



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 and the purchase of a data projector.

- 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, 364 Back Creek Road, Severnlea Qld. 4352.

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CLUB OFFICE BEARERS – 2006/2007

President	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents	Michael Mueller	46811421
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Publicity Officer	Janet Hockings	46811978
Librarian	Robin McCosker	46835371
Management Committee:	President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer	

**Deadline for next Newsletter:
10th September 2007**

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 19th August: Mt Greville led by Rob McCosker

Next Meeting Wednesday 22nd August: Annual General Meeting *Remember Last Year*

Friday Outing September 7th: To be arranged at next meeting. Suggestions welcome.

Outing to Mt Greville 19th August 2007

Mt Greville is one of the volcanic plug peaks of the Moogerah Peaks National Park, usually identified as the “grazing kangaroo” on the right as you descend the Great Dividing Range from Cunningham’s Gap, heading towards Brisbane. It was named by Allan Cunningham in 1828 after a Scottish botanist and its Aboriginal name is *Mebatboogan*.

The following description, from the book *Take A Walk*, by John and Lyn Daly, was made in 1910 by teachers from the Summer School of Geology and is still relevant today “*From a tourists point of view the feature of the mountain is a magnificent fissure on the eastern slope, abounding in palm trees and huge tree-ferns. This cleft in the mountainside is about a mile long. It narrows to only a few yards in some places and the greatest width is not more than 10 or 12 yards. There are precipitous – almost perpendicular – rocks on each side, the height of which must be well over 200ft (60 m). One palm tree that had been cut down measured 99ft (30m) from the root to the first leaf. These palm trees grow in great profusion in the rocky cleft, but are to be seen nowhere else on the mountain. The excursionists were in raptures about its picturesqueness and beauty and it is certainly worth going a long way to see.*”

And if that is not enough enticement to come on the outing, there is also the chance of a remarkable display of wildflowers in the late winter to reward those who have troubled to climb through the palm filled gorge to the top of Mt Greville.

The walk is rated Grade 8 on the Nats scale as there is some scrambling over rocks in the gorge and some steep sections, about 12km return, so allow at least 4hrs. Carry lunch and water.

We will meet at the Mt Greville car park at 10.00am, rather than travel in convoy from Stanthorpe, so allow 2hrs driving time.

To access Mt Greville, turn right, 15km after the top of Cunningham’s Gap, into Moogerah Dam Road – sign posted Lake Moogerah 22km

At 11.3km turn right into Mt Greville Road.

The Mt Greville National Park sign and car park are about another 1km.

Please call me if you need more info, and to let me know if you plan to attend the outing.

Rob McCosker
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robinmcc@halenet.com.au

Report on Outing to the top of Swan Creek 22nd July 2007.

Nats from Stanthorpe, Toowoomba, Warwick and Brisbane travelled via Warwick, Yangan and Swanfels, through desperately dry farmland, to the headwaters of a very dry Swan Creek. After a quick smoko at Lemon Tree, and leaving one member to enjoy the resident family of superb blue wrens, 17 Nats (+ Curtis) set off up the creek. After 2kms, accompanied by bellbird tinkling, we began the harder work of climbing a sometimes 1 in 3 ridge, towards the saddle north of Mt Huntley. Hardenbergia violacea, interestingly contorted grass trees (Xanthorrhoea australis, in flower last year), and westward views down the valley



and to Sentinel Point, were the real reasons for stopping. On more level ground Mt Double Top, Spicer's Peak, Mitchell and Castle came into view to the north, and giant spear lilies or Gynea lilies (*Doryanthes excelsa*) adorned the cliffs; leaves glinting in the sun, and some of their plump buds already in flower.

At the saddle's escarpment, panoramic views greeted us, from the Fassifern Peaks, the Barney-Ballon massif, to the southern peaks and cliffs of the Main Range. After lunch and photos of the grass tree mini-forest, we climbed to the top of a knoll, affording views of the towering north face of Mt Huntley. We then descended through wattle regrowth, casuarinas supporting huge staghorns, and more grass trees, to rejoin our upwards path. Nearer the creek, many eucalypts are seriously defoliated, possibly from the drought and "eviction" of lerp eating birds by the bellbirds.

Back at the cars, the wrens showed little fear as we enjoyed smoko, before heading homewards, after a pleasantly warm winter's day.

Peter Kerr

Bird List – Outing to Mt Huntley

Compiled by Margaret Carnell and Janet Hockings

Magpie, currawong, pee wee, kookaburra, wood duck, crimson rosella, eastern rosella, yellow robin, grey shrike thrush, superb blue wren, white throated tree creeper, white cockatoo, bell bird, white browed scrub wren, satin bower bird, quail, spotted quail thrush, king parrot, striated thornbill, yellow tufted honeyeater, wedgetail eagle, red browed firetail finch, willy wagtail, crow, Lewin's honeyeater, little eagle?, galah, black shouldered kite, crested pigeon.

**Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 22nd August at 7.30pm**

**Program: *Remember Last Year*
Followed by Supper – please bring a plate**

If you have any digital photos of last year's outings to include in the program,
please give them to Kris by 15th August
You can also bring prints to put on display.

Outing Report Friday 3rd August



It was a beautiful day for an outing when a small group of Nats left Stanthorpe headed for the Mt Norman area. As we drove up the road from Wallangarra, it was mentioned that some of our group had not been to the stone house so it was decided to pay it a visit. We stopped at the stone gate posts for smoko. While I was checking that no members were already at the day use area, Archie and Grace arrived. After a cuppa we walked along the track to the house. Apart from the Wallangarra wattle, which had a couple of good displays, there

weren't many wild flowers to be seen.

The house doesn't seem to have deteriorated much since I last saw it and it appears as though a small fire break had been cleared around it. We spent some time looking around the area before starting back.

On the way up we had noticed an interesting rock outcrop a short distance to the North of the track so we decided to take a closer look. There were quite a number of rock orchids on the tors and there is another outcrop which we didn't explore to the North East. I suspect that the rocks are normally hidden from the road by undergrowth, which has been thinned by a controlled burn.



After arriving back to the cars one carload returned back to Stanthorpe while the rest of the group went on to the day use area for lunch. Thanks to Geoff for the plant list.

Kris Carnell

List of plants in flower on our walk on Friday 3 August.

Glenys and I also went most of the way to Mt Norman and I have included plants from that walk as well:

Acacia ulicifolia, Prickly Moses; *A. adunca*, Wallangarra Wattle; *A. latisepala*; *Hovea graniticola*, Granite Hovea; *Mirbelia speciosa*, Showy *Mirbelia*; *Hardenbergia violacea*, Native Sarsparilla Vine; *Epacris microphylla*, Coral Heath; *Leucopogon* sp (small leaf); *L. melaleucioides*, Snowbush; *L. neoanglicus*, New England Beard Heath; *Melichrus urcolatus*, Urn Heath; *Banksia spinulosa*, New England Banksia; *B. integrifolia*, White Banksia; *Spyridium scortechinii*, Pepper and Salt; *Pomaderris* sp; *Lasiopetalum* sp; *Leionema rotundifolium*, Round-leaved Phebalium; *Drosera* sp, Sundew; *Gahnia aspera*, Saw Sedge.

Jeff Campbell

Outing Report – Wallangarra Ridge

On the 6th July a small group of four people ventured on a slightly more strenuous than usual Friday outing to the Wallangarra Ridge. Following the track for 3½ km to Turtle Rock, we then made our way to the first of several very large sloping Granite slabs, bush-bashing in between each one. The Ridge comes to an abrupt end with a steep rocky drop.

From here, our lunch spot, we had a marvellous view down to Wallangarra, (of course!). In the distance we could see the Mole River Tableland and Mt. Spirabo near Deepwater. For the time of year, the vegetation seemed to be a couple of weeks behind. We returned the way we had come. On the way back we looked into 'Little Standley's Chasm', but were not game to squeeze through. We also climbed to the viewpoint half way up Turtle Rock, from where you have the best view of 'The Sphinx'.

Walking back through the camping area, we were invited to join a Swiss couple we had met on the walk, for Hot Chocolate, Coffee and nibbles! What a pleasant end to a good walk! Luckily we had begun the walk half an hour earlier than usual, because by the time we returned to Stanthorpe it was just on dark.

Michael Müller.

LUNAR ECLIPSE ON 28th AUGUST, 2007

Members may like to look up at the sky shortly after sunset on the 28th August, because on this evening there will be a total eclipse of the moon. A Lunar Eclipse happens when the moon passes through the Earth's shadow cast by the sun. From 6 pm. onwards the moon will very gradually appear to get darker. By 7.00 pm. the moon will be noticeably dim.

The total Eclipse will occur between 7.52 pm. and 9.23 pm. During this time the moon will gradually become a dark copper colour because the Earth's atmosphere scatters and reddens the remaining light that reaches the surface of the moon. If at this time you were standing on the moon, you would witness a Solar Eclipse and the Earth would look as though it was surrounded by a sunset-red, glowing ring of light.

Seen from the side, the orbits of moon and earth are offset by 5 degrees. That's why we don't have a Lunar Eclipse at every full moon. Theoretically a Lunar Eclipse can happen twice a year, but on most occasions it's either only a partial eclipse (when the moon just touches the Earth's shadow), or it occurs during the daylight hours when the moon is not visible to us, being still below the horizon. For example, in Western Australia, the moon will rise in a totally eclipsed state, which will hardly be noticeable because by the time it has risen, the eclipse will almost over, and the moon will have its normal brightness again. In America it will be the other way around - the moon will set during the



Eclipse.

Europe, Africa and most of Asia will miss out, because for them the moon will be below the horizon. Only Eastern Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands will be lucky enough to see this event!

For the next Lunar Eclipse which is favourable to us we will have to wait until 2011, or travel to some other place on Earth!

Outing Report -Venus Through the Telescope

In a disappointed voice, a ten year old girl exclaimed "I can't see anything, I can only see the moon!" Without realising it, she had recognized Venus exactly! About fifteen people including six children braved the cold on this evening to have a look at the planet Venus through my telescope. The light that comes to Venus from the sun causes us to see this planet more or less in a crescent shape, depending upon its position in the sky, similar to how it is with the moon.



Venus is nearly the size of the Earth and permanently covered in thick carbon dioxide clouds, which means that the greenhouse effect leads to a temperature of 450 Celsius at ground level. Consequently no surface details are visible.

By the time you have received this newsletter Venus will no longer be visible in the evening because on the 16th of August Venus will have moved to a position between the sun and the earth. It will appear in the morning sky again at end of this month, just ahead of the rising sun.

Michael Müller

Please note

The minutes of the July meeting and the 2006 Annual meeting will be available at the meeting on the 22nd August

A Gentle Reminder

To those of you who have not already paid.
The annual subs for the 2007/2008 year are now due