

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

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1982 - 1983

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	John O'Donnell
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<u>BUSHWALKING OFFICER</u>	Ray Marsden
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	Colin Hockings David Pfrunder Tom Archer Ailsa Wilkinson Lyle Thompson Jean Harslett

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

OUTINGS - Each SUNDAY PRECEDING the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of the
at 8 P.M.
Month.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single - \$5.00

Family - \$8.00

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 NEWSPAPER.

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD 23rd. MARCH 1983.PRESENT 27.APOLOGIES 4.

The President welcomed all to the meeting ,especially our visitors and guest speakers.

MINUTES:-

That the minutes be taken as read was moved by R.Marsden and seconded by T.Archer Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:- Inward was received from:-

1. National S.W.Coalition, re S.W.Tasmania.
2. Richmond Valley Nats...re Easter Camp.
- 3.Press Statements National Park..Protection of wildlife.
- 4.N.P.A.News. Vol.53. No.2 March 1983.
- 5.Q.N.C. News No. 133 April /May 1983.
- 6.Darling Downs Nats Magazine Vol.5 No.4 March 1983.
- 7.

Outward was sent to:-

- 1.Richmond Valley Nats re Billyrimba.
2. 4QS re meeting and campout notice.

Moved by Jean Harslett and seconded by Frank Wilkinson that the inward correspondence be adopted and the outward endorsed... Carried.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Feb.23rd 1983 Bank Balance		\$161.70
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Receipts.

Feb.23/83. Room Rent Collection.	\$5.00	
March 2/83Sub.	<u>8.00</u>	<u>13.00</u>

\$174.00

Payments:

Feb.23/83		
Jan./Feb. Mag.Duplication	\$10.00	
Feb. Room Rent	6.00	
Jan Magazine Postage	7.50	
Feb. Magazine Postage	<u>7.67.</u>	<u>31.17</u>

March 23rd. 1983 Bank Balance	\$143.53.
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Accounts for payment.

Room Rent for March..	\$6.00
March Mag.Duplication	\$5.00
March Mag Postage..	\$9.81
Annual Rent for P.O. Box.	\$18.00

Moved by Dot Archer that the credit balance be received and accounts for Mar:Room \$6 March Duplication \$5. March Postage \$9.81 and P.O. Box rental be passed for payment seconded by Ailsa Wilkinson... Carried.

OUTING REPORT

President John gave a report on the campout to Sundown National Park which was a successful and pleasant week-end under Ranger Peter Haselgrove.

NEXT OUTING

This will be to Mr. Bernie Hickling's property and the hills behind their property under the leadership of Robin McCosker on Sunday 24th April leaving at 9am.

NEXT GUEST SPEAKER

Mr. Bill Goebel will speak on the history of Girraween National Park with reference to Alan Cunningham's trek through the Park.

BUSINESS

A letter of thanks to be sent to Ranger Peter Haselgrove for his leadership at the Sundown National Park campout. His efforts to make us welcome were beyond his duties.

A letter to be written to each of the National Parks Director and the Minister to request that amenities be erected at Sundown camp area to avoid pollution of the river and the surrounding area. Moved by Millie Marsden seconded by Jack Bennie... Carried.

The trees which Tom Archer has been nurturing are ready for planting at Storm King Dam and a working -bee has been arranged for Sunday March 27th 1983.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm. after which May and Jack Bennie gave an interesting talk with slides and a movie on their recent visit to Cape York. They stressed the need for planning, extensive planning, and enroute the need to drive with care to avoid mechanical breakdowns. Shops and "spares" are non-existent. Thank you May and Jack you showed the area and all its beauty.

Joan Stevenson

Hon. Sec.

Thanks to President for his article written by the request of the Y.M.C.A. inviting the views of other organizations on their major project for Stanthorpe. John produced what I'm sure was a thought provoking article for most readers and presented with sincerity some views very appropriate for the ideals of our Society and the population as a whole. We thank him for his honesty and sincerity of presenting views, which would not be universal. It is always good to hear a refreshing variety of views and I think this series of articles through our local press and invited by the Y.M.C.A. have been worthwhile.

J.H.

NEXT OUTING.

LOCATION: The Rocky Hills behind and on Mr. Bernie Hicklings property and Mr. Fletchers property, near Bald Mountain.

Date. Sunday 24th April 1983.

TIME. Meet 9am at Weeroona Park and depart or 9.30am. at Mr. B. Hicklings Property.. Directions below..

LEADERS. Robin Mc.Cosker assisted by Mr. Bernie Hickling.

INSTRUCTIONS: Carry water and lunch and wear good walking shoes.

The directions Robin has provided are to proceed south to the turn off to Wyberba (and National Park) follow this road to the junction just above the crossing of Accommodation Creek and Walahs Bridge. Do not go left to National Park but to ~~right~~ on the old Wallangarra Rd. winding up the hill and passed an interesting "mushroom" shaped rock (left) This is the old Nicol Gap coach road. Soon you will cross a grid on the road, proceed on and about second property on the left and Robin thinks about 6km from first turn off there will be a "NATS" sign indicating that you turn left into Bernie and Joyce Hicklings property. Try and be there by 9.30am sharp (if you want that cup of tea)

Robin asks that you bring water and a lunch that can be carried and eaten along the way. Mr. Hickling has indicated that he will join the party and show us some of the points of interest. (I've looked at those interesting rocks for years, and sad to say cannot be on this outing !)

PASPALUM

Came across an interesting little note in a Stanthorpe Border Post of eighty-one years ago (19.7.1902.)

"Paspalum grass is now being stated to be superior to the lucerne. Roots are said to go down 5 to 8 feet in good soil and it remains green in the drier summers".

It prompted me to look up its origin and found that the eminent botanist Ferdinand von Mueller introduced it to Australia from South America. in 1891. The ounce of seed was sent to the N.S.W. Director of Agriculture and he arranged to have it divided between dairy farmers along the Richmond River in northern N.S.W. and at Wollongbar. From this modest beginning the grass spread widely. For some years it was a poor seeder and was propagated by roots, but it became acclimatized and began to grow from seed.

Though not a native and certainly not appreciated by some, its sticky seeds are well known to us as walking companions, so I thought we may as well know a little more of its story.

Newsletter Editor.

SUNDOWN NATIONAL PARK ..MARCH CAMPOUT REPORT.BY JOHN O'DONNELL.

The drive out from Stanthorpe was depressing, traprock country usually looks sad, now worse than usual, and winter has'nt started yet ! The ironbarks and the tumbledown gums still look attractive. The property next to sundown was very overgrazed and the contrast with Sundown was extreme - and could have unpleasant repercussions as more and more people see that droughts are, indeed, man-made in many cases.

Most of the thirteen campers (and several dat trippers) arrived at the camping area on Saturday morning and at 11am. Peter Haselgrove gave a plan of the walks we could take.

After lunch we crossed the dry river bed and wandered along the line of apples and oaks upstream to the "Permanent Waterhole". White-eyed ducks were seen on its deep waters, and were there for the quick and the sharp-eyed, for the rest of us rocks landing in the water were the only things to cause ripples.

We then walked up the dry bed of the Ooline Creek and noticed the interesting plants of the area, confined to the deep gorges. Some such as the ooline (*Cadellia pentastylis*) wilga (*Geijera parviflora*) and the ironwood (*Acacia excelsa*) are at the wettest part of their distribution. Many other plants were at or near the driest or most westerly parts of their distribution eg. Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) Poison Peach (*Trema aspera*) Whitw. Cedar (*Melia azederach*) Brynia sp. Native Olives (*Notelea* sp.) Blackthorn (*Busaria spinosa*) Whalebone Tree (*Streblus brunonianus*) the Axehandle tree (*Aphananthe phillipensis*) and *Electryon forsthii*. There were other such rarities such as *Backhousia angustifolia*. Peter noted wryly that Herbarium staff were confused and rebellious over the pressure of some of the species.

Numbers gradually dwindled as the afternoon wore on - a few members reached the cascades - most of us were content to dawdle and soak in the spectacular gorge scenery - pine trees clinging to rocky slopes, scree slopes, different coloured rocks etc. A waterhole proved too tempting for me, pleasant to cold, though depending on depth.

Back at the camp the fires started to blaze, and the diet conscious Nats. settled down for a light dinner, a nice pizza-camp oven style, steak roast lamb with a few pots of vegetables, Ray's camp ovens were bulging with food, then we had nuts, another beaut pizza, washed down by a cup of tea and then a damper to finish the meal.

I escaped just before the sixth course to listen for nocturnal noises in the bush. And noises there were - rising and falling babbling and echoing around the hills - the sound of well fed Nats. telling tall tales near the

SUNDOWN CAMPOUT MARCH OUTING. Cont.BY. JOHN O'DONNELL.

campfire. This plus a light like a beacon took away any chance of getting lost in the timber.

On Sunday morning individuals went off on their own for pleasant pre-breakfast walks - at times the sun broke through the clouds to light up massive pine and ironbark covered slopes. One quivered at the thought of scratching a living from this ancient land.

After breakfast we walked along Mc.Allister's creek. The first point of interest was a termites nest punctured by the fruiting body of the fungus *Podaxis pistillaris*. The termites "cultivate" the fungus for food inside the mound. Gradually as we walked on, the hills closed in reminiscent of Ooline Creek. High up on the walls we saw the tangled stems of the caustic bush (*Sarcos-temma australe*). We reached a spot with a spectacular view of rock pools, a red cliff on the right and another cliff visible between the walls and away in the distance. For those who need to empty their minds of the cares of the world, this would be a good place in which to linger.

We enjoyed late morning tea in the rain - enthusiasm wasn't dampened - one could feel it had been a great weekend for all present.

Nearly sixty different birds were seen in the Park, including red capped robin, leaden flycatcher, pied triller (about the last of the period of its stay in this district) King parrot and the striking red-wing parrot, honeyeaters, mistle-toe birds in the mistletoe in the oaks, rufous whistlers in quite numbers, nankeen night herons displaying their 'nankeen' colouration and juveniles, extremely speckled, although many were seen by Jean early on Saturday morning - see a what you missed by arriving late. A wedgetail was seen flying over with a complete rabbit skin dangling, no doubt collected from where a rabbit was skinned the evening before, on the road into the park, but pleased to say outside its boundary. May Bennie tried to explain to me about the flying-fox (artificial kind) situated near the camping area. It is used by I . as an aid to measuring the rate of flow in the river. There is also a rumour that there are ideas about putting a dam wall (200ft. high !) across the Severn River.

John O'Donnell.

Golden undulating hills backed by the rich blue of the mountains, with deeper blue shadows of hidden gorges & sunlit brilliance of red cliffs caught by rising or sinking sun is how Gabriel, at sunrise and I at sunset, saw the bare hills John saw in harsher daylight, our vistas softened by gentle lighting. Gabriel told me of her enjoyment of the scene and I felt very receptive in thought, too and think it's one of Sundowns charms, its changes occasionally from harshness to softness.

J.H.