



# The Granite Belt Naturalist



Mail Address: Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc, PO Box 154, Stanthorpe Qld. 4380

WEB SITE: [www.granitenet.com.au/groups/environment/fieldnats/](http://www.granitenet.com.au/groups/environment/fieldnats/)

## AIMS OF THE CLUB

### Fund

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*

month

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

## WEB EDITION

We would like to know if you have downloaded this and are not a member of the Field Nats. Please email [fieldnats@granitenet.com.au](mailto:fieldnats@granitenet.com.au), thank you.

**Meetings** 4th Wednesday of each month at QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe, at 7.30pm

**Outings:** The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each

(Friday outings as pre-arranged)

**Subs:** Single \$15.00, Family \$25.00 per annum, July to June

## CLUB OFFICE BEARERS - 2007/2008

President	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents	Michael Mueller	46811421
	Rob McCosker	46835371
Secretary	Halina Kruger	46835206
Treasurer	Nanette Jurd	46837119
Newsletter Editor	Michael Jefferies	46812389
Magazine Committee	Wendy & Neil Donges	46812913
Publicity Officer	Janet Hockings	46811978
Librarian	Trish McCosker	46835371
Management Committee:	President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer	

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## 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:**

**1 May 2009**

## Coming Up

**Outing; Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> 2009. *Nundubbermere Falls; Kris & Margaret Carnell.***

**Monthly Meeting; Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2009. "This Side of the Black Stump" – Rob McCosker .**

**Campout at 'Arcadia Valley Escape' 24-26th April – Rob McCosker**

**Friday Outing, May 8<sup>th</sup> . The Underground River, Kris & Margaret Carnell.**

### Pre-Outing Report – Nundubbermere Falls – 19th April 2009

Leaders: Kris & Margaret Carnell



We will leave Weeroona Park at 9.00a.m on 19th April and drive to the parking area at the top of Nundubbermere Falls where we will have morning tea. The drive should take about 45 minutes. A considerable amount of the drive is along good dirt road, from the grid where the Dingo Spur Fence crosses, and the Granite Belt ends and Traprock begins. There are good views along the way, including a vista towards Ballandean. The vegetation in the traprock is quite different from the granite, with ironbark, peach bush and western cypress. At the last gate, just above the falls, there is a good example of the hand-made twelve or thirteen wire fence, used before the invention of wire netting.

The scramble down to the Severn River bed is very steep and we drop 100 metres vertical in about 130 metres, according to the GPS. A stick could be a help on the way down unless you're second cousin to a mountain goat. However, by taking care and moving slowly it should be okay. It took us 15 minutes to get to the bottom.



We walk down Monday Creek and look at the base of the falls, before crossing over the river to the base of a red, rocky cliff inhabited by raptors of some sort. There is an obvious fault line which has some interesting caves. From there we will walk downstream at Nats pace, looking at the water holes (good for fishing). This part of the walk is quite easy. We disturbed tadpoles, tiny fish and water striders and saw yellow-rumped thornbills, a white-throated treecreeper and willy wagtails. When we feel it's time for lunch we will have our break and after lunch we will return to Monday Creek. Depending on the time, we will walk a little way up the creek, which was dry at the time of the pre-outing.

It's then time to make our way back to the car park. It took about the same time to go up as it did to go down. We rate this section as 9 out of 10. It was "breath-

taking" but worth it, and there was plenty of time to stop to admire the view. It could be a good day for birds, as well as the ones mentioned, we also saw flocks of crested pigeons, eastern rosellas and crows. A pair of Richard's pipits sat on the fence near one of the gates as we went through. The river wasn't running on the

pre-outing, so if we are lucky enough to have a decent fall of rain between now and the outing plans may have to change slightly. We will carry water and our lunch down to the river and have morning and afternoon tea at the cars. For more information ring Kris Carnell on 46835268.

### **Camp out at 'Arcadia Valley Escape' 24-26th April**

<http://www.arcadiavalleyescape.com/>

This is an update on the Nats Trip to the fertile Arcadia Valley, just east of the well known Carnarvon NP. I was rather optimistic about it being a comfortable day's drive. I thought so because on our trip last year we left from Toowoomba and arrived there at about 5.00pm after stopping a few times along the way. After looking at our trip notes I discovered we left at 6.15am from Toowoomba, so the 700 km trip is a bit much for one day. Consequently Trish and I have decided to make a more leisurely trip to Surat on the first day (turn off Warrego Hwy at Dalby onto the Moonie Hwy then take the Surat Dev Rd via Tara to Surat), staying at the caravan park overnight and looking at some of the town's attractions. They have a Cobb & Co museum and a large fish aquarium with all the fish stocked in the nearby Balonne River. Caravan park has powered sites for \$17.50. We should then be able to reach the campsite at Arcadia Valley Escape in good time to set up camp and spend some time exploring the nearby dam and ponded pasture dams.

The following day (Saturday 25th) we plan to travel to Lake Nuga Nuga, returning to camp for lunch then exploring the property tracks (4WD with 10 gates!) to Barra Dam, where Rowan assures me there is a different range of birds to be seen from those in the valley. Finally on Sunday, for those with the time and energy, we will tackle the 12km walk up onto the escarpment. This itinerary is very tentative and may change to suit conditions.

To reach the property drive north from Injune for 38km and turn right into the Arcadia Valley Road. After 16km stop at the Lonesome NP Lookout before continuing for another 24km to the 'Arcadia Valley Escape' on the left just past the "Sunnyholt" entrance. From the north, drive down the Carnarvon Dev. Road from Rolleston and continue past the Carnarvon NP for 22km then turn left into Mulcahy's Road. Turn right after 24km into Arcadia Valley Road and continue about 16km to 'Arcadia Valley Escape' on your right.

We will camp next to the cottage – A campfire and BBQ are available. Powered site - \$18/night/2 person; Unpowered site - \$7/night/person.

Arcadia Valley Escape owner, Rowan Peart, apologises for the past lack of communications, as his phone was disconnected while he moved house.

Outing leader – Rob McCosker Ph 46835371 Email [robinmcc@halenet.com.au](mailto:robinmcc@halenet.com.au)

### **WELCOME**



We welcome our newest member, Lucy Mary Morwenna Cameron, born 27<sup>th</sup> February with our apologies for not recording this in the last newsletter. We hope to see her out 'walking' as Curtis did!



## **OUTING REPORTS**

### **Harrigans's Lane to Basket Swamp. 6<sup>th</sup> March**

Two 4WD loads set off to Harrigan's Lane where we stopped to take in the splendid view to the east before the descent. We had a leisurely slow drive down the steep decent to Boonoo Boonoo River, passing a few eucalypt plantings before stopping for a cuppa by the bridge. There was plenty of water running in the river at the pre outing but a much reduced flow by the time we got there as can be seen in the before and after photos below. We explored the holes down river and enjoyed the beauty so close to home

The road meanders casually around the hills giving some great views of the mountains to the east as well as the tracks below and the beautiful green countryside beyond. From the river we went through cattle country passing gates and grids; there was a crew hard at work putting in new grids along Gilgurry Rd and Boobrook Rd. It was interesting to see the spread of eucalyptus plantings in this country. At one creek crossing we had a glimpse of a snipe flying off.



We turned right into Linbrook Road which took us back up the mountain winding its way to the top where we stopped for lunch at Basket Swamp in the camping ground. - Halina Kruger.

### **SCENIC HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MT. NORMAN ROAD 22 March 2009**

The day dawned as one of those typical Granite Belt autumn days which are the envy of coast dwellers. Other commitments for members of our club depleted the attendance to just nine participants in four high clearance four wheel drives. We probably did a little more exploring of 'secret areas' because of the smaller number in the group. The condition of the Mt. Norman road had not changed substantially since the pre-outing last month except that the clay on the track had dried out and did not stick to our mudguards. The water diversion ramps on the road were still high enough to deter the use of 'softer 4WD's'.

Everything went according to plan with the climbing of Billygoat Hill for grand views of the main granite features of Girraween National Park. I think we all agreed that this outlook is probably one of the best in the Park. It was easy to spend a couple of hours picking out the features which lay before us in the clear atmosphere. Much time was spent sitting around a waterhole in the granite right on top of Billygoat Hill where we were surprised to see some sort of crustacean swimming around happily. The question arose: how did they get there? (*it is said the resistant stages such as eggs can be blown on the wind and carried on the feet of birds, they are widespread in ephemeral granite pools. Fairy shrimps are often found; see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairy\\_shrimp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairy_shrimp). Ed.*)

Just before lunch we made an intimate inspection of the tremendous lightning blow on the western side of Billygoat Hill. Rob and Trish McCosker found a crevice between a couple of large granite slabs at the top of the area from which several slabs had been exploded by lightning. With a little coercion most of us crawled

through and found another way out. We theorised that the lightning might have hit a large tree which had lodged itself in a crack in the granite. The force of the tree expanding may well have been enough to tip these massive slabs down a slope to where they sit today. Lunch was taken on a lovely grassed area beside Racecourse Creek.

The rest of the day we walked some little traversed exposed areas a short distance to the south where, other than the views back to Billygoat Hill we found some very interesting volcanic dykes and 'sills'. These will be better described by our "resident" geologist David Wilson who was suitably impressed enough to make a photographic study of them. (*see article below; Ed.*) Wildflowers were scarce and it was not until later in the afternoon that we could observe wildlife. Other than a short walk along a fire trail to a natural crossing of Paling Yard Creek which was just starting to flow again the outing came to an end with members returning home by their chosen route. - Errol Walker.

## Sills and Dykes

The recent Sunday outing provided an opportunity to view a collection of dykes and sills at an unnamed peak south of Billy Goat Hill. Although dykes are generally common throughout Girraween, their horizontal counterparts, sills, are not as easily detected.

Granite is categorised as a plutonic rock. It is named after Pluto, the God of the Underworld. Deep underground, sometimes to a distance of tens of kilometres, magma intrudes into the surrounding country rock as a series of plutons. Collectively, these plutons form a massive intrusion called a batholith. The New England batholith, of which Girraween is a small part, is made up of just such a collection of plutons. At its longest point, it extends for around 300km. While you gasp at that, batholiths in Canada and Chile each extend for over 1000km! The massive intrusion that creates a batholith over time will raise the land above it producing a mountain range or tableland. Subsequent weathering and erosion will eventually reveal the batholith. The plutons may take thousands, maybe even tens of thousands of years to cool, in the process producing large crystals. The resulting rocks are the familiar pink, silica-rich granite grading through to its darker, less silica-rich cousin, gabbro. This rock is often termed black granite.



The cooling of the plutons and pressure from surrounding rocks allow cracks to develop. The fractures will provide the opportunity for more magma to intrude into the cracks, quite possibly widening them in the process. Because these intrusions can cool much quicker than the surrounding matrix, they are denied the opportunity to develop the larger crystals of their host rock. As a consequence, their crystal size is typically much smaller. Vertical intrusions into cooling plutons are called dykes. If the intrusions are roughly horizontal, they are named sills. As the Girraween dykes and sills share a similar composition, they weather at the same rate as the surrounding rock. This makes their identification difficult. An intrusion that is

flush with its host rock gives little indication of its actual angle. Also, if tectonic activity has tilted the rock, a sill may very easily be standing on its end resembling a dyke! For what ever reason, the sills that I believe we witnessed recently have betrayed their origin due to a slight variation in the weathering of the host rock. Some of the more resistant intrusions protruded from the surrounding rock for several centimetres in a near horizontal direction. Unless these are dykes that have been tilted by nearly 90° I believe we were in fact viewing sills. The photo clearly shows the shallow angle at which one intrusion was protruding.

- David Wilson

**References:** Donald Duff & Arthur Holmes: Holmes' Principles of Geology Routledge 4<sup>th</sup> Edition 2004

*Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc.*

*Held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria st, Stanthorpe on Wednesday 25th March 2009.*

*Meeting opened: 7:35pm. Attendance: 17 Apologies 2 as per attendance book*

*Minutes of the previous meeting: confirmed by C Smallwood seconded by R McCosker carried*

*Business arising from the minutes: Nil*

*Correspondence:*

- 1) Qld Naturalists' Club Inc*
- 2) Society for Growing Australian Plants*
- 3) Darling Downs Naturalist*
- 4) Fassifern Field Naturalists Club Inc.*
- 5) State Library of Queensland*
- 6) The Official Journal of the Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club Inc*
- 7) Clover displays*
- 8) Total Technology Centre Pty ltd*
- 9) Australian Natural History Medallion*
- 10) CBA statement*

*Correspondence accepted on the motion of H Kruger seconded C Hockings: - Carried*

*Financial Report (see below): \$423.20*

*Outing Reports:*

*H Kruger reported on weekday outing Harrigan's Lane to Basket Swamp.*

*E Walker reported on weekend outing Billygoat Hill along Mt Norman Rd.*

*Pre-outings:*

*Week day outing: N. Jurd leading outing to Wallangarra on private property leaving at 9.00am, 3<sup>rd</sup> April.*

*R McCosker; Campout (23 April) detailed changes are given above in the pre-outing section.*

*Weekend outing: K & M Carnell to lead outing 'Below Nundubbermere Falls', 9.00am on 19th April 2009.*

*General Business*

*Community Website going well. Official Launch on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March.*

*Printing of newsletter to be done by M Jefferies at cost using duplex laser printer; cancellation of Canon contract for photocopier.*

*P Kerr reminded members of Chinchilla Field Nats Fungi Book.*

*Meeting Closed 8pm. Next Meeting: 22 April 2008*

***Presentation:***

Errol Walker on his trip to Galapagos Islands – very stark country side but well organized for tourism. Wonderful shots of the wildlife on the island and very interesting information about the island and it's inhabitants.

***FINANCIAL STATEMENT for March from 26 / 2 /09 to 25 / 3 /09***

*Cash Book balance as at 25 / 2 / 09*                      \$547.64

*Receipts:-*

*Subscriptions \$ 15.00*

*Room rent collection \$*

*Wildflower books \$*

*Interest \$*

*\$15.00*

*Expenditure:-*

*Magazine postage \$ 75.00*

*Photocopier \$ 64.44*

*Room Rent \$*

*\$139.44*

*Cash Book balance as at 25 /3 / 09*                      \$423.20

***Bank reconciliation***

*Cash Book balance as at 25 /3 /09*

*Plus outstanding cheques \$0.00*

*Less outstanding cash receipts*                      \$0.00

*Agrees with bank balance as at 25 / 3/ 09*                      \$423.20

*Accounts for payment:-NIL*

*Proposed by: Nanette Jurd; Seconded by: Rob McCosker*

### Editors Notes

Firstly I should say it would be very handy to have some notes to put into the newsletter and on the website that were of general interest. I recall a note by Rob McCosker recently along those lines. Not only would they allow me, as editor, to make the best use of the space we might otherwise have to leave blank in this newsletter (which is a shame I think) but also it would spread the word very widely given that these newsletters are widely available and now, being on the web, are available for visitors there to read.

**Web site news.** <http://www.granitenet.com.au/>

The GraniteNet web site in its new form was officially launched on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March by our local Member Laurence Springborg at the QCWT. He gave an interesting and entertaining talk on the use of technology both from a personal family view and as a politician and how it was a useful tool but not the only way to communicate.

On our site I would draw the attention of readers to the 'Links' page:-  
<http://www.granitenet.com.au/groups/environment/fieldnats/links>

I have put on there some links to other web site I think may be of use and/or interest but if anyone has others that they would like included please let me know. One I found recently was to Andrew Isles Natural History Books which seem to have a very good collection <http://www.andrewisles.com>

Michelle Conkas, who is the web administrator, has made a number of changes to the main site so that it both looks better and works better. In particular under the the calender on the front the forthcoming events are in an easy to read strip down the right-hand side. If you click on one of interest it gives more detail. With ours there is also a link to the 'Upcoming excursions' page in our section so that you can quickly see the detail.

The web site seems to be well regarded and is kept as up-to-date as I soon as I get new information and have the time. This is made easier when people send me emails with the information as an attachment as I can directly put the text into Google Docs from where I can copy and edit on line without having to open a word processing program. If anyone is interested in using Google Docs for documents you need to share with others I'd be happy to show how to use them.

I now send notification emails to all on my list if there is a major change to the web site. I am happy to delete persons from this list if it is a nuisance or include other not already on. *Michael Jefferies*