

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
Tibrarian	Betty Collinos	57, 2131

Hut Duty Organiser

Land Preservation Officer... Winsome Gregory

PATRON: Allen Strom, A.M.

Beverley Thompson

57.2076

57.1573

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.

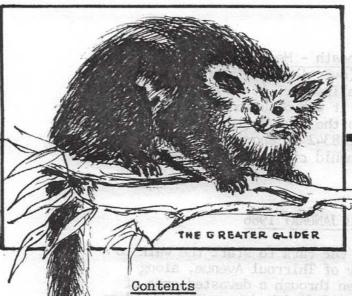
LIBRARY: Facilities for borrowing and returning books at Monthly Meetings. A library list is available on request.

<u>PUBLICATIONS:</u> 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.



UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIET

Newsletter

March, 1986

Contents		Page	Nowe with the
Coming Walks Reports on Walks	Had a bast Rest, turble	1 2,3,4	PLEASE NOTE!
Orkney Letter Darwin's Pathway	Para Parat	5	The date of the March Annual Gene
How do they Feather thei Haven of Refuge	r Nests?	9	Meeting has been changed from 28th
What did you see in the Society News	Bush Today?	10	March to Friday, April 4 at 7.30 p
Land Preservation Fund	SLODB CAUS.	12	The second stup
A per with some ellori.	Amp if .bmi	l of Fred	erous in places and

PLEASE NOTE:

The date of the March Annual General Meeting has been changed from 28th March to Friday. April 4 at 7.30 p.m.

COMING WALKS

April Sunday 6th - Valley of the Waters - Vera Falls Meet at the Hut 10.00 a.m. Rainforest and waterfalls. Medium - Hard walk. Leader Beverly Thompson. 57-2076

April Thursday 17th - Resort Site - Roberts Pass - Inspiration Point Meet at entrance Leura Golf Club Fitzroy Street, 10 a.m. View Leura resort site, see the ladder and bridge erected by Jim Smith and David Lawton (donations towards this gratefully received) Leaders Reg & Dulcie Toseland 84-1682

May Sunday 4th - Old Lapstone Zig Zag Railway Historic Walk. Meet at turn-off to Knapsack Road near gates of Lapstone RAAF Station, Great Western Highway 9.30 a.m. Leader Eric Blick 88-1051

May Thursday 15th - Lawson Area - Dantes Glen to Fairy Falls
Meet Lawson Station parking area - over bridge and turn right at 10 a.m. Short, easy walk. Train from Sydney arrives 9.56 a.m. Leader Grace Bailey 59-1955

June Sunday 1st - Lockley Pylon Meet at Leura Public School at 10 a.m. Fabulous views. See Mt. Banks from a different angle! Medium walk. Leader Keith Sherlock 57-1927 by water. One has to sake a senial goar shift to too June Thursday 19th - Walls Cave Blackheath - Medlow Bath
Meet at Blackheath Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn
right) at 10.a.m. An easy stroll to Walls Cave, it is a large cavern.
Flakes, points and charcoal show that it was occupied by aborigines,
12,000 years ago. A little upstream is the Lake Medlow Dam built in
1907. Leader Rachel Makinson. Ring 87-8342 re enquiries.
Those faced with transport problems should ring J. Noble 87-8342
or leader.

REPORT ON A WALK ON THE WILDSIDE - 5TH JANUARY 1986

22 members met at Blackheath Commuter Car Park to start the walk to Colliers Look-Out. We proceeded by way of Thirroul Avenue, along Bower Bird Dell, we saw the bower, then through a devasted area of uprooted trees, burnt out bush and a half finished house into Goodare Street. We went down Porters Pass, turning right, up a gully and across a small creek, then uphill through fallen trees and over-grown bush to the plateau above Porters Pass. We walked through low scrub to the rocks at the Look-Out where we had lunch overlooking the Kanimbla Valley. There weren't many wild flowers out at this time of year. A few members explored around the nearby rocks while the main party tried to find the elusive track back, this was managed quite successfully. A thunder storm caught some members before they were able to reach their cars. Note: This track is terribly overgrown in places and hard to find. It could be, with some effort, made into an easier track and would be well worth it.

OF AN OUTING OF 16TH JANUARY 1986

"Rain" said the leader, as his already drenched party followed him to Evan's Lookout, "is an essential factor of geological weathering".

Others, having already heard the rain all nights, stayed as Shakespeare's "gentlemen in England", and who could blame them?

Down into the gorge while raindrops set up a ballet of dancing leaves. We paused under the weathered red shelter in Mt York Claystone then down again. Rain eased a little as we looked at and discussed the stratigraphic display across the knickpoint at Beauchamp Falls.

We sought an overhang to enjoy a dry lunch so the rain stopped! Thanks to the noble nine who followed the leader - he had to be there.

R.T. Compagnoni

Editor's Note. One thing we learned from the walk - geologists are all "two timers". There's our time measured in terms of three score and ten years and geological time measured in millions. Looking at the Grose Valley it's very hard to imagine it all being hacked out by water. One has to make a mental gear shift to Geological Time and even then it's incredible.

ATTACK OF THE BLOOD-SUCKERS

WENTWORTH PASS, SUNDAY 2ND FEBRUARY

A hot day, and a cool rainforest walk - the perfect ingredients for a leech attack. But our thoughts were carefree (and leech-free) as we made our way to the top of Wentworth Falls, down the stone steps, and on to the Slacks Stairs turn-off. How could we know, as we eagerly inspected the Microstrobus fitzgeraldii that grows in the spray of the falls, that down below THEY were waiting, unfed for possibly SEVEN YEARS?!

There were about 30 of us and, as we slowly negotiated the minor horror of Slacks Stairs, we were sufficiently alert to note some very fine Angophoras. At the bottom, we rested by the pool which takes the water from Wentworth Falls and sends it down into the Jamison Valley, where it eventually meets the Cox's River on ITS way to Warragamba. The water was not as clear as it was in earlier times, but the place is still very peaceful, and some of us were brave enough to cool our feet.

And then we were off again, winding through the cool forest towards the Valley of the Waters, and ... THEM!

We were attacked without warning, as is always the case - one strangled cry of "Leech!" was not enough to avoid the massacre that lay ahead. Thirty well-nourished people, prime for the sucking - we didn't stand a chance. But lest you think we all went down, bloodily lost in the remote jungles of the Wentworth Pass, it must be recorded that the courage of the bitten was great indeed. We ALL survived, even though, by the end of the walk, there was scarcely a dry sock in the place.

And, as for the leeches, they won't need a feed for months, even years!



From the Visitors Book

Phillip Rogers
Nathan Nevell
K. Hensel

Worcester England Gosford, N.S.W. Munster, W. Germany

Fantastic Scenery, tired legs. Too many leaches. Kalt, aber wunderschon.

SPOTLIGHTING NIGHT WITH WYN JONES

BLACKHEATH GLEN, SATURDAY 8TH FEBRUARY

This was a very popular night as a crowd of members congregated in Blackheath Glen. Some arrived early and had a barbecue, then Wyn Jones took some members for a walk. We patiently waited for dusk, saw a few black cockatoos, heard the kookaburras telling the other birds it was time to settle down for the night; then we heard the boobooks call, saw a few bats and it was time for us to start our spotlighting walk.

We walked round Blackheath Glen, shining our lights high into the trees. Wyn pointed out the monkey gums which grew in the Glen. We crossed the creek and wandered round the cleared area at the other side; we saw manna gums but no koalas! Finally we walked up Megalong Valley Road and here we had out first sighting of a greater glider high on a tree; his eyes glowed in the dark. We were all excited and saw three more gliders, the highlight of the night was spotting a beautiful pale grey and white greater glider with a long tail. He was unperturbed at being picked out by all the lights, and watched us with interest. We shook the tree but he only moved to another branch. We watched him for a while then we slowly walked back to the Glen - a truly enchanting evening.

Olive Noble

CAMPING WEEKEND

COX'S RIVER, SATURDAY-SUNDAY, 15th-16th FEBRUARY

Seven members participated in this weekend camp; five met at Megalong Creek and drove to the end of Black Range where Keith and Beth Sherlock were waiting. We walked to the other side of Little River along the Six Foot Track where we had lunch. The blackberries were ripe and although prolific, we didn't complain - they were delicious.

A leisurely stroll brought us to the Cox's River — on the way we saw a goanna about one metre long. He was on the side of a tree and well camouflaged. We crossed the Cox's River and found a pleasant camping site. After setting up camp some of us paddled in the river. others had a spa bath in the little waterfall. The weather was perfect and we saw rainbow parrots and tree creepers. Next day five members carried on along the Six Foot Track to Megalong Creek, while two of us returned up Murdering Creek to the top of Black Range and collected the car.

Olive Noble

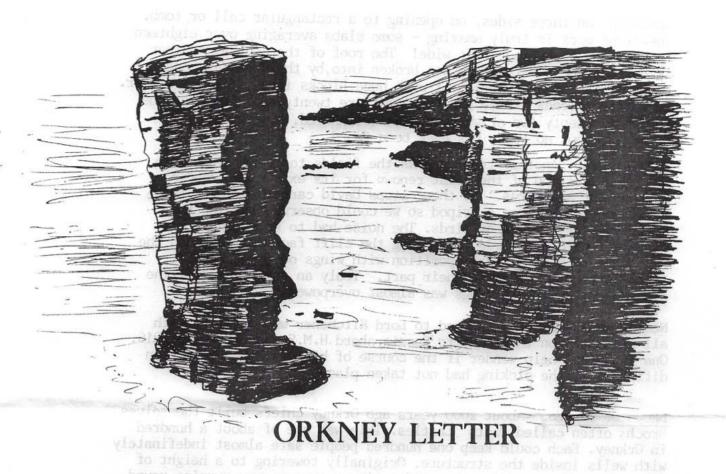
LAND PRESERVATION

Following correspondence with the landholder and approval of the February General Meeting, an offer of \$6000 has been made for an environmentally important wet block in the Water Nymph's Dell catchment.

Native Plant Weekend was held on 1st and 2nd March was a great success.

A talk by Jill Dark on propagating native plants followed by a walk with Jill and Graham Alcorn identifying the flowers and birds in the afternoon attracted a large following. All proceeds from sale of plants for Land Preservation Fund.

★ Binoculars found in Hut - please ring 58.7061.



THIS IS THE SECOND PART OF A LETTER FROM JUDY AND GRAHAM KERR

REPORTING FROM SCOTLAND

SKARABRAE This is the best preserved prehistoric village in Northern Europe and has been carbon dated back to 3100 BC. The site was only revealed in 1850 when a freak storm stripped the grass from a high dune and exposed part of the ancient dwelling. Skarabrae residents built their homes of flagstone rock with roofs of turf or skins laid on wooden or whalebone rafters. Each house had one door and the fireplace was in the centre. Beds were set against side walls and lined with bracken or heather and covered with animal skins.

THE RINGS OF BROGAR Originally a huge circle of some sixty stones, this is one of Orkney's best-known historic monuments - and greatest puzzle. Of the original sixty stones, thirty six now remain either as uprights or broken stumps and it has a surrounding ditch - as much as nine feet deep and twenty seven feet wide. This is probably the best stone circle in Scotland and dates back to 1560 BC. It's original purpose is unclear.

MAESHOWE. Built before 2700 BC this famous chambered tomb is an outstanding example of prehistoric architecture. One has to crouch down and make your way along a passageway some thirty six feet long by only four feet high to where it opens up into a central chamber which

contains, on three sides, an opening to a rectangular cell or tomb. The stone work is truly amazing - some slabs averaging over eighteen feet in length by four feet wide! The roof of the central chamber is not original as the tomb was broken into, by the Crusaders and robbed! The transportation of such huge blocks is a matter of wonder. On various stones of the great chamber are twenty four inscriptions in runes, twenty two of which can be deciphered. One refers to "treasure" but no trace has ever been found.

MARWICK HEAD Another tramp across the fields to the coastline to observe a section of the coast renown for its extensive breeding grounds for sea birds. At these stops David carried along a telescope and set it upon a tripod so we could observe close-up the activities of myriads of birds. The noise had to be heard to be believed while the birds flew along the cliff face or just used the updraught to hold a static position with wings outstretched but absolutely no movement on their part. Truly an amazing sight. The stench from their droppings was almost overpowering.

Nearby was a memorial erected to Lord Kitchener who was lost with all his staff on their way to Russia abord H.M.S. Hampshire in 1916. One can't but help wonder if the course of history might have been different if the sinking had not taken place.

BROCH OF GURNESS About 2000 years ago Orkney chiefs built themselves Broch; often called Picts' Castles. This was one of about a hundred in Orkney. Each could keep one hundred people safe almost indefinately with wells inside the structure. Originally towering to a height of about forty feet and incorporated a clever passage-way running round within the wall. Tragedy must have struck at sometime for in cleaning out the site, the skeletons of two hands were found where they had been thrown into the refuse of a kitchen midden.

KIRKWALL The capital of Orkney on Mainland is full of history. It is beyond the scope of this article to go into the detail with which this historic town is so richly endowed other than to mention the beautiful St Magnas Cathedral founded in 1137 with its alternating bands of local red and yellow sandstone.

The graveyard contains many interesting headstones going back to the mid 1500's. We are intrigued that many of these are inscribed with symbols, such as the skull and crossbones, the hour glass, items of trade etc.

SCAPA FLOW AND CHURCHILL BARRIERS Perhaps Orkney is most popularly known as a Naval Base and where seventy four of the warships of the German Imperial Navy's High Seas Fleet was scuttled in 1919.

In the Second World War a German U-Boat penetrated block ships and sank H.M.S. Royal Oak with considerable loss of life. Because of this, Prime Minister Churchill ordered the immediate construction of concrete barriers connecting four of the isles in the Orkney Group. This work was carried out by 550 Italian POWs. They must have found Orkney a cold and bleak place after sunny Italy.

Scapa Flow is now an important loading terminal for North Sea Oil. But this originally brought problems. David Lee and his fellow ornithologists were most concerned at the high escalation in the death of birds through oil spillage. A committee was formed and a most detailed study was made complete with water analysis and as a consequence were able to supply the authorities with irrefutable evidence that the problem was being caused by ships cleaning out their bunkers. But the authorities did a clever thing. Instead of fining the shipping line say \$50,000 which meant nothing, they refused entry to the offending ships and happily there has been a dramatic reduction in the loss of birds from oil pollution.

From the Churchill Barriers we ended up on South Ronaldsay where we left the bus and made another tramp over water-logged fields to the cliffs to observe more bird life and coastal scenery. The fields were carpeted with flowers - heather, buttercups, Norway orchids and the occasional rare and beautiful primula scotica or Scottish Primrose.

The coastal scenery of course was again magnificent while the thousands of sea birds were a "birdo's" delight. David again set up his telescope and our party just wandered around enjoying some rare sunshine and just drinking in the peace of nature to the accompaniment of the call of sea birds, the sight of seals gently bobbing in clear, clean water. David pointed out one of the sea birds, the Guillemot, and told us of the strange defence mechanism the bird possesses whereby it is capable of spewing an oily liquid which has a terrible smell and which deprives the attacking bird of the ability to fly. If it can't fly, it can't feed and the only answer is a rather lonely and miserable death. The extraordinary finish to this tale was that on the way back to the bus, we came across a bird flapping on the ground with this oily substance on its feathers and looking very dishevelled and unhappy and David seemed quite unconcerned that the bird would soon be dead. Such is the law of nature.

So concluded our stay at Orkney for come the morning we board our ferry for the return trip to the Scottish mainland.

Our thoughts on Orkney. The air is fresh and clean. The seas, too, are unspoiled. It has been like this since time began and nature thrives here. All we can say to anyone lucky enough to visit Orkney - pack your camera and binoculars, bring your sketch book and prepare yourself for a journey back in time and an experience of a lifetime.

Our good wishes to all Society Members.

* * * * * * * more sorembling, slithering, desping

NEW SHELVES of the brand-ingli and group ment , wears and in side brand-ingli

The library now has well over 200 books and magazines covering a wide range of subjects. The librarian feels that the books have not been put to their full use. They are available free and can be borrowed or returned at the monthly meetings of the Society. There are plans afoot to enlarge the shelving capacity of the library which is stretched to the limit at the moment.

"DARWIN'S PATHWAY"

It is impossible to know how closely the overgrown track that today follows the Jamison Creek down to the top of Wentworth Falls approximates the "pathway" that Charles Darwin walked on in 1836.

Nevertheless, as a fitting tribute to a great naturalist and his visit to Wentworth Falls, 40 people met on Sunday 19th January, 150 years almost to the day after Darwin's visit, to retrace his steps.

The weather was more than kind - a superbly sunny day, wedged in between several wet and stormy ones, and we were gratified that so many people turned up.

We started from the School of Arts, close to the site of the "Weatherboard Inn", in accordance with Darwin's route. Unfortunately, it is diffi-

cult to get to the creek near the highway - weeds and pollution have made it fairly inaccessible - and it is joined more comfortably behind the Bushfire Brigade station.

Today's Jamison Creek track crosses the creek about half a dozen or more times, and crossings are varied - our admiration went out to older members of our party who enthusiastically balanced on pipes, clambered along logs, and stepped across rocks on the creek bed. Nobody fell in, although one, who shall remain nameless, came fairly close while negotiating the pipe crossing.

Jamison Creek is, at present, badly overgrown in places with broom, blackberries and dandelion and, near the highway, heavily silted-up. It is more than time that this lovely watercourse was cleaned up and "Darwin's Pathway" restored to a proper walking track.

Beyond the old swimming pool (still used by local children), the creek descends gently to a shallow sand-flat with a rock overhang. Here we saw two yabbies, and someone who wanted a closer look was nipped for his pains. Further along and closer to the "Yestergrange" area, we began to see stands of the Bottlebrush Callistemon citrinus, small graceful trees with beautiful red flowers.

From this point, the track improves - no more scrambling, slithering, leaping and pushing through undergrowth. The "Yestergrange" track comes down on the left-hand side of the creek, then along the right-hand side, all the way to Weeping Rock. This is the more populous part of the track, and the rearguard of our party was accosted by two walkers who wanted to know why we were all there.

"We're retracing Charles Darwin's steps," we said. "A hundred and fifty years ago he was here, possibly right on this spot, and we've followed the track that he took."

"You're not Creationists, are you?" they asked.

We hotly denied this, but an unfathomable expression on their faces made us wonder if THEY were. We moved on. At the Weeping Rock, we stopped to inspect the plaque that had been set into rock the previous day by the friends of Charles Darwin", and then rounded the bend to see, with a sense of historical accuracy, what Darwin himself must have seen when he emerged from the bush around the creek and gazed out over Jamison Valley for the first time. To our left, the creek that we had followed plunged over that huge bulbous cliff-face that IS Wentworth Falls. Before us, the valley lay blue and calm, ages old and ageless. A hundred and fifty years ago seemed as nothing and, with Darwin, we felt that it was "quite novel and extremely magnificent".

From there, some of us walked down to the top of the Falls, or messed about with cameras, while others walked on to the Hut to look at a small "Charles Darwin" display that had been assembled there.

The walk had been exhilarating, and we all enjoyed it immensely. The overgrown state of the track, with the accompanying scrambling that was necessary, made it into something of an adventure trail. However, it is worth remembering that it was the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society which first recommended that "Darwin's Pathway" be upgraded. Our recent walk there has served to revive our enthusiasm, and we should press for more officail information on the future of this track. We had some very dedicated de-weeders on our walk, so perhaps we can consider that work has already begun on the upgrading of this pleasant and historic walk.

HOW DO THEY FEATHER THEIR NESTS

Where do birds find the feathers to line their nests? There is plenty of spider web, grass, bark, lichen and moss around, but you don't see piles of feathers lying about in the bush.

Recently a pair of Eastern Spinebills built their small, cap shaped nest in a stiff-leafed Calistemon bush in my garden. It was extremely well hidden, and nestling down in the thick feather lining when I found it were two small young.

Alas, late on evening about a week later I found three feathers on the ground. Feeling in the nest, it was empty. Next morning, the ground was covered with feathers. The predator, probably a Pied Currawong, had apparently returned and pulled out the lining looking for further morsels.

We gathered the feathers from the ground and those remaining in the nest and counted them - 70 in all, in a nest the size of a small coffee cup!

HAVEN OF REFUGE

Members who do hut duty in the week-ends and holidays are only too well aware that the Valley of the Waters Reserve is very popular. The Hut has become a haven of refuge in all weathers, cold, wet, hot - the fire and hot drinks in the winter and rest and cool drinks in the summer. In the spring there are attractive showings of wild flowers - the result of work over the years of members' plantings and weedings - wattles, calistemons, mountain devils, orchids and native daisies etc. Past neglect however has fostered a profuse growth of exotics which is an ongoing problem to control and eradicate - Agapanthas, montbretia, blackberry, privet, coreopsis and broom! A small band of dedicated conservationists have been gathering very second Tuesday over the past few years to do battle with these exotic pests, but nature and the wet season have made the task very difficult. We need more help. If you have time and energy to spare please ring 57 2131.

P.S. After the last meeting, when the state of weeds round the Hut was mentioned, Philip Davis age 13 turned up with Dad's mower and mowed the grass at the back. Thank you Philip.

WHAT DID YOU SEE IN THE BUSH TODAY?

With the aim of encouraging an early interest in wild life in the Blue Mountains and fostering its conservation and preservation, an Education Committee was formed to think of the best way of interesting school children and their schools. It was decided to organise a drawing competition open to all young visitors to the Hut during the Christmas Holidays.

There were to be three sections - 4-7 years, 8-12 years and 13 and over, materials and paper were provided.

The response was most gratifying. The drawings were hung in the Hut and filled two lines that ran the length of the building.

Some of the most enthusiastic entries were from pre-schoolers, the youngest being aged 1 year. Prizes of books were awarded to winners in each of the three sections and copies of the companion books "Native Plants in the Upper Blue Mountains" and "Native Plants in the Lower Blue Mountains" were sent to the Schools of each of the winners. Budding artists from all over the state entered and some from Qld. and Vic. The response was so enthusiastic that it was decided to hold similar competitions during the May and September holidays.

The winners in the Summer 1986 Drawing Competition were:

Junior Belinda Jolley - Gerringong Public School

Intermediate Robyn Short - Hornsby South Public School

Senior Janson Fitzgerald - Condell Park High School

Society News

General Meeting and the Annual General Meeting

The date of the combined March General Meeting and the Annual General Meeting has been changed from Friday, 28th March, to the week following, Friday 4th April at 7.30 p.m. This arrangement has been necessary because of members' absences over the Easter holidays.

A Special General Meeting was called and held in October after the General Meeting to pass an addition to our Constitution which states that "Any president of the Society is not to hold office for any more than three consecutive terms. He/she may, however, stand again after a lapse".

This resolution was passed by the members and means that Mick Dark (who moved the resolution) can not stand for president of the Society for the coming year. On that note, both the Secretary and the Treasurer will not be standing for office at the Annual General Meeting due to other commitments.

The Blue Mountains Environment Council

A meeting has been arranged by the Blue Mountains Environment Council (which is a combination of the main conservation groups in the Blue Mountains, including ourselves) to look at the present and future of Blue Mountains sewage. Sewage disposal is not only a major problem for the Blue Mountains but also for most large cities, including Sydney. The Water Board has been invited to attend and also companies supplying sewerage systems. This meeting is very timely as the Water Board is getting a plan together for the sewage disposal in the Blue Mountains.

The Leura Resort

Excavation work has begun on the Leura Resort. Acres of bushland have been bulldozed to make way for new fairways for the golf course. A large proportion of the cost of the Resort is coming from a Federal Government source, the A.I.D.C. It would appear that no other lending institution or company is willing to back this venture! Despite all this, the fight goes on if not to prevent the Resort to at least make sure that minimal damage to the environment is caused by the developers. The Society is disappointed that work has begun and hopes that the Blue Mountains City Council and the State Government give proper consideration to environmental matters before allowing future developments to be undertaken — unlike what has happened with the Leura Resort.

Extensions to the Blue Mountains National Park

The precise boundaries have still not been determined. The Blue Mountains City Council is now saying that National Parks and Wildlife Service has not taken enough land off its hands! However negotiations appear to be nearing completion and an announcement should be made in the near future. In the present proposal it appears that the Hut will be included in the Park but it will be leased back to Council who will lease it to "community groups".

The Wentworth Falls Autumn Festival

The Society will be holding a few walks as part of the activities planned for the Wentworth Falls Autumn Festival to be held on the Anzac Day long weekend. Details of the walks will be advertised locally closer to the date.

LAND PRESERVATION FUND

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

Tax Deductible Donations (Minimum \$20.00)

The forms below show you how to make a tax deductible donation to the Australian Conservation Foundation, advising ACF of your preference that the funds be used for the Land Preservation Fund of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

The Director
Australian Conservation Foundation,
672B Glenferrie Rd.,
HAWIHORN VIC 3122

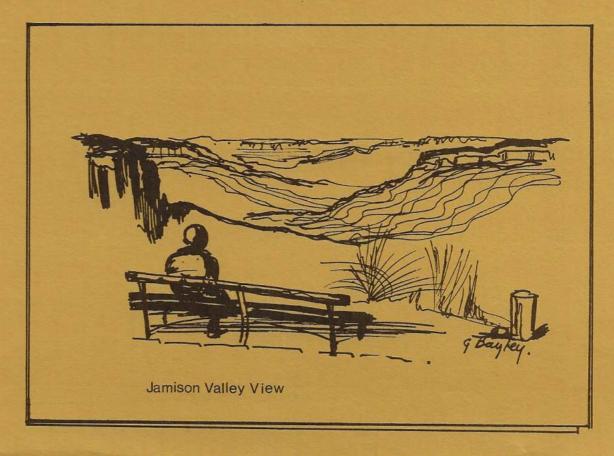
Dear Sir,

Name (block letters)

I attach a donation to the Australian Conservation Foundation. I prefer that this donation be spent for the purposes of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Land Preservation Fund. I understand that this donation is tax deductible and therefore look forward to your receipt.

Address				
Amount .		Signed		Date
The Treas	surer,			
Upper Blu P.O. Box	ue Mountains	Conservation S	ociety,	
Dear Sir,	,.		, 2 f	
donation	expressing a	preference th	alian Conservatio at it be spent fo ociety Land Prese	or the purpose of the
Name				
Address				

Amount Signed Date.....



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 Concervation, 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.	Single \$5.00
Name	Family \$8.00
Address	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 May 2023 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.

March 1986 No. 63

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.

<u>SUBSCRIPTIONS</u>: 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.

<u>MEETINGS:</u> 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

<u>PATRON</u>: Allen Strom, A.M.

<u>NEWSLETTER:</u> 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.

<u>PUBLICATIONS</u>: 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 Orkney Letter Darwin's Pathway How do they Feather their Nests? Haven or Refuge What did you see in the Bush Today? **Society News** Land Preservation Fund

PLEASE NOTE!

The date of the March General Meeting has been changed from 28th March to Friday April 4 at 7.30 pm.

COMING WALKS

April Sunday 6th – Valley of the Waters – Vera Falls

Meet at the Hut 10.00 am. Rainforest and waterfalls. Medium – Hard walk. Leader Beverly Thompson. 57-2076

April Thursday 17th – Resort Site – Roberts Pass – Inspiration Point.

Meet at entrance Leura Golf Club Fitzroy Street, 10.00 am. View Leura resort site, see the ladder and bridge erected by Jim Smith and David Lawton (donations towards this gratefully received) Leaders Reg & Dulcie Toseland 84-1682

May Sunday 4th – Old Lapstone Zig Zag Railway

Historic walk. Meet at turn-off to Knapsack Road near gates of Lapstone RAAF Station, Great Western Highway 9.30 am. Leader Eric Blick 88-1051

May Thursday 15th – Lawson Area – Dantes Glen to Fairy Falls.

Meet Lawson Station parking area – over bridge and turn right at 10.00 am.

Short, easy walk. Train from Sydney arrives 9.56 am.

Leader Grace Bailey 59-1955

June Sunday 1st – Lockley Pylon

Meet at Leura Public School at 10.00 am. Fabulous views. See Mt Banks from a different angle! Medium Walk.

Leader Keith Sherlock 57-1927

June Thursday 19th - Walls Cave Blackheath - Medlow Bath

Meet at Blackheath Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 10.00 am. An easy stroll to Walls Cave, it is a large cavern. Flakes, points and charcoal show that it was occupied by aborigines, 12,000 years ago. A little upstream is the Lake Medlow Dam built in 1907. Leader Rachel Makinson. Ring 87-8342 re enquiries.

Those faced with transport problems should ring J. Noble 87-8342 or leader.

REPORT ON A WALK ON THE WILDSIDE - 5TH JANUARY 1986

22 members met at Blackheath Commuter Car Park to start the walk to Colliers Look-Out. We proceeded by way of Thirroul Avenue, along Bower Bird Dell, we saw the bower, then through a devastated area of uprooted trees, burnt out bush and a half finished house into Goodare Street. We went down Porters Pass, turning right, up a gully and across a small creek, then uphill through fallen trees and over-grown bush to the plateau above Porters Pass. We walked through low scrub to the rocks at the Look-Out where we had lunch overlooking the Kanimbla Valley. There weren't many wild flowers out at this time of year. A few members explored around the nearby rocks while the main party tried to find the elusive track back, this was managed quite successfully. A thunder storm caught some members before they were able to reach their cars. Note: This track is terribly over grown in places and hard to find. It could be, with some effort, made into an easier track and would be well worth it.

OF AN OUTING 16TH JANUARY 1986

"Rain" said the leader, as his already drenched party followed him to Evan's Lookout," is an essential factor of geological weathering". Others, having already heard the rain all night, stayed as Shakespeare's "gentlemen in England", and who could blame them?

Down into the gorge while raindrops set up a ballet of dancing leaves. We paused under the weathered red shelter in Mt York Claystone then down again. Rain eased a little as we looked at and discussed the stratigraphic display across the knickpoint at Beauchamp Falls.

We sought an overhang to enjoy a dry lunch so the stopped! Thanks to the noble nine who followed the leader – he had to be there.

R.T. Compagnoni.

Editor's Note. One thing we learned from the walk – geologists are all "two timers". There's our time measured in terms of three score and ten years and geological time measured in millions.

Looking at the Grose Valley it's very hard to imagine it all being hacked out by water. One has to make a metal gear shift to Geological Time and even then it's incredible.

ATTACK OF THE BLOOD-SUCKERS WENTWORTH PASS, SUNDAY 2ND FEBRUARY

A hot day, and a cool rainforest walk – the perfect ingredients for a leech attack. But our thoughts were carefree (and leech-free) as we made our way to the top of Wentworth Falls, down the stone steps, and on to the Slacks Stairs turn-off. How could we know, as we eagerly inspected the Microstrobus fitzgeraldii that grows in the spray of the falls, that down below THEY were waiting, unfed for possibly SEVEN YEARS?!

There were about 30 of us and, as we slowly negotiated the minor horror of Slacks Stairs, we were sufficiently alert to note some very fine Angophoras. At the bottom, we rested by the pool which takes the water from Wentworth Falls and sends it down into the Jamison Valley, where it eventually meets the Cox's River on its way to Warragamba. The water was not as clear as it was in earlier times, but the place is still very peaceful, and some of us were brave enough to cool our feet.

And then we were off again, winding through the cool forest towards the Valley of the Waters, and ...THEM!

We were attacked without warning, as is always the case – one strangled cry of "Leech!" was not enough to avoid the massacre that lay ahead. Thirty well-nourished people, prime for the sucking – we didn't stand a chance. But lest you think we all went down, bloodily lost in the remote jungles of the Wentworth Pass, it must be recorded that the courage of the bitten was great indeed. We ALL survived, even though, by the end of the walk, there was scarcely a dry sock in the place.

And, as for the leeches, they won't need a feed for months, even years!

From the Visitors Book

Phillip Rogers Worcester England Fantastic Scenery, tired legs

Nathen Nevell Gosford, NSW Too many leeches

K. Hensel Munster, W, Germany Kalt, aber wunderschon.

SPOTLIGHTING NIGHT WITH WYN JONES BLACKHEATH GLEN, SATURDAY 8TH FEBRUARY

This was a very popular night as a crowd of members congregated in Blackheath Glen. Some arrived early and had a barbecue, then Wyn Jones took some members for a walk. We patiently waited for dusk, saw a few black cockatoos, heard the kookaburras telling the other birds it was time to settle down for the night; then we heard the boobooks call, saw a few bats and it was time for us to start our spotlighting walk.

We walked round Blackheath Glen, shining our lights high into the trees. Wyn pointed out the monkey gums which grew in the Glen. We crossed the creek and wandered round the cleared area at the other side; we saw manna gums but no koalas! Finally we walked up Megalong Valley Road and here we had our first sighting of a greater glider high on a tree; his eyes glowed in the dark.

We were all excited and saw three more gliders, the highlight of the night was spotting a beautiful pale grey and white greater glider with a long tail. He was unperturbed at being picked out by all the lights, and watched us with interest. We shook the tree but he only moved to another branch. We watched him for a while then we slowly walked back to the Glen – a truly enchanting evening.

Olive Noble

CAMPING WEEKEND

COX'S RIVER, SATURDAY - SUNDAY, 15TH - 16TH FEBRUARY

Seven members participated in this weekend camp; five met at Megalong Creek and drove to the end of Black Range where Keith and Beth Sherlock were waiting. We walked to the other side of Little River along the Six Foot Track where we had lunch. The blackberries were ripe and although prolific, we didn't complain – they were delicious.

A leisurely stroll brought us to the Cox's River – on the way we saw a goanna about one metre long. He was on the side of a tree and well camouflaged. We crossed the Cox's River and found a pleasant camping site. After setting up camp some of us paddled in the river, others had a spa bath in the little waterfall. The weather was perfect and we saw rainbow parrots and tree creepers. Next day five members carried on along the Six Foot Track to Megalong Creek, while two of us returned up Murdering Creek to the top of Black Range and collected the car.

Olive Noble

LAND PRESERVATION

Following correspondence with the landholder and approval of the February General Meeting, an offer of \$6000 has been made for an environmentally important wet block in the Water Nymph's Dell catchment.

<u>Native Plant Weekend</u> was held on 1st and 2nd March was a great success. A talk by Jill Dark on propagating native plants followed by a walk with Jill and Graham Alcorn identifying the flowers and birds in the afternoon attracted a large following. All proceeds from sale of plants for land Preservation Fund.

* Binoculars found in Hut – please ring 58-7061.

ORKNEY LETTER

THIS IS THE SECOND PART OF A LETTER FROM JUDY AND GRAHAM KERR

REPORTING FROM SCOTLAND

<u>SKARABRAE</u> This is the best preserved prehistoric village in Northern Europe and has been carbon dated back to 3100 BC. This site was only revealed in 1850 when a freak storm stripped the grass from a high dune and exposed part of the ancient dwelling. Skarabrae residents built their homes of flagstone rock with roofs of turf or skins laid on wooden or whalebone rafters.

Each house had one door and the fireplace was in the centre. Beds were set against side walls and lined with bracken or heather and covered with animal skins.

<u>THE RINGS OF BROGAR</u> Originally a huge circle of some sixty stones, this is one of Orkney's best-known historic monuments – and greatest puzzle. Of the original sixty stones, thirty six now remain either as upright or broken stumps and it has a surrounding ditch – as much as nine feet deep and twenty seven feet wide. This is probably the best stone circle in Scotland and dates back to 1560 BC. It's original purpose is unclear.

MAESHOWE Built before 2700 BC this famous chambered tomb is an out-standing example of prehistoric architecture. One has to crouch down and make your way along a passage some thirty six feet long by only four feet high to where it opens into a central chamber which contains, on three sides, an opening to a rectangular cell or tomb. The stone work is truly amazing – some slabs averaging over eighteen feet in length by four feet wide! The roof of the central chamber is not original as the tomb was broken into, by the Crusaders and robbed! The transportation of such. huge blocks is a matter of wonder. On various stones of the great chamber are twenty four inscriptions in runes, twenty two of which can be deciphered. One refers to "treasure" but no trace has ever been found.

<u>WARWICK HEAD</u> Another tramp across the fields to the coastline to observe a section of the coast renown for its extensive breeding grounds for sea birds. At these stops David carried along a telescope and sat it upon a tripod so we could observe close-up the activities of myriads of birds. The noise had to be heard to be believed while the birds flew along the cliff face or just used the updraught to hold a static position with wings outstretched but absolutely no movement on their part. Truly an amazing sight. The stench from their droppings was almost overpowering.

Nearby was a memorial erected to Lord Kitchener who was lost with all his staff on their way to Russia aboird HMS Hampshire in 1916. One can't but help wonder if the course of history might have been different if the sinking had not taken place.

BROCH OF GURNESS About 2000 years ago Orkney chiefs built themselves Brochs often called Pict's Castle. This was one of about a hundred in Orkney. Each could keep one hundred people safe almost indefinitely with wells inside the structure. Originally towering to a height of about fory feet and incorporated a clever passage-way runnung round within the wall. Tragedy must have struck at sometime for in cleaning out the site, the skeletons of two hands were found where they had been thrown into the refuse of a kitchen midden.

<u>KIRKWALL</u> The capital of Orkney on Mainland is full of history. It is beyond the scope of this article to go into detail with which this historic town is so richly endowed other than to mention the beautiful St Magnas Cathedral founded in 1137 with its alternating bands of local red and yellow sandstone.

The graveyard contains many interesting headstones going back to the mid 1500's. We are intrigued that many of these are inscribed with symbols, such as the skull and crossbones, the hour glass, items of trade etc.

<u>SCAPA FLOW AND CHURCCHILL BARRIERS</u> Perhaps Orkney is most popularly known as a Naval Base and where seventy four of the warships of the German Imperial Navy's High Seas Fleet was scuttled in 1919.

In the Second World War a German U-Boat penetrated block ships and sank HMS Royal Oak with considerable loss of life. Because of this, Prime Minister Churchill ordered the immediate construction of concrete barriers connecting four of the isles in the Orkney Group. This work was carried out by 550 Italian POWs. They must have found Orkney a cold and bleak place after sunny Italy.

Scapa Flow is now an important loading terminal for North Sea Oil. But this originally brought problems. David Lee and his fellow ornithologists were most concerned at the high escalation in the death of birds through oil spillage. A committee was formed and a most detailed study was made complete with water analysis and as a consequence were able to supply the authorities with irrefutable evidence that the problem was being caused by ships cleaning out their bunkers. But the authorities did a clever thing. Instead of fining the shipping line say \$50,000 which meant nothing, they refused entry to the offending ships and happily there has been a dramatic reduction in the loss of birds from oil pollution.

From the Churchill Barriers we ended up on south Ronaldsay where we left the bus and made another tramp over water-logged fields to the cliffs to observe more bird life and coastal scenery. The fields were carpeted with flowers – heather, buttercups, Norway orchids and the occasional rare and beautiful primula scotica or Scottish Primrose.

The coastal scenery of course was again magnificent while the thousands of sea birds were a "birdo's" delight. David again set up his telescope and our party just wandered around enjoying some rare sunshine and just drinking in the peace of nature to the accompaniment of the call of sea birds, the sight of seals gently bobbing in clear water. David pointed out one of the sea birds, the Guillemot, and told us of the strange defence mechanism the bird possesses whereby it is capable of spewing an oily liquid which has a terrible smell and which deprives the attacking bird of the ability to fly. If it can't fly, it cant's feed and the only answer is a rather lonely and miserable death. The extraordinary finish to this tale was that on the way back to the bus, we came across a bird flapping on the ground with this oily substance on its feathers and looking very dishevelled and unhappy and David seemed quite unconcerned that the bird would soon be dead. Such is the law of nature.

So concluded our stay at Orkney for come the morning we board our ferry for the return trip to the Scottish mainland.

Our thoughts on Orkney. The air is fresh and clean. The seas, too, are unspoiled. It has been like this since time began and nature thrives here. All we can say to anyone lucky enough to visit Orkney – pack your camera and binoculars, bring your sketch book and prepare yourself for a journey back in time and an experience of a lifetime.

Our good wishes to all Society Members.

NEW SHELVES

The library now has well over 200 books and magazines covering a wide range of subjects. The librarian feels that the books have not been put to their full use.

They are available free and can be borrowed or returned at the monthly meetings of the Society. There are plans afoot to enlarge the shelving capacity of the library which is stretched to the limit at the moment.

"DARWINS PATHWAY"

It is impossible to know how closely the overgrown track that today follows the Jamison Creek down to the top of Wentworth Falls approximates the "pathway" that Charles Darwin walked on in 1836.

Nevertheless, as a fitting tribute to a great naturalist and his visit to Wentworth Falls, 40 people met on Sunday 19th January, 150 years almost to the day after Darwin's visit, to retrace his steps.

The weather was more than kind – a superbly sunny day, wedged in between several wet and stormy ones, and we were gratified that so many people turned up.

We started from the School of Arts, close to the site of the "Weatherboard Inn", in accordance with Darwin's route. Unfortunately, it is difficult to get to the creek near the highway – weeds and pollution have made it fairly inaccessible – and it is joined more comfortably behind the Bushfire Brigade station.

Today's Jamison Creek track crosses the creek about half a dozen or more times, and crossings are varied – our admiration went out to older members of our party who enthusiastically balanced on pipes, clambered along logs, and stepped across rocks on the creek bed. Nobody fell in, although one, who shall remain nameless, came fairly close while negotiating the pipe crossing.

Jamison Creek is, at present, badly overgrown in places with broom, blackberries and dandelion and, near the highway, heavily silted-up. It is more than time that this lovely watercourse was cleaned up and "Darwin's Pathway" restored to a proper walking track.

Beyond the old swimming pool (still used by local children), the creek descends gently to a shallow sand-flat with a rock overhang. Here we saw two yabbies, and someone who wanted a closer look was nipped for his pains. Further along and closer to the "Yestergrange" area, we began to see stands of the Bottlebrush *Callistemon citrinus*, small graceful trees with beautiful red flowers.

From this point, the track improves – no more scrambling, slithering, leaping and pushing through undergrowth. The "Yestergrange" track comes down on the left-hand side of the creek, then along the right-hand side, all the way to Weeping Rock. This is the more populous part of the track, and the rearguard of our party was accosted by two walkers who wanted to know why we were all there.

"We're retracing Charles Darwin's steps," we said. "A hundred and fifty years ago he was here, possibly on this spot, and we've followed the track that he took."

"You're not Creationists, are you?" they said.

We hotly denied this, but an unfathomable expression on their faces made us wonder if THEY were.

We moved on. At the Weeping Rock, we stopped to inspect the plaque that had been set into rock the previous day by the "friends of Charles Darwin", and then rounded the bend to see, with a sense of historical accuracy, what Darwin himself must have seen when he emerged from the bush around the creek and gazed out over Jamison Valley for the first time. To our left, the creek that we had followed plunged over that huge bukbous cliff-face that IS Wentworth Falls. Before us, the valley lay blue and calm, ages old and ageless. A hundred and fifty years ago seemed as nothing and, with Darwin, we felt that it was "quite novel and extremely magnificent".

From there, some of us walked down to the top of the Falls, or messed about with cameras, while others walked on to the Hut to look at a small "Charles Darwin" display that had been assembled there.

The walk had been exhilarating, and we all enjoyed it immensely. The overgrown state of the track, with the accompanying scrambling that was necessary, made it into something of an adventure trail. However, it is worth remembering that it was the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society which first recommended that "Darwin's Pathway" be upgraded. Our recent walk there has served to revive our enthusiasm, and we should press for more official information on the future of this track. We had some very dedicated de-weeders on our walk, so perhaps we can consider that work has already begun on the upgrading of this pleasant and historic walk.

HOW DO THEY FEATHER THEIR NESTS

Where do birds find the feathers to line their nests? There is plenty of spider web, grass, bark, lichen and moss around, but you don't see piles of feathers lying about in the bush.

Recently a pair of Eastern Spinebills built their small, cap shaped nest in a stiff-leafed Calistemon bush in my garden. It was extremely well hidden, and nestling down in the thick feather lining when I found it were two small young.

Alas, late one evening about a week later I found three feathers on the ground. Feeling in the nest, it was empty. Next morning, the ground was covered with feathers. The predator, probably a Pied Currawong, had apparently returned and pulled out the lining looking for further morsels.

We gathered the feathers from the ground and those remaining in the nest and counted them – 70 in all, in a nest the size of a small coffee cup!

Graham Alcorn

HAVEN OF REFUGE

Members who do hut duty in the week-ends and holidays are only too well aware that the Valley of the Waters Reserve is very popular. The Hut has become a haven of refuge in all weathers, cold, wet, hot – the fire and hot drinks in the winter and rest and cool drinks in the summer. In the spring there are attractive showings of wild flowers – the result of work over the years of members plantings and weedings – wattles, callistemons, mountain devils, orchids and native daisies etc.

Past neglect however has fostered a profuse growth of exotics which is an ongoing problem to control and eradicate – Agapanthas, montbretia, blackberry, privet, coreopsis, and broom! A small band of dedicated conservationists have been gathering every second Tuesday over the past few years to do battle with these exotic pests, but nature and the wet season have made the task very difficult. We need more help. If you have time and energy to spare please ring 57-2131.

P.S. After the last meeting, when the state of weeds round the Hut was mentioned, Philip Davis age 13 turned up with Dad's mower and mowed the grass at the back. Thank you Philip.

WHAT DID YOU SEE IN THE BUSH TODAY?

With the aim of encouraging an early interest in wild life in the Blue Mountains and fostering its conservation and preservation, an Education Committee was formed to think of the best way of interesting school children and their schools. It was decided to organise a drawing competition open to all young visitors to the Hut during the Christmas Holidays.

There were to be three sections – 4-7 years, 8-12 years and 13 and over, materials and paper were provided.

The response was most gratifying. The drawings were hung in the Hut and filled two lines that ran the length of the building.

Some of the most enthusiastic entries were from pre-schoolers, the youngest being aged 1 year. Prizes of books were awarded to winners in each of the three sections and copies of the companion books "Native Plants in the Upper Blue Mountains" and "Native Plants in the Lower Blue Mountains" were sent to the Schools of each of the winners. Budding artists from all over the state entered and some from QLD, and Vic. The response was so enthusiastic that it was decided to hold similar competitions during the May and September holidays.

The winners in the Summer 1986 Drawing Competition were:

JuniorBelinda Jolley- Gerringong Public SchoolIntermediateRobyn Short- Hornsby South Public SchoolSeniorJanson Fitzgerald- Condell Park High School

Society News

General Meeting and the Annual General Meeting

The date of the combined March General Meeting and the Annual General Meeting has been changed from Friday, 28th March, to the week following, Friday 4th April at 7.30 pm. This arrangement has been necessary because of members' absences over the Easter holidays.

A special General Meeting was called and held in October after the General Meeting to pass an addition to our Constitution which states that "Any President of the Society is not to hold office for any more than three consecutive terms. He/she may, however, stand again after a lapse".

This resolution was passed by the members and means that Mick Dark (who moved the resolution) can not stand for president of the Society for the coming year. On that note, both the Secretary and the Treasurer will not be standing for office at the Annual General Meeting due to other commitments.

The Blue Mountains Environment Council

A meeting has been arranged by the Blue Mountains Environment Council (which is a combination of the main conservation groups in the Blue Mountains, including ourselves) to look at the present and future of Blue Mountains sewage. Sewage disposal is not only a major problem for the Blue Mountains but also for most large cities, including Sydney. The Water Board has been invited to attend and also companies supplying sewerage systems. This meeting is very timely as the Water Board is getting a plan together for the sewage disposal in the Blue Mountains.

The Leura Resort

Excavation work has begun on the Leura Resort. Acres of bushland have been bulldozed to make way for new fairways for the golf course. A large proportion of the cost of the Resort is coming from a Federal Government source, the AIDC. It would appear that no other lending institution or company is willing to back this venture! Despite all this, the fight goes on if not to prevent the Resort to at least make sure that minimal damage to the environment is caused by the developers. The Society is disappointed that work has begun and hopes that the Blue Mountains City Council and the State Government give proper consideration to environmental matters before allowing future developments to be undertaken – unlike what has happened with the Leura Resort.

Extensions to the Blue Mountains National Park

The precise boundaries have still not been determined. The Blue Mountains City council is now saying that National Parks and Wildlife Service has not taken land off its hands! However negotiations appear to be nearing completion and an announcement should be made in the near future. In the present proposal it appears that the Hut will be included in the Park but it will be leased back to Council who will lease it to "community groups".

The Wentworth Falls Autumn Festival

The Society will be holding a few walks as part of the activities planned for the Wentworth Falls Autumn Festival to be held on the Anzac Day long weekend. Details of the walks will be advertised locally closer to the date.