received on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Jean Harslett. Carried.

**Business Arising from the Correspondence:**

Kris drew members attention to the range of expeditions being organised by the Australian Naturalist Expedition Society, both in Australia and overseas.

**Financial Statement for the period 26/3/97 to 23/4/97**

Balance as at 26/3/97		\$789.39
<b>Receipts:</b>		
Subscriptions	\$16.00	
Room rent collection	\$ 8.70	
Stanthorpe Camera Club		
(half post box rental)	<u>\$22.00</u>	
	<u>\$46.70</u>	<u>\$836.09</u>
<b>Expenditure:</b>		
Room rent (March)	\$10.00	
State Govt Tax (April)	<u>\$ 1.20</u>	
	<u>\$11.20</u>	<u>(\$11.20)</u>
		<u>\$824.89</u>

Balance as at 23/4/97 is \$824.89

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

**Outing Report:**

David Wilson reported on his trip to Mt Matheson near Spicers Gap on Sunday, 20th April. 17 people attended and had a very enjoyable day, arriving back at the cars just before rain fell.

**Next Outing:**

Rob McCosker outlined his proposed trip to Racecourse Creek at Girraween National Park on Sunday, 25th May. He suggested that 4WD may be needed for some sections of the access road into this walk.

**Next Meeting:**

Rob McCosker will be showing slides of a six day trip he did to Hinchinbrook Island in North Queensland.

**Specimens:**

1. Desley McDonagh had a book published in the 1950's "*Naturecraft in Australia*" edited by Thistle Harris that she thought may be of interest to members.
2. Liz Bourne had a tail of a possum, possibly a glider.
3. Liz had copies of the latest Border Rivers Flow Management Plan Newsletter for anyone interested.
4. Joan Bourne had copies of pamphlets on "*Willie Retreat*" a homestay beside the Macquarie Marshes in the Central West of NSW
5. Terry and Margaret Tricker had a round rock from Salvator Rosa National Park in Central Queensland that they were seeking information on.

**Program:**

Narelle Crawford presented a very interesting selection of slides from various trips she had made to the Flinders Ranges area of South Australia.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Memories of another enjoyable camp and sharing with good friends at Boonoo Boonoo. Hope I am able to enjoy many more. Interesting mouse story I received today 14/04/97. Thanks Tom.

Just a story about two black ducks that shared my neighbour's swimming pool and arrived early each day for a feed. Recently they acted in rather an amorous manner during their after breakfast swim. Then for several weeks were missing to the concern of their host. My neighbour then was delighted to see mum duck leading two yellow balls of fluff, her offspring, around the edge of the pool. Duck then pushed her two children the 10 inches into the water, following them around and swimming them around on a tour of introduction. My neighbour sat fascinated at the sight for about 45 minutes till needed to answer a lengthy phone call. On return to poolside the 3 ducks had disappeared. A search of the district showed the only nesting place would have been nearly 1km away. In any case the mother duck must have transported her family across a very busy highway. Can anyone tell us how this was achieved? We are all disappointed that my neighbour did not observe how mum duck got her offspring up out of the pool. Is the story that ducks can carry ducklings on their back and fly them to other areas correct?

Thanks a lot,

Fred Simpson.

From the Editor. I have seen duck families crossing busy highways, stopping traffic and being protected by traffic police on TV. Don't know about the second question. Any responses from our readers??

## HOW OLD ARE GRASS-TREES?

I was interested to read about Grass-trees in the Quick Identification Leaflet (\*) included in the last issue of QNC News, particularly as we saw some very large specimens on the Nats Outing to Mt. Matheson. Some discussion took place regarding the age of these trees, some of which were over 3m tall, with the consensus being that they grew about 25mm per year. This would make them 120 to 200 years old.

To quote from the Leaflet " The age of large grasstrees has been put at over 6 000 years but this is likely to be excessive with more reasonable figures being 400-600 years with a growth rate of 1.2cm per year."

The species seen at Mt. Matheson, one of 28 in Australia and only six in Queensland, was *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii* which is also found in the Granite belt as well as *X. latifolia*. The scientific name comes from the Greek - *xanthos* = yellow and *rheo* = to flow, referring to the resin produced by the stems and leaf bases. This resin was used by aborigines to attach spear-tips to the shaft of a spear which possibly also came from the grasstree.

(\*) ( The Leaflet titled The Grass-trees of Queensland was written by Dr. Peter Woodall, Department of Anatomical Sciences, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Q, 4072)

Rob McCosker

## OUTING TO RACECOURSE CREEK PEAKS - - SUNDAY 25TH MAY -

The exposed granite peaks we will be exploring are approximately at the geographic centre of Girraween National park, and though not very high, a little over 1100m, they provide good views of some of the more popular landmarks.

We will meet at the Lions Park on the Highway in Wallangarra and depart at 9.30 am for the Mt Norman Picnic Area. After morning tea we will travel in 4WD vehicles a further 3km to the Racecourse Creek Crossing. From here we will climb Billy Goat Hill to the East of the road and return to the vehicles for lunch. We will make a round trip and though only quite a short walk it has a quite steep, exposed section of granite to walk up making it a grade 7 walk.

The afternoon walk will be to climb the Twin Peaks, to the West of the road, and once again we will make it a round trip to include an interesting balancing rock on the return. As this is longer than the morning walk I suggest you carry some water. This walk also has some steep exposed granite sections and some thick undergrowth though most of the bush is fairly open as it is just beginning to re-grow since the last bushfire. I have rated this a grade 8 walk.

For those people not able to take part in these walks, I suggest as an alternative, to walk the 3km from the Mt Norman Picnic area after morning tea and meet up at Racecourse Creek for lunch. This track is mostly downhill, grade 3, with a steep downhill section near Racecourse Creek. packs can be taken in the 4WD vehicles, and they will also be available to take you back up to the cars if you do not wish to walk after lunch. There are some waterholes upstream from the lunch spot that are worth exploring and there should be an abundance of birdlife to observe.

It is not a good time for wildflowers, as many species are recovering from bushfire, however on the pre-outing we saw some excellent flowering specimens of New England banksia - *Banksia spinulosa* var. *neoanglica*.

Leader - Rob McCosker 835 371

### SOME WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THAT WELL KNOWN PHILOSOPHER ANONYMOUS.

1. Have you noticed that the person who spends \$3,500 on a treadmill is the same person who has a \$3,000 ride on mower in the garage?
2. Difficulties are stepping stones to success.
3. Ideas are funny things - they do not work unless you do.
4. The doors of opportunity are marked 'PUSH'.
5. .Push will get you anywhere except through a door marked 'PULL'.
6. Don't refuse to go on an occasional wild goose chase. That's what wild geese are for.
7. We are judged by our actions - not our intentions. We may have a heart of gold, but so does a hard boiled egg.

## Report from the April Outing to Mt Matheson

The April outing provided an opportunity to explore another of the less commonly visited areas of the Main Range. The long distance from Stanthorpe was the likely reason for the small turnout of only 17 people. After our final assembly point at Jackie Howe Park, we headed to the Pioneer Picnic Ground along the Spicers Gap Rd. With the customary cuppa finished we made the three quarter hour climb to the summit of Mt Matheson. The view provided an opportunity to see Cunninghams Gap and the northern section of the Scenic Rim from a different perspective and to appreciate the interesting geology.

From here, the track continued along a ridge towards the the Main Range. There was a surprising number of uphill sections that we discovered had been added to the track since the pre-outing a month earlier! Still, with the climbing out of the way, the track wound its way through a stand of rainforest with some magnificent fig trees. Shortly after leaving the rainforest, we came to our lunch stop beside an old timber jinker. One of our group informed us that the name on the wheel of the jinker was that of a manufacturer of traction engines. Almost overtaken by the tall grass, the relic seemed an enigma in an area of wilderness. Someone noted though that the treeless area round about was probably a former timber camp.

From here, the track took us back to the convict built section of the Spicers Gap road and onto the Gap itself. Unlike the pre-outing, the bird life along here, as it had been all day, was conspicuous by its absence. We arrived at the Governors Chair Lookout with storms threatening. They made a spectacular addition to the already impressive view. The walk back down the road to the cars provided our first opportunity to see the work (damage?) done by Telstra who have been laying a fibre optic cable along the edge of the road. During the pre-outing, we located what we believed to be the second well that, along with Moss's Well, provided water to early travellers. If this was the second well, it is no more. Telstra have comprehensively removed any trace of its former existence!

We arrived back at the cars just as the rain started coming down. Some opted to head straight home, but two car loads of us headed back to Warwick through Teviot Gap. This was arguably the highlight of the day. After first passing through storms, we arrived at Teviot Gap in brilliant sunshine. The view was sensational. The Fassifern Valley was immersed in dark storm clouds made darker by the foreground being bathed in sunlight. Arching across the sky was a magnificent double rainbow. Wilsons Peak, its moistened foothills clothed with an emerald carpet of pasture, reared its head into a rich blue sky.

In the short time it took us to reach Carr's Lookout, the scene changed dramatically. Rising cloud in the west plunged the Head Valley into shadow. Within minutes, Wilsons Peak was embraced by cloud rising from the Fassifern Valley. More cloud was carried across the ridge from White Swamp extending its ghostly fingers through the valley below us. With some of it caught in an updraught, it was lifted to our vantage point and over our heads to be lost over the ridge behind us. The final movement in this visual symphony was provided by the setting sun painting the cloud above us a pastel pink. Breaking through the cloud in places was the contrasting white disc of a near full moon.

With light fading and the temperature plummeting, we reluctantly left this visual masterpiece to the approaching blanket of night. A stunning finale to a wonderful day.

David Wilson

### Space fillers from the Editor :-

Lately there have been several white plumed honeyeaters having a wonderful time chasing each other around amongst my trees and plants. The red salvia is flowering and there are a few late blooms on one of the bottlebrushes. It was amusing to see one of these honeyeaters hanging from a bloom on the end of a very flexible branch. The eastern spinebills (up to three at a time) have also been very much in evidence in the flowering plants. They love the birdbath. I've seen them splashing with gay abandon in it and there is often evidence that they have been there - splashes around the edge of it.

YOU ARE INVITED TO SUBMIT SPACEFILLERS FOR FOLLOWING EDITIONS OF THE NEWS-LETTER. THEY ARE OFTEN NEEDED. THANK YOU IN ANTICIPATION.

## CAMPOUT JUNE 7/8/9 1997

### - CORINDI BEACH NORTHERN NSW - LEADER - LINCOLN MCPHEE -

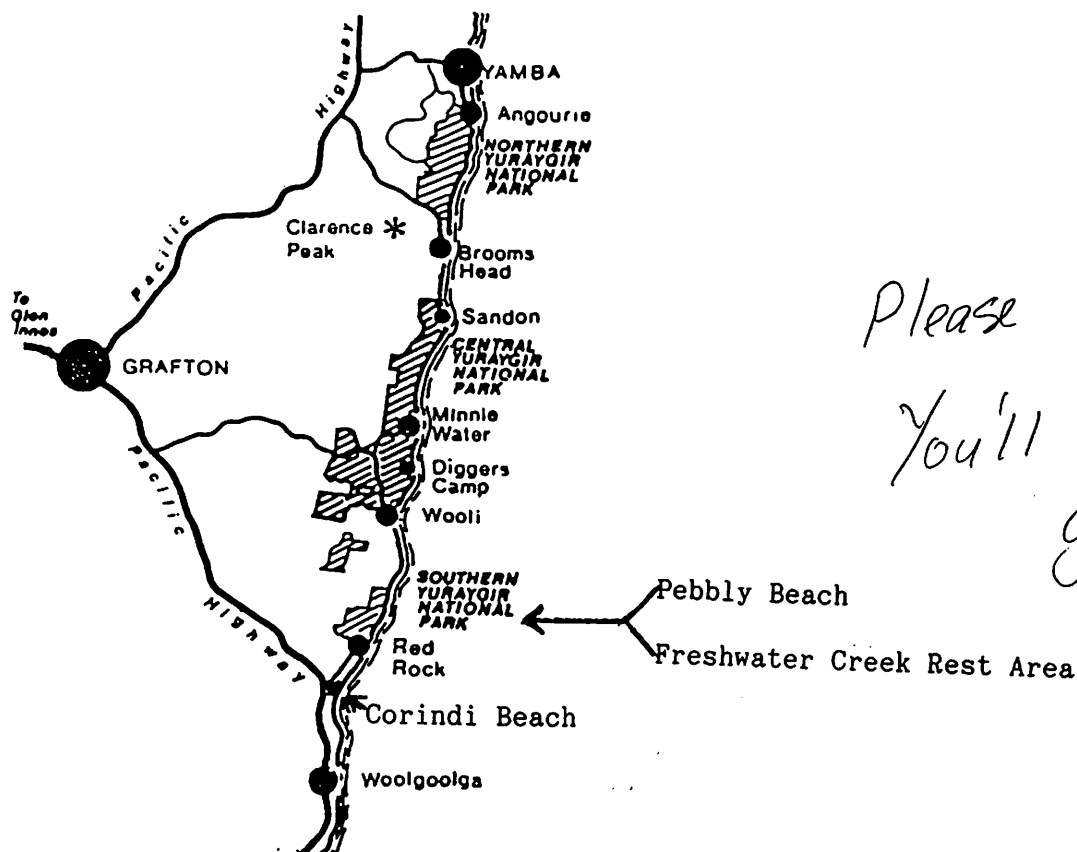
Corindi Beach is about three and a half hours drive from Stanthorpe. Take the New England Highway from Stanthorpe south. Make sure that you take the road from Dundee east to the Gwydir Highway - you need not go through Glen Innes. If you do you will do unnecessary kms.

Corindi Beach is 49km south of Grafton on the Pacific Highway. (*Please do not confuse Corindi which is 6 km from the beach and on the highway and Corindi Beach which is on the beach.*) We will be staying at Corindi Beach Caravan Park. This park has very good facilities right on the beach and will cost \$10.00 per night per tent site for 2 people and \$4.00 for each extra person per night. There is a Kiosk near the park which should be very convenient. Refer to NRMA map - Northern Rivers/South East Queensland.

Saturday afternoon 2.00pm we will be inspecting the beach. Saturday night - campfire and socialising. Sunday morning - 8.30 am 25 minute car trip to Station Creek in the Southern Yarragiri National Park and a walk to Freshwater Beach. This 2km walk begins at Station Creek Rest Area and follows the creek to the beach and headland. From there you walk north along Pebbly Beach and then over the headland to Freshwater Beach. Bring backpack with lunch and water. You will find binoculars and cameras necessary and helpful as there should be many flowers and birds. The National Parks and Wildlife Service brochure says 'The heaths and woodlands flower profusely in winter and spring' and 'The area is renowned for birdwatching with opportunities to see a range of birds which include birds of prey, waders, waterfowl, shorebirds, honeyeaters and cockatoos.' On previous outings in this area at the same time of the year we saw great numbers of flora and fauna. Sunday evening will also give opportunities for socialising.

Monday morning 9.00 am we will be doing a mystery walk for about one and a half to 2 hours. Lunch time pack up and go home. Some members will be going down Friday and some Saturday and returning when they wish. There may even be some staying over on Monday and returning later.

Leader Lincoln McPhee - 076 811 651



Please come -  
You'll have a  
great  
time!!