

KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Newsletter No.30. November, 1977. Price 10¢

"REGISTERED FOR POSTING AS A PUBLICATION - (CATEGORY (B))"



BLACKBIRD

PATRON

Mr Allen A. Strom, A.M.

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Carols in evening with Good Neighbour Choir. Walk in morning (see Bush Ramble Program).

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EDITOR G.N. Alcorn Rutland Road Medlow Bath*****

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Rambles in Our Sandstone Understory.

Often I've stood on a sandstone rock, light brown, or a purplish-gray, a rough-velvet stone, or a sculpture, made by the wind the frost and rain. And then I've heard, quiet-throaty-murmurings-gurgling-close; that tell of a creek in the bush nearby. Down the slope I've pushed my way, through tangles of flowering, nutting, prickly scrub; looking up, at the varied gums with their mauve or silver bark, and branches spread by an artist against the sky.

And there the creek---a chain of varied pools and rocks---clear pools, that are linked by crystal ropes and shining veils and little water-falls; some deep and cool-green, on cushions of sand, some shallow on honey-brown rock, and onto some the bush has dropped pink flowers which laughing children cup in happy hands.

This aesthetic experience has given me, and many others, great joy; especially as it somehow helps us see beyond our individual selves and little problems to the whole creation; of which each individual is a part, whether a Lambertia bush (the B.M. tourist symbol) or one of the honey-birds (which feed on the Lambertias and other flowering shrubs; different shrubs flower throughout the different seasons) or a human.

I rejoice in being human because of our gift for awareness of the intricate wonder of it all, and because we are able to understand a little of how the understory of the Eucalyptus forests protects the soil and contributes to its nourishment; of how it plays its part in the production of moisture and recycling which produces rain, and of its physiological interaction with humans by producing oxygen we need, and using up Carbon-di-oxide we produce.

Also, I grieve in being human, because we have been so egoistical, so slow to adapt and consciously to find our place in it all.

I hope there will always be a forest understory on these eastern ranges of our largely arid continent. On a trip from Sydney, through Parramatta, Katoomba, Broken Hill, along the Nullaba Highway, to Perth, the Blue Mountains Plateau is one of the few forested areas with understory and swamps to maintain permanent freshwater streams. Streams on to which the bushes drop pink flowers (*Bauera rubioides*), and which have very practical uses in the Hawkesbury River Catchment System, with its area of National Parkland.

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them safe storage so far into the future. "The most dangerous by-product of all is plutonium. Most of this is extracted from the reactors and used like uranium as nuclear fuel. However, a small proportion of it remains in the waste products, to remain lethal for half a million years. Jim Falk sums up the plutonium problem as follows; "Plutonium decays so slowly that a single gram of it would still be dangerously radioactive after half a million years. The maximum permissible annual intake of plutonium is at present one millionth of a gram, a quantity capable of causing cancer and genetic damage. Plutonium is also used as the principal constituent for atomic bombs. A single conventional reactor's yearly output of plutonium is over 200 Kilograms, sufficient to make 30 atomic bombs or to provide a dangerous dose for every person in the world, one hundred times over." If in an effort to keep up our exponential growth in consumption, we were to make nuclear fission a major energy source, then we would need to build many thousands of reactors throughout the world. The quantities of plutonium and other radioactive wastes generated would be so large as to put in real jeopardy the survival of the entire human race. We must therefore reject the option of nuclear fission, and work to bring a halt to the further mining of uranium".

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This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in June 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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