

Friends of Brisbane Ranges

Incorporated

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December
2005



Grevillea
steiglitziana

Next Meeting

Sunday ;
11th December

Meet at;
10am at Meikles Point Picnic Ground,
situated in Werribee Gorge State Park.
See map on reverse.

Activities;
I warned you it would be here soon,
yes it's our Christmas breakup. For
those feeling energetic a walk in the
area will be organised.

What to bring;
Whatever you like, remember it is a
BBQ and Parks will be supplying
salads and drinks (BYO Meat).
Those wishing to partake of the walk
should bring suitable footwear.
PS, don't forget the usuals.

Next Month

Upcoming Events

25th December;
Christmas Day for those that have
been good for the past twelve months.
And for those that have played up, half
your luck.

12th February;
Yes it is back into it for another year. At
this stage we will be visiting the Block
Track area to remove pine wildlings
and pittosporum that are invading the
park from the adjoining private block.
Remember, if it is a **Day of Total Fire
Ban**, the activity will be cancelled.

November Meeting

Judy Locke

Weed Removal, Sutherlands Creek, Steiglitz

There is an area along Sutherlands Creek, approx 15 minutes walk down stream from the Courthouse, which has a history of 2 troublesome weeds peculiar only to that area; Caper Spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*) and Blue Periwinkle (*Vinca major*). Neither are common within the Park, possibly garden escapees from long ago when the township had many inhabitants. They tend to favour riparian conditions such as along the banks of Sutherlands Creek, the seed or any plant material with the potential to take root can then be spread to other areas during floods.

Blue Perinkle : Is a native of the Mediterranean region originally cultivated as an ornamental in gardens. It is hardy ground cover with trailing stems, leaves ovate and shiny with attractive bluish – purple flowers. The stems roots at their tips which assist in its spread.

Caper Spurge ; is a native of Europe and sometimes grown as a ornamental. It is an upright plant, leaves lanceolate attached to the stem which contain a bitter milky juice. The flowers have no petals, are bright green and leave a round spongy capsule containing seeds.

In other words, these weed nasties have established themselves and must be removed either by hand or herbicide with follow-up treatments. This is where the trusty friends group have assisted in their control, with handpulling and removal of the seed supply and stem material with the potential to take root.

We spent the morning doing the physical hard labour of weed removal leaving little to continue their survival. Unfortunately they will be there next time we visit but hopefully in very insignificant numbers and taking an only short time to remove. Thanks fellas for all your effort (yet again!)

After a leisurely lunch we thought we'd investigate further upstream using the deadmans Trk as a guide along the creek bed. Our youngest members had a wonderful time discovering the rock pools with their Mum and Dad doing their best to keep them dry. We all became a little confused at times finding the track as the markers had disappeared or were hidden by flood debris, perhaps a future project with a GPS for the fitter members of the friends group!

It really is a special area of the Park; a miniature replica of those wonderful gorges seen in the northern Australia and a must see for visitors in the Park. It is such a delight to see water in the Park, albeit in small quantities, surely a incentive for bird life.
Ps. Sorry no photo, Judy wrote toooo much.

The Voyages of Captain Cook

It has come to the attention of the Editor that Captain Cook and his faithful crew were sighted continuing their discovery of the New World. After much searching and investigation, the reports of sightings have been confirmed and it is with much pleasure that I am able to bring to our readers some excerpts from his journal. Please read on.....

The Cook family decided to go exploring eastern Australia and its National Parks, further a field than Boar Gully. We set off in early July with a new camper trailer, our trusty old hiking tent (the zip broke after 3 weeks), lots of food, drinks, toys, books, oh and we took the kids as well (the neighbours wouldn't feed them).

Our first stop was Peak Hill, south of Dubbo Zoo. It took two days to get around this wonderful zoo. Highlights included the Greater one-horned rhinoceros (apparently armour plated) chasing and tossing a giant ball; Owen entertaining a crowd with his song about cheeky monkeys getting eaten by a crocodile, while a gibbon swung through branches over the water; Kristen and meerkats running on either side of a glass window, equally excited about each another. We also visited nearby Goobang National Park, following signs to their supposedly lovely viewpoint, where we had a lovely view of the inside of a cloud.

Our next stop was Mt Kaputar NP near Narrabri. The days were warm and sunny, but the nights were very cold and frosty at the campground at the bottom of the mountain range. The park campground at the top of the range was 1200m higher (brrr!). A highlight of the area was Sawn Rocks, a huge wall of columnar basalt perched above a creek. It was best not to think too much about the large lumps of columns in the creek bed while walking around them.



“Sawn Rocks as seen by Captain Cook on his voyage down under”

We moved on to Carnarvon Gorge, arriving the night before Owen's fifth birthday, appropriately armed with a hidden cake and candles. The campground was surrounded by cycads and palm trees and more crowded than Anakie Gorge on a sunny weekend. Owen celebrated his birthday with presents and a spectacular 8 ½ km walk into the gorge. Lots of people wished him happy birthday, especially as he told almost everyone that “Today's my birthday!”. He bounced back to camp fuelled by a chupa-chup for a small birthday party with two boys who were camped nearby.

We continued north to Blackdown Tablelands NP, west of Rockhampton. We spent the first two nights camped in the lovely(?) town of Dingo, whose main claim to fame is that it is the home of the World Championship Dingo Trap Throwing and Picnic Races. The town is situated between a busy coal carting railway line, a highway with truckloads of mining equipment, and a sawmill (which was the most peaceful of the three). After discovering that the locals were mistaken and we could get the camper trailer up the extremely steep hill to the NP camping ground, we decamped to the more peaceful and dusty bush (“When did the kids last have clean trousers? Who knows? They're brown half an hour after breakfast”). The park had masses of colourful flowers, especially peas (Drat! says Wendy, no flower book of the area). The purple coral peas were growing so well that we thought they had plans for world domination. The drop off on the tablelands means there are huge waterfalls, but only when there's water flowing in the creeks. This part of the country is still suffering from the long drought.

Later, we headed for Seaforth, on the coast north of Mackay, yearning for a shower and a washing machine. Each night we were disturbed by the loud calls of roaming bush stone curlews. We spent the next week and a half exploring beaches and rainforests. There were not many flowers, but lots of fungi. We had competitions to see who could find the strangest fungi on each walk. One of the strangest had a transparent cap. Kristen, who at this stage was only thinking about starting to talk, could spot fungi from the kid-carrier backpack with excited cries of “fu, fu”. A highlight, especially for the kids, was Wedge Island. This island is reached by a rocky causeway which is only passable around low tide. We found a sandy beach with lots of shell fragments, which led to lots of hole digging and feet burying. We walked back to the carpark along the beach and stopped for a splash in the shallows, eventually returning to the car with two wet, sandy happy children. About this time, we discovered that there was snow on the veranda of our home near Meredith! Owen became an expert at spotting the local green ants and their nests, made of leaves. They obviously liked the taste of him because they kept biting him! Kristen, with chubby face, blue eyes and rosy cheeks charmed all the grannies who spotted her.

At this stage, we discovered that there was so much to see, so little time, so we had to start heading south. Next stop was Girraween NP, just north of the NSW border, near Stanthorpe. After setting up camp in the dark, attempts to restart the Hilux resulted in despondent clicking noises from the starter motor. The next morning, the RACQ man discovered that the batteries weren't being fully charged, mainly because the alternator was about to fall off! After spending a boring afternoon in Stanthorpe waiting for it to be fixed, Colin headed back to Girraween to squeeze in some exploring. Girraween is a land of granite boulders and domes, and we walked up a particularly steep dome called First Pyramid. We were amazed that there were no rails or steps to protect careless hikers from the real world, as there would have been in Victoria. The view from the top was stunning, including nearby Second Pyramid which was an even steeper dome.

Unfortunately, we didn't have time to explore the park properly before heading off to Warrumbungles NP. The days were sunny, but the nights were cold (pass the port!). The area has numerous wonderful bushwalks, but most were too long or steep for a five year old. We still managed to find some wonderful peaks to climb and lots of interesting rock formations. We did spot one young koala outside the visitor centre. Next stop was further south and inland to Lake Mungo NP. This lake has been dry for a few thousand years, but this bit of information hadn't filtered through to the large family group camped near us who had brought along their boat! The Walls of China sand dune next to the lake had many beautiful formations, but it was a bit disconcerting to realise they had mainly been caused by erosion due to grazing damage from the early settler's sheep. The park contains several of their buildings, including a large woolshed with an old steam engine once used to drive the shearing equipment (no Owen, it's not Trevor the traction engine from Thomas!).

Our last (but not least) stop was Bernie and Sue's “patch of bush” in the Victorian Mallee. Wendy had a wonderful time identifying wildflowers and we spent some time helping Bernie and Sue plant some trees. While doing this, Colin managed to dig up a Mallee spadefoot toad (*Neobatrachus pictus*) from one of the dunes. We also had a guided tour of the block, and enjoyed Sue's delicious fruit damper. Unfortunately, we had to head home after that, but our disappointment at this was partly alleviated by the fact that it was spring in the Brisbane Ranges! Now that's a wonderful place to visit, and not too far from home!



“Ay Capin, I canny no see the ship”