

May 1973.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 38

May 1973

P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe.

Officers and Committee 1972 - 1973.

President	Mrs. R. Hamlett	Ph. Amiens	5U.
Vice President	Mr. W. Cathcart and Mr. F. Wilkinson		
Secretary	Mr. E. Walker		Ph. 888.
Treasurer	Mrs. R. Leisemann, Cwth. Bank bus. hours.		
Editors	Mr. I. Jackson and Mrs. D. Orr.		
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Mrs. B. Krautz and Mrs. W. Cathcart.		
Librarian	Mrs. Z. Newman		
Publicity Officer	Mr. F. Wilkinson		
Bushwalking	Mr. R. McCosker		
Geology	Mr. P. Higgins		
Flora	Mrs. W. McCosker		
Fauna	Miss J. Westcott.		
Youth	Mr. G. Marsden.		

Activities.

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

Annual Subscriptions.

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

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader.</u>
Castle Rock	20th May	Mr. R. McCosker.
Texas Caves (extra outing)	3rd June	Combined outing with Dalby Nats. & Malcolm Wilson.

Meetings:

<u>Subject.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Brookvale Park	23rd May	Mr. L. Cockburn
Photographing Wildflowers	29th June	Mr. M. Hodge.

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Did you know: There is hardly a corner of the world that isn't bothered by flies, although improved insecticides and refrigeration have greatly reduced the nuisance in the temperate zones. All two-winged insects are called "flies" and scientifically speaking there are over 40,000 known species of flies! They all belong to the order Diptera and therefore include the mosquito. Incidentally the dragonfly and the may fly are not true flies as they have more than two wings. Discounting the mosquitoes there are many flies throughout the world which are dangerous to man and beast. A few are the black flies of North America which swarm in such countless numbers in spring that their bites sometimes kill man and beast, the tsetse fly spreads sleeping sickness in Africa and we all know of the habit of our "blow fly" laying its eggs on sheep and fowls. Despite the above there is really one kind of fly - Annoying!!!!

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Minutes of General Meeting held 11th April, 1973.

Sixty two members were present with apologies being received from five.

Minutes of previous meeting: Moved Mr. R. Marsden seconded Mr. I. Jackson that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted as written in the Newsletter.

The acting President Mr. F. Wilkinson welcomed the guest speaker Mr. M. Wilson and visitors. Carried.

Inward Correspondence: (i) Press releases from D.P.I.
(ii) Bulletins from associate Nats. Clubs.
(iii) Bill from Power Bros. for duplicating.

Correspondence Outward: (i) Cheque to Lake Pedder Action Committee, Hobart \$12.
(ii) Letter of thanks to Mr. J. Walsh.

Moved Mr. R. McCosker, seconded Mr. I. Jackson that the inward correspondence be accepted as read and the outward adopted. Carried.

<u>Treasurer's Report:</u>	Cr. Bal.	\$29.41
	Postage March	1.27
	Cr. Bal.	<u>\$28.14</u>

Moved Mrs. G. Leisemann, seconded Mr. M. Passmore that the Treasurer's report be accepted and accounts passed for payment. Carried.

Outings Reports: Mr. R. Leisemann outlined the next outing to Boorook.

The next meeting will feature Mr. Lance Cockburn from Brookvale Park.

General Business: Further names requiring badges were collected. We have 41 ordered, but require an order for 75.

The meeting closed at 8.12 p.m. after which Mr. M. Wilson lectured on "Across Australia".

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"Across Australia".

An expert on natural history, "explorer" and Australian adventurer, Malcolm Wilson, gave a very interesting presentation of slides at our last meeting.

Opening the evening with a trip across the Simpson Desert, from east to west, we were taken to the "unknown inland". The various adventures of crossing sand hills were recorded as well as wild, plant and bird life.

The second half of the programme was devoted to the crossing of Australia from east to west. Six men, three four wheel drive vehicles, a two wheel drive motor cycle, and rolls and rolls of film, left Cape Byron N.S.W. and travelling for 45 days arrived at Steep Point in West Australia.

The large attendance present showed that many Australian people are still keen to know and learn about our vast interior. Although many of us would like to undertake a similar adventure, most of us will have to be content with the 'armchair' type trip.

We all look forward to another adventure with Malcolm Wilson.

A MEMBER.

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Outing 20th May to Castle Rock:

Assemble at Weeroona Park at 9.15 a.m. to leave at 9.30 a.m. sharp and travel to Bill McCosker's property, Wyberba. There will be Nats. signs from the main Highway turnoff.

A good days' walking will be provided for those with the energy to carry their own lunch and also drinking water, - there is no water available at the lunch spot. For the less energetic people, there will be plenty of interest quite handy to the cars.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Outing 20th May to Castle Rock Cont.:

The intended walk is from the cars almost due east to meet the Forestry track, to the top of Castle rock Then down the eastern side of Castle Rock and across the ridge-tops to the Sphinx, via some very interesting rock outcrops where we will have lunch. Then from the Sphinx, and Turtle Rock, with its historid cave, we will return in a north westerly direction to Ramsay Creek, and follow it to the cars.

This will be another full day walking, with a less difficult alternative for those who so desire. Wear stout shoes, and I suggest longs, to protect legs from the prickly undergrowth. Those doing the full day walk, remember to pack lunch and DRINKING WATER.

Rob McCOSKER. Sevenlea Phone 217.

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PROPOSED EXTRA OUTING TO GLEN LYON CAVES:

A proposed extra outing is planned with Malcolm Wilson and members of the Dalby Nats. Club to the Glen Lyon or Texas Caves on June 3rd.

With all the paper talk about this area, this should prove an interesting outing. For those who have not previously made the trip, 60 miles of road will be travelled, some sealed some gravel. The road is in good condition with a completely rebuilt section from the Mingoola Turnoff.

Pike Creek Dam Village can be seen from the road, and the various activities associated with the construction of this area.

Drivers beware the occassionally straying prime beef, especially in the "Riversdale" area and near "Glen Lyon".

Those wishing to take part should either be present at the next meeting, contact Mr. F. Wilkinson or be assembled ready to leave from Weeroona Park no later than 8.3 a.m.

A MEMBER.

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BUNYA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK:

Some 60 miles N.W. from Toowoomba via Bowanville, Yamsion and Horse Creek is the Bunya Mountains National Park comprising some 24,000 acres. The main feature of the park is the Bunya Pine CARAUCHARIA BIDWILLII a tall coniferous tree endemic to South Eastern Queensland.

"Bunya" is derived from the Aboriginal "bon-yi" the local name for the tree. Many ficiton and fact stories of aboriginal life describe the rendez vous of Aboriginal tribes from hundreds of miles around when a heavy crop of large milky white bunya nuts were harvested every third year, roasted and long feasts held. During this time tribal boundries were suspended and all hostilities forgotten. It was a time of peace and rejoycing.

The park is a part of the Great Divide and contains 2 main mountains, Mt. Kiangaron (3,725 ft) and Mt. Mowbullin (3,610 Ft.). Fifteen miles of walking tracks are provided and extensive views of the Darling Downs areas may be seen from the mountain summits.

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ECOLOGY:

God gives and the people take away!

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.CAMP-OUT TO RED ROCK GORGE:

"Rising like the walls of the strongest fort, impressive, majestic, colourful and a geographical wonder are the walls of Red Rock Gorge. Far out on the distant horizon the cobalt blue of the forbidding mountains contrasts with the gold, red orange and brown-grey of rock faces. Water cascading over this cliff face sparkling in the sunlight, crashing into the underground creek below presents one of the best pictures one can create. A picture of complete harmony, beauty and allover peacefulness...."

The "Bushwalkers' Guide to S.E. Q'ld" describes Red Rock Gorge as a rather inaccessible point of interest west of Stanthorpe. It was to this "Rather Inaccessible point of interest" Geoffrey Marsden led us on our last outing.

After bestowing the 'comforts' of home upon the truck, we set off from Joe Walsh's home in light drizzle, but in high spirits at approx 11.00 a.m. Many points of interest were noted along the way, - grasshoppers, lizards, grass trees, various forms of bird life, trees and rocks! (There were rocks, rocks, Rocks, ROCKS, R O C K S !!!)

Approx. 1½ hours later found us at the campsite, a small clearing beside a dam, overlooking the Ballandean Valley. While waiting for the truck and lunch to arrive, some members walked a short distance through the bush to view the ever changing colours of the gorge walls.

We were all pleased to see the truck arrive at approx. 2 p.m. as the inner man had been protesting for some time about the little attention he was receiving. After attending to our immediate needs we set up our various forms of camping accommodation (tents, flys, bush huts, hammocks and "under the stars") and then congregated to hear the programme for the day and various camp rules.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent strolling and clambering down to the falls (rather where the falls should be) where the creek spills some 300 feet into the gorge below. Some members found some interesting crystal formations near the top of the falls. Very little digging was required before one had a handfull of crystals of various sizes.

Upon returning to camp the evening preparations were attended to followed by a sing-song around the campfire, where we heard various melodies(?) from various quarters of the community. Our thanks to Mr. Hill and gang for the good work and also to Kerry Marsden for recording our efforts (you never know, we may cut a L.P. one day!)

Emerging from our 'hollow logs' the next morning we quickly disposed of breakfast and set off on a very interesting hike, following an old disused road. Along the way we noted the many stranded dingo fence erected many years ago. Later we came to some old mine diggings. Upon examining the hard rock diggings, one feels that every penny was well earned.

After a short stop at the mine, the party split into two. One group returning to camp while the other group descended into the gorge, ascended the other side and hiked (?) along the rim of the gorge back to camp. Those who made this trip witnessed some beautiful scenery.

Lunch was soon eaten and the truck packed. Some felt it best to "thumb" a ride, while the remaining members hiked back a different route to Walsh's. Among our 30 members and guests present, we were pleased to have with us Helen from Switzerland and Wolf from Germany two young people touring Australia. It was also pleasing to see a number of young people present.

Our thanks to Harslett Bros for the use of the truck, Mr. R. Marsden the driver, Mrs. Harslett for interesting sidelights, Mr. J. Walsh for use of his property and Geoff for his excellent organization.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.RULES FOR NATIONAL PARK VISITATIONS:

The long Easter Break and May Weekens has allowed many of us to adventure further afield. Many of us will have visited some of the many National Parks abounding in our country. A National Park is an area of land set aside by the Forestry Dept. "to conserve the scenery, natural and historic objects and wildlife therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations"

There are a number of regulations and rules set down to govern parks:-
It is unlawful to:-

- (i) Remove any forest product from a park.
- (ii) Remove or damage any bird, animal or plant life.
- (iii) Fish in the waters or remove any crustacean or other aquatic life from the streams.
- (iv) Damage formed tracks by short cutting or dislodging rocks or soil.
- (v) Take any automotive vehicle into the Park or onto the track.
- (vi) Erect a tent without permit.
- (vii) Carry wax matches or light fires except in areas set aside for the purpose.

We should firstly observe the rules at all times, and secondly encourage others to do likewise.

Other points to observe when bushwalking:-

- (i) Leave gates etc. as found
- (ii) Walk several paces behind the one in front of you.
- (iii) It is the responsibility of the second to avoid springing twigs, NOT the responsibility of the first to hold them back.
- (iv) Stones must not be deliberately dislodged or rolled over cliff faces.
- (v) Clean campsite before you depart - leave nothing.
- (vi) Don't drink water if there is any doubt, boil first.
- (vii) Don't wash upstream of drinking water.
- (viii) Don't take unnecessary risks, you may endanger other people as well as yourself.
- (ix) Remember "Keep Queensland tidy".
- (x) Carry out all rubbish - if you can carry it in, you can carry it out, Don't leave food scraps on the fire.
- (xi) Please remember:-

Banana skins and luncheon scraps,
Orange peel and chocolate wraps,
Broken bottles, torn rags,
Kodak cases, paper bags,
Cigarettes and matches spent,
Cardboard plates and papers rent
Tins and such like, odds and ends
Spoil a place for other friends.
Dirt and papers in pretty places,
Slam park gates in people's faces!

from a Park Gate in Scotland.

R.A.D.

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Rumour has it that a certain town authority intends doing something about pollution as soon as it can see its way clear!!!

--oCo--

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.OUR NATIVE RATS:

At this time of the year we seem to be required to accept the fact that "it's getting colder, Winter is on the way". With the advance of cold weather the animals find it necessary to find new places for food supplies and new abodes to escape the chilling fingers of "Jack Frost". Especially in farming areas there is a noted increase in the sighting of those little furry creatures Rats. To describe a rat or 'put it in its place', one could say a rat is a mammal belonging to the sub-phylum vertebrate of the phylum chordata.

Being a vertebrate, a rat has a skull, a well developed brain, a skeleton of cartilage or bone, and a vertebral column consisting of a chain of small bones or cartilages called the vertebrae. Other members of this class include fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds.

There are three groups of mammals in Australia -

- (i) Monotremes, including platypus and echidna
- (ii) Marsupials - numbering 120 species
- (iii) Placentals of which there are 60 species of native rats, 45 species of bats including flying foxes.

Some species of native rats include the Bush or Allied Rat (*Rattus fuscipes*) - probably the most common and widely distributed of our native murid rodents. It is a non-pouched mammal occurring throughout most of eastern Australia. The bush rat is mainly a vegetarian and is usually found close to water, living in burrows where the female makes a grass nest for her litter of four.

Another native placental rodent found throughout most of Australia, always near rivers, creeks, lakes etc. is the Water Rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*). Feeding on crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic organisms, it lives in burrows. Once the water rat was trapped intensively for the fur trade, but it is now protected in most states. Having webbed feet and a stream lined body adapted for locomotion in the water, it is a fine swimmer and essentially nocturnal.

Reaching a head-body length of over 12 inches and a long tail covered with white scales, it is Australia's largest murid rodent, giant white tailed rat (*Uromys caudimaculatus*). Having extremely strong teeth, it will gnaw through coconut husks to reach the fruit. In the Mabbera district, it has entered store rooms, made holes in condensed milk tins and eaten the contents. Frequenting dry forest country, it is mainly terrestrial.

R.A.D.

