OCTOBER 1986 No. 65

# 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 INC.

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 and Juniors \$2.00 per year; Married Pensioners \$3.00; Single Membership \$5.00; Family Membership \$8.00.

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 1986 President..... Reg Toseland 84.1682 Vice-Presidents..... Michael Dark 58,7061 ..... Eric Blick 88,1051 Secretary..... David Horton-James 57.3270 Treasurer..... Joy Anderson 57.1602 Membership Officer..... Joy Anderson 57.1602 Newsletter Editor ..... Ewart Collings 57.2131 Walks Convenors .....Olive & John Noble 87.8342 57.3270 Hut Convenor .....Lois Horton-James Education Officer.....Dorothy Davis 57.1258 57.2131 Librarian.....Betty Collings Hut Duty Organiser.....Beverley Thompson 57.2076 Land Preservation Officer.. Deirdre Morton 58.8137

<u>NEWSLETTER</u>: Four issues a year - April, July, October, January Advertising space available.

LIBRARY: A wide range of books on wildlife and conservation available to members. Facilities for borrowing and returning books at Monthly Meetings.

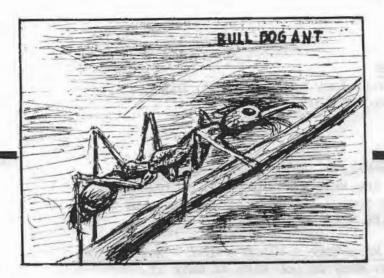
THE HUT: The Society maintains a small museum and information centre at the Conservation Hut. It is manned on weekends and holidays by voluntary helpers.

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.



## UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

# Newsletter

No. 65

October, 1986

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COMING	TALKS	

<u>September</u> - Wyn Jones Wombat Management

October - Margaret Baker Geology of the Blue Mountains

November - Yet to be decided.

#### COMING WALKS

October, Sunday 5th - Woodford Fire Trail - Western Ridge - Toby's Glen Meet at parking area at Woodford Station at 10.a.m. Medium walk Wild flowers should be in abundance. 5 hrs approximately. Leader Dick Weston 53 1003

October, Thursday 16th - Birdwood Gully Meet at Buttonshaw Park, Springwood (on Great Western Highway) at 10.00 a.m. Easy. 2-3 hrs approximately. <u>Leader</u>: Grace Bayley 59 1955

October Saturday 18th - Walk No 1 - Newnes Plateau Area Meet at Mt Victoria Station for 9.30 a.m. train from Sydney. One hour drive each way. Medium 4-5 hrs approx. Pinnacles, wild flowers, orchids and extensive views. New territory. Leader John Noble. 87 8342

November Sunday 2nd - Blue Gum Forest Area Details to be announced later. <u>Leader</u> Keith Sherlock. 57 1927

November Saturday 15th - Wollongambe - Easy Canyoning Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. For those wishing to partake please bring LILO. For those wishing to take it easy an alternate walk will be arranged. Leader David Noble 87 8342 November Thursday 20th - Hassan's Walls Meet at Mt Boyce, Blackheath at 10.00 a.m. Easy walk. Flowers, birds, side effects of mining, local Geology and History. Leader Ron Compagnoni 87 8899

December Sunday 7th - End of Year Ramble

Meet at Conservation Hut, Valley of the Waters, Valley Road, Wentworth Falls at 10.00 a.m. for ramble through the Reserve. This will be followed by a barbeque (fire ban permitting) and social get-together. Bring your own food and refreshments. Tea and coffee will be provided.

December Thursday 18th - Pulpit Rock - Ross Cave - Witch's Glen - Horns Point Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. easy as you wish to make it. There are two exits so can be done as a two hour morning walk or five hour day walk approx. times. Views of the Kanimbla Valley. Leader: Jean Armstrong 87 1249

January Sunday 4th 1987 - Walk No 2 - Newnes Plateau Area Meet at Mt Victoria station for 9.30 a.m. train from Sydney. One hour drive each way. Medium 4-5 hrs approx. Exploring dry canyons and rain forest gullies. <u>Leader</u> John Noble 87 8342

January Thursday 15th - Waterfall Wander - Cascade Falls - Cataract Falls Meet at top of Honour Avenue, Lawson at 9.30 a.m. Easy walk 2-3 hours approx. Linger by the water falls. <u>Leader:</u> Beverly Thompson 57 2076

January Saturday 17th 1987 - Black Jerry's Ridge - Cox River - Six Foot Track Meet at Blackheath station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 9.30 a.m. <u>PROMPT</u>. Proceed along Megalong Valley Road to Six Foot Track entrance (some cars will be left here). The rest to the Mountain River Riders gate entrance. Along Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox River, easy walk by the river, then up the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley Road. Medium walk. 7 hrs approx. Kangaroos can be sighted along the ridge. Leader Olive Noble 87 8342

February Sunday 1st - Details to be announced Later

February Thursday 19th - Resort Site - Roberts Pass - Inspiration Point Meet at entrance Leura Golf Club, Fitzroy Street, 10.00 a.m. View Leura Resort Site and see what progress has been made. Leaders: Reg and Dulcie Toseland 84 1682

<u>February Saturday 21st - Bungleboori River Area</u> Meet at Mt Victoria station for 9.30 a.m. train from Sydney. Medium 4-5 hrs approx. Rain forest gullies. High ridges with extensive views. <u>Leader</u>: John Noble 87 8342

<u>March Sunday 1st - A Look at the Engineers Track</u> Meet at Mt Victoria station at 10.30 a.m. Medium 4-5 hours. approx. Wander along this historic track for a while. <u>Leader</u>: Reg Baumgarten 87-8342 March Thursday 19th - Old Shale Railway, Off Darling Causeway

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 10.30 a.m. Historic walk, pleasant with magnificant views. Maybe a visit to the Museum at Mt Victoria. Easy. 3-4 hrs approx. Leader: Rachel Makinson 87 8342

#### March Saturday 21st - Blue Gum Swamp

Meet at the end of White Cross Road, Winmalee (down the Great Western Highway to Richmond, about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  k.m. on left off Hawkesbury Road) at 10.00 a.m. Easy 3-4 hours approx. Wildflowers, birds and the beauty of the bush. Leader Enid Schaffer 54 1244

#### WALK - HORSE TRACK - RODRIGEUZ PASS - SUNDAY 6TH JULY 1986

Eighteen members met at Evan's Look-Out for the start of the walk along the Horse Track. Superb views of the Grose Valley can be seen along the ridge. The descent into the valley is steep and eroded in places. Once down by the river the path is easy and pleasant, with peppermint gums and stringy barks along the track. Up through Rodrigeuz Pass to Beauchamp Falls is a strenuous climb but the many beautiful water-falls and colourful cliff faces make it well worth the effort. A short walk along the creek to the bottom of the steps leading up through "The Fernery" rain forest area and back to Evan's Look-Out. The day was cool and sunny. Wild flowers are scarce at this time of year but there were a few Wattles and Banksias in blossom.

#### Olive Noble

#### WALK - CENTENNIAL GLEN - WALLS LEDGE - THURSDAY 17TH JULY 1986

The day started off cold and windy and twenty five stalwart members turned up for the walk to Centennial Glen. The low scrub and heathland on the walk down was of interest due to the various colours of the leaves on the bushes. The water fall was in full spate after the rain. A few members wandered off to explore but all were re-united at lunch time when we were entertained by the flight of a Wedge Tailed Eagle and a Chicken Hawk, making the most of the air currents. The day improved as we walked along Walls Ledge; here the epacris longiflora and the epacris microphylla were in bloom and the coral fern was in great profusion. Olive Noble

#### WALK - BRUCE'S WALK - BULLABURRA - WENTWORTH FALLS - SUNDAY 3RD AUGUST 1986

Twenty four members turned up on a glorious sunny day to do this Historic Walk. We meandered up ridges with fine views and down into rain forest gullies. beside creeks of rushing water, the various shelter caves proved interesting and in one side track, at the base of a water fall, we saw iron stalactites growing from the roof of the over-hanging rock. Along the way we saw a lyre birds' nest which appeared to be in use due to the amount of down at the entrance. The magnificant variety of trees along the track caused some comment, also the old ladders, picnic tables and stone fire-places were of great interest, bringing back memories of long ago when this track was a popular walking place. All who came thoroughly enjoyed the walk.

#### WALK - THE DUCK HOLE - THURSDAY AUGUST 21ST, 1986.

A wonderful spring day saw 22 friends turn up for the walk. We walked slowly to the Duck Hole just enjoying the company, bush and weather and wishing Jill was there to help identify some of the flowers. We did manage Grevillea mucronulata which was in flower all along the track, but as usual some of the pea flowers had us confused.

The white eared honey eaters were calling in the tall trees as we descended and Ron remembered one his father had shown him as a child taking hairs from peoples heads.

The group spread out along Glenbrook Creek for lunch with just two of us scrambling through to Kanuba Brook and fresh water. We crossed Glen Creek where it goes underground and can be viewed through sink holes.

Then to our delight a white eared honeyeater did visit us to add some hairs to his nest or was he still just playing at nest building? I didn't see him fly off with any hairs but he certainly tugged at a lot of heads. A really enchanting interlude in our walk.

Then to show us it really was Spring, a rock warbler (origma) was found building its nest in one of the caves above the pool.

As a first time leader I was so pleased to have Dulcie help me count heads and I hadn't lost anyone!

Deirdre Morton.

#### WALK - WALL'S CAVE, THURSDAY JUNE 19TH, 1986

Twenty-four people turned up for this walk, in spite of a bitter wind and the threat of rain. This is an indication of its popularity, and of its scarcity-value now that the area has been closed by the Water Board. While regretting that we can no longer roam over it, we were glad that it is still possible to get a permit to enter.

We entered by the usual route from Wall's Cave Road at Blackheath. A few of the stronger walkers left the party at one point to take the more difficult route down to the old Grand Canyon Track along the stream. We met again at lunch in the Cave, and examined some of the other old tracks leading into it.

Ron Compagnoni was able to tell the party quite a lot about the geology and archaeology of the Cave. it is a large, dry cave; Greaves' Creek (which supplies Medlow Bath, Blackheath and Mount Victoria with their water) flows in front of it after passing through a deep meander and a tunnel. The main floor of the cave was formed by deposition of silt and small rocks by the stream; there is very little material which could have fallen from the roof. There is the residue of a small terrace higher up at the back of the cave. Rocks fallen from the roof lie at its base, under a layer of silt.

Excavation by Dr. Stockton and Molland (see "Cultural Sites and Their Environment in the Blue Mountains", in <u>Archaeology and Physical</u> <u>Anthropology in Oceania</u>, vol.IX, no. 1, April 1974) revealed traces of human occupation only on the main floor (referred to as "the lower terrace"). They included chert flakes, Bondi points, and charcoal, as well as European material. Two occupation levels were found, each about 5-8 cm deep (the floor slopes). Carbon dating of the charcoal placed it at 3,360 years ago (possible error 100 years). The first occupation, on the higher level towards the back of the cave, was estimated to have been at 12,000 years ago (possible error 350 years).

The party left the area by a shorter route than that which we have used in the past, crossing the dam and coming out through the pine forest to Valley View Road.

#### K. Rachel Makinson

#### RED BROWED TREE CREEPER SIPPING NECTAR

Further on the feeding habits of the Red Browed Tree Creeper - recently, in Medlow Bath, I saw this insectivorous bird sipping nectar from Banksia ericafolia flowers. It poked its beak in and out among the flower spikes like a honey eater. Having apparently exhausted one bush, it then flew to another!

#### Graham Alcorn

\* \*

NATIVE PLANT WEEKEND - AT THE HUT

1st - 2nd November ... 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday & Sunday.

All proceeds from Sale of Plants in aid of Land Preservation Fund.

\* \* \* \* \*

11 a.m. Saturday. Jill Dark will talk about "Interesting Plants in the Blue Mountains".

1.30 p.m. Saturday. A walk led by Jill Dark to find Interesting Plants mentioned in her lecture in the morning.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*

#### BALANCE OF NATURE



One day a Sitella, going down, Passed a Tree Creeper, going up. 'And how are the insects, up?' 'And how are the insects, down?' 'The insects up on which I sup Are juicy and divine'. 'The insects down on which I dine Are sweet as honey-wine'. And so they live in harmony Though they forage the bark of the selfsame tree.

Graham Alcorn



#### THE QUIET ONE

Modest grey bird, the quiet one, Sitting inside the bushes, silently, Avoiding, or avoided by, his own kind, Ostracised youngster, seeking small companions -Thornbills, scrub wrens, fantails, Robins, red and yellow. In winter, find a mixed flock feeding; Midst all the chirpings and the flutterings, The hoppings and the dartings here and there, Goes the grey quiet one, unobtrusively. Does he know in springtime he will blaze Like wattle? Shining, yellow-gold bright singer, Golden Whistler.

Graham Alcorn

#### RECENT BOOKS ACQUIRED BY THE LIBRARY

#### Native Plants of the Sydney Region

This is a companion book to 'Native Plants of the Upper Blue Mountains' and 'Native Plants of the Lower Blue Mountains' - a series produced by Society Members, Margaret Baker, Robin Corringham and Jill Dark. It is an indication of the popularity of these books that they have been produced over such a short period.

Nature lovers, bush walkers, teachers and students should have at least one in their pack to help them identify plants they see on their walks in the bush.

The Sydney Region has been studied by botanists from the landing of Joseph Banks at Botany Bay in 1770. It has suffered much and is still suffering from urban development that ignores native standing bush. Perhaps these books by increasing public awareness and appreciation of native plants will change the old habit of bulldozing natives into the ground and waiting for exotics to replace plants naturally suited to the environment.

The book describes the plants found in different areas of the Sydney Region four types of forest, heath, swamps and lagoons and littoral regions. It is illustrated by colour photographs taken on the spot which gives some idea of the habit of the plant.

#### 'Birds of Eucalypt Forests and Woodlands'

This is a comprehensive review of the ecology, conservation and management of a unique component of Australia's avifauna. A single group of trees, the eucalypts, dominate the continent's forests and woodlands. During Australia's long isolation as an island continent, a close association evolved between the eucalypts and Australian avifauna. Many distinctive birds lyre birds, kookaburras, parrots and honey eaters - are birds of the eucalypt forests and woodlands and depend upon eucalypts for their survival.

#### COLD BURNS INDIGENOUS PLANTS

This must have been one of the coldest winters for many years. Around Medlow Bath several species of native plants show frost burn.

Where the tree cover is sparse, acacia terminalis, two species of teatree and particularly, a shrubby wattle with phylodes are burnt back, some severely. Under the power lines, where the trees are cleared, some eucalypt saplings are burnt.

In my garden, a mature wonga vine appears dead, also a kunyea Baxteri (WA native) I've had for over 10 years. Old bushes of melaleuca hypericafolia. (it grows on the National Pass, Wentworth Falls). Also the paper bark M. linearafolia (from the Megalong Valley) are severely burnt back, all their outside leaves brown and shriveled.

Where there is good tree cover, the indigenous shrubs are healthy looking. Also in open swamps and heath areas, where the plant species are used to exposure. Graham Alcorn

#### ISOBEL BOWDEN

The death of Isobel Bowden in August has meant a great loss to our Society and the conservation movement generally, of one of its staunchest supporters. Isobel Bowden was born at Woodford in 1908 and lived most of her life in the Blue Mountains. As a child she became interested in the natural history and ecology of the region and later put her considerable talents into writing, illustrating and recording the features of her surroundings.

She was an expert on orchids and made many water colour drawings of them. She discovered plants previously unrecorded, two of which have been named after her.

Isobel Bowden was a foundation member of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society and at one time held the position of Secretary, Membership Officer and Hut Curator (for some time all three together). She started the practice of twice monthly walks for the Society and also organised the development of the Nature Trail from the Hut to West Street. For this she produced and illustrated a map with accompanying text. It is still on sale.

She was a member of the Blue Mountains Historical Society for 30 years. She wrote a book of stories and poems for children and taught at the Blue Mountains Grammar School and at a junior school at Frencham, near Bowral.

For her work in conservation and service to the community in the Blue Mountains she was awarded the Order of Australia in 1985. In a very active life, Isobel Bowden contributed much as a writer, poet, teacher, artist and adviser on environmental matters and conservation.

Isobel once said ....

"A little sitting down and patient observation coupled with study of the observations of others is necessary if we are to be aware of much at all".

#### BOB DOUGLASS

It is sad to report also the death of Bob Douglass, a dedicated conservationist who was President of our Society from 1974 until February 1977 and Vice-President until 1979.

He carried out his duties conscientiously and in his own rugged individual manner. He was a kindly and loveable man.

Bob and Nancy Douglass joined the Society about 20 years ago and were very active members until ill health forced them both to give up.

Our heartfelt sympathies are extended to Nancy.

### Society News

The Land Use Sub-committee has prepared three submissions for the Society over the last three months. The first looked at the environmental impact of a proposed transmission line from the new power station at Mt Piper (near Lithgow) to Marulan (near Goulburn). The Society's major concern was for the deterioration of the landscape value to the Blue Mountains National Park, new extensions to the National park at Mt Werong and its effects on the environs of Jenolan and Wombeyan Caves.

The second looked at the Draft Regional Open Space Plan for the Blue Mountains prepared by the Department of Environment and Planning. This plan proposed a new zoning, 9 (e), for land that is of environmental significance and should be preserved. Unfortunately only a small proportion of the land that needs to be preserved is rezoned BUT it is a step in the right direction.

The third submission looked at the Shipley Plateau Local Environment Plan prepared by the Blue Mountains City Council. The plan attempted to weigh up environmental protection, tourism and land development through subdivision. Fortunately the former two assumed greater importance and only a few extra building sites have been identified for sub-division. The preservation of the Shipley Plateau is very important because of its relatively undeveloped and rural character. It also forms part of the Western escarpment and Megalong Valley - the three major lookouts are Mt Blackheath, Hargreaves lookout and Double Echo Point.

As I stated in the last Newsletter, I was to bring you news of the Sewerage Plan for the Blue Mountains. However, still nothing has been produced by the Water-Board. This study was due in May '86. Talking of things that never seem to get resolved, the boundaries for the new additions to the Blue Mountains National Park have still not been announced.

The Land preservation Fund Committee held a jumble sale and folk singing day in the hut at the end of July. Over\$350.00 was raised for the Land Preservation Fund. On that note, the land purchases that the Society wishes to make are still in negotiation. Hopefully a little closer.

The Society is very pleased to see the Darwin's pathway track is being constructed. The Society initiated years ago the idea of a track following Charles Darwin's route (in 1836) from the Weatherboard Inn (site near the School of Arts) along the Jamison Creek to the top of Wentworth Falls. We hope the track will soon be finished.

Unfortunately the Hut is being broken into with alarming frequency. Many hundreds of dollars of stock have been stolen. Because the Hut is in a fairly isolated position, it is difficult to keep it secure. Steps have been taken to minimize stock held on the premises and to try and catch the thieves. One member has even spent a lot of time making the storeroom into a Fort Knox. The Society and the Wentworth Falls Reserves 530A Committee got together and organised the Walks Survey which appears elsewhere in this Newsletter. This is the first time a survey has been carried out of walkers on the tracks around Wentworth Falls and the Valley of the Waters.

The Land Use Sub-committee is continuing to look at the fire "hazard reduction" plan for the Blue Mountains produced by the Fire Control Officer of the Blue Mountains City Council and Bushfire brigades. We are concentrating on minimizing the impact on the natural environment of the socalled "hazard reduction" technique.

#### Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Wentworth Falls Reserve 530A Committee

#### Walks Survey for the Wentworth Falls Reserves, 18/4/86 to 6/6/86

#### SUMMARY

Walk	% of people	Adequate & %Yes	Signposting %No	Conditi %Good		
National Pass	23	68	32	54	29	17
Wentworth Pass	20	30	70	22	70	8
Vera Falls	7	63	37	16	76	7
Overcliff	11	61	39	39	39	22
Undercliff	10	81	19	41	52	7
Nature Trail	2	60	40	20	67	13
Short Cut	7	58	42	50	3Ø	20
Wentworth Falls R.						
to Falls	15	68	32	37	39	24
Inspiration Point	1	100	Ø	Ø	100	Ø
Denfenella	1	36	64	36	64	Ø
Other	3	47	53	37	60	3
OVERALL	100	6Ø	40	38	48	14

number of person walks surveyed: 1,274 Survey period: 18/4/86 - 6/6/86 ( 6 weeks ) NOTE: Only a small proportion of visitors responded to survey.

#### Comments on the Walks Survey

Only a small proportion of visitors responded to the survey. One box containing the forms was placed at the end of Falls Road (near the public telephone booth) and the other was just outside the Hut. A lot of people who were using the tracks would not have passed the boxes on foot.Also, it was observed that a high proportion of those on foot did not see the box when they passed it.

Given the fact that only a low proportion responded to the survey there were a surprising number of people who did (1,274). This indicates that the tracks around Wentworth Falls and the Valley of the Waters are more heavily used than thought.

The survey shows that the most popular track, predictably, was the National Pass and the next was the Wentworth Pass. The Wentworth Pass seems to be getting a lot of usage. The next three most popular tracks were the Wentworth Falls Reserve to the Falls, Undercliff and Overcliff tracks. Again this is to be expected. The rest of the tracks get quite a bit of usage.

Overall, the signposting needs improvement with 40% saying that the signposting was inadequate. Signposting of Wentworth Pass needs a lot of improvement, 70% saying it was inadequate. The Denfenella track was the next worse.

The responses about the condition of the track are a little difficult to interpret . However only 38% of the responses showed the tracks were in good condition and 14% said they were in bad condition, indicating that the tracks do need some improvement. The Vera Falls and Wentworth Pass tracks need the most work.

The survey has given us some idea of the track usage. This survey is the first to be carried out of walkers using the tracks around Wentworth Falls. To get more information from a future survey, each walker would have to be interviewed - a mammoth task to organize.

#### BULLDOG ANTS (Genus MYRMECIA)

Many species of Bulldog Ants are found in the Blue Mountains, ranging from the huge aggressive red M. gulosa found in the sandstone areas of the lower Mountains around Kurrajong, to smaller species commonly known as 'Jumpers', found over most of the area.

An interesting and lesser observed species collected at Hazelbrook at the end of last summer was M. piliventris. The workers of this species are 10-19 mm in length, mainly black in colour with legs, antennae and mandibles reddish in colour. However, the striking feature is that the gaster (abdomen) is covered in fine golden hairs, giving the entire gaster a golden appearance.

A nest of M. simillima, a dark brownish to black species is located near the Overcliff Walk, near the Hut, and observant hikers can see the workers foraging for food.

John Freeland, an authority on MYRMECIA, writes in the "Australian Natural History" that 'All MYRMECIA species capture and sting insects or other arthropods, take them home and place them on the piles of larvae in their nest chambers. The larvae puncture the prey with their tiny mandibles and suck out the body juices. Workers, queens and males may then join in the feast.'

In many species, workers and queens lay soft eggs which are given to the larvae for food, or in some cases are given or taken by other adults.

Further reading on this fascinating genus can be seen in the Winter 1985 issue of "Australian Natural History".

Lyle Davis

#### DINGO

Little yellow dog - Australia's own What is the future for you? You have no chance, it's clearly shown, Except caged up in a zoo.

If you could speak in your own defence, Would anyone care to hear? That you were here before the fence, Which you have cause to fear.

Man decides that he will kill a real Australian; come what may, And a man with a gun and stubborn will, Will blast all dingos away.

We treasure our lovely Australian land, Our birds, our Mountains, our Roos -We boast of our beaches of golden sand, but Dingos are just 'Bad News' !!

My dingo friend, for you I cry, For you were here before we came; And with these words of mine, I try To awaken Australian's sense of shame. !

Jean Ross

#### CAVE WARBLER

(Origma solitaria)

What an enigma Is the origma. Nobody can be sure About the taxonimy Of this anomily.

Graham Alcorn

#### 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,

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.

Name (block letters)

Address .....

Amount ..... Signed ..... Date .....

The Treasurer, Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society, P.O. Box 29, WENIWORTH FALLS 2782

Dear Sir,

I have forwarded today to the Australian Conservation Foundation a donation expressing a preference that it be spent for the purpose of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Land Preservation Fund.

#### UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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

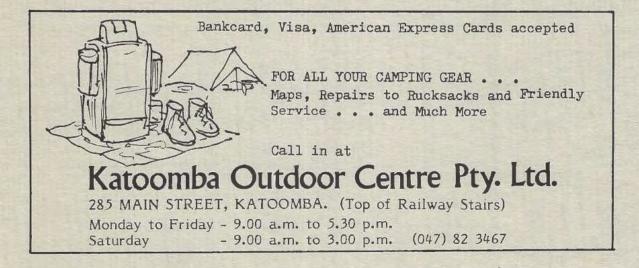
- (a) To disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation among members of the Society and the public generally, particularly in relation to the unique resources of the Blue Mountains.
- (b) To conduct meetings, excursions and research, and such other octivities as may be determined 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
and second the second second as a second	



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

October 1986 No. 65

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER.

Registered by Australia Post – Publication No. NBHO 925

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<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 1986

President	Reg Toseland	84.4682
Vice-Presidents	Michael Dark	58.7061
	Eric Blick	88.1051
Secretary	David Horton James	57.3270
Treasurer	Joy Anderson	57.1602
Membership Officer	Joy Anderson	57.1602
Newsletter Editor	Ewart Collings	57.2131
Walks Convener	Olive and John Noble	87.8342
Hut Convener	Lois Horton-James	57.3270
Education Officer	Dorothy Davis	57.1258
Librarian	Betty Collings	57.2131
Hut Duty Organiser	Beverly Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer	Deidre Morton	58.8137

PATRON: Allen Strom, A.M.

<u>NEWSLETTER</u>: Four issues a year – April, July, October, January. Advertising space available.

<u>LIBRARY</u>: A wide range of books on wildlife and conservation available to Members. Facilities for borrowing and returning books at Monthly Meetings.

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

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

<u>SALE OF NATIVE PLANTS</u>: 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.

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

<u>LAND PRESERVATION</u>: 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 Talks & Walks Reports on Walks Native Plant Weekend Poems by Graham Alcorn Recent Books Isobel Bowden, Bob Douglass Society News Walks Survey Bull Dog Ants Dingo

COMING TALKS

September – Wyn Jones – Wombat Management

October - Margaret Baker - Geology of the Blue Mountains

November – Yet to be decided.

#### COMING WALKS

<u>October, Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> – Woodford Fire Trail – Western Ridge – Toby's Glen</u> Meet at parking area at Woodford Station at 10 am. Medium walk Wild flowers should be in abundance. 5 hrs approximately. <u>Leader</u> Dick Weston 53 1003 October, Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> – Birdwood Gully

Meet at Buttenshaw Park, Springwood (on Great Western Highway) 10 am. Easy. 2 – 3 hrs approximately. Leader: Grace Bayley 59 1955

October Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> – Walk No 1 – Newnes Plateau Area.

Meet at Mt Victoria Station for 9.30 am train from Sydney. One hour drive each way. Medium 4-5 hrs approx. Pinnacles, wild flowers, orchids and extensive views. New territory. Leader John Noble. 87 8342

November Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Blue Gum Forest Area Details to be announced later. Leader Keith Sherlock. 57 1927

November Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> – Wollongambe – Easy Canyoning

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. For those wishing to partake please bring LILO. For those wishing to take it easy an alternate walk will be arranged. Leader David Noble 87 8342

<u>November Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> – Hassan's Walls</u>

Meet at Mt Boyce, Blackheath at 10 am. Easy walk. Flowers, birds, side effects of mining, local Geology and History.

Leader Ron Compagnoni 87 8899

December Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> – End of Year Ramble

Meet at Conservation Hut, Valley of the Waters, Valley Road, Wentworth Falls at 10 am. for a ramble through the Reserve. This will be followed by a barbeque (fire ban permitting) and social get-together. Bring your own food and refreshments. Tea and coffee will be provided.

December Thursday 18th – Pulpit Rock – Ross Cave – Witch's Glen – Horns Point Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 am. easy as you wish to make it. There are two exits so can be done as a two hour morning walk or five hour day walk approx. times. Views of the Kanimbla Valley. Leader: Jean Armstrong 87 1249

January Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> 1987 – Walk No 2 – Newnes Plateau Area Meet at Mt Victoria station for 9.30 train from Sydney. One hour drive each way. Medium 4-5 hrs approx. Exploring dry canyons and rain forest gullies. Leader John Noble 87 8342

January Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> – Waterfall Wander – Cascade Falls – Cataract Falls Meet at top of Honour Avenue, Lawson at 9.30 am. Easy walk 2-3 hours approx. Linger by the water falls.

Leader: Beverly Thompson 57 2076

#### January Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> 1987 – Black Jerry's Ridge – Cox River – Six Foot Track

Meet at Blackheath station Commuter Car Park 9 over level crossing and turn right) at 9.30 am. <u>PROMPT</u>. Proceed along Megalong Valley Road to Six Foot Track entrance (some cars will be left here). The rest to the Mountain River Riders gate entrance. Along Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox River, easy walk by the river, then up the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley Road. Medium walk. 7 hrs approx. Kangaroos can be sighted along the ridge. <u>Leader</u> Olive Noble 87 8342

February Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> – Details to be announced later.

<u>February Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> – Resort Site – Roberts Pass – Inspiration Point</u> Meet at entrance Leura Golf Club, Fitzroy Street, 10.00 am. View Leura Resort Site and see what progress has been made. <u>Leader</u>: Reg and Dulcie Toseland 84 1682

<u>February Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> – Bungleboori River Area</u> Meet at Mt Victoria station for 9.30 am train from Sydney. Medium 4-5 hrs approx. Rain forest gullies. High ridges with extensive views. <u>Leader</u>: John Noble 87 8342

<u>March Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> – A Look at the Engineers Track</u> Meet at Mt Victoria station at 10.30 am. Medium 4-5 hours. Approx. Wander along this historic track for a while. <u>Leader</u>: Reg Baumgarten 87-8342

<u>March Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> – Old Shale Railway, Off Darling Causeway</u> Meet at Mt Victoria station at 10.30 am. Historic walk, pleasant with magnificant views. Maybe a visit to the Museum at Mt Victoria. Easy 3-4 hrs approx. <u>Leader</u>: Rachel Makinson 87 8342

March Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> – Blue Gum Swamp

Meet at the end of White Cross Road, Winmalee (down the Great Western Highway to Richmond, about 5½ km on left off Hawkesbury Road) at 10.00 am. Easy 3-4 hours approx. Wildflowers, birds and the beauty of the bush.

<u>Leader</u> Enid Schaffer 54 1244

#### WALK - HORSE TRACK - RODRIGEUZ PASS - SUNDAY 6th JULY 1986

Eighteen members met at Evan's Look-Out for the start of the walk along the Horse Track. Superb views of the Grose Valley can be seen along the ridge. The descent into the valley is steep and eroded in places. Once down by the river the path is easy and pleasant, with peppermint gums and stringy barks along the track. Up through Rodrigeuz Pass to Beauchamp Falls is a strenuous climb but the many beautiful water-falls and colourful cliff faces make it well worth the effort. A short walk along the creek to the bottom of the steps leading up through "The Fernery" rain forest area and back to Evan's Look-Out. The day was cool and sunny. Wild flowers are scarce at this time of year but there were a few Wattles and Banksias in blossom.

Olive Noble

#### WALK – CENTENNIAL GLEN – WALLS LEDGE – THURSDAY 17th JULY 1986

The day started off cold and windy and twenty five stalwart members turned up for the walk to Centennial Glen. The low scrub and heathland on the walk down was of interest due to the various colours of the leaves on the bushes. The water fall was in full spate after the rain. A few members wandered off to explore but all were re-united at lunch time when we were entertained by the flight of a Wedge Tailed Eagle and a Chicken Hawk, making the most of the air currents. The day improved as we walked along Walls Ledge; here the Epacris longiflora and the Epacris microphylla were in bloom and the coral fern was in great profusion.

Olive Noble

#### WALK - BRUCE'S WALK - BULLABURRA - WENTWORTH FALLS - SUNDAY 3rd AUGUST 1986

Twenty four members turned up on a glorious day to do this Historic Walk. We meandered up ridges with fine views and down into rain forest gullies, beside creeks of rushing water, the various shelter caves proved interesting and in one side track, at the base of a water fall, we saw iron stalactites growing from the roof of the over-hanging rack. Along the way we saw a lyre birds nest which appeared to be in use due to the amount of down we saw at the entrance. The magnificent variety of trees along the track caused some comment, also the old ladders, picnic tables and stone fire-places were of great interest, bringing back memories of long ago when this track was a popular walking place. All who came thoroughly enjoyed the walk.

Olive Noble

#### WALK – THE DUCK HOLE – THURSDAY AUGUST 21st 1986.

A wonderful spring day saw 22 friends turn up for the walk. We walked slowly to the Duck Hole just enjoying the company, bush and weather and wishing Jill was there to help identify some of the flowers. We did manage *Grevillea mucronulata* which was in flower all along the track, but as usual some of the pea flowers had us confused.

The white eared honey eaters were calling in the tall trees as we descended and Ron remembered one his father had shown him as a child taking hairs from people's heads.

The group spread out along Glenbrook Creek for lunch with just two of us scrambling through to Kanuba Brook and fresh water. We crossed Glen Creek where it goes underground and can be viewed through sink holes.

Then to our delight a white eared honeyeater did visit us to add some hairs to his nest or was he still just playing at nest building? I didn't see him fly off with any hairs but he certainly tugged at a lot of heads. A really enchanting interlude in our walk.

Then to show us it really was Spring, a rock warbler (origma) was found building its nest in one of the caves above the pool.

As a first time leader I was so pleased to have Dulcie help me count heads and I hadn't lost anyone!

Deirdre Morton.

#### WALK - Wall's CAVE THURSDAY JUNE 19th 1986

Twenty four people turned up for this walk, in spite of a bitter wind and the threat of rain. This is an indication of its popularity, and of its scarcity-value now that the area has been closed by the Water Board. While regretting that we can no longer roam over it, we were glad that it is still possible to get a permit to enter.

We entered by the usual route from Wall's Cave Road at Blackheath. A few of the stronger walkers left the party at one point to take the more difficult route down to the old Grand Canyon Track along the stream. We met again at lunch in the Cave, and examined some of the other old tracks leading into it.

Ron Compagnoni was able to tell the party quite a lot about the geology and archaeology of the Cave, it is a large, dry cave; Greaves Creek (which supplies Medlow Bath, Blackheath and Mount Victoria with their water) flows in front of it after passing through a deep meander and a tunnel. The main floor of the cave was formed by deposition of silt and small rocks by the stream; there is very little material which could have fallen from the roof.

There is the residue of a small terrace higher up at the back of the cave. Rocks fallen from the roof lie at its base, under a layer of silt.

Excavation by Dr. Stockton and Holland (see "Cultural Sites and Their Environment in the Blue Mountains", in <u>Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania</u>, vol IX, no. 1, April 1974) revealed traces of human occupation only on the main floor (referred to as "the lower terrace"). They included chert flakes, Bondi points, and charcoal, as well as European material. Two occupation levels were found, each about 5-8 cm deep (the floor slopes). Carbon dating of the charcoal placed it at 3,360 years ago (possible error 100 years). The first occupation, on the higher level towards the back of the cave, was estimated to have been at 12,000 years ago (possible error 350 years).

The party left the area by a shorter route than that which we have used in the past, crossing the dam and coming out through the pine forest to Valley Road.

K. Rachel Makinson

#### RED BROWED TREE CREEPER SIPPING NECTAR

Further on the feeding habits of the Red Browed Tree Creeper – recently, in Medlow Bath, I saw this insectivorous bird sipping nectar from *Banksia ericafolia* flowers. It poked its beak in and out among the flower spikes like a honey eater. Having apparently exhausted one bush, it then flew to another!

Graham Alcorn

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#### NATIVE PLANT WEEKEND - AT THE HUT

1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> November...10 am. to 4 pm. Saturday and Sunday

All proceeds from Sale of Plants in aid of Land Preservation Fund.

11 am. Saturday. Jill Dark will talk about "Interesting Plants in the Blue Mountains".

<u>1.30 pm. Saturday</u>. A walk led by Jill Dark to find Interesting Plants mentioned in her lecture in the morning.

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#### BALANCE OF NATURE

One day a Sitella, going down, Passed a Tree Creeper, going up. 'And how are the insects, up?' 'And how are the insects, down?' 'The insects up on which I sup Are juicy and divine''. 'The insects down on which I dine Are sweet as honey-wine'. And so they live in harmony Though they forage the bark of the selfsame tree.

Graham Alcorn

#### THE QUIET ONE

Modest grey bird, the quiet one, Sitting inside the bushes, silently Avoiding, or avoided by, his own kind, Ostracised youngster, seeking small companion -Thornbills, scrub wrens, fantails, Robins, red and yellow. In winter, find a mixed flock feeding; Midst all the chirpings and the flutterings, The hoppings and the dartings here and there, Goes the grey quiet one, unobtrusively. Does he know in springtime he will blaze Like wattle? Shining, yellow-gold bright singer, Golden Whistler.

Graham Alcorn.

#### RECENT BOOKS ACQUIRED BY THE LIBRARY

#### 'Native Plants of the Sydney Region'

This is a companion book to 'Native Plants of the Upper Blue Mountains' and 'Native Plants of the Lower Blue Mountains' – a series produced by Society Members, Margaret Baker, Robin Corringham and Jill Dark. It is an indication of the popularity of these books that they have been produced over such a short period.

Nature lovers, bush walkers, teachers and students should have at least one in their pack to help them identify plants they see on their walks in the bush.

The Sydney Region has been studied by botanists from the landing of Joseph Banks at Botany Bay in 1770. It has suffered much and is still suffering from urban development that ignores native standing bush. Perhaps these books by increasing public awareness and appreciation of native plants will change the habit of bulldozing natives into the ground and waiting for exotics to replace plants naturally suited to the environment.

The book describes the plants found in different areas of the Sydney Region – four types of forest, heath, swamps and lagoons and littoral regions. It is illustrated by colour photographs taken on the spot which gives some idea of the habit of the plant.

#### 'Birds of Eucalypt Forests and Woodlands'

This is a comprehensive review of the ecology, conservation and management of a unique component of Australia's avifauna. A single group of trees, the eucalypts, dominate the continent's forests and woodlands. During Australia's long isolation as an island continent, a close association evolved between the eucalypts and Australian avifauna. Many distinctive birds – lyre birds, kookaburras, parrots and honey eaters – are birds of the eucalypt forests and woodlands and depend upon eucalypts for their survival.

#### COLD BURNS INDIGENOUS PLANTS

This must have been one of the coldest winters for many years. Around Medlow Bath several species of native plants show frost burn.

Where the tree cover is sparse, *Acacia terminalis*, two species of teatree and particularly, a shrubby wattle with phylodes are burnt back, some severely. Under the power lines, where the trees are cleared, some eucalypt saplings are burnt.

In my garden, a mature wonga vine appears dead, also a *Kunyea baxteri* (WA native) I've had for over 10 years. Old bushes of *Melaleuca hypericafolia*. (it grows on the National Pass, Wentworth Falls). Also the paper bark *M.linearfolia* (from the Megalong Valley) are severely burnt back, all their outside leaves brown and shriveled.

Where there is good tree cover, the indigenous shrubs are healthy looking. Also in open swamps and heath areas, where the plant species are used to exposure.

Graham Alcorn

#### ISOBEL BOWDEN

The death of Isobel Bowden in August has meant a great loss to our Society and the conservation movement generally, of one of its staunchest supporters. Isobel Bowden was born at Woodford in 1908 and lived most of her life in the Blue Mountains. As a child she became interested in the natural history and ecology of the region and later put her considerable talents into writing, illustrating and recording the features of her surroundings.

She was an expert on orchids and made water colour drawings of them. She discovered plants previously unrecorded, two of which have been named after her.

Isobel Bowden was a foundation member of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society and at one time held the position of Secretary, Membership Officer and Hut Curator (for some time all three together). She started the practice of twice monthly walks for the Society and also organised the development of the Nature Trail from the Hut to West Street. For this she produced and illustrated a map with accompanying test. It is still on sale.

She was a member of the Blue Mountains Historical Society for 30 years. She wrote a book of stories and poems for children and taught at the Blue Mountains Grammar School and at a junior school at Frencham, near Bowral.

For her work in conservation and service to the community in the Blue Mountains she was awarded the Order of Australia in 1985. In a very active life, Isobel Bowden contributed much as a writer, poet, teacher, artist and adviser on environmental matters and conservation.

Isobel once said ....

"A little sitting down and patient observation coupled with study of the observations of others is necessary if we are to be aware of much at all".

#### **BOB DOUGLASS**

It is sad to report also the death of Bob Douglass, a dedicated conservationist who was President of our Society from 1974 until February 1977 and Vice-President until 1979.

He carried out his duties conscientiously and in his own rugged individual manner. He was a kindly and lovable man.

Bob and Nancy Douglass joined the Society about 20 years ago and were very active members until ill health forced them both to give up.

Our heartfelt sympathies are extended to Nancy.

#### **Society News**

The Land Use Sub-committee has prepared three submissions for the Society over the last three months. The first looked at the environmental impact of a proposed transmission line from the new power station at Mt Piper (near Lithgow) to Marulan (near Goulburn). The Society's major concern was for the deterioration of the landscape value to the Blue Mountains National Park, new extensions to the National park at Mt Werlong and its effects on the environs of Jenolan and Wombeyan Caves.

The second looked at the Draft Regional Open Space Plan for the Blue Mountains prepared by the Department of Environment and Planning. This plan proposed a new zoning, 9 (e), for land that is of environmental significance and should be preserved. Unfortunately only a small proportion of the land that needs to be preserved is rezoned BUT it is a step in the right direction.

The third submission looked at the Shipley Plateau Local Environment Plan prepared by the Blue Mountains City Council. The plan attempted to weigh up environmental protection, tourism and land development through subdivision. Fortunately the former two assumed greater importance and only a few extra building sites have been identified for sub-division. The preservation of the Shipley Plateau is very important because of its relatively undeveloped and rural character. It also forms part of the Western escarpment and Megalong Valley – the three major lookouts are Mt Blackheath, Hargreaves lookout and Double Echo Point.

As I stated in the last Newsletter, I was to bring you news of the Sewerage Plan for the Blue Mountains. However, still nothing has been produced by the Water Board. This study was due in May '86. Talking of things that never seem to get resolved, the boundaries for the new additions to the Blue Mountains National Park have still not been announced.

The Land preservation Fund Committee held a jumble sale and folk singing day in the hut at the end of July. Over \$350 was raised for the Land Preservation Fund. On that note, the land purchases that the Society wishes to make are still in negotiation. Hopefully a little closer.

The Society is very pleased to see the Darwin's pathway track is being constructed. The Society initiated years ago the idea of a track following Charles Darwin's route (in 1836) from the Weatherboard Inn (site near the School of Arts) along the Jamison Creek to the top of Wentworth Falls. We hope the track will soon be finished.

Unfortunately the Hut is being broken into with alarming frequency. Many hundreds of dollars of stock have been stolen. Because the Hut is in a fairly isolated position, it is difficult to keep it secure. Steps have been taken to minimise stock held on the premises and to try and catch the thieves. One member has even spent a lot of time making the storeroom into a Fort Knox.

The Society and the Wentworth Falls Reserves 530A Committee got together and organised the Walks Survey which appears elsewhere in this Newsletter. This is the first time a survey has been carried out of walkers on the tracks around Wentworth Falls and the Valley of the Waters.

The Land Use Sub-committee is continuing to look at the fire "hazard" reduction" plan for the Blue Mountains produced by the Fire Control Officer of the Blue Mountains City Council and Bushfire brigades. We are concentrating on minimizing the impact on the natural environment of the so-called "hazard reduction" technique.

#### Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Wentworth Falls Reserve 530A Committee

#### Walks Survey for the Wentworth Falls Reserves, 18/4/86 to 6/6/86

#### SUMMARY

Walk	% of people	Adequate Signposting %Yes %No		Condition of Track % Good %Fair %Bad		
National Pass	23	68	32	54	29	17
Wentworth Pass	20	30	70	22	70	8
Vera Falls	7	63	37	16	76	7
Overcliff	11	61	39	39	39	22
Undercliff	10	81	19	41	52	7
Nature Trail	2	60	40	20	67	13
Short Cut	7	58	42	50	30	20
Wentworth Falls R.						
to Falls	15	68	32	37	39	24
Inspiration Point	1	100	0	0	100	0
Denfenella	1	36	64	36	64	0
other	3	47	53	37	60	3
Overall	100	60	40	38	48	14

number of person walks surveyed: 1,274 Survey period: 18/4/86 – 6/6/86 (6 weeks) NOTE: Only a small proportion of visitors responded to survey.

#### Comments on the Walks Survey

Only a small proportion of visitors responded to the survey. One box containing the forms was placed at the end of Falls Road (near the public telephone booth) and the other was just outside the Hut. A lot of people who were using the tracks would not have passed the boxes on foot. Also, it was observed that a high proportion of those on foot did not see the box when they passed it.

Given the fact that only a low proportion responded to the survey there were surprising number of people who did (1,274). This indicates that the tracks around Wentworth Falls and the Valley of the Waters are more heavily used than thought.

The survey shows that the most popular track, predictably, was the National Pass and the next was the Wentworth Pass. The Wentworth Pass seems to be getting a lot of usage. The next three most popular tracks were the Wentworth Falls Reserve to the Falls, Undercliff and Overcliff tracks. Again this is to be expected. The rest of the tracks get quite a bit of usage.

Overall, the signposting needs improvement with 40% saying that the signposting was inadequate. Signposting of Wentworth Pass needs a lot of improvement, 70% saying it was inadequate. The Denfenella track was the next worse.

The responses about the condition of the track are a little difficult to interpret. However only 38% of the responses showed the tracks were in good condition and 14% said they were in bad condition, indicating that the tracks do need some improvement. The Vera Falls and Wentworth Pass tracks need the most work.

The survey has given us some idea of the track usage. This survey is the first to be carried out of walkers using the tracks around Wentworth Falls. To get more information from a future survey, each walker would have to be interviewed – mammoth task to organise.

#### **BULLDOG ANTS (Genus MYRMECIA)**

Many species of Bulldog Ants are found in the Blue Mountains, ranging from the huge aggressive red *M. gulosa* found in the sandstone areas of the lower Mountains around Kurrajong, to smaller species commonly known as "Jumpers", found over most of the area.

An interesting and lesser observed species collected at Hazelbrook at the end of last summer was *M. piliventris.* The workers of this species are 10-19 mm in length, mainly black in colour with legs, antennae and mandibles reddish in colour. However, the striking feature is that the gaster (abdomen) is covered in fine golden hairs, giving the entire gaster a golden appearance.

A nest of *M. simillima*, a dark brownish to black species is located near the Overcliff Walk, near the Hut, and observant hikers can see the workers foraging for food.

John Freeland, an authority on MYRMECIA, writes in the "Australian Natural History" that 'All MYRMECIA species capture and sting insects or other arthropods, take them home and place them on the piles of larvae in their nest chambers. The larvae puncture the prey with their tiny mandibles and suck out the body juices. Workers, queens and males may then join in the feast'.

In many species, workers and queens lay soft eggs which are given to the larvae for food, or in some cases are given or taken by other adults.

Further reading on this fascinating genus can be seen in the Winter 1985 issue of "Australian Natural History".

Lyle Davis

#### <u>DINGO</u>

Little yellow dog, Australia's own What is the future for you? You have no chance, it's clearly shown, Except caged up in a zoo.

If you speak in your own defence, Would anyone care to hear? That you were here before the fence, Which you have cause to fear. Man decides that he will kill a real Australian; come what may, And a man with a gun and stubborn will, Will blast all dingos away.

We treasure our lovely Australian land, Our birds, our Mountains, our Roos -We boast of our beaches of golden sand, but Dingos are just 'Bad News' !!

My dingo friend, for you I cry, For you were here before we came; And with these words of mine, I try To awaken Australian's sense of shame. !

Jean Ross

CAVE WARBLER (Origma solitaria)

What an enigma Is the origma. Nobody can be sure About the taxonomy Of this anomaly.

Graham Alcorn