

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 19

August 1971

P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe.

Officers and Committee 1971 - 1972

President	Mr. W. Cathcart	Ph.812
Vice Presidents	Mrs.R. Harslett and Mr. T. Chapman	
Secretary	Mr. E. walker	Ph.888
Treasurer	Miss J. Westacott	
Editors	Mr. D. Pfrunder and Mrs. D. Orr	
Librarian	Mrs.R. Tremear	
Bushwalking Representative	Mr. R. McCosker	
Geology	Mr. F. Wilkinson	
Flora	Mr. B. Dodd	
Fauna	Mrs.Z. Newman	
Youth	Master P. Cathcart	

Activities.

Meetings	4th Wednesday of each month
	C.W.A. Rooms 8 p.m.
Field Outings	Sunday preceeding 4th Wednesday.

Annual Subscription.

Single \$1.50	Family \$2.00
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Programme.Field Outings:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Red Rock Gorge	22nd. August	Mr. Eric Ree
	Departure time from Stanthorpe Park	
	<u>8 a.m.sharp.</u>	

Meetings:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Details.</u>
"Remember Last Year"	25th. August.	A showing of members' colour slides of last year's Club activities. Followed by supper.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.
PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT.

August 1971

What does one say at a time like this?

I had the very good fortune to start the Stanthorpe Naturalist Club about 18 months ago but I take no credit for the success that it has been.

We had the natural assets and the enthusiastic potential members were obviously here waiting for such a club as this.

I was the lucky person to start the club and I assure you it has given me tremendous pleasure to see the terrific interest it has created and the pleasure it has given. Our membership of well over 100 (in 18 months) is ample proof of this enthusiastic interest.

Naturally I am proud to have been your first president, but I readily admit I couldn't have achieved anything without the support of Robin McCosker (our first Sec.), Errol Walker (our present Sec.) Joan Westacott (our treasurer), Jean Harslett and Wai Cathcart (Vice Presidents), all others on the committee and all members.

One other person and her helpers needs a very big "thank you" and that is Flo Tremeer (the hard-working editor of the Granite Belt Naturalist). To have produced a magazine of this quality so early in the life of our club is a tremendous achievement and I'm sure Flo is justifiably proud of our magazine. She has set a mighty high standard but I know our next editor, Mr. D. Pfrunder and assistant Mrs. Orr, will maintain the high standard, with your support.

As regards meetings and outings I feel there is no need to itemise them as they have been very comprehensively reported in the Granite Belt Naturalist. Suffice to say that all outings and meetings have been very well attended and leaders and guest speakers have succeeded in making them all highly enjoyable. I know we all realize that its not just luck when they are a success. I wonder how many miles John Harslett travelled to check the road into Bald Rock and how many hours Errol Walker spent planning our first highly successful overnighiter (first of many, I hope).

No it's not just luck and I would like to thank all outing leaders and guest speakers for their contribution to a very successful Nats. Year.

So far I have been telling you how successful our Club has been, but now is the time to look ahead and with a new Club Year and a new President I know we will all derive even greater pleasure out of the Stanthorpe Naturalist Club.

You all know Wally Cathcart and I'm sure you agree that we are very fortunate that he has agreed to take over as President. Wally and his secretary Errol and Vice-President Jean make a trio of experts as far as knowledge of the district is concerned and I for one, look forward to visiting many of the places that they know so well.

Now I know it is a trap to name people individually as it is so easy to inadvertently omit someone, so I want to say thank you to everyone who has contributed to the success of our Nats. Club.

Finally I'm sure you will give Wally your full support and I know that our Club will go from strength to strength.

TOM CHAPMAN.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Report of Annual Meeting, 28th. July, 1971

There were 42 members present and 2 apologies were received at the Annual Meeting held in the C.W.A. rooms.

Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting were read and confirmed.

The Treasurer's Report disclosed a balance of \$4.02 in Club funds.

Mr. T. Chapman presented the President's Report for the past term, thanking all Office Bearers for their voluntary support.

Mr. W. Cathcart was elected President for the ensuing term and in his inaugural address he outlined the short history of the Club and the role played by its foundation President, Mr. T. Chapman.

Possibly the most important job has been entrusted to Mr. D. Pfrunder and Mrs. D. Orr who will edit and publish "The Granite Belt Naturalist" which has become widely accepted as a Newsletter of "quality" thanks to Mrs. R. Tremeeer and Mrs. Chapman who were responsible for the magazine from its inception.

The Officers, as nominated and elected for the 1971 - 72 year are as follows:-

President	Mr. W. Cathcart
Vice Presidents	Mrs. R. Harslett and Mr. T. Chapman
Secretary	Mr. E. walker
Treasurer	Miss J. Westacott
Editors	Mr. D. Pfrunder and Mrs. D. Orr
Librarian	Mrs. F. Tremeeer
Bushwalking Rep.	Mr. R. McCosker
Geology "	Mr. F. Wilkinson
Flora "	Mr. B. Dodd
Fauna "	Mrs. Z. Newman
Youth "	Master P. Cathcart.

It was obvious that an increase in subscriptions was imminent and the whole meeting voted in favour of an increase to \$1.50 single and \$2.00 family.

Report of General Meeting following Annual Meeting, 28th July, 1971.

Minutes of the previous General Meeting were read and confirmed

The Club decided that the Club Newsletter be sent to Mr. H. McKechnie, M.L.A. each month.

It was resolved by the meeting that the club should take part in the Hobbies Fair on the 28th. August, and Mr. R. McCosker and Mr. G. Marsden volunteered to erect a display.

Mrs. J. Harslett reported on the outing to Nundubbermere Falls at which 21 members attended. Mrs. Harslett also reported on the special extra outing to South Bald Rock in the absence of Mr. John Harslett, who led the outing.

The meeting was closed at 9.15p.m., after which Mr. David Bluhdorn of Warwick spoke to the meeting on "Caves". The lecture was illustrated with colour slides of Australian Limestone Caves and Mr. Bluhdorn then displayed some of the equipment used in this sport.

The President then moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Bluhdorn.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Report on Nundubbermere and Seven River Falls Outing.

Those members of the Naturalist Club participating, on the July Outing to Seven River Falls, can perhaps claim that they set forth on the coldest "outing day" of the year, but despite this a most enjoyable day was had. Indeed, the deep undulating countryside afforded good protection from the winds, and with the additional warmth of the trap rock country, the day was more pleasantly spent there than at home. Those who spent their leisure time otherwise (at bowls and golf etc.) reported quite sad tales!

One member journeyed from Tenterfield to be with us, and a couple of new members were not in the least daunted, either by the ruggedness of the day or the countryside - and have instead expressed enthusiasm to join further outings. Twenty-one members participated.

Before lunch, the party descended the rather steep incline to view the Seven River Falls, which had a fair amount of water flowing over them - and a small amount of water flowed down Monday Creek Falls and the solid rock bed of the latter creek was discussed. However, it was the rugged nature and varied colour of the rock formations which was most admired, while others reminisced about fish reputed to have come from some of the larger waterholes.

Some of the party found a crossing to the River and viewed small caves in the cliff on the opposite bank.

Despite the fact that we felt far from civilization, some money and a teaspoon were found - suggesting recent visits.

While others were crossing the river, some of the party stayed on this side and scanned the cliff face for a possible sight of an owl as evidence of their roosting places were noted. Several wallabies were picked out on the cliff face. It is also the haunt of the Azure Kingfisher, not so often seen in this district.

We then all climbed up the cliff again - to lunch - where we gathered around a cheery big camp fire - one couple receiving our admiration when they produced a hot Sunday roast dinner from a flask.

In the afternoon the whole party proceeded up-stream for about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to an area known either as Lowe's waterhole or Koina's Tanks. This area is quite scenic and the rock formations spectacular. It is made up of many small falls and interesting round holes eroded into the rocks by water, storm and time. Again the variation in rock colouring provided much of interest.

It is a public road to the Seven River Falls, but the latter area belongs to Mr. Bruce Tulloch, and we are grateful for his permission to visit the area.

It was a day of activity, dictated by the weather, rather than one of patient observation, consequently no details of observations are furnished. Perhaps, because the day brought forth the real enthusiasts it could be remembered as one of very good fellowship.

JEAN HARSLETT.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Brief Report of Clubs' second outing to South Bald Rock.

The large party which set off from Stanthorpe on the chilly morning of Sunday 18th July, for the Club's second outing to South Bald Rock, reflected the popularity of this area and was appreciation to the effort and leadership of John Harslett who again led this outing, and had travelled many miles the previous day to check the route after rain for the benefit of members.

Before lunch members spent an enjoyable hour inspecting the balancing rocks in an area across the alpine swamp to the west of South Bald Rock. From here clear views were again enjoyed of West Bald Rock and The Pyramids.

After lunch the assault on South Bald Rock itself was launched. This time members made their way to the top first. Again there were good clear views, but that breeze was getting nippy. On descending part-way, we then entered the cave system from the opposite end to that of the previous outing. Once again we were glad of the guidance of our guide, Bill Gooble. The presence of water in some of the small tunnels underneath presented a challenge. However, everyone came through in good spirits; some showing the effects of damp a little more than others.

FOOT NOTE: Our President has a Certificate for all those who made it through the tunnel at South Bald Rock.

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CAVES I HAVE KNOWN.

by David Bluhdorn

What is a cave?

A cave is simply a hole in the ground. What's more it's usually pretty dark down these caves so actually a cave is a dark hole in the ground.

Aha - you might say - a rabbit's hole fits that description too.

And indeed it does except for one thing - how do you know if it really is dark down there - have you ever been down to have a look?

No and neither have I, because they're too small.

So there we have it - a cave is a dark hole in the ground - that I can fit into... and these caves are scattered all over the countryside.

Tasmania is by far the most wealthy state as far as caves go, having Australia's longest cave in the Hastings area exit, which has more than 10 miles of surveyed passages and Australia's deepest at Mt. Anne which is Tasipot 950 ft.

The main tourist caves in Tasmania are located in the Mole Creek area. There are two separate tourist cave systems - King Solomons and Maracopa.

Coming onto the mainland caves are found along the Nullabor, at Narracoorte in S.A. and Buchan in Vic. Moving north to N.S.W., we find caves at Wee Jasper, Yarrangilly and Burgonia - into the Blue Mts. for the Jenolans - on the mid North Coast West of Kempsey and small system at Ashford and Riverton. In Queensland there are four systems. In the Far North and West at Chillagoe and Camooweal - closer to home at Rockhampton where there are even two tourist caves - Camoo and Olsens.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Caves I have known Cont.

And right in our own back yard we have Texas.

Now, all these caves are Limestone caves formed by solution action as rain water or a creek filters down through the limestone dissolving parts of the rock and gradually forming the caves.

There are other types of caves than limestone, of course. There are sandstone caves or caverns such as those at the Carnarvons. These were formed by wind and rain eroding the surface and gradually cutting into the rockface for form small caverns or large overhangs.

There are gravel caves which are formed by water gradually washing an underground channel through a gravel bed or ombankment.

Examples of these can be seen at Flagstone Creek near Toowoomba and on Mt. Gravatt in Brisbane.

It was in much the same way that the caves at Girraween were formed.

But only in Limestone caves do you find large quantities of cave decorations or "pretties" as they are commonly known. Cave decorations can be large, towering flowstone columns or delicate, intricate Helictites and any size in between. It is these natural beauties which make the Jenolans so famous and give each cave its own beautiful individuality.

Unfortunately these decorations are very fragile and can easily be broken by a careless hand or head. That is why it is always a good idea not to touch any formations. A Stalactite can take many thousands of years to grow only to be destroyed forever by carelessness or vandalism.

Some of the equipment used in caves includes a helmet, called a "bashat" and is used to fend off all those sneaky rocks and projections which hide in ambush waiting for you to smack your head against them. A stunning outfit called a Trog suit and is used to protect clothing and skin from the rigour of caving. Masterpieces in Pediatric design are called Boots and are guaranteed to get stuck in the most awkward situations. However they are useful for keeping your socks clean and preventing stubbed toes. A very illuminating piece of equipment, a Carbide Lamp is the main source of light used by cavers in Queensland.

In large caves, such as those at Rockhampton, Miners' Lamps are used, but in most instances the Carbide is preferred because it gives a more even diffused light - it is also handy for detecting the presence of foul air in a cavern.

But - no sensible caver goes underground without at least 2 emergency light sources. These normally take the form of a small piece of candle and a torch. Also carried all the time is a tin containing a Primus Fricker and a box of matches. With all this lighting equipment, the well dressed caver hasn't much room left in his pockets, but he is assured of a safe and enlightened trip.

In some of the larger caves it is necessary to use ropes and wire ladders for descents into deep chambers so a sound knowledge of climbing and laddering techniques is a must. And to make all this rope work more comfortable a rope or webbing sling is wrapped around the waist and connected by Karrabiners to the rope. Thus giving a relatively comfortable harness without the need for large cumbersome knots.

Now we are equipped and prepared for exploring the caving areas mentioned previously.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.NATIONAL PARKS.Origin of the Concept of National Parks.

The historic setting for the birth of the National Park concept was the juncture of two rivers in the north-west of the State of Wyoming in the United States of America. Here was camped a party of explorers under General Washburn, amongst whom was Cornelius Hedges, a Montana lawyer and Judge. The party had undertaken an exploration of the Yellowstone country and, as the expedition drew to its close and the grandeur and beauty of the region was confirmed by their own observations, the members around the camp fire discussed the opportunities for wealth and personal gain within this wilderness area.

It was during these discussions that Cornelius Hedges expressed a directly opposite opinion to the one of personal gain when he said:-

"It seems to me that God made this region for all the people and all the world to use and enjoy forever. This great wilderness does not belong to us - but to America. Let us make a public park of it and set it aside for America - never to be changed but left sacred always, just as it is now, so that Americans always may know how splendid this early America was, how wonderful".

This noble concept was readily accepted by other members of the expedition and the outcome was the creation in 1872 of the now famed Yellowstone National Park covering an area of two million acres.

So was conceived the character and purpose of the National Park idea.

Purposes and function of National Parks.

Why should areas be set aside and preserved in their natural state and what purpose do they serve? The more important values are summarised briefly as follows:-

1. Intrinsic interest of the area.

Where an area has some special interest, whether it be attractive scenery, interesting or unusual plants or animals, or some relic of, or association with the history of the country, positive action for its preservation is warranted by its lasting scenic, scientific or historic significance, which in most cases, will be greater in the future than in the present.

2. Recreation.

Because a National Park is retained in its natural state it provides a unique form of recreation; recreation in the sense of the re-creation of physical and spiritual well-being which follow from a few hours spent in the tranquility of the natural bushland. This has become of considerable importance with the increasing industrialisation of modern society.

3. Preservation of plants and animals.

All plants and all forms of animal life are of some particular interest to someone at sometime, and it is desirable to save them from extinction where possible. To do this, it is necessary to preserve the natural conditions which support the life cycles of these plants and animals. - and this is just what a National Park does do.

4. Scientific research.

National Parks are of value for scientific studies in two ways. Firstly they help preserve individual species of plants and animals which might otherwise become extinct and thus unavailable for study. Secondly for some forms of research it is vital to have areas which are completely undisturbed, for example they provide unique reference areas for research where in the course of agricultural or pastoral development of similar land it is necessary to investigate changes in soil nutrient level, productivity, plant disorders and the like.

5. Economic Value.

National Parks benefit the economy in several ways - they attract visitors from other countries thus helping to expand the lucrative tourist industry.

Scientific research on individual species and on plant and animal communities, made possible by their preservation in National Parks, can produce results of great economic value.

National Parks in Queensland.

In Queensland, National Parks are administered by the Department of Forestry under the direction of the Conservator of Forests, and subject to the Minister for Lands.

At the 30th June, 1970, there were 271 areas of scenic, scientific, historic and recreational interest in Queensland set aside for preservation in their natural state for the benefit of the people. The area so reserved covers approximately 2,462,680 acres.

The first National Park in Queensland was proclaimed in 1908. It is Witches Falls, a relatively small area, on Tamborine Mountain. Later in the same year a major park was dedicated in the Bunya Mountains while Lamington, possibly the best known of Queensland's Parks, was reserved in 1915 following many years of campaigning begun by Robert Collins and, following his death, brought to a successful culmination by Romeo Lahey, M.B.E.

Some finance for work on the parks was finally made available in 1937 and since then finance allocated was used in constructing walking tracks, picnic areas, toilets, fire places, shelter sheds, tables and seats, and later direction signs, name-plating of trees, booklets publications and recently a self-guiding walk has been developed at Mr. Glorious, near Brisbane. More of these are being designed and a Visitor Centre is planned for Lamington National Park.

Wildlife Conservation.

The most important function of Queensland National Parks is in conserving our native plants and animals, for these give the parks their intrinsic value.

Nowhere outside Australia is there a landscape so dominated by eucalypts and acacias, nor a mammalian fauna with such a range of diversity of marsupials. We have over 200 species of native mammals, and more than half of them are marsupials. Between one-quarter and one third are rodents and the rest are bats. Two animals don't fit into this grouping - they are the two monotremes, of which Carrick and Costin (1959) have written: "The primitive egg-laying monotremes - platypus Ornithorhynchus Anatinus, and spiny anteaters or echidnas Tachyglossus are among the most scientifically-interesting animals in existence.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.National Parks Cont.

"This order has no counterpart, even in the fossil record, outside Australia, and New Guinea. Their unique position as the only living links between reptile and mammal...have won for them complete protection..."

The marsupials show a wonderful variety of forms, they are variously adapted to running, hopping, climbing, gliding and burrowing.

We have some 650 different birds including such diverse and fascinating species as the flightless emu and cassowary, the bower-birds with their playgrounds, the mound-building megapodes, the lyre-birds with their wonderful voices and mimicry, the parrots and cockatoos (rare birds overseas - we have about 60 species), the dainty little fairy-wrens, and the very numerous honey-eaters, - only two species of honey-eaters occur outside the Australian region.

Conservation must be treated as a legitimate form of land use, with claims at least as good as those of agriculture, forestry or mining; and in one sense better, for under the protection afforded by National Park status, the natural resources are preserved and if ever the national need becomes sufficiently urgent the park can be revoked and the resources used. whereas the reverse does not hold good; once an area is used for agriculture, or forestry, or mining, it is spoilt for national park purposes; the essential continuity of nature undisturbed by man from the beginning of time is lost forever - it can never be regained.

(Summary of an article on Queensland's National Parks)
by the Department of Forestry.

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OUTING TO "RED ROCK GORGE" ON SUNDAY 22nd AUGUST 1971.

Cars will depart from the town park at 8 a.m. sharp. Nats. signs will be erected from Ballandean on for the benefit of any late comers.

Once we arrive at Walsh's homestead it will be necessary to walk as the road down to the gorge is too rough for cars.

IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE TO BRING WATER FOR TEA ETC., AS I AM NOT SURE OF THE WATER SUPPLY AVAILABLE AT THE GORGE.

we have roughly a four mile walk to the Gorge, so come prepared i.e.; suitable footwear, reasonable light loads.

As always, fire is a danger, so please be careful when cooking those steaks. we hope to have lunch at the Gorge, look around for a couple of hours and be back at the cars by at least 5 p.m.

Don't forget camera, for those who are interested.

ERIC REE.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR 1971-1972.Field Outings:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Noel Butler's Area	19th September	Noel Butler.
Stanthorpe Town Hills		P. Higgins and.
and Little Broadwater	24th October	Miss J. Westacott
Boonoo Boonoo Falls	21st November	P. Ingram.
Girraween Park	19th December	McCosker Family
Christmas Barbecue		
Toooloom Scrub	23rd January	E. Walker
Boonoo Boonoo River		
Crossing	20th February	Mrs. J. Harslett
Swanfels	19th March	Edgar McCulloch
Undercliffe Falls -		
Rivertree	23rd April	F. Wilkinson
Tenterfield Area	April Extra	P. Ingram
Mystery Camp-out	20th-21st May	W. Cathcart
Texas Caves	25th June	D. Bluhdorn
Spicers Gap - Saturday		
camp-out	22nd-23rd July	T. Chapman
Harsletts' Area	20th August	J. Harslett.

Meetings:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker.</u>
Fraser Island	22nd September	Mrs. J. Harslett
Mechanical Troubles	27th October	R. Marsden
Film Night	24th November	
Botany	26th January	D. Hockings
Bird Evening	23rd February	Mrs. I. Chapman
		with M. Fletcher and W. Goeble.
Antarctica	22nd March	B. Lacy
Orchids	26th April	P. Grant
Basic Geology	24th May	Dr. Branch.
New England National Park	28th June	J. Poulton
Subject of own choosing	26th July	B. Dodd
"Remember Last Year"	23rd August	Film Night.

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PLEASE NOTE:

Subscriptions of \$1.50 single and \$2.00 family are now
due for 1971 - 1972 year.

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