



The Granite Belt Naturalist



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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 - 2018/2019

President	Jeff Campbell	46811420
Vice-presidents	Kris Carnell	46835268
	Gunter Maywald	
Secretary	Rob McCosker	46835371
Treasurer	Lesley Saunders	
Newsletter Editor	K & M. Carnell	46835268
Publicity Officer	Jeff Campbell	46812008
Librarian	Laura Maywald	46810674

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

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 23rd June: Mt Ferguson and Sow and Pigs with Kris and Margaret Carnell

Wednesday 26th June: *West Australia* with Kris and Margaret Carnell

**Deadline for next newsletter
10 July 2019**

Pre-Outing Report – Mt Ferguson and The Sow and Pigs– 23rd June 2019

Leader: Kris Carnell



View from Rock Slab

We will meet at Weeroona Park at 9.00am as usual and drive to Foxbar Falls Camping Area at Amiens where we will have smoko in the picnic shelter before driving a short distance to the beginning of the Mt Ferguson walk. The first part of the walk is up a rocky creek bed and it is quite rough underfoot. There are tongue orchids growing on some of the boulders beside the track at the end of that section where the track begins. It winds through the bush going upwards until you arrive at a rock slab with good views over Harslett Farm to the Sow and Pigs and beyond.

There are *Euclayptus Prava* (Mountain Orange Gum) trees growing among the rocks and a stand of *Eucalyptus scoparia* (Wallangarra White Gum) just below the slab. This is the most westerly occurrence of Wallangarra White Gums in the district. In spite of the dry weather they appear to be thriving. We will spend some time botanising in this area before making our way towards the top of Mt Ferguson. On the pre-outing we saw peach bush, ajuga and a wattle in bloom. We will carry lunch and have it on the rock slab before heading back to the car park.

If we have time, we will go to Foxbar Falls, before driving through the property to the base of the Sow and Pigs. It is about 50 metres along a made track and then 50 metres across the rock slab to the Sow and Pigs.

Please wear sturdy footwear and be prepared to carry lunch.



The Track up Mt Ferguson

Outing Report – Sunday 19 May 2019 - Mt Matheson



Mt Mitchell

Just six participants journeyed the long distance to Spicers Gap to do the Mt Matheson walk.

Starting from the car park at the camping ground, a relatively gentle, but constant uphill brought us to the summit of Mt Matheson, a low peak, connected by a ridge to the Main Range. The summit overlooks the Cunningham Highway, directly uphill from the safety ramp. For the first time, views of Cunningham's Gap through to Mt Castle were achieved. From here,

we were faced with the most challenging leg of the walk. We had to negotiate an (at times) indistinct trail as it wound its way through and over some rocky outcrops. The rock forming these outcrops is trachyte. It is the atypical rock that features in the high cliffs of the Main Range area. Produced in the late stages of the volcanic eruptions, this relatively low density, sticky lava did not flow as far from the vents, unlike the more fluid and denser basalt that was pumped out for most of the earlier life of the shield volcano. Along this section of track, forever changing views of Cunninghams Gap were achieved. One particularly good viewpoint, with a strategically positioned log, provided our lunch stop.

The third leg of the walk left the ridge and headed towards the Spicers Gap road. This was easy walking along a well-made track, passing through some impressive stands of rainforest. The route brought us to a relic of the forestry industry – one half of a timber jinker abandoned beside the track. Rob, noting its resemblance to a chariot, climbed aboard and proceeded to perform an admirable impersonation of Ben Hur! This section of track provided an unusual view of Mt Mitchell, appearing to be more a spire than the well-known edifice that towers above the eastern ascent to Cunningham's Gap.



Rob as Ben Hur



Convict Constructed Bench Cutting

The walking track ended at the Spicers Gap road. The route from there to the Governor's Chair was an easy walk through some tall forest. National Parks have erected numerous signs along the road to highlight the construction work done by convicts in the 19th century. The Governor's Chair provided a great opportunity to admire the incredible cluster of volcanic domes and eroded lava flows that make up the Fassifern Valley and Main Range respectively. Fortunately, the atmosphere was relatively clear thanks to a drop in the recently persistent south easterly.

From the Governor's Chair, it was a short walk down to the cars and the much appreciated afternoon cuppa before the journey home.

David Wilson

Spicers Gap Plant List

Sarasparilla *Hardenbergia violacea*, Australian indigo *Indigofera australis*, Spiny kangaroo apple *Solanum amblymerum*, Poison pimelea *Pimelea neoanglica*, Cockspur flower *Plectranthus suaveolens*, Wombat berry *Eustrephus latifolius*. There were of course many wonderful examples of ferns Elkhorn *Platycerium bifurcatum*, Staghorn *P. superbum*, Bird's nest fern *Asplenium australasicum*, and Necklace fern *A. flabellifolium* to name a few.

Garabaldi Mine and Crystal Cave

On Saturday 18 May, 8 members of the Stanthorpe Nats joined the Tenterfield Nats for an outing to the Garabaldi mine and Crystal Cave. We assembled at the Landcare office at 7 a.m. to start our journey down the Bruxner Highway. A short distance before Tabulam we turned on to Plains Station Road. As we turned we could see in the distance the cranes building the new bridge over the Clarence River at Tabulum. Plains Station Road runs parallel to the Clarence River for some distance and the early morning views would have been stunning except for the fog which at times made driving difficult.



Calcite Crystals

We regrouped at the North Ewingar Road intersection and the leaders decided that our route would be through the Ewingar State Forest. The road soon changed to gravel, which for most of our trip was fairly good, considering that we were soon on forestry roads. Most of the time we were climbing higher up the Gibraltar Range which separates the Timbarra and Clarence Rivers. We turned onto Nogrigrar Road which is a minor road with large whoobys so there was some car shuffling. Smoko was on the road in a saddle above the mine.



Old Steam Boiler

After smoko we went along an unused road for a short distance then down a steep "track" that our guide had marked two weeks before. Our first stop was the remains of a steam boiler in the scrub. We wondered at how it could have been moved there considering the terrain we were in and also where they got the water to power it. Back up the track a little way we veered off for a short distance to the site of the Crystal Cave. The entrance to the cave is now quite small and definitely too small to enter. The cave was also full of water. It appears as though someone has made an unsuccessful

attempt to syphon out the water. A carpet snake was guarding the entrance. Rob McCosker said that when the Stanthorpe Nats visited the cave many, many years ago there were white calcite stones all

around the cave. However, this time there none to be seen. Our guide picked up a nondescript grey stone which he broke at lunch time to show the calcite crystals inside. We then had to make our way back up to the old road, a distance I'm told of 270 metres with a vertical rise of 100 metres. This proved challenging for some. About 50 or so metres further along the old road there are two pits (one quite deep) where the miners had dug into the mountain to try to strike the gold seam. It was then lunch time before continuing our journey.

We turned onto Lionsville Road and then detoured to where there had been a thriving mining community and all that remains are two wells neatly lined with rocks. We were shown historic photos of how the area once looked. Next stop was a lonely grave on a hill, dated 1905 but still in reasonably good condition. We then went to the site of the old settlement of Solfarino which is down Nogrigrar creek from the Garabaldi mine. You can get access to the mine from here but it is a very steep and arduous climb. Nothing much remains of Solfarino except a couple of small ruins and some exotic trees.



Our last stop as a convoy was at the Washpool Creek crossing at the locality of Lionsville. We thanked our guide and the Tenterfield Nats for their hospitality and made our own way home via Baryulgil and Alice to the Plains Station Road and the Bruxner. It was a very interesting and enjoyable day. I hope I've put things in their right order as I didn't take notes on the day.

Kris Carnell

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc.
Held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St, Stanthorpe on Wednesday 22nd May 2019**

Meeting opened: 7.35pm

Attendance: 20 Apologies 4 as per attendance sheet

Minutes of the previous meeting:

confirmed by Rob McCosker seconded by Leon McCosker Carried

Business arising from the minutes: Email to Toowoomba Field Nats to apologize that their contact details had been inadvertently removed and were now back on our mailing list.

Correspondence: as per folder

moved by Rob McCosker seconded by Trish McCosker Carried

Financial Report: nil

Outing Reports: David Wilson gave a report that six members enjoyed the walk along the track over Mt Matheson to Spicers Gap with views to the eastern side of the Main Range and down to the highway over Cunninghams Gap.

The previous day eight members traveled to Tenterfield to join their Nats club on an outing to the Garibaldi Crystal Cave and mine, and the location of the old mining towns of Solferino and Lionsville.

Pre-outings: Kris Carnell will lead the outing leaving Weeroona Park at 9.00am to Harslett's property at Amiens. After stopping at Foxbar Falls Campground for morning tea we will then climb Mt. Ferguson. Lunch will be had there before returning to the cars to drive to near the Sow and Pigs and then walking up this interesting granite formation.

General Business: nil

Specimens: Kris and Rob both had specimens of the Iceland Spar or feldspar crystals from the Garibaldi Mine visited on Saturday 18th on a combined Stanthorpe and Tenterfield Nats outing.

Next Meeting: Kris and Margaret Carnell will present a program on Stanthorpe Wildflowers or the Snowy Mountains.

Meeting closed: 8.05 pm

Presentation: David Wilson provided an outstanding presentation of a trip to the Gulf of Carpentaria visiting many of the places of volcanic origin such as Undara Lava Tubes, and culminating in a spectacular video journey through Boodjamulla NP, Lawn Hill Gorge.

Grey Shrike Thrush Mystery



Image from Atlas of Living Australia
Photo by Arthur Chapman

A few weeks ago Margaret and I were sitting on our deck at lunch time when we noticed a grey shrike thrush flying from the ground up to a tree and back again. On closer inspection we realized that it was collecting grubs and stashing them in crevices in the tree, just like a butcher bird does. We observed this activity the next day as well. I have consulted Dr Google and nowhere can I find reference to this behavior. I can find where shrike thrushes use thorns to pierce their prey so that they can tear it but no reference to stashing. Has anyone else observed this behaviour?

WANTED

Have you given your photos of our last year's outings to Kris for *Remember Last Year*?
If you can have them delivered by the week after our June meeting it would be appreciated.