Remains Of Aboriginal Habitation On the Great Barrier Wall

(By Dr. P. O. Flecker, Mareeba)

About thirty miles north-west of Carpenters Towers, the Great Basalt Wall is encountered; it is in this stony terrain that so much evidence of native habitation can be found. The Wall was described by the geologist, William H. Rands, in 1891, thus:

"It runs along in an east and west direction, at a distance of from four to six miles north of Lolworth Creek. The basalt is highly scoriaceous. Everywhere the cracks produced in the rock on cooling are visible, and there are immense spheroidal-shaped masses in it, also produced by cooling. The lava must have outflowed in a viscous condition, for the well-known 'ropy' structure, formed by masses of semi-liquid lava rolling over and over, is very conspicuous; this structure is easily seen even in hand specimens.

"The basalt does not form a wall in the ordinary sense of the word—that is to say, there are no perpendicular cliffs of it, but it gradually rises in steps, getting thicker and thicker as it recedes from the margin. It is destitute of any vegetation, with the exception of some plum and bottle trees, and a few other scrub trees. I was informed by Mr. Clarke, of Toombaa, that he had discovered some miles of well-grassed open country in the middle of this basalt. Its average breadth is about eight miles. Its general appearance is that of a recent outflow of lava, and it probably represents the latest outflow in the district."

The description is a good one geo-

"Fig. 1. Stone Cairns."

logically. Rands, however, appeared to have little interest in the flora, as the growth of trees is fairly thick and most varied. In addition to the Burdekin Plum (Pleiogyne solandra) and bottle trees (Sterculia) mentioned numerous figs Bauhinias, and umbrella trees (Brassaia actinophylla) are encountered, making progress difficult in places. Surface soil is completely absent, consequently there are no grasses, except in a few areas which represent the dried beds of lakes. At the time of visiting, these lakes were full and there was only a narrow margin of grass at the edge.

The wall is approximately fifty miles long; I learn from residents of that district that the fish-traps described are a feature of the whole area.

The area visited was a portion of the Wall south of Fletcher Creek, adjacent to the old Southwick homestead.
Fig. 3, Fish-Race. The figure is standing in the race. The far end of the race is visible behind and above the shoulders.

**FISH-RACES**

Due to the rising of the basalt in step-like formation, valleys have been left in the basalt. During the wet season, the water courses along these valleys, and these rivulets found with fish. When visited (1/10/50) there was no flowing water, though several pools were small which contained fish. These rivulets had been converted into narrow races, about three feet wide, by the boiling right into walls about two feet high on each side of the water flow. These races are numerous, and some systems extensive, one being followed for about a quarter of a mile. Occasionally a branch of a main channel is to be seen, which follows for some yards parallel to the main channel before ending blindly. Deeper holes are found in continuity with the races, and some separated from them. Apparently the former were used for netting or spearing fish shepherded along the channel, and the latter for holding captured fish. Some blockages in the main races are seen; though these appear to be part of the traps, it is possible that they are due merely to the falline of the stone embankments.

**FUNNEL TRAP**

About two miles west of Southwick, large lakes are found, through which the water flows slowly, forming a connection between the waters of Lolworth and Fletcher Creeks. Between two of these lakes is a narrow canal, about thirty yards wide, which has been further narrowed by two walls of stone, converging to a narrow gap. Fish could be driven into this structure, and aspered as they passed the narrow opening, for food. No evidence of old fires or food remains was found. This is not surprising as rain would rapidly wash charcoal, etc., into the crevices which cover the basalt. A similar system, described to me by Dr. T. R. Edmonds, of Charteris, Towera, as existing in the locality, was not found. Several good specimens of grinding mills, of the pestle and mortar type, have been collected close to the Well by Dr. J. Ailinham, of Fletcherville.

**OTHER SIGNS OF HABITATION**

Camping sites are numerous. Here loose stones have been removed, over areas about thirty feet in diameter, and thrown in a disorderly fashion about the periphery. In several places, clumps of stones, piled about three feet high, can be found. The significance of these is obscure. In other places, holes can be seen in the rock, with the removed stones scattered about. These are above the level of wet-season water, so their function can only be guessed. Possibly they represent places where some animal which sought refuge in the rock crevices worked on the food. No evidence of old fires or food remains was found. This is not surprising as rain would rapidly wash charcoal, etc., into the crevices which cover the basalt. A similar system, described to me by Dr. T. R. Edmonds, of Charteris, Towera, as existing in the locality, was not found. Several good specimens of grinding mills, of the pestle and mortar type, have been collected close to the Well by Dr. J. Ailinham, of Fletcherville.

**Expedition Through Cape York Peninsula From Palmer River To Fairview (Contd.)**

(By Douglas Veivers)

Night travel being impracticable, it was with more optimism than good sense that we departed from the Palmer in the early hours of one morning, on the short run across the Divide to the St. George River. In usual form, we chose the rougher side of the road with the two roads, and after many hails and false turnings were considering the advisability of camp and until morning now. When the decision was clinched by the observation of mechanical trouble in the vehicle in the form of a sticky clutch.

The grass here was shoulder height and in these winter months as dry as tinder. The burning off of an area for a field has resulted in a bushfire of mammoth proportion. The vehicle was loaded to canopy height with stores and offered no sleeping room and the various implements which might have been used for clearing a section of the ground were packed at the bottom of the load. Much too tired and depressed to undertake any considerable exertion, we bedded down for the night in the open, and for one, spent some in chafing in an endeavour to wedge my body into a comfortable position between the thinly growing tussocks of spear grass. It was one of many strange camps on that journey.

The nights in these regions are strangely fascinating. The light, warm breezes which blow across the hilltop during the daytime, continue till the hour of nine or ten, and gradually die away. Subsequently the thermometer falls rapidly till by down the air is still and particularly cool.

Before the first grey of dawn appears, in that uncertain hour between darkness and light, the silence of the region is broken by a strange rhythm, a never murmuring, in the rain. Rising, in volume till it reaches a steady, persistent theme, then to the sun and the rays of the sun. It is the combined melody of the numerous varieties of birds which are noiseless, thrushes and the robins, and others for many forms, all keeping time to the regular sharp cry of the blue winged kookaburra, Dacelo leachi or Forest Kookaburra, Paleyn macleayi, as it is more familiarly known.

We rose with the first notes of this strange sree club, and crept along the remaining few miles to the St. George River with the gears in the utility second. We had carried no water with us and it was necessary to reach some.

The St. George, a small, normally dry tributary of the Kennedy flows through a region of some particular note. Most interesting perhaps are the bare sandstone ridges in the vicinity of the crossing and on which I have written in this magazine previously. The weathered cliff faces still bear indications of early native art and stencilling in the protected crevices and caves. In the lower section of the ridges the sandstone has been eroded by the action of wind and rain into strange and interesting formations. I should have liked to have spent several weeks in this area, scouting out such places of interest and oddity, but our stay was a short one.

(Continued on Page Six)
A Check List Of Australian Dryopidae
Order, Coleoptera
(By J. G. Brooks, B.D.Sc., F.R.E.S.)
This paper has been prepared principally from the papers by the late H. J. Carter and Mr. E. H. Zeck, with some assistance from Messrs. Keith C. McKeown and Alex N. Burns, who have checked literature which was not available to me.

Family DRYOPIDAE
Sub-family DRYOPINAE
Genotype. H. diermestoides Fairm. N.Q., N.S.W.
Trans. Ent. Soc. N.S.W. 1865, p.159. (Lutochrus). N.Q.
Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W. 1929, p.64.

Sub-family HELMINAE
Genotype. A. (Elmis) politus King. S.Q.
I.e. 1935, p.79.
I.e. 1929, p.62.
I.e. 1929, p.170.

HYDRETHUS Fairm.
1. australis King.
2. leai Cart.

AUSTROLIMNIUS C. & Z.
1. Neosul C. & Z.
2. atrepas C. & Z.
3. diemis C. & Z.
4. lirrius C. & Z.
5. metasteral C. & Z.
6. montanus King.
7. oblongus C. & Z.
8. politus King.
9. punctatus King.
10. suffusa C. & Z.
11. variabilis C. & Z.
12. victoriensis C. & Z.
13. trophies C. & Z.
14. asper C. & Z.
15. STENELMIS Dufour.
16. pallidipes Cart.

KINGOLUS C. & Z.
1. aeratus Cart.
2. cuperus Cart.
3. flavoplagiatus C. & Z.
4. flavisignatus C. & Z.
5. heronii C. & Z.
6. metallicus King.
7. quatuormaculatus King.
8. tinctorius C. & Z.
9. tyrrhenus C. & Z.
10. harrensis C. & Z.

SIMSONIA C. & Z.
25. allmani C. & Z.
26. angusta Cart.
27. brooksi C. & Z.
28. coterensis C. & Z.
29. eborica C. & Z.
30. irregularis C. & Z.
31. lepi C. & Z.
32. longipes C. & Z.
33. nicksoni Cart.
34. pulchrae Cart.
35. Carini C. & Z.
36. tasmanica Blkb.
37. tonnori C. & Z.
38. vestita C. & Z.
39. wilsoni Cart.
NOTIOELUS C. & Z.
40. alysnas Cart.
41. barretti Cart.
42. davidsoni C. & Z.
43. dorrigoensis C. & Z.
44. galtonensis C. & Z.
45. humeralis C. & Z.
46. maculatus Cart.
47. minor C. & Z.
48. minutus C. & Z.
49. quadruplagiatus Cart.
50. setosas C. & Z.
51. simsoni Grouv.
52. subplanatus C. & Z.

53. taylori C. & Z.
54. torpicus C. & Z.
55. victoriae C. & Z.
56. NOXIMELS C. & Z.
57. novemnotata King.
58. trinotata C. & Z.
59. elongatus C. & Z.
60. laticeps C. & Z.
Scrubby regions border the river in places and in these thrives the commonest of our bush turkey, *Alectura lathami*, some of the flocks which we observed numbering up to a dozen. It is not only the prolificness of this scavenger, which is not entirely understood in view of the large numbers of wild pigs which inhabit the area, the buried eggs of the megapode usually providing a feast for them.

With these hordes of pigs provided some of the more exciting moments there was no chance for ornamental scavenging, but the pigs have come to be regarded in many places as a pest, which is now increasing rapidly. All of our party being enthusiastic riflemen, the opportunity with large animals of little practical shooting. I can recall one occasion in particular when two of the party were treed by a wounded boar with a rather unreasonable temperament, an incident which the others found extremely amusing at the time, indicating an infantile sense of humour.

Bad luck and inconvenience marked the greater part of our tour. A rainstorm had lost all our spare tyres through blow-outs, the result of too much travel too fast over rough bush roads being too frequent. The trip from here to Cape York and back was sufficiently made without a puncture. We were an uncomfortable item in that country. So with that we will now turn our attention to our last and afternoons at the journey. For the following day early morning was the more enjoyable of the journey.

One was plentiful in the lazos and provided a welcome respite from the heat of the day. The meeting took the form of a members' night. Miss N. Hopkins described the birds observed at Nanga Creek (Three Mile Dam), and read a list of birds observed by Mrs. Hopkins during the Club's last field day, Mr. J. J. Selvage, who has just returned from a trip out west, told of his observations of bird life on the Madigan River, and Mr. R. Slaght spoke of local aboriginal relics, and Mr. Cassidy gave a talk on sun and their influence on the earth.

The first day was to Pallarenda. March Meeting. The lecture was given by Owen Maloney who spoke on Tasmania. The lecturer told of the hydroelectric works of the lake and the city, the cement industry, paper industry, mining, forests and fisheries. The address was taken by Mr. and Mrs. Maloney illustrated the various points of the lecture. Miss N. Hopkins then spoke of the birds inhabiting the land near Heatley's Paradise, which is shortly to be subdivided into a park and reserve, and Mrs. Kennedy exhibited a burl obtained from the butt of a tree, *Melaleuca cunninghamii*, in the same locality. The field day was to Heatley's Paradise. April Meeting. Mr. S. Bro and Selvage gave the lecture on Bower Birds, which he said are unique in that they build elaborate nests and attract females to them. Mr. Selvage illustrated some butterflies and Mr. M. Kennedy exhibited a burl obtained from the butt of a tree, *Melaleuca cunninghamii*, in the same locality. 

North Queensland

Meetings at School of Arts, Lake Street, Cairns, on second Tuesday in March and June. Meetings: 10th Oct., 1960. Br. P. K. Kennedy, Esq. On an interesting trip to Pallarenda. 14th Nov.: Address by Mr. Cantrill on "Astronomy." 12th Dec.: Address by Dr. H. F. Flecker on "The Wannakali" (finger cherry). 9th Feb., 1961: Address by the President, Mr. A. Read, on Biological Nomenclature. 13th March: Address by Dr. H. F. Flecker on Mollusca. 8th Apr.: Lecture by Mr. George Whittaker, of Montario Experimental Station, on Scientific Aspects of the Sugar Industry.
since 1927, but whether by the same pair of birds he did not know. In contrast to the bower, which is essentially a playground, the nest built by the bower birds is very flimsy. Their food consists of wild fruits, such as berries.

Mr. L. R. Black's monthly report on butterflies, birds and snakes was read and discussed.

ELIZABETH KENNEDY,
Hon. Secretary.

PUBLICATIONS

No. 1. Check List of North Queensland Orchids. Price 1/-.
No. 2. Marketable Fish of the Cairns area. Price 1/-.
No. 3. Check List of North Queensland Ferns. Price 1/-.
No. 4. List of Edible Fruits of North Queensland. Price 2/-.
No. 5. List of Birds Occurring in North Queensland. Price 2/-.