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THE  
**GRANITE BELT  
NATURALIST**



**Monthly Newsletter of the  
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club**



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

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1984 - 1985

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AUDITOR	MRS. JOAN FERRIS

MEETINGS 4th WEDNESDAY of each month at the C.W.A. ROOMS at 8 p.m.

OUTINGS The SUNDAY PRECEDING the 4th WEDNESDAY of the Month.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single - \$6.00

Family - \$10.00

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 WEDNESDAY 26th SEPTEMBER, 1984 at 8pm.

Present 25 .....Apologies 8

The President welcomed all to the meeting with special  
 welcome to Mrs. Nancy Aiken and other visitors.

MINUTES - That the minutes be taken as read was moved by R. Marsden/  
 J.O'Donnell. Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

INWARD was received from -

1. Subscriptions from - A. McAllister, L. Deagin, W. Barker,  
 J. & M. Bennie.
2. John & Gabrielle O'Donnell - thanked Club for wedding good  
 wishes.
3. Aust. Post re proposed increased charges - Bulk from \$11  
 to \$13. Registration \$30 to \$36.
4. Endeavour Foundation re Floral carpet.
5. Aust. Conservation Foundation re Green pages Directory.
6. Aust. Senate - Democrats re Daintree National Park.
7. Aust. Conservation Foundation re David Bellamy in B'ne.
8. Govt. in Focus - Vol 1 No 7.
9. N.P.A. News - Sept. Vol 54 No 6.
10. D. Downs Nats. Newsletter - No 364 Sept.
11. Contact - Vol 12 No 3. Aug.
12. 24 Press statements from National Pks Wildlife Dptmt
13. Urimbirra - Sept.

OUTWARD was sent to -

1. 4QS re Outing/Meeting.

That the inward be received and the outward endorsed was moved  
 by B. McDonagh/T. Archer. Carried.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 26th 1984.

Credit Balance August, 1984

166.20

Receipts

Aug. 22	Subscriptions	38.00	
	Bring & Buy Stall	5.60	
	Room Rent Collection	9.60	
Sept. 2	Subscription	5.00	
Sept. 18	Subscription	6.00	
			64.20
			<u>230.40</u>

Payments

Aug. 22	Room Rent for August	6.00	
	Mag. Duplication August	7.00	
	Mag. Postage for August	11.00	
	Mag. Wrappers	31.50	
	Mag. Postage Registration	30.00	
Sept.	Fed. Tax	.50	
			<u>86.00</u>
Sept. 26, 1984	Credit Balance		<u>\$144.40</u>

MOTION D. Archer moved that this report be received and the  
 following accounts be passed for payment - Sept. Room  
 Rent \$6, Sept. Mag. Dup. \$7, Sept. Mag. Postage \$11,  
 Mag. Covers \$44.50. Sec. L. Thompson. Carried.

MINUTES CONT.OUTING REPORT

Jean Harslett reported a very good attendance to Redrock. Good bird watching areas en route. Flowers were interesting though not prolific. Many thanks to those who supplied 4WD for members.

NEXT OUTING

This will be to "Mountain Park" Dalveen and being the "Year of the Family" an invitation is to be extended to the Endeavour children and their house parents to join us. Leave Weeroona Park at 9.30 am or 10am at Dalveen.

NEXT MEETING

The Guest Speaker will be Errol Walker who has been asked to speak on his trip to New Zealand.

SPECIMENS

Brian McDonagh brought a specimen of Banksia ericifolia. Members commented on the difference in weed growth possibly due to the warmer winter. It was noted that broomsedge, an introduced grass weed, is spreading rapidly around the district.

BUSINESS

Tom Dunn showed a new edition of "Freshwater Fish" by John Merrick and Gunter Schmida. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.45 pm after which Mrs. Nancy Aiken showed slides of "Birds seen round her garden" and provided a most informative talk on their habits as well as many humorous antics they provide for her. Many thanks Nancy.

Joan Stevenson (Hon. Sec.)

NEXT OUTING !! Year of the Family walk at Mountain Park.  
Sunday, 21st October.

Meet at Weeroona Park at 9.30 am and then at Dalveen near the Post Office at 10 am.

The Field Nats are hosts to 16 Endeavour Foundation youngsters and their 4 house parents, for the day. Members are asked to bring enough food for two extras, per family - sandwiches, fruit and water for cordial drinks would be appreciated. At this stage, all our guests have transport.

From Dalveen, we will drive out to the Eastern side of the property, to Rosenthal Creek. The first walk will be along the creek amongst the pools and rocks. After lunch (back at the vehicles), we will head East for a circuit into the hills.

Quotation - "Any man can sense that his problem is himself, but the extraordinary man goes beyond that to sense that the solution is also himself".

Vernon Howard

September Meeting Speaker: Nancy Aiken showed slides and talked on "Birds in the Homestead Garden".

The Aikens family run a sheep and cattle grazing property "Dalmoak" east of The Summit. The property is mostly undulating granite, some is heavily timbered, other areas have been cut out or thinned and small areas are almost devoid of cover. The Maryland River runs through it, giving a wide range of habitat for birds, which may help to explain why so many different types of birds (about 90 in all), are seen in the garden.

Darling Downs Field Naturalists and Q.O.S. members often camp at Dalmoak for observing and relaxing. Some members photograph wildlife, and slides shown by Nancy were taken by John Moverley, a frequent visitor.

A granite rock with a dished top makes a pleasant permanent bird-bath. Some birds help themselves to chook feed - such as the crimson rosellas which appeared to be locked in the hen pen. Nancy puts out grain which attracts various finches, such as diamond firetail - an excellent closeup of this one was shown, the cheeky red browed, and the lovely gentle double-barred finches.

Most birds are welcome in the garden, but Nancy related the story of the rare Red goshawk which furtively halved bird populations around the garden! It took weeks to identify this bird of prey because of its skulking habits. Then the R.A.O.U. had to be convinced before they would put the record in their "Atlas of Australian Birds". Another interesting one was the white plumed honeyeater, which is usually seen in drier country.

At "Mountain Park" about 20% of the 130 species seen on the property come to the garden. The figures for "Dalmoak" are roughly 50% of 180 species! The slides were of excellent quality - most of us can only imagine the patience and equipment required to produce these pictures. How gratifying also to hear Nancy's enthusiasm - knowledge and understanding lead to a greater commitment to protect our native animals and plants.

John O'Donnell.

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### FUTURE FOOD

I was wondering if Naturalists would have any ideas on future food production. The present antiquated system of destroying the soil and slowly poisoning all and sundry might not last for ever, so perhaps someone may think of something a bit more harmonious.

When we go on walks we see communities of plants - trees, small trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses living together, often for mutual benefit. So why not a food forest - bringing in firewood and timber production, pest and disease control etc. Each area would need a different mix of species, and PVR legislation will try to eradicate plants which set fertile seed to name just two of many snags, so it is certainly a challenge for those few of us who aren't concerned with who or what's going to win on Saturday!

Ed.



REPORT ON THE RED ROCK OUTING SUNDAY 23th SEPTEMBER 1984.BY LEADER ..JEAN HARSLETT

Forty-eight members participated on the outing to Red Rock. The day dawned perfect, but by the time we reached Walsh's old home a brisk wind was blowing, however entering the timber it was no longer felt. For those who wished to only walk part way- the trip was made easier for them by Carmen Curr, Brian Mc. Donagh and Phil & Mary Devereaux, who brought 4WD vehicles and kindly ferried people in and out.. Thank you! We welcomed several visitors Jack and Enid Hamilton, Steve Darracott (Editor Warwick Daily News) and his son James, Phil & Mary Devereaux and Garry Garwood from Melbourne.

There was plenty to enjoy in nature, especially by the 27 who walked in & out. As we left the cars, a shiny new skinned snake lay nonchalantly, near the track, as though to allow us to enjoy its new looks. Vance Palmer's vivid description rushed to my memory, but only snippets, then I recalled Stella Miles Franklin's words "full length, at ease, in soft green grass shooting after winter retreat, his new skin gleamed blue-black with peacock tints, a little of the underside was showing, blended scarlet and pomegranate."

For the first half of our walk we were close to the creek, and from the very outset birds were lively in the call of Spring and in activity. A male mistletoe bird disputed itself for many to enjoy its vivid steely-blue and scarlet raiment. Several Helmeted Honeyeaters were seen. Various flycatchers, wagtails, scissor grinders, white robins, a leaden flycatcher and the flippant Grey shafted Fantails were enjoyed. Honeyeaters, helmeted, White Naped, Yellow faced (sitting on her nest with two eggs) White Plumed and Brown Honeyeaters were seen as well as a couple of the larger relations, a Wattlebird, Mickies, and Leatherhead. Spotted Pardalotes chipped away both in call and at the banks where nesting sites were being investigated. At one point almost a small 'colony' of cuckoos were seen. Two species were gathered (ah! despair of the 'locals') but it gave us a splendid opportunity to watch them, and the consensus of opinion was Brush Cuckoos and the Fanned Tailed cuckoos. Nearby the bush was filled with radiant sounds of three male Rufous Whistlers who disputed over territory in a fairly small pleasant glade.

We enjoyed the company of our Victorian visitor, a bird watcher, who renewed acquaintance with Double-billed Finches and others. Must not forget "The Silver Sided Roof-rack" sighted by some probably getting a bit fed up with the crazy "birdoes"

Several groups of Choughs were seen and John O'Donnell remarked at their gentle relaxed call as they moved in groups and the remarkable change to a guttural and agitated sound when disturbed. It is tit bits of observations, shared and enjoyed on such walks which I believe is the real essence of such walks.

It became quite obvious that the days activities, could have been filled quite easily without further movement. However we set an aim "Red Rock Gorge" and we trudged steadily on, taking time out to look at ground orchids etc. Caladenia caerulea (as blue as a caerulean blue sky) Its close relatives in white and pink were



REPORT ON RED ROCK GORGE OUTING CONT.

also seen (*C. carnea*) Also the larger 'Purple Waxlip' similar in general appearance but really another family, *Glossodia major*. Its common name refers to the prominent white lip, and soon many will be seen about. Robin spied a the wire-like leafless sample of a climbing orchid, heavy in bud (*Galeola cassyloides*) The pale mauve flowers twined around many things even tiny grasses, were very beautiful (*Glycine clandestina*) Wild violets were plentiful, and a 'beaut' variegated foliage specimen of *Persoonia* was seen.

We all finally met up again at the picnic area, and had lunch. Then we walked out to the lip of the gorge, such a surprise view after so much bush. The excitement and enjoyment of the spectacle - registered on many faces - was due reward for the leader who constantly urged many tired legs over more and more stony slopes, to reach our aim. Many climbed to the bottom, or rather the top of the falls, which had water going over them, something many do not see. Others sat and soaked in the scene from various vantage points.

Several plants in flower should be recorded. *Daphne*, *Eriostemon myopocroides* (var.) a very rich pink budded form, with the pink tones carrying on into flowering. *Zieria aspalathoides* (previously thought to be *Z. pilosa*) The largest of the Alpine Daisies occurring in the Granite Belt, *Olearia gravis*. Brian also located another *Olearia*, *O. canescens*. This one is only found in the drier areas like this and 'canescens means grey and hairy.. true to form. Golden Pomaderris gave spots of colour, taking over from the earlier Acacias.

I always feel a little shy about giving botanical names to those enquiring. However as Brother Lig sat up on the cliff taking in the scene, he asked what the bush with white flowers was? I replied it's a mint bush, *Prostanthera nivea*. "Nivea" he repeated, looking more closely at the plant, "that means Snow," yes, indeed, they look like dainty snow falling and resting on the bush"

He then went on to say that botanists and scientists, so often displayed great sensitivity and love of a plant when they came to name it - as in this case. Followed a discussion on how much more interesting words were for the study of Latin derivation, a subject almost forgotten these days. I relate such things, because I feel these unexpected chats are part of the companionship the outings give us. I hope that everyone, even though they may return home healthily tired and a little leg weary, yet mentally refreshed and stimulated by thoughts, discussions and observations.

Several of us on the return trip enjoyed a few more observations, highlights being, a pair of plovers with chicks no bigger than hens eggs, a flock of about 20 Turquoise Parrots - oh what joy of colour, and six or seven British Goldfinches. Also a wonderful display of the handsome golden catkin wattle *Acacia pubifolia*, one of those wattles only found in this district. These were on the back road from Ballandean Station.

Jean Harslett.



