



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



Deadline for next Newsletter:
8th May 2006

Coming Up

Special Outing Thursday 20th April: Stargazing arranged by Michael Mueller

Outing Sunday April 23rd: Kitchen Caves led by Kris Carnell & Col Hockings

Next Meeting Wednesday 26th April: First Aid with Gail Smail

Camp Out 29th April - 1st May: Toonumba National Park led by Col & Janet Hockings & Mario Pennisi

Friday Outing May 12th: Led by Liz Bourne

Outing Report – *Orana* – 19th March

Leaders: Kris & Margaret Carnell

The day dawned cool and partly overcast – a good day for walking. Col led the Nats from town to our place at Severnlea and a small group set out along the fire trail, across the creek to the slab of rock where we were to have morning tea. We saw magpies, a grey shrike thrush and a grey fantail on the way to the creek, but no fairy wrens as we had hoped. Col also heard a gerigone calling, and we heard crimson rosellas several times during the day. Rod and Dell opted to bird watch along the creek instead of climbing to the rock. They reported later that they saw a black snake. The creek at the crossing is full of lomandra and bracken fern, with some delicate maidenhair fern peeping through.

On the way to the rock slab we saw a couple of *Scaveola ramosissima* (fan flower) blooms and a few rather wilted specimens of *Keraudrenia hillii*. Kris and I gathered some seedpods as we hope to raise some plants. They are progressing nicely in their paper bag.



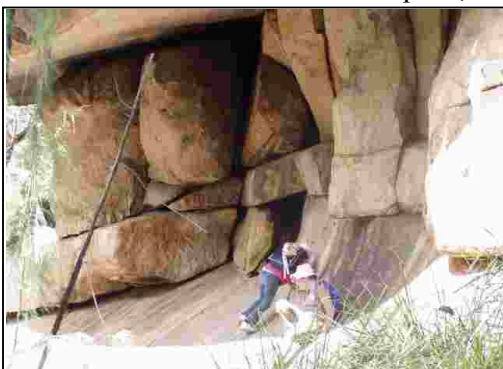
As we left the rock slab, we made a short diversion to avoid a paper wasp nest and said a few “ouches” about the *Melichris urceolatus* (urn heath) and Louize found a large case moth on the ground. Near the edge of the track, several Golden Orb Weaver spiders had built their webs, and sat there fatly waiting for unsuspecting insects to blunder into them. Along the track we encountered several bull ant nests and admired the berries on the *Maytenus silvestris* and some *Wahlenbergia* (Australian bluebell) flowers. Kris stopped to look at a small yellow daisy, which he saw on the pre-outing and had not seen before. After looking at its rosette of leaves and seeds, we came to the conclusion it was a type of *Bidens* (cobbler’s peg). We could well do without another variety as we have millions of two other varieties already. They have spread considerably through the bush since the last bush fire.

After walking some distance along the fire trail around the back of the mountain, we went bush and headed upwards to the top of the mountain with plenty of pauses for breath. The two little girls managed very well considering the vegetation was above head height a lot of the time. At one spot, we could see Bald Rock, and Mt Dillon. A wedge-tailed eagle soared to the south of us and Col disturbed a pair of Tawny Frogmouths. There were a few rather dry specimens of *Pelargonium australe* blooming here and some very green fig trees.

We came over the top onto the large rock and looked across the farmland below to the towers at Dalveen, Passchendaele and Thorndale. Most of us paused to remove some prickles from our clothing, ready to collect another lot as we ventured further. The houses along College Road in Stanthorpe are spreading further and further out. At one time there was just a line of them, and now there are blocks of them.

It was quite hot in the sun, so we headed off through the bush towards the saddle where we intended to have lunch. Erin and Caitlin found a small cave, big enough for five or six people to stand in. On reaching the saddle between the peaks, we all sat down to eat. Erin found a stick insect and there were a number of spiny spiders in their beautifully constructed webs. A treecreeper, several thornbills and pardalotes called and flitted in the trees overhead as we had lunch.

As we walked across the second peak, a second cave was discovered. This one had a much lower roof, so that we had to stoop to enter. Col found a biro inside, so we knew we were not the first people to enter, and when Erin went in she found a little wooden box containing a notebook which was a type of diary written by some neighbourhood teenagers a few years ago. While some people were exploring the cave, someone stumbled across some bones, including a skull and lower jawbone. Col thought it was probably a Koala which had perished in the fire in 2002. Consultation of *Tracks, Scats and Other Traces* confirmed this.



From the top of this peak views down Sundown Valley spread before us. We could see Mt Stirling and what we think were Mt Jibbinbar and Mt Ferguson. Wilson's Peak was seen faintly through the haze. Some of the group walked across to a rocky outcrop while the rest of us pulled out prickles, before we headed downhill on the way home.

On our way down Oak Gully where Casuarinas grow, we stopped to admire a rock overhang with some interesting rocks underneath. The children used the slope as a rather rough slippery slide. Eventually we reached the track across the mountain and came down the middle track to the creek, where some of us cooled our feet until two large, hungry-looking leeches were seen. There was a large tadpole and a small yabbie in the rock pool, and as we left the creek we saw a tiny frog – probably Leseur's frog.

By the time we arrived back at the house we were all rather hot, so we had a cool drink before everyone headed for home. Kris and I really enjoyed showing the Nats "Our Back Paddock".



Bird List: magpie, grey shrike thrush, grey fantail, gerigone (call), crimson rosella (call), wedge-tailed eagle, tawny frogmouth, white throated treecreeper, yellow rumped thornbill, striated pardalote, striated thornbill.

Other critters: dragon, meat ants, bulldog ants, paper wasp, case moth, golden orb spider, stick insect, spiny spider, looper (caterpillar), frog (probably Leseur's frog), tadpole, leech, yabbie, water beetles.

Plants in Flower:

Scaevola ramosissima (fan flower)	Keraudrinia hillii	Melichris urceolatus (Urn heath)
Helichrysum semipapposum	Maytenus silvestris (berries)	Walhenbergia sp. (Aust. Bluebell)
Bidens (Cobbler's peg) 3 speciess	Cassinia quinquefaria (Rosemary Teatree, Dead Finish)	Trachymene incisa (wild carrot)
Zinnia	Pelagonium australe	Senecio sp
Isotoma axillaris	Eustraphus latifolius (wombat berry)	Murdannia graminea
Glycine sp	Plectranthus suaveolens	Targetes minuta (Stinking Roger)



**Special Pre-Outing Report - Stargazing with Michael Mueller
Thursday 20th April.**

Although this outing is only a few days before our regular Sunday outing, we are very pleased that Michael has offered to let us share his telescope to look at the rings of Saturn, and Jupiter rising over Mt Marlay. He will also share some information on Saturn and its rings and other interesting aspects of the northern night sky.

We will meet at Michael and Wendy's place at 5/44 Connor Street at 7.00pm. Parking is available on the street and also in the vacant block between the Stanthorpe Primary School and the block of units where Michael lives. We will be parked in the vacant block in the Pajero at 6.45pm to show people where to go.

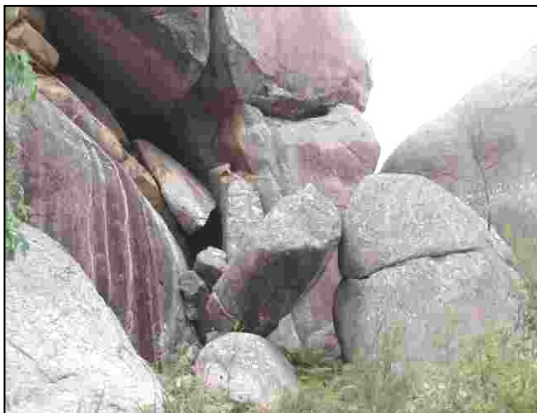
Bring a camping chair, a mug for coffee or tea and be prepared for the weather to be cold. The outing is dependant on the sky being clear. For more information phone Michael on 46811421 or Kris on 46835268.

Pre Outing Report – Kitchen Caves on Sunday 23rd April 2006

Leaders: Kris Carnell and Col Hockings

We will meet at Weeroona Park at 9.00am and travel to the picnic area at Girraween National Park to meet other members at approximately 9.30am. We will travel further along the road to the "Kangaroo Paddock" where we will park our cars and have morning tea.

We will walk across the open paddock to the base of the gully just to the east of the bald Pyramid. There is some reasonably dense undergrowth for a short distance until you get onto the rock slab. We will then make our way up to the saddle, which is behind the pyramid, then we will turn N.E. and make our way along the northern side of the ridge. All the while we will be gradually gaining height until we reach the Kitchen Caves. It took Col and I about an hour and a half to reach the caves.



The caves are actually a heap of huge boulders leaning up against and on top of each other and there is plenty to explore in the area. Slip Rock is about another 500 metres to the east and anyone who feels energetic can walk over to there. It is planned to have lunch at the rock and we should carry afternoon tea in case we don't get back to the cars in time. Be sure to carry water as there is none available. Even though the walk up to the saddle is steep and rough in parts, most Nats should be able to cope. The walk would be rated at about a 7 on the scale of difficulty.

CAMPOUT April 29th - May 1st. TOONUMBAR NATIONAL PARK

Toonumbar National Park is on the Richmond Range in the far north-east of N.S.W.

The Murray Scrub and the Dome Mountain Forest contain some significant areas of subtropical and temperate rainforest and form part of the World Heritage Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia. There are drier and cooler parts in the park and this mosaic of habitats has resulted in an incredible diversity of plant life, from eucalypt woodlands and tall flooded gum-dominated forests, to lush forests of bangalow palms.

Iron Pot Creek camping ground

The campground is on the southern part of the park off Toonumbar Forest Drive. The campground, set among flooded gums beside Iron Pot creek, has sites suitable for caravans; camper trailers or tent camping in cleared pockets, complete with picnic tables. Pit/composting toilets, tank water, picnic tables and a shelter shed with an open fireplace are provided. There was firewood available when we visited in January but it may be advisable to bring a gas stove and your own drinking water. Fees are \$3.00 per adult per night, \$2.00 per child per night. It could be cool down in the valley so bring your warm clothing.

Directions: Map for reference-NRMA Far North Coast NSW Touring Map

Route 1 Travel along the Summerland Way through Woodenbong towards Kyogle. Continue a further 19km to Cox's Road (**600m past Kurrajong Creek - easy to miss - Look for Nats sign**). (Set Odo. reading to Zero). Sharp right turn up a hill (gravel track).

5km, grid and second National Park sign is visible.

11km off Summerland Way. Continue along rainforest road, do not turn left down Forest Rd but continue straight ahead.

At 13km, Murray Scrub Lookout on right (easy to miss) is worth a look.

21km and at the bottom of a downhill slope is a sharp right turn to Iron Pot Creek camp ground. Travel a further 6km on gravel to Iron Pot Creek camping area.

This is the way we went in January. It is a very picturesque drive, winding through lush rainforest but would NOT be advisable after rain as the road is undulating red soil and narrow in sections.

A total of 224km from Stanthorpe, allow at least 3 hours travelling as the highway after Liston is winding and slow.

Route 2 Leave the Summerland Way at Kyogle and travel west via Afterlee and the Toonumbar Forest Drive. The park is approx. 35km west of Kyogle. This route includes unpaved roads, generally suitable for 2WD cars, though roads may become impassable in wet weather. This is the more popular access via Afterlee and is the more maintained and popular route to the National Park.

Activities- We assume most people will be arriving mid morning to lunch, Saturday, so we will spend the afternoon around the camping ground. There is a short walking track along the creek to the nearby picnic area.

On Sunday we intend to walk the Murray Scrub Track which provides access to the World Heritage rainforest area. This mostly easy walk, starts at the Murray Scrub Road, near Iron Pot Creek crossing and takes 2-3 hours. We will drive to the start of the walk and carry our lunch and water.

Other options for the weekend would be bird watching or exploring along the creek or the Murray Scrub road north of Iron Pot Creek which is now closed to vehicles.

On Monday after leaving camp, some people may like to visit the Toonumbar Dam area and stop for a look and lunch before returning home.

Please note, it is ESSENTIAL to contact Colin or Janet Hockings (phone 4681 1978) prior to the weekend if you intend coming on the camp.

Due to weather conditions, plans may need to be changed.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc
held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on Wednesday 22nd March, 2006**

Opening: The meeting opened at 7.37pm, with Kris welcoming members, particularly Lorna Bright.

Attendance: There were 11 present at the meeting and no apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 22nd February 2006 were received. Millie indicated that the QCWA rent of \$30 in the financial report was for Feb/March, not for Feb – April as stated in the minutes. The amended minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Shirley Allum, seconded by Margaret Carnell. Carried.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

- 1 Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club – *Darling Downs Naturalist* – March 06
2. Qld Naturalists Club – *QNC Newsletter* - March
3. Commonwealth Bank – statement for March
4. Chinchilla Field Nats. – *Urimbirra* – March
6. Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Club – *Murrumbidgee Naturalist* – March
7. Canon Total Technology – invoice for \$28.63 for photocopier
8. Dept of Communities – invitation to community forum in Stanthorpe
9. Gambling Community Benefit Fund – grant awarded for data projector
- 10 Fassifern Field Naturalists – newsletter – Jan. and March
- 11 Australia Post – post office box renewal - \$60

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

Business Arising from the Correspondence:

1. Grant for Data Projector

A grant of \$1,698 has been received from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for the purchase of a data projector and screen. The Committee will investigate the best model to suit our purposes.

Financial Statement for the period from 23/2/06 to 22/3/06:

Cash book balance as at 22/2/06	616.48
---------------------------------	--------

Receipts:

nil

Expenditure:

Newsletter postage	100.00
Room rent	30.00
Photocopier - maintenance	19.21
Projector hire	10.00
	159.21

Cash book balance as at 22/03/06	457.27
----------------------------------	--------

Plus outstanding cheques	nil
--------------------------	-----

Less outstanding cash receipts	nil
--------------------------------	-----

Agrees with bank balance as at 17/3/06	457.27
--	--------

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

Outing Reports:

1. 19 March outing – Carnell's place – Back Creek Road

The walk proceeded through the Carnell's property and up a fire trail to smoko on a rock slab. The walk then ascended the mountain via a fire trail with lots of cobbler's pegs and stinking roger plants. A few birds were seen as well as golden orb and spiny spiders. From the top, there were views as far as the towers at Dalveen and Passchendaele. Lunch was had in a saddle between the peaks and the second peak was then ascended. Some caves were explored here. There were views down to the Sundown Valley and to Mt Jibbinbar as well as east to Wilson's Peak.

Eighteen species of wildflowers were seen on the outing and 10 bird species, including two tawny frogmouths. In the creek at the foot of the mountain, there were crayfish, tadpoles, small frogs, leeches and water beetles. The bones of a koala, probably a victim of the 2002 bushfire, were found near a cave.

2. May Outing

Kris said that John Sommerlad from the Tenterfield Naturalists Club would like our club to have a look at the park in Tenterfield that they are rehabilitating. The tank traps off the Mt Lindesay Highway are also worth a visit, with a new track to Thunderbolt's Lookout. This could be done as a replacement for the May 19 outing originally planned for Mt Superbus.

3. Next Friday Outing

As the campout will be on the first weekend in May, it was agreed to try and have a Friday outing on 12 May. Liz Bourne offered to organise this with the venue to be advertised in the next newsletter.

4. April outing – Kitchen Caves

These caves are 700m east of the 2nd Pyramid in Girraween National Park. It should take about 1 ½ hours to walk there from the car park and there will be some scrambling involved.

5. May campout – Toonumba National Park, NSW

This park is accessed via the Mt Lindesay Highway and is south east of Woodenbong. It has very attractive campsites with lots of shade and firewood provided.

Specimens:

1. Dave Bright had a strange, rock-like formation found in his garden. No one was able to identify it, although some thought it could have come from resin or glue dumped there long ago.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting was to be on first aid. Kris will liaise with the Qld Ambulance Service about providing someone to give this talk.

General Business:

1. Publicity

The Hockings reported that the "Border Post" had, once again, failed to publish the club information sent to them. Liz suggested that it was best to send such information direct to the printing staff rather than via the editor.

The meeting closed at 8.21pm and was followed by a presentation from Dave Bright on his trip last year to Alaska, Canada and England.

**Do you know how to bandage for snakebite? Or
Apply First Aid to someone suffering a heart attack?**

**Come to the Field Nats Meeting
On Wednesday 26th April**

**When Gail Smail will be demonstrating
Aid.**



First

Friday Outing 12th May

Details of the outing on 12th May will be tabled at the meeting on 26th April.