

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB

P.O. BOX 154
STANTHORPE, Q., 4380.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1979-1980

PRESIDENT	COLIN HOCKINGS
VICE PRESIDENTS	TOM ARCHER
	ROBIN MC COSKER
SECRETARY	DAVID PFRUNDER
TREASURER	DOT ARCHER
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YOUTH OFFICER	TOM DUNN
BUSHWALKING OFFICER	ERROL WALKER
COMMITTEE	DON LIGHTFOOT
	DESLEY MC DONAGH
	LYLE THOMPSON
	JOHN O'DONNELL
	FRANK WILKINSON

MEETINGS - 4th WEDNESDAY of each MONTH at C.W.A. ROOMS at 8 P.M.

OUTINGS - Each SUNDAY PRECEDING the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of the Month.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

SINGLE - \$4.00

FAMILY - \$6.00

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.

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GENERAL MEETING, WEDNESDAY MARCH 26th. 1980, HELD AT C.W.A.Opening Time 8.20 pm.Present. 16.Apologies. 6.

The President extended a welcome to members and visitors and thanked all for their attendance despite the blackouts. Apologies entered in the attendance book.

Motion:- Moved Mr. F. Wilkinson seconded by Mr J. O'Donnell that the apologies be accepted... Carried.

Minutes of the general meeting held Wednesday February 27th. 1980 Taken as Read in the Newsletter.

Motion. Moved by Mrs. J. Harslett and seconded by Mrs. A. Wilkinson that the minutes "Taken as Read" be confirmed. ..Carried.

Inward Correspondence:-

1. Letter from Mr. Mervyn Fletcher, in which he makes comments and suggestions about members attaining greater educational value from lectures by guest speakers.
2. Details of the Second World Wilderness Conference to be held in Cairns in week 8th. to 13th. June 1980.
3. Press Statements from Honourable Gibbs Minister for National Parks
4. Newsletters, Toowoomba Field "ats. Club, University of Queensland Speleological Soc., Richmond Valley Naturalists Club, and National Parks Assoc.

Outward Correspondence:-

1. Two letters to the John Oxley Library, one advising that our news letter is still being published and that future issues will be forwarded to the library, and two Mrs. D. Archer advised the list of back issues forwarded to the library.
2. Letter to the Youth Centre Management Committee advising that the Club would be agreeable for their representatives to attend our meetings.
3. Letter to Radio Station 4QS. for advertising our March meeting and outing.

Motion:- Moved Mr. D. Pfrunder and seconded by Miss d. Mc. Donagh that the Inward Correspondence be received and the outward adopted..... Carried.

Outing Report:- Mr. Tom Archer reported that 23 adults and 6 children attended the March outing. Features for this day included Nundubbermere Station, Murphy's Creek Road, the Third Crossing, Historic Ballandean Station, and Puglises Winery. The leader for the outing was Cec Curr and he would like expressed thanks and appreciation to the manager and to the owner of Ballandean Station for allowing members to visit the historic homestead.

April Outing:- Sunday, April 20th. 1980, to Wilson's Peak.

Campout, Long Weekend early May. Date 3rd., 4th., and 5th. May.

Location:- Bunya Mountains.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES CONTINUED:-

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday April 23rd., C.W.A. Rooms at 8 pm. After meeting programme, "A selection of topical films".

TREASURER'S REPORT:- Balance Feb 27th.1980..... \$146.40.
 Income for month. Rent collected 27.2.80. \$6.00
 March 23rd.80/ \$12.00
 Total..... \$18.00

Expenditure:- Feb. Magazine Postage \$5.83,
 Feb. Room Rent: \$5.00
 Total.. \$10.83.

Bank Balance 26.3.80..... \$153558

Accounts passed for payment

Postal a/c March. \$5.70.
 Room Rent March .. \$5.00
 New receipt Book.. .85
 Postage to John Oxley
 Library .70
 Printing Nov. Dec. Feb
 Magazines.. \$9.00
 Mail Box a/c \$16.00.

Motion:- Moved Mrs. Dot Argher and seconded by Mr. Tom Archer that the treasurer's report be received and the accounts be passed for payment..... Carried.

The Meeting closed at 8.50pm.

GUEST SPEAKER:- Guest Speaker, Miss Desley Mc. Donagh presented a most interesting programme with her showing of slides of New Guinea, New Ireland and New Britain. The presentation was most enjoyable with members becoming quite involved with Desley's commentary and screening.

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A THOUGHT PROVOKING LOOK AT NEW GUINEA.

At our last meeting, Desley Mc. Donagh's programme of New Guinea and adjacent areas was very much enjoyed. She presented an interesting insight into the areas she visited, and not just from the tourist aspect. Her two trips were made with deeper perception than the usual traveller. One trip was as part of a working party with a building project at a mission station. The other was to stay with her brother, who is a geologist and was with an off-shore oil drilling rig in the New Guinea area. Thus Desley became more part of the life, and had a deeper understanding of some of the problems and the cultures, and peoples. This coupled with a selection of slides from both trips, slides which were artistic and telling in their photography, plus the good natured fellowship and humour of her fellow members of long standing, made a very happy and interesting evening. Desley artfully speeded up her programme, at just the right juncture, to dodge the blackouts. Everyone, I'm sure came home feeling, they had had their interests stimulated, in a most pleasant and relaxing manner. Thanks Desley.

Jean Harslett.

APRIL 1980.

Last month we dealt with some of the alternative powers as researched for us by Mr. Brian Mc. Donagh:- Continued are some other methods.

Ethanol

We are being deluged by ethanol publicity at the moment. Alcohol has been used to power many things, from cars to stoves to D T's for many years. Brazil hopes to have its transport system 100% on alcohol by 1995, produced from sugar cane and casava. Brazil is blessed with much, well watered land, but whether the replacement of millions of acres of forest with sugar cane is a good idea is another thing.

Alcohol has been used at least twice for long periods in Australia, mixed with petrol without anyone knowing, but the petrol alcohol blend (Gasahol) has one particular problem, water dissolves in the alcohol causing poor running. One article I read claimed that petrol engines run perfectly on 80% alcohol and 20% water, while diesel engines do likewise with the addition of a small quantity of another additive. It has been suggested that farmers could grow some of their own sugar beet. Making alcohol fuel from grain is more complicated, as the starches have to be converted to sugar before fermentation. To add only 10% alcohol to our petrol would need to double our sugar crops or to increase the grain crops by 40%.

Methanol. Methyl-alcohol can be made by fermenting woody materials, (bagesse, sawdust etc.) This has all the virtues of ethanol, plus some of its own, but we need to double our forest areas now, to make methanol, in quantities of any value, of contribution to liquid fuel 20 years hence. However Methanol is easily made from both natural gas & coal, & may be a stop gap fuel until people grow legs again.

Methane. One of the principal ingredients of natural gas, easily made by fermentation of organic wastes. There are a few pilot schemes, using piggery & feedlot manure. Can be used for heating & driving engines, but limitations as gas only. Some cities collect methane from sewerage treatment plants, & use it to drive generators, a small contribution to the power grid. Bacterial conversion to methane is in two stages, ketones and high alcohol which are good fuels & liquid. Work is being done to try and stop fermentation at this stage, to extract liquid fuels.

Hydrogen. The perfect fuel, simple & cheap to make, store, efficient and clean to run, but a gas. Wind or solar driven generators can produce hydrogen by electrolytic decomposition of water, and when it burns it produces only water. However to compress it to a density in a cylinder (for use say in a tractor) one had to use nearly as much power as you can get out of it. A cylinder to contain 1/3 as much energy as 13 litres of petrol would weigh 1/4 ton.

Atomic. Not much more can be said about this except that every problem caused by atomic reactors have been caused by human error. The biggest problems appear to be the continuous discharge of heat, some raise the water temperature of the rivers used for cooling up to 15F. The biggest real danger seems to be the disposal of radioactive wastes. The best suggestion I've heard was that of Mr. Gordon Brown at one of our NATS. meetings, some years ago. Use a space shuttle (still being designed and built) to dump the stuff outside the Van Allen belts where the basic radiation is greater than that of radioactive wastes, anyway!!.

If we continue to burn fossil fuels at a continuing and ever -in-

Mr. Brian Mc. Donagh's notes cont:-

-creasing rates, we convert much fixed carbon to carbon-dioxide, the amount of CO₂ has increased measurably in the last 50 years. If this continues we could get one of three effects.

1. The so called "hot-house" effect. The earth will be inhibited in re-radiating heat and might and will gradually warm up melting the ice-caps and drowning all the land below 200' above sea-level, including most of the cities of the world.
2. The CO₂ will restrict the sun's rays, causing another ice age, freezing us all!
3. Or it will have no effect.

The really sick joke of this, is that each of these ideas are supported by academics with impeccable qualifications, which just goes to prove how little we do know.

It seems what we really need is a combination of several research breakthroughs.

2. A cheap, effective method of compressing hydrogen so that a reasonable quantity of "canned energy" would be safe and portable.
3. An electrical storage battery with 100 times the capacity/weight ratio of the current lead-acid battery, then electrical road vehicles would be practical.
4. People please stop wasting fuel.

Brian Mc. Donagh.

Thank you Brian for all the preparation for these two talks and for the thought provoking material, which was shown by the active participation by your audience.

BIRD NOTES.

Dry times usually bring to light some interesting bird observations. When five Red-necked Avocets took up residence on our dam for a week from 22:3:1980. several people about the property immediately noticed them. They are both striking in appearance and handsome. Related Avocets are found throughout the world but the Red-necked Avocet is peculiar to the Australian region. However this is probably why several of the people here felt they had seen an "old friend". A couple of its common names, the "painted lady", "scooper" and "the cobbler" relate to some of its characteristics, the former for its beauty, sharp black and white colouring which we associate with the crisp clean appearance of the Pied Stilts, or Black-winged Stilt. However, where the stilt has very bright red legs the avocet sports soft blue-grey legs which almost appear as if they are elegantly stockinged. The Avocet also has a rich chestnut brown head and neck, hence the "painted lady". The other two common names refer to their remarkable slender bill which is thin and prominently upcurved. This recording at "Mountain View" Amiens is the first I have for this district.

A flock of 10 King Parrots have frequented our garden and adjacent areas for the past three months, and they are a striking and colourful addition. Firstly they made a very good job of chewing up the Angophora fruits, and laterly the various berries, the privet berries getting first priority.

Jean Harslett.

APRIL 1980.

NOTES FROM LEADER COLIN HOCKINGS FOR APRIL OUTING.DIRECTIONS TO WILSON'S PEAK.DATE. SUNDAY 20th. April 1980.LEADER. MR. DOUG BINNS.TIME. MEETING PLACE , BORDER FENCE 10.00am.DIRECTIONS.

Proceed to Killarney and continue 3.1 km to a "T" intersection. (travelling via Liston, instead of by Warwick, this turn comes up Stanthorpe side of Killarney, without going into Killarney) This "T" intersection is on the Legumeroad and will be signboarded "Boonah via "The Head". Along it and at 6.8km pass Queen Mary's Falls and Kiosk. Continue on, on gravel road for 8.5 km to where an excellent view of Wilson's Peak is obtained. 2km past the look-out you come on to narrow bitumen for a steep descent of 2km. Proceed a further 2km to a "T" junction, turn right and continue .7km to another intersection. Go straight ahead over the grid on "Boonah via Teviot Range " road. In 2km the Border Fence on right leaves the road. This is the meeting place. Try to be there at 10.00 am. If travelling via Warwick from Stanthorpe allow 1 hour 45 minutes travelling time. Member Doug Binns travels a long way to attend our outings from Urbenville, so hope there is good support for this outing.

PROPOSED CAMP, LABOR DAY WEEKEND; (3, 4, 5th May Bunya Mountains)
Please contact Col Hockings, re proposed participation, at the April Meeting, or before Phone 811978.

Depending on numbers a decision will be made, as to whether or not the camp will take place.

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QUESTION OF IDENTIFICATION re OWL.

There is some question by a couple of members, keep on their birds as to whether the owl seen on the Mountain Park outing was in fact a masked owl or a very well plumaged Boobook owl. Notes on facial colouring suggest it was dark. Did anyone get a photograph? For two reasons this would be good, one to assist with positive identification, or better still good photographs are required of the Masked Owl, as few are in existence.

Ed.

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MARCH OUTING.

The March outing the responsibility for which was taken on by Tom Archer and being a good organizer, in the best traditions he delegated it to someone else, this being Cec Curr, who knew the area well. It got off to a good start, with the arrival of two new family groups, from Thulimbah and Severnlea, respectively as well as Ruth and Graham Greenup as well as old friend, much travelled Doug Binns. The former represent, well, the teaching world, we are delighted to have your company, and may you enjoy ours. Tom's report is in the minutes. Briefly, and looking back, it could be summed up as, good fellowship, new friends, a good deal of new country seen, drought, dust, history from bora ring round, early graves to early grazing and homesteads, all washed down, dust included, successfully at Angelo's Winery. Apple juice and Angelo's new pasta rised grape juice received pleasing priority. Angelo gave us a good run down on his industry. Thanks to Cec, for arrangements he in turn thanks, Angelo & Michael Pillar, late'er of Ballandean Station.