UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Black Cockatoos by G.J. Broinowski

Newsletter

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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.

Vice Presidents Eric Blick 88 Mick Dark 58 Secretary Reg Toseland 84 Treasurer Elvine Thomas 84 Membership Officer Betty Collings 57 Newsletter Editor Ewart Collings 57 Walks Convenors Olive & John Noble 87 Education Officer Dorothy Davis 57	
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Hut Duty Organiser Beverley Thompson 57	.2076
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Hut Curator Barry Barnes	

NEWSLETTER: 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.

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

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

WALKS: Walks are organised 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.



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Newsletter

No. 70

January, 1988

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WALKS PROGRAMME 1988

IT IS ESSENTIAL ON ALL WALKS IN THE HOT WEATHER THAT MEMBERS SHOULD CARRY AT LEAST 1 LITRE OF WATER

CARRY ON ALL WALK	S: First Aid Kit
	☐ Torch
	☐ Matches
	☐ Warm Shirt or Sweater
	☐ Protective Rainwear
	□ Hat

WEAR SAFE FOOTWEAR

JanuarySunday 3rd - Porter's Pass

Meet at Bundarra Street Blackheath, over level crossing, at 10.00 a.m. Walk through Porter's Pass, steep in places with slippery steps. Flat sections with extensive views over Kanimbla Valley 5-6 hours approx. Medium. Leader: To be announced later.

January Saturday 16th - Mystery Walk
Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. 45 minute drive. Be prepared
to paddle in cool waters. 5-6 hours approx. Medium.
Leader: John Noble 87-8342

January Thursday 21st - Sassafras Gully

Meet across Railway line at Faulconbridge 10.00 a.m. Cool area for walking in Summer. Rainforest and Turpentines. 4-5 hours approximately. Medium. Leader: Dierdre Morton - 58-8137

February Sunday 7th - Pierce's Pass

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. Drive along Bell's Line of Road to start of track. Walk down to Grose River, through rain-forest area and wet sclerophyll forest. Medium. 5-6 hours approx. Leader: Bob Jones. 58-8361

February Thursday 18th - Pulpit Rock - Ross Cave - Waterfall

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. Kanimbla Valley views. Easy as you wish to make it. 3-4 hours approx. Leader: Rachel Makinson 87 8342

February Saturday 20th - Evan's Crown

Meet at Bundarra Street Blackheath, over level crossing, at 9.00 a.m. Interesting area with short rock scrambles. Extensive views. Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Ron Compagnoni 87 8899

March Sunday 6th - Ruined Castle (By Popular Request)

Meet at the head of the track to the Golden Stairs on Narrowneck at 10.00 a.m. Rain forest, eucalypts, shale mining and rock formations. Historic area. Medium. 5-6 hours approx. Leader: Bob Jones 58 8361

March Thursday 17th - Waterhouse Park

Meet at Hazelbrook School at 10.00 a.m. Meander down to the Lake, seeing rock formations on the way. Easy.

Leaders: Dulcie and Reg Toseland 84.1682

March Saturday 19th - Empire Pass

Meet Lawson Bowling Club parking area, i.e. turn left after crossing railway bridge at Lawson, at 10.00 a.m. Rain forest area, canyons, waterfalls. 7-9 Ks., round walk. 5 hours approx. Medium. Leader: Grace Bayley 59.1877

April Sunday 3rd - Wentworth Pass

Meet at the Hut at 9.30 a.m. Excellent walk with fine views across the Jamison Valley, then down into the rain forest area. 5-6 hours approx. Medium - Hard.

Leader: Dierdre Morton 58.8137

April Thursday 21st - Creek Walk

Meet at High School, Chapman Parade, Faulconbridge at 10.30 a.m. Unusual rock formations, sink holes, caves and a variety of things to see. 3-4 hours approx. Easy. Leader: Win Millar 57.1464

April Saturday 23rd - Medlow Bath Wander

Meet at 24 Bellevue Crescent, Medlow Bath at 10.00 a.m. Explore around the Three Brothers area. Walk to the Sun Bath, Maxine's Grotto, Flying Fox and Mark's Tomb. Medium 4-5 hours approx.

Leader: Eric Blick 88.1051

May Sunday 1st - Willawong Pool

Meet at Car Park, South Hazelbrook at 9.00 a.m. Walk to Willawong Pool, Terrace Falls and Victoria Falls. 5 hours approx. Medium. Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

May Thursday 19th - Lyre Bird Dell Area

Meet at Gordon Falls Bus Stop, Olympian Parade at 9.30 a.m. Walk to Lyre Bird Dell, Pool of Siloam, Gordon Falls and Prince Henry Walk. Extensive views, waterfalls etc. Easy. 4-5 hrs approx. Leaders: Dulcie & Reg Toseland

May Saturday 21st - Black Jerry's Ridge - Cox River - Six Foot Track

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 8.30 a.m. PROMPT. Proceed along Megalong Valley road to Six Foot Track entrance (some cars will be left here). The rest to the Mountains River Riders gate entrance. Along Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox River, walk by the river, then up the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley Road. Medium - Hard. 7 hours approx. Kangaroos can be sighted along the ridge.

Leaders: John & Olive Noble. 87.8342

June Sunday 5th - Leura Forest

Meet at the Old Swimming Pool, Leura at 9.30 a.m. A walk through Leura Forest 5-6 hours approx. Medium for regular walkers. Hard for casual walkers.

Leader: David THOMAS 84 2121

June Thursday 16th - National Pass

Meet at The Hut at 9.00 a.m. Overcliff walk - Fletchers Lookout Queen's Cascade and National Pass. Extensive views across the Jamison Valley. 5-6 hours approx. Medium. Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

June Saturday 18th - Queen's Road Ramble

Meet at the Bowling Club Lawson at 9.30 a.m. for an exploratory walk along Queen's Road. Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Grace Bayley 59.1955

WALK REPORT - DEEP PASS - SATURDAY 17TH OCTOBER

The day was cold, dull and showery as 13 members set off for Deep Pass. There were plenty of Waratahs by the side of the road on the drive out there. For those who don't know where Deep Pass is, it is situated right on the northern boundary of the Blue Mountains National Park straddling the southern edges of the Wollimi National park. It is part of a network of rugged gullies, Deep Pass is a green and ferny gully with a well marked track going down to a clearing. The track goes east into Nayook Creek Gorge where Aborigine hand stencils can be seen. From there we cut across the underground creek to the opposite cliff face, where we walked along the track around huge sandstone boulders and under high tree ferns to a horseshoe formation area where we had lunch, sitting under tree ferns to avoid a shower of rain. We continued our walk under the cliff back to the clearing and saw two pardolotes entering their nest in a hole in the bank They were quite unconcerned by our presence. We returned along the track through Deep Pass and back to the cars.



WALK - BLUE GUM FOREST - SUNDAY 1ST NOVEMBER 1987

This is one of the most taxing one day walks in the area about 22 of us gathered at Blackheath on a fairly warm Sunday. We proceeded along Hat Hill Road, where we were dazzled by the display of spotted sun orchids, to Perrys Lookdown. Going downwards to the forest the group seemed to split into three, the vanguard making good time owing to the fact that once started they couldn't stop. They waited at the 'cross roads' where they met up with Lloyd Jones and Ron Campagnoni who had started off very early to follow their own pursuits. Then the middle group arrived and they waited for the tail enders who had taken their time and enjoyed bird watching, finding a scrub wren's nest, seeing a rufous fantail etc, there was also much botanising.

We all enjoyed lunch beneath the beautiful blue gums, some paddled in the creek, others took off on short walks and some remained supine. Although we should have all liked to remain much longer the ascent had to be tackled but before we left Ron Campagnoni addressed the group on the problems that are plaguing the forest and how everyone should be made aware of what is happening there.

At about 2 p.m. the toughies took off, followed by those who knew their limitations and wanted to take a slow pace and finally the main group started. It was a leap frog progress upwards, those whose energy flopped were given encouragement and help by the overtakers, but especially by Bob Jones and John Noble. When we had done the work we were met by a couple of Aquarians who were gallantly offering us nectar disguised as cups of water! Eventually everybody made it to the top and we all felt we had done very well indeed and wondered if we could do it again.

David & Elvine Thomas

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WALK REPORT - SIX FOOT TRACK - FINAL PART - SATURDAY 21 NOVEMBER 1987

The weather was perfect as eighteen members set off from the Bindi Cabins at the start of the final section of the Six Foot Track. We walked through the open forest area along the old logging road then down part of the original section of the Six Foot Track to Carlotta Arch. A few members meandered down through the Devil's Coach House and the Grand Arch back up to Carlotta Arch where we had lunch. Then a slow, steady walk back along the track to the cars.

Olive Noble

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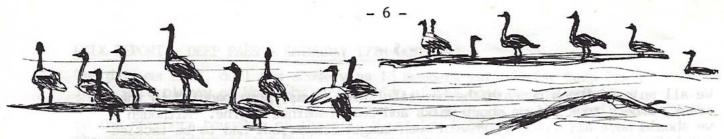
BURROWING KANGAROO

In September the Conservation Society made a donation of \$20.00 to World Wildlife Fund in respect of their appeal re Burrowing Kangaroos. This is a marsupial, Bettonia Lesueuri, endemic to Australia. They belong to the family POTOROIDAE (Potoros) and unfairly called Rat Kangaroo. This one Lesueurs Rat Kangaroo - Lesueurs Bettong, Burrowing Bettong, with many Aboriginal names - Boodie, Tungoo, Yalua and many more. Pitjanjatjarra people knew it as Mitika. Bettong also an Aboriginal name for a small wallaby and Lesueur after C.A. Lesueur, a French naturalist, historian and illustrator, who visited Australia 1800-1803.

<u>Status</u> Once abundant on the mainland from Victoria, South Australia to Western Australia, is now only found on Burrow Island and Dorre Island with a limited population on Boodie Island.

Food Fungi, grubs, insects, seeds, tubers, grass and roots.

The rabbit and fox were the main contributors towards its' demise on the mainland.



MORE ABOUT THE BIRDS OF KAKADU

Heat, dust and distance, flies and blue skies, red rocks and pandanus green have faded into a dream, blotted out by the green of England. Green fields, green hills, sunken lanes like tunnels of green and forests so green the very air seems green. But the birds of Kakadu are firmly imprinted. To me Kakadu means birds. Not that the botanist or whatever would not find a wealth of interest, but the birds, both for quantity and variety exceeded what I had hoped. However scenically it is not good to try to see Kakadu from a campervan in four days. There is a lot of driving to be done before reaching the escarpment. The only part one can reach at the moment on a sealed road is Nourlangie Rock and most of the other roads into the escarpment need a four wheel drive, though the road to Jim Jim Falls is going to be sealed soon. Except for a few parts the Highway from Darwin is flat and not very interesting; but there is Fogg Dam.

After collecting our campervan near the Airport we set off towards Kakadu and were in time to have an evening with the birds of Fogg Dam. This expanse of shallow water is broken with islands of reeds which give cover to reed loving birds as well as those feeding in the water or on its edge. A road runs along a causeway and in the wetter times water would be on either side. Birds here are in their millions dominated by the little corellas whose cries fill the air drowning even the honking of magpie geese and the shrieking of plover, then as they move from feeding to camping the air becomes a pulsating white sheet of birds and the talk is even louder. Here I noted about sixty species of birds and that but a portion of what could be there. With binoculars peering into the distance I would then discover just below me pied herons with the other more familiar ones, several different egrets poised ready to spear a fish, magpie geese up-ending in an attempt to get lily roots, a royal spoonbill sifting for food, jacanas chasing each other across the lily leaves, a shy white browed crake also walking on the lily leaves but mainly staying close to the reeds, green pygmy geese looking dapper as they fossicked with their mates and crimson finches swaying the reeds. There was perpetual movement and interest with new birds constantly being discovered. And what wonderful noises came to us during the night, including those of fruit bats that were interested in the trees near the van. Dawn at Fogg Dam was yet another revelation.

Although I said Nourlangie Rock is the only place where we could with limited time in a campervan get into the escarpment it is a wonderful spot. Orange, pink, grey rocks suddenly rise tall and ragged above the olive green. A very informative, temporary, anthropologist ranger gave us a guided tour of the spectacular art gallery. Aborigines over the centuries, sheltering above the wetlands, have used this uneven sweep of sheltering rock with its numerous caves and its high protecting brow and here today we can see their art and learn of their ways. Not only the wet but the mosquitoes drove them to higher drier land and this not so long ago. Still we could see strips of paper bark just where sleepers had left their bed. The Park is leased to the Federal Government

and aborigines advise and help to run the Park. As we studied their art a sandstone thrush sang and later we were lucky to see a pair of chestmut-quilled rock-pigeons quite unconcerned with our scrutiny. The blue cave paintings are near here and the walk is by tumbles of rock, jump-ups that I hoped may be a home for white throated grass wrens but that little bird eluded me. The blue of these rock paintings, sparingly and effectively applied, came from laundry blue bags. Much of the art is quite recent. Walking three kms at midday in Kakadu is far more wearying than Roderiguez Pass. The lack of good shade can be quite a problem.

There are various boat trips one can take on the South Aligator River and we chose one on the Yellow Waters, so named because of algae that grow on the surface at certain times. The river harbours many crocodiles Some have grown to most impressive proportions, all were very sleepy as they mainly eat at night. That is, when they do eat, for a magpie goose would last them several days. From the boat we saw birds all about us. Brolgas in the grass moved delicately, jabirus with legs too long and beaks too big looked quite unbelievable, and a rare sighting, two great billed herons unwound themselves from the riverside growth. I noticed on the shore the flitting brilliance of shining flycatchers, the rust of the females quite marvellous and then the exquisite little kingfisher, slightly smaller than a robin, darting down to the water and back to its perch. We had been enjoying the forest kingfishers working from the wires. They are quite numerous and every bit of water will have at least one. They are the same brilliant deep blue and contrasting white of the little. About twenty nankeen night herons were disturbed from their rest and lazily flew off. One is always a delight let alone twenty. A pratincole was darting about on the grass and a young black bittern hunched in the reeds. Among all these strangers a willy wag tail was feeding young in a nest over the water. Magpie geese were everywhere. Not the clear black and white I expected but various shades as many come up from digging covered with mud from bill tip to shoulder and the juveniles are duller. There were always pygmy geese on the water often accompanied by burdekin ducks and the massive pelicans were cruising about or talking to the campers on the bank. Again the guide was well informed and constantly manoeuvred the boat so as to give us the best sightings and stopped the motor to tell us something, though the boat was quiet and slow.

We found another bird stop, Mamukala, where we spent some time. On certain days a ranger takes a group from here and no doubt uses the hide on the edge of the billabong. We found the hide unnecessary and sat in the shade, good shade this time, and watched. For density of birds there would be even more there than at Fogg Dam. It is the most marvellous sight. By September the water all over the park has dried out quite a lot so the birds are reduced to a few areas, thus the mass of birds on the remaining stretch, mostly magpie geese. However the more one looked the more one found and something exciting was always happening. Dainty black winged terms flittered over the water and marsh harriers ranged above. Several species of waders prodded the muddy shore. Pelicans were lying in the shallow water near the edge, their bills extended in the mud fossicking in the most extraordinary way, then a head would come up and some very angular shape would show in the bill as the bird tossed it about before it was seen going down the neck. Could they be eating crayfish?

There were land birds too! I saw ten different honey eaters. Many take advantage of gardens around settlements. Once we stopped while a partridge pigeon stepped neatly across the road. Red tailed black cockatoos take the place of our familiar yellow ones. I was delighted to see the torresian pigeon, a large black and white bird, bigger than a bronzewing but a fruit eater. Red backed wrens live there, the females almost chestnut. And so I could go on, but listing birds is of no interest except to the dedicated.

The Park has two motels and both look very good indeed though need to be booked a long way ahead. For those who want to make use of camps and their facilities there is a good supply. A camp at The Bark Hut before Kakadu is by a large stretch of water where one can swim. Not usual in this place of crocodiles. You can fly into the Park and there are flights to be had within the Park. Though I revelled in the birds, Kakadu has a variety of things to interest all and even those not interested in birds could not help but marvel at the sight of them in such abundance.

Jean Armstrong

JOHN SINCLAIR AND FRASER ISLAND

Many members probably saw the A.B.C. "7.30 Report" on Fraser Island and the battle Mr. John Sinclair fought to save its beaches from sandmining companies. The battle was won but subsequently he was forced to resign from the Queensland Public Service after years of frustration and and opposition and lack of job satisfaction. As the result of an unsuccessful libel suit against Jo Bjelke Petersen he was saddled with huge legal costs and was threatened with bankruptcy.

Our Society was amongst the thousands of viewers who responded to the report with a deluge of letters and donations of sympathy and support. The amount he received exceeded \$60,000, enough to avoid bankruptcy, and establish a John Sinclair Trust for the protection of Fraser Island.

We received a letter of thanks and appreciation from him explaining in detail the history of his trial. It is very gratifying to realise the extent of support throughout Australia for the cause of conservation, and the deep sense of the injustice done to John Sinclair.

His letter is available at the Hut for any member who wishes to read it.

OPERATION 'SEEDS ALOFT'

On Thursday, 29th October, as part of the week of celebrations to commemorate the Wentworth Falls Public School Centenary, Operation 'Seeds Aloft' was launched. Each child was given a small package of about half a dozen native seeds attached to a lighter-than-air balloon. Hundreds of green and yellow balloons rose into the air at precisely 1 p.m. At 5.05 p.m. contact was made with the school to say a balloon had been picked up by people from Newcastle who were picnicing on the Hawkesbury River. They promised to plant the seeds. Should the balloons be lost in the bush the seeds were contained in a special paper bag which would disintegrate in time, and allow the plants to grow.

THOUGHTS ARISING FROM AN INDIAN JOURNEY

I doubt if anybody who had made the journey to India could not have come away without pondering on the mysteries of life. What quirk of fate saw one soul to be born in a land of opportunity for personal development and another in a land where such opportunities are for the favoured few. For the rest a fast rising population ensures their share of India's finite natural resources are and will continue to be less and less

The next stage in one's ponderings is to wonder if the material fate of India is a mirror of what Australia could be drifting towards.

I reach for my rather battered copy of "Confronting the Future" by Professor Charles Birch who has given more thought to it than any of us. As his foreword reads, he wrote the book to explain in simple non-technical language the consequences of man's blind, unplanned progress in an age of explosive growth and technological development. His beliefs and suggestions are better conveyed by direct quotes. I feel he sums his own beliefs by opening his book with a quote from H.E. Daly "Towards a Steady State Economy" - 'The proper object of economic activity is to have enough bread, not infinite bread, not a world turned into bread, not even vast storehouses full of bread. The infinite hunger of man, his moral and spiritual hunger, is not to be satisfied, is indeed exacerbated, by the current demonic madness of "producing more and more things for more and more people. Afflicted with an infinite itch, modern man is scratching in the wrong place, and his frenetic clawing is drawing blood from the life sustaining circulatory systems of his spaceship, the 'biosphere'".

Birch likens us to people in a dark tunnel. The darkness in which we are travelling continues into the future distance in total darkness. But there is a cross-road in the tunnel, and at the end of that tunnel there is light if we change our direction. What is the point of continuing on in darkness when there is some prospect of light if we change our direction? Is there hope for mankind? None, if we continue in our present direction; some if we change to a totally different course.

Now his reasons that make him believe we are in a dark tunnel: "The pursuit of material things in the affluent western world has not brought the promised paradise on earth. Instead it throws into the clearest coldest light the spiritual, ethical and philosophical hunger of mankind. It is this hunger which remains unsatisfied in the affluent society."

He calls this tunnel of darkness — the unsustainable society. He points out that it is impossible for the poor people of the world to share the fruits of scientific technological revolution like their rich neighbours, for "if all the people of the world were to consume resources at the rate , say, of the Americans, the total known reserves of petroleum would be used up in 6 years, and the annual consumption of timber, copper, sulphur, iron and water would exceed available known reserves of these resources. So if our objective is that quality of life for all should rise — that it should be sustained, then the material standard of living of one section of the world needs to fall and that of the poor people should rise. At the moment the affluent countries represent 20% of mankind but they consume 90% of the earth's resources that are consumed each year and that proportion is growing". Even with all this economic advantage our days, he argues, are numbered. He quotes the economist E.F. Schumaker "An attitude of life which seeks fulfilment in the single minded pursuit of wealth — in short materialism — does not fit into

this world because it contains within itself no limiting principle, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited. He himself says much the same further on in his book - "A society committed to growth for growth's sake and production for production's sake, not only pits man against the natural world but also man against man because of the inherently competitive nature of the enter-

Birch then puts forward " the light in the tunnel" as being "sustainable society". He writes "from a society whose direction is primarily orientated to material growth we have to move to one which is more in conformity with the carrying capacity of the earth and in which a high quality of life for all peoples in all countries The sustainable society is can be attained and then sustained indefinitely. dependent upon an ecologically ordered world".

"The sustainable society is a revolutionary concept. It will not be achieved without revolutionary political transformations involving the demise of power groups with interests vested in the status quo".

The essence of a sustainable society is, he writes -

1. Stable population numbers, i.e. zero population growth;

2. Fixed material wealth per person - this includes zero energy growth, a maximum as well as a minimum wage per person;

3. Economic growth to change its emphasis from production of goods to production of services such as transportation, education, health services, science, the arts and all forms of creative leisure;

4. Industry directed to social goals instead of profitability, e.g. durability of

goods instead of inbuilt obsolescence.

While Birch's logic is, I think, unassailable, the way these revolutionary changes in our attitudes can be brought about is anyone's guess, but he feels the affluent societies should be the first to change their ways. This is because such societ-He regards the argument ies make the greater inroads on the world's resources. that the benefits of increased output will trickle down to the poverty stricken as a deception by those who wield power, and quotes facts and figures which show the gap between the rich and poor nations is steadily growing wider.

Birch's book is strangely prophetic. It was written in 1976. He appreciates the difficulties of capitalism and Marxism to abandon growth concepts and outlines the possibilities of widespread totalitarian regimes as social order breaks down.

But no system can be sustained which allows the use of energy as is being used Every source of energy other than the sun causes the environment to heat He suggests we have 150 years to consider the up and cause thermal pollution. inevitable problem of disastrous climatic changes.

Since 1976 the rapid depletion of the ozone layer has become the current bogey and the 150 years estimate has been reduced to 10's and 20's.

Birch's call for global thinking in 1976 is many times more relevant now. does not despair completely. Change will come, he says, if people in general are convinced of the need of it.

Knowledge of the state of play is a first essential - hence this much watered down contribution from Birch's 'Confronting the Future'. Chapter 1 of a 12 Chapter Lloyd Jones book.

Society News

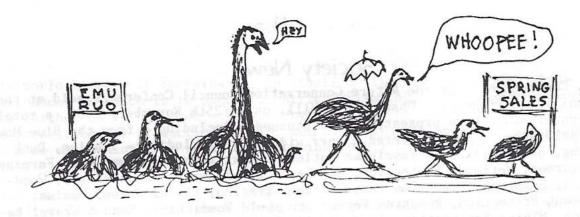
At the Nature Conservation Council Conference held at the National Trust Property - Observatory Hill, on 24/25th November, 1987, a total of 87 submissions were presented and discussed - including 8 from the Blue Mountains delegates. These covered a very wide range including: - Tourism, Duck Shooting, Horse Riding in Kosciusko National Park, possible Commercial Farming of Kangaroos, Wetlands Protection, Gun-Laws, Developments, Rainforests, Woodchipping, Sewerage, Study Centres, Cat Registration, Flying Foxes, Koalas, Escarpment Protection, Roadside Vegetation, Gold Fossicking, Sand & Gravel Extraction, Mining Exploration, Roadside Advertising, Aboriginal Engravings, F5 Freeway, Broom Eradication, Nature Reserves, Marine Conservation, Sea Dumping, Coastal Open-space, Environmental Candidates for Election, Crown Land Act, Blue Mountains Developments, Pesticides, Aerial Spraying, Food Irradiation, Energy Production, Mud Brick Home Building. These are by no means the whole list, which can be studied by asking Dulcie and Reg Toseland for their copy ... and will we all be satisfied after these submissions are presented to the Government? No Way!!!

Congratulations to George Threlfo of Lower Blue Mountains on his election to decision making body on the Nature Conservation Council.

Power House Museum. At the invitation of Bob Debus M.P., about thirty Blue Mountains residents, including Dulcie and Reg Toseland, went on a tour of inspection of the newly completed Museum on Saturday, 14th November. This is a project which is utilising disused buildings, with very little disturbance, and it is a fine structure which will be officially opened in March 1988. It is well worth a visit, although we were warned that it would take three days or more to see everything, and involves a walk of 8 to 10 kilometres. There are over 8,000 objects to be displayed, spanning almost every field of human activity and creativity, including achievements in Australian science, decorative art, and everyday life in Australia, past and present. Please do not be confused about the name 'Powerhouse' - that is what it used to be!! It is situated in Harris Street, Ultimo, and is about 15 minutes walk: from Central Station. If and when the Monorail is functioning, there will be a stopping place at this museum.

Guest Speakers. Jim Smith was guest speaker for our October Meeting. He showed us slides of walks he had done in Britain, in particular the Track through the Pennines of 250 kilometres. Walkers in Britain jealously guard their walks and footpaths which in some cases cut right across farmers' fields. Membership of walking clubs runs into thousands. Walkers come to England especially to traverse the famous tracks, as they also do in New Zealand. Jim Smith's ambition is to "reopen historic walking tracks" from Woodford to Mt. Victoria which would reveal some of the wonders of the Blue Mountains to overseas walkers. He produced maps to show how this could be done by connecting various existing tracks together.

In November Margaret Essen showed us interesting slides of her journeys through the Top End, the Kimberleys and Kakadu Park. This area is only now being made accessible to tourists, scientists, conservationists and other people interested in Nature. It has great potential — the wealth of wild life, the rivers and mountains, the aboriginal rock paintings, the wet lands which attract many different species of birds and the rare and beautiful plants.



The Tables Turned

The Emu and the Painted Snipe And other species of this type, Behave in a manner that could vex us Men, reversing the role of sexes.

For instance, it's of no avail
Courting a Painted Button Quail,
Before you've considered what to do
The female Quail is courting you.

When she's laid the eggs she'll leave you,
Caring not that this might grieve you.
Alas, they'll never understand us
Men – they're polyandrous.

THE BIRDBATHS OF UMBIGUMBI

This is the title of a book of the collected verse of Graham Alcorn which should be out in January. Some of the poems have already appeared in our Newsletter. There are about 30 poems mainly in a humourous vein. Graham has been a keen bird watcher for more than forty years and knows the ways of the swift, the raven, the bush curlew, the oyster catcher, the tree creeper and many others. The above poem is taken from the book, which is illustrated by Ewart Collings. It is produced by Three Sisters Publications and will be on sale at the Hut and in all bookstalls.

Three Cheers for Beverley. Congratulations to Beverley Thompson on being made a Life Member of the Parents & Citizens Association of Wentworth Falls Public School. This honour was conferred at the School's recent Centenary Celebrations. As well shouldering for many years the constant and demanding job of organising the Hut Duty Roster, Beverley has at the same time been working tirelessly in the interests of the children of Wentworth Falls School. What a woman!

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.,
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.
Name
Address

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 m	embership or
renewal of my membership.	Single	\$ 6.00
Name	Family	\$10.00
Address		\$ 4.00
	*strike out	which does not apply.



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

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

January 1988 No. 70

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	Dulcie 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	

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.

<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
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Burrowing Kangaroo
More about Kakadu
John Sinclair & Fraser Island
Thoughts on India
Society News
Birdbaths of Umbigumbi

COMING TALKS

<u>January</u> – Showing of Members Slides <u>February</u> – Ian Brown, East Coast, Cape York. <u>March</u> – General Meeting.

WALKS PROGRAMME 1988

IT IS ESSENTIAL ON ALL WALKS IN THE HOT WEATHER THAT MEMBERS SHOULD CARRY AT LEAST 1 LITRE OF WATER

CARRY ON ALL WALKS:

- First Aid Kit
- Torch
- Matches
- Warm Shirt or Sweater
- Protective Rainwear
- Hat

WEAR SAFE FOOTWEAR

January Sunday 3rd – Porter's Pass

Meet at Bundarra Street Blackheath, over level crossing, at 10.00 am. Walk through Porter's Pass.

Steep in places with slippery steps. Flat sections with extensive views over Kanimbla Valley.

5-6 hours approx. Medium

<u>Leader</u>: To be announced later.

January Saturday 16th – Mystery Walk

Meet at MT Victoria station at 9.30 am. 45 minute drive. Be prepared to paddle in cool waters.

5-6 hour approx. Medium

Leader: John Noble 87-8342

January Thursday 21st – Sassafras Gully

Meet across Rialway line at Faulconbridge 10 am. Cool area for walking in Summer. Rainforest and Turpentines.

4-5 hours approx. Medium.

Leader: Dierdre Morton - 58-8137

February Sunday 7th – Pierce's Pass

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. Drive along Bell's Line of Road to start of track. Walk down to Grose River, through rain-forest area and wet sclerophyll forest.

Medium 5-6 hours approx. Leader: Bob Jones. 58-8361

<u>February Thursday 18th – Pulpit Rock – Ross Cave – Waterfall</u>

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 am. Kanimbla Valley views. Easy as you wish to make it.

3-4 hours approx.

Leader: Rachel Makinson 87-8342

<u>February Saturday 20th – Evan's Crown</u>

Meet at Bundarra Street Blackheath, over level crossing, at 9.00 am. Interesting area with short rock scrambles. Extensive views.

Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Ron Compagnoni 87-8899

March Sunday 6th – Ruined Castle (By Popular Request)

Meet at the head of the track to the Golden Stairs on Narrowneck at 10 am. Rain forest, eucalypts, shale mining and rock formations. Historic area.

Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

March Thursday 17th – Waterhouse Park

Meet at Hazelbrook School at 10 am. Meander down to the Lake, seeing rock formations on the way. Easy.

Leaders: Dulcie and Reg Toseland 84-1682

March Saturday 19th – Empire Pass

Meet Lawson Bowling Club parking area, ie turn left after crossing railway bridge at Lawson, at 10 am. Rain forest area, canyons, waterfalls. 7-9 Ks, round walk.

5 hours approx. Medium.

<u>Leader</u>: Grace Bayley 59-1877

April Sunday 3rd – Wentworth Pass

Meet at the Hut at 9.30 am. Excellent walk with fine views across the Jamison Valley, then down into the rain forest area.

5-6 hours approx. Medium – Hard.

Leader: Dierdre Morton 58-8137

April Thursday 21st – Creek Walk

Meet at High School, Chapman Parade, Faulconbridge at 10.30 am. Unusual rock formations, sink holes, caves and a variety of things to see.

3-4 hours approx. Easy.

Leader: Win Millar 57-1464

April Saturday 23rd - Medlow Bath Wander

Meet at 24 Bellevue Crescent, Medlow Bath at 10 am. Explore around the Three Brothers area.

Walk to the Sun Bath, Maxine's Grotto, Flying Fox and Mark's Tomb.

Medium 4-5 hours approx.

Leader: Eric Blick 88-1051

May Sunday 1st - Willawong Pool

Meet at Car Park, South Hazelbrook at 9 am. Walk to Willawong Pool, Terrace Falls and Victoria Falls.

5 hours approx. Medium.

Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

May Thursday 19th – Lyre Bird Dell Area

Meet at Gordon Falls Bus Stop, Olympian Parade at 9.30 am. Walk to Lyre Bird Dell, Pool of Siloam, Gordon Falls and Prince Henry Walk. Extensive views, waterfalls etc.

Easy 4-5 hours approx.

Leaders: Dulcie and Reg Toseland

May Saturday 21st – Black Jerry's Ridge – Cox River – Six Foot Track

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 8.30 am. PROMPT. Proceed along Megalong Valley road to Six Foot Track entrance (some cars will be left here). The rest to the Mountains River Riders gate entrance. Along Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox River, walk by the river, then up the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley Road.

Medium – Hard. 7 hours approx. Kangaroos can be sighted along the ridge.

Leaders: John and Olive Noble. 87-8342

June Sunday 5th – Leura Forest

Meet at the Old Swimming Pool, Leura at 9.30 am. A walk through Leura Forest.

5-6 hours approx. Medium for regular walkers. Hard for casual walkers.

Leader: David Thomas 84-2121

June Thursday 16th – National Pass

Meet at The Hut at 9 am. Overcliff walk – Fletchers Lookout, Queen's Cascade and National Pass. Extensive views across the Jamison Valley.

5-6 hours approx. Medium.

Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

June Saturday 18th – Queen's Road Ramble

Meet at the Bowling Club Lawson at 9.30am for an exploratory walk along Queen's Road. Medium 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Grace Bayley 59-1955

WALK REPORT - DEEP PASS - SATURDAY 17TH OCTOBER

The day was cold, dull and showery as 13 members set off for Deep Pass. There were plenty of Waratahs by the side of the road on the drive out there. For those who don't know where Deep Pass is, it is situated right on the northern boundary of the Blue Mountains National Park straddling the southern edges of the Wollemi National Park. It is part of a network of rugged gullies. Deep Pass is a green and ferny gully with a well marked track going down to a clearing. The track goes east into Nayook Creek Gorge where Aborigine hand stencils can be seen. From there we cut across the underground creek to the opposite cliff face, where we walked along the track around huge sandstone boulders and under high tree ferns to a horseshoe formation area where we had lunch, sitting under tree ferns to avoid a shower of rain. We continued our walk under the cliff back to the clearing and saw two pardalotes entering their nest in a hole in the bank. They were quite unconcerned by our presence. We returned along the track through Deep Pass and back to the cars.

Picture not reproduced.

WALK – BLUE GUM FOREST – SUNDAY 1ST NOVEMBER 1987

This is one of the most taxing one day walks in the area, about 22 of us gathered at Blackheath on a fairly warm Sunday. We proceeded along Hat Hill Road, where we were dazzled by the display of spotted sun orchids, to Perry's Lookdown. Going downwards to the forest the group seemed to split into three, the vangaurd making good time owing to the fact that once started they couldn't stop. They waited at the cross roads where they met up with Lloyd Jones and Ron Campagnoni who had started off very early to follow their own pursuits. Then the middle group arrived and they waited for the tail enders who had taken their time and enjoyed bird watching, finding a scrub wren's nest, seeing a rufous fantail etc, there was also much botanising.

We all enjoyed lunch beneath blue gums, some paddled in the creek, others took off on short walks and some remained supine. Although we should have all liked to remain much longer the ascent had to be tackled but before we left Ron Campagnoni addressed the group on the problems that are plaguing the forest and how everyone should be made aware of what is happening there.

At about 2 pm. the toughies took off, followed by those who knew their limitations and wanted to take a slow pace and finally the main group started. It was a leap frog progress upwards, those whose energy flopped were given encouragement and help by the overtakers, but especially by Bob Jones and John Noble. When we had done the work we were met by a couple of Aquarians who were gallantly offering us nectar disguised as cups of water! Eventually everybody made it to the top and we all felt we had done very well indeed and wondered if we could do it again.

WALK REPORT – SIX FOOT TRACK – FINAL PART – SATURDAY 21 NOVEMBER 1987

The weather was perfect as eighteen members set off from the Bindi Cabins at the start of the final section of the Six Foot Track. We walked through the open forest area along the old logging road then down part of the original section of the Six Foot Track to Carlotta Arch. A few members meandered down through the Devil's Coach House and the Grand Arch back up to Carlotta Arch where we had lunch. Then a slow, steady walk back along the track to the cars.

Jlive Nob	e

BURROWING KANGAROO

In September the Conservation Society made a donation of \$20.00 to World Wildlife Fund in respect of their appeal re Burrowing Kangaroos. This is a marsupial, Bettonia Lesueuri, endemic to Australia. They belong to the family POTOROIDAE (Potoroos) and unfairly called Rat Kangaroo. This one Lesueurs Rat Kangaroo – Lesueurs, Burrowing Bettong, with many Aboriginal names – Boodie, Tungoo, Yalua and many more. Pitjanjatjarra people knew it as Mitika. Bettong also an Aboriginal name for a small wallaby and Lesueur after C.A. Lesueur, a French naturalist, historian and illustrator, who visited Australia 1800-1803.

<u>Status</u> Once abundant on the mainland from Victoria, South Australia to Western Australia, is now only found on Burrow Island and Dorre Island with a limited population on Boodie Island.

<u>Food</u> Fungi, grubs, insects, seeds, tubers, grass and roots.

The rabbit and fox were the main contributors towards its demiss on the mainland.

MORE ABOUT THE BIRDS OF KAKADU

Heat, dust and distance, flies and blue skies, red rocks and pandanus green have faded into a dream, blotted out by the green of England. Green fields, green hills, sunken lanes like tunnels of green and forests so green the very air seems green. But the birds of Kakadu are firmly imprinted. To me Kakadu means birds. Not that the botanist or whatever would not find a wealth of interest, but the birds, both for quantity and variety exceeded what I had hoped. However scenically it is not good to try to see Kakadu from a campervan in four days. There is a lot of driving to be done before reaching the escarpment. The only part one can reach at the moment on a sealed road is Nourlangie Rock and most of the other roads into the escarpment need a four wheel drive, though the road to Jim Jim Falls is going to be sealed soon. Except for a few parts the Highway from Darwin is flat and not very interesting; but there is Fogg Dam.

After collecting our campervan neat the Airport we set off towards Kakadu and were in time to have an evening with the birds of Fogg Dam. This expanse of shallow water is broken with islands of reeds which give cover to reed loving birds as well as those feeding in the water or on its edge. A road runs along a causeway and in the wetter times water would be on either side. Birds here are in their millions dominated by the little corellas whose cries fill the air drowning even the honking of magpie geese and the shrieking of plover, then as they move from feeding to camping the air becomes a pulsating white sheet of birds and the talk is even louder.

Here I noted about sixty species of birds and that but a portion of what could be there. With binoculars peering into the distance I would then discover just below me pied herons with the other more familiar ones, several different egrets poised ready to spear a fish, magpie geese upending in an attempt to get lily roots, a royal spoonbill sifting for food, jacanas chasing each other across the lily leaves, a shy white browed crake also walking on the lily leaves but mainly staying close to the reeds, green pygmy geese looking dapper as they fossicked with their mates and crimson finches swaying the reeds. There was perpetual movement and interest with new birds constantly being discovered. And what wonderful noised came to us during the night, including those of fruit bats that were interested in the trees near the van. Dawn at Fogg Dam was yet another revelation.

Although I said Nourlangie Rock is the only place where we could with limited time in a campervan get into the escarpment it is a wonderful spot. Orange, pink, grey rocks suddenly rise tall and ragged above the olive green. A very informative, temporary, anthropologist ranger gave us a guided tour of the spectacular art gallery. Aborigines over the centuries, sheltering above the wetlands, have used this uneven sweep of sheltering rock with its numerous caves and its high protecting brow and here today we can see their art and learn of their ways. Not only the wet but the mosquitoes drove them to higher drier land and this not so long ago. Still we could see strips of paper bark just where sleepers had left their bed. The Park is leased to the Federal Government and Aborigines advise and help to run the Park. As we studied their art a sandstone thrush sang and later we were lucky to see a pair of chestnut-quilled rock-pigeons quite unconcerned with our scrutiny. The blue cave paintings are near here and the walk is by tumbles of rock, jump-ups that I hoped may be a home for white throated grass wrens but that little bird eluded me. The blue of these rock paintings, sparingly and effectively applied, came from laundry blue pegs. Much of the art is quite recent. Walking three kms at midday in Kakadu is far more wearying than Roderiguez Pass. The lack of good shade can be quite a problem.

There are various boat trips one can take on the South Alligator River and we chose one on the Yellow Waters, so named because of algae that grow on the surface at certain times. The river harbours many crocodiles. Some have grown to most impressive proportions, all were very sleepy as they mainly eat at night. That is, when they do eat, for a magpie goose would last them several days. From the boat we saw birds all about us. Brolgas in the grass moved delicately, jabirus with legs too long and beaks too big looked quite unbelievable, and a rare sighting, two great billed herons unwound themselves from the riverside growth. I noticed on the shore the flitting brilliance of shining flycatchers, the rust of the females quite marvellous and then the exquisite little kingfisher, slightly smaller than a robin, darting down to the water and back to its perch. We had been enjoying the forest kingfishers working from the wires. They are quite numerous and every bit of water will have at least one. They are the same brilliant deep blue and contrasting white of the little. About twenty nankeen night herons were disturbed from their rest and lazily flew off. One is always a delight let alone twenty. A pratincole was darting about on the grass and a young black bittern hunched in the reeds. Among all these strangers a willy wag tail was feeding young in a nest over the water. Magpie geese were everywhere. Not the clear black and white I expected but various shades as many come up from digging covered with mud from bill tip to shoulder and the juveniles are duller. There were always pygmy geese on the water often accompanied by burdekin ducks and the massive pelicans were cruising about or talking to the campers on the bank. Again the guide was well informed and constantly manoeuvred the boat so as to give us the best sightings and stopped the motor to tell us something, though the boat was quiet and slow.

We found another bird stop, Mamukala, where we spent some time. On certain days a ranger takes a group from here and no doubt uses the hide on the edge of the billabong. We found the hide unnecessary and sat in the shade, good shade this time, and watched. For density of birds there would be even more there than at Fogg Dam. It is the most marvellous sight. By September the water all over the park has dried out quite a lot so the birds are reduced to a few areas, thus the mass of birds on the remaining stretch, mostly magpie geese. However the more one looked the more one found and something exciting was always happening. Dainty black winged terns flitted over the water and marsh harriers ranged above. Several species of waders prodded the muddy shore. Pelicans were lying in the shallow water near the edge, their bills extended in the mud fossicking in the most extraordinary way, then a head would come up and some very angular shape would show in the bill as the bird tossed it about before it was seen going down the neck. Could they be eating crayfish?

There were land birds too! I saw ten different honey eaters. Many take advantage of gardens around settlements. Once we stopped while a partridge pigeon stepped neatly across the road. Red tailed black cockatoos take the place of our familiar yellow ones. I was delighted to see the torresian pigeon, a large black and white bird, bigger than a bronzewing but a fruit eater. Red backed wrens live there, the females almost chestnut. And so I could go on, but listing birds is of no interest except to the dedicated.

The Park has two motels and both look very good indeed though need to be booked a long way ahead. For those who want to make use of camps and their facilities there is a good supply. A camp at The Bark Hut before Kakadu is by a large stretch of water where one can swim. Not usual in this place of crocodiles. You can fly into the Park and there are flights to be had within the Park. Though I revelled in the birds, Kakadu has a variety of things to interest all and even those not interested in birds could not help but marvel at the sight of them in such abundance.

****	******	*******	*******	****
Jean Arms	strong			

JOHN SINCLAIR AND FRASER ISLAND

Many members probably saw the ABC "7.30 Report" on Fraser Island and the battle Mr John Sinclair fought to save its beaches from sandmining companies. The battle was won but subsequently he was forced to resign from the Queensland Public Service after years of frustration and, and opposition and lack of job satisfaction. As the result of an unsuccessful libel suit against Jo Bjelke Petersen he was saddled with huge legal costs and was threatened with bankruptcy.

Our Society was amongst the thousands of viewers who responded to the report with a deluge of letters and donations of sympathy and support. The amount he received exceeded \$60,000, enough to avoid bankruptcy, and establish a John Sinclair Trust for the protection of Fraser Island.

We received a letter of thanks and appreciation from him explaining in detail the history of his trial. It is very gratifying to realise the extent of support throughout Australia for the cause of conservation, and the deep sense of the injustice done to John Sinclair.

His letter is available at the Hut for any member who wishes to read it.

OPERATION 'SEEDS ALOFT'

On Thursday, 29th October, as part of the week of celebrations to commence the Wentworth Falls Public School Centenary, Operation 'Seeds Aloft' was launched. Each child was given a small package of about half a dozen native seeds attached to a lighter-than-air balloon. Hundreds of green and yellow balloons rose into the air at precisely 1 pm. At 5.05 pm, contact was made with the school to say a balloon had been picked up by people from Newcastle who were picnicking on the Hawkesbury River. They promised to plant the seeds. Should the balloons be lost in the bush the seeds were contained in a special paper bag which would disintegrate in time, and allow the plants to grow.

THOUGHTS ARISING FROM AN INDIAN JOURNEY

I doubt if anybody who made the journey to India could not have come away without pondering on the mysteries of life. What quirk of fate saw one soul to be born in a land of opportunity for personal development and another in a land where such opportunities are for the favoured few. For the rest a fast rising population ensures their share of India's finite natural resources are and will continue to be less and less.

The next stage in one's ponderings is to wonder if the material fate of India is a mirror of what Australia could be drifting towards.

I reach for my battered copy of "Confronting the Future" by Professor Charles Birch who has given more thought to it than any of us. As his foreword reads, he wrote the book to explain in simple non-technical language the consequences of man's blind, unplanned progress in an age of explosive growth and technological development. His beliefs and suggestions are better conveyed by direct quotes. I feel he sums his own beliefs by opening his book with a quote from H.E. Daly "Towards a Steady State Economy" – 'The proper object of economic activity is to have enough bread, not infinite bread, not a world turned into bread, not even vast storehouses full of bread. The infinite hunger of man, his moral and spiritual hunger, is not to be satisfied, is indeed exacerbated, by the current demonic madness of "producing more and more things for more and more people. Afflicted with an infinite itch, modern man is scratching in the wrong place, and his frenetic clawing is drawing blood from the life sustaining circulatory systems of his spaceship, the 'biosphere'".

Birch likens us to people in a dark tunnel. The darkness in which we are traveling continues into the future distance in total darkness. But there is a crossroad in the tunnel, and at the end of <u>that</u> tunnel there is light if we change our direction. What is the point of continuing on in darkness when there is some prospect of light if we change our direction? Is there hope for mankind? None, if we continue in our present direction; some if we change to a totally different course.

Now his reasons that make him believe we are in a dark tunnel: "This pursuit of material things in the affluent western world has not brought the promised paradise on earth. Instead it throws into the clearest coldest light the spiritual, ethical and philosophical hunger of mankind. It is this hunger which remains unsatisfied in the affluent society."

He calls this tunnel of darkness – the unsustainable society. He points out that it is impossible for the poor people of the world to share the fruits of scientific technological revolution like their rich neighbours, for "if all the people of the world were to consume resources at the rate, say, of the Americans, the total known reserves of petroleum would be used up in 6 years, and the annual

consumption of timber, copper, sulphur, iron and water would exceed available known reserves of these resources. So if our objective is that quality of life for all should rise – that it should be sustained, then the material standard of living of one section of the world needs to fall and that of the poor people should rise. At the moment the affluent countries represent 20% of mankind but they consume 90% of the earth's resources that are consumed each year and that proportion is growing". Even with all this economic advantage our days, he argues, are numbered. He quotes the economist E. F. Schumaker "An attitude of life which seeks fulfilment in the single minded pursuit of wealth – in short materialism – does not fit into this world because it contains within itself no limiting principle, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited". He himself says much the same further on in the book – "A society committed to growth for growth's sake and production for production's sake, not only pits man against the natural world but also man against man because of the inherently competitive nature of the enterprise".

Birch then puts forward "the light in the tunnel" as being sustainable society". He writes "from a society whose direction is primarily orientated to material growth we have to move to one which is more in conformity with the carrying capacity of the earth and in which a high quality of life for all peoples in all countries can be attained and then sustained indefinitely. The sustainable society is dependent upon ecologically ordered world".

"The sustainable society is a revolutionary concept. It will not be achieved without revolutionary political transformations involving the demise of power groups with interests vested in the status quo".

The essence of a sustainable society is, he writes -

- 1. Stable population numbers, ie, zero population growth;
- 2. Fixed material wealth per person this includes zero energy growth, a maximum as well as a minimum wage per person;
- 3. Economic growth to change its emphasis from production of goods to production of services such as transportation, education, health services, science, the arts and all forms of creative leisure;
- 4. Industry directed to social goals instead of profitability, eg, durability of goods instead of inbuilt obsolescence.

While Birch's logic is, I think, unassailable, the way these revolutionary changes in our attitudes can be brought about is anyone's guess, but he feels the affluent societies should be the first to change their ways. This is because such societies make the greater inroads on the world's resources. He regards the argument that the benefits of increased output will trickle down to the poverty stricken as a deception by those who wield power, and quotes facts and figures which show the gap between the rich and poor nations is steadily growing wider.

Birch's book is strangely prophetic. It was written in 1976. He appreciates the difficulties of capitalism and Marxism to abandon growth concepts and outlines the possibilities of widespread totalitarian regimes as social order breaks down.

But no system can be sustained which allows the use of energy as is being used today. Every source of energy other than the sun causes the environment to heat up and cause thermal pollution. He suggests we have 150 years to consider the inevitable problem of disastrous climatic changes.

Since 1976 the rapid depletion of the ozone layer has become the current bogey and the 150 years estimate has been reduced to 10's and 20's.

Birch's call for global thinking in 1976 is many times more relevant now. He does not despair completely. Change will come, he says, if people in general are convinced of the need of it.

Knowledge of the state of play is a first essential – hence this much watered down contribution from Birch's 'Confronting the Future'. Chapter 1 of a 12 Chapter book.

Lloyd Jones

Society News

N.C.C. Conference. At the Nature Conservation Council Conference held at the National Trust Property – Observation Hill, on 24/25th November, 1987, a total of 87 submissions were presented and discussed – including 8 from the Blue Mountains delegates. These covered a very wide range including:- Tourism, Duck Shooting, Horse Riding in Kosciusko National Park, possible Commercial Farming of Kangaroos, Wetlands Protection, Gun-Laws, Developments, Rainforests, Wood-chipping, Sewerage, Study Centres, Cat Registration, Flying Foxes, Koalas, Escarpment Protection, Roadside Vegetation, Gold Fossicking, Sand & Gravel Extraction, Mining Exploration, Roadside Advertising, Aboriginal Engravings, F5 Freeway, Broom Eradication, Nature Reserves, Marine Conservation, Sea Dumping, Coastal Open-space, Environmental Candidates for Election, Crown Land Act, Blue Mountains Developments, Pesticides, Aerial Spraying, Food Irradiation, Energy Production, Mud Brick Home Building. These are by no means the whole list, which can be studied by asking Dulcie and Reg Toseland for their copy...and will all be satisfied after these submissions are presented to the Government?...No Way!!!

Congratulations to George Threlfo of Lower Blue Mountains on his election to decision making body on the Nature Conservation Council.

Power House Museum. At the invitation of Bob Debus MP, about thirty Blue Mountains residents, including Dulcie and Reg Toseland, went on a tour of inspection of the newly completed Museum on Saturday, 14th November. This is a project which is utilising disused buildings, with very little disturbance, and it is a fine structure which will be officially opened in March 1988. It is well worth a visit, although we were warned that it would take three days or more to see everything, and involves a walk of 8 to 10 kilometres. There are over 8,000 objects to be displayed, spanning almost every field of human activity and creativity, including achievements in Australian science, decorative art, and everyday life in Australia, past and present. Please do not be confused about the name 'Powerhouse' – that is what it used to be!! It is situated in Harris Street Ultimo, and is about 15 minutes walk from Central Station. If and when the Monorail is functioning, there will be a stopping place at this museum.

<u>Guest Speakers</u>. Jim Smith was guest speaker for our October Meeting. He showed us slides of walks he had done in Britain, in particular the Track through the Pennines of 250 kilometres. Walkers in Britain jealously guard their walks and footpaths which in some cases cut right across farmers fields. Membership of walking clubs runs into thousands.

Walkers come to England especially to traverse the famous tracks, as they also do in New Zealand. Jim Smith's ambition is to "reopen historic walking tracks" from Woodford to Mt Victoria which would reveal some of the wonders of the Blue Mountains to overseas walkers. He produced maps to show how this could be done by connecting various existing tracks together.

In November Margaret Esson showed us interesting slides of her journey through the Top End, the Kimberleys and Kakadu Park. This area is only now being made accessible to tourists, scientists, conservationists and other people interested in Nature. It has great potential — wealth of wild life, the rivers and mountains, the aboriginal rock paintings, the wet lands which attract many different species of birds and the rare and beautiful plants.

The Tables Turned

The Emu and the Painted Snipe And other species of this type. Behave in a manner that could vex us Men, reversing the role of sexes.

For instance, it's of no avail Courting a Painted Button Quail, Before you've considered what to do The female Quail is courting you.

When she's laid the eggs she'll leave you, Caring not that this might grieve you. Alas, they'll never understand us Men – they're polyandrous.

THE BIRDBATHS OF UMBIGUMBI

This is the title of a book of the collected verse of Graham Alcorn which should be out in January. Some of the poems have already appeared in our Newsletter. There are about 30 poems mainly in a humourous vein. Graham has been a keen bird watcher for more than forty years and knows the ways of the swift, the raven, the bush curlew, the oyster catcher, the tree creeper and many others. The above poem is taken from the book, which is illustrated by Ewart Collings. It is produced by the Three Sisters Publications and will be on sale at the Hut and in all bookstalls.

<u>Three Cheers for Beverley</u>. Congratulations to Beverley Thompson on being made a Life Member of the Parents & Citizens Association of Wentworth Falls Public School. This honour was conferred at the School's recent Centenary Celebrations. As well shouldering for many years the constant and demanding job of organising the Hut Duty Roster, Beverley has at the same time been working tirelessly in the interest of the children of Wentworth Falls School. What a woman!