



# 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](mailto: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	

**Deadline for next Newsletter: Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April**

## 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



## Coming Up

**Outing Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March:** Crooked Creek led by Terry and Margaret Tricker

**Next Meeting Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March :** Wildflowers of Western Australia by Ian Milinovich

**Friday Outing April 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Leader Millie Marsden.

### Outing Report Friday February 6<sup>th</sup> Bird Outing to Lyra

On Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, a small group of birdos enjoyed a bird watching outing at Brian McDonagh's property at Doctor's Creek, Lyra. We lunched by the Severn Scenes weir on Bald Rock Creek just inside the property in the shade. A sacred kingfisher was surveying the scene from the power line and a yellow tufted honeyeater has taken up residence in numbers in the area over recent years.

We walked up the road towards the house, taking the side road up to Michael Day's orchard and back. It was a hot day, but the road is well shaded. We walked along the Doctor's Creek boundary of the property then crossed over to the Bald Creek area. There were many small birds high in the trees and I feel some were deliberately hiding so we couldn't identify them.

Both Doctor's Creek and Bald Rock Creek were running well which was very good to see. I'm sure those who attended this outing had an enjoyable time. We produced a good bird list.

*Desley McDonagh*

Black faced cuckoo shrike	Double bar finch	Superb blue wren
Willy wagtail	Sacred kingfisher	Peaceful dove
Yellow tufted honeyeater	Magpie	Red browed finch
Eastern yellow robin	Laughing kookaburra	Grey fantail
White throated treecreeper	Brown gerygone	Rufous whistler
Yellow faced honeyeater	Silvereye	Yellow tailed black cockatoo
Dusky wood swallow		

### Outing March 21 to Crooked Creek—Leaders Terry and Margaret Tricker

The outing on March 21 is to Crooked Creek Rest Area on the Bruxner Highway. Meeting place will be in Tenterfield at the "weather rock" picnic area on northern side of town at 9.00 Qld time. We propose to drive to Basket Swamp for morning tea and a look round before continuing on Lindrook Road to Sandy Hills. This road was OK for 2WD cars with reasonable clearance, with care – a few rocks exposed in places due to the heavy rains. Then along the Bruxner to the Crooked Creek rest area in the Girard State Forest. The Creek has permanent water holes and there is usually a variety of

birdlife. On pre-outing trip in January very few flowers. We also saw Boonoo Boonoo State Forest is being intensively felled. We will have lunch at the Crooked Creek picnic area that has toilet, wood barbecues and a couple of tables. There is an easy 2km walk to the Endurance Riders camp ground and return to picnic area, or a longer walk on the forest tracks for the more energetic. It is 100km round trip from Tenterfield. Anyone coming from Stanthorpe on the Mt Lindsay can meet us at the Boonoo Boonoo State Forest/ Basket Swamp N.P. turnoff at 9.30.

We will be in Tassie until the week before the trip, for further info please contact Kris Carnell

### Outing to Mt Banca Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March

Despite the cyclone approaching six members assembled for the outing. From a distance, the mountain of 900 metres – 19 less than Mt Marley – looks formidable, but access was made at a higher level. The approach to “Lookout Rocks” was of a reasonable grade by finding the most suitable way through timber and rocks.

Limited time was spent at the lookout as the wind was extremely strong but the view of the town and surrounding hills was perfect. With smoko due we walked over the top to the western side where there was no wind. From there we stood at the top of a large bare rock face to see the Passchendaele aerial and hills and country for 180°. While there a wedge tailed eagle circled above.

There weren't many wild flowers in bloom but we saw *Correa*, *Isotoma*, *Wahlenbergia*, *Senecio* and *Brachycombe*.

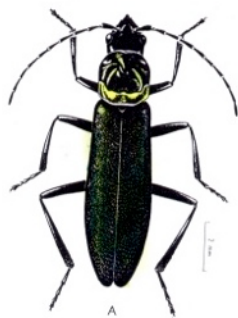
Light mist accompanied us at times but shortly after our return the heavier rain moved in for the rest of the day.

The name Banca came from a Malay Mining Co. (reference from P34 of *They Came to a Plateau*.)

*Joan Stevenson*

### Well Spotted

Over the past few weeks there has been a Spotted Harrier frequenting the area between our house in Back Creek Road and the Severnlea School. Kris has seen it a number of times sweeping low over the grassland and a couple of days ago on my way to work, I came across it in the middle of Beverley Road, eating a rabbit. A willy wagtail was harassing it, but it seemed unconcerned. It flew to a fence post as I approached and perched there waiting for me to pass. I stopped and was able to see its long yellow legs quite clearly. Its head was grey overlaid with a reddish brown. When I passed (carefully straddling the rabbit), it flew to the bank of a dam nearby, and I was able to see its beautiful spots and dark tips to its wings. I'm sure it returned to its meal shortly after I passed.



*Margaret Carnell.*

### Soldier Beetles ( *Chauliognathus pulchellus* )

Kris had some specimens of Soldier beetles at the last meeting which had been flying in their thousands through the tomato patch. He had noticed that when

they landed on the ground they appeared to be dying. There were so many of them that they were about 20mm apart on the ground under the tomatoes. The only explanation we could think of was that they were starving. Perhaps that is nature's way of preventing them from breeding in plague proportions.

Thanks to Jean for the following information:

Both adults and larvae are free-living and carnivorous, preying upon soft-bodied insects; adults are active and common on flowers. *Chauliognathus pulchellus* MacL. Is often very abundant in the mountains of N.S.W. in summer. It is about 12 mm long, blue-black in colour, with the base of the pronotum and apex of the abdomen bright orange. A closely related species, with abbreviated elytra and reduced wings, is found on Lord Howe Island.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc  
held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2004**

**Opening:** The meeting opened at 7.40pm with Kris Carnell welcoming members.

**Attendance:** There were 17 present at the meeting and 7 apologies as per the attendance book.

**Minutes of the previous meeting:** The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26 November 2003 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Millie Marsden, seconded by Patience James. Carried.

**Correspondence:**

**Inwards:**

1. Murrumbidgee Field Nats Club – *Murrumbidgee Naturalist* – Dec 03; Feb 04
2. Toowoomba Bushwalkers' Club – *Footprint* – Jan 04
3. Fassifern Field Naturalists – Newsletter – Jan 04; March 04
4. Chinchilla Field Nats – *Urimbirra* - Jan 04; Feb 04
5. Qld Naturalists Club – *QNC News* – Jan/Feb 04
6. Samson Total Technology – invoice - \$1.68
7. Qld Naturalists Club – *Queensland Naturalist* – Dec 03
8. CGU Insurance – public liability insurance premium of \$388.17
9. Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club – *Darling Downs Naturalist* – Jan 04
10. Blue Care – request for donation
11. Australia Post – post box rental renewal - \$55
12. Stanthorpe Historical Society – invitation to the official opening of the Jean Harslett Research Centre at the Museum on 7 March at 10am.
13. Stanthorpe Shire Council – Clean Up Australia Day – 14 March

This correspondence was accepted on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Jean Harslett. Carried.

**Business Arising from the Minutes:**

1. Clean Up Australia Day

This annual clean up day, to be conducted nationally on 7 March, has been delayed for a week in Stanthorpe so as not to clash with the Apple and Grape Festival. After some discussion, it was agreed to register with the Council and clean up around the Texas Road Refuse Transfer Station where the Club did some landscaping some years ago. Start time will be 7am. Liz will advertise this via the members on the email list.

2. Opening of the Jean Harslett Research Centre

There will be a breakfast offered at 7am and the official opening will be at 10am. Members were encouraged to attend.

**Financial Statement for the period from 26/11/03 to 25/02/04:**

Cash book balance as at 26/11/03           1232.04

Receipts:

Subscriptions                               170.00

Expenditure:

Room rent                                    30.00

Photocopier                                 86.83

Public liability insurance               388.17

Govt. tax                                     1.60

506.60

Cash book balance as at 25/2/04 was \$795.44 which agrees with the bank balance as at 19/2/04.

**Accounts for payment**

Kris Carnell – stamps for newsletter	100.00
Margaret Carnell – p/copying newsletter	25.00
Australia Post – PO box rental	55.00
QCWA – room rent for Feb/March	30.00

This financial report was received on the motion of Dave Bright, seconded by Peter Andrewartha. Carried

**Outing Reports:**

1. Lyra Friday outing – 6 February

Desley reported that the weather was warm but the area was generally well shaded so quite pleasant. There were only a few birds and flowers seen.

2. 3<sup>rd</sup> Crossing of the Severn River – 18 January

This was reported in the latest newsletter.

3. Girraween

This proposed outing to Goat Hill being led by Col Hockings on 22 February was cancelled due to the excessive heat. It will be rescheduled later this year, if possible.

Pre-Outing Reports

1. Mt Banca – 5 March

Harry and Joan Stevenson will lead this short walk with a 9am start.

2. Crooked Creek Rest Area – 21 March

This outing will be led by Terry and Margaret Tricker. The meeting place will be the weather rock in the park on the northern approach to Tenterfield at 9am. The outing will first go to the Basket Swamp Rest Area in Boonoo Boonoo State Forest so those that want to come direct from Stanthorpe down the Mt Lindsay Highway should meet at the turn-off at 9.30am.

**Specimens:**

1. Dave Bright had some oddly shaped Roma tomatoes that would not ripen and a potatoe plant with tomato like fruit.

2. Liz Bourne distributed brochures about the Stanthorpe wildflower project being promoted by the World Wildlife Fund. She said there would be a display about the district's wildflowers in the Stanthorpe Plaza in May and asked members whether they could contribute to a slide program.

3. Kris Carnell had a “sundowner” bug. Jean said that these soldier beetles (*Chauliognathus pulchellus*) often hung in their thousands off gum trees. These beetles are about 12mm long, blue-black in colour. Both the adults and larvae are free living and carnivorous, preying upon soft-bodied insects.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm and was followed by a slide programme by Desley McDonagh of islands.