

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALISTMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

of

THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUBP.O. Box 154
Stanthorpe, Q., 4380.OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1977/1978President
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Mrs. Dore McCosker
Mr. Brian McDonagh
Mr. Maurice Passmore
Mr. Ian Jackson
Mr. Errol Walker
Mrs. Jean Harslett
Mrs. Irene Chapman
Mr. Tom Chapman
Mr. Frank Wilkinson

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MEETINGS 4th. Wednesday of each month in the C.W.A. Rooms at 8 pm.OUTINGS EACH SUNDAY PRECEDING THE FOURTH WEDNESDAYANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Singles \$2.00

Family \$3.00

PROGRAMMENOVEMBER OUTINGPlace Dalveen area... Inspection of Mine and search for
night life after a B.B.Q. (full details see over)
Leader Mr. Noel Butler.NOVEMBER MEETING. Mr. Lance Cockburn of Brookvale Park. (If he is
unavailable for November 23rd. other arrangements will
be made, for a speaker, however the meeting will be
as usual 8 p.m. at the C.W.A. Rooms.QUOTE. No matter where you go in the world you are likely to
find birds, and where you find birds, bird-watchers. Is it
not interesting to note that one scarcely ever hears of a
sheep-watcher or cow-watcher? Take the challenge !

MONTHLY MEETING Held Wednesday October 26th 1977.

The President welcomed the members to the meeting, and a very special welcome to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wilkinson who have recently returned from their trip overseas.

MINUTES. It was moved by Mrs. Marsden and seconded by Mr. Hockings that the minutes as per the October magazine be taken as read.
Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE. Inward correspondence was received from the :-
Department of National Parks and Wildlife Service ;
Information Notes; Three Press Statements; National Parks of Southern Queensland (Coastal area); Australian Conservation Foundation; Stanthorpe Shire Council (re-removal of mugga gums) Mr. McKechnie (re-feral pigs in Girraween National Park); Mr. Diery; Mrs Horton, Mr. Harden; and Mr. McDonagh. Magazines:- Darling Downs Naturalist; Warwick Walker Vol. 5 No. 2; Vol. 5 No. 4; N.P.A. News Vol. 47. No. 7; Urimbra Vol. II No. 9. Queensland Naturalist Club Newsletter Vol. 99 No. 100.
Outward was forwarded to:- 4QS.; Mr. Paul Grimshaw; Mr. and Mrs. McMeniman ; Mr. Brown ; Mr. and Mrs. Peter McKechnie M.L.A.; The director of National Parks and Wildlife Service.
It was moved by Mr. Frank Wilkinson and seconded by Mr. Brian McDonagh that the inward correspondence be adopted and the outward endorsed.
Carried.

FINANCIAL. Mrs. D. Archer moved that the credit of \$112.51 be accepted and the following accounts be passed for payment:- Postage \$12.23.; C.W.A. \$4.00.; Seconded by Mrs. Stevenson.
Carried.

OUTING REPORT. Mrs. Ray Marsden reported an attendance of 30 to the Rivertree outing. A most enjoyable day was spent,

OUTING REPORT cont. bird watching and exploring the old mine sites.

NEXT OUTING. A half-day outing will be held on the property of Mr. N. Butler at Dalveen Sunday 20th. November. Following a bar-b-que tea, we will be spotlighting for possums.

NEXT MEETING. Should Mr. Lance Cockburn of "Brookvale Park" be unavailable for November 23rd. other arrangements will be made.

GENERAL BUSINESS. Discussion took place in regards to proposed tree planting in Stanthorpe by the Shire Council. It was suggested by Mrs. D. Mc. Gosker that trees and shrubs native to the Stanthorpe District be planted.

The president reminded members to pay 20 cents a meeting night to cover extra expences.

Folloeing Mrs. McAllister's enquiries it was suggested that reminder notes be sent to unfinancial members (look for the stamp on the outside of your bulletin.Ed.) and that the magazine distribution would cease to unfinacial members after three months, should fees not be paid.

It was brought to the attention of the newsletter editor, that "preceding" had been spelt incorrectly. However, it was discovered that this particular word had been incorrectly spelt for the past five years!

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35pm. to be followed by a slide programme on "Wildflowers of West Australia" presented by Miss Desley Mc. Donagh.

Janet Hockings Hon. Sec.

OUTING TO RIVERTREE by MRS RAY MARSDEN

Thirty people made the trip to Rivertree and I feel it was a worthwhile outing. The bird life at The Junction was really superb, the red bottlebrush a delight to the eye and the company excellent. Our first stop was at the junction of Koreelah Creek and Maryland River which thereafter becomes the Clarence River.

We had a cup of tea and the bird watchers had a field day, we had one continual chorus. After a bit of free time we gathered to share our notes on the area and this was continually punctuated with exclamations from the 'birdos'. Many people also told of experiences, facts, and tales of the area. Mr. Gentle had told me of his recollections of the early saw-milling days and how he believed the name was originally 'Rivers Three'. Some told of mining days and others of the early settlers and all were very interesting. We then drove along the other side of the river past the relics of the old village and saw-mill and on to view some of the old mine shafts, and these always seem eerie. We found a species of mistletoe on a wild cherry tree making a lovely sight with its orange bloom. Beside one of the boxed shafts one lone *dianella* brightened the scene. As some of the group expressed interest in the river with regards to canoeing we then went to the dip yards at the edge of Morris' property. The *Callistemon* was blooming beautifully and the long stretch of water was most inviting, very soon the canoe was skimming over the water. The bird life was prolific and quite a pleasant time was spent in this area.

We returned to 'The Junction' for our lunch break and were rewarded with blossom and bird song as well as good food and good fellowship. After lunch we made the trek along the old road to the smelting chimney, clouds were brewing into a good storm but undaunted we went onward. In this area we saw the 'Ironbark Orchid' (*Cymbidium canaliculatum*) and noted several silky oaks in bloom in the river. While we were checking for this outing the previous week we saw a goanna with its batch of blue-grey eggs. We left quietly and returned later to mark the spot and we marvelled at the way in which the area looked as if it hadn't been trusted with eggs of any kind. No trace of them this week. Upon reaching the chimney the clouds were thick and the thunder rather menacing so most people made a quick inspection and returned to their cars. One party went across the river to be picked up at the roadside, both parties apparently made good time and the meeting was well timed. The week before we saw hundreds of wallabies of varying kinds and in contrast this week we saw very few and I did not see any

reptiles on Sunday, while on the previous weekend we saw several.

suppose this is because of a larger group of people making more noise and the wildies are gone before the group was close enough to see them. Birds we noticed were: = Red Rosella, King Parrot, Wood Duck, Ibis, Magpie, Hawk, Kookaburra, Currawong, Rainbow Bird, Rufous Whistler, Forest Kingfisher, Scarlet, White-naped and Brown Honeyeaters, Top Knot Pigeon, Helmeted Friar, Pee-wee, Dollar bird, Yellow tailed Weebill, Jacky Winter, Willie Wagtail, Welcome Swallow, Double Bar Finch, Blue Wren, Pardelotes (2), Noisy Miner, Warbler, Wattle-bird (very young), Red-browed Finch, Black Swan, Butcher Bird, Swamp Hen, Black Duck, Millie Marsden.

BIRD of the MONTH. This title must undoubtedly go to the Scarlet Honeyeater. Many were observed at the first stop on the Rivertree outing, feeding from red flowers of *Callistemon viminalis*. As is usual in the bird world the male is the eye catcher. His head and breast are crimson, back mottled black & red, wings black & white feather edging, abdomen pale creamy-grey. The female is quite a dull bird by comparison, being olive-brown on top & paler underneath, with a tinge of red on her chin. Caley states that their distribution is from Cooktown to Victoria. They occur in pairs or small flocks moving south in Spring. Food is nectar & insects which are sought in flowering eucalypts, melaleucas, banksias & of course callistemons.

Colin Hockings.

FLOWER of the MONTH. Bottlebrush. The name could refer to variety of plants, Banksia, Melaleuka, Grevillea, Hakea, Callistemon etc. Common names refer to different plants in different areas. This time it is the lovely *Callistemon viminalis*, growing along the banks of the headwaters of the Clarence River, where reflections doubled the spectacle.

The name *Callistemon* is derived from the Greek word 'halos' meaning beautiful stemon - a stamon. There are about twenty species in Australia. They belong to the Myrtaceae family and are found in colours of red, green, white, yellow, violet & they vary in size from small shrubs to sizable trees. They grow in a wide range of conditions, and make excellent subjects for planting in gardens, parks & streets. *Viminalis* means bearing osiers and refers to the drooping

branches of this species which resemble the willow used for basket making, or weaving.

The scarlet sessile flowers cluster around the ends of the smaller branches in dense spikes and produce large amounts of pollen & nectar which provides food for birds and insects. The main flowering occurs in late spring but odd blooms can be seen throughout the year (about 5mm x 5mm.) and remain grouped on the branch in a neat pattern.

The new shoots grow from the end of the flower spike and are a bright bronzy-red in colour and very soft and downy. These leaves change as they grow to a pretty pale green and finally dark green and leathery. They are alternate, narrow and pointed and have a distinct mid-rib. The trees have a rough bark, grey in colour and though somewhat straggly in the bush can be pruned to a dense attractive shape in cultivation. New plants can be raised quickly from cuttings taken from the best flowering specimens.

Another Callistemon, *C. sieberi* is attracting attention at present with its flowers of brighter yellow than usual, in the swampy areas

Dore Mc.Cosker.

Common names. A note added by Colin Hockings associated with the excellent notes above by Dore Mc.Cosker.

All too often we are confused by common names. Probably the name which causes most confusion is that of 'Bottlebrush'. This rather descriptive name is used indiscriminately on flowers showing any resemblance to their kitchen relative. Banksias, Callistemons, Melaleucas, Grevillea's and others are all prime targets with their cylindrical shaped flowers. Why not call a spade a spade and save others confusion by leaving that brightly coloured specimen with the spiral patterned stalk hanging by the sink.

Colin Hockings.

Koala Bears. Members saw evidence of Koalas during our Rivertree outing, but though we craned our necks until we got a crick we failed to spot one. However Mrs. Rickard told me that she found a dead one recently on her property and not far away was a dead fox. She was surprised to think a koala would defend itself, but when my mother was a very little girl her father was attacked by a wounded koala he found by the road at Bald Mountain near Wallangarra. His face and hands were scratched and clothes badly torn. It was a frightening experience for him & my grandmother who were visiting his sister. It would have been a long trip home to Stanthorpe in those days too.

Dore Mc.Cosker. Wyberba.

Mrs. Dore Mc.Cosker also provided yet another very interesting nature note and personal observation titled 'Aesops Fables ?'.

but since I'm running out of room I will have to keep this interesting one for the Christmas Special!! Thank you to so many of you for providing various articles. No matter how small these personal observations add something of importance to the all over picture of nature study happenings in our district and are, indeed, sometimes of more value than other printed material.

NOVEMBER OUTING. Final information from leader Noel Butler. Depart Dalveen P.O. at 2pm. to Mt. Park. Mr. John O'Donnell, owner will guide one mile walk to mine. Some may wish to come later to BBQ. only at Mr. Butlers property, see Nats sign Dalveen-Stanthorpe road East of Railway & after meal join in search for 'Night Life' 5.30.57PM.

Jean Harslett Newsletter Ed.