



# The Granite Belt Naturalist



**Mail Address:** Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc, PO Box 154, Stanthorpe Qld. 4380  
fieldnats@granitenet.com.au@

Web site [www.granitenet.com.au/groups/environment/fieldnats/](http://www.granitenet.com.au/groups/environment/fieldnats/)

## AIMS OF THE CLUB

1. To study all branches of Natural History
2. Preservation of the Flora and Fauna of Queensland
3. Encouragement of a spirit of protection towards native birds, animals and plants
4. To assist where possible in scientific research
5. To publish a monthly newsletter and post it to members



**Meetings** 4th Wednesday of each month at QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe, at 7.30pm  
**Outings:** The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each month (Saturday outings as pre-arranged)  
**Subs:** Single \$20.00, Family \$30.00 per annum, July to June

## CLUB OFFICE BEARERS - 2013/2014

President	Rob McCosker	46835371
Vice-presidents	Kris Carnell	46835268
	Jeff Campbell	
Secretary	Halina Kruger	46835206
Treasurer	Leslie Saunders	
Newsletter Editor	K & M. Carnell	46835268
Publicity Officer	Errol Walker	46812008
Librarian	Trish McCosker	46835371

The Club thanks the Queensland Country Credit Union for their donation that enabled us to buy a printer.

The Club acknowledges the support of the Gambling Community Benefit Fund in the purchase of a data projector.

Stanthorpe Field Naturalists is a group member of Granite Borders Landcare.

*Management Committee: President, Vice-Presidents,  
Secretary, Treasurer*



**SCALE OF DIFFICULTY FOR WALKS  
ON NATS OUTINGS**

1. Flat walking, road or track
2. Road or track, gentle hills
3. Track, some hilly sections
4. Track, some steep sections
5. Cross country, easy open forest, gentle slopes
6. Track, steep sections common, with steps
7. Cross country, some hills, some thick undergrowth
8. Cross country, steep sections with scrambles over rocks, etc., and some thick undergrowth
9. Cross country, steep, hilly, rough, thick undergrowth
10. Mountain climbing, hard going, higher level of fitness or plenty of time required

**Coming Up**

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February: Landscape and History Highlights Tenterfield with Errol Walker. Leaving Weeroona Park at **8.30am**

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February: *Norway* with Errol Walker. See page 7

**Deadline for next newsletter  
5<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

**Landscape and History Highlights - Tenterfield District  
Pre-outing report for Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2016.**

Grade of difficulty: 1 to 2

Leader: Errol Walker

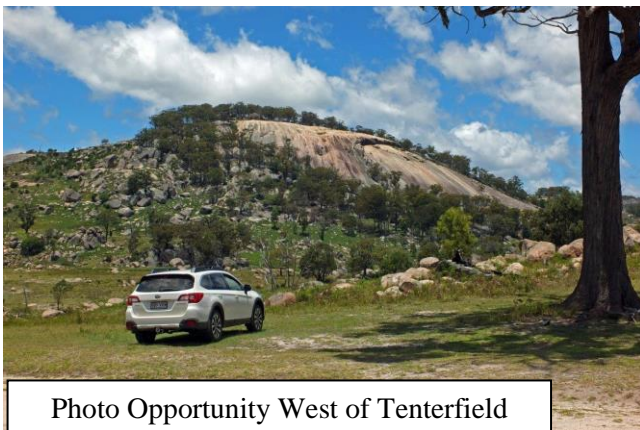


Photo Opportunity West of Tenterfield

The original venue for this outing was to climb Bluff Rock which is just south of Tenterfield.

With the possibility of hot weather at this time of the year I have made other plans which will still give us a view to Bluff Rock from a wonderful vantage point after a tour of local granite landscapes and historical sites.

There will be an 8.30 am departure from Weeroona Park. In convoy (remember to keep the vehicle behind you in sight) we will travel to Tenterfield via the Mt Lindesay Road.

The World War 2 Tank Traps north of Tenterfield have had the scrub around them cleared recently and their original layout can be easily appreciated. A photo stop at the memorial to the F111 crash site can be taken before we visit what is thought to be the largest cork tree in Australia. Morning tea will be taken in a nearby park in Tenterfield.

After morning tea we head for the hills west of Tenterfield on good gravel roads for a short scenic circuit of some really spectacular granite country. Along this drive we will meet up with a local land owner, Mr Barry Brooks, who has agreed to give us access to a 2 acre bird habitat environment experimental plot. Identified trees and grasses have been planted which attract a variety of birds. We will have lunch on the summit of Mt Mackenzie where there is a shelter and toilet at the lookout.



Annette Walker with Property Owner

Lunch taken, we drive east of Tenterfield to a private property where Barry has given us access to a high ridge above his house with views to Wellington Rock and the ranges east of Tenterfield in one direction and Bluff Rock to the south. A really spectacular outlook! The 4WD track up the ridge is definitely for high clearance vehicles only. Car pooling of 4WDs will be arranged for this 20 minute drive.



Part of Garden

After our fill of scenery and a talk by the land owner, we have been invited to have our afternoon tea in the beautiful shaded gardens at Barry and Karlyn Brooks' house. The gardens feature two lovely ponds and a mixture of exotics and natives.

This is a relaxed mainly driving outing with plenty of interest and should be comfortable if the weather is warm. BYO morning & afternoon tea and lunch. And your camera.

**PLEASE NOTE** : The earlier departure from Weeroona Park is 8.30 am.

Errol Walker Ph. 07 4681 2008 or 0428 154 986

### Outing Report Millmerran and Mt Basalt – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2015



Mural on Water Tank

A welcome change to the warm weather was appreciated when four members set off for Inglewood in the cool of the morning. On arrival it was smoko time followed by a quick toilet stop then off to Millmerran. We turned off just before the town and drove up to the Commodore Peak lookout then proceeded through town to the water tank murals followed by the museum, transport, dairy and swimming pool murals, another toilet break at the town park then off to Mt Basalt for lunch.

After lunch we set off on the new path, nicely gravelled and lined with basalt rocks, suitable for wheelchair access, to the top of the main columnar formation. The car park area has been upgraded as well with a new gate and fence and gardens around the picnic shelter and near the gate. The basalt columns are laying over at various angles from horizontal to about 45 degrees, caused by weathering alongside the formation. Caper white butterflies were present in large numbers.

On return to the car we had a bite to eat then set off for home. Approaching Inglewood we noticed that the sky was looking a bit ominous and just before we reached the Cunningham Highway it started to bucket down with lots of hail amongst it, so we pulled off the road and waited for it to abate. We set off again and hadn't gone very far before it started again so pulled off once more on a side road and tried to shelter alongside some trees. The



Looking at Basalt Formation



hail had increased in size by this time, some hitting the car with loud bangs. It abated a little so set off again hoping to drive out of it which we eventually did, however we still had drizzle all the way home. There appears to be about ten dents on the car so figure we got off fairly lightly.

**Jeff Campbell**

### Outing Report – Break-up on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2015



Chatting at the Little Red Bridge

We had perfect weather for our break-up when we met at Quart Pot Creek and went for a walk to the Red Bridge, admiring the beautiful creek and watching a couple of fishermen on the water, one complete with dog. The photographers amongst us were busy with the scenery and the flora and fauna. One thing I noticed was the number of grasses in flower, including shivery grass, plume grass and sedge.

We wandered back to our picnic shelter and cooked a barbeque tea before Errol showed a slide show of Jean Harslett's *Mailboxes*. This was a lovely tribute to Jean who passed away last year and is sadly missed as she was a mentor to many of us.

**Margaret Carnell**



Hungry Anyone?



A Selection of Grasses

*Thank you Marc Newman for Number 8 of the series on native bees.*

### Stingless Bees

This month I want to focus on Stingless bees or as they are sometimes called Sugarbag bees. They are essentially a tropical to sub-tropical bee as they like the warmer weather and can be found naturally from the cape, the northern parts of WA and the Northern Territory down to about Sydney. There is some evidence to suggest they used to exist down into Victoria so the colder weather and man's interference may be the reason they are no longer seen down there. I have so far not found any naturally occurring nests on the Granite Belt though I am convinced they used to be around. Again the cold weather combined with man's activities is probably the cause of their decline. I am aware of a

number of hives around the Stanthorpe area brought in from other locations by enthusiasts. The Aboriginals favoured the honey produced by these bees and were expert at locating their nests.



There are approximately 10 species of Stingless bee in Australia. These bees are social in that they have a queen, drones (males) and female worker bees and live in a nest with perhaps 5000 other individuals. Their normal habitat is in hollow logs but more and more they are being kept in purpose built hives either for pollination or as pets or for honey production. They are quite small around 3.5 to 4mm long and while a hive may contain large numbers of individual bees they produce only about 1Kg of honey per year compared with the much larger European honey bee

which can produce 50 to 100Kg.

Harvesting honey from Stingless bee hives needs to be done with consideration as the stored honey may be needed for the hive over the winter period when it's too cold to forage or when there isn't enough nectar producing flowers. The superior honey production performance of the honey bee can be attributed in part to the fact that they can fly and forage at much lower temperatures than the Stingless bee which needs an air temperature of around 18 degrees before they can fly.

Stingless bee honey is also thinner than honey bee honey containing a higher degree of moisture. It is different in taste but very pleasant.

New hives of Stingless bee can be created by two processes. The first is by "splitting" where the brood cells are divided roughly in two, one half will contain a queen and the other, potential queen cells. One half stays with the original hive, the other goes into a box. The method sets the hive back and takes considerable care and knowledge.



The second method does far less damage to the bees and is called education. Essentially the bees from an original box or log are forced to travel through a new box to get outside by joining the entrance of the old hive to the new box with a tube. If the bees like what they see as they travel through the new box to the exit, they will start to store nectar and pollen in the new area. Eventually they start building brood cells. At this stage the bees from the old hive are allowed to exit normally through the original entrance as well as through the new box and when there is similar activity from each entrance the linking tube can be blocked so that each hive will act independently.

An important thing to know also is that a hive should not be moved by more than 1 meter in familiar surroundings as the worker bees will go out to forage and return to their old position and become lost to the hive. They can however be moved to another location at least 1 kilometre away because the surroundings are unfamiliar. After a couple of weeks they could then be relocated back near their original location.

If you want to get your vegie patch pollinated or want trouble free entertainment think about getting a Stingless bee hive.

I can be contacted at [marcjan@tpg.com.au](mailto:marcjan@tpg.com.au).



## What is a HURTIGRUTEN or a PREIKESTOLEN ?



Pulpit Rock Southern Norway

Well, **Hurtigruten** is the name of a shipping company which carries freight and passengers the length of the Norwegian coastline. It calls at over 30 ports between Bergen in the south and Kirkenes on the Russian border in the north. The name means "The fast way" and was coined in 1893 when a fast route was charted through the many fiords of the coastline.

Our Norway programme on Feb.24 will let you share our experience of this spectacular cruise through the Arctic Circle to the top of the world where we experienced 24 hrs sunlight.

**Priekestolen** means the Priest's Chair or Pulpit Rock. It was the highlight of a full days walk to dizzying heights above a fiord in southern Norway. Nothing could prepare us for feeling of elation standing or lying on the edge of this rock looking down some 600 metres to the Lyse Fiord.

*Errol and Annette Walker*



Errol and Annette way above the Arctic Circle

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalists Club Inc. Held in QCWA Rooms  
Victoria Street Stanthorpe Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

**Meeting opened :** 7.40pm Minutes taken by R McCosker as Secretary unable to attend.

**Attendance:** 11 as per attendance sheet Apologies: 5 as per attendance sheet

**Minutes** of previous meeting moved by K Carnell, seconded by P McCosker carried

Business arising from minutes nil

**Correspondence** nil

**Financial report:** Acting Treasurer Lynette reported that the balance had increased 1c due to bank interest. Moved L Hazelgrove, seconded by M. Carnell carried

**Outing Reports:** Jeff Campbell gave a report on the last outing, to Millmerran. Only four people attended the outing unfortunately, the same number as the last trip Jeff led there. It was a most interesting day with a visit to a lookout, a tour of the town's murals and the trip to Mt Basalt. The return journey was marred by the severe hail storm at Inglewood resulting in damage to Jeff's car.

**Pre-outing Report:** The Christmas Break-up is set for Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December at Rotary Park. We will meet at 4.00pm to walk to the Little Red Bridge then return for a BBQ and Slide show of Jean Harslett's "Mailboxes" program organised by E. Walker.

February 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 Outing will be led by E. Walker to a private property near Bluff Rock, with spectacular views.

**General Business:** After some discussion re. the letter from A & G Committee re. Club activity for Festival we decided a window display featuring a selection of pictures which best portrayed the Club's activities be set up in a vacant shop window for the duration of the Festival. R. McCosker to make enquiries about a location and large screen TV for the display.

K Carnell made a request to members to consider supplying articles for the newsletter, such as things they have seen in their backyard and their impressions of outings .

L. Hazelgrove reported that the Queensland Field Naturalists Club newsletter will soon be going electronic with an email version to be sent to members.

Specimens / Items of interest: R. McCosker showed a Burton's legless lizard found run over on the road. Also a plastic nest egg stolen by crows with several punctures showing where it had tried to open it and an exotic plant specimen for identification, which turned out to Chinese pistachio, *Pistachia chinensis*, and is self propagating in the Sentimental Rocks parkland.

**Next Outing** 21<sup>st</sup> February 2016 to private property overlooking Bluff Rock. Leader Errol Walker.

**Next Meeting** 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016. Presentation on Norway by Errol Walker.

Meeting closed 8.22pm

**Evening Program:** A wonderful presentation on The Burren, Ireland, by Jeff and Glenys showing their travels through this interesting part of Ireland, including the Aran Islands, and lots of different plants.