



# The Granite Belt Naturalist



**Mail Address:** Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc, PO Box 154, Stanthorpe Qld. 4380

## 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



*The Pyramids, Girraween National Park*

**The Club acknowledges the support of the Gambling Community Benefit Fund in the production of this Newsletter**

- Meetings** 4th Wednesday of each month at QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe, at 7.30pm
- Outings:** The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each month (Friday outings as pre-arranged)
- Subs:** Single \$15.00, Family \$25.00 per annum, July to June

**Mail contributions:** The Newsletter Editor, PO Box 33, Severnlea Qld. 4352. **Email:** orana@halenet.com.au

## CLUB OFFICE BEARERS - 2003/2004

President	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents	Millie Marsden	46811593
	Col Hockings	46811978
Secretary	Liz Bourne	46836374
Treasurer	Dave Bright	46811034
Newsletter Editor	Margaret Carnell	46835268
Magazine Committee	Wendy & Neil Donges	46812913
Publicity Officer	Janet Hockings	46811978
Librarian	Trish McCosker	46835371
Management Committee:	President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer	

## 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



**Deadline for next Newsletter:**  
**9<sup>th</sup> March 2004**

## Coming Up

**Outing Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.** Big bunch of boulders beyond Billy Goat Hill led by Col and Janet Hockings

**Next Meeting Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February.** Program *Island Hopping* presented by Desley McDonagh

**Friday Outing 5<sup>th</sup> March.** Leaders Joan and Harry Stevenson

## Outing Report Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November '03

### Glen Lyon Dam – Texas Caves

Leaders: Peter Haselgrove & Col Hockings

A group of about a dozen met at Weeroona Park at 8:00 am and proceeded to Glen Lyon Dam where we met with Peter and Lynette Haselgrove for morning tea at the main picnic area. From the picnic area, the pale grey limestone hill containing the caves, is quite prominent towards the head of the dam.

After the obligatory “cuppa” we were introduced to Bob Johnson, with whom Peter had arranged a guided tour through his property, bringing us closer to the caves.

From the vehicles it was a mainly downhill walk of a couple of kilometres to the limestone hill where the caves are located. The two kayakers who set off from the picnic area at morning tea had waited so long they were beginning to think we were lost.

The remaining time before lunch was spent investigating various holes in an effort to find the entrances to caves which had been quite familiar over thirty years previously.

Finally the steeply sloped entrance to the main cave was discovered and most of the group slid, squeezed and scrambled down through the small entrance hole to explore the expansive chambers beneath.

More adventurous members set off with enthusiasm, crawling, sliding and wading through the mud, to explore the passageways.

For lunch we retreated to the shade of trees on the crest of the hill, enjoying views over the dam as we ate.

After lunch we returned to the entrance of Margot’s Shawl Cave. Three younger and more flexible members of the party descended the few metres through the vertical entrance tunnel which is little more than shoulder width. They rediscovered and photographed the Shawl or at least what remains of it after souvenir hunters and thirty years of intermittent inundation have done their job.

In several places fossils can be found in the exposed limestone. The majority of these are Crinoids which commonly appear as white “donuts” in the rock. These discs, up to about 20mm in diameter, are the individual plates which made up the stem of these “sea lillies”.

Also there is what appears to be a bi-valve of some type. These are up to about 70mm in length.

Generally the formations show little evidence of submersion apart from a coating of silt. It is a pity that many smaller formations were souvenired but it was anticipated that they would never be seen again.

**Bird List – Glen Lyon Dam, Texas Caves 23.11.03**

**Compiled by Andrew and Jenny Cameron**

Tree Martin	Blue – Faced Honeyeater
Black – Faced Cuckoo-shrike	Pallid Cuckoo
Hooded Robin	White – browed Woodswallow
White – breasted Woodswallow	Pelican
Maned (Wood) Duck	Superb Fairy Wren
Wedge – Tailed Eagle	Whistling Kite
Darter	Little Black Cormorant
Pied Cormorant	Yellow – billed Spoonbill
Red – rumped Parrot	Red – kneed Dotterel
Noisy Miner	Apostle bird
Australian Raven	Willie Wagtail
Brown Quail	Noisy Friarbird
Australian Magpie	Straw – necked Ibis
Red – winged Parrot	Jacky Winter

### **Vegetation – Outing to Glen Lyon Dam**

We passed through an open woodland of silver-leaved ironbark, tumble-down gum, white-cypress, brown box and rough-barked apple on the way to the limestone area. Growing on top of the limestone, above the water level were wilga, weeping pittosporum, native olive, red ash, kurrajongs and a scrub tree that we didn't know but was possible a species of *Heterodendron*. There was also a lot of Tree of Heaven, an introduced weed species.

Through the woodland were darling pea, and *hibbertia* (not flowering), numerous bluebells, *rostellularia* and a *goodenia* all flowering, and hophushes covered in fruit. Numerous other unknown weed species were growing below the high water mark.

*Peter Haselgrove*

### **Pre-Outing February 22<sup>nd</sup> '04**

#### **Bunch of Big Boulders beyond Billy Goat Hill**

**Leaders:** Col & Janet Hockings

Meet at Weeroona Park at 9:00am.

**High clearance Four Wheel Drive vehicles** are required to reach the start of the walk. It would be advisable to arrange a lift before hand if possible.

Depending upon the weather, it could be hot and as parts of the walk are over bare rock outcrops it is necessary to carry **PLENTY OF DRINKING WATER**.

Lunch will be carried and eaten at the boulders where we will spend time exploring. If the weather is cool the walk may be extended to include an unusual waterfall.

On the pre-outing we were “attacked” by a pair of Rufous Fantails when we inadvertently ventured too close to their nest. A few years ago we found a working wombat burrow amongst the boulders however there was no sign of it during our brief visit on the pre-outing.

Return to the vehicles will take us across the Racecourse Creek swamp, providing we don't have much more rain. If so, we will retrace our steps over Billy Goat Hill.

Scale of difficulty: 7 to 8.

Distance: approx 5km. May be extended to about 7km weather permitting.

The Program *Island Hopping*, which Desley will present at the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February will range from Fraser Island to Singapore, to the Isle of Bute in Scotland with a few others thrown in for good measure. Sounds like a delightful program.

### **Pre Outing 5<sup>th</sup> March Mt Banca**

Leaders: Joan and Harry Stevenson

The outing on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March will be to the lookout rocks on Mt Banca. We will meet at Weeroona Park at 9.00am and drive up the mountain. It is a short walk to the rocks and not too steep, although there is no track. We will carry morning tea and have it on the rocks.

There is another bald rock over the hill which is an interesting area. If the weather is not too hot we will explore it as well.

As this is the Friday before the Apple and Grape Harvest Festival weekend, it was considered best to have a short outing.

### **18<sup>th</sup> January Outing Report**

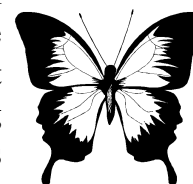
Ten of us gathered for the trip to the Third Crossing of the Severn River at Ballandean and were rewarded by the delightful experience of the river in flood. The crossing was well covered by more than a metre of water and there was even a good flow over the 2<sup>nd</sup> crossing as we returned home later in the afternoon.

After leaving the cars, we had a short stroll upstream to a large pool on the river which had quite a strong current moving through it. Those that went to the same area last January certainly noticed the difference. Even the stronger swimmers had to exert themselves just to make it to the other side. Much fun was had by some of the party liloing down the rapids while others just enjoyed being carried along in the current or sitting in the shallows. It was a nice sunny day – just perfect for swimming and sitting around chatting over lunch. A few callistemons and leptospermums were flowering close to the river and there was a good variety of butterflies also enjoying the post-deluge conditions.

*Liz Bourne*

### **Insects on Outing to Third Crossing**

Although we saw few birds, we did see lots of insects, among them a mountain grasshopper with beautiful colour under its wings. There were cicadas calling in the trees and a constant flutter of butterflies. There were dozens of yellow migrant butterflies as we drove to the Third Crossing and when we arrived at the swimming hole we saw grass blues of some sort on the lomandra, blue tigers and wanderers as well. There were also common migrants and grass yellows.



A spider had caught some march flies with yellow bottoms in its web, and we watched a wasp digging a hole in the ground. On the way out a pair of orchard butterflies were fluttering about and I had a closer encounter with a wasp than I liked. It blundered into the palm of my hand and stung me. As I didn't get a look at it, I can't say what sort it was. I'm assuming it was a wasp by the feel and reaction to the sting. At least it was another insect to add to the list.

*Margaret Carnell*

**Minutes of Meeting of Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc  
Held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

**Opening:** The meeting opened at 7.40pm and President Kris Carnell welcomed members.

**Attendance:** There were 21 members present and 9 apologies as per attendance book.

**Minutes of the previous meeting:** *The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October were received as a correct record of that meeting on the motion of Rob McCosker, seconded Patience James. Carried.*

Correspondence:

**Inwards:**

1. Stanthorpe Shire Council – nominations for Australia Day Awards
2. Land for Wildlife – *Community Nature News*
3. Toowoomba Field Naturalist Club – *Darling Downs Naturalist* - November
4. Toowoomba Bushwalkers – *Footprint* - November
5. International Parktours – Tour Catalogue 2004
6. Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists – *Murrumbidgee Naturalist* – November
7. Stanthorpe Shire Council – Invitation to Christmas function on 10 December
8. Chinchilla Field Naturalists – *Urimbirra* – November
9. Glenn & Jenny Crossman, Hugh Nielsen – membership renewals
10. Alec & Denise Harslett – membership renewal
11. CGU Insurance – Public Liability Policy renewal
12. Fassifern Field Naturalists – Magazine – November

This correspondence was accepted on the motion of Margaret Carnell, seconded John Allison Carried.

**Business Arising from Minutes:**

1. Invitation to Shire Council Christmas Function. Florence Smith and Shirley Alum will represent the club at this function.
2. Questionnaire re CGU Insurance. Kris Carnell will attend to this.
3. Citizen of the Year – no nominations were received.

Financial Statement for the period 23/10/2003 to 26/11/2003

Cash Book balance as at 22/10/2003 1120.04

**Receipts**

Subscriptions	105.00	
Room Rent Collection	7.00	112.00

Expenditure Nil

Balance as at 26/11/2003 \$1232.04

**Accounts for Payment**

QCWA Room Rent October /November \$30.00

This financial statement was received on the motion of Dave Bright, seconded Mario Pennisi. Carried.

Outing Reports

1. Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November to Boonoo Boonoo. This was led by Kris Carnell who reported there were lots of wildflowers with variation in the colour of the boronia. Everyone went to the falls.
2. Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November to Texas Caves. Col Hockings reported that 11 people left Stanthorpe and met Peter and Lynette Haselgrove who had arranged for Bob Johnson to guide everyone through the paddocks. They walked about 3kms. Most people went into the main cave and 3 went to Margot's Shawl. Everyone stopped for ice-cream at the kiosk. Peter Haselgrove will provide a vegetation report.
3. Break-up 7<sup>th</sup> December. This will be held at Tully Park from 3.00pm.
4. January 18<sup>th</sup> to Third Crossing. We will meet at 9.00am at Ballandean School. Look in the Border Post the week before for more details.
5. Friday February 6<sup>th</sup> 2004. Desley McDonagh will lead this bird watching outing to Brian McDonagh's property at Lyra. Nats will meet at Weeroona Park at 11.00am and travel to Lyra. The walk will be up the creek or the road. Bring binoculars.

Specimens

1. Kris Carnell had a flowering specimen of *Eucalyptus scoparia* grown from seed collect at Mt Ferguson on a Nats outing a few years ago.
2. Kris also had a photo of *Pterostylus woolsii* which grows at *Orana* at Severnlea.
3. Bird Watching list from Tenterfield provided by Margaret Tricker on the Boonoo Boonoo outing.
4. Photo of King Parrot eggs from Jean Harslett. The birds nested on the ground close to the garden where there are currawongs and bearded dragons. The male protected the female when it rained. There were empty shells the next morning. Years ago Jean saw a nest on the ground in the grazing country and feels sure the eggs cooked on that occasion. The birds were feeding on the seeds of the exotic pine.
5. Col Hockings had a specimen of limestone from the Texas Caves which had fossils of crinoids in them.
6. Dave Bright had photos of the Mt Norman outing with the water running off the rocks.
7. Rob McCosker reported that he was working on the tanks at Girraween Lodge on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> when he was enveloped in fog. The fog was actually cypress pollen. Kris reported seeing the same thing at Severnlea early the same morning.

General Business

The president tabled details of the Australian Naturalist Network outing in Western Australia in 2004.

The meeting closed at 8:17pm and was followed by a program of slides of Mt Moffatt presented by Col Hockings.