

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
OF  
THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB

P.O. Box 154,  
Stanthorpe, Q., 4380.

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ACTIVITIES

MEETINGS - 4th Wednesday of each Month in the C.W.A. Rooms at 8 p.m.

OUTINGS - Each Sunday PRECEEDING the 4th Wednesday.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single - \$2.00

Family - \$3.00

PROGRAMME

MARCH OUTING

Please note change from what is recorded in minutes. That one will be held at a later date.

Place - TOM PLANTS PROPERTY      Date - March 20th, 1977

Meet at Veeroona Park at 9.30 a.m.

NEXT MEETING - March 23rd in the C.W.A. Rooms

Miss Merle Tonkin will be our Guest Speaker and she will take us to the Olympic Games in Montreal and other parts of Canada.

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MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING - 23/2/77.

Present 30      apologies 9.

The President welcomed all present and expressed pleasure at the presence of Mr. and Mrs. C. Hockings and Mr. Peter McKechnie M.J.A., our Guest Speaker.



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Minutes of meeting continued.  
 Moved by Mrs. A. Wilkinson and seconded by Mrs. A. McAllister. Carried.  
 Inward was received from Mr. P. McKechnie M.L.A., Qld. Nats Club, Dept. Lands, Forestry and Nat. Parks press releases (3) Magazines from D. Downs Nats (Feb.), Q.N.C. (Feb/Mar) Urimbirra Vol. 1 No.2, Wck. Walker (Feb.)

Outward was sent to:- 4QS, Adult Educ., Mr. P. McKechnie M.L.A.

Moved by F. Wilkinson and seconded by A. Lomas that the inward be received and the outward endorsed. Carried.

Financial - Mrs. D. Archer moved that credit balance of \$84.82 be received and a/c \$3.00 to Rover Scouts be passed. Seconded by Mrs. J. Harslett. Carried

Last Outing - Mr. F. Wilkinson reported 37 attended the outing held at Jibbenbar Arsenic Mine on Sunday Feb. 20th. Stop was made at the Nundubbermere homestead to see the Trap Rock cut off and proceeded to the Mine area. Now a ruin it was interesting to see ore pots, pulleys, wood tower construction, dismantled ovens showing the activity once made there by about 200 people.

Next Outing - Mrs. Jean Harslett will take us to the Axtec Temple area at Wyberba. (Ed. Note - this outing is postponed and will take place at a later date.)

Guest Speaker:- Miss Merle Tonkin will take us to the Olympic Games in Montreal and other parts of Canada etc.

BUSINESS - Mr. Tom Archer reported on the Coolmunda issue. The owner is agreeable to sell but it was moved by F. Wilkinson and Sec. by T. Chapman that no moves be made with Mr. Kelly but that Mr. Peter McKechnie be asked to take up the issue. Mrs. Jean Harslett was requested to provide information on the flora of the area. Agreed. There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55 after which Mr. Peter McKechnie M.L.A. gave a most enlightening address on the National Park situation of our area with a promise of an additional park area to be proclaimed this week in the Sundown Area. General discussion and questions took place and all feel more fully informed and satisfied on the moves made. A vote of thanks was moved by Mr. Errol Walker.

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NOTES BY CEC CURR ON THE "ARSENIC MINES" AT JIBBENBAR Trig 3,202'.  
 The largest of the Arsenic Mines in the Stanthorpe District was the State Arsenic Mine at Jibbenbar, 24 miles S.W. of Stanthorpe.

Mineralization appears to have concentrated in shear zones in granite marginal to the Ruby Creek Granite. The lobe striking east averaged 6' in width and worked to a depth of 220' before known reserves were almost exhausted and falling arsenic prices forced the mine and treatment works to close in 1924.

The entire Arsenic output of Q'ld. between 1917 and 1927 came from the Jibbenbar Sundown, Red Rock areas. It would appear that where these Ruby Creek granite outcrops in the Nundubbermere, Kilminster, Red Rock, Sundown and Jibbenbar areas came in contact between granite and menta sediments "Trap Rock" or "Country Rock" mineralisation occurred. Example "Tin Copper Silver Arsenic".

Marshall's lobe which adjoined the main lobe was a low percentage of arsenic, except where it intercepted the main lobe.

Another lobe 4' wide 2 miles south east



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Gen's Jibbenbar Notes continue - of the mine was ~~prospected~~, but no production has been recorded.

Arsenic as an ore is very heavy, silvery in colour and slightly heavier than tin. It was thought that originally the ore was picked up by stockmen and burnt in the shoeing forges - fumes being very toxic. It is recorded that a new show  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles up the creek, "Pine Creek" was much richer in quality and this was carted by motor truck down to the crusher and burnt in the tunnels.

The ore was mined and brought to the surface by the winding engine in metal buckets and dumped into a chute 40' high and then fed into the crusher; sieved in a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " mesh cylinder 20' long by 5' in diameter. The ore was then taken in trolleys to a system of tunnels made of arched bricks which you could only just stand up in, and was lined with fine clay. The ore was burnt in these tunnels and the arsenic fumes given off would adhere to the tunnel ceiling which when cooled was scraped off and packed into wooden casks. The mulled heaps are the residue from the burnt ore. Below is the dam from which water was pumped to the mine and explosives were stored in a magazine in the bush.

Joe Johnstone carted the machinery in by horse teams and he was noted for his teams and feats in hauling mine machinery into the Sundown area and other places.

The bricks were made on the site but were of poor quality. Fire bricks used were from the famous Campbell's of Brisbane.

The story goes that wood cutters and carters were making £20 to £30 per day - big money in those times. Jibbenbar was quite a large village of some 200 people - School, store and many houses. For Sunday recreation, the young bloods would run up to the summit 3,202' and leave 3d under the trig. Mine work was arduous especially collecting the arsenic powder as it got in the creases and pores of the skin creating a continuous rash and discomfort.

The mine was still intact in 1946 but scrap metal demanding big prices after the war soon saw the demolition of anything that could be sold and finally a few years ago the poppets legs fell to gun cotton for what purpose I don't know.

The tunnels were dismantled by Jim Mann to make Jibbenbar House in Stanthorpe. To fall the large chimney it was chipped  $\frac{3}{4}$  through the base bricks before it fell smashing every brick. All that is now left is the water tank; winding winch and a few ore buckets.

As all the arsenic pentoxide was imported and very expensive and with a world shortage of grey arsenic the government of the day decided in a bold bid to assist in eradicating prickly pear by heavily subsidizing the cost of arsenical poisons to land owners and the mine was set up for this purpose. The arsenic however was treated and made into arsenic pentoxide at Wallangarra "Jennings" near the railway line by a man named Roberts who was killed in a car accident near Tenterfield. Arsenic was also procured from Tent Hill near Deepwater. With the decline for the use of Arsenic to combat prickly pear and the availability of cheap Arsenic from Chile saw the final folding of the mine. The State Arsenic Mine at Jibbenbar was started in Jan. 1918 with a



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Cec's notes on Jibbenbar continue - capital of £42,996 with a trading loss up till 1925 of £17,753. The total production from 1919 until 1924 was 1,627 tons.

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Thirty seven people went on the Jibbenbar Outing. We stopped at the top of the hill to view the Homestead at Nundubbermere and the Ballandean Area. We noted the Granite and Trap rock cut off in the Homestead Gully. Another stop was made on the forward slope for a wonderful view of Jibbenbar Mountain, the High Pinnacle, Sundown and Mt. Donaldson.

Cec explained the Mine Workings and Layout and passed a sample from "London" Red Rock. We had a good look over the mine area and saw the old buckets that were still around - found the Explosive Magazine up in the bush.

Lunch was a dampish affair as the rain started falling, some braved the elements and ate outside, but several took shelter in a "Shearing Shed" or sorts and an enjoyable time was had by all.

Several cars went home through Glenlyon, Redgate, Pikedale, but others continued on to the Glen Lyon Dam site.

Many thanks to our Leader Cec for an enjoyable outing.

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#### SNAKES - FURINA DIDEMA - by Jean Harslett

Members were interest in a pair of small snakes seeking shelter beneath some heavy strips of iron bark - near the Jibbenbar State Mine. These small brightly coloured chaps were light brown - cream beneath - with head and nape shiny black. On the nape at the back of the head was a central diamond shaped red patch. It is commonly called The Red Naped Snake (Furina Didadema). It attains a length of 18 cm. Though venomous it is quite harmless to humans and feeds upon insects and small skinks. It has had several changes in gneric names over the years, but the description specific name has stayed the same. (e.g. Aspidomorphus Diadema - Kinghorn 1956; Brachysoma Diadema - Worrell, 1963; and the latest authority Cogger 1975 give it the name of Furina Diadema +, all of which is a little confusing to the beginner.)

This little chap is wide spread over most of continental Australia being happy in as wide a range of habitat as the coastal regions to the arid centre. It always excites some interest when seen because is it quite colourful and often performs a waving striking act which is only bluff as the mouth is usually closed during this performance and the fangs, such as they are, not even extended. Being so wide spread it is surprising its not more often seen but no doubt the reason is its nocturnal habits.

Of the 17 species of snakes recorded from the Granite Belt - a good many of the list is made up from these smaller nocturnal species.

Whilst on the subject of snakes, a week ago Mr. John VanKlaveren found a specimen of Golden Crowned Snake (Cacoplis Squamulosus). This is often described as one of our beautiful snakes and it is only the second specimen recorded from the Granite Belt. It may be dark brown to steely Grey above with a golden "Crown" forming a collar and beneath it is pale pink and red with a line of black patches as marking. Its nocturnal



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Jean continues:- and very active and may reach the length of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a metre. A year ago one was found in the Girraween area by Mr. Bill Goebel. This extended its western range quite considerably so its interesting that Mr. VanKlaveren found his specimen on the Broadwater - even further west.

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### CHRISTMAS PARTY 1976 by Ailsa Wilkinson.

We held our Christmas Party once again on the property of Bill and Dorie McCosker at the Junction. This is a most beautiful place and ideal for such an occasion.

It was a very happy celebration and there was a large gathering of members, their families and friends. In spite of a serious illness in their family, the McCoskers had everything in readiness for the barbecue tea. The area was cleared and firewood supplied. After cooking our tea which was very much enjoyed, we proceeded with community singing of Christmas Carols. "Excellent singing folks". Two prospective members were introduced to those present. Some people walked to the Junction area to view the beautiful scenery.

Our thanks to Mr. & Mrs. B. Noakes of Warwick for their gift of sweets. These were forgotten that night but were much appreciated at our Jibbenbar outing.

Our President Tom and his wife Dot were visiting their daughter Betty and Son-in-law Axel in Tasmania and in their absence Vice President Noel Butler moved a vote of thanks to Bill, Dore and family for the use of their property for our Christmas outing which was once again an outstanding success.

In passing Congratulations Tom and Dot on winning the picturesque property "4 Winds".

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### Pre Outing Report to Tom Plant's Property - March 20, 1977.

This area back of the Amiens Road is a very interesting one. There are many features which are similar to many typical Stanthorpe scenes but each one has its own distinctive beauty. Here it is possible to view the surrounding country from a rock covered hill or to go down to a large water hole; and in between are areas which abound in wildflowers. Spring makes a delicate cover of blue mist with profusion of pink boronias. It is possible to drive to all of these areas.

A touch of "early days" is the log cabin erected there and the relics from early Stanthorpe history are gathered there. All this and more is included in the March Outing which is only about 7 miles from town. For any one desirous of a Barbeque Tea, Mr. Plant assures me the tenderest and tastiest steaks are cooked on his rock slab fireplaces - just bring the steak.

Usual departure time - 9.30 a.m. from Weeroona Park.

See next page for Map of the outing.



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MAP FOR TOM PLANTS PROPERTY OUTING March 20, 1977.

