

DECEMBER 1985
No. 62



UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Black Cockatoos
by G.J. Broinowski

Newsletter

Registered by Australia Post—Publication No. NBHO 925

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Incorporated in New South Wales. Registered Office: The Conservation Hut, Valley of Waters Reserve, Valley Road Wentworth Falls 2782.

Address for Correspondence: P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Single Pensioners & Juniors \$2.00 per year; Married Pensioners \$3.00; Single Membership \$5.00; Family Membership \$8.00. Those joining after June 30th pay half subscription to end of year.

MEETINGS: Held on last Friday in the month, January to November inclusive at the Conservation Hut, Valley of Waters Reserve, Valley Road Wentworth Falls at 7.30 p.m.

For speakers at coming meetings, please see Public Notices in the Gazette.

COMMITTEE FOR 1985

President.....	Michael Dark	58.7061
Vice-Presidents (.....	Eric Blick	88.1051
.....	Joy Anderson	57.1602
Secretary	David Horton James	57.3270
Treasurer	Ross Fitzgerald	57.3267
Membership Officer	Ross Fitzgerald	57.3267
Newsletter Editor	Ewart Collings	57.2131
Walks Convenor	Olive and John Noble	87.8342
Hut Convenor	Lois Horton-James	57.3270
Publicity/Advertising	Jill Dark	58.7061
Librarian	Betty Collings	57.2131
Hut Duty Organiser	Beverley Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer...	Winsome Gregory	57.1573

PATRON: Allen Strom, A.M.

NEWSLETTER: Four issues a year - March, June, September, December. Deadline for copy 20th of month previous. Advertising space available - contact Publicity/Advertising Officer.

THE HUT: The Society maintains a small museum and information centre at the Conservation Hut. It is manned on weekends and holidays by voluntary helpers.

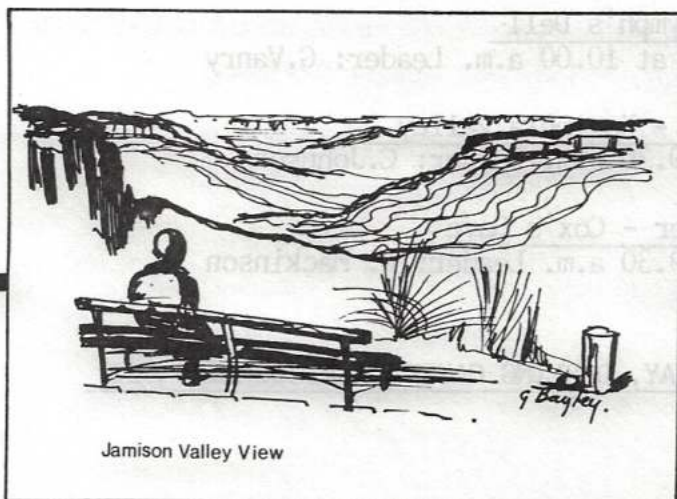
LIBRARY: Facilities for borrowing and returning books at Monthly Meetings. A library list is available on request.

PUBLICATIONS: A range of specialist booklets, posters, maps, postcards etc may be purchased at the Hut.

SALE OF NATIVE PLANTS: Opportunities to purchase native plants grown by Members are organised from time to time during the year. These sales are held at the Hut, proceeds to the Land Preservation Fund.

WALKS: Walks are organised on the first Sunday and third Thursday of the month, conducted by experienced leaders.

LAND PRESERVATION: The Society has a Land Preservation Fund which was set up to give lovers of the bush an opportunity to preserve environmentally important land in the Blue Mountains by purchase and dedication as a reserve.



Jamison Valley View

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Newsletter

No 62

December, 1985

Contents

Page No.

Coming Walks	...	1
Reports on Walks	...	2,3,4
Sap Sucking Glider	...	4
Beauchamp Falls	...	5
Orkney Letter	...	7,8
Isobel Bowden	...	9
Red Browed Tree Creeper	...	10
Society News	...	11,12

COMING WALKS

January Sunday 5th: A Walk on the Wild Side

Through the best of Blue Mountains bush, a short walk approx 4 kms. A variety of scenery and habitats. One short stiff scramble (not dangerous) other-wise easy going. Meet at Blackheath Commuters Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 9.30 a.m. Leader: J. Noble. 87-8342

January Thursday 16th Evan's Look-out - Beauchamp Falls and Return

Rain forest gullies, hanging valleys and local geology. The return climb will be taken gently. Meet at Evan's Look-Out at 10.00 a.m. Leader: R. Compagnoni 87.8899

February Sunday 2nd. Wentworth Pass

Meet Hut 9.30 a.m. From Valley of the Waters, down Wentworth Pass, up Slacks Stairs, to re-join National Pass and back up at Wentworth Falls. Time: about 4 hours. Bring lunch and something to drink. Leader: Lois Horton James

February Saturday & Sunday 15th & 16th - SPECIAL EVENT - CAMPING

WEEK-END AT COX'S RIVER - By special request. Meet at Megalong Creek at 9.30 a.m. Leave some cars there, the rest to Black Range. Walks to Cox's River, camp over-night, walk to Megalong Creek, pick up transport, take drivers to Black Range to get cars left there. Please advise if participating in this exercise so that transport arrangements can be made. This is most important. Bring food and camping gear. Leader; J. Noble 87-8342.

February Thursday 20th- Water Nymph's Dell

Meet at Wentworth Falls station at 10.00 a.m. Leader: G.Vanry

March Sunday 2nd - Old Saw Mill - Kanimbla Valley

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. Leader: C.Johnson

March Thursday 20th - Fairy Bower - Cox's Cave

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. Leader: R. Mackinson
87-1302

REPORT ON WALK ALONG THE OLD SHALE RAILWAY, DARLING CAUSEWAY TO HARTLEY VALE

17TH OCTOBER 1985

This walk was held in the middle of the wet weather, but a considerable number of people turned up, and were lucky. The rain belted down while we were assembling at Mount Victoria Station, but fortunately we had been joined by a visitor, Ebona Isles, who had the keys to the Historical Museum in the old Railway Refreshment Rooms, and was kind enough to give us a conducted tour. After we had finished that, the weather was delightful.

It was a short, easy walk along the route of the Old Shale Railway to the point where it met the funicular from Hartley Vale. The funicular slope itself is too steep to be readily negotiable. From this point we could see most of the old mine workings in the valley, including the settling tanks and the Mine Manager's house. The Comet Inn was just below us, too. After having lunch at this point we scrambled around the ruins and relics of the works on the top of the spur, inspecting the remains of the boiler house, the anchorage points, and the exploded naphtha drum, and climbed the hill for a view of Mount Victoria.

There were plenty of flowers on the walk, with a profusion of *Oxylobium ilicifolium*, where two months earlier it had been *Acacia terminalis*.

REPORT ON WALK - THE FINAL PART OF THE SIX FOOT TRACK - JENOLAN

3rd NOVEMBER 1985

Thirty two members met at Mt Victoria station and drove to Department of Sport and Leisure at Jenolan, where the walk started. Bush cabins were noted and it was suggested we may, in the future, spend a couple of days there. The walk is easy to start with, a leisurely ramble along a flat track, no vegetation was noted as it was a wooded area and in the past had been used for logging. As we descended into Jenolan, the track became steeper, eroded and more interesting with views across the valley to Jenolan. Wildhop bushes, everlasting daisy, *Pandorea pandorana* were noted as we walked to Carlotta Arch where lunch was had. The return journey was via the same route, the weather was fine.



REPORT ON UNDERCLIFF WALK - 14 NOVEMBER 1985

It was a glorious spring day for our Thursday walk in November, despite rain the day before. There were twenty seven of us who set off, down the trail to Denfenella, then along Undercliff Pass to the top of Wentworth Falls, and back to the car park. I think most of us were rather glad that the walk had been postponed from July because of the profusion of wildflowers which greeted us on every turn, causing us to proceed very slowly. Interesting things which were observed were a possum's nest and a pair of pelicans flying thousands of feet above Jamieson Valley probably on their way from Warragamba Dam to an inland waterhole. Amongst the flowers we saw were three species of rare orchids, carpets of violets in the moist ground beneath rock overhangs, waratahs, hakeas, dillwya, and mitrasacme, growing in minute cracks in the rock face. Reg Baumgarten had an interesting old postcard of Denfenella probably taken about eighty years ago. It showed very little change had taken place except a handrail had been added and the ferns were now thicker. Greater change had taken place in the people, as the man in the photo was wearing suit, tie and top hat. Fortunately on our walk nobody bothered to dress so formally.

Beverley Thompson

The snow in July which caused the postponement of the Denfenella - Undercliff walk really did us a favour, as when we did the walk in November, the flowers were at their best.

Botanically this is a very interesting area, particularly the swamps and wet cliff faces. Several rare and endangered species occur here. Among the most interesting plants are the orchids.

Our first find was *Adenochilus nortonii*, its small, white, almost star-shaped flowers showing through the ferns and violets in the swampy overhangs. This orchid only grows about 3,000 ft. and has been recorded from the Blue Mountains and Barrington Tops.

The shale crevices in the wet sandstone cliffs are the haunt of many interesting species, including *Rimacola elliptica*, not yet in flower, but with buds showing from above its large, drooping leaves. The flowers are green with red markings and the orchid occurs on the central coast and Blue Mountains. Also growing in the shale crevices is *Thelymitra venose*, the veined sun orchid, not yet in flower but showing buds. This is a widespread genus but the form growing here is variety *magnifica*, with flowers larger than normal, and often pink instead of the usual blue.

A few late-flowering specimens of *Caladenia catenata*, commonly called Pink Fingers, were found. These are common all through the area and vary in colour from white to a deep rosy pink.

Calochilus paludosus is an intriguing little orchid with its flower looking like a bearded face. It likes the drier areas and is common in open forest throughout the mountains.

Not all the orchids seen were terrestrials. Some late flowers were still clinging to *Dendrobium striolatum*, which grows on rocks and can form large mats in suitable locations. Plants of *Liparis reflexa* were found, also on rock faces, although as this is an autumn flowerer only leaves were showing.

On a walk here the following week with my class, we discovered several patches of *Caleana major*, the flying duck orchid, perhaps the most extraordinary flower of them all. They are quite common in the drier areas, but sharp eyes are needed, they are small and blend in with the surrounding vegetation very well. Our last find was a *Diuris* sp. one of the yellow "Donkey" orchids.

Many other rare and interesting plants occur here, including *Blandfordia cunninghamii* (Christmas bell), *Celmisia longifolia* (Snow daisy), *Eucalyptus rupicola* (Cliff mallee-ash) *Olearia quercifolia* (a white daisy with oak-like leaves) and many more. As this is a newsletter and not a book, they will have to wait till another time.

Perhaps we should do this walk again next month to see if these promising buds have opened?

JILL DARK.

SAP-SUCKING GLIDERS

Jill Dark asks (Sept. issue) about gliders making gashes in tree trunks. Recently I was in the magnificent Carnarvon Gorge National Park in Queensland. There were many gliders there, feeding on the blossoms of the flowering grey gums.

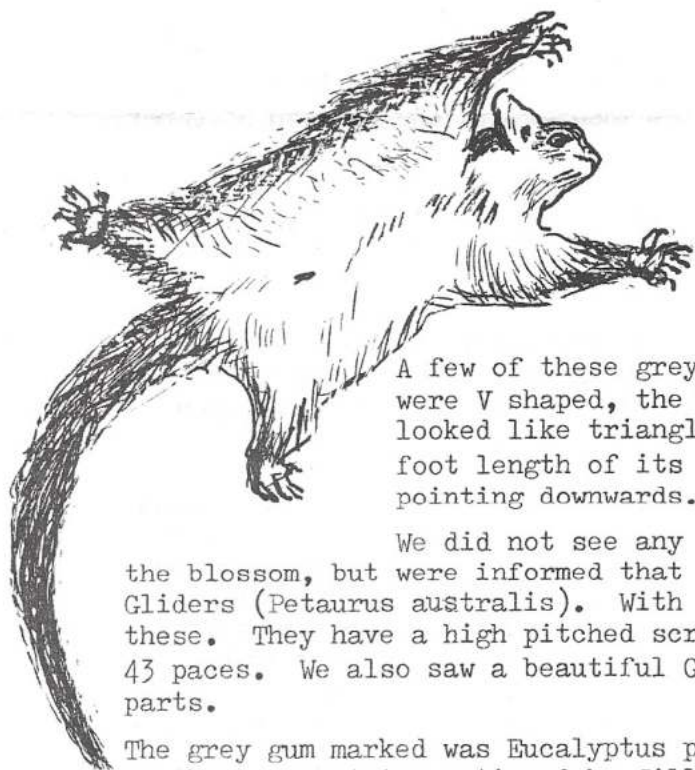
A few of these grey gums were marked with gashes, which were V shaped, the bark chewed from the centre so they looked like triangles. One tree in the camp had a twenty foot length of its trunk marked with these triangles, all pointing downwards.

We did not see any gliders feeding here, they were all on the blossom, but were informed that the perpetrators were Yellow-bellied Gliders (*Petaurus australis*). With a powerful torch we saw several of these. They have a high pitched scream and one did a spectacular glide of 43 paces. We also saw a beautiful Greater Glider with soft, white underparts.

The grey gum marked was *Eucalyptus propinqua*, no doubt a close relative of the *E. punctata* mentioned by Jill as being gashed on the Putty Road.

Once, at a lecture on possums I attended at the W.A. Naturalists' Club, a spectacular slide was shown of a large, circular wound, about the size of a dinner plate or bigger, on the trunk of a eucalypt tree. Arranged around the wound like the petals of a daisy were 22 Sugar Gliders and one Brush-tailed Phascogale, licking the sap!

Graham Alcorn.



BEAUCHAMP FALLS

Are you coming with me on the walk sheduled for 16 January 1986? If so I hope to share with you thoughts coming through the eyes of a student of geology. The local geology relates in many ways to that around our Hut.

From Evan's Lookout we see the uplifted peneplain with the summits of Mts Banks, Tomah, Wilson and Hay preserved by basalt flows during the Tertiary Period. Beneath are the dramatic Banks Walls which give their name to much of the sandstone cliffs we see.

Many of the walls show near horizontal breaks where shale layers interrupt. These layers tell a story. Beneath the walls talus slopes conceal the Permian-Triassic boundary and carry fallen rocks to the bottom of the valleys. In the valleys the creeks meander with ridges appearing to push the creek now from one side, now from the other.

I have mentioned a peneplain and the meandering of the streams suggests to me that these streams existed prior to the uplift. As the land rose gently - an epeirogenic uplift - pre existing streams increased their gradient and their flow and cut down at a rate approaching that of the uplift. So where is the immense amount of rock which once filled the valleys of Govett's Leap Creek, The Grose River and many another stream?

From Evan's Lookout steps lead down a cleft and the track winds over a talus slope, into a not so steep upland valley plentifully filled with Eucalyptus oreades and, on my reconnaissance, ablaze with waratahs. This valley is the haunt of lyrebirds which are frequently seen and heard in performance. One environmental scientist has suggested that these lovely creatures contribute to hillslope erosion. The track enters a narrow cleft - no doubt cut by the stream through an enlarged settlement crack or maybe a joint. At the foot of the first steps is a large rock overhang cut into red claystone. This indicates how weathering by water, wind or other agents readily operates into soft claystones and ultimately brings down overlying rock by exposing a settlement crack and leaving the rock without support. These beds are those of the Mt York claystone and are 90-100 metres stratigraphically lower than similar beds, the Wentworth Falls claystone which tops many of the cliffines in this area but is not evident at Evan's Lookout. The band of Mt York Claystone separates the overlying Banks Wall Sandstone from the Burra Moko Head sandstone beneath.

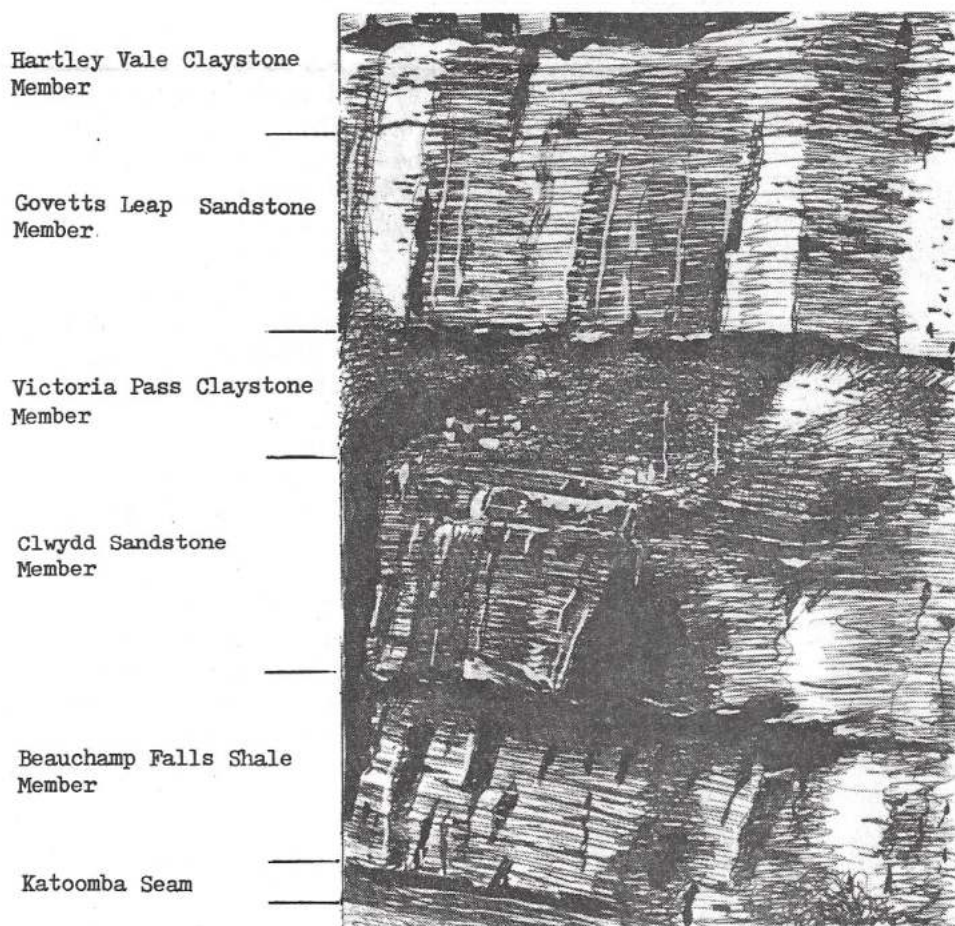
Water continues its melodious but destructive way down the cleft carrying as it goes sand grains, shale grains, leaves and twigs. The grade of the stream is not dramatic as it is controlled by the height of the knickpoint over which it flows at Beauchamp Falls. On reaching the top of the Falls we will have passed through the whole of the Burra Moko sandstone - some 100 metres - and the rim rock of the Falls is cut into rocks of the Caley Formation, the lowest beds of the Triassic Period.

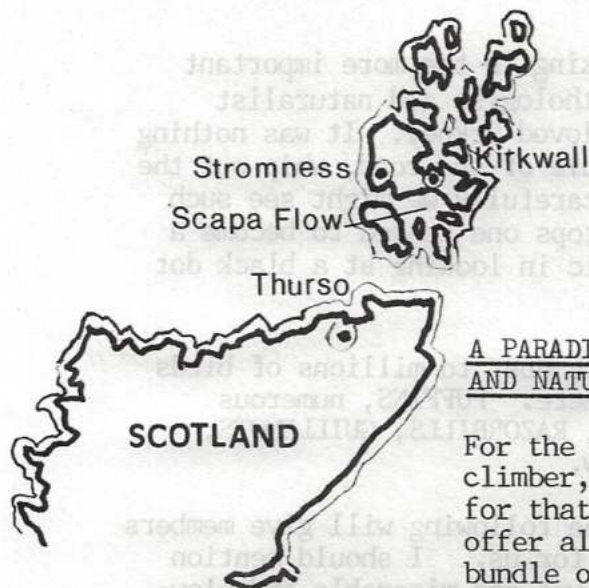
As the stream from Evan's Lookout enters Greave's Creek, freshly emerged from the slot valley of the Grand Canyon, a slightly wider, gentler valley takes us to the top of the Falls and here our lesson unfolds as the cliff

opposite reads like a blackboard. We will see the Katoomba coal seam - about 220 million years old and generally looked on as the top of the Permian Period rocks. Overlying conformably are the Narrabeen Series of the Triassic Period which extended from 220 to 180 million years before the present. The lowest Triassic beds are of the Caley Formation - its component strata of sandstone and shale clearly delineated. Above the Caley Formation are two members of the Grose Formation, Burra Moko Head Sandstone and Mt York claystone in ascending order but the usually prominent, upper member of the Formation, the Banks Wall Sandstone, is not here evident.

I have deliberately omitted defining some of the terms I have used as their omission from this note will no doubt stimulate discussion on our walk. Further, and more important than a confusing list of bed names are a very well set out series of settlement cracks in the sandstone, underlying shale or claystone beds, undermining of the sandstone beds and the subsequent breaking off of great sections of sandstone to leave vertical cliffs. In short, here at the mouth of the hanging valley of Greave's Creek, is an explanation in parvo of how our scenic cliffs are formed and, with a little thought, relatable to the view from the Hut.

R.T. Compagnoni





ORKNEY LETTER

A PARADISE FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGIST, ORNITHOLOGIST AND NATURE LOVER.

For the birdwatcher, archaeologist, artist, climber, walker - and just about everyone else for that matter - Orkney has a great deal to offer all wrapped up among an intriguing bundle of sixty seven islands.

From Thurso on the north coast of Scotland we caught the P & O Ferry "St Ola" specially built for the two hour trip to the small fishing port of Stromness on the longest of the islands in the group called Mainland. (Incidentally, it is incorrect to refer to the 'Orkney Islands'. Orkney Isles if you wish but more correctly just 'Orkney'.

The 'St Ola' is the only roll-on, roll-off car ferry to operate all the year round across the Pentland Firth, waters renowned for fierce gales and unsettled water. She is fully stabilised and can carry 90 cars and trucks and is equipped with comfortable lounges for up to 400 passengers.

I spent much of the two hour trip up on deck, absorbing the scenery, watching people being sick and taking photographs! Society members are going to have a lot to put up with when we return to Australia!

I particularly wanted to get a shot of 'Old Man of Hay' a strange pillar of rock rearing some 450 ft up into the sky, the hero of serious rock climbers - the crumbling flanks and foaming waves at his feet present an awesome challenge.

We decided to make Stromness our headquarters rather than undertake an additional half hour bus trip to Kirkwall the capital of Mainland. Stromness, with a population in excess of 2000 is a pretty little fishing town snuggling under the brow of the hills running behind the port. It has just the one cobbled street which wanders along the waterfront with lovely old stone buildings constructed to withstand the sometime harsh weather conditions.

One feature of our stay in Orkney was the length of the daylight hours. Being so far north it was still light enough to read a book at 10.00 pm! Of course, come winter and the reverse will be true with kids coming home from school in the dark!

Orkney we were to discover contains so much of interest. Take a walk and you can step back 4000 years such is the richness of its history. We were indeed lucky to come across a fellow who conducted tours of no

more than twenty people in his mini bus taking in the more important features of Orkney. David Lee was an ornithologist and naturalist with a deep and abiding interest in his beloved Orkney. It was nothing for him to suddenly stop the bus in the middle of the road, whip out the binoculars and announce that if we looked carefully we might see such and such bird. After a dozen or so such stops one tended to become a little blasé about trying to be enthusiastic in looking at a black dot at a range of 600 yards!

The bird life is truly fantastic. Orkney is host to millions of birds and some 300 species have been identified here. PUFFINS, numerous types of GULLS, KITTIWAKES, TERNS, FULMARS, RAZORBILLS, GUILLEMOTS, GREAT and ARTIC SKUAS to mention just a few.

We did two full day tours with David and the following will give members some idea of just what Orkney had in store for us. I should mention that for much of the time, the weather was wet and miserable and blowing a gale. In fact, gale force winds blow for a third of the year and as a result of this ready supply of free energy, experimental power stations generating power through the force of huge propellers have proven themselves to the extent that new plants with much larger generating capacity are planned. It is a pity that greater use is not made of the earth's natural gifts - gifts which, unlike uranium, don't pollute our world.

1. YESNADY. Here we left the bus and tramped through fields of heather and gorse to the cliffs to observe (a) what David claimed to be amongst the oldest fossils in the world. They were of a primitive type of seaweed. (b) Marine birds breeding in the cliff face. This is written mid July and soon all the migratory birds will be gone in several weeks. There were literally thousands upon thousands of birds in flight or nesting while down below on the water surface we could see the common brown seal and the much more rare grey seal as they frolicked in the water.

THIS IS THE FIRST PART OF A LETTER FROM JUDY AND GRAHAM KERR
REPORTING FROM SCOTLAND

* * * * *

SPOTLIGHTING NIGHT WITH WYN JONES

February 8th Blackheath Glen. Barbeque at 4.00 p.m. before a walk up Blackheath Glen spotting Greater Gliders, Ring Tail Possums, Sugar Gliders and maybe rare Pygmy Possum. Bring binoculars and personal torch. Meet at Blackheath Glen - Quota Picnic Ground - along the Megalong Road.

ISOBEL BOWDEN, O.A.M.

For many years the Blue Mountains have benefitted through the knowledge and wisdom of Isobel Bowden. Her great contribution to conservation and the community received recognition nationally recently when she was awarded the Order of Australia medal. Appropriately its emblem is a single wattle flower and again appropriately, emphasis in N.S.W. is placed on good Australian citizenship.

We are fortunate that Isobel Bowden has lived for so long on the Blue Mountains as she has been able to draw from personal experience, keen observation and knowledge to think through the consequence of 'development' and 'fire control' on this region. Far too slowly the truth of what she has been saying is being recognised.

Our Society has been especially privileged since the late 1960's when Isobel first became active in the Society - and incidentally had the foresight to realise that a condemned old kiosk in the Valley of Waters Reserve would make a good Conservation Hut. In those early years she held the position of secretary, membership secretary and Hut Curator (for some time all three together). From 1973 she continued to work hard and effectively as the leading member of a Fire Control Committee and the Town Planning (now Land Use) Committee. It was she who drew attention to the fact that the Blue Mountain townships were built on a watershed therefore development was affecting adversely the whole catchment of the Nepean-Hawkesbury system, including the Blue Mountains National Park. She pointed out that indiscriminate removal of vegetation from our poor, shallow soil was drying out the area causing reduced humidity and wind resistance which led to hotter, more rapidly spreading wildfire and increased incidence of lightning strikes. Her long personal experience of fighting bushfires and the consequences of over zealous widespread hazard reduction has encouraged some curbing of this activity. She advocated that hazard reduction be concentrated within the townships and their immediate surrounds. The wisdom of this is being accepted.

She drew attention to the importance of swamps which hold water like great sponges and release it continuously through seepage so that creeks flow even during dry periods.

Isobel Bowden is a highly respected and widely known field naturalist. In 1981 some delegates attending the International Botanical Congress consulted her, and the Director of the National Herbarium, Dr. L.A.S. Johnson, has expressed appreciation officially of the valuable assistance she has given to the Herbarium. She has discovered plants previously unrecorded, two of which have been named after her. Her paper on orchids of the Blue Mountains is of special importance.

Her delicate watercolours of wildflowers painted with loving skill in sketchbooks are now in the Mitchell Library. They are of flowers observed in a particular area on a specified date - a valuable record for the future.

Despite serious ill health Isobel continues to try to educate the authorities and the rest of us, to appreciate and protect our precious irreplaceable national heritage.

MORE ABOUT THE RED-BROWED TREECREEPER

Jim Smith's article about the Red-browed Treecreeper (Sept. issue) is interesting. Over the years I have seen this species from time to time, usually in the tall, wet eucalypt forest. The Atlas of Australian Birds gives their habitat as eucalypt forest, while the White-throated Treecreeper has the same but also inhabits rain forest and woodland and extends into partly cleared farmland.

So in one area their habitats overlap. There excellent slides of both species taken at nest hollows in Medlow Bath by Jack Purnell.

The Darwinian rule says one species per niche, so how can these two similar species co-exist? The different feeding habits, as described by Jim Smith, seem to be the answer. The Atlas says the Red-browed Treecreeper "prefers to probe through ribbons of bark hanging from the trunks and branches of smooth barked species."

Invariably I have observed the White-throated Treecreeper hopping up the trunks of rough barked trees.

Graham Alcorn

* * * * *

Moira Pearce

The death occurred recently of Miss Moira Pearce, one of the founding members of our society. Soon after arriving in Katoomba in 1960 she approached the Mayor, the late Frank Walford with a view to forming a group dedicated to the study and preservation of wildlife in the Blue Mountains. This led to the formation of our Society, the Katoomba and District Wildlife Conservation Society which later became the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society. She was a very keen member until ill health restricted her activities but she maintained her interest in our progress to the end.

Elinor Dark

As a recent meeting of our Society a vote of sympathy was extended to Michael Dark, our acting president for the loss of his mother, the distinguished author, Elinor Dark OAM. Over a long period she had a special place as one of Australia's leading novelists and recently had one of her books "The Timeless Land" made into a TV serial by the ABC. She and her husband Dr Eric Dark lived in Katoomba and were members of our society over a long period.

Society News

Charles Darwin Sesquicentenary

The Society is proposing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Charles Darwin's visit to the Blue Mountains in January, 1836. A small exhibition and walk is suggested for the celebration in the middle of January. The walk will follow the "Charles Darwin track" along the Jamison Creek from the highway at Wentworth Falls down to the falls and on to the Conservation Hut where a small exhibition will be opened. Details of where to meet for those who wish to go on the walk will be advertised in the Blue Mountains Gazette early in January. For further information, contact David Horton-James by ringing (047) 57-3270.

The Leura Resort

Some concessions have been reached on the building of the Leura Resort. These concessions, although still unsatisfactory, include no native vegetation to be removed, the cabins not to be built and the manager's residence to be moved north of the existing track around the golf course. This breakthrough was arrived at when the Labour Council was asked to look at the matter by the Escarpment Protection Group. They were also informed by the Labour Council that if they had been brought into the matter earlier then the outcome could have been more satisfactory from our point of view. The developers continue to announce the beginning of the construction early in the New Year; however, we can only say that it hasn't started yet and it is not too late to write to the Premier expressing your disappointment in their action.

Jenolan Caves

Some of our readers may know of a group which has been formed called the Jenolan Caves Protection Society. This group produced a report detailing the serious threat that the caves are under from the pressures of tourist development. The report goes on to say that a proper management plan be drawn up for the caves is probably the only way to rectify the situation. The Society has given its support to this recommendation. A new suggestion is that the caves only be administered by National Parks and the Caves House to remain with the Tourist Commission. Whatever is the outcome we hope this important natural heritage area will receive proper management as a valuable tourist resource whilst ensuring its protection.

Additions to the Blue Mountains National Park

As most members probably know by now the Premier, the Hon. Neville Warn, has recently announced additions to the Blue Mountains National Park. These additions include crown land previously under the administration of the Blue Mountains City Council and are on the floor of the Jamison Valley, the cliff faces and the cliff tops. It also includes the addition of Mt. Werong (in the south-west of the Park) which was designated for forestry use. The Society has remained quiet, although welcoming the news, until more was known. The Society was pleased to learn of the \$4M capital expenditure over the next two years and the addition of 16 extra staff to help manage these extensions.

The new areas include the most touristed areas in any National Park in Australia and will require considerable maintenance. It is therefore hoped that no walking tracks will be closed and in fact some older ones reopened.

Some of the new areas border residential areas and are consequently infested with weeds. Some careful weed eradication and bush regeneration will be necessary to prevent further infestation.

The Society welcomes the news of the additions and the resources to be made available because we feel that it can only be fully protected under the administration of National Parks. However the details of how the Parks Service management plan for the additions and the boundary details have not been released. The Society will be eager to look at these. And on that note, who will have control of the land on which the Conservation Hut is located? In National Park? As yet we don't know. We will keep members informed as information becomes available on all matters concerning the additions to the National Park.

REPORT FROM THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

The Land Use Committee has been heavily involved since April in the investigation and compilation of data for presentation to the Blue Mountains City Council for inclusion in the Environmental Management Plan currently being prepared by Council.

Plans showing critical environmental areas in the Upper Mountains have been forwarded to Council and now further detailed investigation is under way.

A second large project about to commence is the investigation of the proposed areas of bushfire hazard reduction planned by Council. This will require detailed investigation of large areas of bushland.

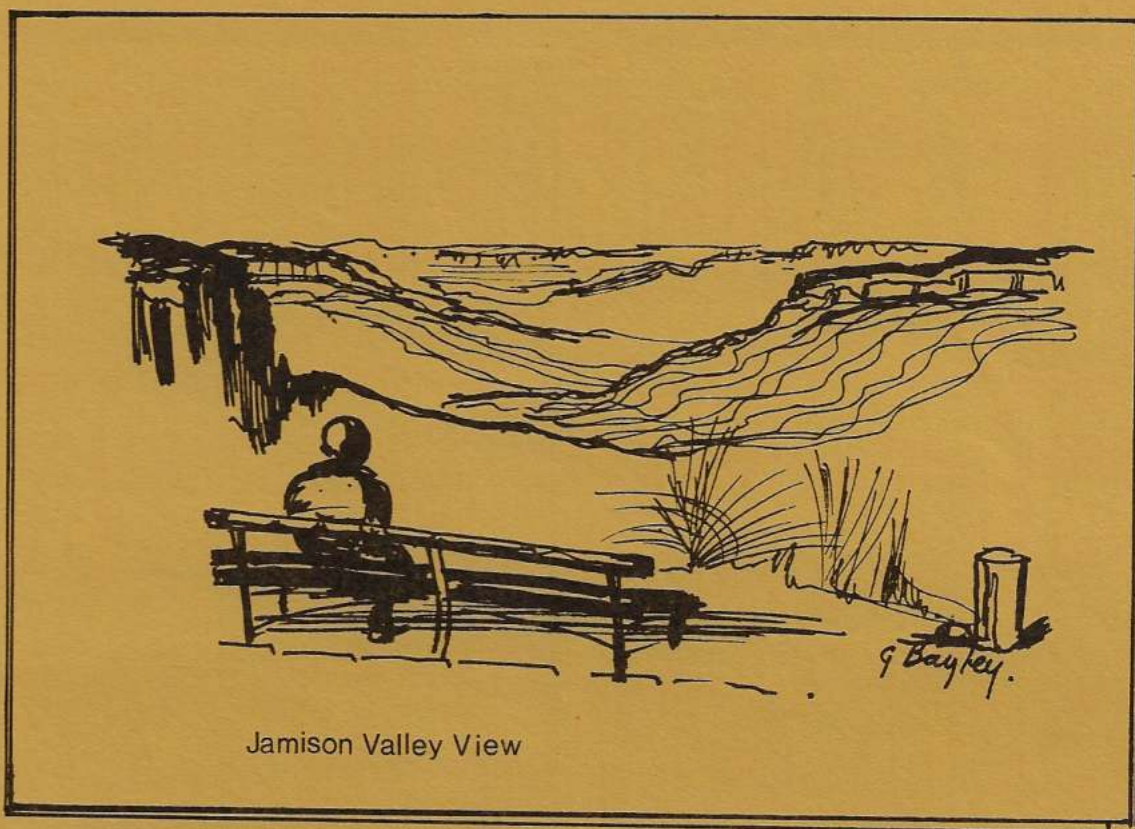
The Committee is in urgent need of members who can assist with these important projects. A meeting is held one evening per month with at least one field trip per month.

Further information can be obtained from Committee Chairman, Barry Barnes, on (047) 88 1053.

Raffle Result

The winner of 'Native Plants of the Lower Blue Mountains' by Margaret Baker, Robin Corringham, Jill Dark, was Mrs. Hudson (yellow ticket, E46).

* * * * *



Jamison Valley View

BLUE MOUNTAINS SOUVENIR

This is an actual size reproduction of one of a set of five drawings done by Grace Bayley for the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society produced as greeting cards. They are double folded and have ample space for writing to friends overseas or near at hand.

They are views which should be familiar to all bushwalkers and visitors to the Blue Mountains -

- JAMISON VALLEY VIEW ● GORDON FALLS TRACK, LEURA
- MEGALONG SUNSET ● THE CONSERVATION HUT, VALLEY OF WATERS
- LANDSLIDE KATOOMBA, FROM GOLDEN STAIRS TRACK

SET OF FIVE \$2.50 (\$3.00 Posted)

Obtainable from the Hut, Valley of Waters Reserve, Wentworth Falls, or by writing to Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society, P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls.

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Objects of the Society as set out in the Constitution are:

- (a) To disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation among members of the Society and the public generally, particularly in relation to the unique resources of the Blue Mountains.
- (b) To conduct meetings, excursions and research, and such other activities as may be determined by the Society in relation to Wildlife Conservation, and especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls, to provide information on Conservation matters.
- (c) To maintain friendly relations with other Conservation Societies especially local bodies.

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls.

MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM*

The Membership Secretary:

I enclose a cheque or postal note for for membership or renewal of my membership.

Name

Single \$5.00

Address

Family \$8.00

Consess. \$2.00

*strike out which does not apply.



Bankcard, Visa, American Express Cards accepted

FOR ALL YOUR CAMPING GEAR . . .

Maps, Repairs to Rucksacks and Friendly Service . . . and Much More

Call in at

Katoomba Outdoor Centre Pty. Ltd.

285 MAIN STREET, KATOOMBA. (Top of Railway Stairs)

Monday to Friday - 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Saturday - 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. (047) 82 3467

This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in March 2023 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.

December 1985

No. 62

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER.

Registered by Australia Post – Publication No. NBHO 925

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Incorporated in New South Wales. Registered Office: The Conservation Hut, Valley of Waters Reserve, Valley Road Wentworth Falls 2782.

Address for Correspondence: P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Single Pension & Juniors \$2.00 per year; Married Pensioners \$3.00; Single Membership \$5.00; Family Membership \$8.00. Those joining after June 30th pay half subscription to end of year.

MEETINGS: Held on last Friday in the month, January to December inclusive at the Conservation Hut, Valley of Waters Reserve, Valley Road Wentworth Falls at 7.30 p.m.

For speakers at coming meetings, please see Public Notices in the Gazette.

COMMITTEE FOR 1985

President.....	Michael Dark	58.7061
Vice-Presidents.....	Eric Blick	88.1051
	Joy Anderson	57.1602
Secretary.....	David Horton James	57.3270
Treasurer.....	Ross Fitzgerald	57.3267
Membership Officer.....	Ross Fitzgerald	57.3267
Newsletter Editor.....	Ewart Collings	57.2131
Walks Convener.....	Olive and John Noble	87.8342
Hut Convener.....	Lois Sattler	57.3270
Publicity/Advertising.....	Jill Dark	58.7061
Librarian.....	Betty Collings	57.2131
Hut Duty Organiser.....	Beverly Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer...	Winsome Gregory	57.1573

PATRON: Allen Strom, A.M.

NEWSLETTER: Four issues a year – March, June, September, December. Deadline for copy 20th of month previous. Advertising space available – contact Publicity/Advertising Officer.

THE HUT: The Society maintains a small museum and information centre at the Conservation Hut. It is manned on weekends and holidays by voluntary helpers.

LIBRARY: Facilities for borrowing and returning books at Monthly Meetings. A library list is available on request.

PUBLICATIONS: A range of specialist booklets, posters, maps, postcards etc may be purchased at the Hut.

SALE OF NATIVE PLANTS: Opportunities to purchase native plants grown by Members are organised from time to time during the year. These sales are held at the Hut, proceeds to the Land Preservation Fund.

WALKS: Walks are organised on the first Sunday and second Thursday of the month, conducted by experienced leaders.

LAND PRESERVATION: The Society has a Land Preservation Fund which was set up to give lovers of the bush an opportunity to preserve environmentally important land in the Blue Mountains by purchase and dedication as a reserve.

Contents

Coming Walks.

Reports on Walks

Sap Sucking Glider

Beauchamp Falls

Orkney Letter

Isobel Bowden

Red Browed Tree Creepers

Society News

COMING WALKS

January Sunday 5th: A walk on the Wild Side

Through the best of Blue Mountains bush, a short walk approx 4kms. A variety of scenery and habitats. One short stiff scramble (not dangerous) other-wise easy going. Meet at Blackheath Commuters Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 9.30 am. Leader: J Noble 87-8342

January Thursday 16th: Evan's Look-out – Beauchamp Falls and Return.

Rain forest gullies, hanging valleys and local geology. The return climb will be taken gently. Meet at Evan's Look-Out at 10.00 am. Leader: R. Compagnoni 87.8899.

February Sunday 2nd: Wentworth Pass

Meet Hut 9.30 am. From Valley of the Waters, down Wentworth Pass, up Slacks Stairs, to re-join National Pass and back up at Wentworth Falls. Time: about 4 hours. Bring lunch and something to drink. Leader: Lois Horton James.

February Saturday & Sunday 15th & 16th – SPECIAL EVENT – CAMPING WEEKEND AT COX'S RIVER.

By special request. Meet at Megalong Creek at 9.30 am. Leave some cars there, the rest to Black Range. Walks to Cox's River, camp over-night, walk to Megalong Creek, pick up transport, take drivers to Black Range to get cars left there. Please Advise if participating in this exercise so that transport arrangements can be made. This is most important. Bring food and camping gear. Leader; J. Noble 87-8342

February Thursday 20th – Water Nymph's Dell

Meet at Wentworth Falls station at 10.00 am. Leader: G.Vanry

March Sunday 2nd – Old Saw Mill – Kanimbla Valley

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 am. Leader: C. Johnson

March Thursday 20th – Fairy Bower – Cox's Cave

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 am. Leader R. Mackinson 87-1302

REPORT ON WALK ALONG THE OLD SHALE RAILWAY,
DARLING CAUSEWAY TO HARTLEY VALE 17TH OCTOBER 1985.

This walk was held in the middle of the wet weather, but a considerable number of people turned up, and were lucky. The rain belted down while we were assembling at Mount Victoria Station, but fortunately we had been joined by a visitor, Ebona Isles, who had the keys to the Historical Museum in the old Railway Refreshment Rooms, and was kind enough to give us a conducted tour. After we had finished that, the weather was delightful.

It was a short, easy walk along the route of the Old Shale Railway to the point where it met the funicular from Hartley Vale. The funicular slope itself is too steep to be readily negotiable. From this point we could see most of the old mine workings in the valley, including the settling tanks and the Mine Manager's house. The Comet Inn was just below us, too. After having lunch at this point we scrambled around the ruins and relics of the works on the top of the spur, inspecting the remains of the boiler house, the anchorage points, and the exploded naphtha drum, and climbed the hill for a view of Mount Victoria.

There were plenty of flowers on the walk, with a profusion of *Oxylobium ilicifolium*, where two months earlier it had been *Acacia terminalis*.

REPORT ON WALK – THE FINAL PART OF THE SIX FOOT TRACK – JENOLAN 3RD NOVEMBER 1985

Thirty two members met at Mt Victoria station and drove to Department of Sport and Leisure at Jenolan, where the walk started. Bush cabins were noted and it was suggested we may, in future, spend a couple of days there. The walk is easy to start with, a leisurely ramble along a flat track, no vegetation was noted as it was a wooded area and in the past had been used for logging. As we descended into Jenolan, the track became steeper, eroded and more interesting with views across the valley to Jenolan. Wildhop bushes, everlasting daisy, *Pandorea pandorana* were noted as we walked to Carlotta Arch where lunch was had. The return journey was via the same route, the weather was fine.

REPORT ON UNDERSLIFF WALK – 14 NOVEMBER 1985

It was a glorious spring day for our Thursday walk in November, despite rain the day before. There were twenty seven of us who set off, down the trail to Denfenella, then along Undercliff Pass to the top of Wentworth Falls, and back to the car park. I think most of us were rather glad that the walk had been postponed from July because of the profusion of wildflowers which greeted us on every turn, causing us to proceed very slowly. Interesting things which were observed were a possum's nest and a pair of pelicans flying thousands of feet above Jamison Valley probably on their way from Warragamba Dam to an inland waterhole. Amongst the flowers we saw were three species of rare orchids, carpets of violets in the moist ground beneath rock overhangs, waratahs, hakeas, dillwima, and mitrasacme, growing in minute cracks in the rock face. Reg Baumgarten had an interesting old postcard of Denfenella probably taken about eighty years ago. It showed very little change had taken place except a handrail had been added and the ferns were thicker. Greater change had taken place in the people, as the man in the photo was wearing suit, tie and top hat. Fortunately on our walk nobody bothered to dress so formally.

Beverley Thompson.

The snow in July which caused the postponement of the Denfenella Undercliff walk really did us a favour, as when we did the walk in November. The flowers were at their best.

Botanically this is a very interesting area, particularly the swamps and wet cliff faces. Several rare and endangered species occur here. Among the most interesting plants are the orchids.

Our first find was *Adenochilus nortonii*, its small, white, almost star shaped flowers showing through the ferns and violets in the swampy overhangs. This orchid only grows about 3,000 ft. and has been recorded from the Blue Mountains and Barrington Tops.

The shale crevices in the wet sandstone cliffs are the haunt of many interesting species, including *Rimacola elliptica*, not yet in flower, but with buds showing from above its large, dropping leaves. The flowers are green with red markings and the orchid occurs on the central coast and Blue Mountains. Also growing in the shale crevices is *Thelymitra venose*, the veined sun orchid, not yet in flower but showing buds. This is a wide spread genus but the form growing here is variety *magnifica*, with glowers larger than normal, and often pink instead of the usual blue.

A few late flowering specimens of *Caladenia catenata*, commonly called Pink Fingers, were found. These are common all through the area and vary in colour from white to a deep rosy pink.

Calochilus paludosus is an intriguing little orchid with its flower looking like a bearded face. It likes the drier areas and is common in open forest throughout the mountains.

Not all the orchids seen were terrestrials. Some late flowers were still clinging to *Dendrobium striolatum*, which grows on rocks and can form large mats in suitable locations. Plants of *Liparis reflexa* were found, also on rock faces, although as this is an autumn flowerer only leaves were showing.

On a walk here the following week with my class, we discovered several patches of *Caleana major*, the flying duck orchid, perhaps the most extra ordinary flower of them all. They are quite common in the drier areas, but sharp eyes are needed, they are small and blend in with the surrounding vegetation very well. Our last find was a *Diuris* sp. One of the yellow “Donkey” orchids.

Many other rare and interesting plants occur here, including *Blandfordia cunninghamii* (Christmas bell), *Celmisia longifolia* (Snow daisy), *Eucalyptus rupicola* (Cliff mallee-ash) *Olearia quercifolia* (a white daisy with oak-like leaves) and many more. As this is a newsletter and not a book, they will have to wait till another time.

Perhaps we should do this walk again next month to see if these promising buds have opened?

Jill Dark.

SAP-SUCKING GLIDERS

Jill Dark asks (September issue) about gliders making gashes in tree trunks. Recently I was in the magnificent Carnarvon Gorge National Park in Queensland. There were many gliders there, feeding on the blossoms of the flowering grey gums.

A few of these grey gums were marked with gashes, which were V shaped, the bark chewed from the centre so they looked like triangles. One tree in the camp had a twenty foot length of its trunk marked with these triangles, all pointing downwards.

We did not see any gliders feeding here, they were all on the blossom, but were informed that the perpetrators were Yellow-bellied Gliders (*Petaurus australis*). With a powerful torch we saw several of these. They have a high pitched scream and one did a spectacular glide of 43 paces. We also saw a beautiful Greater Glider with soft, white underparts.

The grey gum marked was *Eucalyptus propinqua*, no doubt a close relative of the *Eucalyptus punctata* mentioned by Jill as being gashed on the Putty Road.

Once, at a lecture on possums I attended at the W.A. Naturalist's Club, a spectacular slide was shown of a large, circular wound, about the size of a dinner plate or bigger, on the trunk of a eucalypt tree. Arranged around the wound like the petals of a daisy were 22 Sugar Gliders and one Brushtailed Phascogale, licking the sap!

Graham Alcorn

BEAUCHAMP FALLS.

Are you coming with me on the walk scheduled for 16th January 1986? If so I hope to share with you thoughts coming through the eyes of a student of geology. The local geology relates in many ways to that around our Hut.

From Evan's Lookout we see the uplifted peneplain with the summits of Mts Bank, Tomah, Wilson and Hay preserved by basalt flows during the Tertiary Period. Beneath are the dramatic Banks Walls which give their name to much of the sandstone cliffs we see.

Many of the walls show near horizontal breaks where shale layers interrupt. These layers tell a story. Beneath the walls talus slopes conceal the Permian-Triassic boundary and carry fallen rocks to the bottom of the valleys. In the valleys the creeks meander with ridges appearing to push the creek now from one side, now from the other.

I have mentioned a peneplain and the meandering of the streams suggests to me that these streams existed prior to the uplift. As the land rose gently – an epeirogenic uplift – pre existing streams increased their gradient and their flow and cut down at a rate approaching that of the uplift. So where is the immense amount of rock which once filled the valleys of Govett's Leap Creek, The Grose River and many another streams?

From Evan's Lookout steps lead down a cleft and the track winds over a talus slope, into a not so steep upland valley plentifully filled with *Eucalyptus oreades* and, on my reconnaissance, ablaze with waratahs. This valley is the haunt of lyrebirds which are frequently seen and heard in performance. One environmental scientist has suggested that these lovely creatures contribute to hillslope erosion. The track enters a narrow cleft – no doubt cut by the stream thorough an enlarged settlement crack or maybe a joint. At the foot of the first steps is a large rock overhang cut into red claystone. This indicates how weathering by water, wind or other agents readily operates into soft claystones and ultimately brings down overlying rock by exposing a settlement crack and leaving the rock without support. These beds are those of the Mt York claystone and are 90-100 metres stratigraphically lower than similar beds, the Wentworth Falls claystone which tops many of the cliff lines in this area but is not evident at Evan's Lookout. The band of Mt York Claystone separates the overlying Banks Wall Sandstone from Burra Moko Head sandstone beneath.

Water continues its melodious but destructive way down the cleft carrying as it goes sand grains, shale grains, leaves and twigs. The grade of the stream is not dramatic as it is controlled by the height of the knickpoint over which it flows at Beauchamp Falls. On reaching the top of the Falls we will have passed through the whole of the Burra Moko sandstone – some 100 metres – and the rim rock of the Falls is cut into rocks of the Caley Formation, the lowest beds of the Triassic Period.

As the stream from Evan's Lookout enters Greave's Creek, freshly emerged from the slot valley of the Grand Canyon, a slightly wider, gentler valley takes us to the top of the Falls and here our lesson unfolds as the cliff opposite reads like a blackboard. We will see the Katoomba coal seam – about 220 million years old and generally looked on as the top of the Permian Period rocks. Overlying conformably are the Narrabeen Series of the Triassic Period which extended from 220 to 180 million years before the present. The lowest Triassic beds are of the Caley Formation – its component strata of sandstone and shale delineated. Above the Caley Formation are two members of the Grose Formation, Burra Moko Head Sandstone and Mt York claystone in ascending order but the usually prominent, upper member of the Formation, the Banks Wall Sandstone, is not here evident.

I have deliberately omitted defining some of the terms I have used as their omission from this note will no doubt stimulate discussion on our walk. Further, and more important than a confusing list of bed names are a very well set out series of settlement cracks in the sandstone, underlying shale or claystone beds, undermining of the sandstone beds and the subsequent breaking off of great sections of sandstone to leave vertical cliffs. In short, here at the mouth of the hanging valley of Greave's Creek, is an explanation in parvo of how our scenic cliffs are formed and, with a little thought, relatable to the view from the Hut.

R.T. Compagnoni.

Illustration Not Inserted.

ORKNEY LETTER

A PARADISE FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGIST, ORNITHOLOGIST AND NATURE LOVER.

For the birdwatcher, archaeologist, artist, climber, walker – and just about everyone else for that matter – Orkney has a great deal to offer all wrapped up among an intriguing bundle of sixty seven islands.

From Thurso on the north coast of Scotland we caught the P & O Ferry “St Ola” specially built for the two hour trip to the small fishing port of Stromness on the longest of the islands in the group called Mainland.(Incidentally, it is incorrect to refer to the ‘Orkney Islands’. Orkney Isles if you wish but more correctly just ‘Orkney’).

The ‘St Ola’ is the only roll-on, roll-off car ferry to operate all the year round across the Pentland Firth, waters renowned for fierce gales and unsettled water. She is fully stabilised and can carry 90 cars and trucks and is equipped with comfortable lounges for up to 400 passengers.

I spent much of the two hour trip up on deck, absorbing the scenery, watching people being sick and taking photographs! Society members are going to have a lot to put up with when we return to Australia!

I particularly wanted to get a shot of ‘Old Man of Hoy’ a strange pillar of rock rearing some 450 ft up into the sky, the hero of serious rock climbers – the crumbling flanks and foaming waves at his feet present an awesome challenge.

We decided to make Stromness our headquarters rather than undertake an additional half hour bus ride trip to Kirkwell the capital of Mainland. Stromness, with a population in excess of 2000 is pretty little fishing town snuggling under the brow of the hills running behind the port. It has just the one cobbled street which wanders along the waterfront with lovely old stone buildings constructed to withstand the sometimes harsh weather conditions.

One feature of our stay in Orkeny was the length of the daylight hours. Being so far north it was still light enough to read a book at 10.00 pm! Of course, come winter and the reverse will be true with kids coming home from school in the dark!

Orkney we were to discover contains so much of interest. Take a walk and you can step back 4000 years such is the richness of its history. We were indeed lucky to come across a fellow who conducted tours of no more than twenty people in his mini bus taking in the more important features of Orkney. David Lee was an ornithologist and naturalist with a deep and abiding interest in his beloved Orkney. It was nothing for him to suddenly stop the bus in the middle of the road, whip out the binoculars and announce that if we looked carefully we might see such and such bird. After a dozen or so such stops one tended to become a little blasé about trying to be enthusiastic in looking at a black dot at a range of 600 yards!

The bird life is truly fantastic. Orkney is host to millions of birds and some 300 species have been identified here. PUFFINS, numerous types of GULLS, KITTIWAKES, TERNS, FULMARS, RAZORBILLS, GUILLEMOTS, GREAT and ARTIC SKUAS to mention just a few.

We did two full day tours with David and the following will give members some idea of just what Orkney had in store for us. I should mention that for much of the time, the weather was wet and miserable and blowing a gale. In fact, gale force winds blow for a third of the year and as a result of this ready supply of free energy, experimental power stations generating power through the force of high propellers have proven themselves to the extent that new plants with a much larger generating capacity are planned. It is a pity that greater use is not made of the earth's natural gifts – gifts which, unlike uranium, don't pollute our world.

1. YESNADY. Here we left the bus and tramped through fields of heather and gorse to the cliffs to observe (a) what David claimed to be amongst the oldest fossils in the world. They were of a primitive type of seaweed. (b) Marine birds breeding in the cliff face. This is written mid July and soon all the migratory birds will be gone in several weeks. There were literally thousands upon thousands of birds in flight or nesting while down below on the water surface we could see the common brown seal and the much more rare grey seal as they frolicked in the water.

THIS IS THE FIRST PART OF A LETTER FROM JUDY AND GRAHAM KERR
REPORTING FROM SCOTLAND.

SPOTLIGHTING NIGHT WITH WYN JONES

February 8th Blackheath Glen. Barbeque at 4.00 pm before a walk up Blackheath Glen spotting Greater Gliders, Ring Tail Possums, Sugar Gliders and maybe rare Pygmy Possum. Bring binoculars and personal torch. Meet at Blackheath Glen – Quota Picnic Ground – along the Megalong Road.

ISOBEL BOWDEN, O.A.M.

For many years the Blue Mountains have benefitted through the knowledge and wisdom of Isobel Bowden. Her great contribution to conservation and the community received recognition nationally recently when she was awarded the Order of Australia medal. Appropriately its emblem is a single wattle flower and again appropriately, emphasis in NSW is placed on good Australian citizenship.

We are fortunate that Isobel Bowden has lived for so long on the Blue Mountains as she has been able to draw from personal experience, keen observation and knowledge to think through the consequence of 'development' and 'fire control' on this region. Far too slowly the truth of what she has been saying is being recognised.

Our Society has been especially privileged since the late 1960's when Isobel first became active in the Society – and incidentally had the foresight to realise that a condemned old kiosk in the Valley of Waters Reserve would make a good Conservation Hut. In those early years she held the position of secretary, membership secretary and Hut Curator (for some time all three together). From 1973 she continued to work hard and effectively as the leading member of a Fire Control Committee and the Town Planning (now Land Use) Committee. It was she who drew attention to the fact that the Blue Mountain townships were built on a watershed therefore development was affecting adversely the whole catchment of the Nepean-Hawkesbury system, including the Blue Mountains National Park. She pointed out that indiscriminate removal of vegetation from our poor, shallow soil was drying out the area causing reduced humidity and wind resistance which led to hotter, more rapidly spreading wildfire and increased incidence of lightning strikes. Her long personal experience of fighting bushfires and the consequences of over zealous wide spread hazard reduction has encouraged some curbing of this activity. She advocated that hazard reduction be concentrated within the townships and their immediate surrounds. The wisdom of this is being accepted.

She drew attention to the importance of swamps which hold water like great sponges and release it continuously through seepage so that creeks flow even during dry periods.

Isobel Bowden is a highly respected and widely known field naturalist. In 1981 some delegates attending the International Botanical Congress consulted her, and the Director of the National Herbarium, Dr. L.A.S. Johnson, has expressed appreciation officially of the valuable assistance she has given to the Herbarium. She has discovered plants previously unrecorded, two of which have been named after her. Her paper on orchids of the Blue Mountains is of special importance.

Her delicate watercolours of wildflowers painted with loving skill in sketchbooks are now in the Mitchell Library. They are of flowers observed in a particular area on a specified date – a valuable record for the future.

Despite serious ill health Isobel continues to try to educate the authorities and the rest of us, to appreciate and protect our precious irreplaceable national heritage.

MORE ABOUT THE RED-BROWED TREECREEPER

Jim's Smith's article about the Red-browed Treecreeper (Sept issue) is interesting. Over the years I have seen this species from time to time, usually in the tall, wet eucalypt forest. The Atlas of Australian Birds gives their habitat as eucalypt forest, while the White-throated Treecreeper has the same but also inhabits rain forest and woodland and extends into partly cleared farmland.

So in one area their habitats overlap. There excellent slides of both species taken at nest hollows in Medlow Bath by Jack Purnell.

The Darwinian rule says one species per niche, so how can these two similar species co-exist? The different feeding habits, as described by Jim Smith, seem to be the answer. The Atlas says the Red-browed Treecreeper “prefers to probe through ribbons of bark hanging from the trunks and branches of smooth barked species.”

Invariably I have observed the White-throated Treecreeper hopping up the trunks of rough barked trees.

Graham Alcorn.

Moira Pearce.

The death occurred recently of Miss Moira Pearce, one of the founding members of our Society. Soon after arriving in Katoomba in 1960 she approached the Mayor, the Late Frank Walford with a view to forming a group dedicated to the study and preservation of wildlife in the Blue Mountains. This led to the formation of our Society, the Katoomba and District Wildlife Conservation Society which later became the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society. She was a very keen member until ill health restricted her activities but she maintained her interest in our progress to the end.

Elinor Dark

As a recent meeting of our Society a vote of sympathy was extended to Michael Dark, our acting president for the loss of his mother, the distinguished author, Elinor Dark OAM. Over a long period she had a special place as one of Australia’s leading novelists and recently had one of her books “The Timeless Land” made into a TV serial by the ABC. She and her husband Dr Eric Dark lived in Katoomba and were members of our Society over a long period.

SOCIETY NEWS

Charles Darwin Sesquicentenary.

The Society is proposing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Charles Darwin’s visit to the Blue Mountains in January, 1836. A small exhibition and walk is suggested for the celebration in the middle of January. The walk will follow the “Charles Darwin track” along the Jamison Creek from the highway at Wentworth Falls down to the falls and on to the Conservation Hut where a small exhibition will be opened. Details of where to meet for those who wish to go on the walk will be advertised in the Blue Mountains Gazette early in January. For further information, contact David Horton-James by ringing (047) 57-3270.

The Leura Resort

Some concessions have been reached on the building of the Leura Resort. These concessions, although still unsatisfactory, include no native vegetation to be removed, the cabins not to be built and the manager’s residence to be moved north of the existing track around the golf course. This breakthrough was arrived at when the Labour Council was asked to look at the matter by the Escarpment Protection Group.

They were also informed by the Labour Council that if they had been brought into the matter earlier the outcome could have been more satisfactory from our point of view. The developers continue to announce the beginning of the construction early in the New Year; however, we can only say that it hasn't started yet and it is not too late to write to the Premier expressing your disappointment in their action.

Jenolan Caves

Some of our readers may know of a group which has been formed called the Jenolan Caves Protection Society. This group produced a report detailing the serious threat that the caves are under from the pressures of tourist development. The report goes on to say that a proper management plan be drawn up for the caves is probably the only way to rectify the situation. The Society has given its support to this recommendation. A new suggestion is that the caves only be administered by National Parks and the Caves House to remain with the Tourist Commission. Whatever is the outcome we hope this important natural heritage area will receive proper management as a valuable tourist resource whilst ensuring its protection.

Additions to the Blue Mountains National Park.

As most members probably know by now the Premier, the Hon. Neville Wran, has recently announced additions to the Blue Mountains National Park. These additions include crown land previously under the administration of the Blue Mountains City Council and are on the floor of the Jamison Valley, the cliff faces and the cliff tops. It also includes the addition of Mt Werong (in the south-west of the Park) which was designated for forestry use. The Society has remained quiet, although welcoming the news, until more was known. The Society was pleased to learn of the \$4M capital expenditure over the next two years and the addition of 16 extra staff to help manage these extensions.

The new areas include the most toured areas in any National Park in Australia and will require considerable maintenance. It is therefore hoped that no walking tracks will be closed and in fact some older ones reopened.

Some of the new areas border residential areas and are consequently infested with weeds. Some careful weed eradication and bush regeneration will be necessary to prevent further infestation.

The Society welcomes the news of the additions and the resources to be made available because we feel that it can only be fully protected under the administration of National Parks. However the details of how the Parks Service management plan for the additions and the boundary details have not been released. The Society will be eager to look at these. And on that note, who will have control of the land on which the Conservation Hut is located? In National Park? As yet we don't know. We will keep members informed as information becomes available on all matters concerning the additions to the National Park.

REPORT FROM THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

The Land Use Committee has been heavily involved since April in the investigation and compilation of data for presentation to the Blue Mountains City Council for inclusion in the Environmental Management Plan currently being prepared by Council.

Plans showing critical environmental areas in the Upper Mountains have been forwarded to Council and now further detailed investigation is under way.

A second large project about to commence is the investigation of the proposed areas of bushfire hazard reduction planned by Council. This will require detailed investigation of large areas of bushland.

The Committee is in urgent need of members who can assist with these important projects. A meeting is held one evening per month with at least one field trip per month.

Further information can be obtained from Committee Chairman, Barry Barnes, on (047) 88-1053.

Raffle Results

The winner of 'Native Plants of the Lower Blue Mountains' by Margaret Baker, Robin Corringham, Jill Dark, was Mrs Hudson (yellow ticket, E46).
