

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

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OLIVE WHISTLER

PATRON. Mr. Allen A. Strom, A.M.

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The young wood draws me down
these shelving ways
Deeper, as if it drew me to its heart.

--Laurence Binyon.

OUR SOCIETY

COMING MEETINGS

JANUARY 25th, 8pm. at The Hut, Valley of Waters
Wentworth Falls. A Talk on butterflies is to
be given

FEBRUARY 22nd Same time and place a Symposium
on Conservation. 3 of 4 speakers.

MARCH 29th Venue same. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:
Election of Officers for ensuing year.

TEACHERS AND ECOLOGY

At our August Meeting Mr Bill Clarke of the
Nepean College of Advanced Education gave a very interesting
address on the problems of teaching teachers to teach ecology,
so that the message gets out to the vitally important younger
generation.

FUNGI IN THE FOREST

was the subject of a talk by Mr Ross Horne, of
The Forestry Commission, to our September meeting. In
addition to some fine slides and a knowledgeable address,
Mr Horne showed us some large, coloured crayon drawings
of the various fungi; each a work of art.

CONSERVATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Our member Graham Blackwell gave us a scholarly and absorbing
address in October on the various conservation bodies in the
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address was illustrated by some splendid slides.

1979 Walks Programme January to March 1979

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at The Hut Valley of Waters.

Vera Falls and return.

February 3rd. at 9.30 am.

Members and Visitors to meet on southern
side of Hazelbrook station and proceed to Terrace Falls via
Terrace Falls Road, Terrace Falls & Bellfield Creek.

**** KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY ****

1979 WALKS PROGRAMME, continued. 1979 SATURDAYS, 1979

March 3rd. at 9.30 am. Visitors welcomed.

Meet at Wentworth Falls Reserve (end of Falls Rd.) Proceed via Wentworth Falls National Pass, Slacks Staircase to Wentworth Pass and return via Valley of Waters.

The walks planned for January and March are to avail ourselves of repairs and maintenance recently completed by B.M. City Council to these tracks, which have been closed for some considerable time.

Report on walks taken in 1978

September walk was to Blue Mountains National Park, Toby's Glen etc.

The object of this walk was to observe regeneration in the Park after the December bush-fires. Six cars with 23 members and visitors set off from Woodford station and followed the park road to Toby's Glen. The weather was good. Despite the almost rain-forest nature of the glen, the fire had swept through it and destroyed most of the undergrowth, luckily the glorious mountain gums and large turpentine (E.oreades and Syncarpia glomulifera) were practically unaffected. Ferns had recovered remarkably and the area was covered with seedlings, indicating a good recovery. Large patches of greenhood orchids (Pterostylis curta) delighted our botanically minded members. Pardalotes and thornbills were busy in the tall timbers. The party returned to the cars and followed the park road to the 'Oaks' picnic spot, where lunch was enjoyed in the bright sunshine. Patches of Donkey Orchids (Diuris spp) bloomed amongst scattered logs. Lobelias added splashes of blue to the tall green grasses that have regenerated since the fires. A visit to the Red Hands Cave completed the day and the cars returned via Glenbrook and the main highway.

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The weather for this walk was dull and showery and only six hardy members turned up. This was a pity as the occasional shower didn't spoil the beauty of this delightful area. The cars were left near Echo Point (the Lawson one) and a lovely path was followed slowly descending to Dante's Glen which is a beautiful place with many ferns and rain-forest trees and some nice waterfalls. The track then followed Lawson Creek to an open spot where we had lunch. Many small Caladenia orchids dotted the edges of the track and young fern shoots were quite spectacular. The track was in a bad state of repair and a number of fallen logs had to be negotiated. The track then swung back up another creek which was followed until we came to Frederica Falls, which were rather bare after the December fires, on the track back many beautiful patches of native violets (Viola hederacea) were observed together with some fine clumps of Rush Lily or Vanilla Plant (Sowerbaea juncea). A most enjoyable walk despite the odd shower or two.

November 4th. Ruined Castle - Katoomba.

We chose a good day to go to the Ruined Castle. We met at the start of Narrow Neck road. Some of the cars were driven to and left at the top of the Scenic Railway whilst the rest went to the beginning of the Golden Stairs leading onto the R.C. Track. The flowers were so beautiful and varied near the top of the stairs track, that after five minutes we had lost our two most ardent botanists for the day. but there were many more flowers to hold our interest all the way and ending with a blaze of waratahs near the Ruined Castle. Never had we heard so many birds - there seemed to be a constant chorus, and to top it all, while we ate lunch, admired the view and recovered from scrambling up the rocks of the 'Castle', a mistletoe bird lunched too in a cluster of mistletoe nearby. Along the track lie many reminders of Katoomba's history, the bush hasn't quite succeeded in covering all traces of the miners settlement and there are still bits of iron litter to be seen. The more energetic reclaimed the Golden Stairs. All but 18 missed this superb walk.

Not seen by all and had been seen by several with some of them

From the green forest

EDITOR G.N. ALCORN RUTLAND ROAD MEDLOW BATH N.S.W.

*** Bushfire Aftermath ***

Recently, guided by the local ranger from National Parks & Wildlife Service a visit was made to a magnificent area near Ingar. This locality had been burnt last December in the disastrous bushfire. The area was surrounded by hanging swamps but was open type savannah country. The reason for the visit was to see a spectacular display of veined Sun Orchids (*Thelymitra venosa*), these splendid orchids carpeted large areas of the partially swampy terrain; an incredible display. A little further into the area was a forest of grass-trees or Black Boys (*Xanthorrhoea resinosa*) these were all in full flower. This variety is more slender and shorter than the common Black Boys seen in our dry sclerophyll bushlands. The really interesting thing about this great colony was the insect life on the hundreds of flowering stems. The introduced bee were there in great numbers as well as native bees, wasps, large & small bush-flies, butterflies, beetles of all sizes, ants and most interesting of all a few hawk moths which were feeding with long tongues while hovering near the flower spikes; one usually associates hawk moths as night fliers but this particular variety was an avid day feeder. It was interesting to observe this moth excreting almost as fast as it was ingesting the nectar from the flowers. Apparently all this activity of flowers, insects etc. was the direct aftermath of the wildfire that swept through last December, this is probably mother Natures way of compensating for the devastation.

K.R.G.

HANDSOME DONATION FOR LAND PRESERVATION

- (1) The Land Preservation Committee is pleased to report. It has received an anonymous donation of \$300 to the LPF.

This is very heartening and the Committee wishes to express its appreciation for such a generous gift.

- (2) The opportunity-table at the November meeting was a great success and the Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed by donating their treasures and by buying.

This operation added \$113.48¢ to the L.P. Fund.

- (3) The Committee is very thankful for the beautiful Xmas cake which was made and donated by Hilder Duckham and raised \$23. The winners of the cake were Ruth and Peter Baxter.

- (4) The Fund now stands at \$1098.24¢

- (5) The Committee would be pleased to receive suggestions regarding blocks of land suitable for preservation. Please ring Dick Rushton 58-6746.

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NATURE CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

The recent annual Nature Conservation Council Conference was attended on your behalf by Flo. Graham and Dick Duckham. The conference extended over two days, the first day being devoted to detailed consideration of all motions by small working groups with special interest in the subjects under consideration, and the second day to the putting of the motions as amended by the working groups to the delegates in conference for necessary action in the coming year.

/Our motion

KATOOMB AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NO.34

P.4

Our motion regarding the desirability of an international symbol for the Conservation movement was passed with a rider that it be addressed to the Australian representative at the United Nations, also our motion that the Erskine State Forest be included in the National Park was well received and passed without alteration. However, our motion requiring the Tasmanian Government to safeguard the last two wild rivers in S.W. Tasmania was severely mauled and emasculated by the working group considering it, as they were chary of seeming to intrude into the internal affairs of another state. This Society has since decided to go it alone; and has submitted a well reasoned appeal, prepared by Flo. Graham, to the Premier of Tasmania.

We would do well to note that on this occasion all our motions were presented, debated, and voted upon. However, a large number of motions from other societies had to be left undiscussed because of the huge volume of business to be transacted. Next year I expect a limit on the number of motions from any one society to be imposed, and late motions may not be accepted.

-- Dick Duckham.

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WENTWORTH FALLS TRACKS (WALKING) REPAIRED

Blue Mountains City Council rangers have repaired the walking track down the Valley of Waters to Vera Falls, reopened Wentworth Pass and rebuilt Slack Stairs joind this Pass to tje National Pass.

This was made possible by a special grant obtained from the State Government by Alderman Clough, M.L.A. and other monies made available from Council funds.

Extra men were engaged working as temporary rangers under the direction of Arthur Smith, the Wentworth Falls BMCCranger. The enthusiasm they displayed and the high quality of the work they did is a great credit to them all. The tracks were overgrown and almost impassable in many places and sometimes had disappeared altogether in huge landslides.

Our members going on the January walk will be able to see some of this fine work.

Many thanks to the men, Alderman Clough and the B.M.C.C.

FUTURE OF THE ROAD OUT NARROW NECK.

The Glen Raphael Road, which goes 8 - 9 miles to the end of Narrow Neck, is classed as a Tourist Road. This means that State Government Funds are available for its maintenance, upgrading etc.

This means that there is always a possibility that it could be regraded and tarsealed so that tourist cars could drive right to the end. At present you need a pretty good car or a 4wheel drive to do this.

The local press announced recently that the BMCC has discussed this and instructed the Chief Engineer to prepare an Environment Impact Statement on the effect of upgrading the road.

Our Society's Land Use Committee is preparing a submission to the Chief Engineer on this. The general feeling among conservationists is to support the proposal put forward by Alderman Murphy some years ago that there should be a locked gate at the foot of the big hill beyond the Neck, and the dirt road beyond that be only available for fire fighters, waterboard personnel and rangers.

KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Newsletter No.34. Nov...December 1978.Price 20¢

P.5.

BLUE MOUNTAINS TOWN PLANS

Early in November our Land Use Committee wrote to the BMCC seeking information on the progress of B.M. Planning Scheme, particularly the draft Structure Plan, whether it had been adopted, and the "Statement of Objectives, Policies and Priorities for Action", what progress with its implementation, and particularly its second Objective - Conservation, and Policy 6 of that Objective, and Action Priority 6A of that Policy and Item III of that Action Priority which states "Buffer strips along cliff edges in the Central and Upper Mountains etc..".

We received a reply from the Council expressing appreciation of our continued interest and stating that Objections to the Statutory Plan had been submitted to the Planning and Environment Commission and it is possible the final Scheme will soon be placed on exhibition for the information of residents.

The letter said that Council is currently reviewing its Statement of Objectives and will consider an amended Statement early in 1979, "which will incorporate additional Action Priorities in line with the progression of the implementation of the Original Policies" --(! sic, Note: This planning language means, "it will be better." Ed.) About Policy 6, Action Priority A, a submission has been made to the Planning and Environment Commission recommending that escarpment preservation conditions be applied to any development within areas defined by Council as National Estate. Council will continue to apply appropriate conditions on development with the aim of maintaining critical environmental areas, the letter concludes.

It is indeed encouraging to receive such a prompt and comprehensive reply from the Council.

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OUR FRIEND THE WHALE

As we go to press the SMH of 11th Dec. reports that the scientific committee of The International Whaling Commission has recommended the immediate cessation of all whaling in large areas of the Southern and Indian Oceans off Australia. The ban was proposed by the Australian delegation which has always in the past supported Japan and Russia, the main whaling nations. There is little doubt that their change of heart was brought about by the great campaign of Project Jonah which not only had the facts but got them accepted. Every member of Our Society can be proud of involvement, through our letters and donations to Project Jonah, in the fight against this barbarous and unnecessary trade. Perhaps if these gentle giants are free to roam without fear of an agonising death we may learn more about them, including their remarkable communications system.

-- W.A.

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SPRING BIRD COUNT

By Graham Alcorn.

On Saturday Nov. 4th, Peter Thomas, Mick and Jill Dark and I took part in the Spring bird-count of the NSW Field Ornithologists Club. On that day groups of club members were out in a circle 80 kilometres from the Sydney G.P.O. The idea was to count species and numbers, two people to identify a sighting, three a bird call.

We visited 8 areas ranging from Blue Gum Swamp Creek Winmalee, to Wentworth Falls Lake. We recorded 61 species and 339 individuals. Unusual sightings for the Mountains were a Dollar Bird at Shaw's Creek, a Leaden Flycatcher at Blue Gum Swamp Creek and a White-Cheeked Honeyeater at Water Nymph's Dell, Wentworth Falls.

The F.O.C. plans to have another bird count in the Autumn.

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 34 November 1978. Price 10 cents

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