

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

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

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 Mr. Errol Walker
 Mr. Frank Wilkinson
 Mr. Ray Marsden

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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

MAY OUTING -

Place - Goldfields in the Dalveen Area Date - May 22, 1977 Organiser -
 Leave Weeroona Park at 9.30 a.m. Noel Butler

NEXT MEETING

- May 25th, 1977 in the C.W.A. Rooms at 8 p.m.
 Guest Speaker will be Jean Harslett telling us about 'Natural History'

JUNE OUTING

- Campout is planned - Place to be the Bunya Mountains -
 - Date - June 11th, 12th & 13th.

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MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27th, 1977.

Present 22. Apologies - 11

The President welcomed members and guests Mr. & Mrs. Bennett to the meeting.

Minutes - That the minutes be taken as read as per the April Magazine was moved by
 W. McCosker, seconded by Mrs. A. Wilkinson. CARRIED.

May, 1977.

MINUTES continued:-

Correspondence:- Inward was received from - Tmba. College of Technical & Further Educ. (request speakers), Tmba. Nats (re future campout), Dept. Lands & Nat. Parks etc. (re Coolmunda) & Press releases, Royal Ornithologists Union, Magazines from NPA Annual report; Urimbirra Vol. 11 No.4, Warwick Walker Vol. 4 No. 9. QNC. 93/94, Darling Downs April, NPA. Vol.47 No.3. Outward was sent to Adult Educ. return, 4QS, Reg. McMeniman, Mrs. Burton.

Moved by F. Wilkinsn and seconded Mrs. M. McDonald that outward be endorsed and inward received. CARRIED.

Financial:- Mrs. D. Archer moved that credit of \$78.72 be received and a/c for postage \$22.31 be passed for payment. Seconded by Mrs. J. Harslett Carried.

Outing Report

Mrs. Harslett reported 37 attended in 15 cars on our outing to Aztec Temple and Underground river. Highlight was the interesting rock formations in both areas.

Next Outing - Mr. Noel Butler is trying to organise this to the Goldfields in the Dalveen area for May 22.

Next Meeting - Mrs. Jean Harslett will lecture on a natural history topic.

Business - Following a query from Tmba. Nats Club as to whether we will hold another campout this year the meeting voiced its acceptance of such an undertaking and for secretary to make booking at the National Fitness Camp for Sept./ Oct. Moved by F. Wilkinson, Seconded by Mrs. J. Harslett. Carried.

As the Club has not had its own campout for a while it was agreed that Secretary write to the Ranger at the Bunya Mts. to make a booking for June 11, 12, 13.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 8.45 p.m. after which Mr. Ian Jackson led us in sight and sound to the very interesting areas of the Flinders Ranges and Barossa Valley.

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MAY PREOUTING REPORT

Mr. Noel Butler has organised Perry Butler to lead us on our outing on May 22nd to the sight of Old Gold Mines which were working about 1880 to 1900. We will be going along the Old Goldfields Rd. West of Dalveen (this is now called Sorrento Rd.) and will be travelling about 15-16 miles. The one property we'll be visiting was once owned by Perry Butler's Grandfather and we'll be seeing an old Pit Sawn Timber homestead.

We'll meet at Weeroona Park at 9.30 a.m. on the 22nd, and will meet up with Noel etc. at the Sorrento Rd. turnoff.

Sounds like an interesting outing so be sure and join us.

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April Outing Reports -

First from our Publicity Officer Ailsa Wilkinson -

Our April outing was to view the distinctive rock formations at the Aztec Temple area and the underground river. Jean Harslett led a party of about 37 members and friends. Before lunch we walked to the Aztec Temple area. It was a most enjoyable walk and the locality was extremely interesting.

Ailsa continues:- After lunch we climbed over rocks to view the underground river. This was another most unusual region. The course of the river through the rocks was really fascinating. This area gave great scope to rock climbers. It was an outing for all ages and it was good to see toddlers and "oldies" having such a wonderful time.

Our grateful thanks to Jean and family for arranging this outing and making our visit to the Aztec Temple area and the underground river such an interesting and enjoyable day.

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Jean Harslett, our leader, tells us a bit about the formation of this interesting spot.

Then Dot invited me to write something about the formation of the Aztec Temple Rocks. I consulted our Geology expert Maurice Passmore. He suggests that the elongated and perpendicular grouped shapes were caused by an influence of more rapid cooling of the tops, while the sides possibly from cover protection cooling more slowly. This would probably be initially caused by a fault.

I also asked Bill Goebel about the origin of the name. He did not know the meaning of the origin of the name but feels sure that it was applied by the Queensland Bushwalkers who were amongst the first to make these tors popular. Perhaps one of their members was a student of some of the Worlds early cultures - who saw a similarity in the shapes of the Tors to the triangular and capped tops of the sacrificial altars designed by the ancient Aztecs.

The Passmore brothers have been students of some of these cultures and related how the Aztecs were apparently much pre-occupied with time, and were very advanced in this field of study and their ability to measure time - however there is a school of thought which believes that because the Aztecs didn't have a zero in their system of numbering (the Arabic system did) that this lack led to their downfall or lack of advancement. Their method of building sacrificial altars (of which they had a great many) used the system of triangles. Because of this it is suggested they had some early association with other early cultures on the other side of the world. Egyptian in particular. At least we found some food for thought, and hope at some later date to give you further information re - the Aztec Temple and its naming.

After lunch we visited the area known as the "Underground River" a really splendid geographical visual lesson - with its cascades and deep fissures - and members enjoyed climbing in and out the course of the creek.

Leading to these areas are good examples of semi-alpine swamps which are typical of the New England area. They are the habitat of an interesting series of rather specialized plants - The Lady Tresses Orchid (*Spiranthes sinensis*) was in flower. This is a dainty pink and white orchid with flowers spiralling up the stalk and is the only representative of this world wide genus in Australia. (Incidentally it occurs in the Himalayas, on plateaus 2,500 - 8000 ft.) Flowering period is usually described as from October to March depending on latitude. These must have been encouraged to flower later by the wonderfully mild period we are enjoying. Another orchid seen in flower was the "Dancing Lady Orchid" (*Eriochilus cucullatus*). Some give them the vernacular name of Parson's Bands, however, I think those scattered along the flat on their knees inspecting these diminutive flowers were paying homage to "The Dancing Ladies!"

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And to add to this report we have our Flora Officer Dore McCosker who says:-

Travelling along the road to the Aztec Temple the occasional *Helechripum bracteatum* and *H. collenum* matched the sunshine of the glorious day.

During our lunch, a cheeky yellow robin blending well with the rich creamy panicles of the *Bursaria spinosa* growing amongst the shady gums and acacias was "people watching". I wonder if he too sampled the pomegranates we shared.

Dore continues:- Across the creek we admired some *Spiranthes australis* (pink ladies tresses) blooming in the grass while on the hill among the rocks were *Emilia*, *Wahlenbergia*, *Isotoma axillaris*, *Podolepis jaceoides*.

Banksia integrifolia and *collina* are making new flowers. Rock orchids here, as in most areas of the park have been extensively damaged by the goats that must be very numerous now.

Growing out of a rock crevice in the shade by the underground river was *Sticherus flabellatus*, (shiny fan fern), new to most of us. The frond resembles *Gleichenia* (Umbrella fern) but is softer and a brighter green.

As we returned to our cars *Eriochilus cucullatus* ('dancing lady' orchids) and numerous *Brachycome* sp. daisies added interest.

Although not noted on that day green hood orchids *solanums*, *ajugas*, *stylidium*, *lotus australis* and (waterlily) *Attelia ovalifolia* are blooming in the Girraween environs.

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and to complete our very comprehensive 'outing report' we have Uncle Tom's impressions of 'our first outing with the NATS' -

Mrs. Wilkinson has asked me to give my first impressions or such of our first outing with the Nats. Well we nearly didn't make it, as we were running a bit late and just arrived at the Park when the convoy took off. Now I'd be about the slowest driver in Australia, and as the Datsun one Tonner is about like me, we had to go like H- - - down the hill to catch up what I'd lost going up hill. Anyway apart from one car getting between me and the bloke I was following, we made it to Ballandean where the cars pulled up. Well we didn't seem to know anyone, so when one took off I followed. The last I saw of him he was passing cars and well on his way to N.S.W. - maybe even Western Australia. So I said to Mum that we'd better go on to Girraween as it looked like we were going to have a picnic on our own. We had just poured out the tea when Frank and Mrs. Wilkenson turned up looking for us, so once again we were members of the Nats and not following the many cars visiting our scenic spots. We came to the spot in the bush where I am writing this now. My wife has left me (with a couple of good sorts) and has gone to look at the underground river. This morning they went to see the Aztec Temple and she was telling me all about it. If someone hadn't pulled my leg in days gone by I'd for sure be on these walks. However I find it very interesting talking to everyone, which brings me to something that has taken me back over the years. I've just met Mrs. Gemmel, and when I worked at Pierpoints Garage I worked on their Model A Ford, this was 1928 to the 30's so to meet a gracious lady with links of the past means quite a lot.

I think it is a wonderful thing, this club where people who love nature and the bush get together and can see so many interesting places and things. And what a lovely day it is - perfect just like it had been ordered.

As I write I am here with Mrs. McDonald and Mrs. Gemmel - have one ear cocked and occasionally join in the conversation - so if this seems a bit haywire, I'm not going off the deep end, but just finishing this off while waiting for the more energetic of the bush walkers to return, so saying bye for now, lots of good walking and talking from UNCLE TOM.

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Many thanks to Ailsa, Jean, Dory and Uncle Tom.

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EASTER TRAMPINGS - by our Secretary, Joan Stevenson.

With visitors gone and 2½ days of Easter left at our disposal, we hastily packed the car and headed off for our first visit to the Macintyre Falls north West of Ashford about 215 km. away. We went out via Pikedale and Glenlyon and crossed the border to join the Bruxner Highway to Bonshaw. Heading south now over part bitumen mostly dirt road to Ashford we felt we had accomplished all but 30 km in 3 hrs and so thought we were nearly there. Still on dirt roads we followed the sign to the Limestone Caves with thoughts that I know we are right but IS THIS the Road? We

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Joan continues her story - had not heard the weather forecast before leaving of the floods on the Macintyre.

Every trickle was enough to gouge a furrow across the road and many a sudden stop was made when shadows concealed the sharp gutter. Yes there were 32 places in those 30 km that we slowed down to nearly a stop for them. To add to it all there were 14 cement crossings with water at least 4 in. deep and 12 narrow grids to contend with.

Cars! we're there. Not quite. A stretch of very muddy road with timber across the worst to allow someone game enough to give it a go. The other cars decided home was easier to get to if they stayed where they were. I wondered whether I had a brave or stupid driver when he headed for the quagmire. A bit of a hole, a pause, movement forward, on to the timber - she's holding - sigh - we're over. The usual onlookers advice came in "there's a worse stretch further up". Only a few hundred yards to the picnic area and this between us. Had a good look at the mud and wondered which advice we should take as these onlookers said "if you got over the last mud you'll have no trouble here." Once again holes, water & mud but they were kind to us again and so just up the hill to the camping ground/picnic area. This 30 Km. was to fill in the full hour we hadn't allowed for. Still daylight enough to pitch our little tent and prepare for our stay. In the background you could hear the roar of the falls making us wonder if we were on a beachfront with incessant waves. I couldn't curb my curiosity to see the falls so in the fading light dashed along the track to a rather distant vantage point. Over the huge rocks the dirty brown water was rushing and pounding its way then to meet with other water just as anxious to be in the race. After the struggle the water would drop into the huge pool at the base of the falls creating a cauldron of boiling brown liquid.

First call next morning was to get to the water edge and just see what was going on. In those 12 hours the water level had dropped considerably but it did allow us to get a closer view of the numerous smaller falls that all met up to go through one narrow section before their final tumble into this 60 ft. deep hole. Yes the pot was still boiling with the ring of waves where the water would rise again and then spread to the edges in a sea of foam. More to see so back up to the top as the river was too high to walk comfortably across the wet slippery rocks for us to be able to go round the bend of the river into another section of the gorge they called the "beach". Down we went on the quite good track till the steps were feet below where they should be. That was easy enough to get over but we are still looking for the beach. The water carved rocks were showing us how they gained their curvaceous figures but keeping us at a distance by the cooperation of the rushing water. The wall of rock around the walls of the gorge gave the impression of holding it all for themselves. Their huge slabs with exacting cracks were fascinating. Up to the top again - refreshments - then along the rim to the end of the gorge where the river turns to open into wider areas. Down again to where there is room for the water to spread and more gently plunge down the lesser drops. Here the sheoaks stand with their branches waving in the rushing waters. Daylight waning takes us back up the track to the campfire and stars and silence.

Before our departure on Monday we made another quick dash to note the drop in the water level and feel pleased we saw the power of the water at the different levels over 36 hours. We did not find our pot of gold at the end of the rainbow as each fall had its own rainbow and so decided to leave its riches behind and only take the very pleasant thoughts we gathered with us.

We could not pass the Limestone Caves without an inspection. Going in the main entrance the extent of the cave is not fully realized but for anyone wishing to play hide and seek it would be ideal to be the one in the hide. There are numerous off shoots each with the same carved sides and roof made by an underground river grinding its way forcibly through. We could only see a couple of relatively small flow

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Continuing Joan's graphic story - stones and did not have as many features as the very much smaller Texas caves.

On our way again leaving Ashford to have lunch at the Pindari Dam. This has a rock wall as Glenlyon Dam and the water was rushing over the natural rock spillway. Several water skiers were making use of the calm waters of this scenic area and I believe the fishermen are quite legitimate with their tales of the 'big one'.

Across our now familiar creek crossings and gooddirt road we drove past the rolling green pastures and contented stock to arrive at Emmaville. The prosperity of bygone days are depicted in the huge mining complex still in operation and of the many disbanded heaps of worked over soil for the evasive tin and its accompanying semi precious stones.

More peaceful pastures en route to Deepwater where we had to leave our dream for later and concentrate on and join the constant stream of powered metal hoping all had visions of a safe arrival at their destination.

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Many thanks Joan for sharing this adventurous 2½ days.

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THOSE COMMON NAMES!!! by our Flora Officer Dore McCosker.

Recently, while visiting friends, we were invited to sample some chestnuts. They had been roasted in the oven and as there were only a few on the saucer I broke off a small portion of one, nibbled it and enjoyed the nutty flavour. Hubby had a slightly larger taste. As we talked I asked where they had found the black bean pods that I had noticed lying on their barbeque and was told that they were the chestnuts their Brisbane friends had given them.

Returning home I looked for information on the Black bean and found it is also known as Moreton Bay Chestnut or properly *Castanospermum australe* and was eaten by the Aborigines - but only after considerable treatment. A.B. & J.W. Cribb in their book "Wild Food in Australia" write that even after what they regarded as equivalent treatment "three slices, resembling a nutty potato in flavour, produced intense griping which lasted several hours."--So we had not picked up a "wog" after all!

I wasted no time and phoned my friends immediately to prevent any one else having a sample and have since obtained some real chestnuts in the husk.

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Thanks Dore - your warning will be heeded by all chestnut samplers.

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Chrissie Plant has given me some recipes from a very old cook book and I'm passing one on each month - here is the first for LEMON WINE

Pare and cut six lemons (large). Steep the rinds in the juice, put to it a quart of Brandy and let it stand three days in an earthen pot close stopped.

Then squeeze six more lemons and mix with two quarts of spring water and as much sugar as will sweeten the whole.

Boil the water, lemons and sugar together and, when cool add a quart of white wine, the other lemon and brandy mixing them together and run it through a flannel bag into some proper vessel.

Let it stand three months and then bottle it off. Cork the bottles well, keep it cool and it will be fit to drink in a month or six weeks.

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SEE YOU ALL ON THE OUTING -

DATE - May 22nd

Place - Old Goldmines in Dalveen Area

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