

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

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1983-1984

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VICE-PRESIDENTS	Frank Wilkinson Robin McCosker
SECRETARY	Joan Stevenson (811 009)
TREASURER	Dot Archer (811 754)
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Youth Officer	Errol Walker
BUSHWALKING OFFICER	Ray Marsden
<u>COMMITTEE</u>	Colin Hockings David Pfrunder Tom Archer Ailsa Wilkinson Lyle Thompson Roy Werner Gabriele Brown
AUDITOR	Mrs. Joan Ferris

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- \$5.00

Mag. Only Sub \$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.

THE MINUTES OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB HELD AT
THE Q.C.W.A. ROOMS ON JANURARY 25th. 1984 At 8pm.

PRESENT 20..... APOLOGIES 4.

The President welcomed all to the meeting. Some had arrived at 7.30pm to see the A.B.C. programme on the land and its preservation, and brought a small portable T.V. set.

MINUTES That the minutes be taken as read was moved by A. Wilkinson and seconded by F. Wilkinson..... Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE Inward was received from:-

1. Nat. Park re Crows Nest Camp-out and the permit.
2. Peter Haselgrove re Club offer of help; will notify.
3. Uni. of Qld. Speleological Soc. re "Down Under".
4. Nat. Parks and Wild Life 12 Press Statements.
5. Wildlife Preservation Soc. re Australia Day Bird Walk.
6. N.P.A. News Vol. 53 No 8 Jan. Vol 54 No 1
7. Darling Downs Naturalist. No. 357 Feb.
8. Richmond Valley Nats Newsletter Jan.
9. Contact.. Vol 11 No. 2 Dec. 1983.
10. 8th. Annual Report of Qld N.P.A. and Wildlife.

OUTWARD was sent to:-

1. Lawrie Jeffrey. Thanks for the Severn River Camp
 2. Peter Haselgrove re help at Sundown.
 3. Richmond Valley Nats re Acacia Plateau Outing and joining us
 4. Forestry Dept Gympie, application for Camp-out.
 5. Two to 4QS Christmas Break-up and Jan. outing and meeting.
- Moved by L. Thompson that the inward correspondence be received and the outward endorsed, seconded by R. Mc. Cosker.. Carried.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Nov. 23rd 1983 Cr. Bank Balance..... \$164.13

Receipts Nov 23 1983 Room rent 5.40.

Collection

Jan 25th. 1984 Mag. Sub. 5.00

4410.40
174.53.

Payments:-

Nov 1st. F.G. Tax 50.

Oct. 30 F.G. Tax..... 20

Nov. 23rd Room Rent 6.00

Nov 23rd. Magazine Duplication 5.00

Nov 23rd. Mag Postage..... 8.08.

Nov 23rd. Paper for the Mag. 9.00

Dec. F.G. Tax 70

Jan Cr. Balance..... 140.05

Cash on hand..... 5.00

145.05

Dot Archer moved that a credit balance of \$140.05 be received and that the following accounts be passed for payment, Magazine Postage \$8.50 Duplicating \$5.00 Rent \$6.00, seconded by Jean Harslett. Carried.

MINUTES OF THE JANURARY MEETING CONT.

Jean Harslett gave a report on the Acacia Plateau outing attended by 26, on a perfect day, but mountains very hazy. A stop was made at Maryland Station, and the history of the station told, and some of its landmarks. Great interest was shown in the outstanding pattern of the gum tree bark. Though mainly driving through the area many short stops were made at vantage points where the bunya pines and the plantation were seen, insects collected and a hyacinth orchid with a stem of 42 ins. (109cms) was found. We wondered whose worry the three dingoes on the track would be.

NEXT OUTING This is to be a camp-out to the Crow's Nest Falls area. on Feb. 18th-19th. with Ray and Millie Marsden as leaders. They advise you to take drinking water.

Next MEETING. Tentatively, we hope to have Mr. and Mrs. Wally Mc. Kenzie as our Guest Speakers.

SPECIMENS A nest of the Rufous Fantail from Acacia Plateau and three varieties of raspberries were shown. A collection box of moths wasps etc and their camouflage, two species of insects showing their likeness was very popular, also varieties seen at Acacia Plateau were displayed.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Joan Stevenson made a request that on outings that a courtesy rule be observed. The rule is that when in convoy the car behind the leader, the 2nd. car be responsible for closing the gate after the leader has opened it and when the cars are all through, that car then drops to the back of the convoy. Namely - the next car behind the leader then is responsible for closing the second gate and then dropping to the end of the convoy. Agreed.

(This is a very logical suggestion for the leader is always of what should be done, and by waiting until the second car sees what to do the landholder will never have any complaints. Ed.)

Ailsa Wilkinson asked for another half-day outing to be arranged.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.5pm. after which Dore Mc. Cosker and Joan Stevenson gave a talk on and showed some slides of a trip to Cunnamulla and its environs.

Joan Stevenson Hon. Secretary.

REPORT ON THE JANUARY PROGRAMME.

Joan Stevenson and Dore Mc. Cosker gave us an interesting programme to commensate the new year. A lot of good human interest, some fine slides, backed up by sound information, with a sprinkling of humour.

A programme of the contenders in the lizard race, was most numerous, eg.

"Rain" by "Something out of The Past!"

"Good Time Girl" by "Husband out of Town"

"Father's Day" by "Once a Year Out of Pity" and so they went on plenty of bright ideas.

From their notes I gleaned that in September 1983 Dore and Joan joined a group of five others to go by minibus on a camping trip for eleven days to the Cunnamulla area. As they said, "We were

REPORT ON THE JANURARY PROGRAMME GIVEN BY JOAN STEVENSON AND
DORE Mc.COSKER CONT.

"fortunate to that Jack and May Bennie (Nats Club Members) had the desire to show us this part of Queensland. Though in the throes of a seven year drought we were amased at the many plants that were growing. It was difficult to imagine that rather large specimens of Eriosstemon, Dodanaea, Eremophila and Cassia could produce such masses of bloom. Ptilotus, Bassia ans Saltbush were the most common on what would mostly, be otherwise bare ground.

The Cauliflower Gum (Euc. terminalis) was in full bloom and the huge floret bunches were a delight to see. How can the Leopard Tree possible grow from such a prickly shrub, into such a colourful patterned bark and tall tree? Surprisingly, too, is it to find that it is one of the "Flindersias".

Our stay at the Nine Mile Bore was very interesting, as there was a good stand of gidgee nearby in which many species of birds were seen. Open areas also had their particular habitat birds. We were disappointed that the Bourke Parrot eluded us but in all over 60 types were listed, in the eleven days, and included the Spotty Bowerbird; Crested Bellbird; Quail-thrush; Purple-Backed Wren, and other good western species.

Trips were made to the Cunnamulla and Eulo Festivals, and the unity of the western people was evident. Yowah, which is an opal area and also noted for the "Yowah Flea", which one soon gets to know, was a stop over for several days. Here the opal is in the form of "nuts" but despite our high hopes the "Colours" were not found, we remained "nuts" at the game.

East of here there were mesa type hills and trips were made to such landmarks as the "Bluff" and the "Castles". The dryness of the area was proved by the gnarled, twisted and dwarfed Hakeas struggling to survive on the bare ground or the gibber plains.

For the tiny town of Yowah a bore is vital, to provide its water. Sunk on Moolya station in 1912 by Mr. Fagan to a depth of 1468 feet, the bore yields 252,000 gals. per hour day at 129 degrees F. and has 15 miles of drains. A charge of 10 cents per day is made for its use.

All good things come to an end, and the return trip included a stop to see the mud springs which are the release valves for the artesian basin. The Beardmore Dam at St. George guarantees water for agriculture downstream, and it was good to see it had good reserves

The call of the west is with us and we hope to see it and return again to seek more of its beauties."

Joan provided these interesting facts (thank you) and together they showed us some interesting and attractive slides, which also unfolded other fascinating facts as they went along. It was a good evening, and nice for us to see it jointly through two peoples eyes and thoughts.

BULLETIN OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUBACACIA PLATEAU OUTING REPORT BY LEADER JEAN HARSLETT

The new year started well with the January outing to Acacia Plateau, a happy relaxing day, yet plenty of variety of things to see and think about. Twenty-six adults and children turned up meeting at Weeroona Park and completing the compliment when we met up with the rest of the party at Legume, on N.S.W. time. We travelled through "Maryland" and "Mossvale" to Wylie Creek, stopping for points of historical interest and photographic spots of beauty.

It was a perfect day mountain tops at their most beautiful, with billowing clouds creating splendid backdrops, and rhythms of shades of softest blues, through all shades to the richest inky blues of shadow, with shadows dancing and playing on the slopes. I'm sure it was quite impossible for us to believe that clouds we could almost watch to the coast from our eyrie outlook, were soon to be angry storms venting their vengeance on Brisbane and the coast.

There were tall timbers, Eucalypts and Coastal Box (*Tristania*) the latter with pink and grey stems, one harbouring vivid green cushions, ferns and orchids. Typical fringe scrub eucalypts and bloodwoods provided shade and visual inspiration. The bark patterns of the Grey Gum (yes! one of the many Grey Gums) *Eucalyptus propinqua* var. *major* which has the various names of "Small fruited Grey Gum" or the "Bastard Bangalay (but not on Sundays!!)" The former common named fitted the fruit we found well, as they were small, and distinctive. By far the most memorable feature of these tall and straight trees would be the bark at this specific time of the year. Their rich cream smooth stems are generously patterned with vivid ochre-orange shades mingled with the richest of dark greens. Quite irresistible to some of the photographers.

Beyond this type of flora was some scrub, and there were isolated specimens of rain forest species. Two varieties of Lillipill (*Eugenia*) were enjoyed, one with red fruit and brush yellow flowers too. The other in the scrub had handsome bright purple fruit, a joy to some birds (*E. coolminiana*). Odd tall specimens of Crow's Ash, (*Flindersia*) showing their large fruits not yet opening into their intriguing star shapes, so much sort after by floral artists, for dry arrangements. There was an odd fig tree, and some young ones with tree guards around them to keep cattle off.

We strolled up a grassy slope, wild gooseberries growing freely and numerous scotch thistles (10,000 of them can't be wrong!!) From here we could view our home plateau, one of the few places you can stand off and visually realise you live on a plateau. Bright spots of sunshine lit up certain land marks like Bald Rock and Mt. Norman, making them very easy to identify them, from the choice of naked eye, binoculars or a telescope. We then drove up to higher vantage points, over vivid red volcanic soil tracks, made even more so, by the contrasting light but vivid green grass, to see the plateau

ACACIA PLATEAU OUTING CONT.

from a different angle, and to look east on splendid views of Mount Lindesay and the east and west peaks of Mount Barney, being the third highest point in Queensland, only eclipsed by Mt. Bartle Frere in N. Qld. and Mt. Superbous close to where we were.

Reptiles and insects also were a feature of the day. Several Bearded Draggons were seen and Water Draggons. A Land Mullet, so called because of its smooth unscaled appearance. It could be described in being like a Blue Tongue in shape and build, but faster in movement, and shiny black - no patterns. Also a snake unusual in appearance, but only sparing us a glimpse, and was not identified. Another wriggly found in the car was a leech, of fair proportions.

After looking up various references the snake was probably, Stephen's Banded Snake (*Hoplocephalus stephensi*). It is well known from the north coastal areas, wetter sclerophyll or rainforest of N.S.W. and we were only a hop from the border most of the day, and the description of its habitat is spot on.

Swallowtail butterflies were on the wing, the green Macleay's Swallowtail, and attractive Blue Triangles, and another large black and white chap with mother of pearl colouring on the underside and called The Tailed Emperor, could easily be mistakenly thought to be a swallow-tail. It is the one recently pictured in the BorderPost. Jezabels were the other brightly coloured and aptly named butterflies. Sue and Stephanie found some interesting beetles, large weevils beautifully sculptured, for some special reason. Perhaps the spines present a broken outline to their form and make it "melt" into their environment better. A handsome beetle with a defined red and blue pattern, obviously apes a wasp, with a good sting - which though it has no such defence, its fake presents a "Keep off" image to its predators.

Scrub bird calls of whip birds, golden whistlers, brown pigeons, provided the correct atmosphere. A number of heaps of feathers suggested a fairly big population of feral cats. Dore found an attractive and dainty wine glass shaped nest of the Rufous Fantail. Some had the pleasure of seeing three splendid specimens of the true honey golden coloured dingoes, jogging along the track in front of them, no doubt trouble for the locals.

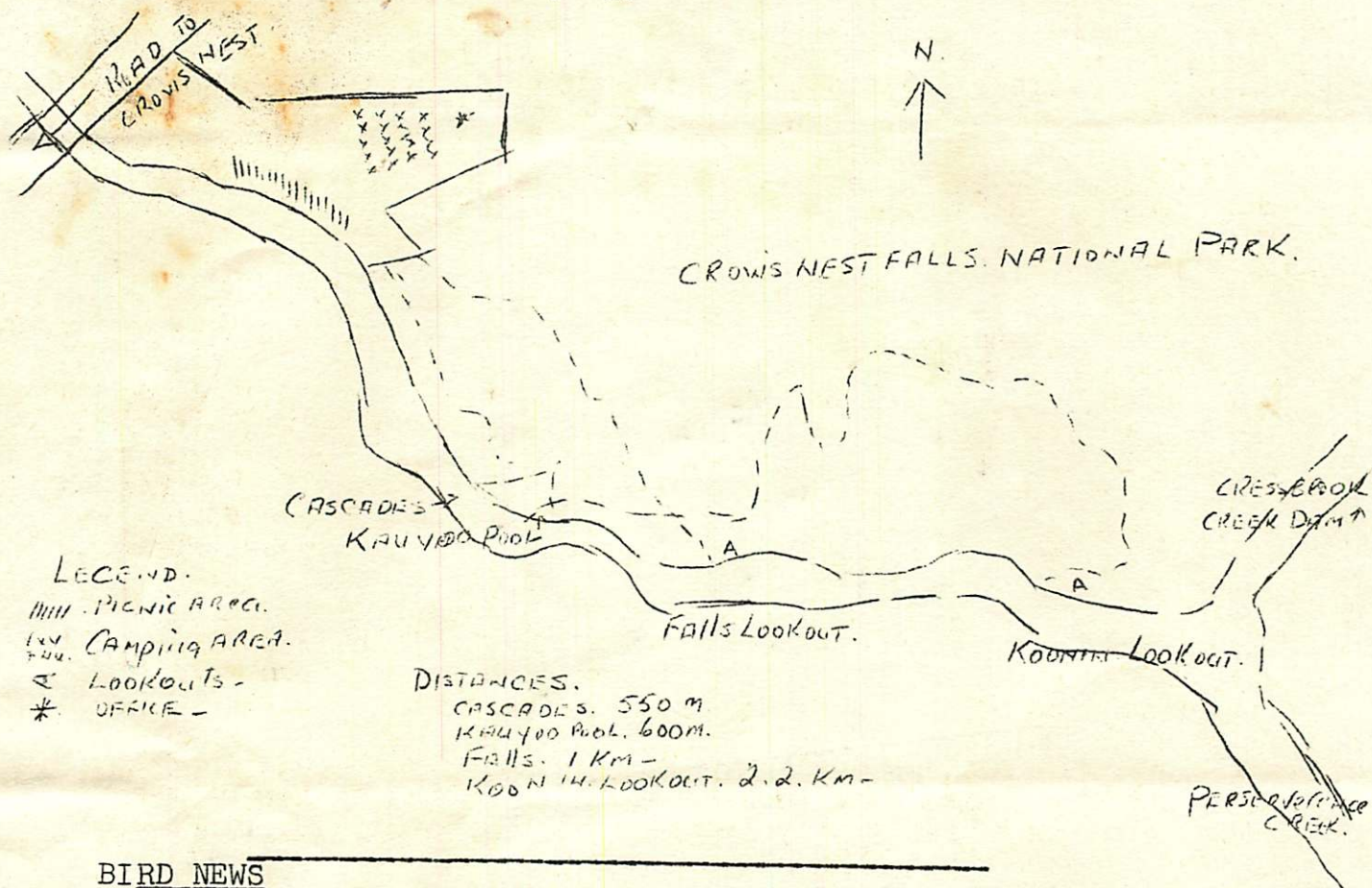
Bunya Pines in plantation, which are doing very well in this area, and Hoop Pines were looked at. Other exotics on top of the ridge, which had been extremely buffeted by weather and winds, had so changed their characteristic form, as to be difficult for even the experts on these species to recognise.

After some walks along scrub trails we had a cup of afternoon tea, surveyed the maps and made our own decisions from a variety of choices of roads which one we would take. From all accounts about four different routes were taken. Three cars went via "Cherribah" to check it out. Congratulations to members Ray and Millie on winning the Rotary Club prize of 'Weekend for Two at Cherribah', have fun.

Must not forget the Hyacinth orchid, of which we saw quite a few, but this one set out to be "the biggest aspidistra in the world" and was 109.3cm (43") tall. Another orchid *Orthoceras stritum* ranging from 15-60 cm in height excelled itself this at 94cm. (37").

STOP PRESS FROM THE OUTING LEADERS.

Plans are in order for the Camp-out to Crows Nest. Leaders Millie and Ray suggest, that if you are not keen about water with a deal of 'local' flavour take your own drinking water, other wise it is quite useable. For the trip to the falls on the Saturday afternoon, there is a pleasant waterhole for swimming, so take your togs' if you wish. Some members will be going if possible for the Friday night, a permit has been taken out with the Ranger in the name of "The Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club" for the information of early arrivers. A map appears below.

BIRD NEWS

Three Crested Grebes, trying to look dignified with their rather comical 'head gear' are each escorting two striped chicks a piece, about our dam at Amiens, first time I've seen them nesting here.

A pair of Pratincoles (first sighting for me locally) decided also to stay and make the record more exciting by nesting. Alas a tractor which normally should not be there was taken by someone unaware of the nest sight, which was really off the track, and alas! it was driven over. Needless to say after a period of bewilderment and no doubt distress they departed for more friendly climes. Both records were on or near our dam at Amiens Jan. 1984.

Jean Harslett.

STOP PRESS FROM THE OUTDOOR LEADERS

Plumbe are in order for the camp-out to the West. Leaders Millie and Ray suggest that if you are not keen about water with a meal of local flavoured take your own drinking water. Other wise it is quite possible. For the trip to the Falls on the Saturday afternoon there is a pleasant waterfall for swimming, so take your bags if you wish. Some members will be going if possible for the Friday night's permit has been taken out with the Ranger in the name of "The Stanborough Field Naturalist Club" for the information of early arrivals. A map appears below.



Three Crested Grebes, trying to look dignified with their rather comical head gear, are seen occasionally along the river, but one and all seem to be in a state of bewilderment. A pair of Redpolls (first sighting for me locally) were also seen and make the record more exciting by nesting. A Redpoll which I really should not be there was taken by someone. It was a Redpoll which was taken off the track, and also a Redpoll. It was a Redpoll to say after a period of bewilderment and no doubt distress they departed for more friendly climes. Both records were on or near our dam at Amiens Jan. 1984. Jean Harcourt.