

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST-

Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 42

September 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	Miss J. Westcott
Geology "	Mr. P. Higgins
Youth "	Mr. G. Marsden
Bushwalking "	Mr. R. McCosker.

Activities.

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

Annual Subscriptions.

Single \$1.50	Family \$2.00
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Programme.Field Outings:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader.</u>
Brian McDonough's	23rd September	B. McDonough.
Spicer's Peak - Double		
Top area. Camp-out, site	13-14th October	B. Leisemann.
on Swan Creek. Extra Outing.		
Goldmine and Leslie Dam	21st October	N. Butler.

Meetings:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker.</u>
Basic Geology	26th September	Mr. P. Higgins.
Slides of Overseas Trip	24th October	Mrs. J. Harslett.

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"What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?"

--oOo--

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Minutes of General Meeting held 22nd August 1973.

Forty nine members were present with apologies being received from seven.

Minutes of previous meeting: Moved Mrs.F.Wilkinson, seconded Mrs.

Paskins that the minutes of the July meeting be confirmed.

Inward Correspondence: (i) Newsletters from associate Nats.Clubs.
(ii) Letter from Mr.D.P.Vernon, stating that he would be pleased to give a talk to the Nats. on 22.8.73. on "Q'ld Birds"; also he would bring bird skins and 35 m.m. transparencies.

Outward Correspondence: NIL.

Moved W.Cathcart, seconded Mrs.Wilkinson that the inward correspondence be recieved and the outward adopted. Carried.

<u>Treasurer's Report:</u> Bal.brought forward from 1972-3	\$19.22
Subscriptions	47.50
	<u>66.72</u>

Duplicating Aug. 2.00

Postage " 1.80

Cr.Balance \$62.92

Moved G.Leisemann, seconded Mrs.J.Harslett that the Treasurer's report be accepted and accounts passed for payment.

Outings Reports: The last outing led by Mrs.W.McCosker went to Girraween National Park.

Next outing (Sept.) will be led by Mr.B.McDonagh to his property.

General Business: Mr.T.Spiller would like to see the Nats. make the Police Paddock into a Green Belt. Miss J.Westcott said that she has made application for her property to be made into a reserve. Mrs.Harslett will investigate the matter and report to the next general meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm. The Programme was "Queensland Birds" with emphasis on the birds of the Stanthorpe District, compiled and presented by Mr.D.P.Vernon, Ornithologist, Q'ld Museum.

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The Bush

The distant blue has beckoned us to search its vale and hill,
With ever changing mood and light, with sounds both soft and shrill;

With rustling grey-green foliage and constant floral art,
The bush will always call to those who know it in their heart.

Join those who tramp the wooded hill and follow trickling stream,

The fascination leads you on to realize a dream
Of peace and renewed pleasure at an ever-changing view,
Oh! Once you learn its secrets, the bush will call to you.

D.O.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Outing 19th August 1973, "The Junction Track":

The listed outing to Jolly's Falls was abandoned as the area is still recovering from last year's bush fires.

Instead, about thirty of us made the most of the winter sun and enjoyed the spectacle of the early spring flowers along the "Junction Track" sheltered most of the way from the cold winds.

About 8 different varieties of wattle (*Acacia*) filled the air with gold. My favourite, *A. ruppii*, was new to most people and provided a colourful ground cover, especially when intermingled with cyclamen coloured *Mirbelia* and the small flowered *Leucopogon*. Heathy plants of *Cryptandra* and the dainty *Micromyrtus* flower over a long period as does the taller fluffy button *Stenanthemum*.

Hovea, snow bush, star flowers and rock rose, used so often for floral decoration in public halls were almost in full bloom. Common names, even in the same district can refer to so many different species so if we call them *Hovea*, *Leucopogon*, *Olearia* and *Phebalium* respectively we will avoid confusion.

Large bushes of *Phebalium rotundifolium* amongst the rocks vied with the wattle for our admiration. Flowers of *P. whitii* were just opening and *P. ambiens* (fruit salad *P.* so called because of its aromatic leaves and flowers) was massed in bud along the creek banks.

Hands off and eyes on prickly dwarf *Leucopogon* and the taller *Melichrus*. However, on all fours, we managed to find and sample the delectable cups of honey from the kinder prostrate *Melichrus*. We may be able to sample the fruit of the heavily laden *gecbungs* (*Persoonia*) later in the year.

Yellow toned pea-flower (Eggs and Bacon) were represented in *Puttenaca* and *Bossia*. Some rice flower (*Punelea*) and the ever popular *Boronia* were seen.

The large seed pods of *Hakea* always attract attention, also the tiny nuts of the *Casuarina* along the creek. As Shanghai ammunition the "boys" decided the one was too large and the other too small!

Wild hops (*Dodonaea*) was in full bloom, but the colourful seed pods in early summer are its chief attraction. Many other plants were discussed - Cone sticks (*Petrophile*), Grass sticks (*Xanthorrhoea*) and others also not yet in bloom and the patch of *Spinifex* we passed through as we returned to our starting point for a final welcome cuppa.

Flowers seen along the way included:

OLEARIA - *microphylla*

LEUCOPOGON - *juniperina*, *melaleucoides*, *neoanglicus*.

MELICHRUS - *urceolatus* and *procumbens*.

ACACIA - *ruppii*, *adunca*, *floribunda*, *ulicifolia*, *spectabilis*
latisepala, *venulosa*, *granitica*, *neriifolia*.

PULTENAEA - *foliolosa*

BOSSIA) *RHOMBIFOLIA*

MIRBELIA - *speciosa*

MICROMYRTUS - *microphylla*

Cont.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Flowers along "the Junction Track" Cont.:

BANKSIA - collina	BORONIA - amabilis
PERSOONIA	PHEBALIUM - rotundifolia, ambiens
GREVILLEA - linearifolia	whitii or ramosissima
HAKEA - dactyloides	grandiflora.
CRYPTANDRA - floribunda	DODONAEA - filifolia
STENANTHEMUM - scortechinii	PIMELEA - colorans.

D. McCOSKER.

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WATTLES:

The August outing could almost have been called "Wattle Day", even if a little premature, date-wise. A New Australian once wrote "Australia is a Land of Sunshine, but in wattle time the sun seems to have come down to us, instead of merely shining down from the sky", and I could not help thinking of this whilst on the outing.

To refresh memories, and in an endeavour to make it easier for members to recognize and remember species, and perhaps even to be able to greet them as "old friends", a short description of the botanical names and species is given.

Swamp Wattle (Acacia venulosa) conspicuous by its erect character, and golden balls, but also by its name venulosa meaning veiny, which suggests it has a special botanical character, many nerved and a strongly veined leaf. Just look at it against the light!

Balled Wattle (Acacia spectabilis) graceful in growth, showy in bloom. Is it any wonder that the word 'spectacular' sprang to Cunningham's mind when he saw it for the first time, as his diary relates, "between the Condamine and Severn River"? Hence the name of 'spectabilis'.

Acacia latisepala very similar to the above and until 1969, was, indeed thought to be a form of 'spectabilis'. Mr. Les Pedley named and described it as a new species and said, "The size of the gland and the pinnae suggest that it is related to A. spectabilis, but the floral structure is quite different and indicates they are not closely related". It also has marked red margins to the leaflets.

Wallangarra Wattle (Acacia adunca) probably the most widespread and predominate wattle in the district and certainly heralds in the Spring, in this area. It is nice that this handsome species is known and associated further afield, with part of the district.

Broad Leafed Black Wattle (Acacia neriifolia) follows the previous wattle in bloom with its golden display and tall limbs which are such a feature of our rural roadsides. The specific name 'neriifolia' means having leaves like oleander from the family name of the latter.

Acacia granitica. Down towards the creek, across the large granite slabs this semi-prostrate species forms many a lovely shape. It was so designated because of its strong preference for granite soils and it may be seen in other areas where granite predominates.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.WATTLES Cont.:

Acacia ruppii was particularly spectacular with its rich coloured and prolific golden galls, and rather pine-like foliage. This very beautiful species is named after that grand old gentleman of orchid fame, the late Rev.H.M.R.Rupp. It is also one of our earliest Spring wattles and confined to the southern end of the district.

River Wattle (Acacia floribunda) also present along the creek as its common name suggests. "Florabunda" refers to its abundant flowers and it is noticable for its elongated shaped flowers, paler colour and rather strong and not very pleasant smell.

Prickly Moses (Acacia ulicifolia) making its presence physically felt was formerly Ac. juniperina and both names refer to its extremely prickly nature. It is also conspicuous by its almost blonde coloured flowers.

Those who returned via Eukey and Storm King Dam could not have failed to be delighted by the golden sprays of Acacia irrorata. This bi-pinnate leafed wattle varies from the widely known 'Sydney Green Wattle, by having very shiny foliage with golden tips.

JEAN HARBLETT.

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Extra outing 13th - 14th October:

Camp-out to Spicer's Peak/Doubletop area - campsite on Swan Creek.

Departure time - 8 am. sharp, Saturday 13th October from Weeroon Park.

Route: New England Highway to Warwick east to Yangan and on to Swanfels and then follow the road along Swan Creek to the campsite. For those who might come later in the day or on the Sunday there's only one road, so you can't miss the campsite. Distance is approx. 70 miles from Stanthorpe.

Programme: A short walk on Saturday will be made to Hell Hole Gorge (round walk approx. 1½ miles) and possibly another short walk.

On Sunday morning, departing as early as possible the energetic and fit will climb Doubletop and Spicer's Peak or Mt. Huntley. It's a walk (or rather a climb) of only approx. 4 to 6 miles, but very rugged. For those who would like to come later on Saturday or on Sunday for the day there will be plenty to see and do. It's a pleasant and scenic drive just to the campsite. For anyone who can't make the strenuous walk there's a couple of old timber roads nearby (untrafficable) running through open forest and then into rainforest. There's usually plenty of wildlife around. Water will be needed for the whole weekend as the stream is sometimes not running or is fouled by cattle. A barbeque plate will be available. Any interested members (or non-members) can contact Rob Leisemann for further details.

R.LEISEMANN.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.BASIC IDEAS IN CONSERVATION Cont.:

In contrast to the water cycle, the NITROGEN CYCLE can be, and is, replenished, and the danger here is that we can overdo the replenishment, and upset the cycle.

When we speak of the nitrogen cycle, however, we are not referring to the gas nitrogen as such, which is one of the most abundant elements on the earth. In this form nitrogen is quite useless to most living things, and has to be converted either to the ammonium or the nitrate ion before most forms of life can utilize it in the production of proteins. In either of these latter forms nitrogen is taken up by plants, stored as woody tissue, in the forms of leaves, or as seeds dropped to the ground to be re-used. Some nitrogen is taken out by animals, and fire, and this is replenished by the action of lightning making ammonia, or by leguminous plants absorbing gaseous nitrogen and converting it to the nitrate ion form.

Man, however, can also synthesise these two forms of nitrogen, and does so in huge quantities to be subsequently put on the soil in the form of fertilisers. The danger of over doing this thus becomes apparent. Nitrogen gets into our dams which then become full of algae, as Stanthorpe citizens were very well aware of last Christmas time. It also gets into our bodies, where in excess it becomes a pollutant of our bloodstreams.

Other animals are similarly affected, as are many plants. In fact excess nitrogen upsets the whole balance of nature, promoting some species and retarding others.

Even from these limited considerations it becomes apparent that those who oppose economic gain at the expense of environmental loss, do not talk in terms of dollars but in those of very survival.

M.D.PASSMORE.

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Outing 23rd September 1973:

Assemble at Weeroona Park at 9 am.

Meet Brian McDonagh at Railway Bridge near Accommodation Creek just past Ballandean.

Proceed to outing point with Brian as leader.

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Extra Outing Report Sunday 9th September:

A most enjoyable day was had by eight members to the valley between Castle Rock and Mt. Norman and return via Turtle Rock and The Sphinx.

The hike was interrupted on many occasions with time-out for the shutter bugs in the group to capture the prolific wild-flowers on film.

R.LEISEMANN.

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September 1973.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Proposed Outings for 1973 - 1974:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Leader.</u>
September (23rd)	Brian McDonagh's	B. McDonagh.
October (13th-14th)	Extra Outing	
October (21st)	Spicer's PK./Doubltop area.	B. Leisemann.
November (25th)	Goldmine and Leslie Dam	N. Butler.
December	Quartz Mine Tenterfield.	P. Ingram.
January (20th)	McCoskers', Christmas.	Mr. & Mrs. McCosker.
February	Haynes, Ballandean	Mr. & Mrs. Flinn.
March	Sugarloaf	T. Spiller.
April	Rivertree	R. McCosker.
May	Rocky River Camp-out.	R. Leisemann.
	River Cave, Dr. Robert's	
	Waterhole	W. Cathcart.
June	Boonoo Boonoo Crossing	H. Stevenson.
July	Ian Ferris' Property	F. Wilkinson.
August	Gibraltar Range Camp-out.	Jean Harslett.
Extra Outing November 11th.	Slip Rocks, north-east of Pyramids.	W. Cathcart/ E. Walker.

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Proposed Speakers until December 1973:

September 26th	Peter Higgins	Basic Geology.
October 24th	Jean Harslett	Slides re Overseas trip.
November 28th	Dr. Kilpatrick.	
December	NO MEETING.	

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FORGOTTEN?:

As houses go I suppose this one is not too bad. The orange walls are peeling and partly suffering from dry-rot. The faded Indian Red roof has seen better days, but it would still keep out a storm or two. The windows are debateable. Half the louvres on the eastern side are missing and the panes are broken in the front sashes.

It is a 'two piece job'. Kitchen etc. at the back joined by a passage way to the main section. The usual out buildings stand empty like down and outs with their hands in their pockets, not taking any interest in what is around them.

Two pepper trees shade what was once the front yard. A little further on a tennis court, denoting the social standing of its past owners, has let the thistles and weeds do their best to change it to a lawn.

Some 'rone' cows hang around the paddock gate, lowing and stamping their feet impatiently. A tank stand supports a rust and

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.FORGOTTEN? Cont.:

silver object which once held water. A creeper hangs around its lower portions like a small child clinging to its mother's skirt.

A dead gum flings its branches to the sky. "Take me, take me don't leave me!" it seems to plead.

The screech of black cockatoos, protesting at my approach cause me to stop. Seven of them, stretching their wings, screech and call out to the other birds, from a river oak near the creek. "Beware, beware". They are the first I have seen for a long time. Against the pink sky they contrast.

As I approach they become uneasy and flutter to the gum. "Beware, beware", they screech, then take to wing. The Rosellas in the pepper trees follow, wagtails, ducks from the pond, crows and plovers, even the little double-bars and blue wren twitter and sigh and flutter off.

Beware a storm approaches; I turn for home, soon this bird paradise will be lost with the rising waters of the dam...

R.A.D.

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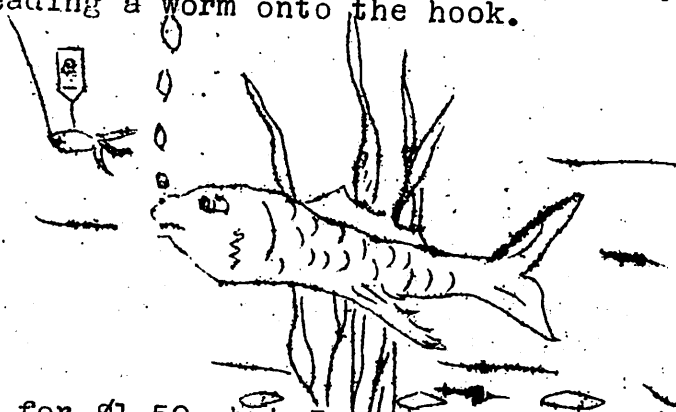
WORMS:

There is a fresh in the creek; the moon is right, the night is fair. Just the right type of situation to go fishing. Equipped with pick and tin can, we set off looking for worms. Although they might help to enlarge our number of fish caught, we should not forget the important role played by the earthworm.

It has been said that the weight of worms in an acre of rich soil is greater than the weight of sheep or cattle that could graze on that acre.

Dragging dead leaves down into their burrows, the worms enrich the soil, and also by keeping the soil loose, allow water and air to enter. By adding their castings to the soil, worms make excellent manure for plants. It has been estimated that the weight of worm castings in one acre of land amounts to approximately ten tons per year.

So - we cannot do without the earthworm if we are to have good rich soil. Perhaps we should try the artificial means of catching fish, wobblers, spinners and plastic lures.... they save that tedious job of threading a worm onto the hook.



Not bad for \$1.50, but Japanese plastic has that - taste, you know!

R.A.D.