OCTOBER 1989 No. 77

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Black Cockatoos by G.J. Broinowski

Newsletter

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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.

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 1989

President	Dulcie Toseland	84.1682
Vice Presidents	Mick Dark	58,7061
	David Thomas	84.2121
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 Noble	87.8342
	Bob Jones	58.8316
Librarian	June Blick	88.1051
Hut Duty Organiser	Beverley Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer.	Deirdre Morton	58.8137
Publicity Officer	Shirley Brown	82,4248
Land Use Officers	Barry Barnes	
	Robin Corringham	58.6561

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.

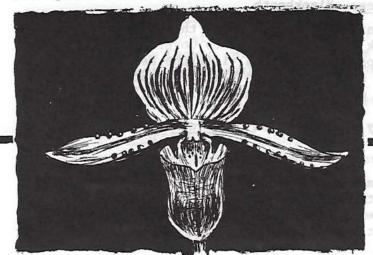
PUBLICATIONS: A range of specialist booklets, posters, maps, postcards etc may be purchased at the Hut.

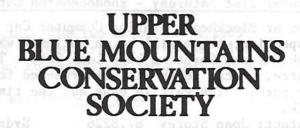
SALE OF NATIVE PLANIS: Opportunities to purchase native plants grown by Members are organised from time to time during the year. These sales are held at the Hut, proceeds to the Land Preservation Fund.

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.

Endangered Orchids of the World





Newsletter

No. 77

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COMING TALKS

<u>October</u> Voyage round the Universe - Slides - Dianne Johnson November

Discussion Evening - Members Present

WALKS PROGRAMME 1989 - OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER

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

ALL PEOPLE ATTENDING WALKS DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK

October 1st Sunday - Blue Gum Swamp

Meet at the end of Whitecross Road, Winmalee, 9.30 a.m. To reach this road drive towards Winmalee approximately $5\frac{1}{2}$ k.m. along Hawkesbury Road from the Great Western Highway, then turn left into Whitecross Road. The walk will include Grose Head Trig Point. A delightful 4 hours easy walk. Contact: Enid Schaffer 54.1244.

October 19th Thursday - Evan's Reserve.

Meet at Blackheath Community Hall (corner Hat Hill Road) on the Great Western Highway, 10.30 a.m. We shall take some different tracks this time, where the wildflowers should be out. Cliff views also. Easy, about 4-5 hours. Contact: Rachel Makinson 87.1302 or 58.8361. Sydney train arrives <u>10.27 a.m</u>.

October 21st Saturday - Rhododendron Gardens, Blackheath

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park 9.30 a.m. After the Garden's inspection, there will be an optional walk down Pope's Glen to Governor Phillip's Look Out and Govett's Leap Look Out. Those who wish can visit the Heritage Centre. A car ferry will be arranged for drivers back to Blackheath Station car park. The walk is easy and the time depends on when you wish to leave the walk.

Contact: Joan Storey 87.8226 Sydney Train arrives 08.29 a.m.

November 5th Sunday - Porter's Pass

Meet at Blackheath Station commuter car park (left hand side of station facing west) at 9.30 a.m. We will drive to Centennial Glen Road, walk across the heathland to Walls Ledge, then on to Porter's Pass. Medium. 5-6 hours. Contact: Olive Noble. 87.8342. Sydney train arrives <u>9.24 a.m.</u>

November 16th Thursday - Pulpit Rock Walk

Meet at Blackheath Memorial Park (opposite caravan park) at the Prince Edward Street entrance at 9.30 a.m. Walkers coming by train will be met with transport at the Blackheath Station car park. The walk will go down the Pope Glen Track to Govett's Leap and on to Pulpit Rock. Wild flowers and excellent Grose Valley views. Car ferry will be arranged. 5 hours. Easy. <u>Contact</u>: Sara Jones. 87.7511. Sydney train arrives 8.50 a.m.

November 18th Saturday - Ruined Castle

Meet adjacent to Katoomba Station on the Great Western Highway side, at 9.15 a.m. The walk will go down the Golden Stairs. Bring some salt or anti-leech just in case. 5 hours. Easy. <u>Contact</u>: Bob Jones 58.8361. Sydney train arrives <u>9.11 a.m.</u> Lithgow train arrives <u>8.30 a.m.</u>

December 3rd Sunday - Annual Barbecue

Meet at the Hut, in the picnic area of the Valley of the Waters 10.00 a.m. There will be a short walk before lunch; tea and coffee will be provided. Keep in touch with the open cooking fire restrictions as these might affect the type of lunch you bring.

Contacts: Bob Jones 58.8361. Olive Noble 87.8342.

December 16th Saturday - Pierce's Pass

Meet at Mt. Victoria station car park at 8.45 a.m. There will be a car journey of about 30 mins. to Bell's Line of Road, where the walk starts. Lunch will be by the Grose River. Medium. 6-7 hours. Contact: Olive Noble. 87.8342. Sydney train arrives <u>8.36 a.m</u>.

December 21st Thursday - Giant Stairway

Meet at Katoomba Station on the Great Western Highway side at 9.30 a.m. The walk will go down the Giant Stairway and along the track to the Scenic Railway. 5 hours. Easy. Contact: Ruth Jones. 58.8361. Sydney train arrives <u>8.56 a.m</u>.

WALKS 1990

January 7th Sunday - Grand Canyon

Meet at Blackheath Station car park at 9.30 a.m. The two attempts in 1989 to go through the Canyon were abandoned due to flooded creeks. Neates Glen, Grand Canyon, optional Beauchamp Falls, then up to Evans Look Out. 5-6 hours -Easy-Medium.

Contact: David Thomas 84.2121. Sydney train arrives 9.24 a.m.

January 18th Thursday - Cliff Top Walk.

This walk will overlook the Nellie's Glen area and will take in other landmarks. Details in next Newsletter.

January 20th Saturday - Mystery Walk

These walks always offer something new and a bit of adventure in an interesting area. Details later.

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A contortionist squeezing through "The T Slot."

WALK - DEEP PASS - SATURDAY 20TH MAY 1989

Although the day was drizzly, ten hardy souls turned up. After a slippery drive along the Glow Worm Tunnel Road, the forest roads were good. We walked down the steep hill into Deep Pass and along to the camping area. From here we went to look at the Aboriginal Hand Paintings on the rock face, then across the gully and down to the creek, which we crossed and up into the tree fern area and the waterfall (which we named The Waterfall of Tree We had lunch here, in a dry area under a rock. Ferns!). After lunch we retraced our steps to the T slot. With a lot of persuasion most of us got through the tiny entrance and were able to walk along the corridors between the rocks, an unreal experience! We returned to the camping area and crossed a creek and walked up a wet and muddy track towards the canyon. We managed to get most of the way up the canyon and saw the waterfall. We then retraced our steps back to the camping area, back through Deep Pass and up to the cars. It was a most interesting day with plenty of water around. Thank you all for coming. We enjoyed your company.

Olive & John Noble.

WALK - SASSAFRAS GULLY - SATURDAY JUNE 17TH

On Saturday 17 June saw approximately 18 people ready for a walk to Sassafras Gully I never did really get a good count of heads so I hope I haven't left anyone in the Gully. With the cold weather most walkers were keen to stretch their legs but some of us were quite happy to stay well behind, looking at Clarinda Falls and finding greenhood orchids. We were well rewarded with four different species. Some with stems as long as two feet. It has been a wonderful season for tall greenhoods as well as moss and waterfalls.

David Thomas was a great help as usual. He ran a messenger service between the leaders, us 'tail-end Charleys" helping to keep track of us all, and again with help of a car turn around at the end.

Although it is called Sassafras Gully some of the really memorable trees are the enormous Turpentines. One spectacular, one beside the track is an old friend of mine and always needs a big hug.

Grete did not find any cans. I suspect Phil Foster, who lives at the top and is in N.P.A. helps keep that area clean.

Deirdre Morton

WALK - CLIFF WALK - GORDON FALLS - ECHO POINT - SUNDAY JULY 2ND

Fifteen assembled at Gordon Falls on a bright but cool day under a leader who felt far from bright herself. Most started off by going down to the Gordon Falls Lookout and we then proceeded westwards along the Prince Henry cliff walk stopping at most of the lookouts each holding a different facet of the view into the Jamison and there was enough cloud about to cast interesting shadows over the valley. We found some of the path very wet but apparently it wasn't in such a bad state as many of the local paths are at the moment after all the wet we have had. At Leura Cascades we saw traces of the oil spill which happened some weeks ago; we could smell it also. Although we didn't pass the frogmouths' tree we have heard that they are back in residence. At the Fork and View, three of the party left us , the rest carrying on to Burralaloo Rock where we stopped for lunch because it was out of the rather chilly wind and a pale sun was shining on it. When we got to Minnamurra Lookout, the vote was taken to proceed to Silver Mist picnic area where some of the cars had been left and leave Echo Point to the tourists. All went off except for four of us who plodded along the road until our transport came back for us.

Elvine Thomas

WALK - BIRD WATCH - SATURDAY JULY 15TH

An ideal day for bird watching - mild, sunny patches, no wind. Sixteen turned up in need of some ornithological knowledge, the number ebbed and flowed somewhat during the walk. The watch was launched by three ravens who flew overhead quickly followed by a pair of glorious King Parrots. There was much twittering at the start, more human than avian I'm afraid. We went down to Links lookout with it's magnificent view, where, down below us we saw the resident flock of Sulphur crested cockatoos. Taking the right-hand path towards Leura some birds were seen, a few honeyeaters but mostly SBBs. We reached the Gordon Falls creek with it's beautiful waterfall at the Pool of Siloam (St John -9) We returned to Links look-out and proceeded towards Sublime Point. From here onwards there were a multitude of birds, mostly honeyeaters. We had lunch on a flat rock with a gulley on either side and with valley views below and Mount Solitary ahead. Just below there was a small rockpool which was almost constantly occupied by bathing birds. It was a privilege to share this place with them - watching, not bathing! After lunch the party broke up, going their various ways. List of birds. Raven, King Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Black Cockatoo, Grey Thrush, Gang Gang, Yellow Robin, Firetail Finch, silver Eye. - Honey Eaters, Wattle Bird, Lewins, White Ear, Yellow Face, New Holland, spinebill, Crescent, White naped. Honey eaters were the most numerous, there were also many SBBs (small brown birds). We were very pleased to rediscover Grete's white boronia with one bloom. It was a most enjoyable bird watch.

David Thomas

WALK - DARWIN'S WALK - THURSDAY AUGUST 17TH

Seventeen folk came along in misty overcast weather - hoping that the day would improve Wrong again!!! By lunch time, it was raining. After a brief history of Charles Darwin in Australia, by Reg, we made our way along the Pathway to Wentworth Falls.

The Path has recently been repaired again, but some spots still need attention even though the steel steps and duck-boarding in places are an advantage. The information plaques in certain areas are an added attraction, and hopefully will be left unscathed, for the walker's benefit. The water flow down Jamison Creek was fast - a result of the lowering of Wentworth Falls Lake (?), and a variety of birds accompanied us all the way ... Parrots, Thrush, Honey-eaters, Thornbills plus many others. Always a good bird-walk, with a variety of native bushes and trees for feeding and attracting them. A few native flowers already adding extra colour, but unfortunately some soil erosion on the creek-bed edgings from the heavy rain, and some sand siltation. What a wonderful sight - just past the Charles Darwin 150 years anniversary plaque on the large rock-face to come upon the view over Wentworth Falls themselves, and out to the beautiful valley. After a sheltered lunch under the open rock arch at Rocket Point, we were disappointed that the mist affected the glorious view of the Falls from a different perspective. Perhaps some other time, in better weather! A short cut on the return journey because of the rain, but a very happy group - including three new faces - Welcome, Welcome!!

Dulcie & Reg Toseland.

WALK - CIRCULAR WALK, MT. WILSON - THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 21ST

We were fortunate to have a sunny day this time. About 18 people turned up, some from Sydney. It was a pleasure to see Chris McDonald walking again after her accident.

The Circular Walk begins opposite Chimney Cottage in the shady park at the end of Queen's Avenue. (There are two Queen's Avenues in Mount Wilson). The walk is really quite short as our walks go, and leads downhill most of the way if tackled in a clockwise direction. It transports one into the silent green world of treeferns and moss, under taller trees festooned with vines. The earth is dark and soft, producing only ferns, no flowers. The rocks are carpeted in emerald moss. The earth is disturbed and raked by birds and animals in search of food, but one needs to be alone and motionless to see them. Near the end of the walk is a small waterfall, almost hidden by treeferns, and 100 metres further on another waterfall straggles over a strange black cliff. Here the track climbs out of the gully quite easily, and ends back at the park.

Because we had plenty of time we wandered off to the left over an old wooden bridge, walked up a decrepit track past forgotten rhododendrons, to sit on a large semi-circular stone seat erected 50 years ago in memory of "Gregson". Then we came on to the picnic area at the much abused "Cathedral of Ferns" and enjoyed a convivial lunch. There was plenty of time left, for those so inclined, to inspect the open gardens of Mount Wilson, adorned with thousands of daffodils and new spring leaves.

As for me, I went looking for Wall's Lookout, a little further along Bell's line of road. Fred and I found it, and it is such a gem we wonder why it seems to be overlooked. So there's a treat in store!



CHAPTER 8 OF CONFRONTING THE FUTURE BY CHARLES BIRCH - NOT BY BREAD ALONE

It needs to be borne in mind that this book was written 13 years ago. With one breath it is heartening to find so many sentiments and suggestions from this chapter now in common parlance. In the next breath, it is disheartening to realise how little has been done to implement such vital needs.

Birch's main thesis in this chapter is that man needs access to 'landscape, woodlands, forest, sea or desert for his psychological well being." Access to these areas should be assured by the creation of National Parks and should be regarded as "essential components" of any planned community development.

He points out practical needs for National Parks such as their scientific value and for their "intrinsic value as part of the national heritage."

He outlines what we have lost - "in the woodland areas of Victoria and N.S.W. alone virtually all the original 40 million hectares of woodland vegetation has been effectively destroyed to make room for wheat and sheep farms. Within the next decade the 2 million hectares of wallum and the 10 million hectares of brigalow country in Northern N.S.W. and Queensland and 12 million hectares of heath and Eucalypt vegetation in the south west of Western Australia will probably be cleared for crops and pastures. Sixty per cent of the water fowl habitat of coastal N.S.W. has largely disappeared as a result of drainage for flood mitigation. Since European settlement half the original forests have gone.

Recall Birch's book is 13 years old and he writes of a population of 13 million. Now we are in the 16 millions, he hadn't heard of that 'wonder' tree-killer 'grasslan' nor the current government plans for the 'development' of coastland. Prophetically he ponders the question, after stating how crowded are our national parks on weekends, "but where will they go unless N.S.W. protects the 1300 kilometre coastline with more reservations along its length than exist today?" Under the sub-heading "Saving what remains" we read suggestions which are now hearteningly accepted and discussed by most thinking people. "The next few decades provide the last chance Australians have to conserve original Australia while some of it still remains. There is an immediate nationwide need to conserve somewhere in Australia representatives of each main type of natural community of plant and animals. Broad examples are rain forest, woodlands of different sorts, desert associations and heathlands."

He stresses the need for national action. There is a recognition of that need amongst conservation groups who see the plans proposed by P.M. Hawke will need a referendum to be implemented. One wonders if it will be thrown out by the public in its customary way.

Birch proposes the following areas in need of immediate national parks.

The Eastern Coast Line: Now under great pressure from many self interest groups.

The Arid Centre: he writes of its huge scenic value and its richness in native species and anthropological interests. He could have added the grave danger of the area's eastern boundaries spreading through bad farming practices.

Marine Parks: The need for Federal control over such activities as tourism, oil drilling, mining with their accompanying pollution.

Alpine Park: to embrace the catchment areas of our rivers.

Cape York Peninsular: See to it that mining and cattle grazing don't take the lot. He hadn't heard of space stations in his day.

Birch concludes with the heading "What should we do" - briefly:

- 1. Develop a caring mentality inculcate a love of the natural world from childhood onwards.
- 2. Form a national Biological Survey of communities and species.

* * *

- 3. Creation of National Parks on a large scale in the areas mentioned above.
- <u>P.S.</u> Well there's been no response to my impassioned despairing appeal for someone to shine a tiny beam of hope amongst the gloom and doom. Is it apathy or do we just have to accept the fact that humans are incapable of co-operating. However the Jehovah Witness people inform me that all will be righted after the second coming. There will be a great thinning out process and those left will follow Divine guidance. My contribution may probably cease at that point. Some Catholic associates insist there is no need for birth control its just a case of even distribution of the world's goodies.

Lloyd Jones

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HUT DUTY

Members who volunteer to do Hut duty and are unable to be there on the day scheduled are asked to <u>PLEASE</u> contact Beverley Thompson (57.2076) as soon as possible so that a replacement may be arranged. If Beverley is not available please contact a member of the Management Committee, whose phone numbers are listed on the inside front cover of this Newsletter, who can then do their best to fill the need.

* *

THOUGHTS ON DARWIN'S WALK

A recent strollalong Darwin's Walk left me rather depressed, as it usually does. I cannot help reflecting what the valley must have been like in Darwin's time, and the changes that have occurred since.

National Parks and Wildlife Service have installed some educational signs. One draws attention to the importance of swamps in water flow. I examined the swamp and noticed several large clumps of detergent froth. A few metres on was a substantial oil slick. Another sign identified an acacia as an important species in the valley. When I looked around I saw exotic trees, introduced grass species, bracken fern and blackberry. Oh yes, over there was a struggling shrub that might be the acacia referred to. I wondered whether the valley had at some stage been cleared and these species planted (in which case signs informing us of the valley's non-darwinian history might have been interesting) or whether they had just invaded from nearby developed areas. The creek banks are terribly eroded, large trees have been undermined and have fallen into its bed. Though for most of this walk no buildings are visible, the fact that almost the entire catchment of the creek is now developed is terribly obvious everywhere.

My mind wandered to the rest of the track network in the Mountains, nearly all of it developed before World War I, and I reflected that maybe the only new tracks built since then were the Fairfax and Darwin's tracks, and a new stretch near Nellies' Glen, an average of between ten and a hundred metres per year (excluding the re-opening of old tracks by private individuals). Those who conceived and executed Darwin's Walk must have shown great determination and all of us who use it should be most grateful to them.

There are many places in the mountains crying out for a walking track. For instance, when walking from Govetts Leap to Pulpit Rock it is always such a shame not to be able to continue on to Perry's. A cliff top walk for even a short distance along Kings Tableland would give fine views of Mt Solitary from the east. Neither of these tracks would take the walker through urban run-off or close to development. There must be dozens of such areas in the mountains that we could all name. Despite the debt owed to those whose energy caused Darwin's Walk to be built, given the tiny amount of new tracks constructed over the last sixty years, and given the wisdom of hind-sight, was that really the best place to use the tiny resources now available for track building? Or might those resources have been better utilised away from the suburbs, in an area where residents and walkers would not be so much in each others' hair? I gather there have been legal problems in constructing Darwin's Walk, presumably because it passed through private land. This, added to all the problems described above, makes me wonder whether building tracks within the townships is really the best use of resources.

Many of the old tracks are built very close to houses (e.g. most of the cliff walks) but they were constructed last century, when walkers and residents were scarce, there were no cars and little pollution. If walks were not close to towns, no-one could get to them. In Sydney a number of tracks have been constructed through urban bushland. While these are a wonderful resource for city dwellers the walker paddles through urban run-off, his ears are besieged by the sound of hi-fi, lawnmowers and traffic, the creeks stink of sewage and the natural vegetation is largely smothered by invading species. In the Mountains, it should be possible to do better. Where there is a choice, development and walking tracks are better kept apart. From this rambling discourse, what are my conclusions? If ever our opinion is offered on these matters, might we not suggest:

- 1. If any more educational signs are to be erected along Darwin's Walk, would it not be better to use them to draw attention to the whole history of the valley, pointing out the effect on a water course of development in the catchment?
- 2. If new tracks are ever proposed, should we not encourage them to be built away from the suburbs, so that walkers can enjoy wilderness rather than tramping through sewage?

ENDANGERED ORCHIDS OF THE WORLD

Jill Curnow

Charles Darwin, with his usual logical approach to scientific puzzles concluded that orchids have evolved unique methods of pollination in response to specific pollinators - flies, bees, mosquitoes, moths, and humming birds. Orchids are often regarded as rare but they are the largest family of flowering plans known to science, approximately 25,000 species in 750 genera. They are distributed all over the world; every continent except Anarctica.

These facts were the subject of a very interesting slide talk given by Peter Taylor at the August general meeting . Orchids grow in a wide variety of habits and growth situations:

in or near the ground surface - TERRESTIAL
 On trees or shrubs - EPIPHYTES

2. On trees or shrubs - EPIPHYTES

3. on rocks - LITHOPHYTES

Some of the rarest and most beautiful grow in the tropical rain forests and these are at present under threat. In the Amazonian forests which are being cleared for pastoral exploitation, they are disappearing at an alarming rate. In South East Asia where logging of rainforest timbers for furniture making and in Australia where the area of available rainforest has been greatly reduced and is still under threat, some species are already extinct. Although they may be still preserved by orchid fanciers in hot houses under artificial conditions, Peter Taylor maintains that they require extensive growing in the wild to maintain genetic diversity.

In Paraguay, approximately 3000 sq km of forest disappears annually - only about 12 years left before the forests have vanished! Whole ecological complexes have gone forever with each hectare logged : trees, epiphytic cactuses, bromeliads, orchids and less-visible wildlife.

Leaving logged areas to regenerate does not solve the problem -

- (i) trees and plants present before destruction do not easily re-establish;
- (ii) with the process called succession, certain plants colonize the area first it takes up to 100 years before a species composition similar to the original one is regained.

One well-known Australian variety becoming hard to find is the Rock Lily (Dendrobuim speciosum). An orchid found in the Blue Mountains that has a strange method of pollination, is the Tongue orchid (Cryptostylus subulata). The method used is the pseudo copulation of the plant by male wasps apparently attracted to the orchid by a scent similar to the female wasp. During the act the pollina of the orchid is deposited on the thorax of the insect and transferred to other orchids.

SAVE THE LAKE!

More than 400 people attended the Save the Lake public rally on Saturday, September 2nd, at Wentworth Falls. This meeting was organised by RAFT (Residents Acting for Tomorrow), an action group protesting about the City Council's dropping of the water level in the Lake, after a consultant's report expressed concern that the Lake wall did not meet new safety regulations.

The rally was attended by representatives of many different groups, including civic, commercial, environmental, conservationist, fishing, garden and service clubs and local schools.

Mr. James McClelland addressed the meeting and expressed concern and amazement over comments made to RAFT in a letter from Mayor Ralph Williams. Mayor Williams said that the "worst case scenario is (could be) the removal of the dam altogether".

It has taken on added significance since the resurgence of steam train trips to the Mountains (such as the famous Flying Scotsman from England, recently), for the Lake was created in the early 1900's as a reservoir to supply water for the steam locomotives of the State Railways. It is the largest body of water of its kind in the Mountains and has become a centre for recreational activities for residents and tourists alike.

The rally was told that the main aims of RAFT are -

*To ensure the Council retains and restores the Lake and to join with Council to lobby the State Government for funds required;

*That all works required to the dam wall, spillway and catchment area of the Lake are undertaken as a matter of urgency and done so with regard to the environmental sensitivity of the lake and its environment;

*That Council undertake an ongoing and complete exchange of information between ward aldermen and concerned residents.

All concerned people should register their concern by writing to their local aldermen, or by contacting RAFT, P.O. Box 58, Wentworth Falls.

WIRRIMBIRRA RE-VISITED

Last October some members made a visit to Wirrimbirra in search of the "White Waratah".

Sixteen members made the trip this year on 16th September. The elusive white waratah was still unseen - not in flower that is - but we saw some very healthy looking plants, some large enough to be flowering soon. It was a beautiful day and the bush was full of bird songs in the air, and flowers on the ground - donkey orchids everywhere, glossodia orchids, major and minor, like stars in the grass. We saw the same pardolote nest in the same heap of potting mix - it has been untouched for 11 years. a thornbill's nest, a grey currawong's nest in the making in a low fork in There was a tree, and a frogmouth motionless on the end of a small straight thin branch quite incongruous, but easily passed by in the greyness of the bush. Wirrimbirra Sanctuary is run by Shirley Rooke - an old friend of Grete's, they were closely associated with the reserve for many years. There is a good well-stocked nursery of native plants, as well as cabins and well marked tracks among the trees for field studies.

Society News

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

At the July General Meeting, Wyn Jones explained our Society's submission and comment on the Environmental Management Plan No. 1, proposed by the Blue Mountains City Council. This submission was a wonderful effort by about 30 Members of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society to examine places in the middle and upper Blue Mountains and comment on sites where neglect, lack of foresight and carelessness have led to the pollution and degradation of large areas of the Blue Mountains. Five overlay planning maps were prepared with suggestions as to what could be done to save and rectify the areas at risk.

This submission has been received by the Council with favourable comment and commended for its thoroughness and serious consideration of environmental issues. The Environmental Management Plan and our suggestions will be presented to a commissioner for further comment.

Below is a tribute from the Society's President, Dulcie Toseland, to the wonderful co-operative effort made by willing helpers to produce the submission.

MINI-PLANT SALE - 10 A.M. - SATURDAY 28TH OCTOBER

Due to unavoidable wet weather earlier in the year (remember?), there are far fewer plants than normally available for sale. So the sale is not being advertised except in this Newsletter. <u>Please don't come before 10 a.m.</u>

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1990

The Society's year ends officially on February 29th, 1990. It is time to start thinking of electing a new Committee! Nominations for positions on the Committee are invited now, and so avoid the embarrassment of last-minute search for nominees.

<u>RE-CYCLE</u> your unwanted jam jars (500g.) and (250g.) and mustard jars. Please 'Phone JUNE. 87.7937

PRESIDENT'S THANKS

A sincere "Thank-you" to everyone who contributed to our Society's submission regarding the Blue Mountains Environmental Management Plan No. 1.

Excellent results, Congratulations - and we will keep you informed. as to progress.

YELLOW ROBIN'S NEST

Waist high beside the wallaby track that winds across the slope above the creek I find a nest snug in a teatree fork a compact cup of bark and grasses bound with spiderweb and neatly camouflaged around the rim with grey green lichen and on the outside hung with flakes of bark to break the outline, matching cunningly

the loose bark flakes of the nesting bush; in the nest cup three eggs of lichen green with russet spots, matching the lichen rim and warm with brooding. An angry churr, A sudden flash of grey and yellow warn that I'm not welcome in this territory.

Graham Alcorn

JUST THINK

We cannot really live for commerce alone, nor will our civilization be deemed great until we thoroughly recognise the fact that the bushlands and all they naturally contain are gifts of Nature far transcending in value all monetary and commercial considerations. The humanising gifts of Nature are necessaary for our interest, education, adventure, romance and peace of mind. They constitute the antidote for the evils of our semi-artificial existence. As we destroy our bushland environment we destroy just so much of ourselves. The balance of Nature is finely adjusted; upset it, and there will be a desert at our doors. All the glory of the canyons, caves and rolling plateaux of our great Blue Mountains is not nearly so much a commercial asset as it is Nature's heritage for legitimate enjoyment, and our own gift to prosperity.

The Katoomba Daily, 24th August, 1934.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

WHY I STOPPED KILLING ANIMALS FOR FUN - Peter Scott

"Now, at 78, I look back and wonder how I could ever have been so insensitive as to kill and maim them. I am convinced that we human beings should not seek pleasure in destroying wild animals. If it is a lovely day, we should go out and rejoice in the beauty of living things. And we should leave the guns behind".

Peter Scott, son of Robert Scott, the Antarctic explorer, died recently. He was a noted ornithologist and wildlife painter. The above is an extract from a piece in Australian Geographic Jan Mar '89.

- 12 -

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 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

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.....

.....

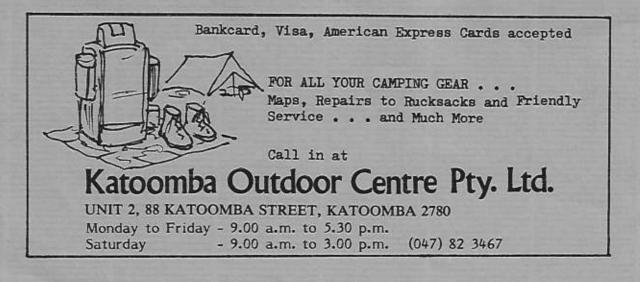
Amount Signed Date..... Date.....

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 Conservation, and especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls, to provide information on Conservation matters.
- (c) To maintain friendly relations with other Conservation Societies especially local bodies.

	Sales Carton Inter	
UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS	S CONSERVATION SO	DCIETY
PO Box 29, V	Ventworth Falls.	
MEMBERSHIP /	RENEWAL FORM*	
The Membership Secretary:		
I enclose a cheque or postal note for renewal of my membership.	for membership	or
Name	Single	\$6.00
Address	Family Concession	\$10.00 \$4.00
Phone	* strike out wh	ich is not applicable
	please tick i	f receipt required



This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in February 2024 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.

October 1989 No. 77

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.

<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 1988

Dulcie Toseland	84.1682
Mick Dark	58.7061
David Thomas	84.2121
Reg Toseland	84.1682
Elvine Thomas	84.2121
Betty Collings	57.2131
Ewart Collings	57.2131
Olive Noble	87.8342
Bob Jones	58.8316
June Blick	88.1051
Beverly Thompson	57.2076
Deidre Morton	58.8137
Shirley Brown	82.4248
Barry Barnes	
Robin Corringham	58.6561
	Mick Dark David Thomas Reg Toseland Elvine Thomas Betty Collings Ewart Collings Olive Noble Bob Jones June Blick Beverly Thompson Deidre Morton Shirley Brown 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.

<u>Contents</u> Coming Walks & Talks Reports on Walks Not by Bread Alone Thoughts on Darwin's Walk Endangered Orchids Save the Lake Society News Yellow Robin's Nest

<u>COMING TALKS</u> <u>October</u> Voyage round the Universe – Slides – Dianne Johnson

<u>November</u> Discussion Evening – Members Present

WALKS PROGR	<u>AMME 1989 –</u>	<u>- OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER</u>
	IT IS ESSENTIA	L ON ALL WALKS IN THE HOT WEATHER THAT MEMBERS
	SHOULD CARF	RY AT LEAST 1 LITRE OF WATER
CARRY ON ALL	WALKS:	First Aid Kit
		Torch
		Matches
		Warm Shirt or Sweater
		Protective Rainwear
WEAR SAFE FC	OTWEAR	Hat

ALL PEOPLE ATTENDING DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK

October 1st Sunday – Blue Gum Swamp

Meet at the end of Whitecross Road, Winmalee, 9.30 am. To reach this road drive towards Winmalee approximately 5 ½ km along Hawkesbury Road from the Great Western Highway, then turn left into Whitecross Road. The walk will include Grose Head Trig Point. A delightful 4 hours easy walk.

Contact: Enid Schaffer 54.1244

October 19th Thursday – Evan's Reserve

Meet at Blackheath Community Hall (corner Hat Hill Road) on the Great Western Highway, 10.30 am. We shall take some different tracks this time, where the wildflowers should be out. Cliff views also. Easy, about 4-5 hours.

Contact: Rachel Makinson 87.1302 or 58.8361. Sydney train arrives 10.27 am.

October 21st Saturday – Rhododendron Gardens, Blackheath

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park 9.30 am. After the Garden's inspection, there will be an optional walk down Pope's Glen to Governor Phillip's Look Out and Govett's Leap Look Out. Those who wish can visit the Heritage Centre. A car ferry will be arranged for drivers back to Blackheath Station car park. The walk is easy and the rime depends on when you wish to leave the walk.

<u>Contact</u>: Joan Storey 87.8226 Sydney Train arrives <u>08.29 am.</u>

November 5th Sunday – Porter's Pass

Meet at Blackheath Station commuter car park (left hand side of station facing west) at 9.30 am. We will drive to Centennial Glen Toad, walk across the heathland to Walls Ledge, then on to Porter's Pass. Medium 5-6 hours.

Contact: Olive Noble 87.8342. Sydney Train arrives 9.24 am

<u>November 16th Thursday – Pulpit Rock Walk</u>

Meet at Blackheath Memorial Park (opposite caravan park) at the Prince Edward Street entrance at 9.30 am. Walkers coming by train will be met with transport at the Blackheath Station car park. The walk will go down the Pope Glen Track to Govett's Leap and on to Pulpit Rock. Wild flowers and excellent Grose Valley views. Car ferry will be arranged. 5 hours. Easy. Contact: Sara Jones. 87.7511. Sydney Train arrives <u>8.50 am.</u>

November 18th Saturday – Ruined Castle

Meet adjacent to Katoomba Station on the Great Western Highway side at 9.15 am. The walk will go down the Golden Stairs. Bring some salt or anti-leech just in case. 5 hours. Easy. <u>Contact</u>: Bob Jones 58.8361 Sydney Train arrives <u>9.11 am.</u> Lithgow Train arrives <u>8.30 am.</u>

December 3rd Sunday – Annual Barbecue

Meet at the Hut, in the picnic area of the Valley of the Waters 10.00 am. There will be a short walk before lunch, tea and coffee will be provided. Keep in touch with the open cooking fire restrictions as these might affect the type of lunch you bring.

Contacts: Bob Jones 58.8361 Olive Noble 87.8342

December 16th Saturday – Pierce's Pass

Meet at Mt Victoria station car park at 8.45 am. There will be a car journey of about 30 min to Bell's Line of Road, where the walk starts. Lunch will be by the Grose River. Medium 6-7 hours. <u>Contact</u>: Olive Noble 87.8342 Sydney Train arrives <u>8.36 am.</u>

December 21st Thursday – Giant Stairway

Meet at Katoomba Station on the Great Western Highway side at 9.30 am. The walk will go down the Giant Stairway and along the track to the Scenic Railway. 5 hours Easy. <u>Contact</u>: Ruth Jones 58.8361 Sydney Train arrives <u>8.56 am.</u>

January 7th Sunday – Grand Canyon

Meet at Blackheath Station car park at 9.30 am. The two attempts in 1989 to go through the Canyon were abandoned due to flooded creeks. Neates Glen, Grand Canyon, optional Beauchamp Falls, then up to Evans Look Out. 5-6 hours – Easy – Medium. <u>Contact</u>: David Thomas 84.2121. Sydney Train arrives <u>9.24 am.</u>

January 18th Thursday – Cliff Top Walk

This walk will overlook the Nellie's Glen area and will take on other landmarks. Details in next Newsletter.

January 20th Saturday – Mystery Walk These walks always offer something new and a bit adventure in an interesting area. Details later.

WALK - DEEP PASS- SATURDAY 20th MAY 1989

Although the day was drizzly, ten hardy souls turned up. After a slippery drive along the Glow Worm Tunnel Road, the forest roads were good. We walked down the steep hill into Deep Pass and along to the camping area. From here we went to look at the Aboriginal Hand Paintings on the rock face, then across the gully and down to the creek, which we crossed and up into the tree fern area and the waterfall (which we names The Waterfall of Tree Ferns!). We had lunch here, in the dry area under a rock. After lunch we retraced our steps to the T slot. With a lot of persuasion most of us got through the tiny entrance and were able to walk along the corridors between the rocks, an unreal experience! We returned to the camping area and crossed a creek and walked up a wet and muddy track towards the canyon. We managed to get most of the way up the canyon and saw the waterfall. We then retraced our steps back to the camping area, back through Deep Pass and up to the cars. It was a most interesting day with plenty of water around. Thank you all for coming. We enjoyed your company.

Olive & John Noble

WALK – SASSAFRAS GULLY – SATURDAY JUNE 17th

On Saturday 17 June saw approximately 18 people ready for a walk to Sassafras Gully. I never did really get a good count of heads so I hope I haven't left anyone in the Gully. With the cold weather most walkers were keen to stretch their legs but some of us were quite happy to stay well behind, looking at Clarinda Falls and finding greenhood orchids.

We were well rewarded with four different species. Some with stems as long as two feet. It has been a wonderful season for tall greenhoods as well as moss and waterfalls.

David Thomas was a great help as usual. He ran a messenger service between the leaders, us 'tailend Charley's' helping to keep track of us all, and again with help of a car turn around at the end.

Although it is called Sassafras Gully some of the really memorable trees are the enormous Turpentine's. One spectacular, one beside the track is an old friend of mine and always needs a big hug.

Greta did not find any cans. I suspect Phil Foster, who lives at the top and is in NPA helps keep that area clean.

Deirdre Morton.

WALK - CLIFF WALK - GORDON FALLS - ECHO POINT - SUNDAY JULY 2nd

Fifteen assembled at Gordon Falls on a bright but cool day under a leader who felt far from bright herself. Most started off by going down to the Gordon Falls Lookout and we then proceeded westwards along the Prince Henry cliff walk stopping at most of the lookouts each holding a different facet of the view into the Jamison and there was enough cloud about to cast interesting shadows over the valley. We found some of the path very wet but apparently it wasn't in such a bad state as many of the local paths are at the moment after all the wet we have had. At Leura Cascades we saw traces of the oil spill which happened some weeks ago; we could smell it also. Although we didn't pass the frogmouth's tree we have heard that they are back in residence. At the Fork and View, three of the party left us, the rest carrying on to Burralaloo Rock where we stopped for lunch because it was out of the rather chilly wind and a pale sun was shining on it. When we got to Minnamurra Lookout, the vote was taken to proceed to Silver Mist picnic area where some of the cars had been left and leave Echo Point to the tourists. All went off except for four of us who plodded along the road until our transport came back for us.

Elvine Thomas

WALK - BIRD WATCH - SATURDAY JULY 15th

An ideal day for bird watching – mild, sunny patches, no wind. Sixteen turned up in need of some ornithological knowledge, the number ebbed and flowed some what during the walk. The watch was launched by three ravens who flew overhead quickly followed by a pair of glorious King Parrots. There was much twittering at the start, more human than avian I'm afraid. We went down to Links lookout with it's magnificent view, where, down below us we saw the resident flock of Sulphur crested cockatoos. Taking the right-hand path towards Leura some birds were seen, a few honeyeaters but mostly SBBs. We reached the Gordon Falls creek with it's beautiful waterfall at the Pool of Siloam (St John -9). We returned to Links lookout and proceeded towards Sublime Point. From here onwards there were a multitude of birds, mostly honeyeaters. We had lunch on a flat rock with a gully on either side and with valley views below and Mount Solitary ahead.

Just below there was a small rockpool which was almost constantly occupied by bathing birds. It was a privilege to share this place with them – watching, not bathing! After lunch the party broke up, going their various ways. List of birds. Raven, King Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Black Cockatoo, Grey Thrush, Gang Gang, Yellow Robin, Firetail, Finch, Silver Eye – Honey Eaters, Wattle Bird, Lewins, White Ear, Yellow Face, New Holland, spinebill, Crescent, White naped. Honey eaters were the most numerous, there were also many SBBs (small brown birds). We were very pleased to rediscover Grete's white boronia with one bloom. It was a most enjoyable bird watch.

David Thomas

WALK - DARWIN'S WALK - THURSDAY AUGUST 17th

Seventeen folk came along in misty overcast weather – hoping that the day would improve ... Wrong again!! By lunch time, it was raining. After a brief history of Charles Darwin in Australia, by Reg, we made our way along the Pathway to Wentworth Falls.

The Path has recently been repaired again, but some spots still need attention – even though the steel steps and duck-boarding in places are an advantage. The information plaques in certain areas are an added attraction, and hopefully will be left unscathed, for the walker's benefit. The water flow down Jamison Creek was fast – a result of the lowering of Wentworth Falls Lake(?), and a variety of birds accompanied us all the way ... Parrots, Thrush, Honey-eaters, Thornbills – plus many others. Always a good bird-walk, with a variety of native bushes and trees for feeding and attracting them. A few native flowers already adding extra colour, but unfortunately some soil erosion on the creek-bed edgings from the heavy rain, and some sand siltation. What a wonderful sight – just past the Charles Darwin 150 years anniversary plaque on the large rock-face to come upon the view over Wentworth Falls themselves, and out to the beautiful valley. After a sheltered lunch under the open rock arch at Rocket Point, we were disappointed that the mist affected the glorious view of the Falls from a different perspective. Perhaps some other time, in better weather! A short cut on the return journey because of the rain, but a very happy group – including three new faces – Welcome, Welcome!!

Dulcie & Ref Toseland

WALK – CIRCULAR WALK, MT WILSON – THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 21st

We were fortunate to have a sunny day this time. About 18 people turned up, some from Sydney. It was a pleasure to see Chris McDonald walking again after her accident.

The circular Walk begins opposite Chimney Cottage in the shady park at the end of Queen's Avenue. (There are two Queen's Avenues in Mount Wilson). The walk is really quite short as our walks go, and leads downhill most of the way if tackled in a clockwise direction. It transports one into the silent green world of treeferns and moss, under taller trees festooned with vines. The earth is dark and soft, producing only ferns, no flowers. The rocks are carpeted in emerald moss. The earth is disturbed and raked by birds and animals in search of food, but one needs to be alone and motionless to see them.

Near the end of the walk is a small waterfall, almost hidden by treeferns, and 100 metres further on another waterfall straggles over a strange black cliff. Here the track climbs out of the gully quite easily, and ends back at the park. Because we had plenty of time we wandered off to the left over an old wooden bridge, walked up a decrepit track past forgotten rhododendrons, to sit on a large semi-circular stone seat erected 50 years ago in memory of "Gregson". Then we came on to the picnic area at the much abused "Cathedral of Ferns" and enjoyed a convivial lunch. There was plenty of time left, for those so inclined, to inspect the open gardens of Mount Wilson, adorned with thousands of daffodils and new spring leaves.

As for me, I went looking for Wall's Lookout, a little further along Bell's Line of Road. Fred and I found it, and it is such a gem we wonder why it seems to be overlooked. So there's a treat in store!

CHAPTER 8 CONFRONTING THE FUTURE BY CHARLES BIRCH - NOT BY BREAD ALONE

It needs to be borne in mind that this book written 13 years ago. With one breath it is heartening to find so many sentiments and suggestions from this chapter now in common parlance. In the next breath, it is disheartening to realise how little has been done to implement such vital needs.

Birch's main thesis in this chapter is that man needs access to 'landscape, woodlands, forest, sea or desert for his psychological well being.' Access to these areas should be assured by the creation of National Parks and should be regarded as "essential components" of any planned community development.

He points out practical needs for National Parks such as their scientific value and for their "intrinsic value as part of the national heritage."

He outlines what we have lost – "in the woodland areas of Victoria and NSW alone virtually all the original 40 million hectares of woodland vegetation has been effectively destroyed to make room for wheat and sheep farms. Within the next decade the 2 million hectares of wallum and the 10 million hectares of brigalow country in Northern NSW and Queensland and 12 million hectares of heath and Eucalypt vegetation in the south west of Western Australia will probably be cleared for crops and pastures. Sixty per cent of the water fowl habitat of coastal NSW has largely disappeared as a result of drainage for flood mitigation. Since European settlement half the original forests have gone.

Recall Birch's book is 13 years old and he writes of a population of 13 million. Now we are in the 16 millions, he hadn't heard of that 'wonder' tree-killer 'grasslan' nor the current government plans for the 'development' of coastland. Prophetically he ponders the question, after stating how crowded are our national parks on weekends, but where will they go unless NSW protects the 1300 kilometre coastline with more reservations along its length than exist today?'

Under the sub-heading "Saving what remains" we read suggestions which are now hearteningly accepted and discussed by most thinking people. "The next few decades provide the last chance Australians have to conserve original Australia while some of it still remains. There is an immediate nationwide need to conserve somewhere in Australia representatives of each main type of natural community of plant and animals. Broad examples are rain forest, woodlands of different sorts, desert associations and heathlands."

He stresses the need for national action. There is a recognition of that need amongst conservation groups who see the plans proposed by PM Hawke will need a referendum to be implemented. One wonders if it will be thrown out by the public in its customary way.

Birch proposes the following areas in need of immediate national parks.

The Eastern Coast Line: Now under great pressure from many self interest groups.

<u>The Arid Centre</u>: he writes of its huge scenic value and its richness in native species and anthropological interests. He could have added the grave danger of the area's eastern boundaries spreading through bad farming practices.

<u>Marine Parks</u>: The need for Federal control over such activities as tourism, oil drilling, mining with their accompanying pollution.

Alpine Park: to embrace the catchment areas of our rivers.

<u>Cape York Peninsular</u>: See to it that mining and cattle grazing don't take the lot. He hadn't heard of space stations in his day.

Birch concludes with the heading "What should we do" – briefly:

- 1. Develop a caring mentality inculcate a love of the natural world from childhood onwards.
- 2. Form a national Biological Survey of communities and species.
- 3. Creation of National Parks on a large scale in the areas mentioned above.

<u>P.S.</u> Well there's been no response to my impassioned despairing appeal for someone to shine a tiny beam of hope amongst the gloom and doom. Is it apathy or do we just have to accept the fact that humans are incapable of co-operating. However the Jehovah Witness people inform me that all will be righted after the second coming. There will be a great thinning out process and those left will follow Divine guidance. My contribution may probably cease at that point. Some Catholic associates insist there is no need for birth control – its just a case of even distribution of the world's goodies.

Lloyd Jones

<u>HUT DUTY</u>

Members who volunteer to do Hut duty and are unable to be there on the day scheduled are asked to <u>PLEASE</u> contact Beverley Thompson (57.2076) as soon as possible so that a replacement may be arranged. If Beverley is not available please contact a member of the Management Committee, whose phone numbers are listed on the inside front cover of this Newsletter, who can then do their best to fill the need.

THOUGHTS ON DARWIN'S WALK

A recent stroll along Darwin's Walk left me rather depressed, as it usually does. I cannot help reflecting what the valley must have been like in Darwin's time, and the changes that have occurred since.

National Parks and Wildlife Service have installed some educational signs. One draws attention to the importance of swamps in water flow. I examined the swamp and noticed several large clumps of detergent froth. A few metres on was a substantial oil slick. Another sign identified an acacia as am important species in the valley. When I looked around I saw exotic trees, introduced grass species, bracken fern and blackberry. Oh yes, over there was a struggling shrub that might be the acacia referred to. I wonder whether the valley had at some stage been cleared and these species planted (in which case signs informing us of the valley's non-darwinian history might have been interesting) or whether they had just invaded from nearby developed areas. The creek banks are terribly eroded, large trees have been undermined and have fallen into its bed. Though for most of this walk no buildings are visible, the fact almost the entire catchment of the creek is now developed is terribly obvious everywhere.

My mind wandered to the rest of the track network in the Mountains, nearly all of its developed before World War 1, and I reflected that maybe the only new tracks built since then were the Fairfax and Darwin's tracks, and a new stretch near Nellie's Glen, an average of between ten and a hundred metres per year (excluding the reopening of old tracks by private individuals). Those who conceived and executed Darwin's Walk must have shown great determination and all of us who use it should be most grateful to them.

There are many places in the mountains crying for a walking track. For instance, when walking from Govett's Leap to Pulpit Rock it is always such a shame not to be able to continue on to Perry's. A cliff top walk for even short distance along Kings Tableland would give fine views of Mt Solitary from the east. Neither of these tracks would take the walker through urban run-off or close to development. There must be dozens of such areas in the mountains that we could all name. Despite the debt owed to those whose energy caused Darwin's Walk to be built, given the tiny amount of new tracks constructed over the last sixty years, and given the wisdom of hind-sight, was that really the best place to use the tiny resources now available for track building? Or might those resources have been better utilised away from the suburbs, in an area where residents and walkers would not be so much in each other's hair? I gather there have been legal problems in constructing Darwin's Walk, presumably because it passed through private land. This, added to all the problems described above, makes me wonder whether building tracks within the townships is really the best use of resources.

Many of the old tracks are built very close to houses (e.g. most of the cliff walks) but they were constructed last century, when walkers and residents were scarce, there were no cars and little pollution. If walks were not close to towns, no-one could get to them. In Sydney a number of tracks have been constructed through urban bushland. While these are a wonderful resource for city dwellers the walker paddles through urban run-off, his ears are besieged by the sound of hi-fi, lawnmowers and traffic, the creeks stink of sewage and the natural vegetation is largely smothered by invading species. In the Mountains, it should be possible to do better. Where there is a choice, development and walking tracks are better kept apart.

From this rambling discourse, what are my conclusions? If ever our opinion is offered on these matters, might we not suggest:

- 1. If any more educational signs are to be erected along Darwin's Walk, would it not be better to use them to draw attention to the whole history of the valley, pointing out the effect on a water course of development in the catchment?
- 2. If new tracks are ever proposed, should we not encourage them to be built away from the suburbs, so that walkers can enjoy wilderness rather than trampling through sewage?

Jill Curnow

ENDANGERED ORCHIDS OF THE WORLD

Charles Darwin, with his usual logical approach to scientific puzzles concluded that orchids have evolved unique methods of pollination in response to specific pollinators – flies, bees, mosquitoes, and humming birds. Orchids are often regarded as rare but they are the largest family of flowering plants known to science, approximately 25,000 species in 750 genera. They are distributed all over the world; every continent except Antarctica.

These facts were the subject of a very interesting slide talk given by Peter Taylor at the August general meeting. Orchids grow in a wide variety of habits and growth situations:

1.	in or near the ground surface	– TERRESTIAL
2.	On trees or shrubs	- EPIPHYTES
3.	on rocks	- LITHOPHYTES

Some of the rarest and most beautiful grow in the tropical rain forests and these are at present under threat. In the Amazonian forests which are being cleared for pastoral exploitation, they are disappearing at an alarming rate. In South East Asia where logging of rainforest timbers for furniture making and in Australia where the area of available rainforest has been greatly reduced and is still under threat, some species are already extinct. Although they may be still preserved by orchid fanciers in hot houses under artificial conditions, Peter Taylor maintains that they require extensive growing in the wild to maintain genetic diversity.

In Paraguay, approximately 3000 sq km of forest disappears annually – only about 12 years left before the forests have vanished! Whole ecological complexes have gone forever with each hectare logged: trees, epiphytic cactuses, bromeliads, orchids and less-visible wildlife.

Leaving logged areas to regenerate does not solve the problem -

- i. trees and plants present before destruction do not easily re-establish;
- ii. with the process called succession, certain plants colonize the area first- it takes up to 100 years before a species composition similar to the original one is regained.

One well-known Australian variety becoming hard to find is the Rock Lily (*Dendrobuim speciosum*). An orchid found in the Blue Mountains that has a strange method of pollination, is the Tongue orchid (*Cryptostylus subulata*). The method used is the pseudo copulation of the plant by male wasps apparently attracted to the orchid by a scent similar to the female wasp. During the act the pollina of the orchid is deposited on the thorax of the insect and transferred to other orchids.

SAVE THE LAKE!

More than 400 people attended the Save the Lake public rally on Saturday, September 2nd, at Wentworth Falls. This meeting was organised by RAFT (Residents Acting for Tomorrow), an action group protesting about the City Council's dropping of the water level in the Lake, after a consultant's report expressed concern that the Lake wall did not meet new safety regulations.

The rally was attended by representatives of many different groups, including civic, commercial, environmental, conservationist, fishing, garden and service clubs and local schools.

Mr James McClelland addressed the meeting and expressed concern and amazement over comments made to RAFT in a letter from Mayor Ralph Williams. Mayor Williams said that the "worst case scenario is (could be) the removal of the dam altogether".

It has taken on added significance since the resurgence of steam train trips to the Mountains (such as the famous Flying Scotsman from England, recently), for the Lake was created in the early 1900's as a reservoir to supply water for the steam locomotives of the State Railways. It is the largest body of water of its kind in the Mountains and has become a centre for recreational activities for residents and tourists alike.

The rally was told that the main aims of RAFT are -

- To ensure the Council retains and restores the Lake and to join with Council to lobby the State Government for funds required;
- That all works required to the dam wall, spillway and catchment area of the Lake are undertaken as a matter of urgency and done so with regard to the environmental sensitivity of the lake and its environment;
- That Council undertake an ongoing and complete exchange of information between ward aldermen and concerned residents.

All concerned people should register their concern by writing to their local aldermen, or by contacting RAFT, PO Box 58, Wentworth Falls.

WIRRIMBIRRA RE-VISITED

Last October some members made a visit to Wirrimbirra in search of the "White Waratah".

Sixteen members made the trip this year on 16th September. The elusive white waratah was still unseen – not in flower that is – but we saw some very healthy looking plants, some large enough to be flowering soon. It was a beautiful day and the bush was full of bird songs in the air, and flowers on the ground – donkey orchids everywhere, glossodia orchids, major and minor, like stars in the grass. We saw the same pardolote nest in the same heap of potting mix – it has been untouched for 11 years. There was a thornbill's nest, a grey currawong's nest in the making in a low fork in a tree, and a frogmouth motionless on the end of a small straight thin branch – quite incongruous, but easily passed by in the greyness of the bush. Wirrimbirra Sanctuary is run by Shirley Rooke – an old friend of Grete's, they were closely associated with the reserve for many years. There is a good well-stocked nursery of native plants, as well as cabins and well marked tracks among the trees for field studies.

SOCIETY NEWS

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

At the July General Meeting, Wyn Jones explained our Society's submission and comment on the Environmental Management Plan No. 1, proposed by the Blue Mountains City Council. This submission was a wonderful effort by about 30 Members of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society to examine places in the middle and upper Blue Mountains and comment on sites where neglect, lack of foresight and carelessness have led to the pollution and degradation of large areas of the Blue Mountains. Five overlay planning maps were prepared with suggestions as to what could be done to save and rectify the areas at risk.

This submission has been received by the Council with favourable comment and commended for its thoroughness and serious consideration of environmental issues. The Environmental Management Plan and our suggestions will be presented to a commissioner for further comment.

Below is a tribute from the Society's President, Dulcie Toseland, to the wonderful co-operative effort made by willing helpers to produce the submission.

MINI-PLANT SALE – 10 AM – SATURDAY 28th OCTOBER

Due to unavoidable wet weather earlier in the year (remember?), there are far fewer plants than normally available for sale. So the sale is not being advertised except in this Newsletter. <u>Please</u> <u>don't come before 10am</u>.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1990

The Society's year ends officially on February 29th, 1990.

It is time to start thinking of electing a new Committee! Nominations for positions on the Committee are invited now, and so avoid the embarrassment of last-minute search for nominees.

RE-CYCLE your unwanted jam jars (500g) and (250g) and mustard jars. Please Phone JUNE 87.7937

PRESIDENT'S THANKS

A sincere "Thank you" to everyone who contributed to our Society's submission regarding the Blue Mountains Environmental Management Plan No 1.

Excellent results, Congratulations – and we will keep you informed, as to progress.

YELLOW ROBIN'S NEST

Waist high beside the wallaby track that winds across the slope above the creek I find a nest snug in a teatree forka compact cup of bark and grasses bound with spiderweb and neatly camouflaged around the rim with grey green lichen and on the outside hung with flakes of bark to break the outline, matching cunningly the loose bark flakes of the nesting bush; in the nest cup three eggs of lichen green with russet spots, matching the lichen rim and warm with brooding. An angry churr, A sudden flash of grey and yellow warn that I'm not welcome in this territory.

Graham Alcorn

JUST THINK

We cannot really live for commerce alone, nor will our civilization be deemed great until we thoroughly recognise the fact that the bushlands and all they naturally contain are gifts of Nature far transcending in value all monetary and commercial considerations.

The humanising gifts of Nature are necessary for our interest, education, adventure, romance and peace of mind.

They constitute the antidote for the evils of our semi-artificial existence.

As we destroy our bushland environment we destroy just so much of our-selves.

The balance of Nature is finely adjusted; upset it, and there will be a desert at our doors.

All the glory of the canyons, caves and rolling plateaux of our great Blue Mountains is not nearly so much a commercial asset as it is Nature's heritage for legitimate enjoyment, and our own gift to prosperity.

The Katoomba Daily, 24th August, 1934.

WHY I STOPPED KILLING ANIMALS FOR FUN - PETER SCOTT

"Now, at 78, I look back and wonder how I could ever have been so insensitive as to kill and maim them, I am convinced that we human beings should not seek pleasure in destroying wild animals. If it is a lovely day, we should go out and rejoice in the beauty of living things. And we should leave the guns behind".

Peter Scott, son of Robert Scott, the Antarctic explorer, died recently. He was a noted ornithologist and wildlife painter. The above is an extract from a piece in Australian Geographic Jan Mar '89.