



# Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc Newsletter

No. 95  
April 1994

P.O. BOX 29  
WENTWORTH FALLS  
N.S.W. 2782

President: Mr Thor Schache  
(047) 57 3272  
Editor: Mrs Grace Bayley  
(047) 59 1955

Meetings are held in the Conservation Hut at the end of Fletcher Street,  
Wentworth Falls, at 7.30pm on the last Friday of every month.

## TOPICS FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

- April 29 Mr Dick Turner will speak and  
show slides of the Regent Honey Eater
- May 27 Ms Merl Thompson will speak on  
George Caley, one of the early  
explorers of the Blue Mountains,  
a man dogged by defeat. He called  
the area we now know as the Mount  
Tomah area, 'The Devil's Wilderness'.
- June 24 'Joan and Lee' will share the results  
of their study of the fauna of the  
Bonny Doon area, near Nellies Glen.

ON OTHER PAGES  
2-3 Meeting reports  
President's report  
4 Bush Care Forum report  
5-6 Accounts of Bush walks  
Thankyou from Robin  
7 Tribute to Beryl Cooley  
8 Matters of interest  
9 Excursion calendar

## OUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S CORNER

### Welcome to These New Members

Mr and Mrs Mansfield of Winmalee  
Ms Nance Cooper of Lawson  
Fay and John Muir  
Meredith Brownhill  
R.A. and M.V. Champion  
M. and T. Flynn  
Sylvia and Colin Williams  
Megan Llewellyn  
Kerry Kirk

There are at present 185 financial members!

Reminder to all members who have not yet renewed their subscription for 1994.  
SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS ARE (OVER)DUE.

John Noble and Reg Baumgarten are two known to be on the sick list -  
best wishes to you both.

There are two members who have died lately: Ped Bembo of Katoomba  
and Dr Beryl Cooley. See inside for a tribute to her.

Our sympathy is extended to their relatives.

*Gudy F.*

## SOCIETY DOINGS

### JANUARY



We'll never forget the fires of January and grieved over the loss of property and wildlife. It is wonderful to see the new growth and to think of the new seeds released by the fire.

It was appropriate to have Mr Gregor Manson as speaker in January, telling how the National Parks are managed. In a question and answer session he explained that the State Government draws up a Key Priorities Plan for the National Parks which takes about 18 months to adapt and implement. Due to the fires many plans are no longer relevant as some plant species have been wiped out.

The plan of management has to be brought up-to-date every five years and put on public exhibition.

The strategic plan details are of day-to-day works to be undertaken in the next five years and the responsibilities of the members of staff. It deals with roads, plants and animals and always looks five years ahead, bushfires permitting.

The process of community consultation is by personal contact and National Parks welcomes comments from the public.

Question: What is the expected increase in tourists numbers and how is it calculated?

Answer: Detailed records are kept at visitors centres. An increase of 10% per annum is expected.

Question about walking tracks maintenance: The Grand Clifftop Walk is the present priority and others will be improved one-by-one. It is hoped one day to have a full cliff-top walk.

Question: How does one reconcile tourism and endangered and fragile species?

Answer: By using high tech walking platforms to the places people want to see. Our part is to encourage children and friends to keep to the track.

At this meeting we voted a sum of \$500 to the Blue Mountains Fire Brigade.

REFERENCE HERBARIUM: We also were pleased to hear that Jim Smith and his students have been sorting the Isobel Bowden collection of flora specimens which used to be housed in the old Hut. This has been a long job. A cabinet is being made to house them and we hope suitable accommodation can be found for it.

Blue Mountains City parks and reserves. Wynn Jones reported that there were twenty bush-care groups trying to rescue these neglected places, many of which are weed-infested and eroded and need revegetation with native plants. We need to increase the awareness of friends and neighbours to grow more native plants in our gardens, and practice what we preach.

### FEBRUARY

The speaker at the February meeting was Wayne Brennan, an archeologist whose interest was Aboriginal sites in the Blue Mountains. He said that there isn't much to go on here. Stone tools are the best source of information. There are a number of engraving sites where tribal groups met to sharpen their tools and talk. Some art sites have been catalogued. Mr Brennan's talk was followed by a demonstration of artifacts and musical instruments by Phil Khan. He illustrated the length of time that Aboriginal people have dwelt in Australia by a simple paper chain, each link representing

200 years. At the end of the colourful 199 links was a solitary white one, illustrating without the need for many words, the brief span of the white man's occupation of this land.

Phil Khan and Tony Kondek represent the Daruk Local Aboriginal Land Council and are available for tours of Aboriginal sites in the Blue Mountains.  
Telephone (02) 832 2457

#### MARCH

This meeting was the annual election of officers and this was done very simply. Here is the list

President: Mr Thor Schache (047) 57 3272  
Treasurer: Mr Joe Ferfaglia (047) 84 3232  
Correspondence Secretary: Mrs Muriel Healey (047) 58 6575  
Minutes Secretary: Mr Imre Gahl (047) 84 3286  
Membership Secretary: Mrs Judy Ferfaglia (047) 84 3232  
Vice President: Mr David Thomas (047) 84 2121  
Walks Organiser: Christine Davies (047) 87 7246  
Land Use Secretary: Mr Thor Schache (047) 57 3272  
Newsletter Editor: Mrs Grace Bayley (047) 59 1955  
Representative on District Fire Committee: Mr Ron Wheeler (047) 57 1526  
Nursery Manager: Mr David Coleby (047) 84 1395  
Committee member: Mrs Elvine Thomas (047) 84 2121

Following the business session Mrs Muriel Healey gave an interesting talk about some impressions of the environment and life-style of Canadian people. She visited the 'Spirit of the Earth Masks Exhibition' and saw that the Aboriginal people of Canada react with sorrow to the spoiling of the environment by tree-felling, oil-spills, over-population and pollution. Their way of showing their feelings is by the making of masks. Muriel also showed slides of Vancouver Island where beautiful cedar trees are destroyed for PULP.

#### PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

March 1993 - March 1994

It gives me great pleasure to report a very successful year in most of our activities. It is my observation that there is a greater awareness by more people now than before, of the need to protect what we have in the bush, and that Governments and Councils are slowly recognising this fact.

Land Care: Many submissions were made to Government and Council on behalf of the Society with the objective of altering the development proposals so that the end result would be more in keeping with the Society objectives. These submissions were considered and discussed by Council. I am unsure of what the Government does with them.

Land Purchase: Our hope for the land in the centre of the Kanangra- Boyd Reserve is still in Limbo. There has been no progress either on the Minna-Ha-Ha Falls land. Getting agreement between State and Federal Governments is very time-consuming but should be worth-while in the end.

Nursery: We can, as we drive past many of the R.T.A.'s road works, enjoy the visible efforts of our enthusiastic group working at the Nursery, growing the plants you see. They are to be congratulated on their efforts and their ability to fulfil the needs of both the R.T.A. and the Society. A big thankyou to all,

Talks: We have had a wonderful variety of speakers and slides this year and our thanks go to those who came out and shared their experiences with us.

Walks: Our thanks are also due to those who delight in sharing their love

and knowledge of our bush on their many walks during the year.

For my part it has been a pleasure working with a group that enjoys working with the objectives of the Society, knowing that each effort has its reward.

In conclusion it would be remiss of me not to give a special vote of thanks to Robin Corringham who has been such a great inspiration to many of us by the way she worked for the Society.

Thor Schache

BUSH CARE FORUM - Sat. 26th. February 1994, Ellison Rd. School, SPRINGWOOD

There are approximately 20 Bush Care groups in the Blue Mountains area, who adopt various sites and try to care for them; they are not all active and effective, and additional volunteers are needed.

Wyn Jones spoke of the importance of bush care for all the diverse habitats in the proposed World Heritage region. Weeds have to be removed in so very many places, and replanting has to be done at the same time, to control erosion - preferably with native species. Weeds have enormous seed stock, and will germinate faster than most species. Plans are in hand to establish a 'Native Plant Nursery' in the local area, to supply stock following weed removal, and in the hope that more of public will introduce native species in to their home gardens. We were reminded that if we neglect to care for our bushland, it will eventually be overtaken by weed infestation, with very little chance of recovery. Wyn read some poems relating to the subject, and showed some very interesting slides.

For further information regarding 'Bush Care' forums, courses and field days etc., please contact either - City Council - 820777; N.P.W.S. - 878877; T.A.F.E., or any Bush care co-ordinator in your area.

Stuart James then talked about the recent bushfires - both locally and State-wide, and supplied technical information in regard to fire control, back burns, heat intensity and hazard reduction etc. These were accompanied by slide and graphs of the subjects discussed - plus scenes of the beautiful areas before the fires and others showing the devastation of other regions afterwards. There was a lot of discussion regarding the problems with back-burning as a means of hazard reduction, because unless the conditions are exactly right - a very large amount of the litter and leaves etc., can be left unburnt, but very dry and fire-prone. The native bush has a diversity of heat and fire tolerance, which makes any attempts with hazard reduction, both an interesting and difficult process. Once any fire reaches to the top of the trees, with accompanying high winds - it is a different story altogether.

Councillor Terry Hamilton then spoke about the new Local Government rulings, the second stage of the Environment Management Plan, and explained some of the details for the trial periods for local Helicopter flights.

Lively discussions followed each speaker, and the general impression was that the 'Forum' had achieved its objectives.

Contributed by D. Toseland



## BUSH WALKS

Graham Alcorn's Bird Walk

### SOCIABLE BIRDS

We saw a big party of white-winged choughs in Megalong Valley on our bird walk, February 17, 1994. There were over twenty of them.



Choughs are very sociable birds. It is a pleasure to watch them feeding on the ground. They are so sociable that sometimes two females lay in the same nest, and even sit there side by side. Many birds help feed the young.

One nest I watched when young were being fed always had a guard bird perched beside it. Sometimes when a bird arrived with food the guard would leave and the new arrival would take over.

Choughs like open, wooded country, so the Blue Mountains forest is too thick for them. However, in recent years there have been a few coming up to Medlow Bath, and they inspired the following poem:



Nest of the  
chough  
*Corcorax melanorham*  
-phos

### COMFORT IN NUMBERS

Three choughs forage on our lawn,  
Alert, friendly, comical,  
Yet in some way, forlorn.  
Perhaps three choughs is not enough.  
Chough life can be precarious  
Unless it is gregarious.  
Father, mother, sister, brother,  
Uncle, aunt, cousin,  
It can be tough to be a chough  
Unless there's at least half a dozen,  
Some in the trees, some on the ground,  
Chuffing about, waddling around.  
Choughs depend on company  
To make their lives profound.

- Graham Alcorn- (c)

### MYSTERY WALK 16/1/94

After a week of bushfires, back-burning, blaring sirens, excessive media coverage, and a red sun shining feebly out of a grey sky full of smoke and ash, at last there was a touch of sanity - a walk in the Newnes Forest with members of the Conservation Society.

It started to rain on Friday night, not enough to put out the fires, but making it safe for us to go into the forest. Saturday morning was misty rain and cold - true mountain weather. We met at Mount Victoria Station, John Noble leading the walk, 13 of us altogether, and drove into the Newnes Forest.

Then a walk down a firetrail amidst dancing orange butterflies, birdsongs, and the fragrance of the woodland after rain; mingled smells of perfumed leaves of Eucalypts and shrubs, of moist earth and leaf mulch. White flowers were predominant - small-leafed Baekea, Pimelia, an Epacris, and the beautiful flowers of Mallee Gums. Patterns and colours on the wet trunks of Scribbly Gums were beautiful.

At the end of the firetrail we made our way down to Bungleboree Creek and walked upstream, sometimes wading and sometimes pushing through dense vegetation around the deep waterholes. On a hot day a swim would have been enjoyed. It was wonderful to be away from the depression of bushfires and news reports, with cheerful optimistic people who love the bush.

Christine Davies



#### THE THURSDAY WALK, MARCH 17 1994

The day was cold, grey and damp from the mountain mist, but amazingly, 22 people turned up at Echo Point, where a car-shuttle was arranged so that there would be cars at the Kiosk end of the walk. Grace Bayley was the leader and took us along Prince Henry Cliff Walk. We stopped at each lookout but the fabulous view was completely obliterated by the mist except at Cliff View Lookout, when it lifted just a little.

We had a late morning tea at the park then went down the steps to Katoomba Cascades and round to Watchtower Lookout to see a better view of Katoomba Falls. We peered over the various lookouts on Reids Plateau, Orphan Rock having a special appeal. Two or three people remembered going to the top before the track was closed.

We were surprised that the Skyway on its frequent trips overhead had so many sightseers aboard, and could see flashes from cameras as we waved at them.

We had lunch near the Kiosk, after which some left and the rest went down Witch's Leap in the dark, delightful rainforest. Then climbing up to Vaniman's Lookout we could see the Falls and The Three Sisters - and then we couldn't as the mist swirled by.

Near the busy road not far from the Scenic Railway complex we were amazed to see a satin bowerbird's bower, made out of twigs into two parallel arched walls; on the layer of straw outside there was a wonderful display of blue articles, mostly drinking straws, but also combs, pegs, plastic, and even a biro.

A Happy Wanderer.

Thanks to these contributors for reporting on the walks. Please keep the reports coming in.

Editor



#### ROBIN'S REPLY TO MURIEL HEALEY'S KIND WORDS IN THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER.

Oscar Wilde is often quoted - "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars". You would agree that it is a passive attitude when applied to the predicament of the world. It is easy to adopt a fine-sounding belief in environmentalism and ecophilosophy. The trick is to transform these attitudes into the practical reality of the here and now. Self-realisation is a personal business but the Conservation Society provides a platform to launch community effort to maintain and improve the care of natural resources of the Blue Mountains.

It was my planned aim to do this during my active time with the Society and it would have continued but for the intervention of family responsibilities. Whether it was successful remains to be seen, but by co-operatively building on the good work of earlier people there is a cumulative effect. I see the most important elements of Society work as land use and bush care, which are indivisible and include town planning and bushfire control.

Thank you to Society members who worked alongside and from whom I continually learned. Thank you for the high degree of appreciation which I really feel was unearned because in the volunteer field of conservation everyone works to their chosen limit. Thank you for the experience.

Robin Corringham

## *I Sing With Earth*

*I sing with the earth,  
the trees, the sky,  
the sea;  
with birds in flight,  
As I stop, to rest and look,  
I sing.*

*A wild and joyous song,  
I sing  
with the earth,  
As I smell the rich  
brown soil I till,  
Any my heart near bursts  
with the lushness of grass & tree  
And the trumpeting waterfall.*

*Triumphant joy is my song,  
for I am these, and more;  
I sing for Man;  
Man the challenger,  
Man just,  
Man perceptive,  
Man compassionate.  
In my song is the softly spoken joy  
of compassion*

*Whence my song?  
From deep in my heart?  
Or from the earth?  
For I am old,  
As old as the earth, and older;  
rich in heritage.*

*As old as the moving force,  
spirit of nature,  
for I am that force,  
in human form;  
rich in human promise.*

*It swells in my joy,  
And when I fade,  
When it ebbs in me,  
my inheritors will sing.  
It can not die,  
but only in Man  
Can it sing Man's song.*

*Beryl Cooley  
(c)*

## OBITUARY

Dr Beryl Cooley, a valued member of this Society, died on 12 March 1994, aged 84.

Dr Cooley was a specialist in Child Psychiatry for over 20 years, and worked with children and their parents to help them through their problems. She also gave voluntary service to Life-line in this field.

Before she became too ill she wrote a book entitled 'Humans Are Different' - An Introduction to Human Motivation and Mental Health. She wished the proceeds of its sale to go to the Mental Health Association. It is available in the Blue Mountains from 'Elizabeth's Bookshop', Town Centre Arcade, Katoomba.

We printed one of Beryl Cooley's delightful poems last year. The poem on this page was found among her papers and I'm sure will be appreciated. Editor

## VALE! BERYL COOLEY

Dr Beryl Cooley, B.Sc. M.D. passed away recently after a long illness. During the 70s and 80s Beryl was a very active and valuable member of our Society.

During the early 70s when the first Blue Mountains Town Plan was being formulated, she, with the late Isobel Bowden, the late Nancy Douglas, Winsome Gregory and myself, was a member of the Society's Land Use Committee.

This Committee, with much input from the membership and a great deal of hard work, compiled the Society's submission to the first Town Plan, a splendid document inspired mainly by the ideas of the remarkable Isobel Bowden. Even today, in my opinion, despite all the studies since, it provides the basic approach to correct environmental planning in the Blue Mountains. Incidentally, this submission was the first to advance the concept of the Blue Mountains being a city within a National Park, a concept now widely and officially accepted.

For many years Beryl worked on the Land Use Committee which was always beset with piles of environmental problems threatening our beautiful mountains. She tended to work behind the scenes, contributing helpful and original ideas and proposing courses of action.

In the 70s she also played a prominent role in a Bush-fire Committee we set up. This Committee compiled a leaflet setting down the steps to be taken in a bush-fire, again mainly the ideas of Isobel Bowden. We took a draft of the leaflet to Phil Koperberg, then head of the B.M. Bushfire organisation. He agreed that the B.M. Council would print it and we would distribute it - 10,000 copies if my memory is correct.

In the recent bushfire crisis Mr Koperberg, now State Controller, broadcast to citizens a series of steps they could take to secure their homes. They were very similar to those proposed by our leaflet.

Vale! Beryl Cooley. Continued

These are only some of the important Society activities in which Beryl played her part. In our Society there is always someone who comes forward when the times demand it. Dr Beryl Cooley was such a one.

by Graham Alcorn.

#### MATTERS OF INTEREST

##### 'ALONG THE TRACK'

12/2/94

A goodly number of members of this Society went to the Katoomba R.S.L. club on Saturday 12 February, to see the launching of Jill Dark's video, 'Along the Track'. Jill Dark's Nature Trek of the Blue Mountains'. It is well worth buying as it describes and portrays so well the scenery and flora and fauna of our own wonderland. Look for it in the mountain tourist centres.

##### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A favourite walk of many of our members is to Den Fenella, that modest gem at Wentworth Falls. We have often wondered where the name came from. Is this the answer? There is a Den Finella on the east coast of Scotland and there are woods fine for walking. They are cut through by two streams, and the northern one tumbles down a 13 metre waterfall. The first Den Finella was a queen who lived in the 10th century and, according to legend, murdered her husband King Kenneth and then threw herself from the top of the waterfall.

.....

##### CONGRATULATIONS!

To Jim Smith and John Low who won an award in the 1994 Xerox Fast Books Awards. This was for their account of the life and poems of Harry Peckman, a coachman of Blue Mountains history, and is entitled 'The Prince of Whips'.

And, forgive me for blowing my own trumpet, but your editor, Grace Bayley, also won a "Highly Commended" award from the Fellowship of Australian writers for her book 'Take it Slowly' - A Blue Mountains Diary.

.....

##### COMPLETING 'MURPHY'S' LAW FOR BUSHWALKERS.

- . Weather forecasts are always wrong.
- . A fine start means a wet finish. Conversely, a wet start also means a wet finish.
- . This mountain is the one they forgot to put on the map.
- . The stone in your boot is at the farthest point and cannot be removed.
- . The carrying of a scramble rope precludes any need for its use.
- . Estimated walk times are always 50% of the real time.
- . The party will disagree with the leader about the grade of the walk.
- . The car keys to swap are at the bottom of the pack.
- . None of the party can find the car which fits the swapped key.
- . After a car swap, the other car's controls are always the reverse of yours.

Well, it was a nice walk, wasn't it?

Thanks to Noel May of North Rocks for this very entertaining contribution. Does any one have any more observations to contribute. Here's one from me: If a walk is cancelled because of bad weather it usually fines up. Ed.



## EXCURSIONS

It is essential on all excursions in the hot weather that members carry at least 1 litre of water.  
Please carry on all walks: First Aid Kit, Torch, Matches, Warm shirt or Sweater, Protective Rainwear, Hat. Wear safe footwear

All people attending excursions do so at their own risk

Members arriving by train should advise contact prior to the excursion. Train timetable on week-days might be altered. Walks starting times and meeting places will remain as stated.

### MAY

Sunday 1 Breakfast Creek. Meet Blackheath Station carpark at 9 am.  
Contact Len Baxter (047) 87 7312

Thursday 19 Bonnie Doon and some new sights nearby. Meet at the carpark behind the Marked Tree at 9.30am. Contact Grace Bayley if transport is needed. (047) 59 1955.

Saturday 21 Mountain Lagoon to Colo Lookout.  
Option 1: 4WD to end of firetrail, 1 hour walk to lookout above Colo R.; hardy walkers may continue down to the river.  
Option 2: if no 4WD vehicles, walk to end of firetrail and walk to lookout above Colo R.  
Meet at Mt Victoria Station carpark at 8.30 am and arrive at the Mountain Lagoon turnoff at Bilpin at 9.15 am.  
Contact: Nella Godfrey (045) 67 7113 or Una White (047) 876047.

### JUNE

Sunday 5 Roberts Pass. Meet eastern end of Fitzroy St. Leura at 9 am.  
Contact David Thomas (047) 84 2121

Thursday 16 Clifftop Walk to Sublime Point. Meet at corner of Gladstone Rd and Fitzroy Sts. Leura at 10am. Contact Dulcie Toseland, (047) 84 1682

Saturday 18 Pierce's Pass. Meet at Mt Victoria Station carpark at 8.30 am.  
Contact Olive Noble (047) 87 8342

### JULY

Sunday 3 Sassafras Gully. Meet at Springwood Station in Macquarie Rd at 9 am. Contact Ron Wheeler (047) 57 1526

Saturday 16 The Temples of Doom and beyond. Meet at Mt Victoria Station carpark at 8.30 am. Contact John Noble (047) 87 8342.

Thursday 21 Transit of Venus track. Meet at 9.30 am at Hazelbrook shopping centre carpark. Contact Bob Jones (047) 58 8361.

### ..... SNIPPETS

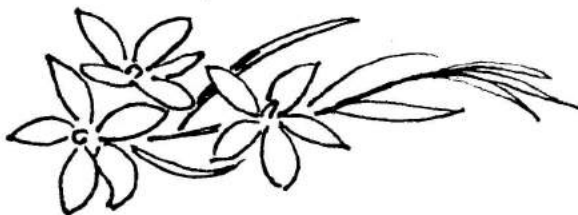
Reg Baumgarten found this in some historical research.

#### DISFIGURING TREES IN KATOOMBA RESERVE

Ruth Newman, a visitor, was fined 2/6 with 5/6 costs, three times for 3 lots of initials. She was caught at it by Ranger J. Smith.

"The Mountaineer" 17 January 1896.

Reg wondered if our Jim Smith had an ancestor watching over the mountains 100 years ago.



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April 1994

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE ON MARCH 1st 1994

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY. P.O.Box 29, Wentworth Falls. 2782

**Membership / Renewal Form (1st March 1994 - 28th Feb 1995)**

Name.....	Family	\$15	per year
Address.....	Single	\$10	" "
.....	Pensioner Family	\$10	" "
.....	Single Pensioner	\$6	" "

Half fee applies for new membership from 1st September. If a receipt is required please forward stamped self-addressed envelope.