

September 1977

1.
THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST CLUB.
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER.

OF
THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB.

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1977/1978.

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 Mr. Maurice Passmore.
 Mr. Ian Jackson.
 Mr. Errol Walker.
 Mrs. Jean Harslett
 Mr. Tom Chapman.
 Mrs. Irene Chapman.
 Mr. Frank Wilkinson.

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

OUTINGS Each Sunday PRECEEDING the fourth Wednesday

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single \$ 2.00

Family \$3.00

SEPTEMBER OUTING.

Place Texas - Yetman area.... Date 25 th. September 1977.... Leader Mr. Laurie Jeffrey of Texas. Depart "Weeroona Park" at 9a.m. and meet at the Texas P.O. at 10.30 a.m.

It has been suggested by Mr. Jeffrey that we take the Glenlyon road to Texas, this being the most interesting, in his view. Directions are to take the Glenlyon road at Pikedale. Do not take the first road to Texas via Arcot, but continue on to within two miles of Glenlyon and take the Silverspur-Texas road - both signboarded. However we may travel independantly and take which ever route we care, as long as we arrive at the Texas P.O. by 10.30 am. Mr. Jeffrey will take us a further thirty miles towards Yetman and he estimates the whole round trip for Stanthorpe members will be just under 200 miles (320 kilometres).

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September Meeting. Mr. Paul Grimshaw speaking on local lizards.
PLEASE NOTE the MEETING is at 7.30 p.m. and at the NEW INFORMATION
CENTRE AT GIRRAWEE NATIONAL PARK.

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD 24th August 1977.

Present 17

Apologies 8.

The President welcomed members to the meeting, with a special welcome to Mr. Lincoln Mc.Phee.

Minutes...It was moved by Mr. L. Thompson and seconded by Mrs. M. Marsden that the minutes as per the August Magazine be taken as read.

Carried

Correspondence...Inward correspondence was received from Mr. Paul Grimshaw Mr. John Heaton; Mr. L. Jeffrey; D. Halloran; Aust Post; Dept. of National Park and Wildlife Press Releases; Mr. Bill Barker; Magazines from, Warwick Walkers, Vol 5. No. 2. Contact Vol. 5. No. 2. Outward was forwarded to: S.G.A.P.; Mr. Gordon Brown; Mr. J. Harden; Mr. L. Cockburn; Mr. L. Jeffrey; Mr. P. Grimshaw; Qld. Nats; Darling Downs Nats; Chinchilla Nats and 40s.

It was moved by Mr. N. Butler and seconded by Mrs. Butler that the inward be adopted and the outward endorsed. Carried.

Financial....In the absence of Mrs. D. Archer, the credit was given as \$63.52 and accepted, and accounts C.W.A. \$4; Mrs. A.M. Mc. Allister (postage \$6.14; and stapler \$4.50.) = \$10.64. be passed for payment.

Moved by J. Harslett, seconded Mr. L. Thompson. Carried.

Outing Report. Mr. T. Chapman reported very briefly as his talk would basic-ly cover it, however it was deemed it achieved something useful.

Next Outing. Is planned to the Yetman area, Mr. L. Jeffrey is the leader Meeting at the Texas Post Office at 10.30 a.m. 25.9.1977.

Next Meeting: PLEASE NOTE TIME 7.30 p.m. PLEASE NOTE VENUE Girraween

Nat. Park at the new demonstration centre. A brief meeting follow-
-ed by programme to commence by 8 o'clock, Reptiles by P. Grimshaw.

Business. S.G.A.P. wildflowers to be left 1st. Sept at Chapmans Shop.

Bill Barkers request for bird lists to be kept discussed next meet-
-ing, with possible type form prepared. Subs. Members to pay 20 cents
a night to cover extra expenses. Moved T. Archer sec. N. Butler. Carried
Lincoln Mc.Phee expressing regret at removal of trees in High St.
Moved J. Harslett Sec. N. Butler to write to council. N. Butler then
suggested letter should incorporate letter to the Border Post too.
Carried.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9 p.m. and
Mr. Tom Archer introduced our guest speaker Mr. Tom Chapman who
spoke on "How to Identify Some of Your Own Findings" with a 'do-it-
yourself kit'!

THE AUGUST OUTING

The August outing was specially designed by Tom and Irene Chapman, to stimulate observation and interest in what we might see on an outing - Thank you Tom and Irene for the original thoughts and effort put into this venture. In only 5 acres we had time to stop, look and listen. It moved one of our younger members, listening to the notes of a small flock of thornbills to say, "It's like fairyland." The things found are listed in full, so that some of you may find these in your own books.

Birds

Grey Thrush, Golden Whistler, Yellow tailed Thornbill, Rose Robin, Grey shafted Fantail, Spinebill, Kookooburra, Little Thornbill, Weebill, White faced Honeyeater, Yellow eared Honeyeater, Mistletoe Bird, White throated tree creeper.

PLANTS

Acacia falciformis, Acacia implexa, Acacia irrorata, Indigofera australis, Plectranthus parviflorus (wild sage), Pimelea linifolia, Pratia purpur ascens, Exocarpus cupressiformis, Daviesia corymbosa, Notelaea sp, Billardiera scandelis (wild peach) Hardenbergia monophylla (sarsaprilla), Cryptandra amara, Goodenia hederacea, Pterostylis nutans (nodding greenhood), Geranium pilosum, Dianella laevis. The trees included yellow jacket, stringybark, kurrajong, sheoak, pine tree, - Also noted was blady, sword grass and weeds - Dandelions, Cobblers peg Purple Top and Blackberry. The tree ferns were Rock or Mulga fern (Cheilanthes sieberi), Maiden Hair (Adiantum aethiopicum) and Bracken Fern (Pteridium esculentum).

MISC.

Cicada Nymph, Christmas beetle lava, Ground weevil, Worm, Centipede, Millipede, Chrysalis of Emperor Gum Moth, Carab beetle, Cabbage white butterfly, Meadow Argus butterfly, Bull ant, Meat ant, small black ants, various galls (the largest and most spectacular one found in Australia) and a lady bird. Lizard Anomalopus verreauxii, which lives in the mulsh under logs and rocks.

SOIL PROFILES

By Maurice Passmore

Mr. Maurice Passmore dug for us a hole, to explain a soil profile which was a new experience for most of us - and an interesting one. Brian McDonagh made some observations too and jokingly threatened to take out a miner's lease, when he found an interesting reef. Maurice Passmore has kindly written these notes on soil profiles for us to ponder over further.

As we haven't paid much attention to soils previously, some explanation about soil classification is probably desirable. There has been an attempt to follow the Linnean System, but as there is an infinite gradation in all soil types this is only partially successful. The most useful concept is that of the Great Soil Group which is akin to the Family Classification of plants and animals. There are quite a lot of these, many with Russian names such as Chernoyems, as this is one field where the politically acceptable teaching of Lamarck did not interfere with the scientific reality of Darwin. (This is in fact why Russian Agriculture is so far behind that of the west). Also of interest is a peculiarly Australian group "the Grey and Brown Soils of the Desert", which many of you will know as bulldust in the dry, and that delightful stuff that chocks up the mudguards (not the black soil variety) in the wet.

Soils as classified in a more specific way by depth, colour and texture of various horizons or layers. Depth is of course obvious, but colour, to the uninitiated is not. I well remember, as a student being dismayed to find what seemed an ordinary brown turned out to be a yellow red (not red yellow) brown with a touch of sky blue pink.

How ever a gentleman named Mussel produced a standard chart which is really essential for a start. Texture is purely by feel and thus its classification is about as exact as economics.

Our Sunday outing showed three clear horizons which are classified alphabetically. The "A" horizons are ones that are leached and the "B", that layer where these elements are precipitated. The C is disintegrated rock and the "D" - solid rock. Further subdivisions are then made if necessary, commonly in the "A" where the "A1" contains humus and the "A2" does not. Thus our soil profile was:

0 - 10"	A1	Sandy Loam
10- 20"	A2	Sandy Loam
20" +	B2	yellow brown- Loam with "R" iron stains

The "B1" is absent which would have been a cemented layer. The soil is thus, Red Yellow Podzolic, a common type in this area and indeed in Australia. If the "B1" layer was also present it would be a true Podzol which are more characteristic of European soils.

AUGUST MEETING PROGRAMME

by Tom Chapman.

The meeting followed up the August outing and Tom's theme was "You can enjoy nature without being an expert, but a little knowledge helps". He went on to say, my interest in nature probably began with admiration of some beautiful flowering bushes and brightly coloured birds. When this interest was shared with Irene and later with the kids, it developed to the stage where we knew the names of practically all the plants on our place at Kogan and the surrounding areas. We could also identify most of the birds, many just from their calls. Some of our plant identification may not have been 100% accurate down to the last dot over the "i". No doubt at times we may have mistaken an immature bird of one species for a fully mature bird of another. We enjoyed however, watching birds, learning about them as individuals, or discovering where some particular party could be found. We knew when to expect to see Dollar Birds and Rainbow Birds, where to find the lovely Red capped Robin, and even had our own Owlet Nightjar that we could produce for those interested.

We were lucky to have friends with knowledge and the willingness to share it. Our kids were always taking some plant to Keith Kerr for identification, or a lizard to Bill Dunmall, or describing a bird to Malcolm Wilson. What I'm trying to say is that I feel a true amateur naturalist can appreciate nature without needing to know every scientific fact, but once you start to learn a few interesting facts you realize how much there is to know. There is no better way to learn then to share experiences and excursions with others interested in the same things.

Now that we live on the Granite Belt I realize that I know very few of the local plants. Perhaps there is just too much here to learn all at once. Upon thinking about it, I can see that I need to get back to basics, concentrating on a few things at a time, using the help and knowledge of our local experts. Within this club we have so much local knowledge but unfortunately we are not using it. With this in mind our last outing was an attempt to start at the beginning using some outside expert knowledge, (David Hockings), some local (Jean Harslett, Maurice Passmore, Brian McDonagh) to

create more and varied and interest amongst our members.

The outing took the form of an observation wander in 5 acres of ordinary bush, interesting but not spectacular. It contained no masses of flowers and just an average bird area, but previously I had roamed with David Hockings over this 5 acre ordinary patch of bush and he identified 35 plants, not counting grasses.

During discussions on one of the three Acacias the old problem of common names arose; eg. as to whether it was Hickory Wattle, Ben's Wattle! or some other inappropriate common name. At this point Tom gave a very direct example of how plants were divided into Families, genus and species, and how the specific name usually defined the special characteristic of that specific plant. He gave many good examples. The three Acacia species he hopes you will remember are -

1. *Acacia falciformis* - the species name refers to the falcate formed phyllodes, falcate being shaped like a scythe or sickle. The gland near the base of the phyllode is very prominent. It perhaps should be said that the "leaf" on Acacia trees is always called a phyllode and it is a flattened leaf stem which serves as a leaf but conserves moisture - a clever adaption to Australian conditions.

2. *Acacia implexa* - this species had dark green phyllodes. It flowers in the summer time and has pale creamy yellow flowers. We did not see the flowers but did observe the very quaint twisted and intertwined seed pods. This is the very important characteristic of this particular Acacia, hence a special name "implexa" which means entwined, and refers to these seed pods.

3. *Acacia irrorata* - a very dainty tree the tips of which are golden. The name "irrorata" means besprinkled with minute dots - just what this refers to on this particular plant, we do not know yet, but it will be a nice little challenge to find out.

BIRD & PLANT of the MONTH

It was Tom's suggestion that perhaps we should have a bird of the month and a plant of the month. The obvious choices of the month are -:

1. The Rose Robin - a pair of these dainty little birds was seen, the male by most and the female by only one or two of the party. The male, satin grey above and with a delicate pink breast was very handsome. The female was without any pink flush. This species which is rare in the Stanthorpe District was quite a thrill to see. They make an extremely beautiful nest decorated with lichen and moss, and the finding of this would really cap everyones excitement.

2. - the plant chosen was the tall growing *Acacia falciformis*, which was at the height of its flowering period. The flowers were a rich golden yellow, the leaves a fresh green and the trees up to 9 metres in height. This species grows particularly well in the Dalveen, Cottonvale, Poziers and The Summit area and also along the Mt Tulley road. For many years *falciformis* was a subspecies of *Acacia penninervis* and it is only recently that it has been raised to specific rank - which it well deserves.

BOONOO BOONOO TRIP

by Irene Chapman.

A trip to Boonoo Boonoo on Sunday 14th August by the Hockings and Chapmans yielded much of interest nature-wise. First stop was at the site of the old mine sluice where Colin demonstrated his

Irene continues

proficiency with a miners pan. We watched, fascinated, as he panned out a quantity of tin and also two tiny topaz.

Next a small rock pool was investigated. First discovery were several giant sized tadpoles plus countless normal sized ones. A dragon fly nymph was next to come under observation. It is rather hard to relate this drab looking aquatic insect to the beautiful gauzy winged creatures which flit through the bush on hot summer days. Strange as it may seem though, this is indeed the juvenile form hatched from eggs laid above the pool by an adult female dragonfly. The eggs are destined to spend up to five years in the water gradually increasing its size by periodic moults. It is a ferocious creature, preying on everything smaller than itself which moves in the environment. Finally it will ascend a grass stalk and pupate, emerging in due course as a fully mature dragonfly, capable of perpetuating the species. Harry Frauca's book "Australian Insect Wonders" gives a very lucid and readable account of the life of the dragonfly, which is well worth reading.

The final specimen from the pool was a small red yabbie. What it lacked in size it made up for with ferocity. Obviously a great believer in attack being the best form of defence, it proved very easy to prod him into assuming an aggressive pose for photographic purposes. Closely related to the muddy coloured yabbie which causes such problems in farm dams this red variety, commonly called Corchie (*Euastacus spinifer*) inhabits mountain rock pools. A bright blue variety is found in the Springbrook area.

There was an abundance of tiny fish in nearby running water, but despite Mary's noble effort in wading knee deep in freezing water with a picnic cup and plastic bag none of them were destined to grace her aquarium. However she promised to return with a net to capture and identify some specimens.

We moved on to a patch of *Banksia collina* in full flower, where we parked the car for lunch. Stepping out of the car we startled a bird which shot out like a rocket from almost under our feet. Closer investigation revealed a tiny open nest of bark, grass and twigs suspended in a *Banksia* no more than a foot above the ground. Inside were two tiny, obviously freshly hatched nestlings. We were able to establish that the parents were New Holland Honeyeaters and although we moved a distance to have lunch they were somewhat upset and no doubt relieved when we departed. These honeyeaters were present in fair numbers, attracted by the flowering of the banksias. It seemed rather cold for nesting to be taking place, but according to Cayley the breeding season is between June and January and of course a plentiful food supply adjacent to running water would be conducive to such activities.

SLOW COACH

I laud the snail.
At its own pace,
unhurried by the human race,
unhurried by our hectic measure,
it moves with dignity and leisure
on mossy wall, or path,
or bough,
through a serene
and spacious Now.

R.H.Greenville.