

BELLTHORPE FORAY, MARCH 27 – 29, 2015.

Bellthorpe is “Top of the Range” in more ways than one. It lies on top of several ridges on the Conondale Range behind Woodford.

15 forayers met on Friday 27 March to spend three days on the property of David and Wendy Clark. Some camped, and others were accommodated in the two guest cottages. Three walks in three different types of habitat were enjoyed by all. The property has been a dairy in the past, and still has pasture land for grazing the small herd of beef cattle. It also has a permanent creek with rainforest on the surrounding hillsides, and wet sclerophyll forest as well. The Clarks have created walking tracks though all three areas, and because of the warmth and regular rainfall, fungi are found there in profusion after rain.

Friday’s walk led us through pasture, across a creek, and back through paddocks to the house. Rain had fallen a week previously, but hot sunny days had dried things out except along the creek with its thickly treed banks. Of the thirty species recorded, our best finds here were a large clump of *Corioloopsis* and several species of tiny cup-shaped Ascomycetes growing on cow dung and on dead twigs.

The group returned to the Bellthorpe Hall to examine their finds. This old building, typical of country community halls, was ideal - large enough, and providing seating and tables and a kitchen for joint evening meals. Wayne found five more species of fungi in the area around the hall to add to our list.

The Creek Walk on Saturday was more productive, with 51 species recorded. The fallen timber and leaf litter was still damp, and our chosen track this time led through rainforest. On a log near the creek, an undamaged, large, fresh specimen of *Laetiporus cremeiporus* was found, and nearby *Trametes elegans* covered a large area on another dead log. Further along the narrow track, “Flame of the Forest”, *Clavulinopsis* species, stood out clearly in the shadow of the trees. Lunch was consumed in a picnic area near the creek, delivered by the Clarks per quad bike. Back at the house, some relaxed in the shade, but Susie discovered a very strange fungus growing on a dead *Pittosporum undulatum*, which was later identified as an immature *Ryvardenia campyla*. It was covered in mazelike pores, and oozed drops of red liquid.

The local people have formed the Bellthorpe Progress Association which has an interest in environmental matters, and in exchange for a large reduction in Hall hire were invited to a presentation on Saturday evening. Specimens were laid out on tables round the Hall, and very informally but very effectively, Patrick and Fran gave an introduction to fungi and their importance, using our collections as illustrations. People asked questions, and some had brought photographs of fungi found on their properties. Supper and lots of informal talk followed.

Our last morning was spent walking a new track on the Clark’s recently acquired neighbouring property, this time much more open and passing through eucalypt forest with tall flooded gums, *Eucalyptus grandis*, on either side. I had feared that nothing would be found here, as it was quite open and had dried out since the last rain. But I’m glad to say that I was wrong – the sharp eyes of the QMS forayers found 25 species. These included boletes – a patch of *Boletus* aff. *dispersus* with rich brown caps, *Boletus carramus*, and a species of *Xerocomus*. Growing in an earth bank, *Calostoma fuscum* was a first for me, and a small sequestrate *Russula*, *R. galbana*, made Patrick a happy man. Susie found a small brown agaric which was later identified as *Crucispora naucariodes*, a genus unique in having cross-shaped spores. It has been reported twice in Queensland, and once each in New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

The forecast storms held off, and the weekend was deemed by all to be a success, with 107 species found overall. Thanks to the cooks, who did a great job, to the Clarks for their hospitality, and the Bellthorpe Progress Association for their support.

Glenda Walter