

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 – 2004/2005

President	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents	Mario Pennisi	46813750
	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

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



Librarian Trish McCosker 46835371
Management Committee: President, Vice-Presidents,
Secretary, Treasurer

***Deadline for next Newsletter:
6th March 2006***

Coming Up

Outing Sunday 19th February: Tenterfield Area led by Kris and Margaret Carnell

Next Meeting: Wednesday 22nd February. Program by Glenys Mathison

Albert's Lyrebird Talk: Thursday 23rd February

Outing Report – Lake Dyer, Laidley 4/5/6 November 2005 Leaders Errol & Annette Walker. Attendance 13

Storms and general rain was forecast for the period of the outing but, other than about 85mm rain with a spectacular sound and light show in the early hours of Sunday morning, we were not restricted in our planned activities at all.

Lake Dyer was in a relatively healthy state after considerable rain in the weeks preceding the outing.

Most attendees arrived on Friday, which gave us time to explore the town and to enjoy the street markets. Friday evening was mild, which made an outdoor chat and slide show an enjoyable activity.

The big day was Saturday when we drove in convoy south, up the Laidley valley towards the mountains around Cunninghams Gap. Features of the drive included: Shutlz's Lookout with views across the valley to the mountains, Thornton campground, Mulgowie village with old pub, extra green valley scenery, the head of the valley near the base of Mt Castle and the Mistake Mountains, an inspection of the Lake Dyer water intake pipe, which collects flood waters and pipes it into the lake some 3.6km downstream. This facility serves to keep Laidley Creek flowing during dry times, while keeping the town flood free.

Before lunch we climbed (by car) to the top of the Little Liverpool Range for magnificent views of the scenic rim while David Wilson checked out the location of the rail tunnel through the Little Liverpool Range east of the town.



The weather by now was hot and humid, so a few hours siesta was in order until 4pm when David led us to the eastern entrance of the rail tunnel. To the delight of the photographers a train appeared within minutes of our arrival and within another couple of minutes another train came out of the tunnel in the opposite direction. As a matter of interest, this tunnel was one of the first two rail tunnels built in Queensland.

The tunnel viewing experience was not without incident when a mountain biker came bouncing and skidding down the adjacent steep hillside, startling not only us, but the bike rider who wasn't expecting a group of people on his trail.

After close encounters with trains and a mountain bike, we spent some quiet moments at the Narda lagoon on the southern edge of Laidley watching the birdlife and marvelling at the construction of a huge swing bridge.

Narelle Crawford dutifully recorded bird observations for the weekend and the list is included. Thanks Narelle!

A heavy storm was brewing in the southwest as we headed back to camp where another slide programme was enjoyed in the great outdoors. Errol provided a programme on aerial photos of the Cunningham's Gap area as well as some Granite Belt favourites. David delved into his photographic archives, giving us pictures of the construction of Wivenhoe Dam, a balloon flight over Lockyer Valley and some historical steam train studies around Grandchester. An interesting and enjoyable programme.

1.30am Sunday morning saw most of us checking our guy ropes etc as a severe electrical storm raged for about 4 hours. Someone even got out of his tent and sat in his car during the worst of the lightning.

Sunday morning dawned fine and most tents were packed up dry by 10.00am, when we visited Das Neumann Haus in the centre of Laidley. This pink 3 storey building was constructed in 1893 by the Neumann family and was recently donated to the Laidley Council. A lot of the original furniture has been returned to the building, which now serves as a district museum. Volunteer ladies gave us an interesting talk on the house and Laidley in general.

We all then sat down to Devonshire Tea at the Das Neumann Haus' *Annies Café* prior to driving home ahead of a threatening storm.

Thank you to all who attended, sharing an area we have enjoyed many times over the years.

Errol and Annette Walker

Birds at Lake Dyer - November 2005

Magpie goose	Great crested grebe	White-bellied sea-eagle
Hardhead	Pacific duck	Australasian grebe
Whistling kite	Rainbow lorikeet	Scaly-breasted lorikeet
Black-faced cuckoo shrike	Golden-headed cisticola	Superb fairy wren
Tawny grassbird	Crested pigeon	Mudlark
Noisy miner	Royal spoonbill	Little black cormorant
Little pied cormorant	Eurasian coot	Darter
Galah	Little corella	Kookaburra
Fairy martin	Pale-headed rosella	Black swan
Maned duck	Welcome swallow	Brown quail
Masked lapwing	Indian mynah	White-faced heron
Black-shouldered kite	Pelican	Purple swamphen
White ibis	Pied butcherbird	Nankeen kestrel
Grey teal		

Report for the November Outing to Mt Cordeaux

The September outing to Cunningham's Gap was a chance for some members to revisit a familiar area, and for newer members to experience one of the best civilised walks in the district. Around a dozen assembled at Jackie Howe Park in Warwick, with more joining our party at Cunningham's Gap.



The day started out fine and warm with storms predicted for later. After the customary cuppa at the picnic ground, we drove to the Gap car park to start the walk. The short walk to the lookout has been recently realigned to take it away from an area of potential landslides. The work has been so well done, that it was hard to find the old track. From the lookout, we plunged into the rainforest for the steady walk to the top. A highlight along here was a large python coiled up on a branch beside the track. It was presumed dead when maggots were seen in its open mouth. It was suggested that he was

the victim of a meal that didn't agree with him. Later, one member reported seeing the snake move when they approached for a closer look! (Hmm. Request that when I am ever declared departed from this world, I don't wake with a mouth full of maggots!!)

When our party eventually emerged onto the grassy flanks of the Mt Cordeaux summit, the expected storms were building on several fronts. An inspection was made of the remains of the old "gold" mine that for safety reasons has now been largely fenced off. From there a short walk was made to the natural lookout platform earned lunch. We were canvas as the developing athletics.



below the summit for a well treated to an ever changing storms played their atmospheric

After lunch, we extended northern side of Mt views back to the heat, the possibility of a from our leader, but there walk to Bare Rock and admiring the view we retraced our steps back to the waiting cars.

our walk to the saddle on the Cordeaux for some spectacular summit. Whether it was the storm or a lack of enthusiasm were no takers for extending the Morgan's Lookout. After

Before being swallowed once more by the rainforest, we admired a most impressive storm developing just to our south behind Mt Mitchell. It made an awesome sight with its black cloud filling our view, and lightning arcing to the ground. Thankfully, we remained in clear air for the remainder of our walk. The day was concluded back at the picnic ground for a cuppa and a chance to review the day's achievement.

A passing Warwick bound traveller who stopped near us for a break informed us that he had driven through the storm and had experienced some quite large hail. A shower of rain on a hot day would not have been all that unpleasant, but being sconed by multiple hail stones would not be the way to remember what was a pleasant outing.

David Wilson

Albert's Lyrebird Talk – 23 February

Darren Phillips and Bruce Lawrie from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service will be presenting a powerpoint and audio presentation on Albert's lyrebird at 7.30 pm on Thursday 23rd February at the CWA Meeting Room in Victoria Street, Stanthorpe. All members with an interest in this species are invited to come along. This presentation follows on from a series of talks run in South East Queensland in 2005 by extension officer, Chris Evenson.

Records of sightings of this lyrebird from Killarney and Goomburra, for example, could be valuable in increasing the current knowledge on the species, which will be directed towards its conservation and management. QPWS are especially interested in talking to community groups and forming partnerships aimed at collecting good quality data. As the Stanthorpe district itself is actually in the range of the Superb lyrebird, there will be a special session on it as well.

Both the Albert's and Superb lyrebird are listed as rare species and all information collected is entered onto the Wildnet database. The Albert's Lyrebird monitoring kits are available in PDF form on the Environmental Protection Agency's website: www.epa.qld.gov.au

If you are unable to make it along to this meeting, but would like to make contact with Bruce Lawrie with information on any sightings, he can be contacted at the Toowoomba office of the QPWS on 4699 4366 or bruce.lawrie@epa.qld.gov.au

Pre-Outing Report Billyrimba Falls and 4 Bull Hut on 19th February 2006

Leaders: Kris & Margaret Carnell

The Tenterfield Field Naturalists will be joining us on 19th February, so we will meet at Weeroona Park at 8.00am (Queensland time) and travel to Tenterfield and meet with them at Rotary Park (the weather rock) at 9.00am. 4WD vehicles will be needed for this outing.



We will travel along Spirabo Forest Way for about 24 kilometres and then turn left into Falls Fire Trail and travel for another 4 kilometres to the top of the falls, where we will have morning tea. The track to the falls is steep in parts and quite rough, but not excessively rocky, with a number of speed bumps (for drainage). There are hundreds of tree ferns all through the forest where trees have been logged and let in the light. At one stage the

road passes beside a beautiful swamp where there is a great diversity of vegetation. It would be well worth a look in Spring. Once at the end of the track, it is a short scramble to the top of the falls which drop a considerable distance into the valley below. Above the falls are a number of cascades and water holes that are suitable for swimming. There were two different species hibernia in bloom when we did the pre-outing and a couple of trigger plants.

After exploring the area of the falls we will travel back to Spirabo Forest Way and continue to the turnoff to 4 Bull Fire Trail. We have permission to visit 4 Bull Hut where we will have lunch. The original hut was built by the McClifty family and housed a family of seven. The remains of it are still there. The old cattle yards are a few metres from the hut. The post and rail fences are still there and parts of them are covered in orange algae. One thing of note is a hollow log with a snig chain attached, which appears to have been a dog kennel. We wondered how big the dog was! There were *Spiranthes sinensis* growing in the grass in front of the hut as well as tiny pink pea flowers.



After we have explored the environs of the hut and had lunch (not necessarily in that order), we hope to drive a short distance and visit a waterfall on 4 Bull Creek. There are a number of cascades on the creek and pools to swim in, or at least cool off. The vegetation in the creek has quite a few rainforest species.

Park Ranger, Michael very generously guided us on the pre-outing and has asked us to supply him with a list of plants and birds seen at each area.

For further information contact Kris or Margaret on 46835268.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc
held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on Wednesday 23rd November, 2005**

Opening: The meeting opened at 7.39pm, with Kris welcoming members and visitors, Fred and Betty McKinlay (friends of Millie Marsden)

Apologies: Rob McCosker was again unable to attend the meeting as he had a second eye operation the day before.

Attendance: There were 23 present at the meeting and 5 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26th October were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Rod Hutchins, seconded by Margaret Carnell. Carried.

Business Arising from Minutes:

1. Grant for Data Projector

The Committee is still working on the details for a submission to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for funding to purchase a data projector. This will need to be submitted by 31 December.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

1. Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club – *Darling Downs Naturalist* – Nov 05
2. Chinchilla Field Nats. – *Urimbirra* – Nov. 05
3. Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Club – *Murrumbidgee Naturalist* – Nov 05
4. Stanthorpe Shire Council – nominations for Australia Day awards
5. Samson Total Technology – statement for \$38.05; invoice for \$25.54
6. Stanthorpe Shire Council – invitation to Christmas function on 7th December
7. International Park Tours – tour program for 2006
8. Taita Publications – invoice for wildflower books

This correspondence was accepted on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Col Hockings. Carried.

Business Arising from the Correspondence:

1. Invitation to attend the Stanthorpe Shire Council's Christmas Party

It was agreed that John and Sue Allison would attend the Council's Christmas party on behalf of the club.

Financial Statement for the period from 27/10/05 to 23/11/05:

Cash book balance as at 27/10/05 1051.67

Receipts:

Memberships	85.00	
Sale of wildflower books	<u>75.00</u>	
		160.00

Expenditure:

Postage of newsletter	100.00	
Photocopier - maintenance	37.95	
		137.95

Cash book balance as at 23/11/05 1073.72

Less outstanding cash receipts 25.00

No bank statement received before the meeting.

Accounts for payment:

Samson Total Technology	25.54
QCWA – room rent (Oct/Nov)	30.00
Taita Publishers – wildflower books	30.00
Hire of data projector	10.00

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

Outing Reports:

1. Friday 4 November outing to Bald Rock National Park

This was reported on in the November newsletter.

2. Outing to Mt Cordeaux – 20 November

19 people attended this walk. Highlight of the trip was seeing a “dead” snake on the way up the mountain that was miraculously alive on the way down! There was good weather all day but a storm developed over Boonah on the return trip.

3. Camping trip to Lake Dyer near Laidley on 4 – 6 November

13 people went on this camping trip and saw lots of interesting places in and around Laidley, thanks to the efforts of Errol and Annette in arranging this excursion.

4. Wildflower Walk

Liz mentioned that the last Wildflower Walk, held at Girraween National Park on Sunday 13 November, attracted over 60 people and created a lot of interest.

Pre-outing reports:

The next Friday outing will not be held until 3 March. Details will be in the February newsletter.

The February 19th outing will be a joint one with the Tenterfield Naturalists Club and will be visiting Mt Spirabo. Details in the February newsletter. The programme at the meeting on 22 February will be given by Glenys Mathison and will be about Fraser Island.

Christmas Break-up at Hockings:

Kris reminded members of the club’s Christmas break-up that was being hosted by the Hockings on their property “Pinaster” on Sunday 11 December.

Specimens:

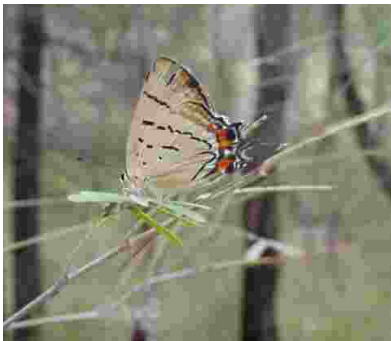
1. Peter Andrewartha had photos from the outings to Laidley and Mt Cordeaux
2. Rene Thompson had the jaw bones of an animal that she thought could have been a bandicoot. Liz thought it looked more like that of a wallaby.
3. Desley said she had had a Christmas card from Fred Simpson who gave his regards to all in the club
4. Margaret Carnell had a selection of postcards from Alaska
5. Col Hockings reported seeing the body of a crimson rosella in front of a satin bower bird’s bower where the male was plucking out its feathers for decoration. He wondered if it had dragged it there for this purpose.

General Business:

1. John Allison said that there was a bird watching trip to Basket Swamp in the Boonoo Boonoo State Forest this coming weekend with members of the Tenterfield Field Naturalists Club and invited any interested club members along

The meeting closed at 8.19pm and was followed by a very interesting presentation on the ground orchids of the Granite belt by Ian Milinovich.

Imperial Blue Butterflies



At Christmas I was walking along the track beside our creek at Severnlea, when I saw a couple of butterflies fluttering around a small wattle tree (*Acacia latisepala*), then I noticed there were dozens and dozens of ants going up and down the tree. Closer inspection revealed that they were attending larvae and pupae. I hurried back to my trusty sheet of Australian butterflies and identified them as Imperial Blue butterflies. I kept a watch every day as they metamorphosed. We found several more trees where they were breeding along the creek, and one day I saw a few on a black wattle (*A. nerifolia*) beside the track up the mountain. Then

we found a tree of a third species very heavily infested. I do not know the species of this acacia. It has ferny leaves and gets large cream flowers and mostly grows very close to the creek. The butterflies, which I think are males, appear to be waiting for the females to emerge so they can mate with them.

Late this afternoon (6th February) we checked the ferny leafed acacia and found eleven butterflies resting on the tree, which is almost denuded of leaves. There are still a number of pupae yet to emerge.

Margaret Carnell