



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:

7th April 2008

Coming Up

Outing Sunday 16th March: Mt Mitchell led by Halina Kruger. **Note the early start 7.00am**

Next Meeting Wednesday 26th March: Program by David Wilson *Snowy Mountains*

Camp-Out Monday 31st to Thursday 3rd April: Bunya Mountains led by Andy & Jenny Cameron

Friday Outing April: to be arranged

Bunya Mountains Campout 31st March to 3rd April

Leaders Jenny and Andy Cameron 46155276 0427545297 andy.m.a.cameron@bigpond.com

Please let us know if you intend to come on the outing.

We intend to stay at the Dandabah campsite.

If it is wet we will possibly postpone the campout, so please stay in contact.

Please bring all the food and drinking water you require for your stay, along with warm clothing and raincoats, insect repellent and sunscreen, bags for rubbish. The Bunya's quite often has afternoon storms at this time of year and can be quite cool (but not always).

Proposed Itinerary – We do not expect that everyone attending will wish to do all of the walks listed below – Shorter walks will be organised as required. Curtis will set the pace from time to time (rather slow).

Please see EPA web site (below) if you need directions on how to get to the Bunya Mountains, allow 3.5/4hours from Stanthorpe. The road up the Bunya's is very steep and winding. No fuel is available on the mountain.

31st March

Arrive and set up camp. Please stop at the Rangers headquarters at Dandabah to collect a walking track map.

2.30pm Walk to Mt Kiangarow from Burton's Well – 2.4km – approx 1hr
Mt Kiangarow is the highest point at the Bunya Mountains. Leaving from Dandabah in cars.

Late After dinner a night walk is proposed (bring a torch and something warm to wear). We shall try to spot some of the nocturnal residents. Leaving from Dandabah on foot.

1st April

6am Bird Watching, leaving from Dandabah on foot– a short walk down to the waterholes. Bring binoculars

8.30am Barker Creek Circuit – Leaving from Dandabah on foot
10 km – approx 3-4hrs
Mostly rainforest taking in all of the waterfalls and eastern lookouts
carry morning tea and drinking water – late lunch back at cars

Late After dinner a night walk is proposed, leaving from Dandabah on foot - (bring a torch and something warm to wear). We shall try to spot some of the nocturnal residents.

2nd April

6am Bird Watching, leaving from Dandabah by car to SJ Fisher Lookout Russell Park (Mt Mowbullen) – a short walk down to Cunjevoi Falls. Bring binoculars.
There were some lovely little pink orchids flowing at the falls in January.

9am Leaving from Dandabah by car – Walking from Paradise to Westcott via Westcliff Lookout (3.2km)
Lunch at Westcott car park
After Lunch Leaving on foot from Westcott - Koondaii Lookout Circuit (2.5k) + return to cars at Paradise via road (1.5km down hill).
Carry water, morning tea and lunch

Late After dinner a night walk is proposed, leaving from Dandabah, (bring a torch and something warm to wear). We shall try to spot some of the nocturnal residents.

3rd April

Pack up Camp (not returning to Bunyas)

10am Muntapa Railway Tunnel – leaving from Dandabah by car
50min car trip to tunnel, some dirt road
1km walk – walking through Tunnel with bats in residence – bring torch so that we can see the bent wing bats
Lunch at cars

Return home from here via Thornville and Crows Nest on the New England HW.
(Approx 1.15hr to Toowoomba from Muntapa Tunnel)

Accommodation Options

There are 3 campgrounds at the Bunyas, Dandabah (main campsite with drive in sites, coin operated electric bbqs, no fires, hot showers and toilets), Westcott (tent camping only, wood bbq, toilets), Burton's Well (tent camping only, cold showers, wood bbq, donkey boiler and toilets).
Book campsites online or 131304. If you haven't pre-booked and there is still space available, self register before you set up camp.

This is the website for all the info about the Bunya Mountains National Park – it has a link on it for booking campsites online.

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/find_a_park_or_forest/bunya_mountains_national_park/

There are other sorts of accommodation available, cottages and houses.

Bunya Mountain Getaway 46683131 www.cyberlink.com.au/bunyatourism

Bunya Mountain Accommodation Centre 46683126 www.bunyamountains.com

Owing to our having to go to Brisbane urgently for family reasons there are no photos to accompany the outing reports in this newsletter.

Editor

Friday outing to Mt Mackenzie 8th February 2008

We had morning tea at the park in Tenterfield. Six cars took the opportunity to see the sites, We proceeded to do the Mt Mackenzie Granite Drive, Starting at Sunnyside Loop Road then along Kildare Rd, which took us up to the rocky outcrops to the west of Tenterfield. The weather was perfect and the clouds put on a beautifully display for our outing.

We stopped to view some interesting rock formations as well as wild flowers around the rocks. Cameras were clicking and discussions taking place. From this area we could see Small Bald Rock and an interesting rock formation on the next hill that looked like big flat rocks had been placed for our inspection.

We stopped many times to view the spectacular sites.

Doctors Nose

Small Bald Rock a very tiny version of Bald Rock

The Mole Valley View - Great rock formations.

Draining Rock -This is one of the largest exposed granite rocks in the district, second only to the famous Bald Rock.

The Wallangarra lookout - giving us a view of the hills in Girraween NP

Mt Mackenzie - room with a view for lunch

We then took a drive to Curry's Gap State Conservation Area only a short distance from Tenterfield. Although there were not as many wild flowers out as at the time of pre-outing we still had a look around and crossed the creek meandering along the road. There hasn't been much work done in this area as yet but we will be visiting there some time again in the future.

Halina Kruger

Mt Mitchell pre-outing 16th March 2008

Leader: Halina Kruger

This track leads through the World Heritage listed Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves. It is the only track on the southern side of Cunningham's Gap that starts at the crest and climbs to the eastern peak of Mt Mitchell.

The trail winds in and out through rainforest and open eucalypt forest through to the West Peak, then along the saddle to the East Peak. The last part of the track is through open montane heath with grass trees. It has the most spectacular views almost a bird's eye view of Cunningham's Gap and surrounding districts, absolutely wonderful. There are so many changes in the walk that make it most interesting and admiration of our diverse countryside all within such a short distance. I feel that it is one of the best walks with views I have seen in a long time. We will have lunch on top of the East Peak.

This is a class 3 walk with well-defined, distinct tracks, variable in width, steep grades and some steep steps. There wasn't too many surprises on the pre-outing and the National Parks have done a wonderful job clearing the path for our outing. The cliff edges and lookout at the top is not fenced and caution needs to be taken. Reasonable level of fitness required.

This is definitely a place to have your head in clouds and your eyes taking in the spectacular 360 degree views. Hoping for a sunny clear day.

Bring your lunch, hat, camera, binoculars, water.

We will meet at Bellbird Rest Area at 8.30am. The Rest Area is a little difficult to find but if you go past the Camp Stacey entrance you will have to keep a close lookout for the entrance to the Rest area. It is a sharp turn to the left. If you miss this entrance, then turn around at the top of Cunninghams Gap and the entrance will be the first on the right which has a much better signed and turning road into the park. It took us nearly one and half hours from Stanthorpe to the rest area. We will meet at Weeroona Park at 7am.

After smoko we will then proceed up the Visitors section on top of the range leaving our cars. We will need to cross the road and then proceed on the designated walk up to Mt Mitchell. This walk is 10.2km long and takes about 5 hours to do the round trip not including lunch break. There are no toilet facilities on the track.

Hope to see you there.

Outing Report McIntyre Brook and Coolmunda Dam – Sunday 24th February

Six cars left Weeroona Park and travelled along the Inglewood Road to Camp Greenup where we met Peter. Along the way, we saw Cassinia and two species of Acacia in bloom. Later we added a third one to the list. I also noticed a Dendrobium caniculatum with seed pods. Shortly after turning into Tobacco Road we had to stop to look at two Wedgetails and a Whistling Kite circling overhead.

Our destination was the property of Andrew and Carolyn Hooper where Andrew was loading hay bales. On the left of the track there were windrows of hay and over to the right hay that had just been cut. We all drove into the paddock, turned around and drove back through the gate where we parked and had a cuppa. Across the track were extensive areas of galvanised burr. It makes good feed during the drought and it takes two good years to get rid of it. There were yellow daisies flowering nearby and we thought they might be feral and two with purple flowers which we knew to be weeds.

Our first excursion was a leisurely walk downstream beneath thick Casuarina trees and what we thought may have been River Red Gums. There were lots of birds, including Kingfishers, Leaden Flycatchers and Moor Hens. Several of us stood with our heads bent back trying to focus on the Pale-headed Rosellas in the trees. There was a very fat goanna on the trunk of a tree, which had the cameras clicking. We met up with some very healthy-looking, quiet cattle and photographed an orb-weaving spider on the pump shed.

Lunch was eaten back at the cars, after which a couple of carloads left and the rest of us walked upstream for a little while. This was not as interesting as the downstream track, but there was a Pittosporum with yellow berries, Grey-crowned Babblers and more Kingfishers. There was also a Wilga tree in bud with one tiny flower out.

After walking back to the cars we drove to the wall of Coolmunda Dam and watched water-skiers on the water and some Black Kites circling overhead. Before setting off for home we had a cuppa in the delightfully shady picnic area. It was a very quiet, restful outing which we all enjoyed.

Margaret Carnell

Bird List: ibis, wedgetail eagle, whistling kite, crested pigeon, willy wagtail, kookaburra, magpie, pee wee, apostle bird, galah, noisy miner with nest, welcome swallow, restless flycatcher, azure kingfisher, superb blue fairy wren, white-plumed honeyeater, crow, pale headed rosella, white-faced heron, red-rumped parrot, rufous whistler (call), noisy friarbird, white cockatoo, Pacific black duck, moor hen, grey shrike thrush, grey-crowned babbler, reed warbler, black kite.

Other Wildlife: Goanna, black snake, goat, wasp nest, cattle, lizards.

Plants of Interest: cassinia, 3 acacias, 2 purple weeds, galvanised burr, whalenbergia, pittosporum, dendrobium caniculatum seeds, box with shiny green leaves, prickly pear with fruit, Wilga, yellow daisy.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc
held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on Wednesday 27 February 2008

Opening: The meeting opened at 7.35pm.

Attendance: There were 24 present at the meeting and 1 apology as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 28th November 07 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Millie Marsden, seconded by Michael Jefferies. Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

1. Grant Application to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund

An application for funding for a guide to the mammals of the Granite Belt was lodged by the deadline on 31st December but as the Fund required additional details on the ABN for the printer supplying a quote, the application is likely to be held over until the next funding round which ends on 31st March.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

1. Environmental Protection Agency – *Bush Telegraph* – Summer edition
2. Chinchilla Field Nats. – *Urimbirra* – Jan and Feb 08
3. Society for Growing Aust Plants – Warwick Branch – Feb newsletter
4. Queensland Naturalists Club – journal – Dec 07
5. Fassifern Field Naturalists – newsletters for Jan and Feb
6. Canon Total Technology – re electronic meter reading of photocopier
7. Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club – *Darling Downs Naturalist*– Dec and Jan
8. Stanthorpe Shire Council – reimbursement of money for plaque in Heritage Park
9. Landmark – public liability insurance
10. Commonwealth Bank – statements for Dec, Jan and Feb.
11. Queensland Naturalists Club – *QNC News* – Jan/Feb 08
12. Australian Natural History Medallion – call for nominations
13. Events Tasmania – grants for group visits to Tasmania
14. Landmark – receipt for public liability insurance
15. Joan Stevenson – re wrong mailing address for Margaret Compton
16. Australia Post – PO Box renewal
17. State Library of Queensland – receipt for newsletters

Outwards:

1. Landmark – public liability insurance premium

This correspondence was accepted on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Rob McCosker. Carried.

Business Arising from the Correspondence:

1. Electronic meter reading of photocopier

As we do relatively small amounts of copying, it was agreed that it would not be worthwhile to have an electronic meter reader installed for the photocopier.

Financial Statement from 27/11/07 to 27/2/08:

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

Receipts:

Membership renewals	40.00	
Stanthorpe Shire Council	563.40	
		603.40

Expenditure:

Photocopier	69.30	
Public liability insurance	437.53	
Armsign	763.40	
Photocopy paper	40.45	
		1310.68

Cash book balance as at 27/2/08 411.13

Plus outstanding cheques \$35.47

Less outstanding cash receipts

 M Marsden 200.00

 Membership 35.00

Agrees with bank balance as at 27/02/08 \$610.66

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

Outing Reports:

1. Club Christmas Party

This was held on Sunday 9 December at the Jurd's place at Mt Tully and was a well attended and very enjoyable function. The BBQ was finished before a storm that night.

2. Mt McKenzie, Tenterfield

Halina reported on the outing she led to Mt McKenzie and the Curry's Gap Conservation Area outside Tenterfield. There were not a lot of wildflowers out but good views were had from the mountain.

3. Outing to Coolmunda Dam – Sun 24 February

Margaret Carnell reported on a successful outing to the dam. A pair of wedgetailed eagles and a whistling kite were observed. The dam was full after all the recent rain which was good to see.

Pre-outings:

1. Wednesday 5 March – Donnelly's Castle

Kris Carnell said he would be leading this outing which aimed to explore the northern slopes of the Donnelly's Castle reserve. They would meet at Weeroona Park at 9am.

2. Star gazing

Kris said he had had a call from Michael Mueller in Germany to say he hoped to be back in Stanthorpe by the Apple and Grape weekend and was willing to conduct a star watching night on 12 March somewhere in town. Those interested should contact him.

3. Outing to Mt Mitchell – 16 March

This outing is being held earlier in the month to avoid a clash with the Easter long weekend and is being led by Halina Kruger. She said it would be a 10km round trip and she hoped to visit the east and west peaks as well as some caves.

4. Campout at the Bunya Mountains – 31 March to 2 April

The Tuesday and Wednesday will be the organised part of the trip with people welcome to come for a longer period if they wish. There are a number of campsites at the Bunyas but the main one has hot showers. Information will be in the next newsletter.

Specimens:

1. Col Hockings had a supply of river red gum seeds from The Summit school which members were welcome to have although he could not guarantee that they would still be viable.
2. He also had what he thought was a wasp like beetle with bright yellow antennae
3. Ian Milinovich had the skull of a koala found on Mt Tully. It appeared to be a juvenile and may have had a disease on its jaw as the bone appeared to be malformed.
4. Margaret Carnell had a white flowering plant collected at Coolmunda Dam
5. Rob McCosker had a branch from a small tree with yellow berries which David Hockings thought was a *Pittosporum phillyreoides* and it supposedly has anti-cancer properties.
6. Jean Harslett showed a photo from the Sydney Museum of a green coloured cockroach plus photos from her niece, Sandra, of a new *Grevillea* hybrid with a lovely mauve/pink flower which is being named after her late sister, Dorothy.
7. Liz Bourne reported finding a decapitated magpie with only the head and feathers remaining under a tree branch where it had obviously been eaten. She wondered if it may have been eaten by a quoll while it was roosting at night? She also said that she had recently seen their resident wedgetailed eagles with a juvenile in a tree close to their house where it was practising its flying skills and calling for food.

General Business:

1. Michael Jefferies reported that he had been contacted by someone from ABC Southern Queensland radio who was interested in having some of his photos on their website after seen them on the public Flickr photo library website. They seemed keen for other contributions from our area.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm and was followed by a wonderful presentation from David Hockings of a trip he took last August through western Queensland and the Tanami Desert to the Kimberley Region of Western Australia.

