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: Pensioners and Juniors \$4.00 per year; Single Membership \$6.00 per year; Family Membership \$10.00 per year. Those joining after September 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 1987		
President (Acting) Dulcie Toseland	84.1682	
Vice Presidents Eric Blick	88.1051	
Mick Dark	58.7061	
Secretary Reg Toseland	84.1682	
Treasurer Elvine Thomas	84.2121	
Membership Officer Betty Collings	57.2131	
Newsletter Editor Ewart Collings	57.2131	
Walks Convenors Olive & John Noble	87.8342	
Education Officer Dorothy Davis	57.3466	
Librarian June Blick	88.1051	
Hut Duty Organiser Beverley Thompson	57.2076	
Land Preservation Officer. Deirdre Morton	58.8137	
Hut Curator Barry Barnes		

NEWSLETTER: 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.

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.

 $\underline{\text{PUBLICATIONS}}$: A range of specialist booklets, posters, maps, postcards etc $\underline{\text{may}}$ 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 for the first Sunday, third Thursday and third Saturday 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.67

April, 1987

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COMING TALKS

<u>April</u> - Paul Nagle North Queensland

May - Chris Cleary Walking Tour, S.W. Tasmania.

June - Yet to be decided

COMING WALKS

April Sunday 5th - Bell Trees Property - Bell

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. Walk to Cathedral, explore around pinnacles and have an interesting experience. 5-6 hours approximately. Easy to Medium. <u>Leaders</u> - June and Eric Blick - 88.1051

April Thursday 16th Prince's Rock-Rocket Point - King's Table

Meet at Car Park at end of Falls Road at 10.00 a.m. Walk through open swampland and see Vera Falls from a different angle. 3-4 hours approx. Easy - Medium. Leader: Beverley Thompson 57.2076

APRIL Saturday 18th There will not be a walk as it is Easter Saturday

May Sunday 3rd Little Zig-Zag - Charles Johnson's Property

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. Walk down little Zig-Zag. Check erosion, explore around. 5-6 hours approx. Medium walk with a climb back up the little Zig-Zag. Leader: Jean Armstrong 87.1249.

May Saturday 16th Castle Head - Narrow Neck

Meet at Katoomba Golf Course at 9.30 a.m. Train from Sydney arrives at 9.10 a.m. (cars will meet 9.10 a.m. train). Walk along Narrow Neck to Castle Head. 6-7 hrs approx. Medium. Panoramic views. <u>Leader</u> Dick Weston 53.1003

May Thursday 21st Wilson's Glen

Meet at Woodford Station at 10.45 a.m. for trains from Sydney and Lithgow. Easy walk. 2-3 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: Deirdre Morton 58.8137.

June: Sunday 7th. Six Foot Track - Part 2 - Old Ford Reserve - Cox's River and Return

Meet in Bundarra Street over Blackheath Railway Crossing at 9.30 a.m. A steady walk over a fair track along parts of this historic track to the Cox River. Medium. 5-6 hours approximately. Leader: Bob Jones.

June Thursday 18th North Faulconbridge

Meet at Primary School, Grose Road, Faulconbridge at 10.00 a.m. Walk along tributary of Linden River - blue gum forest. Easy. <u>Leader</u>: Jill Dark 58.7061

June Saturday 20th Arethusa Falls

As yet no details are available. The leader, Brian Wynands suggests it should be an overnight camp as it is a long, hard walk to do in a day. Details will be announced later.

July Sunday 5th Cox's Road - Lockyers Road

Meet at Mr Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. Walk down Cox's road and up Lockyers road. Lock at these historic roads and think of their beginnings. Magnificent views. Medium. 5-6 hours approx. Leader: Jean Armstrong 87.1249

July Thursday 16th Nature Trail

Meet at The Hut at 10.00 a.m. Walk along Nature Trail and understand a little more of this delightful area. Easy. 3-4 hrs approx. Leader: Beverley Thompson. 57.2076

July Saturday 18th Bruce's Walk - Bullaburra - Wentworth Falls

Meet at Bullaburra station at 9.40 a.m. to meet Sydney and Lithgow trains. Walk along this Historic walk into rain forest gullies and up ridges with fine views. Medium 5-6 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: Grace Bayley 59.1955

August Sunday 2nd Valley of The Waters - Roberts Pass - Inspiration Point - Golf Course - The Hut

Meet at The Hut at 9.30 a.m. Walk down the Valley of the Waters to Roberts Pass, up Inspiration Point to the Golf Course and back to The Hut. Medium. 5-6 hours approximately. Leaders: David & Elvine Thomas 84.2121

August Saturday 15th Hazelbrook Area

Details to be announced later. Leader Bob Jones

August Thursday 20th Prince Henry Cliff Walk Meet at Leura Cascades Picnic area (old swimming bath) at 10.00 a.m. Walk to Leura Cascades - Gordon Falls - Pool of Salome. Easy. 4-5 hrs approx. Waterfalls, extensive views etc. Leaders: Reg & Dulcie Toseland 84.1682

September Sunday 6th Mt Hay Area

Meet at leura Public School at 10.00 a.m. Walk in parts of this lovely area with extensive views and plenty of wild flowers. Easy - Medium. 5-6 hours approx. Leader: to be announced later

September Thursday 17th Dark's Common

Details to be announced later. Leader: Mick Dark. 58-7061

September Saturday 19th Bungleboori River Area (Repeat)

Meet at Mt Victoria station for 9.30 a.m. train from Sydney. Medium 4-5 hours approx. Rain forest gullies. High ridges with extensive views. Pinnacle Country. Leader: John Noble 87.8342

WALK - PULPIT ROCK, ROSS CAVE, WITCH'S GLEN AND HORNE'S POINT THURSDAY, 18TH DECEMBER

The weather could not have been better. After a slight preamble in the cars we viewed the countryside from Pulpit Rock and looked across to where our walk would take us. Reg had an old photograph and it was interesting to see how much the trees had grown. The bush purred in the perfection of the day. The first part of the walk took us under overhangs, along rock ledges and through tall mountain ash. It's the home of lyre birds and pilot birds though we only heard the latter. A cracking whip bird led us up to Ross Cave. There we could also admire a bower and worried a grey fantail sitting on eggs in its exquisite wine-glass nest. The name Ross is a mystery, but both Renitz, the school master and Piddington, an MP, lived in Mt Victoria. Piddington had the Grange built. He lived there and owned a large portion of what Mt Victoria is today.

Above Renitz Pass we took a rock climbers' trail along the western edge of the Piddington spur. Boronia florabunda were still blooming profusely, their bitter sweet aroma and expansive views of Kanimbla Valley stayed with us most of the way to Horne's Point. Some of us saw peregrine falcons sweep by. It is a good place for raptors to glide up in the warm air of the valley.

From Horne's Point we had a 270 degree view of the valley below. From there a fire trail leads back to Mt Piddington. A number of wildflowers showed up including lots of kunzea capitata and some flying duck orchids. We turned off the fire trail and scrambled down to marvel at Ferris Cave and rest in its cool dampness before climing out to Mt Piddington.

Jean Armstrong

WALK - NEWNES PLATEAU AREA - WALK NO. 2. SUNDAY 4TH JANUARY

Our second trip to the Newnes Plateau area, this time the weather was a perfect 21° and with the prospect of a good day ahead, 25 members made the trip. We drove along the Glow Worm Tunnel road and made our way into the bush as on our previous visit, but this time we turned off the main track and followed a lesser track to the left of it. The bracken had grown apace since our earlier visit to the area and it was hard to find the track in places. At the start of the dry canyons, there is a steep climb down into the gully — we entered the first canyon — there are many tree-ferns growing in the canyon and although these are usually dry canyons, it must be noted that in the event of heavy rain, which

was experienced in August, 1986, these canyons can become raging torrents and evidence of this was seen in the deep scouring which had occurred and the uprooting of tree ferns. At the end of the canyon we saw signs of wind eroded rocks and entered a wide gully with tea-trees, bracken and scrub. In the second canyon, two rock warblers nests were clinging to the roof of overhanging rocks — it is good to have a torch here so that the rock surfaces can be examined. The canyon almost meets overhead and glimpses of blue sky can be seen — we came out into an open area and bright sunlight, overlooking the Wolgan Valley where we had lunch. After lunch we wandered back through the canyons, some energetic members taking to the high ridges while others returned along the track to the cars.

WALK - BLACK JERRY'S RIDGE - COX'S RIVER - SIX FOOT TRACK, SATURDAY, 17TH JANUARY

The day started off quite uneventfully - it was hot and 9 members turned up. We walked along the fire trail down Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox's River and Our troubles began as we walked beside the found a shady spot to have lunch. river; the track had been obliterated by the heavy rain in August, 1986, so there was a lot of rock-hopping and scrambling over fallen trees to be done. We saw many tree-goannas along this stretch of the river. Two of the party became dehydrated and this slowed down the walk considerably. It cannot be stressed too often that in specially hot conditions all members should carry Eventually we reached the Six Foot Track Crossing and Murderplenty to drink. ing Creek, much later than anticipated. We all had a welcome dip in the river We refilled our water bottles (Puratabs were carried). (clothes and all!). The party split into two at this stage and the 4 more energetic members went their own way back to the cars. More about their story later! The others, after a long rest, started the slow climb up the Six Foot Track. Daylight was rapidly fading, but with plenty to drink and cooler conditions the walk became We saw a big brown kangaroo and a smaller one with a joey in quite pleasant. We negotiated the stiles and creek beds with no difficulty and once the open farmland and wider track was reached, although by now quite dark, We finally reached the car at 10.55 p.m. we experienced no hazards. other four companions reached their car before dark, only to find it wouldn't start, due to a flat battery. They had to get the N.R.M.A. to fix it and arrived home only 30 minutes before the rest of the party. What should have been a pleasant walk turned into a traumatic experience.

It must be stressed that in hot weather plenty of water must be carried. Fortunately no one suffered any ill effects from this walk.

Olive Noble

WALK - FLORABELLA PASS - 1ST FEBRUARY

Despite the temperature (in excess of 30°) 12 people turned up for the walk. All came prepared with hats and plenty of water. We started the walk at the end of Florabella Street in Warrimoo, proceeded down 50-year old stone steps along a gully to Glenbrook Creek where a swimming hole relieved us from the heat. After spending an hour or two at the creek we made our way up a winding track to a vacant block of land at Plateau Parade, Blaxland.

The exit of Florabella Pass (Plateau Parade) will shortly be lost to all walkers, since the remaining exit has been sold and will shortly be built upon, cutting off all access to the track from Blaxland.

Brian Wynands.

WALK - RESORT SITE - ROBERTS PASS (PARK) & LADDER - INSPIRATION (DESPERATION) POINT THURSDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 1987

A glorious day after rain - 29½ walkers - although we should really include Nathaniel Baker (aged 4) as an adult....he walked every step of the way. Four from Wollongong - consisting of an American couple, the newsletter editor of the South Coast Conservation Group, and a friend.

After inspecting the Resort site, which some had not seen previously, we moved on to Roberts Pass ladder, and then to Inspiration Point for lunch. After this, we were delighted with the singing and prose of Dennis Keavins Thank you Dennis, inspired words and music in a lovely setting. Much appreciated.

Instead of going to Lilians Bridge, the party settled for Cathedral Point as the weather was warming up, and we were running out of time. On the return trip we passed the Resort on the other side, and viewed the work on the two dams, and the reconstructed lower 9 holes of the golf course.

Having missed several Thursday monthly walks, it was lovely to see familiar faces again, and catch up on conversation.

Dulcie & Reg Toseland

BUNGLEBOORI RIVER - SATURDAY 21ST FEBRUARY

Despite the rain, thirteen members set off along the high ridge towards the Pinnacles in the Newnes Forest area. We explored around these rock formations although the magnificent views were diminished by the heavy rain. We had an early lunch under the rock overhang and decided that as it was so wet, and no signs of the rains ceasing, we wouldn't go down to the river. We returned to the cars, very wet and bedraggled. We will be doing this walk again at a future date.

ENGINEER'S TRACK - SUNDAY 1ST MARCH

Another wet day! Four members set off along the track. We got as far as the Grotto, and then turned back. A very disappointing walk, but we will do it again as an extra walk on <u>Saturday 30th May</u>. Meet at Mt. Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m.

WALK - OLD SHALE RAILWAY, MOUNT VICTORIA - 19TH MARCH

This short walk was preceded by a visit to the Museum in the old Railway Refreshment rooms at Mount Victoria, which Ebena Isles kindly opened for us.

The walk starts at the junction of Hartley Vale Road and the Darling Causeway, and follows the line of a railway or tramway which was constructed in 1868 and used to take firstly, shale, and later, oil and naphtha to the industrial siding on the railway line, which later became Hartley Station (now demolished). At first horses were used to pull the skips or wagons; later, locomotives. However the company which first began mining the shale in Hartley Vale, in 1865, did not have the advantage of this tramway, and took the shale out the hard way, by horse-team to Hartley and then up Mitchell's Pass to Mount Victoria Station.

Near the end of the tramway there is a wide view over Hartley Vale, from which some of the works, the mine manager's house, the Comet Inn, a number of cottages and the settling tanks, used in refining the oil, can be seen. To the left and right of the tramway are ruins of brick structures, and straight on, after passing an exploded naphtha tank which marks the site of a tragic accident, one comes to the head of the cable haulage way, up which trucks were hauled full of shale from the mines in the walley alongside Reedy Creek (now Kerosene Creek, in Lawson's Long Alley). The anchor points for the haulage can be seen, and tucked round the corner of the crag on your left are the remains of the brick boiler house and the site of the winding engine. The grade of the haulage way varies from 1-in-4 and 1-in-1. Nevertheless, some of our party went a little way down, and one returned bearing a large slab of shale with leaf fossils, which must have been brought up at some time from the valley.

Thunder rolled all round us during lunch and later, but did not come close, so some of us drove down Hartley Vale Road to examine a coal mine in the gulley at the foot of the hill, which was opened in 1901 to supply the kerosene works in the valley, after coal mines nearer the works became uneconomic. We found four of the five adits, but all had been blown in. We then cruised along Hartley Vale Road, noticing the Comet Inn, the ash and slag heaps on Reedy Creek, and Collit's Inn. The white ash was used at one time as an abradant in toothpaste, and as recently as the 1970s was used in making light-coloured bricks.

We returned by Mitchell's Pass (now Victoria Pass). The rain held off till we were all safely home. Rachel Makinson

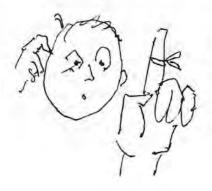
PLEASE NOTE DETAILS OF ARETHUSA FALLS WALK - SATURDAY, 20TH JUNE

Meet at Evans Lookout at 7.30 a.m. Horse Track - Hilary Falls - Arethusa Falls - Beauchamp Falls. Hard. 10 hours approx. This walk is for experienced bush walkers only. Bring plenty of energy foods. Leader: Brian Wynands 39.4752 or 87.8342.

RED SPOTS

If you see a red spot on Page 1 of your Newsletter, it means your membership fees are in arrears.

As a result of a recent check of the Membership List, it was decided to delete all members who have been unfinancial for more than three years. You will understand we cannot afford to send Newsletters to people who have forgotten or have overlooked payment of fees for such a long period. The fees have remained at the same low figure for several years, and it is now found necessary to increase them in line with increasing costs.



SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE NOW \$6.00 SINGLE; \$10.00 DOUBLE; \$4.00 PENSIONERS & JUNIORS. PLEASE RE-NEW PROMPTLY OR THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER. RENEWAL FORM ON BACK COVER.



Before the lecture at the February monthly meeting, there were probably very few in the audience who would describe themselves as friends of the Bats, but after two hours of very interesting talk, slides and discussion and being introduced to "Gollum", a grey flying fox, I'm sure everybody had a change of heart. For centuries we've heard so many tales of vampires and the nasty blood sucking habits of bats that no one could think of liking them, much less having one for a pet.

It seems there are two distinct kinds of bats - the insectivosous small bats and the larger fruit bats or flying foxes. Bats are very widely distributed round the world and are mostly creatures of the night that assemble in large colonies

in caves, or 'roosts' in rain forests.

The smaller bats live on insects and often have distorted nose and mouth parts

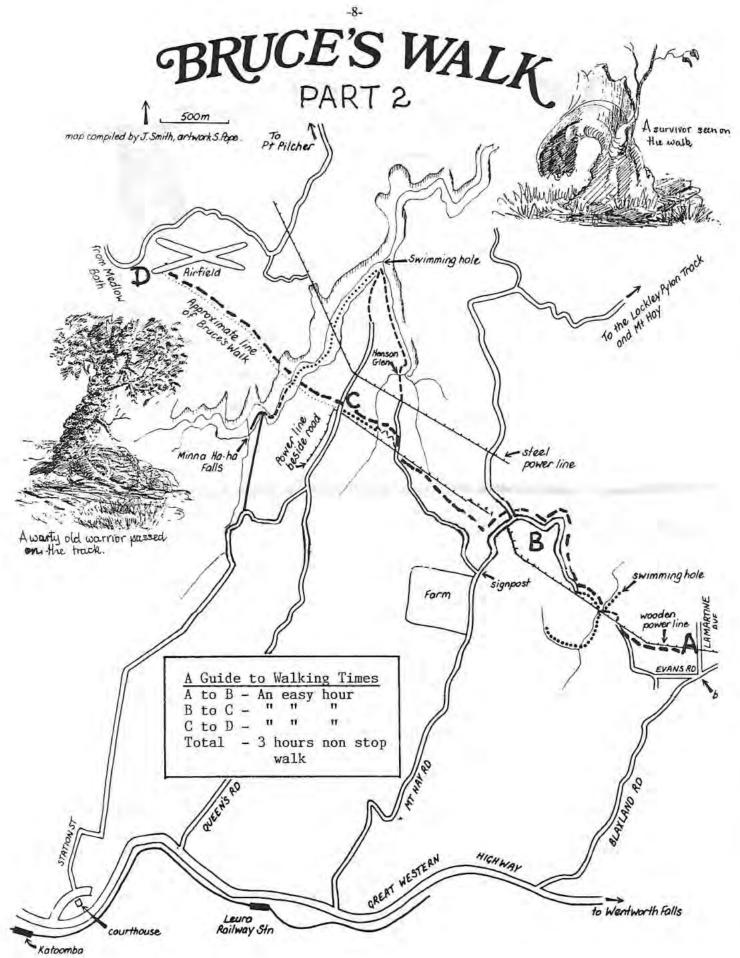
which are believed to be used as echo sounding devices.

The fruit bats have very good nocturnal vision and a keen sense of smell which helps them to find the flowers and fruit which make up their diet. They are mammals, furry intelligent animals that give birth to live young. They prefer nectar and pollen from eucalyptus flowers, figs and lillipilli fruits rather than orchard fruit, but will eat orchard fruit if there is not enought pollen around.

This has given rise to a decline in their numbers at the hands of irate orchardists, but scientists now believe that flying foxes help man by pollinating eucalyptus flowers and dispersing seeds from the fruit they eat. "Friends of the Bats" is an organisation dedicated to conservation and better understanding of these unique and interesting creatures.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM BRONWYN WOOD, SPEAKER AT FEBRUARY MEETING

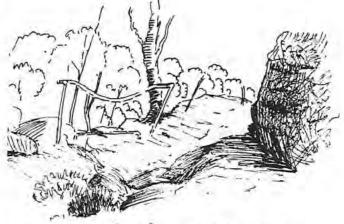
"I asked our bat expert about the behaviour one lady said she had observed amongst Wingham Brush bats, of them "hanging off each other in long strings". Our bat expert, who studies the Wingham Brush bats, said that the <u>Greys</u> (Gollum) do <u>not</u> indulge in this sort of behaviour, but that the <u>Little Reds</u> (which frequently temporarily share Greys' camps) <u>do</u> (she calls it "clumping" and an example can be partially seen on the front of the Batwatch leaflet). She has also observed, and had many reports, of <u>Greys</u> hanging along nearly vertical vines close together, which from a distance is often mistaken for the bats hanging off each other, which they <u>do not</u> do. So at your next meeting you might pass this information on to the lady who asked - she might have seen an example of either of the above."



BRUCE'S WALK - PART 2

Since writing Bruce's Walk, Part 1, I find the complete walk is described in Jim Smith's 'How to See the Blue Mountains, 2nd Edition'. However, to keep faith with our Editor and in the belief that another description can add interest, I press on with Bruce's Walk, Part 2.

As mentioned in Part 1, from the high points the walk looks most unpromising because of the man made scars, but once in the valleys, peace and serenity prevails.



A few lengths of pipe railing are still to be seen.

As in Part 1, the walk crosses three creeks and so falls and rises three times but the accompanying scenery is distinctly different. My guess is that it is all due to increased elevation. Part 1 started from Kent Street at an altitude of approx. 760 metres and terminated at the eastern end of Lawson View Drive at around 800 metres. The commencement of Part 2 at Lamartine Avenue is at 900 metres and at Katoomba Aerodrome the end of Part 2, it is at 980 metres so in the main we are walking through country about 100 to 200 metres higher than in Part 1. The vegetation is much scrubbier and it has patches of heath and hanging swamps. Angophoras disappear completely.



The track is well defined though a little fossicking is necessary to pick up markers where the walk is cut by access roads.

The biggest obstacle is the trudge from Katoomba Aerodrome to Medlow Bath Station. If you do the walk west to east, a taxi from Katoomba costs around \$14 and you still have the walk along Blaxland Road to Wentworth Falls station.



"it has patches of heath + homging swamp"

Actinotas minor is a common resident

However the access roads of Mount Hay and Queens Road provide points where probes can be made east or west along the walk in very easy stages.

Lloyd Jones

REPORT FROM TASMANIA'S WEST COAST

The Queenstown Tourist Development Committee has called for the removal of vegetation on the 'bald hills' around the town.

The committee believes the hills are one of the town's greatest tourist attractions and add to the unique character of the mining town.

The hills, originally covered in dense rainforest, lost most of their vegetation earlier this century through logging, sulphur fumes from the mine smelters and bushfires.

The high rainfall experienced in the area washed away the topsoil and prevented the forest replenishing itself.

The committee's president, Mrs Joyce Bushby, said the committee would like to see the removal of the re-growth, most of which is not native to the area.

She said the committee realised there would be some opposition to the removal of any re-growth, but it was vital to the area's tourist industry the hills remained as they were.

'This area is beautiful in its own way, particularly when a good sunset occurs and the hills light up with colour," she said.

Even if the area is kept as a memorial of what humans can do to an environment in a short time, it should be kept as it is.'

Mrs Bushby said the hills were also the greatest firebreak the town could have.

Michael Moore in "The Hobart Mercury"

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FORMATION OF WIRES BRANCH ON MOUNTAINS

Negotiations are underway to form a Blue Mountains branch of WIRES (Wildlife Information & Rescue Service).

The primary aims of WIRES are:

- The rescue and rehabilitation of injured native animals and their release through the use of an organised network of volunteer rescuers, foster carers and veterinarians.
- The provision of information on the requirements of native animals so that their survival and freedom in urban areas is maximised.

WIRES in Sydney has established a network of hundreds of volunteer rescuers, foster carers and veterinarians available on call. Rescuers and carers are given training in identification, first-aid, rescue techniques and transport, foster caring and release back into the wild.

A public meeting will be held to set up a local branch of WIRES, tentatively on Friday, 15th May, at Springwood Civic Centre. Watch local press for confirmation. Please come to the meeting if you are interested in becoming a co-ordinator, volunteer rescuer, foster carer or just help when you can. For further information contact George Threlfo (395125) or Jill and Mick Dark (587061).

Society News

Land Preservation Fund. On 28th February and 1st March, the Land Preservation Fund Committee held their Autumn Plant Sale. Well, it was much too hot on Saturday and much too wet on Sunday but despite this we had many keen gardeners turn up to hear Graham and Jill talk on the Saturday morning -Graham encouraging us all to plant lots of Banksias to attract birds to our winter gardens and Jill's boundless enthusiasm making us feel like gardening with natives despite the weather. The morning ended with many varied suggestions to help Waratahs to flower, including spreading good wood ash around the base to make the plant think there had been a bush fire and prompt it to flower; another suggested burying rusty tins near the tree and Jill had seen plants flowering well which had been cultivated around yearly, so we will hope for some good results next Spring. The afternoon walk was most enjoyable. The weather prevented many bird sightings, but proved excellent for lizard watching instead. Denfenella is always delightful, specially on a hot day.

Guest Speakers. Since the beginning of 1987, we have had three very interesting guest speakers after the general meetings. Jill and Mick Dark had some very colorful and informative slides of their safari into North Queensland rain forest territory. Unfortunately the rain forest is diminishing in tropical North Queensland as in other parts of the world, but it is interesting to see the difference in character of the vegetation—luscious growth and fierce competition for light on all sides. David Thomas's "Catching and Handling of Small Animals" talk illustrated the care that is necessary not to injure the delicate creatures and not to be bitten by them at the same time. David illustrated the art of putting a possum into a bag by swinging it by the tail and foreleg and into the bag before it has time to grab the bag on the way in. The third lecture by Bronwyn and David Wood and "Gollum", the Fruit Bat, was called "Friends of the Bats" and has been reported more fully elsewhere.

Education Committee has been busy preparing a fun folder primarily for children, on the Charles Darwin Walk, the track nearing completion from the highway to the top of the Falls. The front cover is a colour-in of the Explorer making his 'stroll' 150 years ago. Inside there is a description of his walk in 1836, a crossword puzzle, a fold out "Snakes and Ladders" kind of game tracing Darwin's Walk today and the hazards along the way and the good things to see and do in the bush. There are other games as well. The object of the booklet is to make children aware of the bush, to relish it and care for it. It is not yet completed but will be on sale later at the Hut.

Membership Fees. The membership fees of the Society have remained at the same level for the last few years. In keeping with increasing costs and inflation generally it was decided at the February General Meeting to increase the fees for Pensioners and Juniors \$4 per year; Single Membership \$6 per year; Family Membership \$10 per year, as set out inside the front cover of this Newsletter. A revision and up-dating of the Membership List has long been overdue and is now being done. Anyone unfinancial for more than three years has been deleted from the records.

NEST ROBBERS

Last month I wrote about the large proportion of small birds' nests that get robbed — on that occasion I suspected a pair of grey currawongs.

Well, June and Eric Blick of Medlow Bath have an interesting story about another nest robber. About mid-December they heard a terrific commotion in their front garden and found four white browed scrub wrens vigorously attacking a small brown snake.

The snake searched and searched, with great diligence and purpose, even back tracking once, and totally ignored the birds which were dive bombing it constantly.

The Blicks had to go out after watching it for 10 minutes. On their return they found an empty eggshell and then after much searching, a small ball-shaped nest with a neat side entrance, built on the ground under a tussock, and empty! The persistent snake had presumably located it by scent.

Last Spring in my garden, scrub wrens and brown thornbills together were attacking a blue tongue lizard, thereby indicating that here is another predator of bird species who build their nests low down.

One day, June and Eric found a fairly large lizard sunning itself in their garden - 12 to 15 ins long, it was speckled green in colour! In their seven years residence, they have never seen another green lizard. Does anyone know what it is?

GRAHAM ALCORN

WINDY DAY, BLUE MOUNTAINS

Over the trees around my house
Fifty huge birds are playing,
Soaring and swooping about in the gale,
Yellow tails splaying;
Screeching and screaming with much ado,
Fifty great jubilant Black Cockatoos,
Showing the rest of us what they can do,
The big exhibitionist clowns!





AVIAN DETECTIVE - DIP FALLS

The Dip Falls are about 25 miles from Wynyard in Tasmania's North West. They are beautiful gushing falls with plenty of water, surrounded by rain forest with enormous eucalypts, one of which was especially singled out as "The Big Tree". In the process of looking for this monster, I picked up a green branch lying by the side of the track. To my surprise there was a beautiful nest attached to it, made of cobwebs and fine grass, suspended from the branch with a side entrance and a little awning over the door. It was camouflaged with green moss and would have been hard to see in the bush. It was lined with soft feathers and down and had one infertile egg still inside. We had no idea what bird could have made it. Later I described the nest to Graham Alcorn who thought it might be a thornbill or a scrub wren. I had bought a little book on Tasmanian birds in Hobart and sure enough, there was a picture of a Tasmanian Thornbill with a nest very similar to the one we found. It is indigenous only to Tasmania.

Ewart Collings

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 \$10.00)

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., HAWTHORN VIC 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. Name Address....

.............

Amount Signed Date.....

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 mer	mbership or
renewal of my membership.	Single	\$6.00
Name	Family	\$10.00
Address	Concession	\$4.00
	*strike out wh	nich does not apply.

Or

enture Out - by Air, Land & Sea

LIGHT AIRCRAFT TOURS

OUTBACK AUSTRALIA

Flinders Ranges - Coober Pedy - Ayers Rock - Alice Springs - Birdsville - Sydney

FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND NATIONAL PARKS

Carnarvon Gorge - Chillagoe - Laura (Aboriginal Rock Art) - Lakefield - Cape Tribulation - Mossman Gorge - Great Barrier Reef

BARRIER REEF CRUISE

Visit the bird islands of the Great Barrier Reef on M.V. NOEL BUXTON accompanied by a qualified Ornithologist.

RING'VENTURE OUT'(047)82.5022 Bus. Hours (047)57.3181 After Hours

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.

April 1987 No. 67

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> Pensioners & Juniors \$4.00 per year; Single Membership \$6.00 per year; Family Membership \$10.00 per year. Those joining after September pay half subscription to end of year.

<u>MEETINGS:</u> 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 1987

President	Reg Toseland	84.1682
Vice-Presidents	Eric Blick	88.1051
	Michael Dark	58.7061
Secretary	Reg Toseland	84.1682
Treasurer	Elvine Thomas	84.2121
Membership Officer	Betty Collings	57.2131
Newsletter Editor	Ewart Collings	57.2131
Walks Conveners	Olive and John Noble	87.8342
Education Officer	Dorothy Davis	57.3466
Librarian	June Blick	88.1051
Hut Duty Organiser	Beverly Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer	Deidre Morton	58.8137
Hut Curator	Barry Barnes	

<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, third Thursday and third Saturday 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.

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Coming Talks & Walks Reports on Walks Membership Fees Friends of the Bats Bruce's Walk Part 2 Tasmania's West Coast Society News Nest Robbers

COMING TALKS

April – Paul Nagle North Queensland

<u>May</u> – Chris Cleary Walking Tour, South West Tasmania

June – Yet to be decided.

COMING WALKS

<u>April Sunday 5th – Bell Trees Property – Bell</u>

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. Walk to Cathedral, explore around pinnacles and have an interesting experience. 5-6 hours approximately. Easy to Medium.

Leaders – June and Eric Blick – 88.1051

April Thursday 16th – Prince's Rock - Rocket Point - King's Table

Meet at Car Park at end of Falls Road at 10.00 am. Walk through open swampland and see Vera Falls from a different angle. 3-4 hours approx. Easy — Medium.

Leader: Beverley Thompson 57.2076

April Saturday 18th. There will not be a walk as it is Easter Saturday.

May Sunday 3rd Little Zig-Zag – Charles Johnson's Property

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. Walk down little Zig-Zag. Check erosion, explore around. 5-6 hours approx. Medium walk with a climb back up the little Zig-Zag. Leader: Jean Armstrong 87.1249.

May Saturday 16th Castle Head – Narrow Neck

Meet at Katoomba Golf Course at 9.30 am. Train from Sydney arrives at 9.10 am. (cars will meet 9.10 am. train). Walk along Narrow Neck to Castle Head. 6-7 hrs approx. Medium. Panoramic views. Leader: Dick Weston 53.1003.

May Thursday 21st Wilson's Glen

Meet at Woodford Station at 10.45 am. for trains from Sydney and Lithgow. Easy walk. 2-3 hours approx.

Leader: Deirdre Morton 58.8137.

June: Sunday 7th. Six Foot Track – Part 2 – Old Ford Reserve – Cox's River and Return

Meet in Bundarra Street over Blackheath Railway Crossing at 9.30 am. A steady walk over a fair track along parts of this historic track to the Coxs River. Medium 5-6 hours approximately. <u>Leader</u>: Bob Jones.

June Thursday 18th North Faulconbridge

Meet at Primary School, Grose Road, Faulconbridge at 10.00 am. Walk along tributary of Linden River – blue gum forest. Easy.

Leader: Jill Dark 58.7061

June Saturday 20th Arethusa Falls

As yet no details are available. The leader, Brian Wynands suggests it should be an overnight camp as it is a long, hard walk to do in a day.

Details will be announced later.

July Sunday 5th Cox's Road – Lockyers Road

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. Walk down Cox's Road and up Lockyers road. Look at these historic roads and think of their beginnings. Magnificent views. Medium 5-6 hours approx. Leader: Jean Armstrong 87.1249

July Thursday 16th Nature Trail

Meet at The Hut at 10.00 am. Walk along Nature Trail and understand a little more of this delightful area. Easy 3-4 hours approx.

Leader: Beverley Thompson 57.2076

July Saturday 18th Bruce's Walk – Bullaburra – Wentworth Falls

Meet at Bullaburra station at 9.40 am to meet Sydney and Lithgow trains. Walk along this Historic walk into rain forest gullies and up ridges with fine views. Medium 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Grace Bayley 59.1955

August Sunday 2nd Valley of The Waters – Roberts Pass – Inspiration Point – Golf Course – The Hut Meet at the The Hut at 9.30 am. Walk down the Valley of the Waters to Roberts Pass, up Inspiration Point to the Golf Course and back to The Hut. Medium 5-6 hours approximately. Leaders: David and Elvine Thomas 84.2121

August Saturday 15th Hazelbrook Area

Details to be announced Later.

Leader: Bob Jones

August Thursday 20th Prince Henry Cliff Walk

Meet at Leura Cascades Picnic area (old swimming bath) at 10.00 am. Walk to Leura Cascades – Gordon Falls – Pool of Siloam. Easy 4-5 hrs approx. Waterfalls, extensive views etc.

<u>Leaders</u>: Reg and Dulcie Toseland 84.1682

September Sunday 6th Mt Hay Area

Meet at Leura Public School at 10.00 am. Walk in parts of this lovely area with extensive views and plenty of wild flowers. Easy – Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: to be announced

September Thursday 17th Darks Common

Details to be announced later. <u>Leader</u>: Mick Dark 58.7061

<u>September Saturday 19th Bungleboori River Area (Repeat)</u>

Meet at Mt Victoria station for 9.30 am. train from Sydney. Medium 4-5 hours approx. Rain forest gullies. High ridges with extensive views. Pinnacle Country.

Leader: John Noble 87.8342

<u>WALK – PULPIT ROCK, ROSS CAVE, WITCH'S GLEN AND HORNE'S POINT THURSDAY, 18TH DECEMBER</u>

The weather could have not been better. After a slight preamble in the cars we viewed the countryside from Pulpit Rock and looked across to where our walk would take us. Reg had an old photograph and it was interesting to see how much the trees had grown. The bush purred in the perfection of the day. The first part of the walk took us under overhangs, along rock ledges and through tall mountain ash. It's the home of lyre birds and pilot birds though we only heard the latter. A cracking whip bird led us up to Ross Cave. There we could also admire a bower and worried a grey fantail sitting on eggs in its exquisite wine glass nest. The name Ross is a mystery, but both Renitz, the school master and Piddington, an MP, lived in Mt Victoria. Piddington had the Grange built. He lived there and owned a large portion of what Mt Victoria is today.

Above Renitz Pass we took a rock climber's trail along the western edge of the Piddington spur. *Boronia florabunda* were still blooming profusely, their bitter sweet aroma and expansive views of Kanimbla Valley stayed with us most of the way to Horne's Point. Some of us saw peregrine falcons sweep by. It is a good place for raptors to glide up in the warm air of the valley.

From Horne's Point we had a 270 degree view of the valley below. From there a fire trail leads back to Mt Piddington. A number of wildflowers showed up including lots of *kunzea capitata* and some flying duck orchids. We turned off the fire trail and scrambled down to marvel at Ferris Cave and rest in its cool dampness before climbing out to Mt Piddington.

Jean Armstrong

WALK - NEWNES PLATEAU AREA - WALK NO. 2. SUNDAY 4th JANUARY

Our second trip to the Newnes Plateau area, this time the weather was a perfect 21° and with the prospect of a good day ahead, 25 members made the trip. We drove along the Glow Worm Tunnel road and made our way into the bush as on our previous visit, but this time we turned off the main track and followed a lesser track to the left of it. The bracken had grown apace since our earlier visit to the area and it was hard to find the track in places. At the start of the dry canyons, there is a steep climb down into the gully – we entered the first canyon – there are so many tree-ferns growing in the canyon and although these are usually dry canyons, it must be noted that in the event of heavy rain, which was experienced in August, 1986, these canyons can become raging torrents and evidence of this was seen in the deep scouring which had occurred and the uprooting of tree ferns. At the end of the canyon we saw signs of wind eroded rocks and entered a wide gully with tea-trees, bracken and scrub. In the second canyon, two rock warblers nests were clinging to the roof of overhanging rocks – it is good to have a torch here so that the rock surfaces can be examined. The canyon almost meets overhead and glimpses of blue sky can be seen – we came out into an open area and bright sunlight, overlooking the Wolgan Valley where we had lunch. After lunch we wandered back through the canyons, some energetic members taking to the high ridges while others returned along the track to the cars.

Olive Noble

WALK - BLACK JERRY'S RIDGE - COX'X RIVER - SIX FOOT TRACK, SATURDAY 17th JANUARY

The day started off quite uneventfully — it was hot and 9 members turned up. We walked along the fire trail down Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox's River and found a shady spot to have lunch. Our troubles began as we walked beside the river, the track had been obliterated by the heavy rain in August, 1986, so there was a lot of rock-hopping and scrambling over fallen trees to be done. We saw many tree-goannas along this stretch of the river. Two of the party became dehydrated and this slowed down the walk considerably. It cannot be stressed too often that in specially hot conditions all members should carry plenty to drink. Eventually we reached the Six Foot Track Crossing and Murdering Creek, much later than anticipated. We all had a welcome dip in the river (clothes and all!). We refilled our water bottles (puratabs were carried). The party split into two at this stage and the 4 more energetic members went their own way back to the cars. More about their story later! The others, after a long rest, started the slow climb up the Six Foot Track. Daylight was rapidly fading, but with plenty to drink and cooler conditions the walk became quite pleasant. We saw a big brown kangaroo and a smaller one with a joey in the pouch. We negotiated the stiles and creek beds with no difficulty and once the open farmland and wider track was reached, although by now quite dark, we experienced no hazards. We finally reached the car at 10.55 pm.

Our other four companions reached their car before dark, only to find it wouldn't start, due to a flat battery. They had to get the NRMA to fix it and arrived home only 30 minutes before the rest of the party. What should have been a pleasant walk turned into a traumatic experience.

It must be stressed that in hot weather plenty of water must be carried. Fortunately no one suffered any ill effects from this walk.

Olive Noble

WALK - FLORABELLA PASS - 1st FEBRUARY

Despite the temperature (in excess of 30°) 12 people turned up for the walk. All came prepared with hats and plenty of water. We started the walk at the end of Florabella Street in Warrimoo, proceeded down 50 year old stone steps along a gully to Glenbrook Creek where a swimming hole relieved us from the heat. After spending an hour or two at the creek we made our way up a winding track to a vacant block of land at Plateau Parade, Blaxland.

The exit of Florabella Pass (Plateau Parade) will shortly be lost to all walkers, since the remaining exit has been sold and will shortly be built upon, cutting off all access to the track from Blaxland.

Brian Wynands

WALK – RESORT SITE – ROBERTS PASS (PARK) & LADDER – INSPIRATION (DESPERATION) POINT THURSDAY 19th FEBRUARY 1987

A glorious day after the rain -29% walkers - although we should really include Nathaniel Baker (aged 4) as an adult....he walked every step of the way. Four from Wollongong - consisting of an American couple, the newsletter editor of the South Coast Conservation Group, and a friend.

After inspecting the Resort site, which some had not seen previously, we moved on to Roberts Pass ladder, and then to Inspiration Point for lunch. After this, we ere delighted with the singing and prose of Denis Kevans...Thank you Denis, inspired words and music in a lovely setting. Much appreciated.

Instead of going to Lilians Bridge, the partly settled for Cathedral Point as the weather was warming up, and we were running out of time. On the return trip we passed the Resort on the other side, and viewed the work on the two dams, and the reconstructed lower 9 holes of the golf course.

Having missed several Thursday walks, it was lovely to see familiar faces again, and catch up on conservation.

Dulcie & Reg Toseland

BUNGLBOORI RIVER - SATURDAY 21st FEBRUARY

Despite the rain, thirteen members set off along the high ridge towards the Pinnacles in the Newnes Forest area. We explored around these rock formations although the magnificent views were diminished by the heavy rain. We had an early lunch under the rock overhang and decided that as it was so wet, and no signs of the rains ceasing, we wouldn't go down to the river. We returned to the cars, very wet and bedraggled. We will be doing this walk again at a future date.

ENGINEER'S TRACK - SUNDAY 1st MARCH

Another wet day! Four members set off along the track. We got as far as the Grotto, and then turned back. A very disappointing walk, but we will do it again as an extra walk on <u>Saturday 30th</u> May. Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am.

WALK - OLD SHALE RAILWAY, MOUNT VICTORIS - 19th MARCH

This short walk was preceded by a visit to the Museum in the old Railway Refreshment rooms at Mount Victoria, which Ebena Isles kindly opened for us.

The walk starts at the junction of Hartley Vale Road and the Darling Causeway, and follows the line of a railway or tramway which was constructed in 1868 and used to take firstly, shale, and later, oil and naphtha to the industrial siding on the railway line, which later became Hartley Station (now demolished). At first horses were used to pull the skips or wagons; later, locomotives. However the company which first began mining the shale in Hartley Vale, in 1865, did not have the advantage of this tramway, and took the shale out the hard way, by horse-team to Hartley and then up Mitchell's Pass to Mount Victoria Station.

Near the end of the tramway there is a wide view over Hartley Vale, from which some of the works, the mine manager's house, the Comet Inn, a number of cottages and the settling tanks, used in refining the oil, can be seen. To the left and right of the tramway are ruins of brick structures, and straight on, after passing an exploded naphtha tank which marks the site of a tragic accident, one comes to the head of the cable haulage way, up which trucks were hauled full of shale from the mines in the valley alongside Reedy Creek (now Kerosene Creek, in Lawson's Long Alley). The anchor points for the haulage can be seen, and tucked round the corner of the crag on your left are the remains of the brick boiler house and the site of the winding engine. The grade of the haulage way varies from 1-in-4 and 1-in-1. Nevertheless, some of our party went a little way down, and one returned bearing a large slab of shale with leaf fossils, which must have been brought up at some time from the valley.

Thunder rolled all round us during lunch and later, but did not come close, so some of us drove down Hartley Vale Road to examine a coal mine in the gully at the foot of the hill, which was opened in 1901 to supply the kerosene works in the valley, after coal mines nearer the works became uneconomic. We found four of the five adits, but all had been blown in. We then cruised along Hartley Vale Road, noticing the Comet Inn, the ash and slag heaps on Reedy Creek, and Collit's Inn. The white ash was used at one time as an abradant in toothpaste, and as recently as the 1970s was used in making light-coloured bricks.

We returned by Mitchell's Pass (now Victoria Pass). The rain held off till we were all safely home.

Rachel Makinson

<u>PLEASE NOTE DETAILS OF ARETHUSA FALLS WALK – SATURDAY, 20th JUNE</u>

Meet at Evans Lookout at 7.30 am. Horse Track – Hilary Falls – Arethusa Falls – Beauchamp Falls. Hard. 10 hours approx. This walk is for experienced bush walkers only. Bring plenty of energy foods. <u>Leader</u>: Brian Wynands 39.4752 or 87.8342.

RED SPOTS

If you see a red spot on Page 1 of your Newsletter, it means your membership fees are in arrears.

As a result of a recent check of the Membership List, it was decided to delete all members who have been unfinancial for more than three years. You will understand we cannot afford to send Newsletters to people who have forgotten or have overlooked payment of fees for such a long period. The fees have remained at the same low figure for several years, and it is now found necessary to increase them in line with increasing costs.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE NOW \$6.00 SINGLE; \$10.00 DOUBLE; \$4.00 PENSIONERS & Juniors. PLEASE RE-NEW PROMPTLY OR THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER. RENEWAL FORM ON BACK COVER.

FRIENDS OF THE BATS

Before the lecture at the February monthly meeting, there were probably very few in the audience who would describe themselves as friends of the Bats, but after two hours of very interesting talk, slides and discussion and being introduced to "Gollum", a grey flying fox, I'm sure everybody had a change of heart. For centuries we've heard so many tales of vampires and the nasty blood sucking habits of bats that no one could think of liking them, much less having one for a pet.

It seems there are two distinct kinds of bats – the insectivorous small bats and the larger fruit bats or flying foxes. Bats are very widely distributed round the world and are mostly creatures of the night that assemble in large colonies in caves, or 'roosts' in rain forests.

The smaller bats live on insects and often have distorted nose and mouth parts which are believed to be used as echo sounding devices.

The fruit bats have very good nocturnal vision and a keen sense of smell which helps them to find the flowers and fruit which make up their diet. They are mammals, furry intelligent animals that give birth to live young. They prefer nectar and pollen from eucalyptus flowers, figs and lillipilli fruits rather than orchard fruit, but will eat orchard fruit if there is not enough pollen around.

This has given rise to a decline in their numbers at the hands of irate orchardists, but scientists now believe that flying foxes help man by pollinating eucalyptus flowers and dispersing seeds from the fruit they eat. "Friends of the Bats" is an organisation dedicated to conservation and better understanding of these unique and interesting creatures.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM BRONWYN WOOD, SPEAKER AT FEBRUARY MEETING

"I asked our bat expert about the behaviour one lady said she had observed amongst Wingham Brush bats, of them "hanging off each other in long strings". Our bat expert, who studies the Wingham Brush bats, said that the Greys (Gollum) do not indulge in this sort of behaviour, but that the Little Reds (which frequently temporarily share Greys camps) do (she calls it "clumping" and an example can be partially seen on the front of the Batwatch leaflet). She has also observed, and had many reports, of Greys hanging along nearly vertical vines close together, which from a distance is often mistaken for the bats hanging off each other, which they do not do. So at your next meeting you might pass this information on to the lady who asked – she might have seen an example of either of the above."

5 March 1987.

BRUCE'S WALK Part 2

Illustration not copied.

Since writing Bruce's Walk, Part 1, I find the complete walk is described in Jim Smith's "How to See the Blue Mountains, 2nd Edition". However, to keep faith with our Editor and in the belief that another description can add interest, I press on with Bruce's Walk, Part 2.

As mentioned in Part 1, from the high points the walk looks most unpromising because of the man made scars, but once in the valleys, peace and serenity prevails.

As in Part 1, the walk crosses three creeks and so falls and rises three times but the accompanying scenery is distinctly different. My guess is that it is all due to increased elevation. Part 1 started from Kent Street at an altitude of approx 760 metres and terminated at the eastern end of Lawson View Drive at around 800 metres. The commencement of Part 2 at Lamartine Avenue is at 900 metres and at Katoomba Aerodrome the end of Part 2, it is at 980 metres so in the main we are walking through country about 100 to 200 metres higher than in Part 1. The vegetation is much scrubbier and it has patches of heath and hanging swamps. Angophoras disappear completely.

The track is well defined though a little fossicking is necessary to pick up markers where the walk is cut by access roads.

The biggest obstacle is the trudge from Katoomba Aerodrome to Medlow Bath Station. If you do the walk west to east, a taxi from Katoomba costs around \$14 and you still have the walk along Blaxland Road to Wentworth Falls station.

However the access roads of Mount Hay and Queens Road provide points where probes can be made east or west along the walk in very easy stages.

Loyd Jones

REPORT FROM TASMANIA'S WEST COAST

The Queenstown Tourist Development Committee has called for the removal of vegetation on the 'bald hills' around the town.

The committee believes the hills are one of the town's greatest tourist attractions and add to the unique character of the mining town.

The hills, originally covered in dense rainforest, lost most of their vegetation earlier this century through logging, sulphur fumes from the mine smelters and bushfires.

The high rainfall experienced in the area washed away the topsoil and prevented the forest replenishing itself.

The committee's president, Mrs Joyce Bushby, said the committee would like to see the removal of the regrowth, most of which is not native to the area.

She said the committee realised there would be some opposition to the removal of any regrowth, but it was vital to the area's tourist industry the hill remained as they were.

"This area is beautiful in its own way, particularly when a good sunset occurs and the hills light up with colour," she said.

"Even if the area is kept as a memorial of what humans can do to an environment in a short time, it should be kept as it is."

Mrs Bushby said the hills were also the greatest firebreak the town could have.

Michael Moore in "The Hobart Mercury"

FORMATION OF WIRES BRANCH ON MOUNTAINS

Negotiations are underway to form a Blue Mountains branch of WIRES (Wildlife Information & Rescue Service).

The primary aims of WIRES are:

- 1. The rescue and rehabilitation of injured native animals and their release through the use of an organised network of volunteer rescuers, foster carers and veterinarians.
- 2. The provision of information on the requirements of native animals so that their survival and freedom in urban areas is maximised.

WIRES in Sydney has established a network of hundreds of volunteer rescuers, foster carers and veterinarians available on call. Rescuers and carers are given training in identification, first-aid, rescue techniques and transport, foster caring and release back into the wild.

A public meeting will be held to set up a local branch of WIRES, tentatively on Friday, 15th May, at Springwood Civic Centre. Watch local press for confirmation. Please come to the meeting if you are interested in becoming a co-ordinator, volunteer rescuer, foster carer or just help when you can, For further information contact George Threlfo (395125) or Jill and Mick Dark (587061).

Society News

Land Preservation Fund. On 28th February and 1st March, the Land Preservation Fund Committee held their Autumn Plant Sale. Well, it was much too hot on Saturday and much too wet on Sunday but despite this we had many keen gardeners turn up to hear Graham and Jill talk on the Saturday morning – Graham encouraging us all to plant lots of Banksias to attract birds to our winter gardens and Jill's boundless enthusiasm making us feel like gardening with natives despite the weather. The morning ended with many varied suggestions to help Waratahs to flower, including spreading good wood ash around the base to make the plant think there had been a bush fire and prompt it to flower; another suggested burying rusty tins neat the tree and Jill has seen plants flowering well which had been cultivated around yearly, so we will hope for some good results next Spring. The afternoon walk was most enjoyable. The weather prevented many bird sightings, but proved excellent for lizard watching instead. Denfenella is always delightful, specially on a hot day.

Guest Speakers. Since the beginning of 1987, we have had three very interesting guest speakers after the general meetings. Jill and Mick Dark had some very colourful and informative slides of their safari into North Queensland rain forest territory. Unfortunately the rain forest is diminishing in tropical North Queensland as in other parts of the world, but it is interesting to see the difference in character of the vegetation – luscious growth and fierce competition for light on all sides. David Thomas's "Catching and Handling of Small Animals" talk illustrated the care that is necessary not to injure the delicate creatures and not be bitten by them at the same time. David illustrated the art of putting a possum into a bag by swinging it by the tail and foreleg and into the bag before it has time to grab the bag on the way in. The third lecture by Bronwyn and David Wood and "Gollum", the Fruit Bat, was called "Friends of the Bats" and has been reported more fully elsewhere.

Education Committee has been busy preparing a fun folder primarily for children, on the Charles Darwin Walk, the track nearing completion from the highway to the top of the Falls. The front cover is a colour-in of the Explorer making his 'stroll' 150 years ago. Inside there is a description of his walk in 1836, a crossword puzzle, a fold out "Snakes and Ladders" kind of game tracing Darwin's Walk today and the hazards along the way and the good things to see and do in the bush. There are other games as well. The object of the booklet is to make children aware of the bush, to relish it and care for it. It is not yet completed but will be on sale later at the Hut.

Membership Fees. The membership fees of the Society have remained at the same level for the last few years. In keeping with increasing costs and inflation generally it was decided at the February General Meeting to increase the fees for Pensioners and Juniors \$4 per year; Single Membership \$6 per year; Family Membership \$10 per year, as set out inside the front cover of this Newsletter. A revision and up-dating of the Membership List has long been overdue and is now being done. Anyone unfinancial for more than three years has been deleted from the records.

NEST ROBBERS

Last month I wrote about the large proportion of small birds' nests that get robbed – on that occasion I suspected a pair of grey currawongs.

Well, June and Eric Blick of Medlow Bath have an interesting story about another nest robber. About mid-December they heard a terrific commotion in their front garden and found four white browed scrub wrens vigorously attacking a small brown snake.

The snake searched and searched, with great diligence and purpose, even back tracking once, and totally ignored the birds which were dive bombing it constantly.

The Blick's had to go out after watching it for 10 minutes. In their return they found an empty eggshell and then after much searching, a small ball-shaped nest with a neat side entrance, built on the ground under a tussock, and empty! The persistent snake had presumably located it by scent.

Last Spring in my garden, scrub wrens and brown thornbills together were attacking a blue tongue lizard, thereby indicating that here is another predator of bird species who build their nests low down.

One day, June and Eric, found a fairly large lizard sunning itself in their garden – 12 to 15 ins long, it was speckled green in colour! In their seven years residence, they have never seen another green lizard. Does anyone know what it is?

Graham Alcorn

WINDY DAY, BLUE MOUNTAINS

Over the trees around my house
Fifty huge birds are playing,
Soaring and swooping about in the gale,
Yellow tails splaying;
Screeching and screaming with much ado,
Fifty great jubilant Black Cockatoos,
Showing the rest of us what they can do,
The big exhibitionist clowns!

AVIAN DETECTIVE - DIP FALLS

The Dip Falls are about 25 miles from Wynyard in Tasmania's West. They are beautiful gushing falls with plenty of water, surrounded by rain forest with enormous eucalypts, one of which was especially singled out as "The Big Tree". In the process of looking for this monster, I picked up a green branch lying by the side of the track. To my surprise there was a beautiful nest attached to it, made of cobwebs and fine grass, suspended from the branch with a side entrance and a little awning over the door. It was camouflages with green moss and would have been hard to see in the bush. It was lined with soft feathers and down and had one infertile egg still inside. We had no idea what bird could have made it. Later I described the nest to Graham Alcorn who thought it might be a thornbill or a scrub wren. I had bought a little book on Tasmanian birds in Hobart and sure enough, there was a picture of a Tasmanian Thornbill with a nest very similar to the one found. It is indigenous only to Tasmania.

Ewart Collings