

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Monthly newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 45 December/January 73/74 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
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Fauna "	Miss J. 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 pm.
Outings	Sunday preceeding 4th Wednesday.

Annual Subscription

Single \$1.50 Junior (full-time student) 50c. Family \$2.00.

Programme.Field Outings:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
McCoskers' (Christmas Bar-B-Q.	16th December	Mr. & Mrs. McCosker
Haynes, Ballandean	20th January	Mr. & Mrs. P. Flinn

Meetings:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
NO MEETING IN DECEMBER.	23rd January	G. Hamlyn-Harris.

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Did you know: The Polar Bear gives birth to its young during hibernation?

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Minutes of General Meeting held 28th November 1973.

Forty-five members were present with apologies being received from 5. The meeting opened at 8.10pm. with a welcome to new member, Mrs. Rowe.

Minutes of previous meeting: Moved Mrs.F.Wilkinson, seconded Mrs. D.Orr that the minutes of October meeting be confirmed.

Inward Correspondence: (i) Letter from Queensland Nats.re car sticker.

(ii) Press releases from D.P.I.

(iii) Letters from Adult Education re lecture fees and club publicity.

(iv) Newsletters from other Nats.Clubs.

Outward Correspondence:(i) Three letters to men responsible for success of Nats.Outing to Leslie Dam.

(ii) Advertisement notification to Adult Education.

Moved Mrs. R.Harslett, seconded Mrs.R.Marsden that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted.

Business arising from Correspondence: We are to follow up the letter from the Queensland Nats.Club and make enquiries to Melbourne, re availability of a Nats. car sticker.

<u>Treasurer's Report:</u>	Cr.Bal. B/f		74.86
	Postage November	1.58	
	Duplicating	3.00	4.58
	Cr.Bal.		<u>870.28</u>

Moved Mrs.R.Leisemann, seconded Mrs.W.Newman that the Treasurer's Report be accepted and accounts passed for payment.

Carried.

General Business: It was suggested by Mrs.D.Orr that the duplicating of our magazine by Power Bros. has been unsatisfactory in that there have been too many blanks to be able to make up sufficient full copies for members. The Rover Scouts have offered to do the duplicating for the same price.

Moved Mrs.D.Orr, seconded Mr.I.Jackson that the Rover Scouts do the duplicating in future.

Carried.

Mr.I.Jackson wishes to resign from the position of Editor but will stay on until a new Editor is available.

The date of the Christmas Bar-B-Q was decided upon as the 16th December 1973.

Nats. signs will be erected to show the way to the Youth Hostel, which is the venue for our January 1974 meeting.

Outings Reports: Mr.P.Ingram reported on the November outing at the Tenterfield Quartz Mine which was attended by 40 people. The next outing will be to Haynes' area at Ballanean led by Mr.& Mrs.P.Flinn.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm. after which Mr.& Mrs.R.Leisemann presented and illustrated a lecture "Off the Beaten Track - Outback Australia".

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We thank Mr.& Mrs.R.Leisemann for the chance to travel with them "off the beaten track". It made us all realise the vast, magnificence of our open, empty 'outback'.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Report on Outing to Tenterfield Silica Mine,
November, 1973.

On Sunday 25th November, forty people attended the outing to the Silica Mine near Tenterfield.

Firstly we inspected the Crushing Plant where the Silica is crushed into three different grades and sent to various parts of Australia, where it is used for facing buildings etc., and in cleansers and paints.

While we were at the plant twenty tons of Silica were loaded on to a truck for Brisbane.

After leaving there we went and had lunch at the Tenterfield Dam, then travelled a further six miles to the Mine.

The mine, which is open-cut, has been operating since 1938 and is at present producing 250 tons per month. The mine is now 150 ft. deep, and recent drillings for a further 70 ft. show that the Silica is still there. This mine has the purest Silica in Australia (98% pure).

We were fortunate to have the mine owner's son come along with us and he gave us a lot of information.

While we were there one of the employees did some blasting but some of the rocks became lodged on the side of the cliff, which made it unsafe for us to walk through the bottom of the mine so we had to be content with a look from the top.

It was a very pleasant and enjoyable outing.

PHILIP INGRAM.

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CHRISTMAS BAR-B-Q:

Come one, come all!!

Bring all you can eat PLUS your voice and festive gaiety.

The fire will be 'on' from 4.30 pm.

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January Meeting Venue (or how to find your way to
the Youth Hostel).

Proceed along the Pikedale Road crossing the Broadwater Bridge, passing the Broadwater School until you see a NATS. sign pointing to the left. Take this turn and follow road until another NATS. sign takes you into a gateway through which you follow a road to the Youth Hostel.

Meeting time is 8 pm. BUT it is suggested that we try to get there by 7.30 pm. to have a look around beforehand.

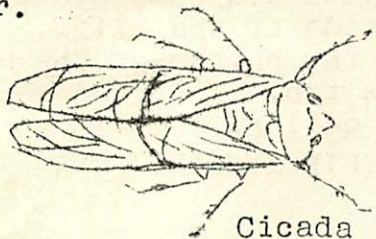
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A small bright pink flower, attractive to bees and insects the plant having a grass like appearance is the Trigger Plant *STYLIDIUM LARICIFOLIUM* SYN. *CANDOLLEA LARICI FOLIA*. A mechanism for the pollination of the flowers of the plant is arranged so that when contact is made with the lower end of the column, it causes it to spring up suddenly hitting the agent making contact. Pollen is exploded on the tack of the agent. Older flowers with spent pollen exposing the ripe sticky stigma now collect pollen on contact with a visiting pollinator.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Cicada Hunters:

Recently my attention was attracted to a number of quite large holes in soft soil in parts of the orchard. After watching for a short time, I saw a very large wasp towing a Cicada which it took straight to one of the holes. The wasp and cicada together made an impressive looking team and it is reported that a wasp will tow his paralysed victim to a larder over a hundred yards away.

The wasp belongs to the family EXEIRIDAE, Cicada Hunters, and is perhaps the largest and most impressive looking wasp in Australia. It can be described as an enormous yellow and black insect. Most of the body is black, but the last two thirds of the abdomen are orange with two narrow black bands. The legs are black and orange with many spines and ending in strong curved claws. It is one of several species of solitary wasp which tunnel in soft soil and store their paralysed victims in underground chambers, as food for the wasps' larvae. If there should be any shortage of cicadas the cells are sometimes stocked with spiders, but this year should be one of plenty for the Cicada Hunter.



Cicada



Wasp

Z. NEWMAN.

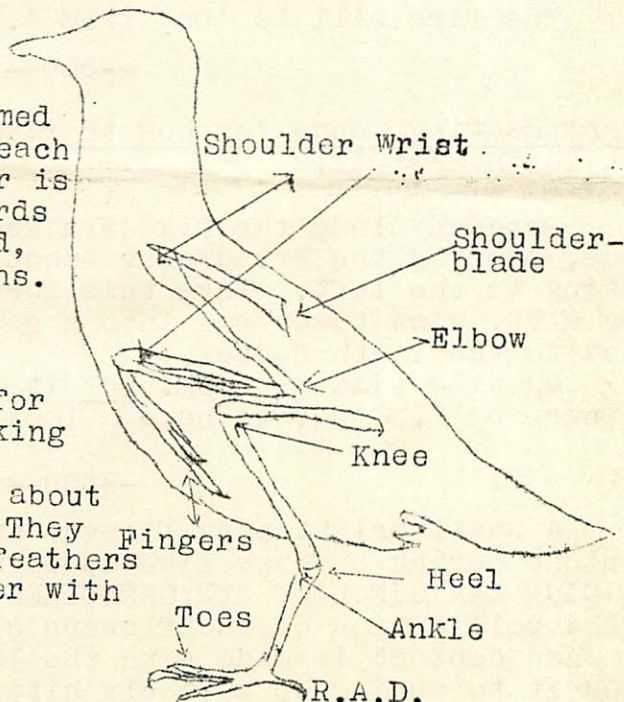
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Fingers and toes:

We have become so accustomed to having 5 fingers and toes on each hand and foot we think the number is normal, - but - most perching birds have 3 toes in front and 1 behind, but even here there are variations.

If the bird is perhaps a wader, it has only 3 toes since wading birds rarely perch. Some have webbing between their toes for efficiency when swimming and walking on mud.

The most interesting part about birds is their "legs and arms". They are the same as humans only the feathers cover more than humans often cover with clothes!!



R.A.D.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.New England National Park:

Situated about 55 miles from Armidale on the eastern side is the New England National Park.

Reserved in July 1931 as a result of efforts of the late Mr. P.A. Wright of Wollomombi, the park is noted for its rugged densely forested mountain and valley country.

The park contains the second highest peak on the New England Plateau, Point Lookout, 5,250ft. high which provides an excellent view of the park and is also the major picnic spot. The average rainfall is 83 inches, and snowfalls occur on the high peaks.

The park which is managed by a Trust of ten members, has two residing Rangers, and overnight accommodation comprising of a visitors' chalet (sewered, hot and cold water, electricity, cooking facilities, refrigeration and bunks for 8 persons). No other camping is allowed in the park although an area is set aside for campers near the park entrance.

Lyrebirds are often heard and seen in this area, as well as the Banksias, Parrot Pea, New England tea tree and other interesting trees like Arctic Beech.

Close by the park are Elbow Falls, Wollomombi Falls and Edgars Lookout. These are also worthy of a visit. A pamphlet on park facilities may be obtained by writing to

The Ranger in Charge,
New England National Park,
Point Lookout Road,
Armidale, 2350.

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A Naturalist's Reflections:

In the dusk of the evening I took a stroll along a chain of ponds, which in this dry country represented the course of a river, and had the good fortune to see several examples of the famous platypus, or ORNITHORHYNCHUS PARADOXUS. They were diving and playing about the surface of the water, but showed so little of their bodies that they might easily have been mistaken for water-rats.

A little time before this I had been lying on a sunny bank, and was reflecting on the strange character of the animals of this country as compared with the rest of the world. An unbeliever in every thing beyond his own reason might exclaim, "Two distinct Creators must have been at work; their object, however, has been the same, and certainly the end in each case is complete."

While thus thinking, I observed the hollow conical pitfall of the lion-ant: first a fly fell down the treacherous slope and immediately disappeared; then came a large but unwary ant; its struggles to escape being very violent, those curious little jets of sand, described by Kirby as being flung by the insect's tail, were promptly directed against the expected victim. But the ant enjoyed a better fate than the fly, and escaped the fatal jaws which lay concealed at the base of the conical hollow.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.A Naturalist's Reflections Cont.:

There can be no doubt but that this predacious larva belongs to the same genus with the European kind, though to a different species. Now what would the sceptic say to this?

Would any two workmen ever have hit upon so beautiful, so simple, and yet so artificial a contrivance?

It cannot be thought so; one Hand has surely worked throughout the universe....

Written by Charles Darwin on a visit to Sydney in 1836, taken from "Land of Wonder" by Alec H. Chisholm with kind permission from the publishers.

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Seasons
Greetings

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