

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.

Email: orana@halenet.com.au

CLUB OFFICE BEARERS - 2007/2008

President	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents	Michael Mueller	46811421
	Archie Cameron	46852347
Secretary	Liz Bourne	46836374
Assistant Secretary	Halina Kruger	46835206
Treasurer	Nanette Jurd	46837119
Newsletter Editor	Margaret Carnell	46835268
Magazine Committee	Wendy & Neil Donges	46812913
Publicity Officer	Janet Hockings	46811978
Librarian	Robin 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:
10th March 2008***

Coming Up

Friday Outing 8th February: Mt Mackenzie & Curry's Gap led by Nanette Jurd & Halina Kruger

Outing Sunday 24th February: Coolmunda Dam led by Kris & Margaret Carnell

Next Meeting: Wednesday 27th February – Program by David Hockings

Camp-out Bunya Mountains: 31st March to 3rd April

Outing To Mt. McKenzie & Curry's Gap 8th February 2008

Leaders: Nanette Jurd & Halina Kruger

This outing will be just about driving and easy strolling. There is no strenuous walking involved at all. All meet at Weeroona Park at 9am. Travel to Tenterfield where we will head onto the Mt. McKenzie Road.

This short drive gives you the opportunity to view some of the unusual granite outcrops which can be found throughout the district. These are quite spectacular and many unique formations of granite can be seen. It is approx 38k long.



There are various stops along the way for look-outs and opportunities to walk about amongst some rocks. At the beginning of the drive along Sunnyside Loop Road onto Kildare Road, we will stop for morning tea under some trees.

Mt. McKenzie lookout has picnic & toilet facilities & this will be our lunch stop. There are excellent views of Tenterfield and the surrounding district.

From here, it is a very short drive to Carry's Gap State Conservation area. Here you can spend a little or as much time as you like. On the pre-outing, we could not go too far because of the flooded creek but that will be gone by now. There are quite a few different wildflowers in this area.

Anyone can leave whenever they like from here to travel back home.

Outing Report – Campout - Blatherarm 23-26 November 2007

Leaders Kris & Margaret Carnell

Friday: We travelled through Silent Grove Road past Mole River Station with Nanette following on our way to Torrington. A large flock of ibis flew lazily away as we passed. There were a couple of showers on the way, so we decided to set up camp before having a cuppa. As we approached the camping area we noticed *Boronia granitica* and *Petrophile canescens* blooming, as well as *Lomartia silaifolia* (Wild Celery) and a cream *Grevillea*.

After lunch we walked upstream to an old mining area where the creek had been diverted and there were man-made walls of rock. After exploring the area, we walked back along the road trying to beat the approaching storm. We all retired to our tents while it rained and Erin and I played Scattergories. When the rain stopped we were able to light the fire and sat around and chatted for the evening. A kangaroo and joey came to visit.

Saturday: We woke to rain but it eased quite soon. Narelle arrived as we were having breakfast and went for a walk till we had finished and organized ourselves for the morning expedition to Ugly Corner Falls. Kris found a large grey slug with red markings when he went to the creek. On the way to Ugly Corner Falls we walked across corduroy road in the creek crossing and turned off to the top of the falls. There was *Kunzea* in flower where we turned off and a cream *Callistemon* in the creek. Three Nats made their way to the bottom of the falls and found a proper track back to the road. There was a different *Boronia* blooming near the top of the falls and a lovely purple *Scaevola*.



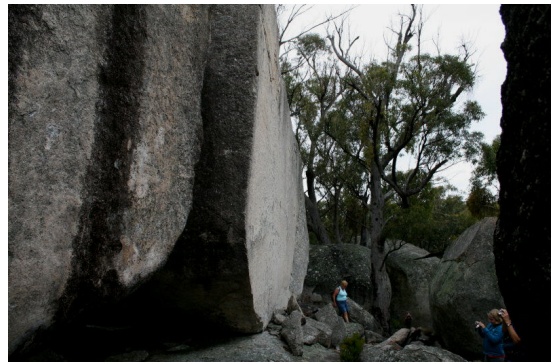
The people at the bottom of the falls discovered a marked track, so the rest of us scrambled down and we walked along the track to the road, stopping to watch a couple of skinks under a rock on the way. The easy way to the falls is to walk to the end of the road and follow the track across, so we could have saved some energy by going that way. There were grey fantails and a crested shrike-tit in the undergrowth, which we watched for some time, then we headed to the site of what we think was a miner's camp. There were the remains some stone walls

and what looked like a type of oven.

In the afternoon we drove towards Torrington and turned off to explore Old Mystery Face. There was moisture in the air, but the rain held off. On the rock slabs near the start of the walk, large areas of *Stackhousia* were making a yellow carpet. As we skirted a rock slab Lyn said "There's a snake here", and there hidden amongst the leaf litter was a death adder. It was the first one I and several others had seen, and it wriggled the tip of its tail as described in the book, but made no attempt to move. It had its photograph taken many times, but I don't think it's very obvious in any of them, it was so well camouflaged.



After that excitement you might have thought that Old Mystery Face would be an anticlimax, but it wasn't, of course. It is the most amazing rock formation, and several of the rocks around it are very interesting too. We all climbed up onto a large boulder and admired the view, before heading back via Westminster Rocks.



Sunday: Before setting out for Bismuth Falls, those of us who had to return home packed up our camp. There were no day trippers to meet us so we drove to the dam at the Bismuth Mine to have morning tea, then set off across the dam wall to make our way to the gorge. We walked through patches of *Boronia* and disturbed an Owlet Nightjar which flew into a tree and watched us warily as we took photos. A little further on, we came to the top of the first fall and skirted around it to walk to the second fall and deeper gorge. We passed through colourful *Dodonea* in seed. The going was quite difficult here, as we had moved further away

from the edge of the gorge than we had on the pre-outing, and we were very glad indeed when we reached the gorge. The peregrine falcon we saw on the pre-outing was still flying about calling a warning.

Everyone admired the view and lots of photos were taken before we sat down for lunch. We were joined by a little skink with spots along his sides. As we were walking back up from the gorge, Erin noticed a freshly emerged cicada on its shell, and then another further up the hill.



Before crossing back over the dam wall, we explored some old mining equipment, including a buddle and a chimney. We then drove back to the



Bismuth mine and climbed up the steps onto the steel frame of the old workings. There is still an engine in one of the sheds and a lot of steel just rusting away. There are reeds growing in the old tank, and we spent some time speculating about what happened where, and found some core samples in the old workshop.

When we arrived back at the camping area someone spotted a cicada coming out of the ground and another on the trunk of a tree, covered in mud. Those Nats who were staying the night kept checking on this one which took about an hour and a half to emerge from its shell. The rest of us had to regretfully set out for home, again via Silent Grove Road and the Ibis were still by the roadside at Mole River Station.

Margaret Carnell

Bird List (birds seen on the way to and from included): Ibis, Eastern Rosella, King Parrot, Magpie, Noisy Miner, White-throated Tree Creeper, Grey Shrike Thrush, Currawong, Kookaburra, Crested Shrike-tit, Grey Fantail, Rufous Whistler, Leaden Flycatcher, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Variegated Fairy Wren, Thornbill, Great Cormorant, Superb Blue Wren, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Owllet Nightjar, Peregrine Falcon, Richard's Pipit, Baby Spurwing Plover, Wedgetail Eagle, Fire-tailed Finch, White Cockatoo, Pacific Heron

Other Wildlife: Grey Kangaroo, Swamp Wallaby, Pretty Faced Wallaby, Death Adder, 2 Skinks, Cicada.

Flowers:

<i>Grevillea</i> (cream)	<i>Dampiera</i> sp	<i>Boronia granitica</i>
<i>Hibbertia</i> (2)	<i>Petrophile linearis</i>	<i>Persoonia pinifolia</i>
<i>Leucopogon novoanglia</i>	<i>Actinotus helianthi</i> (Flannel Flower)	<i>Scaevola</i> sp.
<i>Patersonia glabrate</i> (Wild Iris)	<i>Micromyrtus ciliata</i>	Orange Pea (2)
<i>Dipodium punctatum</i> (Hyacinth Orchid)	<i>Comesperma retusum</i> (Matchsticks)	<i>Gompholobium latifolium</i> (Golden Glory Pea)
Yellow Riceflower	<i>Stackhousia viminea</i>	<i>Goodenia hederacea</i>
<i>Goodenia bellidifolia</i> (Daisy Goodenaa)	<i>Stylidium laricifolium</i> (Trigger Plant)	<i>Stylidium graminifolium</i> (Grass Trigger Plant)
<i>Leptospermum</i> sp	<i>Zieria</i> sp	<i>Brachyscombe stuartii</i>
White Daisy	<i>Hybanthus monopetalus</i>	<i>Leucopogon muticus</i>
<i>Kunzea bracteolata</i>	<i>Laxmannia compacta</i>	<i>Thysanotus tuberosus</i> (Fringed Lily)

Hypoxis hygrometrica (Golden Weather Glass)	<i>Pimelea linifolia</i>	<i>Phebalium rotonduifolium</i>
Mistletoe	<i>Urticularia sp</i> (Bladderwort tiny blue flower)	<i>Isotoma petraea</i> (Rock Isotome)
<i>Melichrus</i> (Jam Tarts)	<i>Brachyloma daphnoides</i>	<i>Bossiaea rhombifolia</i>
<i>Boronia</i> sp	Unidentified plant with white umbrils	<i>Dodonaea hirsute</i> (Hop Bush in seed)

Bunya Mountains Campout for the 31st March to 3rd April.

Leaders: Jenny and Andy Cameron

This is a preliminary pre-outing report for the Campout to the Bunya Mountains. If you wish to book cabin accommodation it would be a good idea to do so now.

The campout will probably include the Russell Park walks (on the western side of the Bunyas) and a trip to Muntapa Railway Tunnel. A description of the tunnel is printed below.

Description

Walk through Queensland's longest straight railway tunnel (287m). It is also quite high being 640m above sea level. Now that trains don't roar through it the tunnel is a seasonal home to a colony of bent winged bats.

The tunnel is sign posted from the main road (access road is unsealed). The road finishes at a park that is actually on the ridge over the tunnel- according to the plaque this is the crest of the Great Dividing Range

From the park there is a track to each end of the tunnel, which has long cuttings at each end. It is a steep descent to the cutting at the Cooyar end. The Oakey end is not as steep but the ground can be quite soggy here. A torch will be necessary.

The reserve has a good picnic table but no water or toilet. There is also a track which takes you past a couple of ruins from the camp in the construction days-

The trail reserve is managed by the Shire of Rosalie.

If planning a visit around winter it may be worth contacting the shire as it is closed for a few months so that the bats are not disturbed, increasing their chance of surviving the winter.

This tunnel was on the branch line that was opened from Oakey to Cooyar in 1913 and was closed in 1964

For photos etc. click on the link below

<http://www.railtrails.org.au/states/trails.php3?action=trail&trail=86&gallery=379#gallery>

On 1st August 2008, Bunya Mountains National Park turns 100 years old.

To mark this event, a weekend of celebrations filled with lots of outdoor activities, walks, talks and fun is planned for 2-3rd August 2008. If you have a soft spot for or connection with the Bunyas, mark this date in your calendar and start thinking about booking your camping site or accommodation!

The organising committee is trying to contact as many former Bunya Mountains staff and residents (or those with a connection to the Bunyas) as possible in order to invite them to the celebrations. If you are one of them, or know others who are and their current whereabouts, please let the organisers know.

For information and celebration details contact:

Brett Roberts on 4699 4340 or email brett.roberts@epa.qld.gov.au

Karen Smith on 4699 4327 or email karenc.smith@epa.qld.gov.au

Pre-Outing Report – Coolmunda Dam – Sunday 24th February 2008

Leaders: Kris and Margaret Carnell

As we are unable to go to either Rivertree or Sundown National Park for our February outing, we will be driving to Coolmunda Dam, through Inglewood along Tobacco Road. We will meet at Weeroona Park at 9.00am and will stop for morning tea on the McIntyre River on private property on Tobacco Road. At the time of going to press we have not done the pre-outing but will be doing so in a week or two.

Lunch will be at Coolmunda Dam where we are hoping to be able to do some bird watching. It should be possible to go for a swim, so come prepared. We will return to Stanthorpe on the Stanthorpe-Inglewood Road.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on Wednesday 28 November, 2007

Opening: The meeting opened at 7.35pm.

Attendance: There were 16 present at the meeting and 6 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 24th October 07 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Millie Marsden, seconded by Halina Kruger. Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

1. Plaque in Heritage Park

The Stanthorpe Shire Council has approved the funding for a more vandal proof replacement for this plaque in association with a contribution from the Marsden family.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

1. Stanthorpe Shire Council – call for nominations for Australia Day awards
2. Chinchilla Field Nats. – *Urimbirra* – Nov 07
3. Society for Growing Aust Plants – Nov newsletter
4. CSIRO Publishing – notification of new publications – *Wildlife and Wilderness in the Waterfall Country; Native Mice and Rats; Plant Names – Guide to Botanical Nomenclature*
5. Fassifern Field Naturalists – newsletter Oct/Nov
6. Total Technology Centre – statement for \$69.30
7. Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club – *Darling Downs Naturalist*- Nov
8. Commonwealth Bank – statement for Nov
9. P and C Smallwood – return of newsletter
- 10 Stanthorpe Shire Council – invitation to Christmas function

This correspondence was accepted on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Michael Jefferies. Carried.

Business Arising from the Correspondence:

1. Stanthorpe Shire Council Christmas Function

It was agreed that Archie and Grace Cameron should represent the club at this function.

2. Australia Day Awards

There are quite a number of categories for the awards with nominations closing on 21 December.

Financial Statement from 24/10/07 to 27/11/07:

Cash book balance as at 24/10/07: \$1,113.41

Receipts:

Membership renewals	75.00	
Donation	20.00	
		95.00

Expenditure:

Room rent – QCWA	90.00	
		90.00

Cash book balance as at 27/11/07 \$1,118.41

Agrees with bank balance as at 27/11/07 \$1,118.41

Accounts for payment:

Kris Carnell - \$40.45 for newsletter expenses

This financial report was received on the motion of Nanette Jurd, seconded by Rob McCosker. Carried

Outing Reports:

1. Friday 2 November – Sandy Creek, Leslie Dam

This outing was reported on in the last newsletter.

2. Campout to Torrington on 23-25 November

Eight people attended altogether, although not all of them came for the whole weekend.

Club Christmas Party:

This will be held on Sunday 9 December at the Jurd's place at Mt Tully.

Outings:

Nanette and Halina will lead a day trip on a week day in February.

The outing on February 24 was to be to Rivertree but the road may not be trafficable. Kris said there was a new walking track at Sundown National Park that might be worth exploring instead.

Next Meeting – Wed. 27th February

David Hockings will be giving a presentation.

Specimens:

1. The Carnells had information about Torrington.

General Business:

1. Mammals Book

Liz said that following the success of the wildflower booklet, a number of people had expressed interest in having a similar introductory booklet to the mammals of the Granite Belt. The production of this could be funded via an application to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund which she was willing to prepare. The next closing date for applications was 31 December.

Motion: That the club make an application to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund to produce a booklet on the mammals of the Stanthorpe Plateau.

Moved: Patience James Seconded: Annette Jurd Carried.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm .

Proposed Emu Swamp Dam Draft Environmental Impact Statement Released

The draft EIS for the proposed 5,000 ML dam on the Severn River at Emu Swamp, north of the first (Fletcher Road) crossing, has been released by the Co-ordinator General's Department. The project involves the construction of a 110ha dam on the Severn River and a 23km pipeline. Although aimed primarily as a water supply dam for Stanthorpe, the possibility exists for it to be expanded to incorporate additional water for agricultural purposes to be piped to farms throughout the shire.

From an environmental perspective, the project area will impact on a "Critically Endangered" regional ecosystem along the river – a white box, yellow box, Blakely's red gum, grassy woodland as well as 3 "Endangered" and 1 "Of Concern" regional ecosystems.

The inundation area will impact upon a number of threatened plant species such as *Acacia latiseptala*, *Melaleuca flavovirens*, *Melaleuca williamsii*, *Rulingia hermannifolia* and *Thelionema grande* while the urban pipeline route will potentially impact on populations of *Melaleuca williamsii*, *Acacia latiseptala* and *Mirbelia confertiflora*.

Apart from these issues, other matters of concern in the draft EIS are the lack of adequate assessment of the alternatives to a new dam eg. demand management and conservation measures; the environmental sustainability of the project; its greenhouse gas impacts and water quality issues.

The draft EIS is available for viewing at the Stanthorpe Shire library and online at www.infrastructure.qld.gov.au/eis. Copies of the Executive Summary and a CD of the full EIS are available for free at the Council's office in Marsh Street. The Council will also have a display on the dam proposal at the Stanthorpe Show on 1 – 2 February where further information will be available. The closing date for submissions is 25 February.

Anyone wishing to make a submission and who would like any assistance, please contact me.

Liz Bourne
Ph 4683 6374
batmaps@halenet.com.au

Editor's Note: This article was submitted by a member of the club and is not the official opinion of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.