

KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Newsletter No.27. February 1977. Price 10¢

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Registered for posting --Category C.



RUFIOUS WHISTLER

Patron Mr Allen A. Strom, A.M.

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the question."

---Shakespeare.

HONOURS FOR CONSERVATION AND LITERATURE

'... the sure vision celebrate' .

In January the Society was pleased to see that honours had been awarded three Australians whose work has had close associations with the Blue Mountains.

For each the honour recognizes a lifetime of service, professionally and in leisure time, to Australia; each has had a sure vision of this land---its past, present, and its possible future. Their work, each in its kind, has helped their fellow Australians to understand and cherish their country.

At the wish of the General Meeting of 27th January the President has conveyed the Society's congratulations to each of them.

Originator of Blue Mountains National Park

Mr. Myles J. Dunphy, O.B.E., New Year's Honours List:  
---for services to Conservation.

Recently we displayed in the Hut a copy of the historic supplement to The Katoomba Daily, 24th August, 1934. This 4-page broadsheet 'issued for General Information' described, with map, 'a Blue Mountains National Park with Primitive Areas' proposed by the National Parks & Primitive Areas Council, being the 'scheme originated by M.J. Dunphy... formulated ... 1922-1923, 1932 handed to the Surveyor-General and the Blue Mountains Shire Council in June, 1932'. This 'scheme' was based on the experience of Myles Dunphy and fellow pioneering bushwalkers. He and his friend Herbert Gallop undertook their first long walk in the region---Jenolan, King's Tableland, Burragorang, Picton---in 1912. There were no adequate maps and from then on Myles devoted his cartographic skill to making the detailed maps needed by bushwalkers.

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The award, of course, recognizes Mrs. Dark's Contribution as a whole, but most of us would think first of her novel "The Timeless Land", its title now a part of the national consciousness and of the language. Mrs. Dark's creative power and insight, her loving observation of her country, brought to bear upon its pre-history and its history, united in this book to give Australians an imaginative experience of this land such as no other had given them.

In Sydney Harbour there are still a few remnants of the native bush-capped, wave-eroded rocky foreshore where the waters lap and the seagulls alight. These are the historian's (and the conservationist's) precious 'points of reference'. They were few enough even in 1937 when Eleanor Dark began "The Timeless Land". In the opening pages she shows the child Bennilong and his father, who in the last autumn has seen 'the boat with wings' (the "Endeavour"), and stand on the south headland of the pristine harbour looking for the boat to appear again and from memory portraying it upon a rock. Time is moving relentlessly towards the confrontation, the conflict that the Land and its dark people are to know. The father will not see it, but the child will, to his destruction. Mrs. Dark took our 'point of reference' that moment in time, and put it into our literature:

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of the native flora was one of her great interests.

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Meet at Lawson Council Chambers 9.30 am.

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Editor= G.N.Alcorn. Rutland Rd. MEDLOW BATH. 2780

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A VISIT TO YERRANDERIE ---The Society is planning to have a special excursion to the old silver mining town of Yerranderie, deep in the Water Board Catchment Area. The area is very much involved in the plan for the southern section of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park, and in addition, much of it is directly viewed from the towns of the Blue Mountains. Some among us have memories of the beautiful Burragorang Valley before it was closed off by the Water Board, and no doubt all would feel that first-hand knowledge of the area would be

an advantage if we wish to support ideals of conservation there.

The trip is proposed for 26-27th March. The distance from Katoomba is about 130 miles (210 km), via Oberon and Mt. Werong. There is no other way in. Roads are tar sealed to Shooters' Hill, and then dirt of surprisingly good quality most of the way, with four creeks to be forded near Yerranderie. The last petrol station and mechanical help is at Oberon, with 80 miles still to go so plan accordingly. You must pay a toll of \$5 per car through Neville Lang's property at Bindook.

There is a good camp site on the Tonalli R. near Yerranderie or there is luxury accommodation in Miss Val. Lhuede's resurrection of the old Post Office. For a sum of \$10 per night there is excellent bunking with all cons and cooking facilities. Bring your own linen, cutlery.

You must take in all the food and luxury you normally find necessary for your survival, as nothing is obtainable in Yerranderie. Oberon is the last shopping centre you will see.

Dare I suggest it? We must start at 6.30 am Saturday from Katoomba, and leave Yerranderie by 5.30 pm Sunday. Members who can take passengers please make yourselves heard.

Make any enquiries to:

Terry Macartney, Wentworth Falls,  
(047) 57-1881.

P.S. I must know how many wish to stay at the Post Office lodging, so please let me know early.

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#### A CASE AGAINST ALL NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY

The distinguished Australian medical scientist, Sir MacFarlane Burnett, Emeritus Professor of Experimental Medicine, University of Melbourne has given permission to reprint his submission to the Ranger Inquiry on Uranium Mining, provided any quotation has sufficient context to ensure that his meaning is properly conveyed.

His submission is short and to the point (4 double spaced typewritten pages) and convincingly puts "The case against all nuclear technology". It proposes that.... "the Government, on behalf of the people of Australia, should make a unilateral and self-denying undertaking to allow no mining of uranium ore nor any production of fissile material from any source under Australian control. Such action will have no material effect on the continuation of nuclear power plant production overseas, but it could have an unprecedented and perhaps extremely powerful moral effect on world opinion," the submission states.

#### "Biological and Evolutionary Considerations"

Professor Burnett's remarks under this heading are extremely interesting. We reprint them in full as follows:

"At a more strictly biological level, I wish to point out how the whole development of the biosphere during the course of organic evolution has been "directed" toward the elimination of life-damaging constituents of the environment. The most conspicuous was the generation of the oxygen of the atmosphere by photosynthesis, mostly by marine algae. Once the oxygen content of the atmosphere became significant, the ozone layer in the stratosphere developed to screen out most of the solar ultraviolet and remove an important damaging agent. Biological processes also gave rise to the laying down of vast amounts of calcium, magnesium, and carbon dioxide, and almost certainly of much iron ore. The associated changes in sea water constitution were in all probability highly significant for development of life.



"Modern molecular biology is deeply concerned with the elaborate mechanisms by which DNA can be repaired after damage by ionizing radiation (from radioactive atoms) or ~~high~~ ultraviolet. The amount of background ionizing radiation has probably diminished six-to eight-fold since the first appearance of life, and the incidence of ultraviolet at the earth's surface must have been many times greater in the days before the development of biological photosynthesis. Life has clearly been concerned from the beginning with counteracting damage from radiation, almost the only type of environmental impact that can modify the informational content of DNA and cause genetic damage. It is interesting possibility that natural chemical mutagens also may once have been present in the environment. If they were, they have since been destroyed by some form of biological action. None are now present at more than a few parts per billion in natural ecosystems uncontaminated with man-made substances.

"One might summarize by saying that lethal ultraviolet and ionizing radiations are appropriate in the atomic furnaces of stellar interiors and the unfiltered regions of space in solar systems. Life can only evolve in environments which such radiation cannot reach in more than minimal amounts. Having regard to all the other physical requirements for an abode of life, the earth's biosphere is, and probably always has been, unique in the solar system. The only human action that could destroy the biosphere and exterminate the human species is by manipulation of nuclear forces. Maybe the biosphere is now so well established that it is indestructible by anything that man could attempt, but the most elementary consideration of the possibility is a justification for struggling to reverse the decisions already made by the major powers to use nuclear energy in unlimited amounts, and to maintain a perpetual stockpile of nuclear arms that could kill or maim genetically a substantial fraction of the people of the earth."

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#### FIRST RANGER REPORT IN OUR LIBRARY

Friends of the Earth have sent us a copy of the First Report of the Ranger Uranium Enquiry. It is in our library for perusal by members. It is not a green light for uranium mining as was initially reported in the press. Friends of the Earth urge people to write to their M.Ps. expressing opposition to the further development of uranium mining in Australia, as the Government must soon commit itself soon on opening up a new uranium mine.

#### GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

In our last issue we wrote of the campaign for the Greater Blue Mountains National Park and reported that the case was to be put to the NSW Premier, Mr Wran in November.

Since then the Premier and the Minister for Lands, Mr Crabtree, have announced the creation of the Greater Southern Blue Mountains National, an area of 160,000 hectares which includes much of the southern section of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park.

This is great news indeed and the Government is to be congratulated for its prompt action. Much of the remainder of the proposals for the Southern B. MTS. including Nattai and an area south-west of Mount Werong is to be investigated.

The announcement of the granting of the Southern Blue Mountains Park came at the same time as the special issue of the National Parks Journal aimed at launching the public campaign for the Greater Blue Mountains Park proposal. Splendid that half of it should be already achieved. However, it is considered that the dedication of the northern section will not be simple as there are considerable commercial, industrial developmental and other opposing forces involved.....(OUR SOCIETY HAS COPIES OF NATIONAL PARKS JOURNAL:FOR SALE \$1, at the Hut) or NPA 263 Broadway...2007

*This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in May 2021 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.*

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### Biological and Evolutionary Considerations"

Professor Burnet's remarks under this heading are extremely interesting. We reprint them in full as follows:

At a more strictly biological level, I wish to point out how the whole development of the biosphere during the course of organic evolution has been "directed" toward the elimination of life-damaging constituents of the environment. The most conspicuous was the generation of the oxygen of the atmosphere by photo-synthesis, mostly by marine algae. Once the oxygen content of the atmosphere became significant, the ozone layer in the stratosphere developed to screen out most of the solar ultraviolet and remove an important damaging agent. Biological processes also gave rise to the laying down of vast amounts of calcium, magnesium, and carbon dioxide, and almost certainly of much iron ore. The associated changes in sea water constitution were in all probability highly significant for development of life.'

"Modern molecular biology is deeply concerned with the elaborate mechanisms by which DNA can be repaired after damage by ionising radiation (from radioactive atoms) or ultraviolet. The amount of background ionizing radiation has probably diminished six-to-eight-fold since the first appearance of life, and the incidence of ultraviolet at the earth's surface must have been many times greater in the days before the development of biological photosynthesis. Life has clearly been concerned from the beginning with counteracting damage from radiation, almost the only type of environmental impact that can modify the informational content of DNA and cause genetic damage. It is interesting possibility that natural chemical mutagens also may once have been present in the environment. If they were, they have since been destroyed by some form of biological action. None are now present at more than a few parts per billion in natural ecosystems uncontaminated with man-made substances.



“One might summarize by saying that lethal ultraviolet and ionizing radiations are appropriate in the atomic furnaces of stellar interiors and the unfiltered regions of space in solar systems. Life can only evolve in environments which such radiation cannot reach in more than minimal amounts. Having regard to all the other physical requirements for an abode of life, the earth’s biosphere is, and probably always has been, unique in the solar system. The only human action that could destroy the biosphere and exterminate the human species is by manipulation of nuclear forces. Maybe the biosphere is now so well established that it is indestructible by anything that man could attempt, but the most elementary consideration of the possibility is a justification for struggling to reverse the decisions already made by the major powers to use nuclear energy in unlimited amounts, and to maintain a perpetual stockpile of nuclear arms that could kill or maim genetically a substantial fraction of the people of the earth.”

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#### FIRST RANGER REPORT IN OUR LIBRARY

Friends of the Earth sent us a copy of the First Report of the Ranger Uranium Enquiry, It is in our library for perusal by members. It is not a green light for uranium mining as was initially reported in the press. Friends of the Earth urge people to write to their MPs expressing opposition to the further development of uranium mining in Australia as the Government must soon commit itself soon on opening up a new uranium mine.

#### GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

In our last issue we wrote of the campaign for the Greater Blue Mountains National Park and reported that the case was to be put to the NSW Premier, Mr Wran in November.

Since then the Premier and the Minister for Lands, Mr Crabtree, have announced the creation of the Greater Southern Blue Mountains National Park, an area of 160,000 hectares which includes much of the southern section of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park.

This is great news indeed and the Government is to be congratulated for its prompt action. Much of the remainder of the proposals for the Southern Blue Mountains including Nattai and an area south-west of Mount Werong is to be investigated.

The announcement of the granting of the Southern Blue Mountains Park came at the same time as the special issue of the National Parks Journal aimed at launching the public campaign for the Greater Blue Mountains Park proposal. Splendid that half of it should be already achieved. However, it is considered that the dedication of the northern section will not be simple as there are considerable commercial, industrial developmental and other opposing forces involved...(OUR SOCIETY HAS COPIES OF NATIONAL PARKS JOURNAL: FOR SALE \$1, at the Hut) or National Parks Association Broadway..2007