



SEPTEMBER 1997

Vol 293



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 :	Roger Logan	076 812 493
	Lincoln McPhee	076 811 651
Secretary :	Liz Bourne	076 836 374
Treasurer :	Julia Brown	076 814 540
Newsletter Editor :	Rob McCosker	076 835 371
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, September 24th at the CWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe at 8.00 pm. Peter Andrewatha will be taking us to the Top End.

2. SEPTEMBER OUTING - Sunday 21st September to Amiens Forestry - Leader Liz Bourne. Leaving Weeroona Park at 9.00 am. Further details inside.

PLEASE NOTE

1. DEADLINE DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER - Tuesday October 7 th. Contributions can be sent to The Newsletter Editor P.O. Box 24, Severnlea Q 4352. It is always helpful if they are EARLY!

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 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.

STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB

ANNUAL REPORT 1996/97

It is with much pleasure that I present this annual report of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club. The past year has been a very successful one for the club with many varied activities.

Once again some of our members organised a trip to Lord Howe Island. I would like to thank sincerely those members who organised outings and presented meeting programmes. Three campouts were held during the year - the first two were very successful, but the third less so. Members will be asked to indicate their preferences for campouts - the number, the times and the distance from Stanthorpe.

The responsibility for our club's activities seems to be confined to a small group of members, so I would encourage more of you to put your hand up to organise either an outing or a programme. If it interests you then it will other members. I'm also sure that the Newsletter Editor would be overjoyed to have more than enough items to print in the magazine.

Three small groups have been meeting throughout the year in the Learning For Pleasure programme - Ancient History, Conversational French and Current Affairs.

Our gardens at Heritage Park are starting to show progress with some plants flowering during the past twelve months. Hopefully these gardens can be improved with more specialised plantings if the seasons are kind to us.

I would like to thank my fellow officers for the efficient way in which they have carried out their duties during the past twelve months, and wish the club the best for the next year.

Kris Carnell

Tinaroo Dam to Cape Hillsborough

We ended up spending 6 days camped at Kairi Camping Area and I think Margaret really did think I was going to spend the rest of our holiday there. We saw a number of new birds for us and went on two different walks. When Tinaroo Dam was constructed, the Forestry Department took control of the balance of the resumed land. Some was planted with plantation pine and some was just left. Its interesting to see that land that was dairy farms forty years ago is now thick rainforest.

Our next stopover was Cooktown. We travelled via Mt Molloy^P and Lakeland Downs and again the country ranged from lush green to dry to nearly barren and back again. The area around Lakeland Downs reminds me of Kingaroy and appears to be very fertile. Black Mountain, just before Cooktown, is quite amazing. Imagine three mountains about the size of Mt Banca or larger made up of large granite rocks which appear to be about 2 to 3 metre cubes. Hardly anything grows on them and the black colour is caused by an algae. Cooktown is a fascinating place with obviously lots of history. There's lots of tourists but it still has an unspoilt feeling. At night, things change a bit and the locals come out, especially in the area around the West Coast Hotel with loud music, drag racing up the main street and the odd fight or two. You need plenty of insect repellent especially if you go to the Botanical Gardens or Keatings Lagoon. We spent three days there looking at all the sights but you could spend a couple of weeks, no trouble.

We decided to come south along the Bloomfield Track but unfortunately we picked the wrong day and it rained nearly all of the way. The driving was not easy and because of the cloud and rain, there wasn't much to see. The passenger didn't enjoy the trip at all. The National Park Camping Area north of the Daintree was booked out so we continued on to Mossman. On the Saturday, we went to Mossman Gorge with about 500 other people. It is a very nice spot but a bit of a shock to the system after being in quiet areas for so long. The next day, we took a trip to the outer reef from Port Douglas and enjoyed it immensely. We even saw a whale on the way out. We left Mossman intending to go to a State Forest south west of Cairns but it was walk-in camping only so we went on to Innisfail and more rain. We only wish we could bring it home. Mt Bartle Frere is only a short drive away and we can say we started to walk up Queensland's highest mountain.

Its hard to believe that Innisfail is so wet and that Townsville is so dry. We camped in the Bowling Green Bay National Park about 30km south of the city. Townsville tended to grow on us a bit and by the time we left, we were talking about coming back some time. The Town Common in particular is well worth the visit and we saw 40 different birds in about 2.5 hours including jabiru, brolgas and bustards. The National Parks in the area suffered a lot of damage during Cyclone Justin and some are still closed for camping so we were very crowded at Bowling Green Bay.

The Whitsunday area lived up to its scenic reputation with its cane fields, green hills, blue seas and sandy beaches but I'm afraid that Airlie Beach didn't do much for me, very touristy as you would expect and reminds me of Noosa. The camping area in the Conway National Park is also closed so we were in a commercial park beside the highway.

We're now at Smalley's Beach in the Cape Hillsborough National Park and I'm writing this and looking out over the sea. Its a very quiet spot with only about 10 campsites about 45 minutes north of Mackay. Just the sort of place we enjoy where we can walk along the beach, bird watch or just sit and watch the world go by.

Kris and Margaret Carnell

OUTING REPORT - 24/8/97 - BOONOO BOONOO DISTRICT

Some 35 hardy souls braved the Antarctic blast to gather at the Boonoo Boonoo turnoff where they were shown the way to the Post Office. (Sorry we closed 80 years ago). We then proceeded to Geoff and Claire Robertson's property where we had morning tea - somewhat extended because people stood around the fire, had second cups and looked at the old Mines Dept. map or a set of old photos found in the house when the Robertsons bought it.

The company finally set off for a walk which led through the former residential area where we examined some of the remains of stone fireplaces (one intact) and the many earthworks and shafts in the area. We returned, via Specimen Gully and the site of the cemetery, to the cars and the barbecue. Many of us showed our culinary skills and all this took time. Fortunately there was sun and, despite the rocky ground, a surprising number of people seemed to find a place to stretch out. Our host, however, was allowed little peace, answering a multitude of questions.

In the afternoon we visited a section of the creek where a narrow, deep trench had been blasted, similar to that at Morgan's Gully.

Few birds were seen - doubtless they had the sense to seek sheltered spots. It proved to be too early for many flowers though there were still opportunities for B.McD and D.McC and others to show the breadth and depth of knowledge our club has in its membership.

I am very grateful to Geoff and Claire Robertson for the opportunity to visit this interesting site and to share their knowledge. The provision of the boiling kettle and barbie was also much appreciated. It seems that the day was generally enjoyed (some travelled considerable distances) and several people have already made arrangements to return.

Helen Hartmann.

OUTING AND MEETING DATES 1997/8

AS PLANNED AT PRESENT - FIRST DRAFT

Date	Activity		Leader/Speaker
Sept 21	Outing	Amiens Forestry	Liz Bourne
24	Meeting	Top End	P Andrewatha
Oct 18/19	Campout	The Steamers	Peter Kerr
22	Meeting	Central Aust	P Andrewatha
Nov 23	Outing	West Bald Rock	Geoff Walker
26	Meeting	First Aid	Stpe Ambulance
Dec 7	Breakup	Heritage Park or Patience James' home if wet.	
Jan 24/8	Outing	Nundubbermere Falls	Kris Carnell
Feb 22	Outing	Teviot Falls	Alan Jones
25	Meeting	North Queensland	Kris Carnell

PRE - OUTING SUNDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER AMIENS STATE FOREST

A Wander Through the Wildflowers

This outing will be to Amiens State Forest, about 20km north west of Stanthorpe, where hopefully, following the recent rain, there will be a reasonable display of wildflowers. We will encounter a variety of different habitats - swamps, open eucalypt forest, heathlands, open granite slabs and pine forest - so we should get to see a good range of plants and some lovely granite formations. A recent trip there found a good array of flowers, including the endangered *Boronia granitica*.

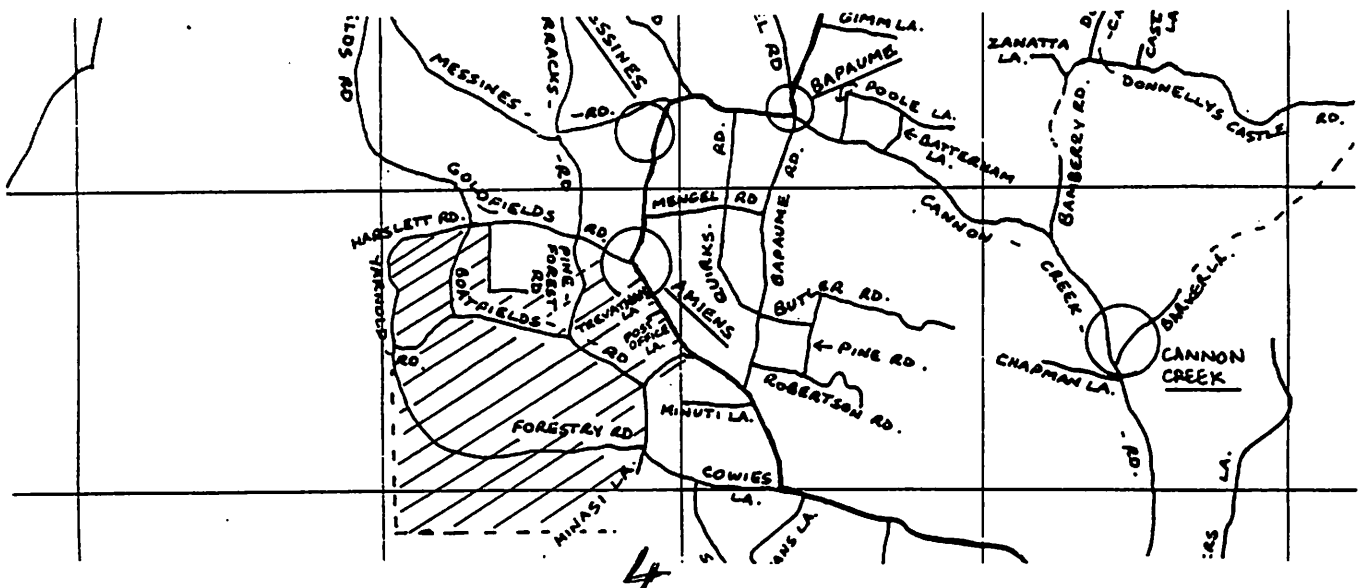
Most of the walking will be on forestry tracks although there could be some small sections of cross country so leg protection eg. long pants is recommended. The grade will vary from 1 to 5.

We will meet at Weeroona Park, Stanthorpe at 9am and then travel west out along Amiens Road, turning left at Cowies Lane before reaching Amiens. Follow Cowies Lane until it takes a sharp right hand turn at its junction with Minasi Lane and then we go straight ahead up a dirt track into the State Forest. For those members who live out this way, you could meet us just where this track enters the Forest at about 9.20am. We will first head south through a eucalypt forest section, aiming to have smoko at the top of a hill with extensive views to the south and west. Depending on our rate of progress, lunch will be on a granite slab with views west over the Harslett's property. I aim to have us back at the cars by early afternoon. If anyone only wants a short, morning walk, it would be feasible to return to the cars by a different route after smoko.

For those wanting a slightly more adventurous and strenuous trip, Sue and John Kenna will be walking over to join us from their property off Sonogo Lane, probably leaving about 9am and aiming to meet us at smoko. If you would like to join them, please give them a call on 83 3241. After the outing, you could walk back to their place or we could organise a lift back.

Bring something for smoko and lunch, water, hat and camera. If you have any queries about the outing, please contact me on 83 6374 , preferably after 7pm.

Liz Bourne



MINUTES OF MEETING OF STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.
held in Q.C.W.A. Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on 27 August, 1997.

Opening: The meeting opened at 8.40pm with Vice-President, Rob McCosker, welcoming members and visitors.

Attendance: There were 25 present and 15 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 23rd July, 1997 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Peter Andrewartha, seconded by Patience James. Carried.

Correspondence:

- Inwards:**
1. Office of Sport and Recreation - newsletter and questionnaire
 2. Jean and Bob Harslett, Mrs Hodgson, Neil Donges, Sue Kenna, Fred Simson, A. Ridge, R. Fletcher - membership renewals
 3. Mahlab Information - listing in their publication, *Probono*
 4. Stanthorpe Community Road Safety Committee - seeking input on any local road safety issues
 5. Australia Council - offer of funding for organisations to engage contemporary Australian artists
 6. Senator Meg Lees - *Ecowatch*
 7. Errol and Annette Walker - postcard from Ireland
 8. Directory of Australian Associations - current listing
 9. Matrix Office Systems - invoice for \$25
 10. Toowoomba Bushwalkers - *Footprint* - August '97
 11. Chinchilla Field Naturalists - *Urimbirra* - August '97
 12. Bookman Directories - marketing directories for sale
 13. Hewan Gibson - article on yellow-footed antechinus
 14. Nancy Gooding - article on rock wallabies for newsletter
 15. Toowoomba Field Naturalists - *Darling Downs Naturalist* - August '97
 16. Invitation to the AGM of the QCWA at 10am on the 19th September.

Outwards:

1. Community service announcements for outing and meeting
2. Letter of condolence to Janet Hockings on the death of her sister
3. Response to questionnaire from Office of Sport and Recreation

This correspondence was received on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Patience James. Carried.

Business Arising from the Correspondence:

1. It was agreed that Patience James and Desley McDonagh would represent the Club at the Annual General Meeting of the Q.C.W.A. to be held at 10am on the 19th September.

Financial Statement for the period 23/7/97 to 27/8/97

Balance as at 23/7/97		\$680.50
Receipts:		
Subscriptions	399.00	
Room rent collection	9.60	
Room rent donations	<u>23.00</u>	
	431.60	<u>1112.10</u>
Expenditure:		
Room rent	12.50	
Magazine postage (July)	35.40	
Matrix Office Systems	50.00	
Petty cash - secretary	10.00	
Padlock for cupboard for projector and screen (Roger Logan)	2.80	
State Govt. tax (July)	0.90	
State Govt. tax (August)	<u>1.80</u>	
	113.40	<u>(113.40)</u>
		<u>\$998.70</u>

Balance as at 27/8/97 is \$998.70

Accounts for payment:

Matrix Office Systems	25.00
QCWA room rent	12.50
Vince Allen - audit of Club accounts	145.00
Office of Consumer Affairs	30.00

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

Outing Report:

Rob McCosker read out a report from Helen Hartman about her trip to the site of the former Boonoo Boonoo township. 35 people attended and had a most enjoyable outing.

It was agreed to send a letter of appreciation to the Robertson's for allowing the Club access to their property.

Next Outing:

Liz Bourne briefly outlined her proposed trip to Amiens State Forest, north west of Stanthorpe, on Sunday, 21st September where there will hopefully be a good display of wildflowers.

Specimens:

1. Peter Andrewartha had some rocks from the Fitzgerald River National Park in Western Australia and brochures about the park.
2. Dore McCosker had the inside of a banksia cone.

General business:

1. The next committee meeting will be held at Roger Logan's house on Tuesday, 2nd September at 7.30pm. to plan the coming year's program.
2. Vern Sullivan queried why it was only those members who attended meetings who helped to pay for the room hire. This is currently set at 50c per person per night to help defray the charge of \$12.50. Millie Marsden explained that previously there was not enough money in the Club's general account to defray this expense so it had been agreed to levy those who came to the meetings.
3. Liz Bourne said that a number of members of the Club had participated in a clean-up of a section of the Texas Road during Clean Up Australia Day in March. Now that the new Refuse Transfer Station was nearing completion, she thought it would be a good idea for interested Club members who live to the west of Stanthorpe to undertake some landscaping around the site. It was agreed that we would write to the Shire Council to seek their approval for this project. Moved Millie Marsden, seconded by Mavis Bott. Carried.

A selection of slides taken on outings during the past year were then shown and the meeting closed at 9.25pm.

HELP TO BEAUTIFY THE TEXAS ROAD REFUSE TRANSFER STATION

A number of members of the Field Nats helped in a clean up of a section of the Texas Road on Clean Up Australia Day in March this year, particularly around the unsightly mess of the local rubbish bins, opposite the Granite telephone exchange. Since then, the Stanthorpe Shire Council has constructed a refuse transfer station on the site and it is to be hoped that people will put their rubbish in the bins and not all over the place as was happening previously.

To try and improve the appearance of this highly visible site on the Texas Road, a couple of local Club members thought we might offer to undertake some landscaping using local native species. If you travel regularly along this section of the Texas Road and would be willing to help plant out and maintain these trees and shrubs, please contact me so that we can organise a working bee later in the year once we have received Council approval. If you have "green fingers" you may also wish to pot up some seedlings for use in this project.

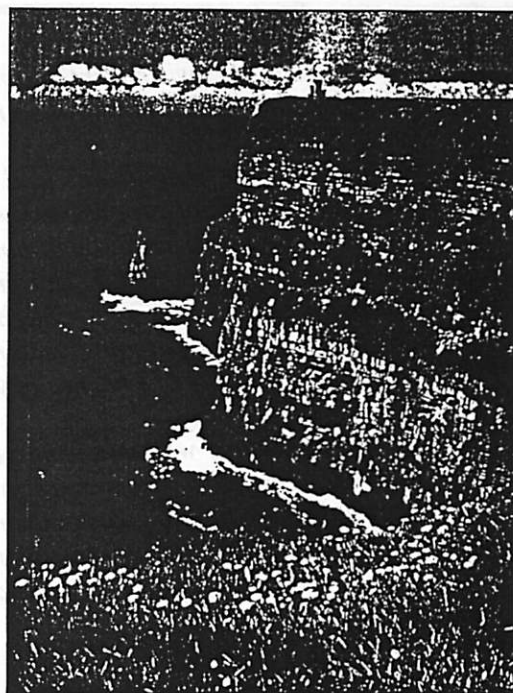
Liz Bourne
83 6374

From the Wandering Walkers!

Hear fellow Nats, Having a great time. Wish you were all here. We are touring Ireland in a motorhome and enjoying every narrow lane. Annette is pleased her ancestors left this place during the potato famine. This Irish mist is getting her down. However, the country is uniquely beautiful at every turn of the road and along every soggy track. Something we didn't expect was the abundance of wildflowers and European tourists. The tourists are on bikes, in campers, in horse-drawn wagons, hilly hiking or driving little red line cars on the wrong side of the road. We had 4 great days with Bob & Jean's daughter, Susan & family in Denmark. It was good to see a Stantloperian again. Enjoy your winter!

The spectacular Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare, Ireland.

Warm regards Enal & Annette Walker



CLIFFS OF MOHER

From the retiring editor

A MYSTERY FOR SOMEONE TO SOLVE - PLEASE.

There is a 'creature' who lives (I think) in my kitchen. Never been seen; never left a dropping or a calling card or any messages. All the year round it chews paper - has eaten holes in sheets of paper left on the kitchen table - seems to like the taste of printing ink. It has nearly destroyed some sheets of paper, chewed bits out of a book left on the table and chewed bits out of a photo. Some times it seems to leave a small trail not unlike a snail trail; othertimes it leaves no sign of being here other than the holes chewed in the sheets of paper. Although I am sure it is not a mouse I have left rodent bait out which has been eaten but the paper chewing goes on on the kitchen table. I've also sprayed the whole area with insect spray including under the table to no avail. This mystery has been going on for over a year, summer and winter. I am completely at a loss to understand. Any ideas??? Thanks.

This will be the last newsletter I do (for a year or two or three anyway) and I want to express my thanks to those members who have taken the trouble to contribute. I particularly thank Liz Bourne our secretary who supplies the minutes on time and ready to go in the newsletter. I appreciate very much input and contributions from all who have contributed and encourage you to keep doing it - this way the newsletter is a real newsletter - of interest to all who receive it. I wish Rob McCosker all the best for his term as editor and the other office bearers good wishes for the next year.

Desley McDonagh

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBERS - Received with thanks!

From Nancy Gooding - BRUSH-TAILED ROCK WALLABIES

As the Department of Environment knows all about "our" colony of brush-tailed rock wallabies, I thought the Field Naturalists might like to hear about them, too.

We have known of their whereabouts, and taken an interest in them, for many years but it only since the Department people have voiced their interest that we have attempted to count them, or watched them through binoculars. One comment from a Department of Environment visitor from Armidale University was on the ease of observance and that he had seen more rock wallabies by torchlight in a short time than were left in Victoria! We have been taking our own evening visitors to see them for some years. Numbers seem fairly constant, with plenty of evidence of young.

They are very attractive wallabies and very agile on the rocks and north facing cliff where they live. They come from there in the evenings to graze on the sloping ground above. Certainly there are no goats in their area, and fox numbers are negligible because of predation by dingoes. We do know there was another colony on the Maryland River some years ago but the property owner said they appeared to have been decimated by foxes. We enjoy our colony.

Nancy Gooding

I thought you would be interested in this article from Mulga Line which is a publication put out by the DPI in Charleville.

From Hewan Gibson

NATURE NOTES - YELLOW-FOOTED ANTECHINUS - Colin Dollery

In early May this year, a small, unusual Australian showed up at a house in Cobb Street, Charleville, to dine on the fine fare in the pantry. The little visitor was a yellow-footed antechinus, a dasyurid (carnivorous marsupial) that superficially looks like a small rat.

In Queensland, yellow-footed antechinuses are generally found closer to the coast, with Charleville the western limit of their distribution. They are basically grey-brown above, with a rusty-red rump, feet, belly and sides.

Yellow-foots, like many other dasyurids, are partial to insects but will also eat small lizards and birds, mice, flowers and fruit. Excellent climbers, they are just as happy running underneath a branch as on top of it.

Yellow-foots have a fascinating life cycle. Breeding takes place in late winter or early spring. This is common to many animals, because spring is a good time to raise a family. But this is where similarities to other animals stop. Once mating has taken place, all male antechinuses die - every single one! What seems like a strange and risky breeding strategy is actually designed to halve the population so that pregnant females and juvenile animals do not have to compete with males for food and shelter. So, if you're a yellow-foot antechinus, you have a little more than one football season to leave your mark on the world!

But mother antechinuses don't get it all their own way, caring for up to twelve young at a time. From five weeks on, youngsters can be left in the nest (usually a hollow limb) but, until then, they must be carried in the pouch at all times. Just a fold of skin, the pouch has limited space, so the intrepid babies grab a teat and hang on while they are dragged around the country. A mother antechinus trying to make a living while six or eight little bundles of joy hang from every available part makes a comical sight.