

MAY 1974.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST

Monthly newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 49 MAY 1974

P.O. BOX 154 STANTHORPE Q.

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE 1973-1974

PRESIDENT	Mr. F. Wilkinson
VICE PRESIDENTS	Mr. R. Leisemann & Mrs. R. Harslett
SECRETARY	Mr. E. Walker (Phone 888)
EDITOR	Mr. I. Jackson
NEWSLETTER SUB-COMMITTEE	Mr. & Mrs. W. Cathcart
LIBRARIAN	Mrs. Z. Newman
PUBLICITY OFFICER	
FLORA OFFICER	Mrs. D. McCosker
FAUNA OFFICER	
GEOLOGY OFFICER	Mr. P. Higgins
YOUTH OFFICER	Mr. G. Marsden
BUSHWALKING OFFICER	Mr. R. McCosker

ooo000ooo

ACTIVITIES

MEETINGS	4th Wednesday of each month at C.W.A. Rooms at 8.00 p.m.
OUTINGS	Sunday preceeding 4th Wednesday

PROGRAMME

FIELD OUTING:

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>
Dr. Roberts waterhole	MAY 19th 9.15 a.m.	To be announced Civic Centre depart.
<u>MEETING:</u> <u>SUBJECT</u> TASMANIA - Off the beaten track	MAY 22nd	<u>SPEAKER</u> David Bluhdorn



MAY 1974

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 24TH APRIL, 1974

Present 39 Apologies 4

Meeting opened at 8.07 p.m.

President Frank Wilkinson thanked Mrs. R. Harslett for chairing the March meeting in his absence.

Minutes of the previous meeting: Moved by Mr. I. Jackson, seconded Mr. G. Marsden, that the minutes of the previous meeting be confirmed.

INWARD CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Newsletters from other Nats. Clubs
2. Correspondence from Adult Education re Speakers etc.
3. Press releases from D.P.I.
4. Letter from Mr. R. Moncrieff confirming June lecture.

OUTWARD CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Request to Adult Education for Speakers fee for Mr. Moncrieff, and details of newspaper ads. for following meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Balance B/fd.	\$49.15
Expenses:	
Duplicating	\$ 6.00
Postage	4.36
P.O. Box	6.00
Lees A/c	1.70
	<u>\$18.06</u>
	18.06

CREDIT BALANCE \$31.09

Moved by Mrs. G. Leiseman, seconded by Mrs. R. Marsden that the Treasurer's report be accepted and accounts passed for payment.

OUTING REPORTS: Mrs. G. Leiseman reported on the Rocky River outing which was attended by about 30 people. (8 cars) The next outing will be to the underground river and Dr. Roberts Waterhole, leader still to be announced.

GENERAL BUSINESS: The "Land Utilisation Survey" is to be studied by a Committee before the May meeting. Our magazine in future will be edited by Mr. F. Wilkinson with the typing being done by Mrs. G. Leiseman and Mrs. M. Flinn.

It was decided by a show of hands that we put the price of car stickers up to 50c. to supplement our finances.

CLOSURE: The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m. after which Mr. Doug Croston gave an illustrated talk "Off The Beaten Track Overseas".



MAY 1974

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST

REPORT ON ROCKY RIVER CAMP-OUT 20TH-21ST APRIL LED BY  
ROB LEISEMANN:

As is usual for outings to this area, the weather turned out lousy on Saturday morning. Five Nats. cars set out from the park in heavy overcast conditions and drizzling rain. We were joined later in the day by three more cars and altogether just over 20 members came on the outing.

Perhaps the weather kept a few people away, however it was very kind to us and we only encountered a few light showers during the weekend, with patches of sunshine on the Sunday. On the Saturday we drove about 10 miles down Rocky River to a spot where we had lunch. The scenery was very pleasant along the stretch of the river despite the cloudy conditions. By the time we returned to the Upper Rocky River area to the campsite on Boundary Creek it was starting to drizzle and everyone hurriedly made camp. In the early hours of Sunday morning a heavy shower of rain brought thoughts of an early return home that day, but the morning dawned with brighter conditions.

After breakfast most people went for a walk up Boundary Creek, a crystal clear stream with numerous cascades and waterholes. If only there had been more sunshine to bring the whole area alive!! On returning to the cars we packed up and then drove to the end of the Upper Rocky River road to view some more sections of this picturesque river.

We then returned to a clearing on the banks of Demon Creek where we had a late lunch, after which we went for a walk up the creek to a spot where another creek flowed from the plateau above, over a series of waterfalls. There was a very interesting small narrow gorge above the falls with water cascading through. On returning to the cars the party broke up and everyone headed for home after what turned out to be a most enjoyable weekend.

Rob. Leisemann.

FOLLOWING ARE COMMENTS MADE BY MEMBERS AT THE CLOST OF THE  
OUTING:

"Damp but enjoyable"

"First campout, most enjoyable and one we will not forget in a hurry"

"Another great Nats. outing, we saw a place some of us didn't know existed, we must go again to enable others to enjoy it".

"A most delightful spot with varied interests and very pleasant company".



MAY 1974

## THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST

Comments (Cont'd.)

"The seven members of our party voted the weekend an outstanding success. The drive to and from the camp site was through varying types of country and the scenery was magnificent. The outing was well organised and Bob went out of his way to ensure that we got the most out of the weekend. Enough free time was allowed to enable each member to pursue his own particular interest. The company, as usual, was of the very best. Many thanks to all for an absolutely wonderful weekend."

ooo000ooo

Nats. don't forget those car stickers are readily available - 50c. each - be in it, show that you are proud to be a Nat!

ooo000ooo

No doubt most of you will by now have heard of the death of our very popular member, Miss Joan Westcott, on Sat. 27th April. Joan was a true Nat. in every way, loved the bush and everything in it and her passing has left quite a gap in the lives of the many people she knew and helped so often over the years in this Community.

ooo000ooo

POISONOUS PLANTS:

The article relating to poisonous plants by one of our members in last month's magazine, brought to mine our experience with a plant we grew for about 20 years. It had tri-foliate leaves, very attractive autumn colours caused us to plant it in the first place. Some time after planting it, my wife started getting a severe eczema which over the years seemed to get worse, at times her face swelled until she couldn't see! Then I started to be affected, and the discomfort and itch was very distressing, no treatment the Doctors gave us did any good (until just before we discovered the culprit and got rid of it), when anti-histamines were prescribed.

We had blamed various flowers etc. and gradually eliminated them until there wasn't a flower plant in the garden at all. It is incredible that it took us so long to discover the cause of the trouble, it was TOXICODENDRON RADICANS of the Genus RHUS, it should have been a prohibited immigrant!



MAY 1974

POISONOUS PLANTS (Cont'd.)

It's sap is milky and it appears no one is immune, the irritant is so potent that in an experiment the sap was diluted fifty million to one and still caused a rash! If burnt, the smoke carried the irritant, it can be carried by shoes, clothing, soil, tools etc. and persons who have had no contact with the shrub can be affected by these means. Poisoning can occur if clothing is worn a year after coming in contact with the plant. After identification I phoned the person from whom I obtained the plant and she could not even remember it, luckily for her it had died apparently shortly after I had taken some of it, I wish mine had died!

F.W.

ooo000ooo

BIRDLIFE:

I recently had the pleasure of introducing Merv. Fletcher to a bird which was new to him and one which, to my knowledge is a rarity in this district, though it has been well known to me for many years. This is the Chestnut Breasted Finch (*Donacola Castaneothorax*) a breeding colony of which I was fortunate to discover some time ago. This colony which could number some fifty odd birds is settled in an area which is typical of the situation in which they thrive, blackberry thickets, long reed grasses and long grass in profusion, interspersed with bushes and trees.

Merv. and I spent some time with them and were able to see the adults in all the splendour of their subdued colouring of chestnut, white, black and browns with the typical blue black beak. We also saw plenty of fully grown young birds which have not as yet attained the adult plumage, being a dark olive brown in colour at this stage. We also found one nest containing eggs which we think belonged to the Chestnut Breast though Red Browed and Double Bar Finches were also in this area. The nest was a very well built structure, not like the usual nests of both Double Bar and Red Browed which are usually built of very fine grasses. We hope to confirm which species owns this particular nest.

One peculiarity which we were able to see clearly was the habit the young birds have of flicking their wings in much the same way as the Spice Finch family flick their tails. This is a common habit of the young birds though I have never seen adult birds do it.

In common with many members of the Finch family male and female are practically identical and seeing them is extremely difficult. A couple of the commoner names for this finch



MAY 1974

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST

BIRDLIFE (Cont'd.)

are Barley Bird and Bull Finch. Though it is nothing like a true Bull Finch in colouring it is a bit similar in its build.

Bill Barker..

ooo000ooo

D.P.I. PRESS RELEASE: 22/3/1974

WIDER FAUNA COVERAGE: Protection contemplated for two species of crocodiles also for tortoises, lizards, pythons, and possibly some insects, such as bird-wing butterflies. Four categories of FAUNA is envisaged - permanently protected (echidna, koala, platypus etc.) protected, non-protected and prohibited. You will be pleased to hear the Bennetts tree kangaroos, Q'land hairy nosed wombat, Q'land rat kangaroo and the yellow footed rock wallaby are now in the first category, also the golden winged and paradise parrots.

The Bill provides for a maximum penalty of \$3000 for a second offence or subsequent offence relating to permanently protected fauna plus \$200 for each fauna involved

ooo000ooo

A MEMBER'S GARDENING HINTS:

In late winter plant tomato seeds in empty yoghurt containers after piercing with heated nail. Bring indoors at night and when Spring comes you can plant out still in the container.

Scillas give a longer inflorescence when planted in a south east aspect or failing that, southeast. Near the scillas let for-get-me-nots go to seed during late summer and thin out and transplant on a cloudy day.

ooo000ooo

More about poisonous plants next month and PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE - how about some more articles - it's your magazine let's keep it interesting with a wide variety of subjects.

ooo000ooo

I must comment - aren't we having a lovely autumn, azaleas, camelias, prunus blossom, jonquils and even flag iris against a glorious background of golden poplars and rich red liquid ambers and japanese maples. Isn't it wonderful to be able to enjoy such beauties of nature so close at hand?