



MAY 1998  
Vol 299



# 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 May 24th Departing Weeroona Park at 9.00am. for Mt. Janet with leader Lincoln McPhee.

Next Meeting Plants of the Granite Belt with Jean Harslett - Wednesday 27th May at the QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe.

Campout Queen's Birthday Weekend June 6,7,8th - Gibraltar Range National Park with leader Kris Carnell.

## DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

9th June 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 Q.C.W.A. Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on 22nd April, 1998**

**Opening:** The meeting opened at 8.07pm with President, Kris Carnell, welcoming members and visitors, George and Mavis Bourne from England.

**Attendance:** There were 22 present at the meeting and 12 apologies as per the attendance book.

**Minutes of the previous meeting:** The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 25th March, 1998 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Rod Hutchin, seconded by Jean Harslett. Carried.

**Business arising from the Minutes:**

**1. Texas Road Refuse Transfer Station**

Although some rain has now fallen, planting will be delayed until spring as it will be too late to get plants established before it gets cold. Tom Archer has offered to look after any potted plants until then.

**Correspondence:**

- Inwards:**
1. Toowoomba Field Naturalists - *Darling Downs Naturalist* - April '98
  2. Toowoomba Bushwalkers - *Footprint* - April, '98
  3. Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club - *Urimbirra* - April '98
  4. Directory of Aust. Associations - latest listing
  5. Stanthorpe Camera Club - cheque for \$22 (half PO box rental)

**Outwards:**

1. Community service announcements for outing and meeting
2. Senator Lyn Allison - response to questionnaire
3. Information Australia - directory information

This correspondence was received on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Desley McDonagh. Carried.

**Business Arising from the Correspondence:**

The Toowoomba Field Nats. have a trip going to North Stradbroke Island from the 2 - 4 May and still have spare room available.

**Financial Statement for the period 25/3/98 to 22/4/98:**

Balance as at 25/3/98			\$ 791.52
<u>Receipts:</u>	Room rent collection	<u>7.20</u>	
		<u>7.20</u>	<u>7.20</u>
			<u>798.72</u>
<u>Expenditure:</u>			
	Room rent	10.00	
	Magazine postage	39.40	
	Post box rental	44.00	
	Govt. tax	<u>.90</u>	
		<u>94.30</u>	<u>94.30</u>
			<u>\$704.42</u>

Balance as at 25/3/98 is \$704.42

Accounts for payment:

Room rent	10.00
Magazine postage	39.40
Rob McCosker - p/copy paper	27.25

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

**Outing Report:**

Millie reported on a very interesting and successful trip that she led to the Acacia Plateau. 27 people attended.

**Pre-outing Report:**

Lincoln Mc Phee will be leading a trip to Mt Janet on 24th May. The details of the camp-out to the Gibraltar Range National Park in northern NSW over the Queen's Birthday weekend will be in the May newsletter.

**Next Meeting:**

Jean Harslett will be talking on "*Plants of the Granite Belt*".

**Specimens:**

1. Liz Bourne had a large moth which Jean Harslett identified as a hepapid moth which commonly emerge after rain in March/April.
2. Rod Hutchin produced a large stone that was responsible for the noise in Millie's car on the recent outing.
3. The Andrewarthas had prints from various outings.
4. Kris Carnell brought along the forestry map of north east NSW to see if people on the trip to Acacia Plateau could determine the mountains they saw.

**Presentation:**

Millie Marsden gave the meeting a nostalgic presentation of slides from past Field Nats. trips, some more than 10 years ago.

Meeting closed at 9.25pm.

**Coming Attractions**

JUNE	Campout Queen's Birthday Weekend 6/7/8th Gibraltar Range National Park , leader Kris Carnell. 24th Meeting - West Australia with Rod Hutchin.
JULY	19th Outing to Wallangarra Ridge, led by Brian Dodd 22nd Meeting - North Queensland with Kris Carnell



## Hepalid Moths

This article is from information from Jean Harslett regarding the large moth specimen brought to the last meeting.

Family : Hepialidae Genus : Abantiades Specific name : barcas

The female is much bigger and heavier than the male, and they lay vast numbers of eggs - "scattered to the wind". Tests showed a female laid 29,100 eggs and when dissected still had 15,000 fully developed eggs. They are very small but this ensures a big distribution in case of many losses.

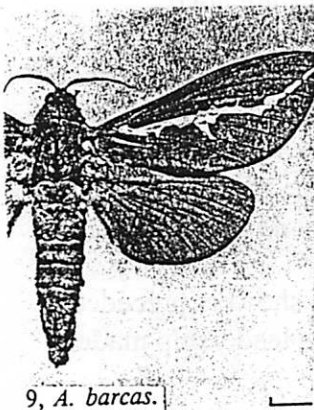
We have four species in Stanthorpe of these larger ones which range in colour from fawn to pink and grey. On the forewings there are broad irregular lines of silver, as well as curved lines and scrolls of various designs, in a number of shades of brown, but no two specimens have the same pattern. They emerge in late March and April after rain and are commonly seen tapping against the window pane during the early hours of the night because they are attracted to light. Ian Common, in his book "Moths of Australia" particularly mentions this species of Hepalid as occurring from Stanthorpe in southern Queensland to northern Victoria.

The larvae are underground feeders, living within the roots of eucalypts, wattles and other trees for several years. When fully grown they leave the roots and bore upwards to the surface, the tunnel often measuring several feet. Within this tunnel the larva pupates, and remains until conditions are favourable (moist) for the moth to emerge. The pupa then digs itself to the soil surface and rests with its head and thorax above the surface where the covering splits and the moth emerges, leaving behind the empty brown shell, which is a common sight in the bush after autumn rain.

The larvae are subject to attack by a fungi of the genus *Cordyceps* which turn them into "vegetable" caterpillars - yet maintain the exact form of the caterpillar. These "fossil" looking things get dug up occasionally and cause a lot of interest.

Female of a similar species and empty pupa shell

Male Hepalid moth



9, *A. barcas*.

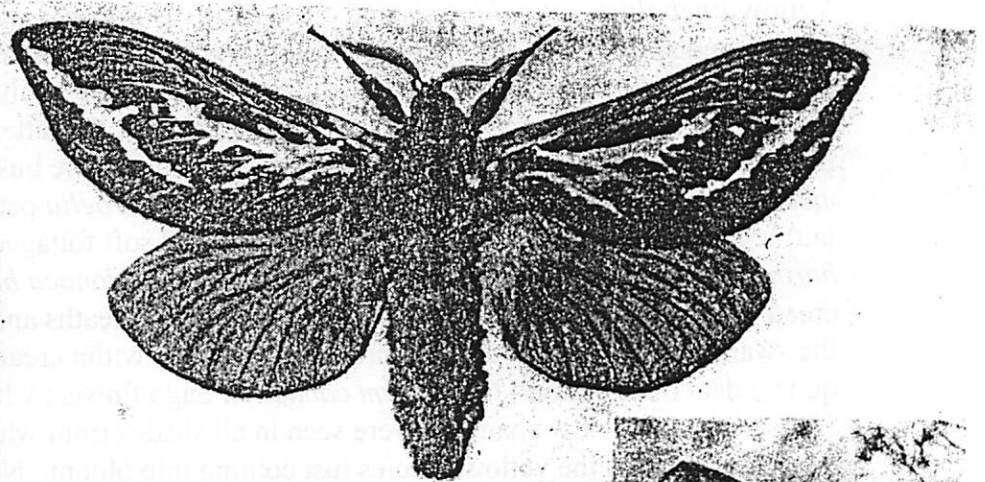


Fig. I.

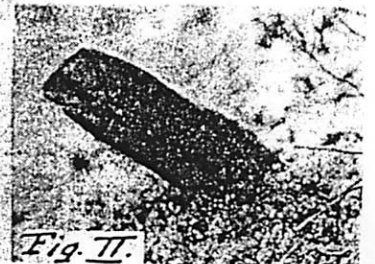


Fig. II.

The next article, I must apologize, was meant for the October Newsletter. It was when I first took over the Editor's job, and mislaid this report by Jean Harslett on the native plants seen on the Amiens Forestry Outing led by Liz Bourne on 21st September 1997. I feel it is appropriate to print it now, since Jean is providing this month's meeting program on the plants of the Granite Belt. ( Editor)

### Plants Seen On The Amiens Forestry Outing

The handsome species of Trigger Plant with its larch-like foliage which gives it its specific name *Stylidium laricifolium* provided a lot of pleasure to the members. I always think the description by author Nuri Mass quite delightful, and I quote " Don't be deceived by the innocent look of the outspread pink petals. It's always wide awake and up to mischief, playing practical jokes, especially on the small black native bee.. As soon as the bee burrows down for nectar, he is startled by something on his back. It doesn't hurt, of course, but gives it something to wonder about, even though, wonder as much as he likes, he will never guess what really happened. He will never guess its the impish way the plant has of making sure the pollen will be delivered to another of its kind."

It was pleasing to see quite a good patch of *Stenanthemum scortechinii*, a species confined to this district and named after a Catholic priest who served in this district in the early 1870's. He became quite a well known botanist, and named after him as well are three other rare species in Stanthorpe, recognizing his splendid field work here. This plant has white woolly heads enhanced by dark brown bracts, the flowers persisting for a long time. It likes moisture and grows near rivers and streams and in this case where there was good seepage from a huge granite slab. It has been grown quite successfully in gardens in this district, and other regions. A prostrate form from Basket Swamp has also been successful and also a number of cultivars.

Two varieties of Alpine Daisies were seen ( past their best) - the white Star Flower *Olearia microphylla*, and the wedgewood blue species *Olearia ramosissima*. Yellow *Phebalium rotundifolium* and close relatives *Boronia granitica* ( on the endangered species list) and joining the above with pungent smelling leaves was *Zieria laevigata* with the somewhat *Boronia* - like flowers. Only a couple of wattles still had flowers - " Prickly Moses " and *Acacia stricta*, the latter in quite good patches. Also *Acacia granitica* still with flowers. Snowflake bush *Leucopogon melaleucoides*, *Micromyrtus*, *Calythrix*, rich purple *Mirbelia* pea flowers and paler purple *Hovea*, yellow peas *Daviesia corymbosa* and soft foliated *Pultenaea hartmannii*, rich blue *Stypantra* and the lovely hop *Dodonaea hirsuta* all blended to create beautiful rock gardens near large granite slabs. Heaths and Callistemons graced the swampy areas, whilst the stiff broom-like bushes withn cream flowers attracted quite a deal of attention - *Choretrum candollei*. Sago flowers which were called *Helichrysum*, but now changed, were seen in all shades from white, pale pink to deepest pink, also the yellow species just coming into bloom. Not a bad display after bushfires and very dry winter.

The day, weather-wise was perfect, a couple of refreshing showers preceded it, and the variety of habitats we walked through and Liz Bourne's leadership made it an enjoyable and interesting day.

Jean Harslett

### April Outing Report - Acacia Plateau

Mavis and George Bourne from Kent, England were among the 27 people to avail themselves of the opportunity to visit the green and grassy Acacia Plateau on April 19.

The group met at the park at Killarney for a cup of tea and were joined by the leader Geoff Hamilton. Geoff gave us the history of Killarney and a detailed account of the tornado which changed the face of Killarney and was instrumental in the beginning of new industries for the district.

Geoff had a full day planned and we had natural history, history, spectacular scenery and thoughts for the future. The first of the 14 stops for the day was to view the general atmosphere of the plateau from a position just past the site of the old school. Geoff pointed out the changed face of the plateau since the timber getting of bygone days with many sawmills positioned in the area. The menfolk supplemented their income by working at the mills while the women took over the running of the dairies.

The countryside looked green and lush and, as rain had fallen the previous night, together with recent grading of the road, we encountered some muddy stretches. We saw the old ventures and the new. One which is creating much interest in the district is a plantation of eucalyptus, said to be the venture of a South African group, and the growth of the trees in a few short months was incredible. Are these trees destined for the wood chip industry? Geoff also showed us the potato growing slopes with their potential for great soil erosion if the farms aren't managed correctly. The steep hills are bare of trees and the rainfall is great so it would seem that soil management is of paramount importance. We saw, from a distance, potato harvesting taking place. Other industries on the plateau include grazing, growing of fruit, especially kiwi fruit and forestry, where replanting is taking place following the harvest of mature pines.

The luncheon spot atop a steep slope on Ross Hamilton's property and reached by 4WD was, to say the least, picturesque. It was a feast for the eyes as we contentedly ate our lunch. In one direction we looked over wonderful country and saw Mt Lindesay - monarch of all it surveyed - and in the other direction Bald Rock was clearly visible. Grazing cattle were in view, as was the potato harvesting - we really felt we were on top of the world.

Following a leisurely lunch we travelled up further to the border fence and were able to walk in the "scrub" or rainforest, as we know it. In this area ( a remnant of what the whole plateau would once have been. Editor ) there were quite different vegetation types from that which we see around here, many vines clambering up to the light, ferns of many types growing in the quite open understory with a thick carpet of leaf mulch on the ground.

We then travelled in convoy to the other side of the plateau, stopping now and again for items of interest, down onto the Woodenbong road and back to Legume. Here we inspected some wonderful wood work in the form of horse drawn vehicles and a motorised buggy. The attention to detail and the precision of the work was a credit to the gentleman who incidentally, got up from his sick bed to show us around. We trust that he is now enjoying better health.

Our last port of call was also in Legume to view a protea plantation. This created a lot of interest to see the plantation thriving and being a new venture, we all hoped that it would prove successful. Diversification is the name of the game these days in all districts where agriculture and horticulture are playing their part.

From Legume we also 'diversified', some to go home through Liston, some went back to Killarney and Warwick while we took our visitors for a quick look at Killarney Falls and Daggs Falls. There was quite a lot of water going over the falls and the late afternoon sun was shining up through the gorge onto the falls, to make a very fine finale to our day out.

I thank Geoff for giving up his day at the Bonalbo Show to do this trip for us and to thank him also for his knowledge which he imparted so freely. He is very proud of his district and this was good to see.

Many thank to all those who were so helpful when my car decided to shriek.

Millie Marsden

---

### **Extended Outing to Vanuatu - Easter 1998**

Several Observations and Group Activities

Part 1 of a Report by Helen Hartman

This trip to Vanuatu was, I believe, a worthy successor to the excursion to Lord Howe Island - in itself, a hard act to follow. We found our experiences enjoyable on many different levels. I am finding that many memories continue to pose questions which prompt me to re-examine many attitudes and values.

The first change, for me, came halfway between the plane and airport terminal at Port Vila when I decided this was not the weather for walking - and it was only 2am! For the first two days or so, many of us found the high humidity very trying, then either the weather or our stamina improved.

Port Vila is similar in its extent to Stanthorpe though rather more elongated as it spreads along the coastline. Our motel was comfortable, though by no means lavish, and very conveniently situated, being about three minutes from a good (and interesting ) supermarket (excellent French delicatessen, good bottle shop - joy and rapture!) and about fifteen minutes walk from the main town centre. The motel poolside was a pleasant place to spend the heat of the day and many nibblies were consumed in the early evening.

There was a unanimous decision on Saturday to join a round-the-island (Efate) bus tour and I think no-one regretted the decision. We were most fortunate in our guide (the owner of the company), who provided us with a comprehensive and sympathetic yet clear-sighted view of his homeland. Early in the day we saw farmland, villages, coconut groves, the ravages of the recent cyclone and village and popular beach called Eton! The women doing the washing in a small creek seemed very happy about the photographic interest. As we travelled further from the capital, the villages became less Westernised, the country more rugged and the vegetation ever greener and more rampant. Lunch was taken at a resort which felt a long way from anywhere - the food (to this dedicated tryer of the unknown) was a delight.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was a stop to photograph some wrecked American tanks (military, not water storage) though this thrill was eclipsed, at least for me, by a later meeting with some quite lovely geckos, displayed by a man who told us he had hundreds, perhaps thousands, in his little bit of jungle. They were brilliant green with irregular lighter stripes, the bodies about 150-200mm and the tails up to three times that length.



The second joint venture was the trip to Tanna Island (cooler), home to one of the worlds most accessible active volcanoes. In eight days packed with noteworthy experiences, it is remarkable how completely this visit dominated most people's impressions. In speaking to my fellow travellers about this, I think even the most articulate felt that their words fell short of the reality. Words like "power" and "awesome" have been used too often to describe more common phenomena. My own impressions (fear aside) focus on the amazing range of sounds. I now find it entirely natural that peoples around the world and through the ages have ascribed a super-natural animate quality to volcanoes.

This visit also sparked many discussions on the right of the individual to take risks. People said, quite correctly I'm sure, that if Tanna were part of Australia, we would not have been within miles of this belching monster. Yet I doubt if any of us felt irresponsible as we stood on the rim watching lumps of red hot lava the size of a cow shoot hundreds of feet into the air.

The final group activity was a Melanesian feast, another venture of the company and guide who showed us Efate. This feast was another resounding success, with many different delights. The food was plentiful and wholesome, though generally somewhat bland; the dancers (and singers) a well rehearsed and splendid group of young men presented a programme full of vigour and subtle variation; and the host and hostess were wonderfully dignified and delightfully spontaneous.

We also went to a pleasant, though rather noisy restaurant where some people chose and greatly enjoyed one of the local taste thrills, coconut crab. This creature, which can grow to a vast size, eats coconuts and is, alas, being greatly overharvested. This excursion, apart from the crab, was the kind of night travellers have all around the world.

To conclude this part, one can only say that Walker and Walker have done it again.

---

## **May 24 Nats Outing**

### **Mt Jannet and surrounding features**

Meet at Weeroona Park at 9.00am. Proceed via the Bapaume Forestry road to "Loloma". Here we will meet up with David Moran for a guided tour of his Prize Garden followed by a walk and / or trip by Ute to Mt Jannet on the old "Cobb & Co. Coach Road" for approx, one hour. Grade 1 walk.

Interesting features to be seen include - Granite outcrop, old school remains, mine site and Mt Jannet.

Return to "Loloma" between 2 and 3pm.

Morning tea could be had at "Loloma" and lunch as well as water should be carried in a small backpack.

Outing Leader - Lincoln McPhee

### Camp-Out Queen's Birthday Weekend JUNE 6/7/8

The campout on the June long weekend will be at the Gibraltar Range National Park. On Saturday 6th the activities will start at about 1.00pm. We will walk to the Tree Fern Forest, a walk of about 1 1/2 hours. Along the way we will pass the Twin Bridges where twenty different types of fern have been identified, and also growing in the warm temperate rainforest is giant club moss, one of the tallest in the world. The tree fern forest has tall messmate stringy barks with four species of tree ferns.

Sunday the 7th will be a waterfall day, based around the Boundary Creek Falls Rest Area. We will meet at 9.00am and explore the area around the Boundary Creek Falls. After smoko we will walk along the North West Fire Trail to the Duffer Creek Falls, about 4.5km away. At the falls Duffer Creek drops over two small waterfalls and some cascades before dropping over the cliff into Boundary Creek which runs along the Demon Fault Line. If we have time after returning to the cars we can go to the Lyre Bird Falls 1.4km further downstream.

On Monday morning the plan is to go to the twin cedar trees (1000 years old) in the Washpool National Park. The walk is about 4km return along part of the Washpool Walk. We walk through dry sclerophyll forest, moist sclerophyll forest and rain forest.

All the walks for the weekend are along made tracks and most are along vehicle width fire trails with an easy to moderate rating. There are also alternative short walks available.

We will be camping at Mulligans Hut camping area. Gibraltar Range National Park is on the Glen Innes - Grafton road, on the right hand side just before the Washpool National Park and the top of the range. From Stanthorpe the Dundee short cut saves a fair bit of time. Mulligans Hut is about 10km off the highway. We will arrange for hot showers and there is usually plenty of firewood. A self registration camping fee of \$5.00 per person per day applies and Nats members are to make their own arrangements when they arrive.

For further information phone Kris or Margaret Carnell 07 46 835268

