

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB

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

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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 APRIL 23rd. 1980.

Opening time 8.30.pm.

Present 14..... Apologies: 4.

The President extended a warm welcome to those present.

APOLOGIES. 4. Listed in the apology book.

Motion Moved by Mrs.J.Stevenson and seconded by Mr.M.Davies that the apologies be accepted..... Carried.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY MAR.26th.1980.

"Taken as read in the newsletter."

MOTION: -Moved Mrs.F.Wilkinson and seconded by Mr.F.Wilkinson that the minutes "Taken as read in the newsletter be confirmed..... Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:-

INWARD:- 1. Letter from the Oxley Library acknowledging receipt of back issues of the 'Granite Belt Naturalists.'

2. A registration form for a five day identification course on mosses & liverworts from the Monash University Victoria.

3. Letter from the Dept. of Education advising that we must make application for registration as a borrower before we can borrow films.

4. Newsletter Conservation

5. " Bush Rescue Association.

6. " Richmond Valley Naturalists Club.

7. " Queensland Naturalist Club.

8. " Warwick Bushwalkers Club.

OUTWARD:-

1. Letter to Radio Station 4QS advertising meeting and outing.

2. Letter to Mr.Mervyn Fletcher acknowledging his comments and suggestions relating to the value to members of guest speakers.

MOTION: -Moved Mr.D.Pfrunder and seconded by Mr.J.O'Donnell that the Inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted. .... Carried.

TREASURERS REPORT:-

Balance... 26th.March 1980..... \$153.58.

Income for March, Subscriptions..... \$11.00

April 9th, 1/2 share P.O. Box 154..... \$8.00

££

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\$172.58.

Expenditure for Month. Magazine Postage \$5.70

C.W.A. Room Rent..... \$5.00

Magazine Printing Nov.Dec.Feb. \$9.00

Rent on P.O.Box 154..... \$16.00

Receipt Book ..... 85.

Postage Oxley Library..... 70

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\$37.25

BALANCE:- April 23rd.1980..... \$135.33.

Accounts passed for payment Room Rent \$5.00; Magazine Postage \$5.26; Magazine Printing \$3.20.



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MAY 1980.

MOTION:- Moved by Mrs.D.Archer and seconded by Mr.M Davies that the treasurers report be adopted and the accounts passed for payment..... Carried.

OUTING REPORTS:-

April Outing

WILSON'S PEAK.

Leader:-

MR. DOUG.BINNS.

DATE:-

SUNDAY 20th April 1980.

Twenty-seven members and friends enjoyed this outing to Wilson's Peak on the Qld-N.S.W. border. Ten or twelve made the top. Our thanks to Mr.Doug Binns for leading this successful outing.

PROPOSED CAMP OUT

The proposed camp-out to the Bunya Mountains will be held on the weekend of the 3rd,4th. and 5th. May . For further details contact our president Mr.Colin Hockings.

MAY MONTHLY OUTING.

VENUE

TEXAS AREA.

LEADER:-

MR. LAURIE JEFFRIES.

DATE:-

SUNDAY MAY 25th.

DEPARTURE TIME

Depart Stanyhorpe about 9am to 9.30 am. dependant on your personal travelling habits, but to meet Mr.Jeffries at 10.30am. Details of planned outing,directions and a sketch map will be forwarded by Mr,Jeffries.

MAY MEETING PROGRAMME:

Wednesday 28th.May at the C.W.A. Rooms at 8.00 pm.

Guest Speakers Mr.And Mrs.Wally McKenzie.

Subject:-Slide Programme on a "Round Australia Trip."

The April Meeting Closed at 9.00pm. and the after-meeting Programme was the viewing of a film titled,"Harvest of the Seasons" from the "Ascent of Man Series from the Dept of Education.

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WILSON'S PEAK OUTING by MR.DOUG BINNS.

Wilson's Peak forms the junction of the Great Dividing Range and the Mc.Pheron's Range. It is composed of trachyte cliffs above basalt lower slopes. Trachyte is similar to, but is less silica-rich than the rhyolite of Mount Lindesay and other outcrops further east. The basaltic soils of the slopes support sub-tropical rainforest, while the poorer, skeletal soils derived from trachyte near the summit support only low scrub. It is interesting to note that rain falling on the peak can drain in one of three directions; to the Logan River via Teviot Brook, to the Clarence River via the waters of Koreelah Creek, or the Murray-Darling system via the Condamine.

At least 27 people, including, eventually, the leader, began the ascent from the south-western side, following the border-tick fence. The grade was easy at first, but steepens fairly abruptly, with a final scramble up an almost precipitous rock face to reach the summit.

Crabapple ( Schizomeria ovata ) is a very common tree in the first section of the forest, but is soon replaced by Booyong ( Heritiera actinophylla ) and Giant Stinger ( Dendrocnide excelsa ) as dominants,



WILSON'S PEAK REPORT by MR. DOUG BINNS. Cont.

with Flame Trees ( *Brachychiton acerifolium* ) and Rosewood ( *Dysoxylum fraserianum* ) as common associates. There is an interesting patch of Brush Box ( *Tristania conferta* ) near the base of the steeper section with only scattered trees of this species on the lower slopes. Hoop Pine is very common on the steeper slopes. The forest on the rocky ridges nearer the summit consists of stunted and gnarled rainforest trees, with branches almost completely covered in bunches of hanging mosses, a testimony of the frequent mountain mists. Common species here include *Stenocarpus salignus* (Scrub Beefwood), *Pittosporum undulatum* (Sweet Pittosporum) and *Baloghia lucida* (Scrub Bloodwood). The view from the summit is somewhat obscured by dense scrub of Lemon-scented Tea-Tree ( *Leptospermum petersonii* ) and *Prostanthera ovalifolia* (the Oval Mintbush)

Of particular interest, vegetation-wise, were the bright orange berries of *Elaeodendron australe*, (Red Olive Plum), the large clump of the epiphytic fern, *Asplenium falcatum* and the particularly large specimen of Brown Beech ( *Pennantia cunninghamii* ) in the middle of the track. The orange-red berries of *Cordyline fruticosa* (Palm Lily) also attracted attention.

Naturally, the descent was much quicker than the ascent, with, on occasions, the feet attempting to descend at a somewhat greater rate than the body, a situation which provided comic relief for observers. The walk demonstrated that the tick fence is not totally useless, after all.

My thanks to all those who participated..... Doug Binns.

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And our thanks to you Doug for a most interesting report and for your expert knowledge, so willingly and interestingly explained to those who loitered and listened. Most of us are at sea with rainforests and their diverse flora, and your explanations and observations were much appreciated.

One or two observations by some who didn't quite reach the top may be of interest. Several of the berry-feeding species of birds were observed, as well as some very colourful seeds, which unconsumed, had dropped to the path below, also the handsome pods of Crow's Ash ( *Flindersia* Sp.) spined and fluted and polished inside, all in one attractive 'pack'. A couple of large very flattened land snails had their design admired and pondered upon. Probably the most frequently seen bird was the yellow robin, which quickly returned to the trees bordering the track, after the human stampede had passed. Lovely splashes of yellow, poised precariously, on the sides of scrub trees lit the way. Fuscus Honeyeaters both visible and audible were enjoyed and Satin Bower-birds observed.

On the descent, on the same track as we proceeded going up, signs of quite a recent battle were noted. The attack had apparently taken place, during the period of going up and down. There was a "flurry" of fur, some very fresh internal organs and fresh blood strewn across the ground. Neither the 'attacker' nor the 'attacked' identity was really established. By the nature of denseness of the scrub above, it was decided the 'attacker' arrived terrestrially, and not by air. The fur may have belonged to one of the glider clan. However, the scene of the battle made us think about the pulsing life and duels, which go on, constantly, though not a great deal of life was observed..... J. Harslett



Popular members Harry and Joan Stevenson have a son exploring interesting parts of the world, and they are kindly sharing one of his more unusual trips with us.

DOUGLAS STEVENSON'S TREK THROUGH THE HIMALAYAS.. APRIL 1980.

Nothing to do this afternoon. I'm sitting on top of a Tibetan stone house, behind a chimney, as the cold afternoon wind has really set in. Manang is a sizeable village of several hundred houses clustered closely together at 12,000 feet. Just across the valley are several peaks over 24,000 feet - Annapurna 3 being one. Won't try to describe the impressiveness of the scene, but simply that the mountains are just there, not over there. A rather goodly glacier comes down to the blue lake just near the village. On my right is an old woman, who has been sitting there all day. In one hand she has a prayer wheel which doesn't stop and beads in the other. Her clothes are homespun. Every house has its prayer flag and in this village, as in all the high villages there are few people to be seen, but there is an incredible atmosphere of peace over everything. It's 3.30, but even with two jumpers and a wind breaker it is decidedly chilly. The old woman has just gone down the notched log which are stair ladders in these parts. Tomorrow I will go 3 hours up the valley to a hut which then leaves me 10 hours to go over the 17,800 feet Tharong Pass to the religious centre of Muktanath. That is, if there isn't any snow. Earlier many had been here for 5 days waiting for favourable weather, and many had to turn back. These are hard people.

Houses here are relatively open, possibly to let out the smoke from the open clay fireplaces. Plank beds or more generally just the floor - water is freezing. No vehicles up here - just feet. The trail is a main route so plenty of people walking between villages and lots of porters. Loads are carried with the headband - 4X5 Gal. drums of kerosene plus personal gear is common - 160 + lbs - 110 KG is about maximum. The trail is covered with rocks and for me and my 25 lb. it is frequently just one foot in front of the other and many pauses for breath and water. The porters have bare feet. At night you stop in tea houses or people's homes, where you buy a meal and sleep on the floor with the family. Rice (huge quantities), different seed and a bit of potato is a standard meal. Tea is like dirty water with lots of sugar and a little milk.

Day 4 and 5 the trail went along the river gorge through really rugged high country. Occasional glimpses of the peaks and real ups and downs in the trail. When it crossed the river it was by suspension or local wooden bridges. There is a sizable population. Many hillsides are terraced and villages way, way, up where there is some soil. If you could only see where many school children come down from and return each day - obviously nothing for them. Higher up is pine forest - and much cooler to walk through, in the not so hot heat of the day.. Always going up!. The river is fast and always getting smaller with each stream and waterfall passed.

On the 5th day I saw Annapurna 2, 26,041 ft. and lots of other peaks, and some of the biggest rock faces which I will ever see, are frequent.

(At this high point, both physically & metaphorically, we will leave you, and continue in the June issue.) J.H.



