



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 Club acknowledges the support of the Gambling Community Benefit Fund in the production of this Newsletter and the purchase of a data projector



The Pyramids Girraween National Park

4th Wednesday of each month at QCWA

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



Deadline for next Newsletter:
9th of June

Coming Up

Outing : Sunday 25 May; Girraween Lodge, led by Rob McCosker

Next Meeting : Wednesday 28 May; *The West Coast of Ireland*; Michael Mueller

Friday Outing in June to be arranged

Saturday - 17 May

The annual wombat search will be taking place in Girraween National Park, involving teams of people looking for and recording signs of wombats (holes and scats) in designated areas throughout the park. Holes are tagged, photographed and their location recorded on GPS. If you would like to help, contact Liz Bourne on 4683 6374 or batmaps@halenet.com.au

Sunday - 25 May

May Outing 25th May to Girraween Lodge.

Leader Rob McCosker; Ph 46835371

Since the Nats last visited the Lodge there has been some track extensions to link some of them together. In doing so a couple of interesting rock formations have been made accessible on one continuous track, with the option to return to the cars at various points along the way.

We will meet at Weeroona Park at 9.00am as usual and drive to the Girraween “Hilton” for morning tea. Carrying lunch with us to have along the way we will endeavour to walk the full circuit of tracks, returning to the cars for afternoon tea.

Editor's note: The following items are for the advice of members only and is not an official Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club notice.

FOR SALE A complete collection of Australian Geographics in mint condition with all maps. [90 magazines including No1.]

Contact Kel or Hanna Dominey on 4681 2811 or 0409 019 499. \$200.00 or near offer.

FOR SALE Computer, AMD32ghz processor; ASUS motherboard; Ubuntu software installed with complete suite of free software including word processing spreadsheet, email, web browser etc, self updating and compatible with MS Office; 160gb hdd, USB, Ethernet and firewire connections; 17in LCD monitor wireless keyboard and mouse. \$450.00 as is.

Contact Michael Jefferies 46812389.

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Outing report for Castle Rock. Sunday 20th April.

We left town at 9 am for our outing to Castle Rock. The weather didn't look too good at this stage but it turned out to be fine & sunny with a little wind. After morning tea at the Castle Rock Day use area, eight of us set off for the walk.

We hadn't gone very far when there was an accident. One member just caught her toe on a rock step and took quite a bad tumble and finished up with quite a few bruises & grazes as well as a very nasty gash on her head where it hit a rock. We patched her up with what was in a couple of our first aid kits and then she was taken back to town to the doctor where she was stitched up. It just goes to show how easy an accident can happen & how important it is to take simple first aid kits in our packs. I believe a few of us have since updated our first kits a little since this time.



The remaining 5 of us continued on with our walk. The beginning of the track was quite steep with well graded steps and track. We reached the junction of Turtle Rock & The Sphinx & Castle Rock, where another member decided to wait for us to come back.

The last section of the track to the summit of Castle Rock is quite steep with the last bit over steep rock slabs. Another member decided not to continue over

us made it to the top. Here we were spectacular panoramic views over Mt. Turtle Rock, The Pyramids and the After we have had a stroll around the summit, we returned to the junction of the track and walked up the track

towards Mt. Norman for a bit over a kilometer across a little of a gully where we had lunch. Here there was quite a lovely clump of Trailing Lobelia growing in the rocks near the track. A little further past this gully is a large slab of rock that we explored a little. Here we got different views of Mt. Norman and Castle Rock. We returned back to the car-park along the track the way we came.



the steep slabs so just three of rewarded with some Norman, The Sphinx with surrounding countryside.

The Sphinx & Turtle Rock

Some wildflowers are just starting to flower and some are coming to the end of their flowering season.

Some of the plants seen along the way were:-

Podolepis jaceoides, Showy Podolepis
Xerochrysum bracteatum, Golden Everlasting
Chrysocephalum apiculatum, Yellow Buttons
Senecio sp. (purple)
Hardenbergia violacea, Native Sarsaparilla Vine
Dipodium variegatum, Hyacinth Orchid
Leucopogon (at least two, possibly three species)
Melichrus urceolatus, Urn Heath (bud)
Banksia spinulosa var *neoanglica*, New England Banksia
Persoonia sericea, Silky Geebung
Isotoma anethifolia, Narrow-leaved Isotoma
Trachymene incisa, Native Candytuft
Goodenia hederacea, Ivy-leaved Goodenia
Leionema rotundifolia, Round-leaved Phebalium
Lobelia andrewsii, Trailing Lobelia
Wahlenbergia graniticola, Granite Bluebell
Wahlenbergia sp.
Dampiera purpurea, Mountain Dampiera
Actinotus helianthi, Flannel Flower

We didn't see a lot of birds but we did spot some Scrub Wren, Firetail Finches, Blue Wren and Grey Fantail. An Echidna was also observed walking through the bush.

After having afternoon tea at the Castle Rock day are before going our separate ways home, all decided that it was a very rewarding day. Nanette Jurd.

Friday Outing: 9th May to Donnelly's Castle



View from Donnelly's Castle to Bald Rock and Girraween.

A select group led by Rob McCosker set out for Donnelly's Castle on a very pleasant day. On arrival we explored the nearest group of rocks noting some plants showing bud development and sampling some wild carrot roots. Under one of the larger perched rocks were clusters of small flies in groups that must have numbered thousands, like black stains. After smoko we tried another path and climbed to the viewing area, see picture above (made from 8 photos). From there we went in a northerly direction seeing a number of plants including a low-growing mistletoe with a mistletoe of another species growing on it. On getting back to the car park area the frog, a bleating tree frog, *Litoria dentata* was found on the wash basin! We agreed it was a pleasant and interesting place for a short ramble.



Birds on a mission



The drought has provided an opportunity for some! In late October last year while I was attending to maintenance of the swimming pools at the Lodge, I was surprised to be constantly flown-over by a group of White-winged choughs. These birds are not good fliers, flapping their wings noisily and only a couple of metres above the ground. In fact they spend most of their time on the ground foraging for insects, usually in groups. I had photographed a group of about 15 doing just that in winter, a couple of months ago. So what were they up to now? A closer

observation determined that they were ferrying beak-fulls of mud from the edge of the nearby dam, now very low on water due to the drought, to a branch of a Stringybark tree in the bush nearby. Some of the birds would stop to pick up pieces of grass and strip bits of bark off a stringybark log, while trying to keep the blob of mud in their beak at the same time, often without success, before flying off to the construction site. Apparently some were a little optimistic about the amount of mud they could carry at a time as there were several blobs in the pool as well.

The nest was built in stages. First a platform was built on the near horizontal branch about 10m from the ground, followed by the start of a bowl shape, then the final, well proportioned bowl with smooth finish. Work seemed to be done early in the morning for a couple of hours before the group went off foraging, presumably allowing the mud to dry and harden before doing any more. I watched this over a period of three weeks before a bird was finally seen sitting on the nest and soon after four small heads could be seen above the rim of the nest. It was action stations again for the rest of the flock to keep a constant supply of food up to the young birds. I wonder if they purposely coincided their breeding with a time when there were plenty of cicadas emerging. After fledging I have only seen the flock twice however the nest is still intact, even after receiving over 300mm of rain in January and February.

Rob McCosker.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on Wednesday 23 April 2008

Opening: The meeting opened at 7.40pm with Rob McCosker standing in for the president, Kris Carnell, who was away. A particular welcome was given to our guest speaker, Emlyn Creevy.

Attendance: There were 14 present at the meeting and 3 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26th March 08 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Patience James seconded by Rod Hutchin. Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

1. Plaque in Heritage Park

Millie had asked about what had happened to the replacement memorial plaque in Heritage Park and Rob said this had been erected.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

1. Chinchilla Field Nats. – *Urimbirra* – April 08
2. Society for Growing Aust Plants – Warwick Branch – April newsletter
3. Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club – *Darling Downs Naturalist* – April 08
4. Commonwealth Bank – statement for April
5. Gambling Community Benefit Fund – grant application was unsuccessful

This correspondence was accepted on the motion of Lyn Marriott, seconded by Halina Kruger. Carried.

Financial Statement from 26/3/08 to 23/4/08

Cash book balance as at 23/3/08	\$540.66
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Receipts:

Nil

Expenditure:

Nil

Cash book balance as at 23/4/08	\$540.66
Plus outstanding cheque for photocopier	\$68.21
Less outstanding cash receipts	\$30.00

Agrees with bank balance as at 23/4/08

\$502.45

Accounts for payment:

Total Technology \$68.21

This financial statement was accepted on the motion of Nanette Jurd, seconded by Halina Kruger. Carried.

Outing Reports:

1. Friday

There was no Friday outing this month as Michael Mueller was still away.

2. Castle Rock, Girraween National Park – Sunday 20 April

This was organised by Nanette Jurd and 7 people attended with 3 making it to the top of Castle Rock. Unfortunately, on the way there, Shirley had a fall and cut her head which was patched up before she returned to the car park. There were still a few flowers out and the group encountered an echidna.

Pre-outings:

1. Weekday

Rob McCosker offered to lead an outing to Donnelly's Castle on Friday 9 May, leaving Weeroona Park at 9am. Liz will organise to send members on the email list a notice about this.

2. Outing on 25 May

Rob McCosker was to lead an outing to Poverty Point in northern NSW but access to this area is now difficult. Instead, he will take it to the Girraween Environmental Lodge where some new tracks have been constructed.

3. Next program – 28 May

This was to be Michael Mueller but this will have to be confirmed when he returns from interstate. Details will be in the next newsletter.

Specimens:

1. Glenys had a couple of cicada shells picked up on Sunday's walk. Members commented that they were very prevalent this year.

2. Liz reported seeing a wedge-tailed eagle almost pick up a small dog off the road near the Leyburn State Forest recently. It was only their yells that prevented the eagle from striking the dog and lifting it up.

General Business:

1. Peter Andrewartha said he did not get the most recent newsletter emailed to him and asked if the distribution list could be checked.

2. Patience said there was a new exhibition coming to the Art Gallery called "Creepy Creatures" and encouraged members to go along and see it.

The meeting closed at 8.07pm and was followed by a very informative presentation by Emlyn Creevy on safety in the bush. Emlyn is involved with the local State Emergency Service and is also a workplace, health and safety officer at the Stanthorpe Hospital. He is a past member of the Brisbane Bushwalkers Club and has been involved in a number of bush search and rescue operations.