# KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY.

Newsletter No.33, August 1978. Price 20¢

REGISTERED FOR POSTING AS A PUBLICATION - CATEGORY "B".



Patron Mr. Allen A. Strom, A.M.

"Man is confronted with the difficult and complex ecological problem of finding out how he can fit into his environment so that it will not deteriorate but continue to provide what he needs".

R. G. Downes

A.C.Foundation

OUR SOCIETY.

CONLING MEETINGS
Please watch local papers for details which are to be finalised. One of the talks will be titled "Fungi in Eucalypt Forest, and one "The Study of Ecology in Blue Mountains".

BUSHFIRE CONTROL On 25th May the Panel discussion on this subject was well-attended and our thanks go to the speakers who put their views so clearly.

MEMBERS' NIGHT.

On June 29th we got so interested in discussing various conservation matters that we did not start showing slide till 10.30 pm. It was a case of quality beats quantity however, and the slides of fungi and lizards including geckos and an amazing shot of a water-dragon laying eggs

These slides were shown by Chris Van de Helde and Ken Gorringe and were really outstanding.

SOUTH WEST TASMANIA

On July 27th we had a talk from D.Kelly and D.Noble on the south-west Wilderness of Tasmania, illustrated by slides of great beauty. It was disquieting to learn that the Tasmanian Electricity Authority, which flooded the Lake Pedder in this area, now wants to flood the Franklin river by damming. This is the last wilderness river in Tasmania and the slides that we were shown of its rugged gorges were very beautiful.

The meeting decided to send a resolution to this year's N.C.C. Conference calling on the whole of NSW conservation movement to vigorously support the campaign to preserve the Franklin river as a wilderness.

WALKS PROGRAMME for Sept. October & November

This group of walks is designed to take full advantage of the spring flowers and also to observe regeneration of the bushland devastated last December.

Saturday 2nd September. Blue Mts. National Park area. Meet Southern side of Woodford near railway station . 9.30 am (includes Toby's Glen etc.)

7th October. Lawson/Hazelbrook area. Meet at Lawson Bowling Club parking area. Northern side of Lawson Station.

4th November. By request a trip to Ruined Castle. Meet at commencement of Narrow Neck road at junction with Cliff Drive 9.30 am.

KATCOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONAERVATION SOCIETY

Newsletter No.33 August 1978. Price 20g

P2.

The December ramble will be associated with the Society's annual Xmas gathering at the Hut, Valley of Waters, and will be a shorter walk probably including the Undercliff Track, Den Fenella etc. This will be on December 2nd 9.30 am. meeting at the Hut

BUSH OUTING, DATURDAY 3rd June to Erskine creek via Kiara creek.

Persistent rains and high winds during the previous week made selection of an alternative walk necessary, however, though inspection on the previous wednesday snowed fallen trees and flooded creeks by friday the flood-level had dropped dramatically so it was decided to proceed with the original walk as planned. A near record of 33 people arrived and all proceeded by car for about 20 kms along the McManons Lookout road. A left-hand turn was then followed for about 4 kms to a point above Kiara creek. Here the cars were left and the party went on down a rough logging track to the actual creek which was followed by numerous crossings from bank to bank which made the walk somewhat laborious. There was much eviden of damage done by logging operations for red cedar etc. which at one time were a feature of this area. The creek was ry beautiful with massive fern areas and some fine trees incruding Lillypilly (Acmena smithii). The lack of a good forest botanist made identification of the various species difficult. The ringing calls of lyre birds were heard but the birds were not sighted, birds in general were not plentiful although onw energy normally this is a good area for birdlife, possibly the unfavourable weather conditions could have had some effect. Near the lunch spot some interesting fossils were examined and much rotting timber provided a display of various fungi.

An interesting walk which would be worth repeating during more favourable weather. however, and the slides geokos and an america

Bush Outing Saturday July the first was to Yellow Rock Creek Firetrail and Yellow Rock Lookout

After days of wet and murky weather, 22 ramblers met near Springwood Station on a fine sunny morning and proceeded Singles Ridge road and followed this road for about 3 Kms to the commencement of the trail on the left of the road. Dismounting the party proceeded down a moderate slope to Yellow Rock Creek. Folk from Upper Blue Mts immediately noticed the different species of genera familiar to them.

Along the creek was a fine stand of Melaleuca linariifolia which were 6to 8metres high with their 'paper'bark. Unfortun ately this species flowers in Spring/Summer so we were unable to see the attractive flowers. A lovely colony of 'Pixie Cap' orchids were found near the path in full flower (Acianthus fornicatus). The trail closely followed the creek and was easy walking, many interesting species of trees, shrubs and other plants were seen and included the beautiful yellow bloodwood (Eucalyptus eximia) a stanger to upper mountain dwellers the fern-leaf banksia (B.aspleniifolia). A fine shrub seen all along the trail was a geebung which was carrying both flowers and fruit, the geebungs are sometimes difficult to identify but thisone was probably Persoonia oblongata which grows in the lower blue mountains. The trail ended at a couple of deep pools. Lunch was eaten in a sunny spot just above these pools. There were many birds seen and heard, honey-eaters were evident and included white-eared and white-plumed, a flock of red-browed finches were seen and one of the party afterwards found an old, abandoned nest of this species, most of the party explored a trail which went north of the main trail and then we all returned to the cars and proceeded onto the Yellow-rock Lookout with a fine view of the lower Nepean river. A nice spot, fine trees and sandstone formations. A very happy day enjoyed by all.

KATOCABA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY.

Newsletter No.33; August 1978. Price 20%.

REGISTERED FOR PUBLICATION AS A PUBLICATION Category 'B' EDITOR G.N. ALCORN RUTLAND ROAD MEDLOW BATH

ACTIVE NEW MEMBERS

It is most heartening to see so many active new members.

As long as we continue to be actively involved in the conservation struggle I am sure this trend will continue and there is little danger of Our Society degenerating into a social gathering for tea and gossip.

Secretary ....

\*\*\* Land preservation committee opportunity table \*\*\*\*

This will be held at 7.30 P.M. in the Hut at the Society's November General Meeting.

Members are invited to donate any saleable article (new or old, to assist raise funds for the Preservation of Environmentally Sensitive Land Project. It will help if the suggested price is marked on the item being donated.

(This is a good chance to recycle things no longer of use to you).

Enquiries: please phone... Ruth Baxter (57.1774) OR

Winsome Gregory... (57.1573)

# FASCINATING FUNGI

In the course of the day's work we found recently a round object about the size of a large grapefruit. It had an outer covering a little like a paper-bank tree and when cut revealed a cellular pattern like a honeycomb. After being kept in a bag for a few days it developed from the cut part a toadstool of astounding whiteness and great beauty.

Mr John Walker, Senior research scientist of Biological Research Institute has kindly identified it for us. It is the fungus known as "blackfellows' bread Polyporus mylittae. He also states, and I quote the large subterranean body known as a sclerotium is thought to have been used by the Aborigines as a food, although this is not completely certain. This fungi was found under the roots of a fallen tree in the Leura area.

Another strange object we found in Dante's Glen at Lawson was like a petrified pine-cone but very heavy. Ar Walker advises that this is a stone-making fungus, a relative of the other one but instead of forming a subterranean body entirely of fungus tissue it binds together ing a subterranean body entirely of lungus tissue it pinds together small stones and soil into a hard compact mass and this serves as its sclerotium. A toadstool of this fungus is apparently rare and Mr Walker would like to see any found. Fungi are only one of Nature's marvels one could study but at the moment we are very keen on them and are searching for Earth Tongues a 2inch high black, club-shaped object, and a thin brown stick-likeone 2 - 8 inches highwhich is a parasite on insects. If excavated below soil level the mummified insect larva (caterpillar, grub) is often found attached to its base.

Both of these are to be found in moist places among leaf-mould.

SUBSCRITTIONS: by iliv and investor by jest species. The characteristics of is, classics in the world enable on to credict with confidence tween 25 and how of the grain and ammai appoins how present

KATCOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Newsletter No. 33. August 1578 Frice 20¢

All Koya on horaco sa turkin katalan katalan  $_{L}$  ,  $_{L}$  ,  $_{L}$  ,  $_{L}$ 

## Bruce's Walk .

When bushwalking I have often come across stone steps leading nowhere which are apparently part of what was once Bruce's Walk. I know nothing of its history as I have only been a few years in the Mountains. If anyone could enlighten me or tell me of a book on the Walk I would be most grateful to hear from them. (Box 29 wentworth Falls, N.S.W. 2782) It may even be possible that some group is trying to rebuild it and I would like to be involved.

sided without one sent in a W. Alcorn

# A Society Activity Secretary

Miss Valerie Swane from Swanes' Nursery at Dural was the Guest Speaker at a function organized by the Land Preservation Committee at the Wentworth Falls Country Club on Tuesday morning 8th August. Over 60 mountain residents came to hear this well informed horticulturist who had taken the time to visit this mountain area prior to the functio and was able to give nelpful advice to mountain gardeners.

She urged home owners and local authorities to plant more trees in our streets to relieve the existing bareness to add to the beauty of our homes, to replace those which may have died or been destroyed by fire

Miss Swane compared the creation of a native and an exotic garden and explained that nealthy trees and shrubs can build up a resistance to pests. She pointed out the need to preserve our native flora, and mentioned that by careful observation of existing natives it was easy to select the right species to plant in our own gardens.

The Society for Growing Native Plants gave a shrub which was won by the holder of the lucky door ticket.

Mr Dick Rushton in proposing the vote of thanks on behalf of the Society presented her with a copy of Sketchbook of the Blue Mountains and an attractive brown scarf.

The Wentworth Falls Country Club kindly donated the use of the Club Lounge which created a warm and friendly atmosphere in very pleasant surroundings.

The Border Ranges is an exceptional area both from the standpoint of recreation and scenic value and for the conservation of flora and fauna. Rainforest is the richest natural community found in the world today and the Border Ranges is the largest remaining area of this community in N.S.W. Because of its geographic position between temperate and tropical zones it contains a great variety of unusual plant species as well as one-quarter of the bird species present in Australia and probably more mammal species than any area of comparable size elsewhere in Australia.

Unfortunately the government's compromise on the Border Ranges has resulted in a non viable national park. It preserves less than a quarter of the total suitable area and is therefore far too small to adequately fulfil one of its major purposes, the protection of plants and animals in the long term. Although Lamington National Park makes an important contribution on the Queensland side of the border, the total area of both parks is still probably less than 15% of the original area of rainforest in the region. Furthermore, the long narrow shape with a large edge to area ratio makes management difficult and increases the likelihood of damage by fire and invasion by pest species. The characteristics of such "islands" elsewhere in the world enable us to predict with confidence that between 25 and 50% of the plant and animal species now present in this area will ultimately be lost. K.TOO.BA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFF COMSERVATION SCCIETY

Newsletter No. 33. August 1978. Price 20¢

P.5

Outside of this park logging of rainforest is to continue. It is important to note that despite assertions that these forests are managed to provide a continuing supply of fine cabinet timbers, logging at present is far in excess of replacement growth. We are mining these forests rather than managing them on a sustained yield basis. The long term effects of these practices on the continued viability of the rainforest community and the constituent plant and animal species are not known. Nor are these timbers being used to produce the fine furniture for which they are so well suited. Large amounts go into plywood cores and house framing, a practice E.F. Schummacher has referred to as "obscene".

Once again a conflict between short-term gains and long-term values has been resolved in favour of the former. One might well question whether we have a right to foreclose the opportunity for future generations to enjoy what Border Ranges now is and represents. Sadly, alternatives exist which could have preserved this rainforest and employment opportunities in the area. That one of these was not chosen is a disturbing indication of our inability to make environmentally sound decisions in the present economic and political climate.

F.H. Talbot &S.S. Clark, Centre for Environmental Studies, Macquarie University.

NEEDED VOLUNTEER TYPIST

The Land use Committee of Our Society urgently needs a typist. Would any member able and willing to help in this matter please phone Dick Duckham .... 'phone 57-1836.

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

# KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY. Newsletter No.33 August 1978. Price 10 cents REGISTERED FOR POSTING AS A PUBLICATION – CATEGORY "B".

Patron Mr Allen A Strom, A.M.

"Man is confronted with the difficult and complex ecological problem of finding out how he can fit into his environment so that it will not deteriorate but continue to provide what he needs" R. G. Downes...Australian Conservation Foundation.

#### OUR SOCIETY.

<u>COMING MEETINGS</u>. Please watch local papers for details which are to be finalised. One of the talks will be titled "Fungi in Eucalypt Forest", and one "The Study of Ecology in Blue Mountains".

<u>BUSHFIRE CONTROL</u>. On 25<sup>th</sup> May the Panel discussion on this subject was well attended and our thanks go to the speakers who put their views so clearly.

MEMBERS NIGHT. On June 29<sup>th</sup> we got so interested in discussing various conservation matters that we did not start showing slides till 10.30 pm. It was a case of quality beats quantity however, and the slides of fungi and lizards including geckos and an amazing shot of a water dragon laying eggs. These slides were shown by Chris Van de Helde and Ken Gorringe and were really outstanding.

<u>SOUTH WEST TASMANIA</u> On July 27<sup>th</sup> we had a talk from D. Kelly and D. Noble on the south-west Wilderness of Tasmania, illustrated by slides of great beauty. It was disquieting to learn that the Tasmanian Electricity Authority, which flooded the Lake Pedder in this area, now want to flood the Franklin River by damming. This is the last wilderness river in Tasmania and the slides that we were shown of its rugged gorges were very beautiful.

The meeting decided to send a resolution to this years Nature Conservation Council Conference calling on the whole of New South Wales conservation movement to vigorously support the campaign to preserve the Franklin River as a wilderness.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

## WALKS PROGRAMME, for September, October and November.

This group of walks is designed to take full advantage of the spring flowers and also to observe regeneration of the bushland devastated last December.

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September. Blue Mountains National Park area. Meet Southern side of Woodford near railway station. 9.30 am (includes Toby's Glen etc.)

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October. Lawson/Hazelbrook area. Meet at Lawson Bowling Club parking area. Northern side of Lawson Station.

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November. By request a trip to Ruined Castle. Meet at commencement of Narrow Neck Road at junction with Cliff Drive. 9.30 am.

The <u>December ramble</u> will be associated with the Society's annual Xmas gathering at the Hut, Valley of Waters, and will be a shorter walk probably including the Undercliff Track, Den Fenella etc. This will be on December  $2^{nd}$  9.30 am, meeting at the Hut.

# BUSH OUTING, Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June to Erskine Creek via Kiara Creek.

Persistent rains and high winds during the previous week made selection of an alternative walk necessary, however through inspection on the previous Wednesday showed fallen trees and flooded creeks by Friday the flood-level had dropped dramatically so it was decided to proceed with the original walk as planned. A near record of 33 people arrived and all proceeded by car for about 20 kms along the McManons Lookout Road. A left hand turn was then followed for about 4 kms to a point above Kiara Creek. Here the cars were left and the party went on down a rough logging track to the actual creek which was followed by numerous crossings from bank to bank which made the walk somewhat laborious. There was much evidence of damage done by logging operations for red cedar etc, which at one time were a feature of this area. The creek was very beautiful with massive fern areas and some fine trees including Lillypilly (Acmena smithii). The lack of a good forest botanist made identification of the various species difficult. The ringing calls of lyre birds were heard but the birds were not sighted, birds in general were not plentiful although normally this is a good area for birdlife, possibly the unfavourable weather conditions could have had some effect. Near the lunch spot some interesting fossils were examined and much rotting timber provided a display of various fungi. An interesting walk which would be worth repeating during more favourable weather.

# Bush outing Saturday July the 1<sup>st</sup> was to Yellow Rock Creek Firetrail and Yellow Rock Lookout.

After days of wet and murky weather, 22 ramblers met near Springwood Station on a fine sunny morning and proceeded Singles Ridge Road and followed this road for about 3 kms to the commencement of the trail on the left of the road. Dismounting the party proceeded down a moderate slope to Yellow Rock Creek. Folk from Upper Blue Mountains immediately noticed the different species of genera familiar to them. Along the creek was a fine stand of *Melaleuca linariifolia* which were 6 to 8 metres high with their 'paper' bark. Unfortunately this species flowers in Spring/Summer so we were unable to see the attractive flowers. A lovely colony of 'Pixie Cap' orchids were found near the path in full flower (*Acianthus fornicatus*). The trail closely followed the creek and was easy walking, many interesting species of trees, shrubs and other plants were seen and included the beautiful yellow bloodwood (*Eucalyptus eximia*) a stranger to upper mountain dwellers the fern-leaf banksia (*Banksia aspleniifolia*). A fine shrub seen all along the trail was a geebung which was carrying both flowers and fruit, the geebungs are sometimes difficult to identify but this one was probably *Persoonia oblongata* which grows in the lower blue mountains. The trail ended at a couple of deep pools. Lunch was eaten in a sunny spot just above these pools.

There were many birds seen and heard honey-eaters were evident and included white-eared and white-plumed, a flock of red-browed finches were seen and one of the party afterwards found an old, abandoned nest of this species, most of the party explored a trail which went north of the main trail and then we all returned to the cars and proceeded onto the Yellow-rock Lookout with a fine view of the lower Nepean River. A nice spot, fine trees and sandstone formations. A very happy day enjoyed by all.

#### **ACTIVE NEW MEMBERS**

It is most heartening to see so many active new members.

As long as we continue to be actively involved in the conservation struggle I am sure this trend will continue and there is little danger of Our Society degenerating into a social gathering for tea and gossip.

Secretary

\*\*\*\* Land preservation committee opportunity table \*\*\*\*\*

This will be held at 7.30 pm in the Hut at the Society's November General Meeting.

Members are invited to donate any saleable article (new or old) to assist raise funds for the Preservation of Environmentally Sensitive Land Project. It will help of the suggested price is marked on the item being donated.

(This is a good chance to recycle things no longer of use to you).

Enquiries: please phone Ruth Baxter (57.1774) or Winsome Gregory (57.1573)

#### FASCINATING FUNGI

In the course of the day's work we found recently a round object about the size of a large grapefruit. It had an outer covering a little like a paper-bark tree and when cut revealed a cellular pattern like a honeycomb. After being kept in a bag for a few days it developed from the cut part a toadstool of astounding whiteness and great beauty.

Mr John Walker, Senior research scientist of Biological Research Institute has kindly identified it for us. It is the fungus known as "blackfellows" bread *Polyporus mylittae*. He also states, and I Quote the large subterranean body known as a sclerotium is thought to have been used by the Aborigines as a food, although this is not completely certain. This fungi was found under the roots of a fallen tree in the Leura area.

Another strange object we found in Dante's Glen at Lawson was like a petrified pine-cone but very heavy. Mr Walker advises that this is a stone-making fungus, a relative of the other one but instead of forming a subterranean body entirely of fungus tissue it binds together small stones and soil into a hard compact mass and this serves as its sclerotium. A toadstool of this fungus is apparently rare and Mr Walker would like to see any found. Fungi are only one of Nature's marvels one could study but at the moment we are very keen on them and are searching for Earth Tongues a 2 inch high black, club-shaped object, and a thin brown stick-like one 2 – 8 inches high which is a parasite on insects. If excavated below soil level the mummified insect larva (caterpillar, grub) is often found attached to its base.

Both of these are to be found in moist places among leaf-mould.

Wilson Alcorn.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: If a red dot appears in the space.....we have not yet received your sub for 1978-9

# Bruce's Walk

When bushwalking I have often come across stone steps leading nowhere which are apparently part of what was once Bruce's Walk.

I know nothing of its history as I have only been a few years in the Mountains. If anyone could enlighten me or tell me of a book on the walk I would be most grateful to hear from them. (Box 29 Wentworth Falls NSW 2782). It may even be possible that some group is trying to rebuild it and I would like to be involved.

Wilson Alcorn.

# A Society Activity

Miss Valerie Swane from Swanes Nursery at Dural was the Guest Speaker at a function organized by the Land Preservation Committee at the Wentworth Falls Country Club on Tuesday morning 8<sup>th</sup> August. Over 60 mountains residents came to hear this well informed horticulturist who had taken the time to visit this mountain area prior to the function and was able to give helpful advice to mountain gardeners.

She urged home owners and local authorities to plant trees in our streets to relieve the existing bareness to add to the beauty of our homes, to replace those which have died or been destroyed by fire.

Miss Swane compared the creation of a native and exotic garden and explained that healthy trees and shrubs can build up a resistance to pests. She pointed out the need to preserve our native flora, and mentioned that by careful observation of existing natives it was easy to select the right species to plant in our own gardens.

The Society for Growing Native Plants gave a shrub which was won by the holder of the lucky door ticket.

Mr Dick Rushton in proposing the vote of thanks on behalf of the Society presented her with a copy of Sketchbook of the Blue Mountains and an attractive brown scarf.

The Wentworth Falls Country Club kindly donated the use of the Club Lounge which created a warm and friendly atmosphere in very pleasant surroundings.

## **EDITORIAL VIEWPOINT**

The Border Rangers is an exceptional area from the standpoint of recreation and scenic value and for the conservation of flora and fauna. Rainforest is the richest natural community found in the world today and the Border Rangers is the largest remaining area of this community in NSW. Because of its geographic position between temperate and tropical zones it contains a great variety of unusual plant species as well as one-quarter of the bird species present in Australia and probably more mammal species than any area of comparable size elsewhere in Australia.

Unfortunately the government's compromise on the Border Ranges has resulted in a non-viable national park. It preserves less than a quarter of the total suitable area and is therefore far too small to adequately fulfil one of its major purposes, the protection of plants and animals in the long term. Although Lamington National Park makes an important contribution on the Queensland side of the border, the total edge of both parks is still probably less than 15% of the original area of rainforest in the region. Furthermore, the long narrow shape with a large edge to area ratio makes management difficult and increases the likelihood of damage by fire and invasion by pest species. The characteristics of such "islands" elsewhere in the world enable us to predict with confidence that between 25 and 50% of the plant and animal species now present in this area will ultimately be lost.

Outside of this park logging of rainforest is to continue. It is important to note that despite assertions that these forests are managed to provide a continuing supply of fine cabinet timbers, logging at present is far in excess of replacement growth. We are mining these forests rather than managing them on a sustained yield basis. The long term effects of these practices on the continued viability of the rainforest community and the constituent plant and animal species is not known. Nor are these timbers being used to produce the fine furniture for which they are so well suited. Large amounts go into plywood cores and house framing, a practice E.F. Schummacher has referred to as "obscene".

Once again a conflict between short-term gains and long-term values has been resolved in favour of the former. One might well question whether we have a right to foreclose the opportunity for future generations to enjoy what Border Rangers now is and represents. Sadly, alternatives exist which could have preserved this rainforest <u>and</u> employment opportunities in the area. That one of these was not chosen is a disturbing indication of our inability to make environmentally sound decisions in the present economic and political climate.

F.H. Talbot & S.S. Clark, Centre for Environment Studies, Macquarie University.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

#### **NEEDED VOLUNTEER TYPIST**

The Land use Committee of Our Society urgently needs a typist. Would any member able and willing to help in this matter please phone Dick Duckham...phone 57-1836.