THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 41 August 1973 P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe.

Officers and Committee 1973 - 1974.

President	Mr. F. Wilkinson
Vice Presidents	Mr. R. Leisemann and Mrs.J.Harslett
Secretary	Mr. E. Walker Ph. 888
Treasurer	Mrs.R. Leisemann,Cwth.Bank Bus.Hrs.
Editors	Mr. I. Jackson and Mrs.D. Orr.
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Mrs.B. Krautz and Mrs.W.Cathcart.
Librarian	Mrs.Z. Newman
Publicity Officer	
Flora "	Mrs.D. McCosker
Fauna "	MissJ. Westcott
Geology "	Mr. P. Higgins
Youth "	Mr. G. Marsden
Bushwalking"	Mr. R. McCosker

Activities.

Meetings	4th Wednesday of each month C.W.A. Rooms, 8 p.m.
Outings	Sunday preceeding 4th Wednesday.

Annual Subscriptions.

Single $1.50 Family $2.00

Programme

Field Outings:

Place	Date	Leader
Wyberba "The Junction" (Xmas Party spot)	19th August	Mrs.D.McCosker

Meetings:

Subject	Date	Speaker
Q'ld Museum Lecture.	22nd August	Mr.D. Vernon
Basic Geology	26th September	Mr.P. Higgins.

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Note: Change of place for August outing.

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Did you know: Needles of lightning knit a storm!?

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Minutes of the Annual Meeting held 25th July 1973.
Forty three members were present with apologies being received from six.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: The Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting were moved Mr.E.Walker, seconded Mr.R.Leisemann. Carried.

Treasurer's Report: Moved Mrs.G.Leisemann, seconded Mrs.P. Flinn, that the following statement of the Club's Financial affairs be accepted. Carried.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 25.7.73.

INCOME	$	EXPENDITURE.	$
Magazine Subscriptions	82.00	Rent - P.O. Box	5.00
Membership subscriptions	58.00	Secretary expenses & stationery	8.91
Donations	20	Magazine - Stationery	85.58
Bank Interest	1.28	- Duplication	25.50
		- Postage	18.58
	141.48		143.57
Balance 16.7.1972 CR.	21.31	Balance 25.7.1973	19.22
	$162.79		$162.79

President's Report:
Mr.F.Wilkinson gave a short report in the absence of the President Mrs. J. Harslett.

Election of Officers: Following is the result of the election of Officers for the forthcoming year:

President	Mr.F.Wilkinson
Vice Presidents	Mr.R.Leisemann and Mrs.J.Harslett.
Secretary	Mr.E. Walker.
Treasurer	Mrs.G.Leisemann
Editors	Mrs.J.Orr and Mr.I.Jackson
Newsletter Subcommittee	Mrs.N.Cathcart and Mrs.B.Krautz.
Librarian	Mrs.Z.Newman
Flora Officer	Mrs.D.McCosker
Fauna "	Miss J.Westcott
Geology "	Mr.P.Higgins
Youth "	Mr.G.Marsden
Bushwalking	Mr.R.McCosker.

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Minutes of General Meeting held 25th July, 1973.
This meeting followed the Annual Meeting with forty three members present and apologies from six.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Moved Mr.R.McCosker, seconded Mrs.A. Wilkinson that the minutes of the June Meeting be confirmed.

Inward Correspondence: (i) Newsletters from other Nats.Clubs.
(ii) Press Releases from D.P.I.
(iii) Letter from Stanthorpe Town Council advising that the matter of a lock on the Texas Caves is to "be on the table".
(iv) Letter advising that Mr.D.P.Vernon from the Q'ld Museum will be available to lecture to us in August.

Cont.

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Minutes of General Meeting held 25th July, 1973 Cont.

Outward Correspondence: (i) Letter to Adult Education with details re next meeting and outing.

(ii) Letter to Toowoomba Field Nats. requesting information about thier Club Car Badge.

Treasurer's Report: Refer Annual Report.

Outings: The last outing to Cherry Gully Gorge, led by Mr.W.Cathcart, attracted 75 members and friends.

The August outing will be led by Mrs.D.McCosker to Jolly's Falls.

General Business: It was moved by Mr.N.Butler, seconded by Mr.H. Stevenson that the committee investigate and advise on the Club joining fee and subscription.

With the offer from the Museum for a speaker, the Secretary is to contact Mr.P. Higgins to explain the situation and to try to organize the Geology lecture for September. Moved Mr.W.Goebel, seconded Mrs.H.Stevenson. Carried.

The President called for all members to suggest meetings and outings for the next year and to advise the committee of same as soon as possible.

The Meeting closed at 9 p.m. when the Programme "Remember Last Year" was compiled and presented by Mr.R.McCosker and Mr.E.Walker.

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A QUEENSLAND REST AREA:

During our recent holidays we were very pleased to note that Southern visitors commented most favourably on the qu[illegible] of Queensland's Rest Areas.

About twenty miles south of Bundaberg, we discovered a rest area which was particularly pleasing. The Commissioner of Main Roads was instrumental in having about 175 acres of typical Wallum country declared a Reserve and arranging for the Forestry Department to set it aside and for the Main Roads Department to maintain it. It was opened officially by the then Commissioner, Mr.C.N. Barton in 1969.

Wallum country was formed by the lowering of the sea in the Glacial Age. The sands are not alluvium from local rocks. The valleys and lakes were filled with sand and peat from the high sand hills to form Wallum marshes. This reserve is High Wallum, as distinct from the coastal marshy Wallum Flats. The name Wallum is derived from the Banksia Plant family. The species "Aemula" and "Oblongifolia" were called Wallum by the aborigines. They obtained nectar from the flowers.

The soil is a coarse white sand overlaying rock and is subject extremes of wetness and dryness. The vegetation is described as Wallum Heath and is listed as consisting of small tress such as Wallum Banksia and Yellow Stringybark and shrubs including a smaller Banksia, Wild May, Zieria, Woody Pear and a variety of Acacias. Animals to be found include the Echnida or Spiny Anteater, Swamp Wallaby and Eastern Grey Kangaroo. There are lizards such as the Frilled Dragon, Tommy, Round-head Dragon and the Eatern Bearded Dragon. Honeypot Ants build nests of gravel from 5 to 16 inches high.

Cont.

A QUEENSLAND REST AREA Cont.:

The birds include the scrub turkey and a variety of honeyeaters. The Honeyeaters were present in a bright and cheerful throng, feeding busily from insects and the banksia blossoms and appreciating the blue-painted half tyres set in a number of trees as water troughs.

This rest area would give pleasure to any visitor. Cool shade, dappled sunlight and bird song for all. For the nature lover walking tracks to observe and enjoy the flora and fauna and for the conservation - minded a practical demonstration of how a typical area of any district can be preserved and presented for all to appreciate.

Z. NEWMAN.

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Random Thoughts on a wet Saturday Afternoon:

Having had the privilege of being a member of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalists Club since its inception, I wish to write about what the S.N.C. had done for me.

It has added to my circle of friends in all age groups, and I have enjoyed many an interesting and instructive outing in their company.

Although I have lived here and at Wallangarra for a quarter of a century, my duties prevented me from seeing much of the countryside, except from the windows of a railway train. Since I joined the S.N.C., really I have been amazed at the great number of beauty spots in this area, their waterfalls, fauna, (birds included) majestic eucalypts, and an infinite variety of beautiful, and sometimes quaint, wildflowers, and queerly shaped rocks.

As we drive along the well kept roads in these areas, and across good bridges, passing towering mountains and well-kept and prosperous looking farms and station properties, I marvel at the courage of the early proneers who traversed this country in bullock wagons or with horse teams, and waded across the streams, and of their womenfold who, lacking all modern conveniences, and many miles from towns, exercised their ingenuity, and improvised many things from kerosene tins, wire, sugarbags etc, taught their children, and I should imagine were too busy to have time to waste complaining.

Sometimes we pause beside some lonely graves out in the bush where these brave people, who opened up the country are lying and wish that they could see it as it is today - thanks to them!

To end these thoughts, I send my thanks to all club members, in all age groups, who have, in many ways, helped me to enjoy our outings, and hope that we may have more fun together.

Cheerio,

D. WISEMAN.

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BASIC IDEAS IN CONSERVATION Cont.:

THE WATER CYCLE. This is really the path water follows over land and in the air, so let us start at the largest supply of water the oceans, containing 97.3% of all the earth's supply. Water evaporated from the oceans into the air as the result of the sun's heat rises up to become atmospheric vapour commonly seen as cloud, and when the air conditions are right is released as rain onto the land and oceans. As we are interested only in the land, what happens to this water after it falls to the earth's surface?

Eventually it can do one of two things. It can run back into the ocean, or it can be absorbed by plants (and to a minor extent by animals) and evaporated into the air. It is highly desirable that we aim, by land management, to see that as little as possible runs off, and the maximum is released by plants.

Some of the effects of clearing obviously do exactly the opposite, as do raodways and buildings, quarries and open cut mines. Opposition to these operations does not just rest on the basis of what is done to the land from an aesthetic point of view, but to the effect on our water supply.

There are, however, less obvious things to consider. In a heavy fall of rain, we obviously cannot hope to use the water as quickly as it falls, so the aim is to store the water until it is needed. Now one of the best places to do this is in the soil, and it is necessary to have this as open or friable as possible so that the water may be soaked up. Unfortunately the effect of some froms of land usage is disastrous in this regard, for example the trampling of little feet, especially those attached to sheep. On the other hand the earthworm and the small roots have the opposite effect by opening the soil and thus permitting the water to penetrate. Once again the bad effect of heavy clearing is apparant.

Finally let us consider what pollutants do to our water supply. Principally they affect the quality of the water that runs off, but pollutants can also affect the water stored in the soil. The effect of salt is very obvious, for not only does it kill plants, but it also closes the pores in the soil thus preventing water soaking into the soil, which is the only way of getting the salt element out again. Borax is another particularly undesirable element in the water, for the same reason. Nevertheless it is in the run-off water that the effect of pollutants is worst, as it is this water which supports most of the animal life.

Pollutants have a bad habit of accumulating in the body fat of animals, and have, and will continue to kill off many individuals. Worse still pollutants may prevent the animal from breeding, e.g. D.D.T. on birds. Birds are not noticably affected by D.D.T., but the shells of their eggs are so thin they break, thus effectively killing the next generation.

This is a subject in itself, but my aim is to point out the basic factor of the water cycle is that it goes round and round, being neither lost no replenished, and if we pollute it then the pollutants are virtually trapped in it in one form or another forever.

Impure water affects everything!

M.D.PASSMORE (to be Cont)

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SOME NATURE NOTES:

Many of us, especially those in the country have often been visited by swallows, looking for a site to build their nests, and later setting up home.

A couple of weeks back, I had a visit from two birds, who had made it their business to give me 'the once over'. I was not particularly interested at the time, but have since wished I was.

In the building where the two gas burners for the hot water are housed, I found an interesting project yesterday. Two swallows were fluttering about as if something important was afoot. I often found a willy wagtail, looking for insects in the same place, so I presumed these two swallows were up to the same 'capper'.

Upon closer inspection, I found I was wrong.

The roof of the building is approx 8 - 12 inches above the burners which are fixed to the wall. Just above these in a cosy position, nearly completed, was a nest.

Lace like, cup shaped and ever so neat it was positioned. Such a cunning plan, central heating throughout will be the comforts of this abode. Perhaps the swallows predict more cool weather afoot, and have prepared for this or perhaps they were impressed by the gold trimmings of the gas burners and its surroundings, and were making their point clear that "just any place is not good enough, we have the best!"

The nest is something unusual, I feel. Each 'dob' of mud is laid like a wall of bricks, and just how it sticks to the wall has me bluffed. Being a shiny smooth material, it does not offer any help in construction.

If I had known of this building'without a permit'earlier I would have watched closely to see how it was done.

I shall now keep a close watch to see what comes forth!

R.A.D.

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THE SATIN BOWER BIRD:

Has anyone ever seen a satin bower bird build two bowers at the same place?

For several seasons a male Satin Bower Bird displayed at his bower adorning it with blue parrot feathers, blue material and even a small blue plastic ship.

Several months ago it was noticed that another bower had been built near the other and resembling a road intersection. I had supposed this new bower to have been built due to a limb falling from a nearby tree and resting above the original bower, but it was obvious that both bowers were in use as they had a few new blue feather in each and were well packed down through constant use.

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Did you know: Dawn draws a pink frown across the forehead of night.

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TRY FOSSIL COLLECTING:

The best and most likely place to find a fossil is in sedimentary rock, such as limestone, shale and sandstone. Soil will often be covering these rocks so a study of ourcrops in quarries, road and rail cuttings, gullies, cliffs and creek beds may offer more success.

COLLECTING:

A few 'tools of trade' are needed for this task. Hammer, powerful hand lens, chisel, knife, labels, wrapping materials, note book, pencil and a map of the area. If you wish to go in for collecting in a big way, a stiff bristle brush, a sledge hammer, a shovel, a compass and perhaps a good bype of camera to photograph samples which cannot be moved will be needed.

A fossil-bearing rock may split easily if it has been strongly weathered. Use of the hammer will normally be all the effort required. Chipping will be needed if the rock is hard. Clean the fine parts of the follil and dust with the brush. Carefully wrap the specimen and label, with locality and anme of rock formation and its geological age if known.

PREPARATION:

Needles, wire hooks, shellac solution, indian ink, a tin of white lacquer, fine sandpaper and an old toothbruch are needed for preparing the samples for display and proper identification. Unless the rock is soft shale, it is best to soak the fossil specimen in water for a few hours before working it.

Chip off as much excess rock as possible, then use the finer tools to complete the job, and finally bruch down. Such things as plant impressions are often damaged by handling, especially if they are in shales. These should be coated with either shellac of melted paraffin wax.

Rub a small flat spot on the rock with sandpaper and coat with white lacquer, and put a catalogue number on this when dry.

CLASSIFICATION:

This is the most difficult part of collecting. Help should be obtained from the University Geology Department, Geological Survey Dept. or from other collectors.

The Paleontologist works with the two word classification, devised by LINNAEUS, in which the fossil is identified by its genus and species name.

Although a find may be rewarding, remember do not go bashing the countryside to pieces to look for something which is not there.

R.A.D.

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Outing 19th August 1973:

This outing has been changed to Wyberba, the Christmas Party spot and The Junction. Cars will depart Weeroona Park at 9.30 am.

There will be walking for the young and hearty and cars to drive the older members so that lunch etc. may be enjoyed together.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Outing 15th April, 1973.

This outing is probably rather 'old hat' now, but having discovered the writeup in a book lent to me I find the contents still of interest.

Only five cars left from the assembly point, but as the late-comers caught up or arrived at the destination later in the morning we ended up with about ten cars and 35 people. The outing was not to Boorook as advertised, but to Basket Swamp Creek, a tributory of the Cataract River. The starting point for the day's hike was from a spot on the Casino Road, 17 miles east of Tenterfield.

After a pleasant morning's walk along Basket Swamp Creek, a crystal clear mountain stream, we arrived at the top of Basket Swamp Creek Falls, the destination for the day, where everyone had a rest after the strenuous climb around the side of the mountain to the top of the falls.

At this scenic spot we had lunch after which most of the party ventured further up the creek to other smaller waterholes, cascades, and deep waterholes. Quite a few of the younger members made use of the last of the summer weather and went in for a swim in the icy cold water, said by Don Orr to cure all aches and pains.

Everyone seemed very reluctant to leave this beautiful spot for the return trip, but eventually everyone got going and the last of the stragglers arrived back at the cars just after 4.30pm. I think everyone had a most enjoyable day even though the last 400 metres up the side of the mountain to the cars were a bit exhausting.

R.LEISEMANN.

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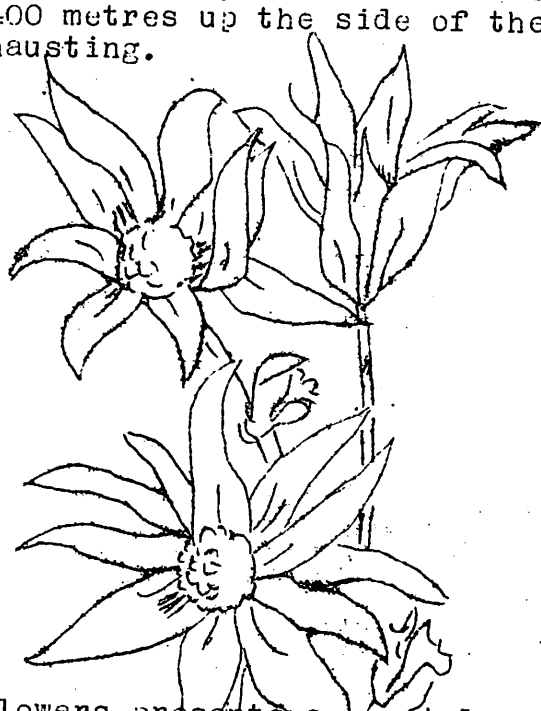

THE FLOWER OF FLANNEL:

Actinotus helianthi, with its white, woolly, flannel like petels is commonly called "Flannel Flower".

Found in many areas on the Granite Belt, its growing area extends into southern Queensland, New South Wales coastal sandstone areas, and Victoria. The white petal bracts surround a cluster of tiny florets, and the entire plant, leaves, stems, and flower is coated with a soft velvety down.

A patch of these creamy white flowers presents a spectular sight. Ranging in height from 12 inches to approx.3 feet or more, the plant often grows in areas least expected to support such an interesting specimen. The average width of a flower - 2 or more inches. There is such variation in the size of the flower and the height of the plant it is difficult to set the measurements.

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