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THE NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALIST

The Journal and Magazine of the North Queensland
Naturalist Club.

Vol. I. No 1.

October 1932.

Hon. Editor: V. Kennedy.

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"NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALISTS CLUB"

Rooms: Harbour Board Office, Cairns.
Business Paper for monthly meeting at 8 p.m., Monday
October 10th, 1932.

Minutes, Correspondence and Reports: Nominations for
Membership.
FORTHCOMING EXCURSIONS. Members are requested to
bring suggestions for new excursions to the meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS.

REMARKS BY EXHIBITORS. It is desired that members having
interesting specimens to exhibit at the meeting (or
future meetings) should make a few remarks upon them,
and furnish the Hon. Secretary with written particulars
concerning them for record in Club minutes or other books
of reference.

INTERVAL: Ten Minutes.

SUBJECT FOR THE EVENING: Lecture by Mr. Edmund Jarvis
"Protective Coloration and Mimicry of Insects"
NATURE NOTES. Conversazioni.

The Hon. Librarian (Mr. Victor Kennedy) wishes to acknow-
ledge the following gifts to the Club's library.
Mr. Ike Askew: "Romance of the Animal World"; "Romance of
Insect Life" both by Edmund Selous; Dr. H. Flecker, "Birds
and Blossoms" (A Sun Book) and "Proceedings of the Royal
Society of Victoria (new Series).

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EDITORIAL.

The North Queensland Naturalists Club was
formed after a few discussions in which it was made
clear that no corner of the Commonwealth could less
afford to be without such a body. It is remarkable that
no such effort was made during any part of the last half
century. True one attempt was made to found a Field
Naturalists Club and although it did not progress its
very existence proved the need for such an organisation
in the Far North. The need is greater to-day. The public
is more alive to the values that could accrue to the
social body from the activities of a group interested
in the natural phenomena that abound North of the Tropic
of Capricorn. We need only refer to the opportunities
for study offered by the proximity of the Great Barrier
Reef. For a century science has been intrigued by the
existence of coral reefs and attention has been
concentrated continuously upon the thousand miles of
perfection (in the way of coral reefs) that runs along
the Pacific Coast of Queensland. For many years Cairns
has been the base of operations for research workers
from the whole world, yet during that time there has
been no organised interest amongst those living on the
very fringe of the Great Barrier Reef. The Australian
is perhaps as much alive as any to the economic advantages
of his environment, but there is probably a disinclination
to consider the aesthetic importance of living. There is
also a lack of knowledge regarding both these phases
considered in conjunction with the Reef. The North

Queensland Naturalists Club has been formed to remedy that regrettable condition of public intelligence.

Besides the reef, is the mainland, Cape York Peninsular is the actual breeding ground of fauna upon which the eyes of the scientific world have been trained for many years. The marsupials, the birds, the wealth of flora, the tropical jungle itself and the geological strata all offer to the student of nature a field that might compel his attention for the term of his natural life.

The programme that can be placed before one interested in the Natural History of North Queensland may be exacting, but at least the attempt to carry it through would end in something done, something handed on for the future to carry further.

The Editor.

THIS JOURNAL.

The first issue of the NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALISTS is a tentative essay. It was thought that the Club could not be as useful as it should be unless it published its own journal of transactions. While we have to consider finance, efforts will be made to launch a printed magazine that will be self-supporting. Until that is possible, it will be the Committee's endeavour to continue a publication such as the present issue. It will contain all notices necessary for the information of members and NO OTHER NOTICE OF THE MONTHLY MEETINGS WILL BE ISSUED TO MEMBERS. Notice of the October Meeting will be found on page two of this issue.

affiliated to the

ORIGIN OF THE CLUB.
(By. Dr. H. Flecker)

The idea of a naturalists club occurred during a meeting of the Cairns Tableland Publicity Association in June 1932. A discussion arose concerning the trustee-ship of Lake Barrine, whether local trustees or trustees appointed by the Government were the more fit to preserve all the natural features of such an extremely interesting locality.

It was felt that the most capable body to advise upon the best method of preservation, would be a Club, specially interested in natural history. As no such club existed it became a matter of urgency to those who had brought the matter forward to have one established. Accordingly, at the next monthly meeting of the Publicity Association, held on July 19th it was moved that the Mayor of Cairns (Alderman W. Collins) be requested to convene a meeting for the purpose of establishing a Field Naturalist's Club. It was believed that such an organisation would gratify its own members and would be of permanent benefit to the community. The Club would not only be useful in drawing attention to the many natural features of the district, but could act as guides to other investigators. Besides, the members would be trained to distinguish natural phenomena and to classify them. Accordingly the Mayor convened a meeting which was held in the Cairns Council Chambers on August 19th. Those present were constituted a committee to form such a Club. A well attended meeting held at the Harbour Board Office on August 29th drew up rules, fixed subscriptions and appointed its officials. The rules were formally ratified at the next meeting on September 12th.

VICE REGAL MEMBER. While in Cairns recently His Excellency, the Governor of Queensland (Sir Leslie Orme-Wilson) accepted an invitation to become an Honorary Member of the North Queensland Naturalists Club.

Perforates, such as the staghorn, oock, bracket and lace corals, housed millions of polyps in the one colony. The colony, commencing from a single animal grew by a process of budding into millions of polyps all members of the one hugh family and in physical communication with each other. Each perforation housed a separate member of the colony.

The lecturer gave an interesting account of the feeding habits of the polyps. They fed on plankton varying in size from microscopic to about half an inch and depending on ocean currents for their distribution. When the plankton touched the extended tentacles of the polyps, the impact released a hair trigger a tiny dart shot out, paralyzing it, and the tentacles closed over it drawing the food into the open mouth. Other methods of feeding were touched upon and comment was made on the socialistic spirit of the colony, one section supplying necessities to another section which, by force of circumstances, might not at the moment be in a position to gather its own requirement of food and oxygen.

The speaker also referred to the coloration of coral, the hydroids, other coral-like forms, and the construction of coral reefs. He concluded by appealing to members to aid the preservation of the marvellous gift of the age-old polyps to the people of North Queensland.

GREEN ISLAND EXCURSION. The first official Club Excursion will be held on Sunday Oct. 9th when members will visit Green Island. The launch "Merinda" will leave Hayles' Wharf at 9 a.m. and will return early in the evening. The return fare will be 5/- and it is hoped that many members will participate.

"ARCHITECTS OF THE CORAL"

At the first meeting of the North Queensland Naturalists Club held on Sept. 12th, Mr. T.P. Hoey B.A., delivered an instructive lecture upon the "Architect" of the Coral Reefs, taking the life history of the coral polyps as a basis of his discourse. The lecture was illustrated by reef specimens loaned by Dr. P.S. Clarke of Cairns.

After referring to some popular fallacies concerning the nature of coral reefs and the polyps which form the basis of their construction, the lecturer stated his intention of dealing only with a limited phase of the subject, the possibilities of which form the points of view of study and research were almost definite. Contrary to common belief amongst the mass of people (even those of the North) the polyp was not an insect but a piece of animated jelly, differing from the sea-anemone by its habit of depositing a skeleton of lime through cells known as calicoblasts. Briefly, it consisted of stomach, mouth, tentacles, lime-depositing cells, and its skeleton of lime. That limy skeleton, which constituted its home and, in the case of most varieties, the linked-up homes of the whole colony of which it formed a part, was not, as generally believed, the remains of dead polyps but, an essential part of the body of the living polyp. The polyp varied in dimensions from the size of a small pin head to that of a man's hand and could be divided into two classes the perforates and the imperforates. Quoting the mushroom (Fungus) coral as an example of the imperforates, the lecturer explained that each piece of coral houses only one large polyp. A new polyp of this type budded from the parent stem, broke off and took root on its stem where it came to rest and, with its growth, constantly increased also the size of the lime deposit about it.



AN EARLY SOCIETY.

A Cairns Field Naturalists' Club was formed at a meeting in the School of Arts on March 13th 1905, and the following officers were appointed:-
 Chairman; E.M. Cornwall; Vice-Chairman: J.G. Fearnaley;
 Hon. Secretary-Treasurer: E. Allen; Committee: Hyland, D. Dean, F. Ingram, J. Anderson, J. Brewer, F. Barrett.
 Subscription Fees were fixed at 5/- for adults and 2/6 for Juniors. Several excursions were held and apart from being successful were of value to science. Through investigations by the first Chairmen, a fruit pigeon, until then unknown to ornithologists, was discovered in the Cairns District. On the first excursion on April 9th some rare butterflies were obtained and a dragonfly which was also new to science. Mr. J.G. Fearnaley placed the s.s. "Vigilant" at the Club's disposal for a marine excursion to Green Island on Oct. 22nd. That was a very instructive outing as was one held at Edgehill in conjunction with St. John's Mineralogy Class. Two papers were read to meetings - "The Rhopalocera of Cairns and District" by Mr. J. Brewer and "An Introduction to Entomology" by Mr. E. Allen who used lantern slides. Mr. Cornwall left for Mackay during the year but before his departure he was presented with a pair of rare "Atthis" moths by the Club. A credit balance of £5/7/4 existed at the end of the year.

For the second year the officials were: Chair- man; W.H.J. Meyers; Vice-Captain; D. Dean; Hon. Sec. Treasurer, E. Allen. Committee: P. Hocking, F. Ingram, J. Griffiths, E. Moody, A. Atkinson and J. Anderson. The Club did not live through this year, although some of the members are still in the district.

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"The North Queensland Naturalist" is for free distribution amongst members of the Club and may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary (C/- Cairns Harbour Board) or the Hon. Librarian. Postage One Penny.