

JUNE 1998

Vol 300



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 July 19th Wallangarra Ridge with leader Brian Dodd - see next months Newsletter for more details.

Next Meeting Rod Hutchin presents Western Australia - Wednesday 24th June at the QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

7th July 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 27th May, 1998

Opening: The meeting opened at 8.12pm with President, Kris Carnell, welcoming members, including new members Lyn West and Peter Haselgrove.

Attendance: There were 29 present at the meeting and 8 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 22nd April, 1998 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Rob McCosker, seconded by Rod Hutchin. Carried.

Correspondence:

- Inwards:**
1. Qld Naturalist Club - *QNC News* - May/June '98
 2. Office of Sport and Recreation - newsletter
 3. Gary Stubbins - information on his property, "Lanikai", west of Casino, which is available for camping
 4. Community Health -info. on "International Year of Older Persons"
 5. Border Rivers Catchment Management Assoc. - newsletter
 6. Mel and Judith Jurgensen - membership
 7. Debra Burge - query re her membership
 8. Toowoomba Field Nats. - *Darling Downs Naturalist* - May and June '98
 9. Who's Who in Australia - offer of directory for \$250
 10. Gold Coast International Hotel - information
 11. Sinclair, Knight, Merz - newsletter on sport and recreation facilities study for Stanthorpe Shire
 12. Toowoomba Bushwalkers - *Footprint* - May '98
 13. Matrix Office Systems - ceasing to be Canon p/copier agents
 14. Chinchilla Field Nats. - *Urimbirra* - May '98

Outwards:

1. Community service announcements for outing and meeting

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

Business Arising from Correspondence:

Kris suggested that the "Lanikai" property be considered for a future campout location.

Financial Statement for the period 22/4/98 to 27/5/98:

Balance as at 22/4/98 \$ 704.42

Receipts:	Room rent collection	6.50	
	Stanthorpe Camera Club	22.00 (half post office box rental)	
		<u>28.50</u>	<u>28.50</u>
			\$ 732.92

Expenditure:

Room rent	10.00	
Magazine postage	39.40	
Rob Mc Cosker (paper for magazine)	27.25	
Govt. tax (May)	<u>.60</u>	
	<u>\$77.25</u>	<u>77.25</u>
		\$ 655.67

Balance as at 27/5/98 is \$ 655.67

Accounts for payment:

Room rent	12.50
Magazine postage	39.40

The financial statement was adopted on the motion of Julia Brown, seconded by Rob Mc Cosker. Carried.

Outing Report:

Lincoln McPhee reported on his very enjoyable day trip to the Mt Janet area.

Pre-outing Report:

Kris Carnell outlined details of the proposed campout to the Gibraltar Range National Park, east of Glen Innes, on the Queens Birthday long weekend as described in the last newsletter. He emphasised that it was likely to be very cold but hot showers would be available. If the weather looked bad, he suggested that people contact him by the Friday morning to confirm that the trip would still be going. If it was bad, a day trip would be scheduled for Sunday, 21st June as an alternative.

Specimens:

1. Desley McDonagh had some prints from the outing to the Acacia Plateau.

General Business:

Jack Watters, the Vice-President and Publicity Officer of the University of the Third Age group in Warwick, explained that they organised rambles on the third Friday of each month and that our members were welcome to attend.

Jean Harslett said she had recently attended the opening of the new Queensland Herbarium building within the grounds of the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens in Brisbane and said that Paul Grimshaw, a former National Parks ranger at Girraween, had planted a newly described plant there to commemorate the opening.

Presentation:

Jean Harslett gave an informative and entertaining presentation on some aspects of the flora of the Granite Belt region.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Coming Attractions

JULY	19th Outing to Wallangarra Ridge, led by Brian Dodd 22nd Meeting - North Queensland with Kris Carnell
AUGUST	23rd Outing to Cherrabah with leader Liz Bourne 26th Annual General Meeting with slides and photos to "Remember Last Year"

Extended Outing to Vanuatu - Easter 1998

Further Traveller's Tales
Part 2 of a Report by Helen Hartman

Most of our time in Vanuatu was spent doing our own thing, although it was perhaps not surprising to meet someone from Stanthorpe coming in the opposite direction! A summary of the most satisfying activities may help possible future travellers.

Activities on Efate

Cascades - a series of waterfalls with silica terraces. This is near Port Vila, though quite a distance from the town centre. There is a guided tour though you can visit the Cascades without joining it. This site had a mixed reaction from those who went there; some thought it wonderful, some thought it 'allright'.

Sailing Trip - a full day excursion. Pleasant, though perhaps a half day would be sufficient.

Riding - a guided tour which provided an interesting introduction to the countryside.

Snorkelling - a close look at a stunning range of marine life, including sea slugs "longer than your arm and thicker than your leg." Coral and myriads of fish, large and small, all in glorious technicolour. Snorkelling gear is widely available for hire, as is equipment for many other kinds of marine activity. However the "chewed mouthpiece" of one did not sound attractive.

For those who didn't want to get *into* the water, the jetty at Eririki Island (free, five minute ferry ride from town) is a substitute. The fish, mainly small, are 'encouraged' (at least one family feeds them most mornings), very plentiful and varied.

Eririki and Erakor Islands - both house resorts, both provide a free ferry and both allow visitors to roam more or less at will. Eririki provides a close-up, comfortable (via paths) view of some very impressive trees and the ubiquitous lushness. It looks natural though it is probably planted. The resort also has a good, reasonably priced buffet lunch in lovely surroundings. The catering manager comes from Amiens! Erakor has mangroves and nineteenth century missionary graves and a beautifully kept little open-air chapel. On both islands, once away from the resort area, you can feel a long way from anywhere.

"Garden" tour - a half day tour which provides an introduction to village culture (the gardens produce vegetables), cultivation methods, herbal medicine, cooking methods and a taste of the results. Low-key, though very interesting.

Museum - a small collection but but extremely informative. Housed in a very successful modern interpretation of a traditional building.

Visit to Church on Easter Sunday - A number of the group went to a church service, though most said they would not have done so at home. All of them rated it among their most significant experiences. The obvious enthusiasm of the worshippers and their delight in their visitors (who all shook hands with the entire congregation!) won the admiration of those visitors.

Flight to Ambrim - on a three-seater float plane. Some quite beautiful views of islands between Efate and Ambrim where there is a much larger volcano (no lava). The plane circled the volcano for some time (several lifetimes, it seemed) dodging cloud and mountain and completely avoiding straight, level flight. Lunch was taken at

Epi and it was very good, and remarkably it was cooked by a local man (cooking is woman's work). The time there was somewhat extended because the battery was flat, causing one of the passengers some alarm about the start of the new term the next day. An expensive little jaunt, but very worthwhile. Once again, I'm sure that you would never be allowed to do it in Australia.

Activities on Tanna - The accomodation chosen here was not near any settlement, so provided a very different experience. No need to worry about losing keys (no keys); generator turned off at midnight; simple but delightful (I thought) accomodation but ants find any food you take.

Village Tour - a visit to a quite primitive village with very little evidence of Western tools (I saw 1 spade, 1 axe, 3 metal saucepans, 1 pencil). The tour finishes with a goosebump inducing dance. It also led us to discuss whether this village was a deliberate tourist attraction. I think it likely, that the way of life we saw was authentic, but it is quite possible that there has been a deliberate choice not to introduce European ways.

Walking - Because of our location and because Tanna was considerably cooler, it was possible to be away from it *all* in a couple of minutes. It is possible to spend a pleasant few hours, or even a day, peacefully botanising and observing. There are some blowholes about three kms from the resort, and also some interesting fossilised coral formations.

And some final thoughts about it all .

But first, a word about the buses. These are mini, plentiful and mostly middle-aged. They may be hailed anywhere and will deliver passengers to their chosen destination (yes, right to the door), in the order in which they board. With luck you can have a fascinating hours' conducted tour around backstreets for something less than \$1 - but you shouldn't be in a hurry. This system, which appears to work well, exemplifies, as well as anything, some of the intrinsic features of Vanuatu - and no one could think, "this could be the Gold Coast".

I discussed this impression briefly with all the people who went and, on balance, found that the people of Vanuatu are one of its great attractions. Their open and sincere welcome, their obvious and non-comercial interest in oneself, their willingness to talk about themselves and their customs - all these we found very attractive.

The beauty of the land and sea came a close second. The lush vegetation, the natural abundance of food plants, the clarity and colour of the water - these, together with a friendly, honest and attractive people made the trip to Vanuatu like "National Geographic" come to life.

Helen Hartman



Koala up a gum tree and Satin bower bird down in the garden.

Early last month we were fortunate to have a visit to our garden by a Satin bower bird. I recall we have only occasionally seen bower birds here, usually one or two females and rarely the glossy black satin male. When this fellow arrived on his own I thought he was just passing through, as they often did at this time of year on our farm at Wyberba, many years ago, taking advantage of any ripe apples left on the trees as well as any left in the packing shed, (much to our dismay as they were very messy eaters). We had no fruit here, except for a few rotten apples on the compost heap which the Eastern rosellas were enjoying, however I think the bowerbird may have been taking the berries off the white cedar tree as he spent a lot of time there, and I thought he may have been eating fruit on the Irish strawberry tree as I saw him fly away from it several times as I walked out the back door. About a week later I discovered that his interest there was actually the bright blue sage flowers. I heard him down in the garden making his strange calls and from a distance watched him prancing about on the ground and flashing his wings as he made those extraordinary sounds. Later I investigated the spot and found a bower of sticks and the flattened area in front decorated with blue feathers, a blue peg and yes, several blue sage flowers. We never saw any females, and my bird book states that apparently the male only displays actively in the presence of females, so perhaps this chap was practicing. I also had the chance to watch him performing high in a gum tree near the shed, and it was interesting that he would finish each bracket of song with a little hop to another branch and a few seconds of mimicry of Kookooburras, not just one but a chorus of them. On another occasion I watched him select a dead twig from a gum tree and fly off with it to add it to his bower. He only stayed for about three weeks, so we are hoping he will return next year and perhaps entice some females to come as well.

Isn't it a shame that Koalas are sighted so rarely in the wild when they were reportedly once so plentiful around this area. I wonder which gum trees have suitable leaves for them to eat in this area.

These were the thoughts going through my mind as I was taking a walk a couple of weeks ago in a neighbouring property. I started to take notice of the types of trees around me as I went, looking up into their leafy canopy. I had only gone another 50m or so when I crested a small rocky ridge and looked straight at a koala, looking straight back at me. It was perched in the fork of an angophora tree which was growing down the hill from where I was, so its canopy was closer to my eye-level, and I was able to sit and watch for some time. The koala became quite agitated when the dogs arrived and found its scent at the bottom of the tree. It made a loud alarm call and swung its body defensively behind the branch, so I called the dogs away and left it in peace. Two days later the only trace of the koala was a scratch in the bark of a nearby angophora, no doubt made by the koala as it climbed the tree.

Rob McCosker.

As a post-script to the story about the Satin bower bird, since starting to write this article, he has indeed returned, though only for a couple of days. This time with two females in tow, who helped him demolish the ripe fruit on the Strawberry tree.

Outing Report **Mt Janet - May 24 1998**

Attendance : 31

At 9.00am we left Weeroona Park on a glorious May day for "Loloma" where we met up with our host, David Moran. We were delighted to be able to be shown around the garden which is included in the Australian Open Gardens Scheme. We observed various plants of interest and all appreciated a pleasant cup of tea in this garden.

After morning tea, we were guided to a historic grave site just over the crossing on Pikes Creek. From there we travelled in high clearance vehicles to Mt Janet, a granite outcrop where we could not resist the climb to the top. The climb proved to be about grade 8 for 5 minutes, but the magnificent view from the top was well worth the effort.

Proceeding from there we eventually found an exit in the granite boulders which took us back down to the track where we had lunch in the grounds of what was once the Mt Janet school. A very pleasant lunch was consumed in this secluded place.

We returned to our cars at about 3.00pm and said farewell to each other till our next outing.

Many thanks was afforded David for a most rewarding day.

Lincoln McPhee.

Bird List for May Outing

Butcher bird	Grey crowned babblers
Noisy minor	Wedge-tailed eagles
Currawong	Blue wren
Eastern rosella	Pardelotes
Crimson rosella	Choughs
Golden whistler	Double-barred finches
White faced heron	Apostle birds

Remember Last Year

This list of outings for the year might help you find your slides and photos for the AGM presentation.

Boonoo Boonoo CBD	Amiens Forestry
Goomburra	West Bald Rock
Nundubbermere Falls	Teviot Falls
Stinson Park-Lamington Plateau	Acacia Plateau
Mt Janet	Gibraltar Range N.P.

Stanthorpe Field Nats Past Outings

The list below is the start of a compilation of all past Nats outings since the club began, and includes the date, venue and whether it was a day (D), half day(1/2D) or campout (C). There are some gaps which I hope to fill in later but for now I hope the list will give members some inspiration when considering suggestions for future outings.

Rob McCosker.

Nov 26 1969 Field Nats Club Inception		Apr 20 1974 Rocky River	C
Feb 22 1970 Bluff River NSW	D	May 19 1974 Dr Roberts Waterhole	D
Feb 25 1970 Club Constitution & Rules Adopted		Jun 23 1974 Bald Rock	D
Mar 22 1970 Texas Caves	D	Jul 21 1974 Connolly Dam	D
Apr 19 1970 Amiens	D	Aug 25 1974 Red Rock Gorge	D
Jun 21 1970 Bald Rock	D	Sep 22 1974 Red Rock Gorge	D
Jul 19 1970 Swanfels area	D	Oct 20 1974 McDonagh's property	D
Aug 23 1970 Mt. Norman & Castle Rock	D	Nov 23 1974 Gibraltar Nat Park	C
Sep 20 1970 Cunningham's Gap	D	Dec 15 1974 The Junction Christmas BBQ	1/2D
Oct 25 1970 Donnelly's Castle & Jolly's Falls	D	Jan 19 1975 Severn River Third Crossing	D
Nov 22 1970 Caves and Well, McCosker's	D	Feb 23 1975 Tooloom Falls	D
Dec 13 1970 The Junction Christmas BBQ	1/2 D	Mar 23 1975 Glen Lyon Dam & The Pinnacle	D
Jan 24 1971 Queen Marys Falls	D	Apr 20 1975 Mt Norman	D
Feb 21 1971 Dr Roberts Waterhole	D	May 24 1975 Wilson's Peak	C
Mar 21 1971 Dr Dark's Property	D	Jun 22 1975 Dalveen area	
Apr 18 1971 Tenterfield area	D	Jul 20 1975 South Bald Rock to West B.R.	D
May 23 1971 Mystery Campout-Reynolds Ck	C	Aug 24 1975 Dalveen area	D
Jun 20 1971 South Bald Rock	D	Sep 24 1975 Amiens area	D
Jul 25 1971 Nundubbermere Falls	D	Oct 19 1975 Nundubbermere Road property	D
Aug 22 1971 Red Rock Gorge	D	Nov 16 1975 Girraween wildflowers	D
Sep 19 1971 Dalveen area	D	Dec 21 1975 The Junction Christmas BBQ	1/2D
Oct 24 1971 Town Hills & Little Broadwater	D	Jan 25 1976 Jolly's Falls & Donnelly's Castle	D
Nov 21 1971 Boonoo Boonoo Falls	D	Feb 22 1976 Jibbenbar	D
Dec 19 1971 The Junction Christmas BBQ	1/2D	Mar 21 1976	
Jan 23 1972 Tooloom Scrub and Falls	D	Apr 25 1976	
Feb 20 1972 Mt Norman via Racecourse Ck	D	May 23 1976	
Mar 19 1972 Swanfels	D	Jun 20 1976 Rokeby Station	D
Apr 23 1972 Undercliffe Falls & Rivertree	D	Jul 24 1976 Lake Broadwater Dalby	C
May 20 1972 Mystery Campout - Kelvin Falls	C	Aug 22 1976 Rokeby Station	D
Jun 25 1972 Texas Caves	D	Sep 19 1976 Coolmunda Dam	D
Jul 22 1972 North Branch Creek	C	Oct 24 1976 Upson Downs Nundub. Road	D
Aug 20 1972 Harslett's area	D	Nov 20 1976 Storm King Dam Combined Nats	C
Sep 17 1972 Inglewood area - dam & forest	D	Dec 19 1976 The Junction Christmas BBQ	1/2D
Oct 22 1972 Mt Banca - wildflowers	D	Feb 20 1977 Jibbenbar	D
Nov 19 1972 Queen Mary Falls	D	Mar 20 1977 Tom Plant's property	D
Dec 17 1972 The Junction Christmas BBQ	1/2D	Apr 24 1977 Aztec Temple	D
Jan 21 1973 Rocky River	D	May 22 1977 Dalveen area	D
Feb 25 1973 Signpost - Girraween	D	Jun 11 1977 Bunya Mt.	C
Mar 24 1973 Red Rock Gorge	C	Jul 24 1977 Undercliffe	D
Apr 15 1973 Basket Swamp Creek Falls	D	Aug 21 1977 T. Chapman's property	1/2D
May 20 1973 Castle Rock - Girraween	D	Sep 25 1977 Yetman area	D
Jun 16 1973 Texas Caves with Dalby Nats	C	Oct 7 1977 Storm King Dam Combined Nats	C
Jun 26 1973 Paddy's Flat	D	Oct 23 1977 Rivertree	D
Jul 22 1973 Cherry Gully Gorge	D	Nov 20 1977 N. Butler property BBQ / Spotighting	1/2D
Aug 19 1973 The Junction Wyberba	D	Dec 18 1977 Storm King Dam Christmas BBQ	1/2D
Sep 23 1973 McDonagh's property	D	Feb 19 1978 Signboard & Open. Girraween Office	D
Jan 20 1974 Haynes property Ballandean	D	Mar 19 1978 Boonoo Boonoo Falls	D
Feb 24 1974 Sugarloaf	D	Apr 23 1978 Pikedale Station	D
Mar 24 1974 Rivertree	D	May 21 1978 Bald Rock Ck.	D
		Jun 3 1978 Dalrymple Creek	C
		Jun 25 1978 Bald Rock Ck. Junction to Lyra	D

ANNUAL MEETING AUGUST 26th 1998

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE FOR 1998/99

FAMILY - \$15.00 SINGLE - \$8.00

Please complete your correct name and address details below and present with your subs to the July or August Meeting, or post to -

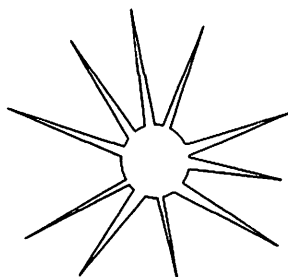
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc.
P O Box 154
Stanthorpe Q 4380

Name (Including title please) _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Please Note - Receipts will be posted with your newsletter.



Club Program - 1998/99

The Committee once again asks for your assistance to provide a wide range of outing activities and meeting programs for the coming twelve months. Please jot down your suggestions below, and indicate if you would be prepared to lead an outing or provide a meeting program.

A list of some previous outings is on the reverse of this page, which may help to jog the memory - it is often more enjoyable to re-visit some spots at a different time of year.

Last years' survey indicated that most people were not prepared to travel more than three hours to an outing, and there has been a suggestion to move the Queen's birthday weekend campout to the May Labour day weekend, and have an ordinary outing as well, in that month. What do you think ? Please tell us.

OUTING / PROGRAM

LEADER / PRESENTER
