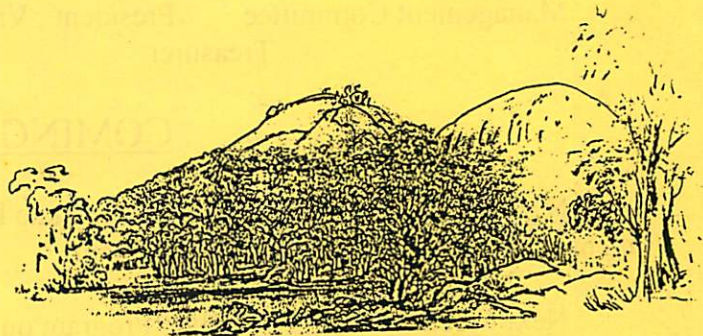




JULY 1999

Vol 311

# 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.

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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
Librarian	Trish McCosker	46 835371
Management Committee	President , Vice-Presidents , Secretary , Treasurer	

### COMING UP

Next Outing July 25<sup>th</sup> Stanthorpe State Forest - Leaders Mel and Judith Jurgensen. Meet at Weeroona Park at 9.00am

Next Meeting July 28<sup>th</sup> Slide Program on Zimbabwe by Noela and Brian Dodd 8.00pm at the QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe.

### DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

8<sup>th</sup> August 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.



## Outing to Sundown Observatory 20<sup>th</sup> June 1999

(As this outing took the place of the normal Meeting night there are no minutes for this month.)

Undaunted by prospects of cloudy night skies and cold night air a total of five members rolled up to observe the heavens at Keith Lays Sundown Observatory at Ballandean. There were some clouds in Stanthorpe but less at Ballandean although a thick patch came over during the evening.

We began with a view of one of the pointers of the Southern Cross. This turned out to be a double star. These two stars revolve around each other. Keith has seen their positions slowly change over his lifetime of observations. Then we looked at star clusters, nebulae, galaxies, and galactic clusters, each progressively further away from us. Some of these distant features are many millions of light years away from Earth and contain billions of stars. The galaxy we live in, the Milky Way, contains more than a hundred billion stars of which our star, the Sun, is just one.

Keith showed us his display of posters while we had drinks and cake. He has posters of the planets, satellites, nebulae, galaxies and many more. Keith has a computer which he showed can make a map of the earth's surface with the position of satellites and their future orbital paths. It will also show the position of the earth in relationship to the sun and planets of our solar system both forward and backward in time.

We returned to the telescope for a view of the moon. We could see details of many craters and mountains on the moon. It looked huge and very bright. Its difficult to get a sense of scale as the largest crater on the moon is eleven hundred kilometres across and the moon itself is 384,000 kilometres away. There are a lot of vacant blocks up there just waiting for a real estate agent.

Keith told us he had made his reflecting telescope himself. It is mounted on a block of concrete set a metre deep in the ground. Its main axis points to the south celestial pole. (That's the point in the sky directly over the south pole.) The telescope can be pointed in any direction but a motor drive keeps it turning on its main axis so that it follows the object of interest across the sky. This is the same rate the earth is turning or fifteen degrees an hour.

The Sundown Observatory is also the site for weather observations for the Meteorology Bureau. Meteors and meteorology are not related.

For those who would like to read about our place in the universe, have a look at Carl Sagan's book "A Pale Blue Dot" from the Stanthorpe Library. It has very up to date information and pictures from the Voyager and other space missions, and is very easy to read.

Roger Logan.

## Report On Outing to Con's Plains.

On Sunday morning, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 27 Field Nats and friends met at the Tannymorel Hall at 9.30am. We then drove in convoy to the property of Wayne Lindenberg, that is at the head of the Farm Creek valley. We stopped at a vantage point on the way up and viewed the falls from a distance. When we reached the property we stopped for smoko before exploring the top of the falls, which had quite a good flow of water. It was interesting to see thick layers of ice on the small rock pools in the deep shade beside the stream, even though it was 11.00am. There were some plants flowering in the microclimate that exists there, a *Cryptandra* and surprisingly, a Pink Rock Orchid *Dendrobium kingianum*.

From the falls we drove up into the pine forests on the Hoffmans Plateau. After a short walk through the rainforest (remnant) we came out at the clear section known as Cons Plain. The day was clear and crisp so the viewing was spectacular - from the Peak Range in the distance to the north to Edinborough Castle in the south - from the Steamers at our feet leading up to the Main Range with views of most of the peaks from Spicers Peak to Mt Superbus and to Joneses top paddock!!!

After lunch we drove to Kelly's Lookout on a more northern aspect of the plateau. This was another spectacular vista - with the Steamers prominent next to Mt Guymer. Another interesting sight there was Venus, clearly visible in daylight.

It was an enjoyable day - not a lot of walking or climbing and we hope we can do better next time. (With such wonderful scope at your back door, I'm sure you will. Editor.)

Alan and Diane Jones.

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## A Response to "A Liking for a little Desert" article

The following email was received from Peter Ogilvie.

Your April 1999 newsletter has finally reached me on circulation at Qld Parks and Wildlife Service Head Office (Brisbane). It includes a note by Jean Harslett about a juvenile grey butcher bird eating figs. While I don't have any similar observations, I'm not surprised by what she recorded.

It is often not appreciated that eating a fig invariably involves eating a quantity of wasps. The unique pollination process for fig tree flowers (which occur inside the figs) means that, at any time, most figs will contain a quantity of larval and/or adult fig wasps. It has always seemed to me that eating a fig is probably a very easy way of having an insect meal. This applies equally to birds and humans. Conversely, it has always intrigued me when bird books refer to certain birds, particularly some pigeons, as being exclusively fruit eaters, when their fig diet means they must have a significant intake of insect protein.

Peter Ogilvie  
Park Management.

## Outing to Stanthorpe State Forest – 25<sup>th</sup> July 1999

This walk will be an easy ramble (of about Grade 3) along tracks through the Stanthorpe State Forest which is located just west of town, adjacent to the Happy Valley Resort.

We will meet as usual at Weeroona Park in Marsh St., Stanthorpe at 9am and then proceed west along Amiens Road, turning right (north) into Plant Lane and following it to the grid entrance to the State Forest. Those members who live west of town may like to meet us here. We will leave the cars here and proceed north along a good vehicle track through the forest for about an hour, before stopping for smoko on a rock with good views. Those who cannot spend the whole day away could then return back along the track to the cars.

After smoko, we will proceed east and then south along the track for a proposed lunch stop on some rocks with good views to the south and west. This will involve a moderate scramble up the rocks so the less energetic may care to stop at the base. Depending on what people would like to do, after lunch there will be a number of interesting features of the forest to explore before following the track south and west back to the cars by mid-afternoon.

Quite a few of the local wildflowers are already in bloom in this State Forest, including *Boronia granitica* and *Hovea* spp. so we should get to see a good variety - make certain you bring your camera.

For further information on this outing, please call us on 4681 4490.

Mel and Judith Jurgensen

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## FOR SALE

Complete 35mm SLR Photography Kit

Camera - Canon AE1 + Tele Carry Case

Lens - Canon 50mm 1:1.8, Canon Zoom 35 - 70mm 1: 4, Flexar Zoom 80 - 200mm 1:4.5

Flash - Canon Speedlite 188A

All VGC including all Manuals and Instructions and Camera Bag

\$400.00 o.n.o. Col Hockings Phone 4681 1978

## Coming Attractions

JULY	25 <sup>th</sup>	Outing to Stanthorpe State Forest - Leaders Mel and Judith Jurgensen.
	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Meeting Program - Sundown Observatory
AUGUST	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Outing - Mt Jibbinbar Leader Liz Bourne
	25 <sup>th</sup>	Annual General Meeting Followed by Program of Past Outing Slides prepared by Tom Archer.



## Annual Meeting August 25<sup>th</sup> 1999

Subscriptions are now due for 1999/2000

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.

PO Box 154

Stanthorpe Q 4380

Name (Including title please ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Payment enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Please Note - Receipts not collected at the meeting will be enclosed with your newsletter.



## CLUB PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS - 1999/2000

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.

**OUTING / PROGRAM**

**LEADER / PRESENTER**
