



URIMBIRRA

Monthly newsletter

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Urimbirra is an Aboriginal word meaning 'to take care of' or 'to preserve'.

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NEXT DEADLINE FOR URIMBIRRA CONTRIBUTIONS: SUNDAY 4 MARCH 2018

Emailed contributions should be sent as attachments in JPEG and/or Word, please, not PDF or other format.

EMAIL for Urimbirra material. Send to Frank Truscott - mongrove@bigpond.com

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IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE INFORMATION ABOUT THE 2018 AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS' NETWORK GET-TOGETHER IN VICTORIA, PLEASE CONTACT KATH TRUSCOTT ON 4668 9054 OR mongrove@bigpond.com.

Our web site: <http://www.chinchillanaturalists.com.au>

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BUNYA MOUNTAINS COMBINED NATS OUTING – 12TH, 13TH AND 14TH OF JANUARY

By Frank Truscott

FRIDAY 12TH JANUARY

Friday was arrival day and after settling in to our accommodation, members of Chinchilla and Toowoomba Field Naturalists' Clubs and of Bunya Mountains Natural History Association took a short walk around the Dandabah area. The White Euodia *Melicope micrococca* is a quite common tree around that area and can grow to 27 metres. It was flowering profusely. The Brush Cherry *Syzigium australe* was also



flowering and had pear-shaped fruit as well. A bird highlight was a Grey Goshawk in a tree at the edge of the forest. We also saw numerous Large-leaved Tamarind trees with their large, leathery leaves. The scaly bark of the Red Cedars was about the only part of them that we could see, with the rest of them in the upper canopy. The Native Violet *Viola hederacea* (LEFT) seems to like the sun and was growing in more open areas, while the Tongue Orchid *Dockrillia linguiformis* (TOP RIGHT) likes trees. The small waterholes left in Saddletree Creek were home for large tadpoles (RIGHT) of either Great or Giant Barred Frogs. That was it for the day's nattering and we made our way back to our respective homes to see who else had arrived.



SATURDAY 13TH JANUARY

Several more members of CFNC and Bunya Mountains NHA arrived for the day's activities and we congregated at the Ranger Station. In consideration of the warm weather, the first walk was to be from Westcott to Paradise because this kept us on the shady side of the mountain. Just finishing flowering at



Westcott camp ground was Blue Skin *Acacia irrorata* with fine ferny leaflets and a resident Erect Mistletoe *Ameyema congener*. Of special interest were numerous wattles, possibly Green Wattle *Acacia maidenii*, with numerous galls (LEFT). The Cut-leaf Cranesbill *Geranium solanderi* (probably subsp.



solanderi) (RIGHT) was on show in spite of the dry weather. A brown, shiny beetle about 2 cm long (possibly a Chrysomelid) was found minding its own business (LEFT). An interesting scrambling plant was *Tylophora grandiflora* with its impressive dark pink star shaped flower (RIGHT). Juvenile Velvet-leaved caper *Capparis velutina* with its long, paired spines was quite common, as was a Cucurbit, possibly Star Cucumber *Sicyos australis*. The Rock Felt Fern *Pyrrosia rupestris* was also a frequent sight on trees



(BELOW LEFT). In a large patch of Wandering Jew *Commelina diffusa* were several specimens of Native Onion or Golden Lily *Bulbine bulbosa*. We soon ended up at Paradise and a vehicle ferry service had us back at Westcott where we had a late morning tea, after which we returned to camp.





After lunch and a rest we visited Cedarvale, headquarters of the Bunya Mountains Natural History Association. Donated to the Association and laboriously dismantled and carefully re-erected on the current site, Cedarvale houses a wonderful collection of natural and cultural



history exhibits, a very wide range of excellent reference materials and a wonderfully constructed model of Andersen's Tramway. Thank you to volunteers Mike and Lyn England of BMNHA who were on duty roster for keeping Cedarvale open for us. There being no rest for the wicked, those so inclined took on the walk from Paradise to Dandabah which, while never far from the main road, gives the feeling of being in the middle of the rainforest. A Bunya Pine which had relatively recently fallen across the track had had a section removed from it to open the track up. It was already being eaten by a variety of organisms,



including fungi (RIGHT). A fairly common plant in damp areas, *Polia Polia crispata* (LEFT) was well in bud and starting to flower. All too soon we were at Dandabah and everyone returned to their respective houses to start getting ready for the barbecue. This was held, as it was last year, at "Kookaburra Cottage" which has a verandah just large enough for the 21 attendees. It was a most



enjoyable evening, particularly so because we were in the company of like-minded people.

SUNDAY 14TH JANUARY

Sadly it was pack-up day and we needed to vacate the houses by 10 a.m. Some folk had to take their leave and go home, while others decided to do a pre-breakfast walk up Mount Kiangarow. While it is uphill most of the way, the track is of a quite reasonable grade and had only a couple of obstructions which were negotiated without death or serious injury. Nettles and New Zealand Spinach were common as were Native Raspberries which were fruiting. However, something uncommon was the burrowing wasps which were going about their business at the lookout. They didn't seem to mind the photographers in close proximity to them and their burrows. Chris Rinehart has prepared an article about them. The views from the lookout were also captivating. I found a small, green Lynx Spider (RIGHT) but have been unable to find a name for it. Lynx Spiders belong in the family Oxyopidae which has four Australian genera and nineteen species thus far described. However, the number of genera and species is almost certain to increase, perhaps to at least six genera and about 60 species. As the common name suggests, these spiders are (daytime) ambushers who sit and wait to pounce on their prey. A physical feature is the numerous long spines on their slender legs. The walk down took almost as long as the walk up, but that's nats for you.



After a quick pack-up, we tackled the Carbine's Chute walk from Munro's Camp. This is a regular favourite as it is an easy walk for all levels of fitness and has the bonus of having quite a few name signs for the trees and shrubs. An interesting thing to look for is the pipe from a spring on one of the tributaries of Horse Gully to the fountain at Munro's Camp. The fountain was built to acknowledge the generosity of WA Russell, grazier and Queensland parliamentarian, who, in 1927 presented 1100 acres to the Mayor of Dalby as a gift to the people of Dalby and districts.

All too soon it was time to go our separate ways and we did so with the idea that a winter get-together on the Bunyas might be worth trying. Thank you to all participants for making the camp thoroughly enjoyable.

BUNYA BIRD LIST
Compiled By Kath Truscott

Golden Whistler	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Yellow-throated Scrubwren
Grey Shrike-Thrush	Silvereeye	Laughing Kookaburra
Green Catbird	King-Parrot	Regent Bowerbird
Noisy Pitta (H)	Black-faced Monarch	Large billed Scrubwren
White-throated Treecreeper	Brown Thornbill	Grey Goshawk
Russet-tailed Ground Thrush.	Rufous Fantail	Spotted Pardalote (H)
Eastern Whip Bird	Yellow Thornbill	Superb Fairy-wren
Red-browed Finch	Gerygone	Australian Magpie
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Australian Bush-turkey	Wonga Pigeon
Lewin's Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin	Southern Boobook (H)
Pied Currawong	White-browed Scrubwren	Brown Pigeon
Crimson Rosella	Satin Bowerbird	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

NATURE NOTE: YELLOW SAND WASP
BY CHRIS RINEHART

The Sunday morning walk was a pleasant one to the top of Mt Kiangarow, the highest of the Bunya Mountains. At the summit we were greeted by about a dozen yellow-coloured wasps (BELOW RIGHT). They were flying around close to the ground in a patch of sandy soil about a metre square. A number of them landed on the ground and were observed digging holes in the soil. I identified them as a species of *Bembix* (*Fam. Sphecidae*) – yellow sand wasps. This was confirmed by Martyn Robinson, ex Aust Museum: They are solitary wasps but like to build their nests near one another so these ‘villages’ are formed. They progressively provision their burrows, most frequently with March flies/ Horse Flies (family Tabanidae), which are added to the burrows at intervals for the growing larva. CSIRO’s, *The Insects of Australia*, (1970) notes that they are often stylopized (parasitised by tiny Strepsiptera insects), and also parasitized by other types of wasps and flies.

According to Wikipedia, similar species are found in North America where, “nests are typically short, simple burrows, with a single enlarged chamber at the bottom which is stocked with freshly killed prey items for the developing wasp larva; the egg may sometimes be laid before the chamber is completely stocked. It is common for numerous females to excavate nests within a small area where the soil is suitable, creating large and sometimes very dense nesting aggregations, which tend to attract various species of parasitic flies and wasps, many of which are cleptoparasites, feeding on the wasp’s food reserves; in some cases, the sand wasps prey on their own parasites, a surprisingly rare phenomenon in the animal kingdom. “

Some interesting observations and theories have been made by Peter Chew on his Brisbane Insects and Spiders web page. [Chris: I have made some minor corrections to spelling and grammar.]

“Yellow sand wasps are medium to large in size (body length 15mm) with stout body and colours of yellow and black on thorax, black and white bands on abdomen. All legs are yellow with very minor black marks on joints. They are ground nesters. Females have fore-basitarsi [‘feet’] expanded and a high number of rake spines for digging. They provision their nest with different insect prey, mainly flies. The female wasp constructs a burrow under the ground, drags its paralysed prey in and lays an egg in the burrow. Adult wasps feed on nectar.



This wasp flies with a typical buzzing noise, especially when it flies very close to the ground. We noticed that the turbulence under where the wasp was flying was exceptionally high. The dust and sand were blown around when the wasp was flying close to the ground, and it seems that the wasp was searching for something.” [Chris: We also noticed this turbulence. I also thought that burrow entrances seemed to be marked or perhaps hidden by small stones or twigs.] “We believe the wasp makes this turbulence to check if the soil is loose and easy to dig holes. The wasp may also use the buzzing noise as sonic radar to detect the structure of the ground surface. It may detect if there are any holes or hollows under the ground. If we can find and prove the wasp has some kind of organ to receive the echo, then the sand wasp may be the first group of insects known that can use the Echolocation technique (besides bats, humans, whales and dolphins, some birds etc.)”

“In Karawatha Forest during early summer next to the footpath, we saw two sand wasps flying over a patch of bare soil. On the top of the soil there were more than ten small holes, which looked like the nest entrance. (Later we learned that those could be the decoy.) We noticed one wasp guarding outside; the other wasp found the real entrance and dug into the soil. The wasp stayed underground for about two minutes, then came out and flew away. This wasp was [supposedly] looking for food to feed the young in the nest; so let’s call this wasp the provisioning wasp. The other let’s call it the guarding wasp. The guarding wasp patrolled outside the nest while the provisioning wasp was underground and away for provision. The guarding wasp chased away any large insects that flew within two metres. There was a pattern of its patrolling flight. It rested for a few seconds and then resumed its patrolling flight for a minute. It did not care about the small flying insects or the camera man. About ten minutes later, the provisioning wasp came back (we checked the photos carefully by comparing the body pattern; we are sure it is the same wasp.) Both wasps flew together in a small circuit over the nest with a loud buzzing sound, with frequency change, which could be a form of communication. Then the guarding wasp guided the provisioning wasp to the nest entrance; the provisioning wasp dug into the nest as before.

The two wasps look a bit different. The guarding wasp had the black thorax while the provisioning wasp had yellow markings on it. We saw at least once that the guarding wasp chased away another sand wasp. With about an hour of observation, we saw only two wasps related with this nest. Sharing the nest entrance and guarding the nest is an effective way to avoid parasites. This also is paving the path for the evolution to social wasps.”

We nats observed lots of such buzzing and chasing and flying together behaviour; but did not have the time (or patience!) to do such detailed observations as Peter had. They were also very difficult to photograph as they did not stay still for very long. Some of us would have liked to stay and observe their behaviour for longer, but we needed to get back to the cars and to breakfast. This appears to be a permanent “colony or “village” as other nats had seen them here before, so perhaps someone might like to spend some time observing them to see whether they observe similar behaviours to support those observed by Peter. They are a very interesting animal providing many questions to answer.

MURDER AT KOGAN

By Denver Kanowski

It was about 10 pm on a moonless night. I was disturbed by the death cry of a crow. It was soon joined by a chorus of other crows responding in sympathy and concern. By the time I had assembled my gun and ammunition from the required secure places the crow had fallen silent – perhaps 4 minutes. At this point in time I was thinking, “Cat?” as Carpet Snake sightings have become quite rare since the invasion of Cane Toads in 2011. The murder was clearly in a clump of Box trees near the house. The first thing I sighted was a possum that was keeping a low profile in the very top of one tree. Then I spotted a movement that turned out to be a Carpet Snake, perhaps two metres long, moving around in the top of another tree – perhaps ten metres off the ground. Wedged in a fork in the tree was a dead crow. I watched the snake for a few minutes and during this time the dead crow became detached and fell to the ground.

When I arose next morning the cadaver was gone. There were no feathers around so I presume that the snake had come down and swallowed the crow.

I have become quite fond of crows as they are clearly providing a partial biological balancing by predated the Cane Toads.

MANAGEMENT MEETING MINUTES - JANUARY 2018

Date: 19th January 2018
Venue: Mason Residence - Chinchilla
Time: 6.00 pm
Present: B & H Rennick, K & F Truscott, L. Plant, D. Kanowski, H & J Mason
Apologies: F. Reynolds
Minutes:

The minutes of the previous meeting were read by L. Plant. F. Truscott moved that the minutes be accepted as a true and correct record. Seconded by H. RennickCarried

Business Arising:

The outing at the Bunya Mountains on the 12th, 13th and 14th January was attended by ten members. Members from the Toowoomba Field Nats and Bunya Mountains Natural History Association also attended making it a very enjoyable weekend.

Correspondence:

Inward:

- Newsletters
- Invoice from Websters Insurance

Outward:

- Sympathy card to Chris Patterson and family

L. Plant moved that the inward correspondence be accepted and outward endorsed. Seconded by J. Mason. Carried

Treasurer's Report:

No current report for January. Tony Minnis has audited the 2017 books.

H. Mason presented an account for payment – Websters Insurance – Public Liability \$412.22, Voluntary Workers' Personal Accident \$251.46 – Total \$663.68. H. Mason moved that the invoice for insurance be paid.

Seconded by B. Rennick.....Carried

General Business

- Heather and John Mason made their apologies for the annual meeting as they will be unable to attend.
- Denver Kanowski passed on regards from his son Ben and Bree Newman (nee Reynolds).
- H. Mason moved that a letter of thanks be sent to Tony Minnis for completing the audit.

Seconded D. Kanowski..... Carried

Program

16 th February 2018	AGM – Chinchilla CWA Rooms – 7.30pm
17 th February 2018	Outing – Old Man Lagoon – meet at 4.00pm - wander and campfire BBQ.
16 th March 2018	General Meeting - CWA Rooms – 7.30pm
17 th & 18 th March 2018	
or (preferred)	
24 th & 25 th March 2018	Outing – tentative dates as yet – Jandowae area – Denver Kanowski –Leader
20 th April 2018	General Meeting – CWA Rooms - 7.30pm - Mason's NZ Trip info & photos
21 st April 2018	Local ramble & BBQ at Chinchilla Weir – Leaders John & Heather Mason
18 th May 18	Management Meeting – Rennick Residence – 6.00pm Take out dinner. No May outing

Meeting closed: 6.55pm

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING – NOVEMBER 2017

Date: 18th November 2017
Time: 8.05 pm
Venue: Plant Residence, "Ulmarra" Hopeland Chinchilla
Present: F & K Truscott, H & J Mason, L. Plant, H & B Rennick, P. Fawcett, R & W Smith, D. Kanowski, J. Latham, T. Plant, G. Plant.
Apologies: F. Reynolds

MINUTES:

J. Mason moved that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted as a true and correct record.
 Seconded by T. Plant.....Carried

BUSINESS ARISING:

- The World Science Fair was an excellent exhibition event held in Chinchilla earlier in the year.
- Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club 50th Anniversary celebration was very successful with past and current members enjoying a camp oven lunch at the Chinchilla Historical Museum.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Inwards

- Letter from Tom and Robyn Aisbett.

Outward

- Thank you letter to Mike and Judy Hines.

L. Plant moved that the inward correspondence be accepted and the outward endorsed.
 Seconded by F. Truscott.....Carried

General Business:

- January Outing – Bunya Mountains – 12th, 13th and 14th January 2018.
- AGM - 16th February and outing the following day at Old Man Lagoon – an afternoon outing with BBQ.
- Frank Truscott spoke about the proposed plans for the garden project in Chinchilla. The plans will utilise the old railway area. The gardens will showcase the different soil types and flora in the local area. There will be a stage area for performances and areas for parking including caravan parking. The old council workshop across the road will remain as a parks and gardens depot with a greenhouse for volunteer staff to propagate plants for the gardens. Council has engaged a landscape architect for the project.

Meeting Closed: 8.40pm

DOWN MEMORY LANE – FEBRUARY 1983

BY FRANK TRUSCOTT

President Grace Lithgow presented her report to the AGM which was held on the 18th. An index for volumes 1 to 14 and Val Hando's "Wildflowers of Barakula" had been published during the year. As a lasting memorial to his wife Jean, Cecil Cameron gave the club a sum of money to be used to purchase a book for the library annually.

Office Bearers for 1983 were elected and were:

PATRON: A. C. Cameron M.B.E	PUBLICITY OFFICER: Wendy Smith
PRESIDENT: Rodney Smith	CHIEF RECORDER: Grace Lithgow
VICE-PRESIDENT: John Mason	RECORDERS: Keith Kerr, Ross Tait, Heather Mason and Pam Fawcett.
SECRETARY: Roy Hando	SUPPER HOSTESS: Dorrie Kerr
LIBRARIAN: Jess Gosper	PUBLICITY OFFICER: Wendy Smith

A management committee meeting and B.B.Q. were held at Smiths' property, "Boort-Koi" (date not given). A \$50 donation was sent to the Bird Observers Club of Victoria for the rehabilitation of wildlife habitat following the disastrous fires there. A program was worked out until September which was quite optimistic.

The February Outing was to the Bunya Mountains on the 25th, 26th and 27th. The attendees on Saturday (the 26th) numbered 37, a great turn out and seven families stayed for Sunday. Joe's place was in operation then but has long since been "repurposed".

CLUB NOTICES

2018 Program

February 16 Annual General and Ordinary General Meetings 7.30pm, CWA Hall, Heeney Street, Chinchilla.

February 17 4 pm meet at Old Man Lagoon for bird watching and a BBQ tea and campfire.

March 16 Management Meeting 6:00pm and General Meeting (2016 ANN photos) 7:30pm – CWA Hall.

March 24/25 Jandowae outing. Leader: Denver Kanowski - ph. 0408 884 532 (after dark).

To Jandowae and Petroglyphs:

- Meet at Visitor Information Centre, Chinchilla at 8a.m. or Jandowae Pioneer Park (Athlone Cottage) at 9 a.m.
- After smoko we will check out the Jandowae water treatment plant site – hopefully a good birdo spot.
- Then to “Coondambo” to look at petroglyphs in sandstone of unknown origin and a tree planting/ revegetation project from 1999/2000 including Spotted Gum, White Gum and Grey Box. Hopefully ex-members Lennie and Jocelyn Martin will be able to join us for some local knowledge.
- Later to Cooranga North Recreation Grounds for those who wish to camp for the night. Toilets are provided and we may be able to organise a bush shower if required.

April 20 General Meeting – Masons’ 2018 NZ photos – 7:30pm at the CWA Hall

April 21 Outing via local roads to the Chinchilla Weir for a BBQ tea. Leaders: John & Heather Mason

May 18 Management Meeting 6 pm at Rennicks’ home.

May General Meeting TBA

No May outing due to Chinchilla Show

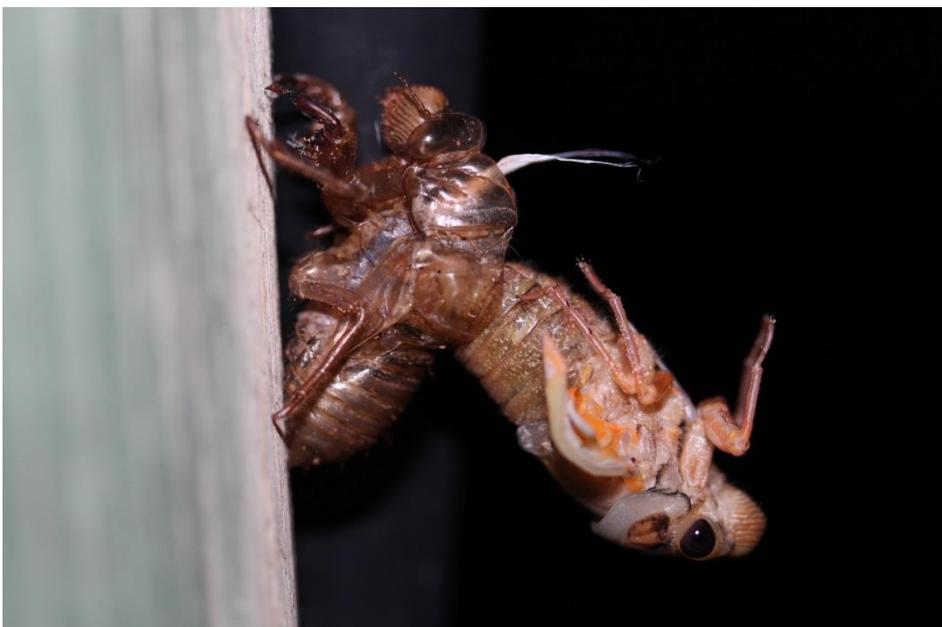
August Wattle outing to Goranba Lane with Len Hubbard. Date to be announced.

DISCLAIMER

Urimbirra is the journal of the Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club Inc. The authors of the material used in it seek to maintain the highest standards of accuracy, but if inaccuracies occur, every endeavour will be made to correct them in future editions. With the exception of official club notices, all other material in Urimbirra represents the views, opinions and records of contributing members. Such material is edited as little as possible in an effort to encourage members to contribute. The onus is placed on members to voluntarily edit and cross-check their own material, thereby easing the burden on the Publication Officer.

NATURE NOTE

By Frank Truscott



Some time ago, after rain, I noticed that Cicadas were emerging from the ground in substantial numbers in the late afternoon or at night. It was somewhat surreal to watch the nymphs climbing trees, posts, in fact just about anything to find a place where they could break free from their nymphal skin. They didn't seem to be in any hurry and there were long periods when nothing seemed to be happening. However, they all seemed to be finished by morning.