

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- 'Cooper' Australia's largest dinosaur progress
- New species Beefly
- 'Artist in residence' at dinosaur dig.
- Wood moths
- Feathered Innovation

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ALL CREATURES GREAT & SMALL

ISSUE 1

31 JANUARY 2008

Welcome to our first edition of our newsletter. The Society was formed in January 2007 and the first year has been an exciting year of discovery, from Cooper's huge bones to the smallest of insects. None of this could have happened without the support of our major sponsor Santos and the commitment from the community in general, Eromanga Earthmoving and Eagle Gallery.

We have started the long process of planning for a Dinosaur & Natural History Museum for South-west Queensland. This will be a world-class project and a major boost for Quilpie Shire and the South-west region.

I hope this newsletter gives the reader an insight into the journey we have begun, a journey of discovery, communication and education. As more and more people and organizations offer their support, we are encouraged to believe the journey will be a long and rewarding one.

Stuart Mackenzie
President, CEBNHS Inc.

Dinosaurs & Art

Renowned Quilpie artist Lyn Barnes produced a stunning representation of the South West Queensland's first ever dinosaur dig. This painting was sold at her annual exhibition at Graydon Gallery, New Farm in August.

This year we have another of Quilpie's talented artists at the 2008 dig. Annabel Tully has successfully applied for

RADF funding and will be 'the artist in residence'. We look forward to seeing her interpretations of the landscapes and activities.

'Finding Cooper –
Eromanga Dinosaur Dig
2007'
By Lyn Barnes.



PROJECT UPDATES - Eromanga Dinosaur Project



Photo: Gary Cranitch © Qld. Museum.

Jo Wilkinson, Senior Technician QM, working on weathered surface bone from Cooper's skeleton.

Little by Little

When something appears overwhelming and there's no way to get it done, reduce it to its smallest parts and take care of them, one by one.

Grace Pegler testing her prep skills on a small piece of 'George's' rib.



Dig 2007 - extract's from the dig report of Queensland Museum Geosciences Curator/paleontologist, Scott Hocknull.

'The excavations at the Cooper Site in May of 2007 were extremely successful. Having never undertaken any excavations of any sort in the southwest region of Qld. we were surely turning new soil.' *'The excavation site will need to be seriously expanded to encompass the potential area in which this skeleton may be scattered.'*

This will no doubt take several field seasons'. 'The scientific value of these discoveries is of international standing and cannot be underestimated.' *'With the increasing number of sites being found west of Eromanga (property name omitted), there is a major opportunity for science to fill a massive gap in our understanding of Australia before it became a island continent.'*

The Eromanga Dinosaur Project Management

Committee sincerely thanks all volunteers and sponsors who have helped make this project a success in 2007 and we look forward to your continuing support in 2008.

Santos
Major sponsor

Big thanks to the Queensland Museum team & Santos for their continuing support..



What's next?

With the aim to keep the public informed as much as possible on the Eromanga Dinosaur Project's progress, more community days are planned for 2008. Eromanga State School and Charleville School of Distance Education 'Eromanga In School' students, who have themed their week on dinosaurs have been invited to Plevna Downs to learn more about Cooper and

Australian dinosaurs. Quilpie Shire's seniors plan to see what the Eromanga Dinosaur Project is up to for Seniors week in August.

Dig dates for 2008 are 20th May—4th June. This is a closed dig and there will be no media permitted. Visitors will be by invitation only. This ensures that the dig team are able to do their job without constant interruptions and also

ensures the safety of the bones. Excavations will continue a Cooper's site each year until no more bones are found and at this time the site will be closed. The scientific paper will then be written and Cooper will then be given a formal scientific dinosaur name and he will officially become one of Australia's few known dinosaurs. This process could take at least 3 to 4 years.

Inside the Plevna Downs Lab

Many, many hours of meticulous bone prepping from as many as eight very dedicated & patient volunteers has ensured that steady progress is being made in the extremely lengthy process of prepping Australia's largest dinosaur.

Prep workshops have been held and in between time the Mackenzie family and Jo Pegler are continuing on when time permits. These workshops will continue this year as only about half of the bones excavated from 2007 dig have been prepped. With 2008 dig looming and potentially more

bones to bring back to the lab, there is no time to rest.

Special thanks must go to our extremely supportive team of volunteers who have been tirelessly helping with all areas of field work, prepping, and collection management.

COMMUNITY - Eromanga Info Day



CEBNHS ran the Information Day in Eromanga at the Community Hall and Opalopolis Park. The Eromanga Dinosaur Dig team took the day off from digging and traveled into Eromanga to deliver what turned out to be an extremely well attended and enjoyable day with about 150 people turning up to view the fossil displays & posters, watch a powerpoint presentation presented by Scott Hocknull, Paleontologist and listen to speeches by Garth Bates & Mel Wilkinson Santos & Stuart Mackenzie.



Our thanks go to local community group, EDCA who volunteered to cook a BBQ lunch and serve the cold drinks.

Our sincerest thanks go to all volunteers and supporters.

Developing Paleontological Skills

Locals have been given the rare opportunity to attend the dig and learn the skills required to excavate dinosaur bones. Numbers have to be limited on the digs but if there are people genuinely committed to the project and in gaining this type of paleontological experience to add to the long term benefit to the project, the Eromanga Dinosaur Project Committee would be happy to hear from you for future digs. The Eromanga Dinosaur Project also has a fully equipped dinosaur preparation laboratory at Plevna Downs and this too has provided a training ground to the very dedicated and patient local and non- local dinosaur enthusiasts.

Quilpie Show - “Digging for Dinosaurs”



CEBNHS was asked to put on a dinosaur display at the Quilpie Show. With the help of several wonderful supporters, we put together a substantial display telling the story of the dinosaur finds in SW Queensland and displaying samples of dinosaur bones and fossils.

This proved to be a very successful day with a lot of interest and outstanding support from all four local schools and the Quilpie Kindergarten.

The Santos team yet again supported us on the day.



Dinosaurs to Dungbeetles!!!



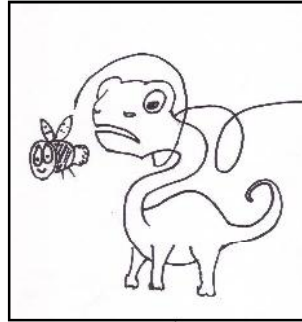
Chris Lambkin, Queensland Museum Entomologist setting a Malaise trap.

A visit to Plevna Downs from Queensland Museum's Biodiversity Curator & Entomologist (studies insects), Christine Lambkin and her partner Noel Starick in December have discovered definitely one new species of beefly and the possibility of three more. We will have to wait until Chris returns to her lab to make more comparisons to know the outcomes on the other three.

This highlights the diversity of the fauna in this largely unstudied arid region. It is bizarre to think that Far South West Queensland is home to one new species which is Australia's largest animal that ever walked on her soils and now this region has disclosed yet another one of her secrets with another new species as

small as a ten cent piece.

Chris & Noel spent a few days collecting insect specimens by setting pitfall traps, Malaise traps and using sweep nets (we



Move over big boy— it's my turn now!!!

would call them butterfly nets)

They have left several traps set which will be left until they are checked in February.

This visit opened up a whole

new world of little creatures which we know all too well but probably never really thought about them being important or interesting enough to bother to find out more about.

For those of us who share this interest, this visit was extremely interesting and was a lot about what some of us did in our childhood or at school. The fascination of catching something beautiful and strange, knowing how to properly display and label and all the time there is a very real chance that you will catch the sought after prize - another species new to science.

DID INSECTS KILL THE DINOSAURS?

Latest reports say disease spread by mosquitoes, mites & ticks were one of the most likely causes for the extinction of the dinosaurs.

On Top of Tompilly

Chris & Noel catching beflies on top of an isolated mesa, Tompilly.



Sweep nets were used to catch flying insects on top of a mesa. This location was ideal for collection of small beflies and other flying insects who make their homes and fed on flowering plants in arid places like the top of this mesa.

It takes some practice to become efficient with the sweep nets and most of the time I was happy to let the experts do their work!!

BREAKING NEWS— Eromanga’s latest new species



South West Queensland's new species beefly (Genus Palirika)

Introducing Far South West Queensland's latest addition to its increasing list of species new to science, nationally and internationally. This semi-arid little beefly lives on top of places like isolated mesas and loves to hover near flowers where they feed.

INSECT FACTS
75% of all Australian insects are still awaiting formal description and are potentially new species.

Starting your own insect collection

Collecting

Killing Jar: A typical killing jar for most insects other than butterflies and moths has a plaster-of-paris base to absorb moisture and is covered with absorbent paper towel, then sprinkled with a few drops of ethyl acetate (finger nail polish remover can be used at home). Captured insects can then be placed directly into the killing jar.

Hand collecting: This is best for large insects which can be collected directly off foliage, flowers, tree trunks, log or on the ground.

Insect nets: These are used to collect smaller flying and aquatic insects.

Pitfall traps: These are used to collect ground dwelling insects which are usually active at night time. These traps can be simply made using 2 one litre ice cream containers sitting inside each other buried up to their rim. You can easily remove the inside one to clean the trap leaving the other container in the ground. For long term preservation a preservative (antifreeze) is added to a depth of 3cm. For a short term trap, water could be used instead of antifreeze.

Light sheet: Attracts many insects on hot, humid, windless nights. The simplest method is to suspend a light in front of a standing white sheet and pick off the insects of interest.

Mounting & Preserving: Most insect specimens are either pinned or stored in 70% ethyl alcohol (methylated spirits can be used at home). The majority of insects are pinned with special long, stainless steel pins before storage in specially made boxes or trays (sewing pins can be used at home but can be a bit bulky and rust and spare packing polystyrene can be used to pin onto but for long term storage somewhere dry and away from ants is ideal.)

Labeling:

The last essential stage is labeling, every specimen should have its own label about 8mm x 16mm, placed midway on the pin. Standard minimum information required is location, date and name of collector. For more details check out the useful references on page 6 or email CEBNHS.

Focus - Wood moths (Family Cossidae)



Size: Heaviest of all moths

Larvae: Wood borers & the original witchetty grub eaten by Aboriginal people.

Life cycle: Longest living moth with a full life cycle which can be as long as five

years.

These moths are currently emerging from their cocoons in bore holes in trees like Coolibahs in South-west Queensland.



Wood moths empty cocoon in a Coolibah tree.



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Preserving the past
Protecting the future
Discovering natural Australia

Useful Reference Guide

Cooper & George (titanosaurs) Fact Sheet (QM)
www.qm.qld.gov.au/features/dinosaurs/cooper_george

A Field Guide to Insects in Australia
by Paul Zborowski and Ross Storey

Insects Spider & Other Terrestrial Arthropods
By George C. McGavin

Australian Entomology Supplies
www.entosupplies.com.au

Australian Insect Common Names (CSIRO)
www.ento.csiro.au/aicn/

Australian Moths Online (CSIRO)
www.ento.csiro.au/anic/moths.html

Giant Wood Moth and Witchetty Grubs Fact sheet (QM)
www.qm.qld.gov.au/inquiry/factsheets/wood_moths_20070605.pdf

Pic of the pics



Black-fronted Dotterel (plover) guarding her nest of three eggs in a cow patty!!

Photo: Robyn Mackenzie, Plevna Downs