



Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People

No 101
October 1995

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

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.

President: Mr Thor Schache (047) 573272
Secretary: Mr Les Coyne (047) 573327

*New editor
needed!*

PROGRAMME

October 27 Alan Lobb "Reptiles of the Blue Mountains and Surrounding District"

November 24 Richard Wells "How Endangered is Endangered?"
Fauna Finders or
"How Effective Are Conservationists?"

December No Meeting, but a Christmas Get-together on Saturday 9 December.
Meet at the Hut at 10am for a walk and lunch together. Bring or
buy at the restaurant.

January Meeting 1996, date to be confirmed, see letter below.

Robert Crawford, Chairman of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Management Trust

WELCOME TO THESE NEW MEMBERS

Mary Jane Shaw, Barbara Wylie, Dave Altmore, Jo Van Sommers, Pater and Judy Smith,
Sandra Brown, Marilyn McArthy.

FAREWELL

This is my last effort as editor of the newsletter, as Fred and I are moving to
Gerrington. What a wonderful experience it has been to belong to this grand
society and have such good friends!

Grace Bayley

DEAR EDITOR

Re discussion on a change of meeting night:

So that a reasoned decision will be reached I feel that members who cannot
attend many meetings should be acquainted with some of the view-points raised
therein.

There are some who say we should resist any move for a change of meeting night
as it could be the thin edge of the wedge to have us evicted completely from
The Hut and so lead to the demise of the Society.

There are some who say a change of night does not trouble them, and if the
change enables Chris Cole to increase his business turn-over, all the better.

Geoff Luscombe, the new N.P.W.L.S. manager has clearly stated that a change
of night is purely a Society matter. Our use of The Hut is safeguarded by a
legal agreement.

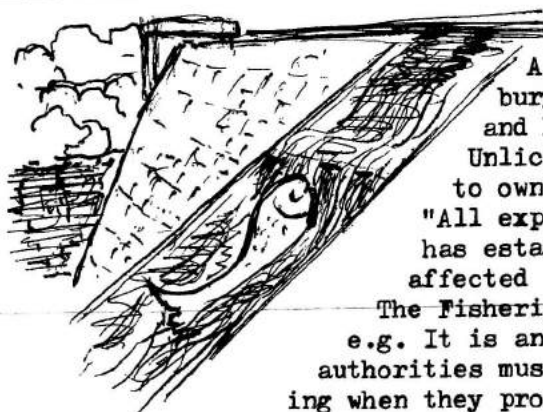
The issue has dragged on for at least two months and each meeting night Chris has
to pay staff to stay home. He has not complained about this and continues to be
co-operative. I personally feel he should be given a fair go and we should decide.

Geoff Luscombe, the new manager of N.P.W.L.S. has clearly stated that a change of
night is purely a Society matter. Our use of The Hut is safeguarded by a legal
agreement. Personal discussion with Mr. Luscombe has confirmed what he said to us
at the July meeting. He is anxious to see us operating from The Hut forever and
anon. 'You can quote me on this' he said.

So please indicate your wishes on the enclosed form and return it to the secretary
as soon as possible. The executive committee has the right to make the final
decision, but it seeks guidance.

Lloyd Jones.

SNIPPETS FROM BOX 29



WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT NEWS

A two year moratorium has been placed on the Hawkesbury-Nepean river system for all new irrigation schemes and high yield bores in the Hawkesbury's tributaries. Unlicensed irrigators could be closed down if they refuse to own up to their operations.

"All expansion of water use will halt until the department has established if the health of the river is adversely affected by the current water extraction".

The Fisheries Management Act 1994 has some significant changes. e.g. It is an offence to release live fish into any water. Public authorities must now consult the Minister, instead of simply notifying when they propose to undertake dredging or reclamation works, or to approve of someone else undertaking such works. N.S.W. Fisheries must be notified whenever a dam, weir, reservoir or any barrier to fish movement is constructed, altered or modified and, if the Minister requests it, a fishway must be included in the plans.

N.P.W.L.S. have completed a major survey of one of Australia's biggest arid country wetland systems - thirty lakes fed by the Warrego, the Paroo and the Bulloo rivers and their tributaries. "We want to make sure these lakes operate as natural systems long into the future".

Did you know that South Australia is the only State which compensates farmers for leaving uncleared land alone? In ten years more than \$70 million has been paid to farmers to retain scrub.

Cowra Shire Council has initiated a willow clearing programme. "The disadvantages of the willow tree far outweigh any qualities it may have."

Warragamba Dam: Since its construction thirty years ago sixty million tonnes of sediment has been dumped into the dam.

LOCAL NEWS

Members of the Management Committee were addressed at their August meeting by a member of the Blue Mountains Organic Community Garden. A space on our Hut notice board has been allotted for a pamphlet holder which outlines their aims and ambitions, and these to our ears are quite worthy. For further information phone (047) 823506.

A member of the Bonnie Doon Fauna Group wishes to update us at our next meeting on their activities.

We responded to a request from W.I.R.E.S. by donating \$200.

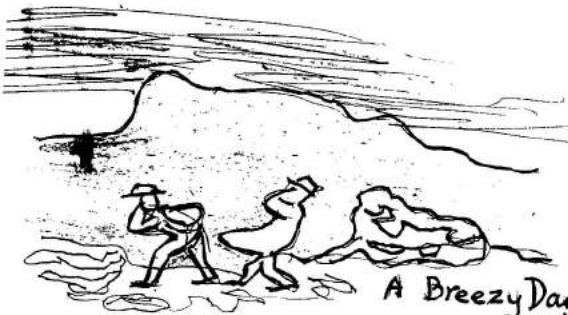
With the belief that the Nature Conservation Council voice is strengthened by the number of societies they represent, we have rejoined that body.

E.M.P.2 is now on public display. Council is urging all residents to take an active role in the second stage of its rezoning project. "This follows an exhaustive two year process which has identified the housing, recreational, business, transport, health, employment and educational needs of the city..." Maximum community input and participation is vital if we want the Mountains to retain its character as well as provide its people with all the needs identified in the plan.

WALKS REPORTS

July 19 1995: Golf Links Lookout to Gordon Falls, Leura.

The ingredients for a dismal walk were all there - a maximum of 6 predicted and cold westerly winds, but a most exhilarating and pleasant walk resulted. The days of wind gave horizons of utmost blue clarity. Cloudmaker, Kanangra Walls and The Gib seemed but a stone's throw away.



A new, well-constructed path runs from Cliff View Road to a tastefully-built lookout (Golf Links L.O.) on the Cliff Walk. The high standard of track construction continues right through to Gordon Falls picnic area. All the party, admittedly only six, expressed delight at the nicely curved footbridge passing the Pool of Siloam.

It was a day to make one enjoy the mountains at their winter best.

Lloyd Jones

Saturday, August 19
Kurrajong area

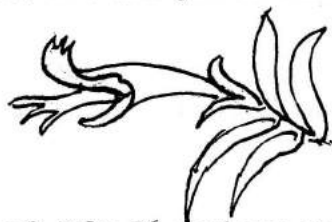
We are grateful to Nella Godfrey for introducing us to a different type of walk. Fifteen turned up and were conducted from the Health Farm at Kurrajong to the top of a nearby mountain, along a rough firetrail. This joined civilisation at the top of the mountain and we walked along a tarred road for a while, enjoying the views towards the plains, the pleasant homes and gardens, and the perfume of the pittosporum. At the end of this road we rapidly descended the very steep and dusty remains of the original Bells Line of Road which is now the delight of trail bikers, and found ourselves back near the Health Farm.

But Nella led us down the gully to an old logging road where we inspected an old rickety bridge. A little further on was a very pretty dam. The path led across this and back to the Health Farm via a rainforest, a couple of waterfalls, and finally we had to choose between climbing Cardiac Hill or going Easi-road. Guess which four chose the hill?

The bird watchers were happy and we saw some *dotted sun orchids,* black-eyed Susan, boronia and one plant of Chloanthes stoechadis.

For the learned, these are *Thelymitra ixioides,* Tetratheca ericifolia.

Grace Bayley



pale yellow Chloanthes stoechadis

MEETING REPORTS

On the meeting night of July 26 members were transported to the far north-west of N.S.W. The vast open sunny plains and winding water courses projected on a screen made a strong impact on the overcoated, gloved and beanieed audience.

Our guide was Judy Smith who is studying birds for a Ph D. Her project necessitated visits over a 4½ year period to the Paroo Overflow area which is located about 100 km north of Wilcannia.

She saw the area in times of severe drought and in good seasons. As a result Judy was able to document the fortunes fair and foul of her feathered friends.

Though interested in the details of the study I found the evidence of what man is doing to the country west of the Darling most distracting. Overgrazing and the onslaughts of feral fauna are combining to make the area an ultimate wasteland. And all we can do, it seems, is to sit back and watch it go on!

Lloyd Jones

ACTIVITIES OF THE JENOLAN CAVES RESERVE TRUST

Report on talk by ERNST HOLLAND, KARST RESOURCES MANAGER, JENOLAN CAVES RESERVE TRUST

Ernst began his presentation to the 25 August 1995 General Meeting on the Society by defining KARST - having to do with limestone topography, typified by underground drainage, sink holes, rolling surfaces and caverns. The name comes from a desolate region in Yugoslavia. Pro-rata, Australia has relatively little karst.

Ernst vividly illustrated the distinctive karst landforms with a series of slides, covering subjects drawn from many parts of the world. Aspects of different kinds of karst landscapes included

- rivers pouring out of sides of hills,
- natural arches and bridges in caves,
- ice caves inside limestone caves.

Pseudo karsts can include lava tubes, and geological occurrences such as glaciers.

The process of landscape formation can often be deduced from karsts. They are libraries of the past, holding fossils of corals and shells dating back hundreds of thousands of years. The mineralogy of caves tells of prevailing conditions of the past. Holes formed by (naturally) acid rain can be dated by the cross-section, and sediments tell of flora, water table and catchment changes.

There are many threats to karst areas including:

- demand for building products, resulting in the establishment of limestone quarries
- tourism, and the desire to make karst areas accessible and "attractive".

Other threats include fire, weed infestation, sewerage works, human occupancy of caves, poorly planned scientific experimentation and data gathering.

People go to caves to see the "pretties", and development aimed at displaying special formations can often cause cave degradation. Cave environments are fragile, and can be damaged through even small changes.

A study is currently being done to find ways of minimising environmental degradation at Jenolan Caves. Proposals being considered include rationing the number of people on site at any one time. Visitor impact management is being undertaken and data collected. The elimination of use of the Grand Arch for vehicles is being studied, and 24 options for future access to the caves have been narrowed down to six for detailed evaluation.

One of the world's few species of sheet-web spiders live in the roof of the Grand Arch. Their webs can cover up to 8-9 square metres. These spiders retreated to the caves during the last global climatic shift, and stayed there as the air carried insects into the cave for their food. The spiders on the walls of the Grand Arch are environmental indicators - when the vehicle emissions float upwards, their webs are affected and they fall.

Jenolan Caves has an important colony of brushtailed rock wallabies, of which there are only 400 in the country. The colony has increased from 7 to 14, with a predominance of males. UBMCS money helped with setting up this colony, and the breeding programme location is seen as a major factor in its success, as the enclosures were set up where the wallabies were, rather than moving them to a new location. A student from CSU at Bathurst is doing behavioural studies on the colony, looking at the differences between results of hand-feeding and natural foraging. The wallabies' personal space is important, especially at breeding time. Visitors may arrange a time to come and view the wallabies, but preference is always given to the needs of the colony.

Questions brought out information about some caves in Leura (in Sid Sinclair's backyard) which are long tubes, lined with a glassy substance, and are thought to be of volcanic origin.

The evening concluded with a vote of thanks to Ernst for a very enjoyable and informative presentation.

Mary Coyne

JOHN NOBLE - IN MEMORIUM

Many members, and others who have experienced his leadership, together grieve for the loss of our friend and fellow bushwalker, John Noble. He and Olive, his wife, provided unforgettable opportunities to explore the Newnes High Country. They shared their knowledge and love of this place with many who might never have penetrated the wondrous rocky area, and known its wind sculpt-ures, its deep crevasses, and the tiny fragile plants which inhabit them.

John was a 'natural student' eager to share with fellow walkers the names and characteristics of the wonders of the bush. It brought him great joy, during the difficult time of his encroaching illness, to know that their son David had discovered an unknown plant, the Wollemi Pine.

It was John's nature to struggle against frailty and to continue walking as long as he was able. Inevitably his activities were constrained and Olive became his nurse at home. John died on Friday July 21.

On the following Tuesday family and friends gathered at the Crematorium, Wentworth Falls, to say farewell. The sun shone on the gathering, lighting up the native flowers and protea which graced the coffin. Friends had laid other flowers around it, many of them native to the Blue Mountains. It was a time of thanksgiving.

Our thanks to Olive and John are timely - in gratitude for the precious ex-periences many of us have shared with them. These memories are priceless.

Muriel Healey

The following poem was written after one of 'John's walks' amongst the Pagoda Rocks. I would like to include it in appreciation of the beauty he and Olive opened up to me.

Rest

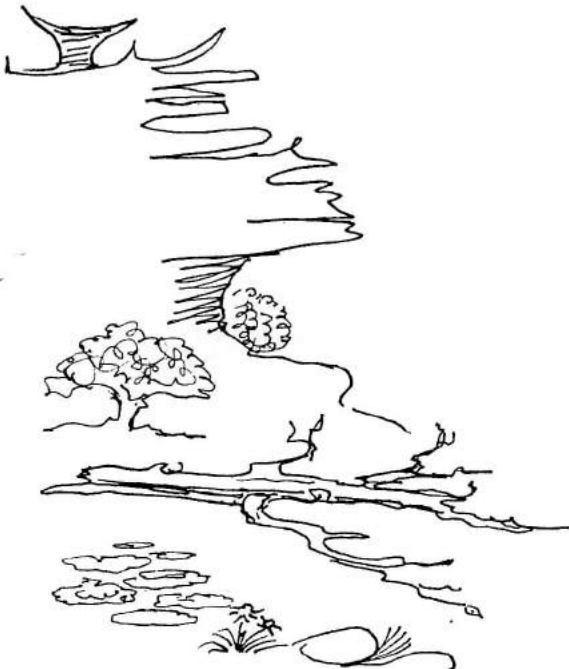
Warm brown rocks
Brocaded with lichen,
Wonderful place to wander and dream;
Mintbush and teatree perfuming the hollows,
And in the cracks the yellow buds gleam.

Walk with care!
Don't tread on old branches
Worn out, and fallen after a storm.
They dream of birdsong and wind in the treetops,
Memories captured in each sculptured form.

Pale grey twigs
Scribbling the shining rock,
Fragile as ash, destroyed by a breath.
Silvery, quiet
Ghosts of the trees and shrubs,
Resting so gently, and lovely in death.

So dear Lord,
After my labouring,
When I am weary, grant me your grace.
In everlasting arms
Carry my spirit home,
Let me live on in the light of your face.

© Grace Bayley 1995



A HAPPY DAY!

Thirty people made the trip to scatter John Noble's ashes in a place that he had loved. I dare not hazard a guess as to who the eldest were, but the two youngest, Kittani Su and Lauren, less than one year old, were carried by their mothers Sue Morison and Kath Ireland.

On a large pagoda surrounded by the sweet perfume of golden wattles and overlooking the Wolgan Valley, some of John's friends spoke of their time of knowing him - Muriel Healey, David Thomas, Betty Campbell, Tony Garbellini, Joan Storey, Kath Ireland. Perhaps I've left others out. David Thomas read a poem about the lyrebird and said that at that spot they once heard five lyrebirds singing around them. Later he read another poem entitled "Presence of the Bush" by John le Gay Brereton. Elvine Thomas read another lovely poem chosen by Olive and written, I think, by Adam Lindsay Gordon. Tony played the didgeridoo, and Olive and David Noble scattered John's ashes around the base of little plants in a little pagoda garden.

We ate a leisurely lunch on a nearby pagoda, listened to more didgeridoo from Tony, and a poem about the Gardens of Stone from Wyn Jones, and ate delicious cakes provided by Rosemary Brister and others. Afterwards we went to Blackfellows Hands Cave. It was getting too late in the year for lyrebird song, but we passed several mounds, saw two nests, and Ben Corey found a discarded filamentary feather. Wattles were delightful - *Acacia terminalis* along the way still in flower although it is fading in our area, and then higher up *Acacia hamiltonii* flowering profusely with a lovely sweet perfume which was stronger away from the shrub than at the flower.

It was a lovely day, very relaxed, and a happy day, to be with friends in such a beautiful place, to say goodbye to a friend who has left a legacy of warm fondness and many happy memories.

Christine Davies, August 1995

BLUE MOUNTAINS BUSHCARE FORUM

12TH NOVEMBER 1995

MID-MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY CENTRE, LAWSON

THE FOCUS WILL BE ON HABITAT - WHAT FLORA & FAUNA LIVE IN YOUR BUSH REGENERATION AREA OR FAVOURITE PLACE TO VISIT.

REGISTRATION: 9.30am No costs involved, but donations accepted for the Blue Mountains Bushcare Network. Tea & Coffee provided, bring your own lunch.

SPEAKERS:

THE BONNIE DOON FAUNA STUDY will be talking about how to conduct simple survey methods and what the bush can tell us about its inhabitants.

JILL DARK will be speaking about the Birds of the Blue Mountains and what to do if you find an injured native animal.

BRETT PETERS will be explaining the habitat needs of reptiles and showing us Blue Mountains specimens.

ALAN LOBB will be giving us some ideas on the identification of terrestrial orchids - one of the more fascinating native survivors in disturbed bushland.

OPEN FORUM - The last hour (approx 3.30-4.30) will be set aside for networking and information sharing. Tell us briefly what your group is doing. Space will be available for displaying leaflets, photos, etc. Tables provided, bring your own display boards.

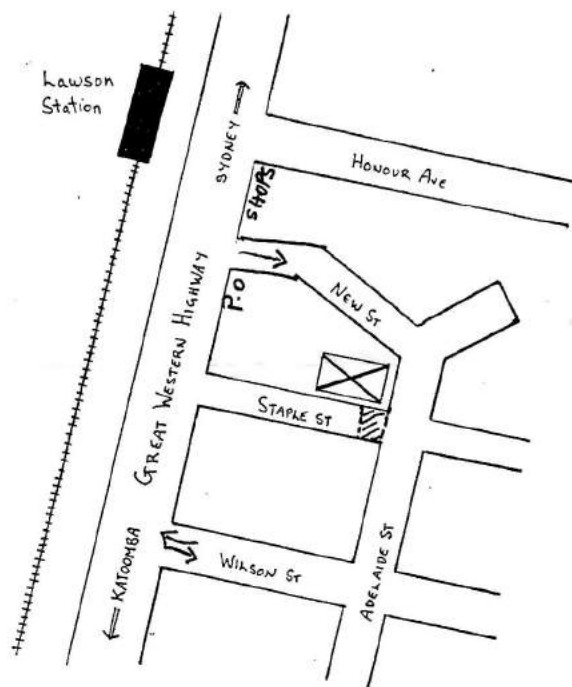
Although this forum will be mainly attended by Blue Mountains Bush Regenerators, anyone from the Greater Sydney Region with an interest in the bush will find this an enjoyable and informative day.

Hosted for the Blue Mountains Bushcare Network
by Bonnie Doon Fauna Study

(047) 822218

Map overleaf

HOW TO GET THERE



Mid-Mountains Community Centre
New St (cnr Staple St)
Lawson

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.

EXCURSION PROGRAMME

October 1995

Sat. 21 Lockley Pylon. Meet at corner of Mt Hay Road and Great Western Highway at 8.30am. Contact June and Len Baxter (047) 877312

November

Sunday 5 Linden Sawmill. Meet opposite Faulconbridge Railway Station in car park at 9.30am. Contact Bert Davies (047) 588586

Wed. 15 Rainforest bird walk with Graham Alcorn. Meet at 10am at B1 Blackheath Commuter Carpark. Contact Ruth Milton (047) 573584

Sat. 18 The Hanging Garden. Meet at Wentworth Falls Station in carpark nearest Great Western Highway at 9.30am. Contact Christine Davies (047) 877246

December

Sunday 3 Evans Crown and Tarana Reserve. Meet at Mt Victoria Station Carpark at 9am. Contact Ron Wheeler (047) 571526

Saturday 9 Christmas Party in the vicinity of The Hut. Meet at 10am for a short bushwalk before lunch. Contact David Thomas (047) 842121

Sat. 16 Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Carpark at 9.30am to drive to Old Ford Reserve in Megalong Valley. There will be a short walk towards Nellie's Glen along the Six Foot Track and return to Old Ford Reserve. Contact: David Thomas (047) 842121

Wed. 20 Terrace Falls. Meet at Hazelbrook Shopping Centre carpark at 9.30am. Contact Bob Jones (047) 588361. If coming by train please let Bob know.

January 1996

Sun. 7 Neates Glen. Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Carpark at 9.30am. Contact David Thomas (047) 842121

Wed. 17 A stroll around Wentworth Falls Lake - history of same and feed the ducks. Level going. Meet 10am at Stockyard Parking Area Contact Lloyd Jones (047) 572270

Sat. 20 The River Cave. Wet walk, bring spare shoes. Meet Mt. Victoria parking area at station at 8.30am. Contact: Dave Lovegrove (063) 552133.

If you have never been on any of our walks or have missed them for awhile, why not come? If you are new to it, try the Wednesday walks for a start. Those on Saturday and Sunday are longer and may be more strenuous but you'll be well looked after. The walks are only as fast as the slowest member. We like to stop and look at plants, views and rocks. The company is great. Check with your friendly contact person if in any doubt.



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Saturday - 9.00 am to 12 noon (047) 82 3467

Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Newsletter

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Oct. 1995

**SURFACE
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Membership / Renewal Form

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 29, WENTWORTH FALLS 2782

Name

Family \$15 per year

Address

Single \$10 " "

.....

Pensioner family \$10 " "

Single Pensioner \$6 " "

Fees cover membership from 1st March (or date of application for new members)
to end of February the following year.

Half fee applies for new membership from 1st September.

If a receipt is required please forward a stamped self-addressed envelope.