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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST



Monthly Newsletter of the
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club

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Management Committee	President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer.	

Meetings: 4th Wednesday of each Month at Q.C.W.A. Rooms at 8 p.m.

Outings: ~~The~~ Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each Month.

Annual Subscriptions: Single \$8.00 Family \$15.00 per annum July to June

Rent: Donation per family per meeting.

SCALE OF DIFFICULTY FOR WALKS ON NATS OUTINGS

1. Flat walking road or track.
2. Road or track gentle hills.
3. Track some hilly sections
4. Track some steep sections
5. Cross country easy open forest, gentle slopes.
6. Track steep section common, with steps.
7. Cross country some hills, some thick undergrowth.
8. Cross country steep section with scrambles over rocks etc. Some thick undergrowth.
9. Cross country steep, hilly, rough, thick undergrowth.
- 10 Mountain climbing, hard going, higher level of fitness or plenty of time required.

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 & plants.
4. To assist where possible in scientific research.
5. To publish a monthly newsletter and post it to members.

ADDRESS CHECK

Could all members please check that their address is correct, and if not notify the secretary immediately.

OCTOBER OUTING REPORT

-Attendance 47 in 18 vehicles

Ten members beat the gun and started enjoying the weekend on the Friday night by camping at the Tooloom falls.

The drought, however dictated that the falls were non-existent. Waterholes above and below the cliff face were quite spectacular as a thick fog descended in the early morning. Birdlife was plentiful and I hope Kris and Margaret's sightings list may be included in this article.

One request I will make is that on future campouts, could Ray and Herb please snore in unison.

On the road by 9am we explored a forestry road which took us up to the Q.L.D. N.S.W border fence in the shadow of Mt Lindesay. It is probably the closest road to the spectacular cliffs of this ancient volcanic plug, which dominates the skyline for many kilometres.

This drive was supposed to be a round trip, but because Herb had left his two chainsaws at home we had to retrace our steps in the face of a tree across the road.

We met 36 other members and friends patiently waiting at Moore Park just after 11am. Moore Park is a very small reserve of remnant rain forest 30km east of the junction of the Mt Lindesay highway and the Summerland Way. Of particular interest were the huge strangler figs and a colony of 5000 flying foxes in the trees above us. It certainly wasn't safe to look up.

After lunch the convoy of 17 vehicles traversed the rainforest clad ridges of the Border Ranges National Park, stopping for a short walk in the rainforest and a lookout into Queensland and the Lamington National Park. Sightings of scrub turkeys and goannas were common.

Half the party under the leadership of president Kris walked and climbed out to the "Pinnacle" which should have given them views over the Tweed valley to Mt Warning and the coastline. No views, but the party was rewarded with a spectacular cloud show as mist swirled in from the east, rising as it hit the 700 metre cliffs of the Tweed Range. We all eventually found our way out of the cloud-shrouded mountains, picking up a late starter, Geoff Walker, on the way to our campsite on the Lions Road.

Our group soon took over the grassy bank of Grady's Creek, and spent what was probably our first fine camp night without a fire. There was a total fire ban in the area and all we could do was talk about the Marsden dampers on this rather cool night.

Most were up early the next morning, prompted no doubt, by a cocky train driver blowing his whistle as he thundered past our camp at 5am. We inspected the continuous weld rail line, watched the XPT pass overhead and found it impossible to return an escaped cow to its paddock. It was a relaxing way to spend a morning. Kids enjoyed the swimming hole while we packed up ready to drive home via the Lions road over the McPherson Range.

On the way we stopped and marvelled at the unique loop railway, proceeding then to the border tick gate. Here we spoke to the gate keeper, learning something of the district's history.

Lunch was taken about 10km inside the Queensland border on the banks of Running Creek, and it was here we said goodbye to our members from other towns. Some of us chose to return home via the Mt Lindesay highway, some via the coast, but most of the 4WS's went past Maroon Dam, The Head and Killarney.

The latter route proved to be a very picturesque alternative, the road having been upgraded considerably over the last few years.

Errol Walker

BIRD LIST FROM CAMP OUT

The following are the forty-eight different birds seen and identified by Kris and I over the two days of the campout, from Tooloom Falls back to our own house.

Azure Kingfisher	Cormorant	Thornbill
Coot	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Little Friarbird
Wood Duck	Dusky Moorhen	Noisy Miner
Butcherbird	Magpie	Peewee
Eastern Rosella	Crimson Rosella	Firetailed Finch
Black-faced Monarch	Grey Shrike-thrush	Rufous Fantail
Crow	Kookaburra	Welcome Swallow
White Ibis	Stownecked Ibis	Bell birds (calling)
Spoonbill	Peregrine Falcon	Satin Bower Birds
White-faced Heron	Willie Wagtail	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet
Cattle Egret (breeding plumage)	Nankeen Kestrel	Grey Fantail
Currawong	Black Duck	White Cockatoo
Brown Cuckoo Dove	Channel-billed Cuckoo	Superb Blue Wren
Blue Jay	Yellow Robin	Dollar Bird
Collared Sparrow-Hawk	Figbird	Galah
King Parrot	Tawny Frogmouth	Scrub Turkey

HISTORY OF MT. WARNING

At the last Nats' camp out we went for a drive through the Wiangaree State Forest and stopped and admired the view from a lookout on the eastern escarpment. To the north we could see the McPherson Ranges and the southern part of the Lamington Plateau. It was here that the Stimson plane crashed. The escarpment we stood on continued to the south and then east, forming a huge semicircle with Mt Warning in the centre about 15km to the east. (I suggest that if you have a R.A.C.Q. map of the "Gold Coast and Northern Rivers" it is worth looking at Mt Warning and its surrounds to the west of Tweed Heads.)

We then climbed down a very narrow path and out onto the Pinnacle from which we would have been able to see almost straight down some dairy farms in the valley but low cloud moved in at the last moment.

As this area is very interesting geologically Kris asked me to write something for the magazine. So here goes. But as I am no geologist this is in layman's language and may not be geologically 'dead accurate.

The story goes something like this. Originally Australia was attached to South Africa and South America or both, but in the course of time it split off and drifted north east floating over the molten magma well below the Earth's crust to its present position and is still moving north very very slowly.

At some time in its history the eastern coast in this area suffered several bursts of violent volcanic activity, also surface folding and mountain building. The granite was formed under mountains of considerable height. With ample time the mountains wore down and the inland sea filled and the country settled down for a quiet old age. However, as it slowly drifted north the areas around Lakes Eacham and Barrine in North Queensland passed over a spot somewhere near where Mt Gambia now is in South Australia.

As chance would have it a "hot spot" developed down below. A "hot spot" is a welling of molten magma somewhat like a kettle boiling in slow time. The same thing is now occurring in Hawaii. The floor of the North Pacific is moving north west and as it moves over this hot spot a series of volcanoes is being left behind of which the Hawaiian Islands are the last so far.

Well as Australia in its old age moved north over this hot spot it left a series of volcanoes behind starting in North Queensland and coming down through the Glass House Mountains, Mt Warning, Mt Lindesay, Mt Wilson etc. and down through the Warrumbungles to Mt Gambia which it seems was the last in this series, and could have still been active when the aborigines arrived in this country.

Of these volcanoes Mt Warning was very large and erupted huge quantities of ash and lava and must have been very much higher than now. It has been suggested that some of this lava is still on the southern end of the Granite Belt. From one or more sources large areas of what is now the eastern Darling Downs was covered with a deep layer of lava and ash.

To get back to Mt Warning, more ash was deposited near the core or central vent and the harder lava ran down the slopes and built up around the base. In the course of time the softer ash was eroded away more quickly and left a very much worn down central core and a partial ring of basalt ramparts which had originally been near the base of the mountain. The Pinnacle had probably been a pipe of molten lava working its way up through a weakness in the Earth's crust. It may have reached the surface and formed a small vent on the side of the volcano, or more probably never reached the surface at all. While geologically speaking, this all happened very recently, time in the Earth's history is of no consequence.

Tom Archer.

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER MEETING OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC. HELD IN THE C.W.A. ROOMS, STANTHORPE ON OCTOBER 23rd AT 8.00 P.M.

Opening: President Kris opened the meeting, welcoming all present, particularly Bob Harslett's cousin, Kath Clelland as a very welcome visitor.

Attendance and Apologies: as per attendance book.

Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record of that meeting with a motion moved by Margaret Carnell, seconded by Noor Davis and carried.

Correspondence: Inward:
Toowoomba Field Nats
Qld. Twitch
Q.B.A.
M. Compton
Richmond Valley Nats
I.P.R.

Darling Downs Naturalist
Contest Details
Bank Statement
Subs 1991-92; 92-93;
Footprints
Green Guide

Minutes Contd.Correspondence: Inward contd..Dept of Justice
Chinchilla Natsform for incorporation
Urimbirra

Outward: Community Billboards (Radio 963) & 4 QS (broadcast notes)
 Moved Noor Davis, seconded Errol Walker that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted. Carried.

Treasurer's Report:

Financial Statement for 25/9/91 to 23/10/91

Balance as at 25/9/91 637.95

Receipts

Subscriptions	101.00	
Room Rent Collect.	7.70	108.70
		<u>746.65</u>

Expenditure

Room Rent	10.00	
Magazine Duplicating	6.00	
Magazine postage	30.00	
Val White	1.11	
Federal Govt. Tax	90	48.01
Balance as at 23.10.91		<u>\$ 698.64</u>

Julia Brown moved the report for adoption and the following accounts to be passed for payment. Room rent \$10.00; Magazine Postage \$30.00. Seconded J. Harslett.

Outing Reports

Half day outing to Amiens led by Frank James. Frank reported that it was a clear dry day, but there were not many flowers. They inspected an old wolfram mine. There were specimens and pictures available at the meeting.

Camp Out. Errol Walker reported on a very successful campout - 47 people, 18 vehicles. There will be a full report in the magazine. President Kris reported that it was an excellent outing, and as people had gone various ways home and there had not been an opportunity to thank Errol and Annette he moved a vote of thanks to them which was carried by the meeting by acclamation.

Next Outing: Sunday November 24th. Leader Jean Harslett, to Mt Norman - meeting at Weeroona Park at 9.00 a.m.

Next Meeting: The programme will be presented by Kel Dominey.

General Business: Management Committee will meet before the next meeting - 7.45pm. Those on the management committee are the President, Secretary, Treasurer and both Vice-Presidents.

Specimens: Noor Davis brought along interesting things she had made from collections made at outings.

Patience James brought specimens of flowers growing by Quart Pot Creek.

Kris & Margaret Carnell had three distinct currawong flower specimens.

There were samples of flowers found at the Amiens outing, and photos of the outing.

Margaret Carnell had the specimen and spoke of pellets created by currawongs.

Dore McCosker had a legless lizard as a specimen.

Programme: Frank James presented a very interesting programme from Japan. He had a photo album on display containing photos of a Japanese wedding for which he was photographer. There were also post cards to examine on the display table. With his slides Frank took us to places not seen as a tourist when visiting Japan. We were treated to a programme which was both interesting and informative.

PRE OUTING REPORT

The proposed outing for Sunday 24th November is to the Mount Norman area, and the requested sector to visit is the southern section, adjacent to Mount Norman itself.

It is likely to still be very dry, but even if the flora presents a very different aspect, perhaps even somewhat depressing, the timeless rock formations will be unchanged. There are some fascinating examples of weathering where the harder intrusions rear up in interesting shapes.

At the last meeting the specific area was referred to as "Mallee Ridge" and it is, indeed, the home of one of the few local mallees. Mount Norman was named after one of Queensland's early Governors, Sir Henry Wylie Norman, 1889 - 1896. Even as early as that Stanthorpe's climate was being extolled, and he spent part of several summers in Stanthorpe (for relief from Brisbane's humidity) while Governor of this state. An eminent geologist of that period lamented that Norman's name had been given to the most elevated point in the Granite Belt. He believed that this honour should have gone to W.C. Hume. Government Geologist Skeritchly suggested that Mr Walter Hume who was appointed Mineral Lands Commissioner to Stanthorpe on 6th November 1872 (almost exactly 119 years ago) should have been accorded the honour. He said, "Walter Hume saw more of early Stanthorpe - mapped more of the country - and described more of its geological features, than anybody before or since" Skeritchly should have been able to speak with some authority, since he did an extensive survey of the mineral potential of this area in 1897-98.

Cars will leave Weeroona Park at 9 a.m. or meet at the Lion's Park at Wallangarra at 9.30 a.m. and proceed to the Mount Norman Picnic area, where morning tea can be enjoyed.

Lunch will be carried, also water or cool drinks ...no fires. The walk can be taken steadily and should not be too arduous. Leader Jean Harslett (833185)

Jean Harslett

THE SHARP-SNOURED LEGLESS LIZARD

(*Lialis burtonis*)

At our October meeting Dore brought along a specimen of a legless lizard (*Lialis burtonis*). The following is some information about this reptile. According to "Australian Wildlife Heritage" legless lizards are often mistaken for snakes, and are sometimes called snake-lizards, flap-footed lizards or slow worms. Some of the differences between legless lizards and snakes are: Lizards have small flaps which are the remnants of hind legs, and are usually carried close to the body.

Legless lizards have ear openings while snakes don't. Their tongues are wide and fleshy and are used to clean their eyes, instead of being forked.

Legless lizards have long tails which they can break off as a decoy when frightened, whereas snakes have short tails which they cannot fracture in this way.

Most of the species of legless lizard are small, but some reach lengths of 60cm. Perhaps the best known of the family is the sharp-snouted legless lizard, sometimes called Burton's legless lizard. It is found over almost all of Australia.

CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP

The Christmas break-up on 8th December has fallen victim to the drought. It will now be held at the Rotary Park, just east of Carnarvon Bridge, instead of at Col and Janet Hocking's place.

We suggest people arrive at around 5 p.m. to allow time for a gentle walk along the creek before cooking a barbeque tea. Please supply your own food and drink. Barbeques will be provided to cook on.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 27th November. Kel Dominey will provide the programme.

BOOK REVIEW

Desley McDonagh has kindly written the following book review.

BUSHPEOPLE'S GUIDE TO BUSHWALKING IN SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND.

Second Edition, completely revised. Bisjpeople Publications. 1991/

Book in two parts - Part 1 - Introduction and Skills - chapter headings being:

1. How to use this book.
2. Grading system, roads, permits, and private landowners.
3. Starting bushwalking: basic questions answered.
4. Bushwalking conditions in S.E. Queensland.
5. Preparations, safety and equipment.
6. Basic bushwalking navigation.
7. Minimum impact bushwalking.

Part 11 - Regional Descriptions (My reason for the purchase)

8. One hundred suggested walks.
9. Brisbane Forest Park and Environs
10. Springbrook and the Cougals
11. Lamington National Park
12. Border ranges and environs/
13. The Barney/Ballow region.
14. The Main Range: Cunningham's Gap to Wilson's Peak.
15. The Mistake Mountains and environs.
16. The Boonah/Ipswich peaks
17. The Granite Regions
18. The Conondale Ranges
19. The Glasshouse Mountains
20. The Coastal Sand masses
21. Isolated areas.

Saw this advertised in a recent weekend paper - ordered it locally - they could not find out where to get it - saw it at Bookworld Toowoomba recently! It is packed with useful and interesting information, and excellent illustrations, both colour and black and white. It cost me a little under \$20.00 which is slightly less than RRP as advertised.

The second book I purchased was 'Encyclopaedia Botanica', 'The essential Reference Guide to Native and Exotic Plants in Australia.' A huge book 20x30cmx7cm thick, 1083p - contains detailed information on more than 11,000 plants, over 1100 illustrations, glossary, common name index etc. Compiled and illustrated by Frances Bodkin. Cornstalk Publishing 1991. This seems an excellent book for someone like me who had practically no references to help identify plants. Its RRP is close to \$60.00, but Bookworld was selling it for less than half that. At that price it is real value for money. It seems well bound, the paper quality is a bit rough, but the price on very good quality paper would be prohibitive.