

MARCH
Vol 297



THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST



Monthly Newsletter of the
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club

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 at 8.00pm.
Outings: The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each Month.
Subscriptions: Single \$8.00 Family \$15.00 per annum July to June.
Rent : Donation per family per meeting.
Address: Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc., P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe Q
4380.

CLUB OFFICE BEARERS 1997 - 98

President	Kris Carnell	07 46 835268
Vice-Presidents	Roger Logan	07 46 812493
	Lincoln McPhee	07 46 811651
Secretary	Liz Bourne	07 46 836374
Treasurer	Julia Brown	07 46 814540
Newsletter Editor	Robin McCosker	07 46 835371
Magazine Committee	Wendy & Neil Donges, Julie Beddow	
Publicity Officer	Patience James	07 46 811853
Librarian	Trish McCosker	07 46 835371
Management Committee	President , Vice-Presidents , Secretary , Treasurer	

COMING UP

Next Outing Campout 21st-22nd March at Lost World, Stinson Memorial Park. Leader Fred Simpson.

Next Meeting The best of things natural from around the world with Errol and Annette Walker - Wednesday 25th March at the QCWA Rooms Stanthorpe.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

7th April 1998

Send contributions to The Newsletter Editor, P O Box 24, Severnlea Q4352
or leave with Mrs Dore McCosker, 58 Railway St., Stanthorpe.

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.



MINUTES OF MEETING OF STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.
held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on 25th February 1998

Opening: The Meeting opened at 8.05pm with President, Kris Carnell, welcoming members and visitors, Dave and Lorna Bright.

Attendance: There were 30 present and 13 apologies as per the Attendance Book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26th November 1997 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Millie Marsden, seconded by Desley McDonagh. Carried.

Business arising from the minutes: Photocopier - Julia Brown had been in contact with Matrix Office Systems regarding their account for the photocopier and had clarified the situation.

Rehabilitation of the Texas Road Transfer Station - The Shire Council had delivered some topsoil to the site and a group of Field Nats have constructed one large garden bed ready for planting. Liz Bourne and Kris Carnell have some plants suitable for the site and Pam Ward has kindly agreed to donate some native plants from her nursery. A planting out day will take place in March when, hopefully, we may have had some rain and it will be cooler. Liz asked for any interested members to pot up suitable plants for this project.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

1. Office of Sport and Recreation - SW Region - Newsletter
2. Dept. of Environment - Report on the administration of the *Nature Conservation Act*.
3. interNationalpark tours - newsletter - Dec '97, Feb '98.
4. Toowoomba Field Naturalists - *Darling Downs Naturalist* - Nov '97, Feb '98.
5. Girraween Environmental Lodge - invitation to invest.
6. M & B Mallon, M. Sheahan - subscriptions.
7. Toowoomba Bushwalkers Club - *Footprint* - Dec '97, Jan, Feb '98.
8. Qld Outdoor Recreation Federation - *Compass* - seeking our interest in membership.
9. Commercial Union Insurance - renewal of public liability policy.
10. Qld Nats Club Inc. - *Qld Naturalist* - Dec '97, *QNC News* - Jan, Feb '98.
11. John Oxley Library - acknowledgement of receipt of newsletters.
12. Dept of Environment - Annual Report.
13. Fred Simpson - information on March campout.
14. Chinchilla Field Nats - *Urimbirra* - Jan '98, Feb '98.
15. Information Australia - Directory of Aust. Associations.
16. Binna Burra Mountain Lodge - information on their Ecology week.
17. Stanthorpe Shire Council - invitation to workshop on sport and recreation needs study.
18. Senator Meg Lees - *Eco Watch* - Jan '98.

Outwards:

1. Community Service announcements for January and February outings and meetings.
2. Office of Consumer Affairs - further information required for annual return.

This correspondence was received on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Margaret Carnell. Carried.

Business arising from the Correspondence:

1. Old Outdoor Recreation Federation As the fee to join this association was \$100, it was felt to be beyond the Club's financial resources.

2. Stanthorpe Shire Council Sport and Recreation Facility Needs Study - Liz Bourne offered to represent the club at one of the workshops being held to provide input to this study.

Financial Statement for the period 26/11/97 to 25/2/98:

Balance as at 26/11/97		\$1016.45
<u>Receipts:</u>		
Subscriptions	60.00	
Room rent collection	<u>7.95</u>	
	<u>67.95</u>	<u>67.95</u>
		<u>\$1084.40</u>
<u>Expenditure:</u>		
Room rent	10.00	
Magazine Postage	39.40	
Matrix Office Systems	50.00	
Govt. tax - Dec '97	.60	
Govt. tax - Jan '98	<u>.30</u>	
	<u>100.30</u>	<u>100.30</u>
		<u>\$984.10</u>

Balance as at 25/2/98 is \$984.10

Accounts for payment:

Room rent	\$10.00
Magazine postage	\$39.40
Commercial Union Insurance	\$168.18
Petty Cash for Secretary	\$10.00

The financial statement was adopted on the motion of Julia Brown, seconded by Errol Walker. Carried.

Outing Reports: Nundubbermere Falls 18/1/98 - In the absence of Roger Logan, Jean Harslett reported on this trip which attracted 45 people. It was a very hot day so people enjoyed the water, and walks went in a variety of directions, both up and down the river, as well as exploring Monday Creek.

Teviot Falls 22/2/98 - Kris Carnell reported on this trip which met at Queen Mary Falls. 16 people went on to Teviot Gap for a view of the falls while the remaining 3 stayed at the picnic area and did the Falls Circuit. They found a very good Bower bird's nest at the picnic grounds. The main group lunched at the top of the Teviot Falls where it was difficult to get a good view of the falls, however there were very good views of Wilson's Peak.

Pre-Outing Report on March Campout to Lost World : In the absence of Fred Simpson, Desley and Lincoln reported on what they knew of arrangements for this campout. Fred's letter provided further details, and he hopes to be in Stanthorpe for the Apple and Grape Harvest Festival and will provide further details then.

Specimens:

Kris Carnell had a snail shell that Col Hocking suggested may be that of a carnivorous native land snail that might have been eaten by a Pitta.

General Business:

1. Goeff Walker has recently taken a job in Toowoomba so will not be able to get to club meetings as regularly.

2. Errol Walker said that final payments for the Vanuatu trip at Easter were now required.

3. Karol Stica asked who was responsible for the maintenance of the gardens at Heritage Park as they were looking a bit neglected. Although Kris said it was really the Shire Council's responsibility, he suggested that the Field Nats organise a working bee to tidy the area up. It was agreed to have this on the morning of Sunday 15th March starting at 7.30am. People should bring their own tools, barrows etc.

Presentation: John Bourne gave a very interesting and informative talk on a trip he, his wife, Joan, and four others took down the Canning Stock Route in Western Australia last winter.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Coming Attractions

APRIL	19th Outing to Acacia Plateau , leader Millie Marsden.
	22nd Meeting - Nostalgia with Millie Marsden.
MAY	24th Outing to Mt. Janet, leader Lincoln McPhee.
	27th Meeting - Plants of the Granite Belt with our resident expert, Jean Harslett.

In Search of the Common Wombat

A study to try to determine the number and extent of remaining wombat populations on the New England Tableland is being carried out by Queensland's Department of Environment. A brochure was recently sent out to most country mail boxes which included descriptions of wombats and their habitat, as well as a questionnaire to enable anyone who has seen a wombat or recent signs of a wombat to forward this information to the Department of Environment. The brochure should be available at National Park Offices or by writing to the address below -

REPLY PAID 104
COMMON WOMBAT SURVEY
Department of Environment
P O Box 731
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

The common wombat *Vombatus ursinus*, can be identified by its:

- * stocky barrel-shaped body ending in a very small, bare tail, which in an adult is completely hidden by fur;
- * average weight of around 25-30kg, but weights of 35kg are not uncommon;
- * thick, coarse fur with much variation in colour, from glossy black to dark grey, silver-grey, chocolate brown or grey-brown;
- * small erect ears with slightly pointed tips set sideways on the head; and
- * large, naked nose with a covering of thick, bare skin.

It inhabits undulating open woodlands with grass or shrub understorey, and though it prefers to dig under rocky outcrops or large boulders, burrows can also be found in open areas with suitable soil. Wombats have distinctive droppings - large about 4cm by 5cm cube-shaped pellets - usually in groups of four to eight.

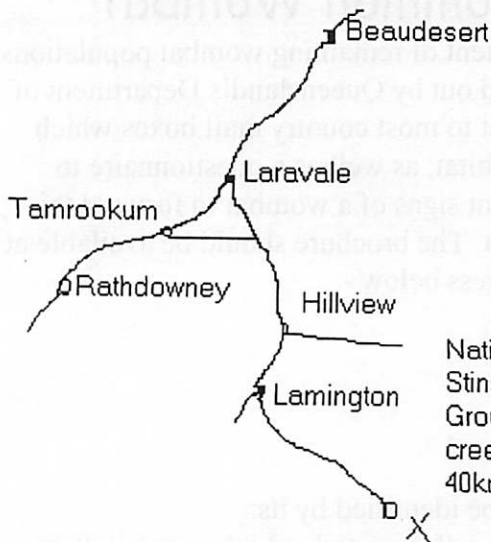
Campout to Lost World, Lamington

March 21st and 22nd

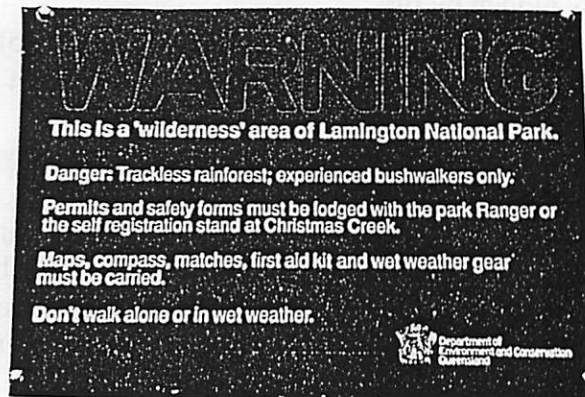
The campground, Stinson Memorial Park is a pleasant level area with septic toilets and provision for BBQ fireplaces. No shelter or showers. The creek has good swimming with running clear water. Rob Lather, the Fitness Camp manager has offered all assistance regarding walks and there is accomodation available at the camp - phone 07 55 448100. A suggestion is to drive 7km to the National Park entrance where a notice states "Trackless Wilderness Area". There is a rough track to Westaway's grave and the site of the Stinson crash. A walk up the creek which is picturesque and the whole area holds extensive interest for birdwatching. The scenic wonder of this wilderness area is a photographers delight, but it is essential for there to be fine weather. The camp is definitely not suitable during heavy rain as Christmas Creek is subject to flash flooding.

Unfortunately I am not able physically to lead strenuous walks and the itinerary will need to be decided subject to weather conditions at the camp.

Leader Fred Simpson Phone 07 55 244965.



National Fitness Camp
Stinson Memorial Park Camping
Ground - good sealed road, numerous
creek crossings subject to flooding.
40km from Beaudesert



Outing Report Queen Mary's Falls, 22nd February.

A Word From the Shirkers.

Three of us decided that discretion was the better part of valour on the outing to Teviot Falls, and decided to stay at Queen Mary's Falls as the day promised to be hot.

Immediately after morning tea we investigated the Satin Bower Bird's bower situated close to the parking area, beneath the trees, with people taking a short cut a few metres away. The only blue decorations were a pencil and a parrot feather. We saw several female bower birds in the vicinity, but the male did not come close.

Our walk around the circuit took us about two and a half hours as there was so much to look at. Elva spent some time sketching and Helen and I took photos here and there. I had expected to have a "bird day", but there were more botanical specimens than the feathered kind. We saw several specimens of the Wombat Berry *Eustrephus latifolius*, some showing their black seeds, and the diomorphic fern *Pyrrosia rupestris*. There was a creeping white flower which I think is a type of lobelia, and Hybanthus with a single orange petal.

However, the most interest was caused by the gnat orchid *Acianthus exsertus* and *Chiloglottis sylvestris* or *c. reflexa*, growing on the bank beside the track, and numerous fungi. The first fungus we noticed was a reddish brown toadstool with a very rough cap. We saw a number of these around the circuit. There was also a very pretty pink toadstool with white gills and stem, and one specimen which may have been the same except that it was orange instead of pink. As well as these there was a velvety brown toadstool with no gills, a tiny red one and a small golden brown with rings around it.

The falls were very pretty as they always are and there was a slight breeze so we had a very pleasant walk, followed by a leisurely lunch, and were quite happy to laze about waiting for the rest of the party to return from their strenuous pursuits.

Margaret Carnell

Have you heard the definition of a POLYGON ? A dead Parrot.

An electrician who was sent to do a repair job wasn't sure if he had the right address. He said to the woman who opened the door, "Have you got something that doesn't work?" She said, "Come in and I'll get him for you."

Outing Report - Teviot Falls - 22nd February 1998.

The weather for the outing to Teviot Falls was very hot and may have put some members off what was a very enjoyable outing. We all met at Queen Mary's Falls for morning tea. Most of the Stanthorpe members travelled via Liston and Legume. The traffic was minimal and the countryside was very green, showing the benefit of the extra rain that had been falling on the eastern side of the range.

After our cuppa sixteen of us travelled up the road to a parking area at Teviot Gap. Firstly we walked down the road to the lookout to have a look at the falls and the landslide. There are actually two separate creeks that flow over the falls with the left hand one only just visible. I'm told that there has been a slip as late as 1996. While we were taking photos some jumper ants took a liking to Peter Logan, which didn't impress him much.

The first section of the walk was along a forestry road and quite easy going. At the gate Alan took us cross country through the rainforest to the creek at the top of the falls - the right hand or main falls.

There were quite a lot of fungi growing in the rainforest and we saw some magnificent pine trees. The walking stick palms had lots of berries which some of us tried. There were also quite a lot of bluish-purple berries on the ground, but we were unable to find the trees they came from.

We also noticed that lots of King Orchids and Elkhorns or Staghorns blown down on to the ground. The last 30 metres or so was very steep and most of us used the rope to get down into the creek. We then walked the short distance to the top of the falls. The area at the top of the falls is quite narrow, so we took it in turns to go to the edge and have a look at the magnificent view of Wilsons Peak. The atmosphere was surprisingly hazy and not suitable for long distance photography.

We all found a comfortable spot to have our lunch and prepare for the return trip. There was very little breeze and the humidity was quite high.

While we were having lunch Alan caught a spiny crayfish. It bore some resemblance to the red crayfish living in some Granite Belt streams, but it was a dark "Muddy" colour.

After lunch we returned to the forestry track, coming out of the rainforest within a few metres of where we entered, which goes to prove that Alan is a lot better at navigating in the rainforest than I am.

On the walk back along the forestry track we noticed some ripe passionfruit which were enjoyed by those who managed to score one. We arrived back at Queen Mary's Falls and met the others in time for an early afternoon tea. For some it was a cuppa, some a "wicked" ice cream, and for others "one of the best cappuccinos you can buy."

Thank you Alan and Diane for a great outing.

Kris Carnell