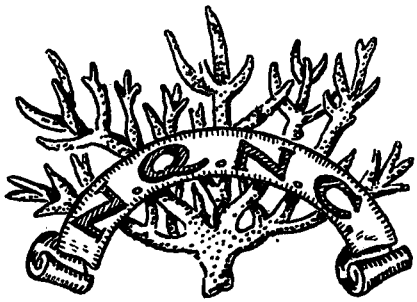
# THE NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALIST




CAIRNS

## Journal of NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALIST CLUB

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# NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALISTS' CLUB

**Founded 1932**

**OBJECTS — The Furtherance of the Study of the various branches of Natural History and the Preservation of Our Heritage of Indigenous Fauna and Flora.**

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GENERAL MEETINGS for discussion, lectures, screenings and display of specimens are held on the second Tuesday, 8 p.m., at the Old Kuranda Barracks, Esplanade.

FIELD DAY Excursion usually fourth Sunday.

VISITORS are welcome, especially members of Australasian and Overseas Clubs and Societies.

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**Subscriptions (Due September 30):**

City and Suburban Members, £1/5/-. Country Members, 15/-.
Junior Members, 5/-.

**Treasurer's Address** — Pyne Street, Edmonton, N.Q.

# THE GENUS HABENARIA (ORCHIDACEAE) IN AUSTRALIA

UNTIL recent years the genus **Habenaria** was considered almost world wide in distribution, but members of what were known as **Habenaria** in the cooler latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere have been transferred to other genera and **Habenaria**, as it is now known, is practically confined to the Tropics.

This genus is a member of the tribe **Orchididae (Ophrydeae)** which is of the anther type **Basitonal** and indeed is the only genus of that important division in Australia, yet this is the dominant division of orchids in the cooler latitudes of Europe, distinguished, as the name suggests, by the anther beng attached by its front or base whereas all other Australian genera have their anther attached by the apex.

Other fascinating features of **Habenaria** are the possession of stalked stigmas and the bases of the anther cells often prolonged into tubes.

When one is accustomed to the column-form of the remainder of the Australian genera and exotic epiphytes and terrestrials (those commonly cultivated), the reaction to the first encounter with **Habenaria** is astonishment. Unfortunately, none of the Australian species have large or showy flowers, but the examination of a specimen with a glass, by anyone lucky enough to see one, will be most rewarding.

None of our species are common, or, at least, few specimens appear to have been found, and much research remains to be carried out on them. As far as is known, they are confined to open forest land in the coastal regions of the Tropics, showing a preference for sandy soil which is usually damp.

Fourteen species are recognised in Australia, seven (7) of which are confined to Queensland, namely:—

H. banfieldii, F. M. Bail, Qld., Agri. Journ. 16 (1906) 564.
H. divaricata, Rogers and White, Proc. Roy. Soc. Qld. 32 (1921) 136.
H. millari, F. M. Bail, Bot. Bull. Qld. Dept. Agri. 3 (1891) 18.
H. ochroleuca, R.Br., Prodr. (1810) 313.
H. ovoidea, Rogers and White, Proc. Roy. Soc. Qld. 32 (1921) 140.
H. propinquior, Reichb. F., Beitr. Orchid (1871) 53.
H. xanthantha, F. Muell, Fragm. 7 (1869) 16.

Four are confined to the Northern Territory, namely:—

H. holtzei, F. Muell, Journ. Roy. Soc. N.S.W. 24 (1890) 128.
H. hymenophylla Schltr., Fedde Repert. 9 (1911) 212.
H. mesophylla Kraenzl, Orch. Gen. et Spec. 1 (1901) 204.
H. triplonema Schltr., Fedde Repert. 9 (1911) 435.

Two are found in North Queensland and Northern Territory:—

H. elongata, R.Br., Prodr. (1810) 313.
H. eurystoma, Schltr., Fedde Repert. 10 (1911) 248.

And one is found in North Queensland, Northern Territory and North-west Western Australia:—

H. muelleriana, Schlt., Fedde Repert. 9 (1911) 435.

Four names associated with Australian species would appear to be synonyms:—

H. arnhemica, F. Muell, Herb., which is H. muelleriana Schltr.
H. ferdinandi Schltr., Fedde Repert. 9 (1911) 435, which is also a synonym of H. muelleriana Schltr.
H. graminea, Lindl., Gen. et Spec. Orch. (1840) 318. This species does not occur in Australia, but the plant known under this name in Australia is, again, H. muelleriana, Schltr.
H. trinervia, Wight., Ic. Pl. T. (1701) is an Indian species and the plant known under this name in Australia is H. hymenophylla, Schltr.

—A. W. DOCKRILL

# BANDICOOTS AND BANDICOOTS

BY J. L. HARRISON

THE name "bandicoot" is so obviously an Australian aboriginal name, that it seems a pity to have to record that the name was originally brought from India. It is in fact derived from the Telugu language, spoken in southermost India, and means "pig-rat" (pandi-kikku).

What we should strictly call the true bandicoots comprise a genus of large rats of the genus **Bandicoots** which are to be found over much of southern Asia, from Bombay to Hong Kong and from southern China to Java. They are of burrowing habit and they take very readily to living in fields and gardens so that anybody who has lived in, say, Ceylon will know of a large rat-like creature which digs up all his flower beds. So marked is this digging that the smaller species has been called the "Indian Mole Rat." In fact it has no mole-like habits. It is a fairly ordinary rat, not unlike the Norway rat (which occurs in Cairns), but it happens to dig very elaborate burrows in which it lives. At one time I was trying to kill a lot of these rats in connexion with controlling the disease plague, and I came to the conclusion that an average "mole rat" burrow had between ten and twelve entrances. They do not seem to feed on the roots of plants nor do they burrow for insects. They seem to come out of their burrows and feed on growing plants, seeds, and of course, when they get into suitable places, stored grain.

You will immediately see how the Australian Bandicoots got their name. Early officials with experience of the East India Company must have noticed that their flower beds were being dug up by some creature looking like a large rat and so they called it by the name with which they were familiar, a bandicoot. The difference is that the marsupial bandicoots are digging up the garden from the opposite direction. The Indian bandicoots want to make holes to live in, while marsupial bandicoots live above the ground and dig holes to find food.

It is inevitable that someone found in suspicious circumstances will be accused of a crime and so we find that the bandicoots are accused of digging up root crops to eat them and even (horror of horrors in this district!) chewing sugar cane. I have no doubt that they do all of these things now and again, but I think that basically their holes are made when they are looking for insects, and the vegetable matter which they do eat is probably eaten because it has insects in it or on it. I have never managed to persuade a bandicoot to eat sweet potato in captivity, but it will thrive on minced beef and, strangely enough, bread. Its tastes in foodstuffs are evidently very human.

The marsupial bandicoots comprise a large number of species about half of which are found in Australia and half in New Guinea. Here, in the region of Cairns, we can expect to see only two species. They are:—

**THE SHORT NOSED BANDICOOT. Thylacis Macrourus**

This is the one that is commonly killed on the roads. It seems to do very well in sugar cane areas and, as every motorist knows, is always straying on the roads at awkward moments. Although called "short nosed" the nose is only short for a bandicoot. Compared with such creatures as rats, which look rather like it, the muzzle is quite long. This species will be found recorded under a variety of names. It used to be put in the genus **Isoodon** and you will find it called **Isoodon torosus,** perhaps **I. peninsulae,** and sometimes **I. obesulus.**

**THE LONG NOSED BANDICOOT. Perameles nasuta.**

Although about as common as the short nosed bandicoot it is not very often found dead on roads. This is the only bandicoot to be found in rain forest here, although it spreads from rain forest into all sorts of vegetation including even sugar cane. It is called "long nosed" because the nose is very long indeed. Unlike the other species it does not seem to have collected a very large set of names.

Both of these species are Australian mainland groups and **Thylacis** has succeeded in speading to New Guinea. In return New Guinea has sent us one of its characteristic bandicoots of the genus **Echymipera.** The species **E. rufescens** has been described from the Cape York Peninsula. It has only been seen once of twice, however, and while those who look at bandicoots should keep a sharp lookout for it, I don't think we need consider it as one of our garden pests.

If we look at a dead bandicoot, how then are we to tell whether it is a short nosed. bandicoot or a long nosed bandicoot? Well the difference is obvious, but rather difficult to describe without pictures.

The thing to do is to look at a lot of bandicoots in profile—stop and look at those you find dead on the road—and you will very soon spot the difference. The short nosed bandicoot has a muzzle of over 30 degrees at the tip, while the long nosed has a sharper muzzle of less then 30 degrees at the tip. An easier differnce to express is the length of the ear. The long nosed bandicoot has noticably longer ears. A convenient measure is to take the length of the ear from the tip to the bottom of the earhole and compare this with the length of the hind foot from the heel to the toe. In a long nosed bandicoot the ear is more than half the length of the hind foot, and in the short nosed bandicoot it is less than half the length. Another way of expressing it is to pull the ear forward and see if you can make the tip touch the eye. In a long nosed bandicoot the tip will just about touch the eye. In the short nosed bandicoot it comes nowhere near it.

Owing to their habit of digging up gardens bandicoots have gained a very bad name, and that name has been further blackened by their undoubtedly being concerned in such diseases as scrub typhus and Weil's disease. In some parts of Australia they seem to be in danger of extinction but here in the North of Queensland they seem to have accommodated themselves so well to the vegetation caused by farming that I can see no danger of their extinction, even were the present severe law protecting them relaxed, and we can look forward to having these entertaining little animals with us cheerfully digging up our gardens for generations to come.

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# THE YELLOW FIGBIRD

MARION L. CASSELS

ANOTHER bird common to our city is the Yellow Figbird (**Sphecotheres flaviventris, Sphecos wasp theras,** I. Hunt, **Flavus yellow venter belly).** The male is a handsome bird sporting a black head, olive green back, yellow breast and red eyes. His wife is not so gaudily attired, having a brown back and brown and white speckled breast. They can be seen around home or public gardens feeding on fruits and berries.

During the non-breeding season only an odd one or two are seen flying through our garden, but comes the mating season, and suddenly there is bedlam. Large numbers of birds arrive to the Big Tree and chase each other and other species of birds round and round through the trees, all the while calling loudly, "Oh! You beaut! Oh! You beaut, you beaut, you beaut, you beaut! Come yer, come yer, come yer!" All day long this goes on until at long last they pair off and the serious business of nest building is begun.

No time now for chasey through the trees. One pair elected to build their nest in the big tree just where we were able to watch them from our living room. They selected an outer branch of the tree about thirty feet up. Mrs. Figbird alone did the building, which is not to say that Mr. Figbird went off to enjoy himself. As she built her little shallow basin of vine tendrils and twigs, he mounted guard on a branch overlooking the nest site. If I ventured under the tree to get a closer look at the building he

would call out quickly to his wife, who straight away stopped work and flew up and stood beside him. When she flew away for more nesting material he always flew as her escort and on their return would stand vigil once more.

The little nest was very fragile, having no lining. In a little less than a week the nest was made and on two successive days, an egg was laid. These could clearly be seen when standing underneath. Now Mr. Figbird's vigil was over and he and his wife took part in the incubation, which lasted for twenty-one days.

Two young were successfully hatched and both parent birds had a busy time providing for the two hungry mouths. The babies would lie quiescent in the nest until they heard or saw mother or father appear, then up would pop two little heads with mouths agape. The young birds grew rapidly and by about fourteen days were nearly the same size as their parents, and as I watched their excited movements at feeding times on the shallow little cradle, I was hourly expecting to have to run to the rescue of a falling bird. However, they managed to preserve their balance.

It was not possible to say what sex the fledglings were, as at that age both sexes resemble the female. It is quite some time before the male gradually acquires his lovely colors.

On the fourteenth day when I looked up at the nest both fledglings had gone. As the parents had also gone, and were not flying around in any distress, it is possible that the parents had taken them nearer to their food supply. How, I don't know, as never at any time did I see the fledglings make any attempt to fly. And so, once more there is peace in the garden, just our usual friends—the magpie larks, friar birds, doves and willie wagtails—until the breeding season starts again.

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# OUR STATE FLORAL EMBLEM

THE announcement that the "Cooktown Orchid" was to be gazetted the Queensland floral emblem, must have delighted almost every resident of North Queensland, particularly members of this Club, as it is a widespread species with a beautiful flower and lends itself to cultivation in most parts of the State. (Let us hope that this does not lead to further vandalism in its native haunts.)

Following the above announcement, a relevant article appeared in "The Cairns Post" stating that the Queensland Government Botanist had quoted that the correct name of this plant is **Dendrobium phalaenopsis.** This caused some concern to numbers of interested parties, as this name had been discarded for many years by most notable botanists. The following week "The Australian Women's Weekly" contained an illustrated article (author not indicated) quoting the name of the plant as **Dendrobium bigibbum** Lindl. and referred to **D. phalaenopsis** as a synonym of **D. bigibbum.** Dates of publication of both of these names were given.

F. M. Bailey, Qld. Flor. 5: 1524 (1902) quotes a **D. bigibbum var. phalaenopsis** and this was supported by Rupp and Hunt, Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W. 72: 239 (1948). Later, St. Cloud, Nth. Qld. Nat. 24: No. 115 (May, 1956), considered **"phalaenopsis"** merely a form of **D. bigibbum var bigibbum.**

Doubtlessly it is desirable to have the correct name gazetted when such time arrives and a voice from the North (the home of the orchid), particularly from this club, should be timely.

When a State floral emblem is chosen, one of the major considerations of the selectors would be selecting a plant with a relatively wide distribution and surely they would have had in mind the species as a whole, not merely one form of it. Consequently the author of the article in "The Australian Women's Weekly" is to be commended on his stand.

Rupp, in private conversation, expressed the opinion that "the form

known as phalaenopsis" was merely a large flowering form of the species **D. bigibbum,** an opinion endorsed by the present author in the light of material seen since becoming resident in North Queensland.

Horticulturists, understandably, are anxious to have names to distinguish variations of a species (but these are sometimes not of botanical significance) and are loth to relinquish names of long standing, but these matters should not be allowed to influence the retention of the correct name of the species of a State floral emblem.

From the above we would therefore have the name of the "Cooktown Orchid": **Dendrobium bigibbum** Lindl., Paxton, Flower Garden 3: 25 (1852), and as a synonym **D. phalaenopsis** Fitz., Gard. Chron. 2: 38 (1880).

—A. W. DOCKRILL

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# WINNING ENTRY—H. FLECKER MEMORIAL NATURAL HISTORY MEDALLION

## NOTES ON THE GREEN TREE ANT

BY MARY KULAKOWSKI.

ON THE TOP of a comquat tree fully eight feet high is what looks like a huge green football. It is approximately eight inches long by five inches wide, slightly oval in shape. On closer examination it is observed to be ingeniously made by gluing the leaves together with a white substance.

If one should venture to tap this football with a finger one would soon find the nest, for such it is, covered thickly with furious ants. These ants are about one third of an inch long, and a lovely light green in color. They have six powerful legs upon four of which they stand as they wave their fore-legs in the air, with their pincers wide open. The abdomen of the ant is covered with fine hairs and their body is almost transparent when examined under the microscope. Their fore-legs are equipped with two sharp spikes at the joint, which are, no doubt, of great use to them.

If your finger should be within reach they will swarm madly on to it. The sting is quite sharp but not nearly as bad as a wasp sting. On some people the sting area may form a lump, but not as a rule. Once the ant has fastened on to you it hangs on like a bulldog and won't let go. On more than one occasion I have angrily pulled at the body of the ant, leaving the head still embedded in the skin.

I wished to see just how their nest was made so, I took a pair of tweezers and pulled one of the leaves from its fastenings on the nest. Instantly the nest was swarming with ants until it looked like it was made of fur. About a quarter of an hour later when the alarm had died down and the ants had nearly all dispersed, a row of ants lined up along the edges of the leaf. The leaf had sprung roughly one and a half inches from the nest, so I was kept guessing as to how they would replace it. Several ants gripped the leaf in their jaws and hung with their bodies dangling in the air. The other ants came and gripped behind the waist, until a living chain of ants was constructed to the nest below. Ants on the nest commenced to strain and heave until the leaf was gradually being pulled towards the nest. Just at that moment a strong breeze blew and the leaf sprang apart once more. With stubborn patience the ants repeated the operation, this time suuccessfully. When at last the leaf was drawn into place a single row of ants was able to hold it there. The majority of the assisting ants vanished.

Some time later one ant came along, carrying what seemed to be a white grub, which was in truth one of the ants' many baby sisters. The

ant placed the baby on one leaf and moved it alternately from one leaf to the other. After a while I was able to see that the baby was emitting a fine misty white silk with which the worker ant was sewing the leaf back into place. Soon the baby could produce no more silk. Whereupon the ant hurried away to replace the non-productive baby with a fresh one.

At the foot of the cumquat tree a steady stream of ants is engaged in dashing backwards and forwards to and from the nest. One busy ant carried a dead comrade from the nest, another few ants were struggling to pull a dead cicada's head to the nest, others carried bread crumbs, dead insects, etc. Sometimes I was even lucky enough to see them carrying their precious eggs to and fro.

The green tree ant is obviously partly carnivorous as at one stage I saw them attacking a half dead blowfly. When they had killed it, they pulled it a distance of six feet to the foot of the tree, then they commenced to heave it right up to the nest.

This species of ant is very ceremonious with it's dead. A friend of mine once sprayed a nest with an insect killer while spraying the orchard. The following day I saw that the few survivors were busily engaged in carrying their dead comrades to the ground where, about one yard from the tree, they lay the little corpses of their dead bretheren in a little heap.

Some of these ants are also shepherds looking after aphids as we do dairy cattle. Aphids are a pest to the orchardist as they are a scale insect, one sixth of an inch long, which live mainly on the leaves of citrus trees. I first discovered the aphids one day when my attention was attracted by a small nest or shelter made out of silk only. Upon inspection I found that nearby was a group of aphids amongst which stalked several ants. These ants tended their flocks with utmost care. The ants eat the honey-dew which is produced by the aphids in abundance. To get this the ant gently strokes the aphid on the back with its antennal.

As well as building shelters to protect these insects, the ants also build fences to keep them in one spot where they can't stray. This is done in the usual way of sewing some leaves together to form a stout barricade to keep the aphids in and out of trouble.

These ants truly are the most intelligent, industrious little creatures that I have ever come across.

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# THE SPANGLED DRONGO

MARION L. CASSELS

MOST of us are familiar with the Spangled Drongo, which is often seen about suburban gardens and in the bush. He is that lovely bluey black satiny bird with a black velvet cape and hood, red eye and fish's tail. He thoroughly deserves his scientific name—**Chibia bracteata** Drongo—like a shining metal plate. You would probably not recognise the young. I did not until I saw the parent birds feeding a pair. They are light and dark brown speckled, big blue bill, no red eye and no fish tail.

Their nest is a shallow cup of vine tendrils, slung to a forked branch by spiders' web. I have seen one hanking on the wire stay of a telegraph pole and another on the crosspiece of the pole.

The Drongo has some peculiar, harsh grating calls and whistles, and with some of them his whole body and wings jerk and jitter. He is rather a pugnacious fellow, not much liked by his fellow birds. One day I watched him chase a Blackfaced Cuckoo Shrike, which had a large grasshopper in his beak. They flew through the trees and up and down till the Drongo tired and the Cuckoo Shrike was able to feed in peace.

Another day it was a Rainbow Bird which got his attention and the two of them flew higher and higher into the sky with the Rainbow Bird outmanoeuvring the Drongo all the time. The time and energy expended

chasing other birds for their hard-earned meal must be far greater than if he went after the prey himself.

He also eats the young nestling if the parent birds are not very watchful. A scene was described to me where it seems a young Drongo attacked an Indian Turtle Dove nestling, the parent Drongo coming down to give a hand. However, they were disturbed and dropped their victim, though not before its head had been torn off.

The other day whilst in the laundry, I was watching outside in case anything interesting happened in the garden. I saw a Drongo and it looked as if he had a small bird in his claws—a Peaceful Dove, I think. The dove was hanging head down, the Drongo clasping its claws with his claws. I ran outside and saw that the Drongo had taken his victim to the lemon tree next door. It was perched on a branch with the little bird head down still, and was calmly plucking the feathers out. Not knowing if the dove was dead or not, I got my son to disturb him, hoping to see him drop the dove. However, the Drongo, still clasping his "breakfast" firmly in his claws, flew away to another tree.

He is also the enemy of our "Mrs. Spider," who complained bitterly to me that when she had released several nice big female spiders in her back garden, hoping for them to get established so that she could study them, "your friend the Drongo flew down and snapped them up."

Another club member tells me of a canary in a cage which, when the Drongo comes down to his cage, falls to the bottom of the cage in a "faint" and does not recover for some time.

So it seems Mr. and Mrs. Drongo are the gangsters of the bush and not very popular in any quarter.

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# BARKING SPIDER—Selenocosmia (sp.) Avicularíidae

THE 1st March an extremely large arachnid was unearthed at a depth of six inches at Mt. Mulligan and forwarded to me to mount and preserve for the Cairns Ambulance. I was very interested in this specimen as it was the largest spider I had ever seen. I had received two females of this species previously but was unsuccessful in keeping them alive. Then I received four more that had been captured locally and one was a very robust male.

While feeding him one night he became agitated and, raising himself on his hind legs, emitted the true characteristic whistle of the barking spider. This I would describe as a rasping whistle, the same sound as produced by children when first learning to whistle, as they blow through their teeth. I have heard it many tims since but only from the males. Unfortunately he did not like life in captivity and became sickly, so I preserved him to keep my specimen.

I have established two different species of Selenocosmia but so far have been unable to have them typed. One is a large brown specimen extremely hairy, with stout body and legs and at times very aggressive. The hairs have an irridescent sheen. The other species is slender bodied, very long legs, with the tarsus and femur a rich chocolate brown.

On March 18th I was awakened about 3.20 a.m. by a strange noise and on investigation found my spider pacing her box, drumming her fangs alternately on the floor of her cage, clearly audible at twenty feet. Since her capture I had tried all methods of feeding known to me to no avail. She just refused to eat. Realising she was hungry and in search of food, I tied a small cube of raw steak to a length of cotton and waved it before her. She backed away and then attacked, driving her fangs through the meat three times, and then she settled down to feed, after fasting for seventeen days. She fed for four hours, kneading the meat with her fangs to extract the juices and leaving the meat white and bloodless.

March 23rd I installed her in an observation jar of slightly moist earth and placed a handful of stones in a heapon top. The first night she began work at 10.15 p.m. and arranged some stones in a quarter circle from the heap to the wall of her jar. Next she made a depression within this quadrant and lined it with silk, where she remained until the next night.

March 24th, half buried under mound of stones, she began her burrow. By tying a heavy black cloth around the jar, I was fortunate to keep her working right at the wall of her jar, where I could record her every movement. Working nightly, she completed a slanting tube to the bottom of a ten-inch observation jar in five nights.

March 29th, tube completed to her satisfaction, she commenced to build what is known as her living room, but what I term her dining room as I have only seen her enter it to eat. I place her meat tied to cotton at the mouth of her tube and she takes it to her dining room, feeds, and then carries the remains to the entrance and casts it off. Occasionally she will deposit remains at the far end of her burrow where it stays until the stench is overpowering, hence the cotton to retract it if need be without disturbing her tube. Her dining room is quite a large cavity, giving her plenty of room for easy movement.

April 2nd, she extended her dining room, tube fashion, around the bottom of her jar for seven inches. I was unable to establish her purpose. I observe her work by torchlight, as all work ceases as soon as the electric light is switched on.

Her method of removing the soil from the tunnel is most interesting. She crawls down the tube head first, and on reaching the point of work, she moves backwards using her fangs (slightly spread) and pedipalps like a four-pronged rake. She rakes up a ball of earth and, holding it in her mouth, supported by fangs and palps, she begins her ascent through the tube, stepping backwards all the way. When she emerges through the entrance she turns, deposits her load and, using her palps alternately, she pats flat the small marble of earth, then back head first for the next load.

After each second load, as she returned to the working area, her four spinnerets were busily engaged spreading their ribbons of silk to reinforce where she had removed her two previous loads of soil.

The whole tube is lined with a fine webbing and this is all that prevents a cave-in of roughly fourteen pounds of soil.

It took her twenty nights of extremely hard, continuous work to complete to her satisfaction her ground retreat.

I have kept specimens of female Selenocosmia alive in captivity for six months, but the males will not thrive, as they seem to be wanderers and confinement for study purposes is very hard.

A description of one of this tribe was described in a publication of the North Queensland Naturalists' magazine, 1st September, 1957.

—MRS. M. HALL

# EDITORIAL

WITH this number of the N.Q.N.C. Journal an overdue improvement has been effected in its general presentation, providing information as to contents, Club staff and Club activities, thus bringing the Journal's format to the standard of journals of kindred clubs and societies of other Australian States.

The Editor is confident, the improvement will be appreciated by members and those of clubs on our journal exchange list.

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# CLUB ACTIVITIES—FIELD DAY

ON SUNDAY, 20th September, the Club's monthly field excursion was held, five cars leaving from the President's residence soon after 9 a.m. for Fishery Falls, 26 miles south of Cairns, main coast road, between Gordonvale and Babinda.

At the Fishery Falls Hotel the turn-off, right, was followed, the grass-grown but trafficable road ascending gradually for half a mile to the creek gorge.

Another quarter mile on foot along a gradually ascending 12-foot wide clearing in the rain forest jungle led to the Cascade Fall of about 40 feet at the foot of which is a pool between granite walls in which our junior members were soon enjoying themselves in the rather chill mountain water.

Bright morning sunshine gave perfect conditions for photographs of the falls and gorge.

No birds were seen, but a few could be heard calling from the tree tops, some of which bore clumps of ferns and orchids.

Mrs. M. E. Hall, the Club's arachnidist secured specimens of four spiders, including the stick spider, **Tetrag natha,** water spider, **Dolomedes,** and a black and white spotted sheet web specimen to be identified.

Specimens of the stinging plant were seen along the sides of the jungle path, and of the lawyer vine with its sharp hooks, climbing to the tree tops, besides many varieties of tropical palms and ferns.

Altogether an enjoyable and interesting day.

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# CLUB HANDBOOKS

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|---|---|
| Check List of North Queensland Orchids, 1953 ... ... ... ... ... ... | 2/6 |
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