



APRIL 1999

Vol 308



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 1998 - 99

President	Roger Logan	46 812493
Vice-Presidents	Desley McDonagh	46 813074
	Millie Marsden	46 811593
Secretary	Liz Bourne	46 836374
Treasurer	Julia Brown	46 814540
Newsletter Editor	Robin McCosker	46 835371
Magazine Committee	Wendy & Neil Donges, Julie Beddow	
Publicity Officer	Patience James	46 811853
Learning For Pleasure	Mary Walters	46 835306
Librarian	Trish McCosker	46 835371
Management Committee	President , Vice-Presidents , Secretary , Treasurer	

COMING UP

Next Outing April 25th Visit to the property "Wywurrie", Tooloom. Leader Helen Hartmann. Meet at Weeroona Park at 8.00am or at Liston at 8.15am.

Next Meeting April 28th Slide Program - Landscapes of the Great Artesian Basin - by Errol Walker. 8.00pm at the QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe.

REMINDER May Campout 1st -3rd at Torrington. Leader Kris Carnell.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

9th May 1999

Mail contributions to The Newsletter Editor, P O Box 24, Severnlea Q4352

Fax to 4683 5371, e-mail robinmcc@halenet.com

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 24th March, 1999**

Opening: The meeting opened at 8.07pm with President, Roger Logan, welcoming members and visitors.

Attendance: There were 31 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 25th February, 1999 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Patience James, seconded by Rob McCosker. Carried.

Correspondence:

- Inwards:**
1. Geoff and Margaret Meredith – new membership
 2. Bookman Directories – *Organisations and Leaders* – available for purchase
 3. Light and Easy Display Systems – information about their products
 4. Samson Total Technology - invoice for \$21.20
 5. Granite News – invoice for copier labels - \$22.95
 6. Australia Post – post office box rental - \$45
 7. Qld. Naturalists Club - *QNC News*, March/April '99
 8. Toowoomba Bushwalkers Club - *Footprint* – March '99
 9. Toowoomba Field Nats. – *Darling Downs Naturalist* – March and April '99
 10. Chinchilla Field Naturalist Club – *Urimbirra* – February and March '99
 11. Association Software Co. – information on software
 12. Waves at Warwick – information on their facilities

- Outwards:** 1. Community service announcements for outing and meeting

Business Arising from the Correspondence:

1. Purchase of GPS equipment

Roger Logan reported that he had not been able to borrow a GPS yet to try it out in the field to help determine how useful it might be for the Club.

2. Best Native Bloom at the Stanthorpe Show

We should write to the Show Secretary to indicate the Club's willingness to sponsor this category again.

Financial Statement for the period 24 February '99 to 24 March '99:

Balance as at 24/2/99

\$ 736.99

Receipts:

Room rent collection	-	<u>8.75</u>	<u>8.75</u>
			<u>\$745.74</u>

Expenditure:

Room rent	10.00	
Magazine postage	37.00	
Samson Total Technology	52.60	
Petty Cash – Liz Bourne	10.00	
Govt. tax (March)	<u>.90</u>	
	<u>\$110.50</u>	110.50
		<u>\$ 635.24</u>

Balance as at 24/3/99 is \$ 635.24

Accounts for payment:

Room rent	10.00
Magazine postage	37.00
Samson Total Technology	21.20
Granite News	22.95
Australia Post	45.00

This report was received and adopted on the motion of Julia Brown, seconded by Rob McCosker. Carried.

Outing Report:

Millie Marsden reported on the campout weekend she led to the Hodgson Vale area near Toowoomba on the 20th/21st March which was attended by 11 people on the Saturday and another three who joined them on the Sunday. Millie requested that a letter of thanks be sent to the land owners, Penny and David Marsden, whose property was used for the campout.

Pre-outing Report:

Helen Hartmann will be leading the next outing on the 26th April to the property "Wywurrie" at Tooloom.

Specimens:

1. Mavis Bott had a collection of various native plants from her garden.
2. Jean Harslett had some photos of an orange/red fungus found on their property, which is commonly known as "dead man's fingers".
3. She also had a collection of mud wasps' nests that had used a variety of different types of mud in their construction.
4. Brian McDonagh reported that the *Tweedia* plant he had brought to the last meeting was a native of Brazil and Central America and had a number of colour variations. It had also been found on the Nundubbermere Road.

General Business:

1. Heritage Park

Kris Carnell reported that the native gardens at Heritage Park in Stanthorpe needed weeding again and that the Shire Council would supply more mulch, if required. He said there may be a need to replant some sections where plants had died out. It was agreed that a working bee would be held on Sunday 11th April, starting at 8am.

2. Campout to Torrington

Kris Carnell asked for a show of hands from those who thought they might be going on this campout on the 1 – 3 May. It will be held in the State Recreation Area at Torrington in northern NSW. Accommodation and camping will be available at the caravan park which is basic but clean. A local miner has offered to talk to the group and fossicking is allowed.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Guest Speaker:

Vic Torrens from the Stanthorpe Ambulance Service gave members an update on recent changes to the Ambulance Service.

- All emergency calls will now be directed to a communications centre in Toowoomba who will then contact the local ambulance. They are aiming for a 10min. response time to calls in towns like Stanthorpe. The new system will free up local staff to be able to respond to

calls more effectively. 4681 2233 will be the normal number to call the Stanthorpe office and if it is unattended the call will be diverted to an operator in Toowoomba. The number for pre-booking of an ambulance will be 131233.

- The Ambulance can supply and fit baby capsules into cars.
- First Aid courses are run about ten times a year and cost \$95 for a six week course.
- First Aid kits, ranging in price from \$14 to \$65 may be purchased from the Service.

Slide Presentation:

David Wilson from Warwick gave members a very informative and entertaining account of the Club trip to Vanuatu last year, with a particular focus on the volcanic activity they witnessed.

~~~~~

### **Heritage Park Working Bee**

Seven members turned up on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> armed with gloves, hoes, wheelbarrows etc and cleared away all the weeds and dead plants from the garden beds. Unfortunately some of the plants were poisoned by herbicide spray, as they were not marked to indicate their purpose, and were regarded as weeds by council staff. As well as providing replacement plants, the Club should consider a means of plant identification as a matter of urgency. The load of mulch for topping up the beds did not arrive, so another working bee may have to be organised.

~~~~~

March Outing Report - Campout to Hodgson Vale

Perhaps "Campout" is the incorrect term for this outing, as no one actually camped - perhaps "Sleep Over" may be more to the point. Inclement weather conditions on the Saturday morning did deter a few people and only a small number met at Weeroona Park at 8.30am. Our entourage was made up of one car and caravan, one mobile home and three cars with a total of ten participants.

The stop at Sandy Creek Darling Downs Hotel was made extra special as the owners invited us to have a look inside the old hotel even though they were not open for business. The rooms all have pressed tin ceilings with each room having a different pattern, and the outside has recently been painted and it looks quite superb. There is a lot of printed matter displayed, which traces the history of the hotel and district. They even provide a "courtesy" bus - not bad for a rural area!

The proposed itinerary was followed and at Leyburn we also saw the old school bell and the shingled roof playshed, visited the Liberator Park and the church before moving on to Nobby. Most of the people took the opportunity to lunch at the historic Rudds Pub and enjoyed the experience greatly. Sister Kenny's Memorial created much interest and a deal of time was spent there. Peter Power left us here to return to Stanthorpe. Roger pointed out that the mature trees in the surrounding park had been planted by Nobby QCWA in honour of local pioneers. As we left Nobby the threatened rain began to fall and continued for a couple of hours as we settled in to "Bellbrae". When the rain ceased David took us on a drive through the local area and down the range. It was to be a scenic drive but, at some of the vantagepoints, the fog rolled in and spoiled our viewing.

We invited the Marsdens to join us for the evening meal, which we all ate together but the windy conditions changed our plans somewhat. We enjoyed a slide show before having a hot shower (courtesy of the Marsdens) and going off to our beds.

Sunday morning dawned deep in fog, however we set off to Gormans Cairn where Trish, Robin and their grandson were waiting for us. Two cars were left at the road at the bottom of the long steep hill to make things easier for the walkers. The track was extremely muddy, and this made our progress rather slow, as we had to pause to remove the build-up of mud from our shoes. The fog was very thick and so we missed many of the "enchanted vistas". We were not able to see into the valley below as we traversed the Camel's Hump section and this was a great shame, as we could not fully appreciate Gorman's feat in finding a way up the range. As we went over the Hump we marveled at the tenacity of Lt. Gorman's party in 1840, and we surmised that they did not make the trip during a wet time as their animals and vehicles would not have had any traction. The fog provided us with many naturally created works of art. The intricate designs of the webs of the many spiders were really wonderful. Each had a special design, which was highlighted with dewdrops - it was quite spectacular. Some webs were quite small and others were draped from huge trees - we felt we were in wonderland (didn't glimpse Alice though). The walk was completed by lunch and we wended our way back to "Bellbrae" for a leisurely lunch, after which we made our way home by various routes.

Our thanks to Penny and David for making their property available to us and for leading the scenic drive.

Millie Marsden.

Bird list for the Sunday outing.

Birds are generally more active in the early morning, and with the heavy fog for our outing on the Toowoomba range, early morning lasted until lunch time. Unfortunately most of the activity could be heard, and not seen, such as the almost constant companion of the Whipbird call, along the walking track. I have included some sightings recorded at the Lion's Park, on our way to the outing.

Galah,
King parrot,
Grey butcher bird,
Bronze wing pigeon,
Straw-necked ibis,
Currawong,
Striped honeyeater,
Crested pigeon,
Superb blue wren.

Rainbow lorikeet,
Noisy miner,
Pied butcher bird,
White-faced heron,
Magpie,
Noisy friar bird,
Grey crowned babbler,
Silvereye,

Pale headed rosella,
Welcome swallow,
Common starling,
White-necked heron,
Crow,
White-faced honeyeater,
Willie wagtail,
Red-browed firetail,

Rob McCosker.

April Outing - A visit to the property "Wywurrie" Tooloom

Owned by Brian and Sylvia Mulcahy

The outing company will regroup at the rest area in Liston. As the road to Legume is rather dusty, we will regroup again at Legume; park as close to the turn-off as safely possible and a head count will be done.

We will travel quite slowly from then on, as there are many excellent views, always worth another look.

The road to the right, at the Tooloom lookout, Tooloom Plantation Road, runs past mature plantings of Hoop Pine (about 50 years old). Though we will not be detouring, Brian suggests it may be worth a look sometime. Logging started some time ago, but he does not think there is much activity at present.

From Tooloom Lookout on the Koreelah Range we drop some 230 metres. The property is on Iverson's Road (off Eight Day Creek Road) just before Urbenville.

We will have morning tea at the property, then travel a short distance (in as few vehicles as possible) to Brian's native food plantation which has been recently established in conjunction with the Australian Native Food Resource Development.

We will return to "Wywurrie" for a longish lunch; longish, because it would be possible to spend hours here. One of Brian's lifelong hobbies is the propagating of trees from seed (another passion of his is mineral collection). Every tree has a story and, what's more, he remembers the stories and is happy to tell them. Two samples - a mature Atlantic Cedar shades some cattle yards near the house, the seed was collected in Canberra by Brian's mother, probably on her honeymoon. The road fronting the house has a row of mature Hoop Pines of varying ages. Brian and his siblings would dig up a Hoop Pine seedling from the bush and plant it in a container to use as a Christmas tree. When the pines outgrew their containers they were transplanted along the road.

A feature of the property is the tree diversity and after lunch we will see something of this aspect. We will travel to a sheltered gully with rainforest specimens and then stop at a vantage point overlooking the Mt. Lindesay basin and the associated vents, especially Mt. Callawajune (The Beehive) adjacent to the property.

We will then travel to another sheltered spot with a number of Tallow woods at the base of a low cliff. The cliff is home to orchids and ferns and there is a short scramble down for those who want to inspect these plants more closely.

If time permits, there is another native food planting nearby.

House keeping details -

Leave Weeroona Park at 8.00am, led by Roger Logan.

Regroup at Liston at 8.15am.

Travel to Legume and regroup.

Continue on to "Wywurrie" - one to one and a half hours.

Note: To those who would like to climb Mt. Callawajune, this can be arranged but it would be self-guided and would be grade 9 - 10 (and would take most of the day).

If you are interested, please get in touch with me **BEFOREHAND**.

Leader for the outing - Helen Hartmann Phone 02 6736 1423.

A LIKING FOR A LITTLE DESSERT

Recently I have observed an immature Grey butcher bird (still with its greyish-brown immature plumage) quite deliberately feeding on and apparently enjoying a fig. It was eating the better part of a whole fig at a time.

The Soldier birds Koels and Currawongs are frequent visitors and enjoy our offerings, to the detriment of jam making.

For a number of years a pair of Grey butcher birds have nested close to the garden, and though not aggressive to us they are noticeably so to anyone else who might walk immediately under their tree. Unless very close to the tree they respect all human movements as OK.

However, it occurred to me that you do not associate the Grey butcher birds with having fruit in their diet. Have the parent birds decreed - "If you don't eat that fledgling or black beetle there is no desert!" I cannot find any reference to this as part of their diet. It would be interesting to hear of other bird watchers' observations with regards to a fruit eating habit. There are remarkable records of their skills of mimicry of calls and sounds.

Jean Harslett.

Specimen Table

A specimen for display at the February meeting, with erect fruit (follicle) of soft furry-like texture belongs to a plant with an attractive quite large pale blue flower. I have seen it in the State Forestry in the Amiens area, where once there were old soldier settlers' blocks of the early 1920's era - which were later abandoned.

The plant is *Tweedia coerulea* a native of Argentina. A note from Flora of South Eastern Queensland suggests that it has naturalized in the Stanthorpe area of the Darling Downs and a few localized areas of the Moreton district.

Jean Harslett.

Coming Attractions

APRIL	26 th Day Outing to Tooloom - Leader Helen Hartmann
	28 th Meeting program - Slides by Errol Walker showing Landscapes of the Australian Great Artesian Basin - Lake Eyre, Dig Tree, Innaminka, Cameron Cnr. etc
MAY	1 st -3 rd Campout at Torrington Leader Kris Carnell
	23 rd Outing to Mt. Banca Leader M. Passmore
	26 th Meeting - Trivia Quiz organized by Desley McDonagh

Camp - Out May 1st - 3rd Torrington

The Camp-out on the May long weekend will be at the Torrington State Recreation Area, which, at about 30,000Ha in size is described as the largest area of native vegetation remaining on the Northern Tablelands. Current land uses are small mining operations, fossicking, beekeeping, grazing, horseriding, bushwalking and wildflower appreciation.

We will be camping at the Torrington Caravan Park, which has plenty of camp sites, some on - site vans, hot showers and a communal BBQ area. There is no kiosk or fuel available in Torrington, and be prepared for cold nights.

Torrington is a very interesting village where time appears to have stood still (except for Ed Oribons new house). There are buildings dating from around the turn of the century showing how architecture has changed through the decades. There also mining relics scattered through the town. As the town is situated in the middle of the town common cows and donkeys roam the streets.

The programme is as follows,

Saturday 10.00am : Town walk and visit Torrington Cemetery

1.30pm : Meet N.P. Ranger at Nomad Picnic area

Walk to Thunderbolts Lookout

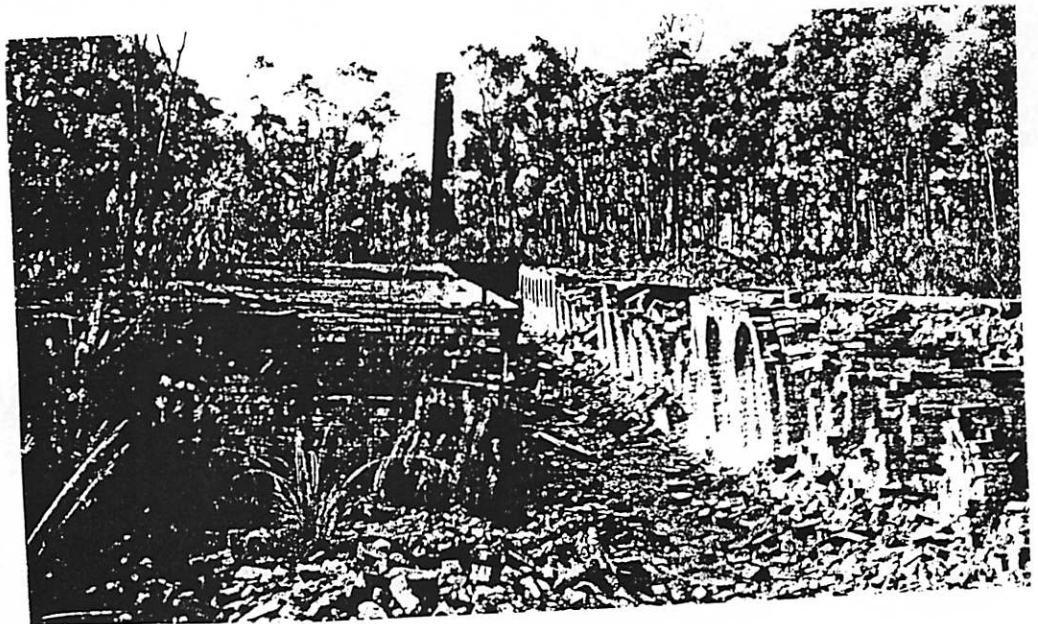
Sunday 9.00am : Sherrats Buddle, visit Burnt Hut mine area and Pacific Copper. Travel to picnic area and walk to Old Mystery Face then go to the Blatherarm fossicking area where the National Parks are establishing a camping area.

Monday Leave Caravan Park immediately after smoko and drive to the Ottery Arsenic Mine recently rehabilitated by the Mining and Environment Departments.

Visit Emmaville for lunch then return home.

Torrington is about 1hrs drive from Tenterfield. The easiest route is to turn off the New England Hwy just as you enter Deepwater from the north and follow the signs. This road is all sealed except for a short section of dirt. The Stanumm Cemetery is worth a look if you have the time. Alternative routes are via Silent Grove or Pyes Creek Rd, neither of which is suitable for small cars.

Leader - Kris Carnell Phone 4683 5268



Ottery Mine



Above - Ottery Mine ruins

Left - Old Mystery Face

Below - Mining relic

