



# Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

## NEWSLETTER

MAY 1982.

President; Christine Stickley Ph. 53-6380 Secretary; Wendy Godfrey  
Ph. 39-1748 Editor; Paul Godfrey Ph. 39-1748.

P.O. Box 119, Springwood. 2777

### Next Meeting

Friday, 11th June, 1982.

To be held at the Teacher's Resource Centre, Glenbrook Infants School,  
Ross Street, Glenbrook, opposite the tennis courts.

The meeting will commence promptly at 7.30pm. Our guest will be Mr. Phil Koperberg, Chief Fire Control Officer from Blue Mountains City Council. Mr. Koperberg will discuss 'hazard reduction by control burning'. This will be a very important and useful opportunity for the dissemination of information on this controversial issue. All members are urged most strongly to attend. For those wishing to study up a bit on the topic, "Fire and the Australian Biota" from the Aust. Academy of Science is excellent. Ignorance is our worst enemy.

### Resignation

Regrettably Margaret Esson has resigned as Editor. We congratulate her on becoming the new President of Blue Mtns.S.G.A.P.

### MAY 14th Meeting.

Aside from General Business, there was a special discussion on the merits of further re-zoning of land in the Blue Mtns. for light and service industrial purposes. Council has prepared an Environmental Study of likely industrial areas from Linden to Lapstone. Submissions will be received by Council until 28th May, 1982. The Study is the result of a decision by Mr. Wickham in July, 1981 that, because there is an apparent shortage of land for these purposes, there is a need to investigate industrial development in the Lower Mtns. The Study indicates five likely sites from Linden to Lapstone.

1. The extension of the existing industrial area south of Attunge Rd., Blexland.

2. Land west of the railway, adjacent to Coughlan Rd., Blexland.



3. The extension of the existing Valley Heights industrial area on zoned land between Peninsular Road and the Highway.

4. Land on Singles Ridge Road, Winmalee near Heather Glen Road.

5. Land south of Tusculum Road, adjacent to the railway workshops, Valley Heights.

Site 1 is currently vacant unreserved crown land.

Site 2 is privately owned .

Site 4 is mainly privately owned, partly crown land vacant, unreserved.

Site 5 is vacant land, privately owned, zoned Residential 2A1.

Consensus of opinion of the Works Committee is to oppose any further re-zoning of land for industrial purposes. There is no demonstrated need. Although there may be approximately 130 operations in residential areas, these have not been assessed to see if they could survive in proper premises. Council's Statement of Objectives says that all sources of pollution should be designated and attempts made to reduce and eliminate those sources. A report by the Aust. Water Resources Council entitled "Characterisation of Pollution in Urban Stormwater Runoff", Technical Paper No.60, revealed that, in the areas surveyed, pollution in runoff from light industrial areas is approximately double that from residential areas. This would vary for types of industries and their localities, but the effects of any further industrial development would only exacerbate the pollution problem in adjacent rivers and streams in the Blue Mtns. Most of the sites are not serviced by electricity, water or sewerage. What will therefore be the cost to the community of providing these services? We have a responsibility to protect the amenity of our adjacent natural areas and the Society has forwarded a submission opposing any further re-zoning for industrial purposes.

#### Eastern Escarpment

Our request to the Minister for Planning and Environment for his department to prepare a Regional Environmental Plan has been refused. His letter states,

"...that the concern expressed by the representors would more appropriately be addressed within the context of certain alterations to local planning in Penrith Local Government Area."



We will therefore be pursuing the matter of landuse planning on the escarpment with the member for Nepean, Peter Anderson, and Penrith City Council. This should prove interesting as the Council is unco-operative on this issue. We will continue to work with the Escarpment Preservation Group.

#### Darks Common.

We are pressing for the Common to be reserved under Section 24 of the Lands Dept. Act. This necessitates an Act of Parliament to revoke the reserve, rather than Section 28 which is purely on a Minister's direction.

#### Year of the Tree.

The Society has been invited to join in the Tree Planting Ceremony at Glenbrook Native Plant Reserve, Great Western Hwy, Glenbrook, on Sat. 5th June at 11.00am. B.Y.O. picnic lunch.

We will endeavour to have a ceremony each month over the year, depending on weather conditions being suitable for planting. Wendy Godfrey is co-ordinator of these ceremonies. Any members with suggestions of suitable or desirable sites can give her a ring. Surely each of us has a particular area that is to our liking and could be improved with a tree or two. Donations of trees would be gratefully received and can be given to Jill Dark (Ph.58.7061).

#### A.C.F. Special "Habitat".

The Society will be obtaining copies of the special Habitat on trees and forests, marking the 1982 Y.O.T.T. They will be on sale for \$2.00. Orders may be placed with Wendy Godfrey.

#### Ecologist on B.M.C.C.

In case any member may have missed the results of the last Council meeting, the vote was 6-all re the above position. The Mayor carried the motion that Council employ such a person on staff, with his casting vote.



COLIN WATSON, Gentle Cabinet Maker who helped found a National Park.

by Richard Phillipps.

Sometimes you meet a person who changes your whole life from that moment on. In Colin Watson's case, it was his infectious laugh that drew me to him. It also drew Christine Hainsworth, a shy girl of 19 who was to become my wife (still is). We met on the promise of Colin guiding us on a walk in a national park. On about the third walk, Colin promised us something new - a walk in the Budawangs. These Ranges were not then thought of as a potential national park. But Colin helped start the ball rolling and a few years ago, Pidgeon House and the Budawangs were joined to Morton National Park to become the fifth largest national park in N.S.W.

That first walk there with Colin was a shocker. He'd understated the distance and much of the way we seemed to be either trudging hours on end through swamp or pushing through knee or neck-high grasses. Mainly the stuff that cut you. I think it was the October long weekend in 1959 and Colin said all we had to do was walk in from an old road to Mount Renwick, put up a plaque and walk out on the Monday. About 20 miles or so. Well, it may have been 20 miles on the map but we seemed to walk all of the Saturday, most of the Sunday and all of the Monday. The thing that impressed me most was the scenery. The Budawangs represent the southern limit of sandstone in the state. The scenery is spectacular, with open forest, swamp, rainforest and moorland.

You'd walk for miles and see a panorama of scenery pass you by - valleys that could have been carved by old glaciers, limestone country, sandstone and even granite. You'd walk mainly on rolling upland country but you'd pass great cliffs and caves. And getting on to Mount Renwick was a problem - you had to go down a deep defile and climb up the other side. Chris and I started down but I slipped and fell about 50 feet. I wasn't hurt - only my dignity at having come down so hard, fast and first. I looked up and saw all these worried faces peering at me over the cliff, so to allay their fears I jumped up and said, "I'm not hurt!" By some miracle I wasn't, and was able to walk the rest of the way to the Mountain and back to the cars without feeling even bruised.

I saw Colin the other day after quite a few years, and he remembered the Mount Renwick incident well. "I'm glad we didn't have



to carry you out," he said, laughing that laugh of his. "By the way, it's not Mount Renwick any more. We checked up and found that Renwick never went there, so we've had it renamed Mount Owen." I hope Mr. Owen, whoever he is, appreciates the honour because it's hard to get used to a new name for the mountain that impressed itself so forcefully - particularly on my backside.

Colin eventually parted with enough of the colour leaflets in this newsletter to give us our first colour insert. The reason I haven't seen much of him the last two years is the cabinet maker has turned author and editor in an effort to spread the word and raise some money for his beloved Budawangs, which is probably the poorest-funded of all our national parks considering it's size. The Budawangs have no major road running through, to tap funds from visitors. But they are outstanding and need money to protect them. Colin doesn't laugh when he talks about the problems he has with four-wheel drive clubs, or property owners - there are still one or two major inholdings. Where the money will come from to buy up these inholdings he doesn't know. He's had quite a few fights with the Government - I expect they're sorry they made him Chairman of Morton National Park and the Budawangs Committee. The book, "Pidgeon House and Beyond" will help raise cash and win friends for the Park. The hard-cover edition will become a collector's item, as they are printing them only to order. It's a good guide to the region which stretches from Fitzroy Falls south to the Clyde River, from Milton west to Bundanoon and Bungonia.

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Food for Thought.

BATTLING WITH BUTLER,

The continuing saga, condensed from "Up The Creek, with Harry Butler", Chain Reaction, Number 25, Spring 1981, with the kind permission of Friends of the Earth.

Harry Butler has achieved an extraordinary level of popularity as a conservationist. But is he still a real conservationist.

Butler certainly gained much public prestige with his ABC series of "In The Wild", which demonstrated his ability as a naturalist. He made viewers believe that the Australian environment is fascinating. In Butler's own words 'A lot of people are now aware of the concept of looking at things in the bush, enjoying them and then putting them b



That's a hell of an achievement for anybody'. The problem is that upon this flimsy basis Butler has assumed the position of Australia's most authoritative 'conservationist'. The result has been a dramatic shift in his relationships with corporations, governments and conservationists.

Butler's authoritative views have found a ready market. As his public profile grew, so did business. His clients read like a list of Australia's resource development companies. So Harry's views are certainly acceptable to business interests. But are they still acceptable to environmentalists? Harry always stops short of making any challenge to the status quo.

Harry is happy with the way things are. 'I live as an Australian and I like the way of life in which I live as an Australian. That way of life is a compound of conservation and preservation of things such as mining and farming, and cities which are where the people who do the conserving live'.

Harry's way of life is dependent upon the concentration of global wealth in a minority of nations, and on his position within Australia as a successful, Anglo-saxon male. Exploitation by mining and commercial interests is in his interests. If he can help lessen it's impact on the environment Harry is happy enough, contented in the bush with his four-wheel drive vehicle and tin rowing boat, or at home with his wife who he describes as 'a very glamorous toy - expensive too'.

Understandably resource development companies welcome Harry Butler with open arms: a popular figure, publicly identified as a conservationist, who can explain and give credibility to their claims.

Butler has a clear understanding of these relationships. 'The edge is they need me. They don't need a biologist, a naturalist or a conservationist. They need me'.

It is not surprising that the volume of such work has grown since Butler's *In The Wild* success. Even if he does insist on a tightening of environmental controls, the potential benefits for a company are considerable. For instance, Butler produced a programme on Burrup Peninsular, the site for the on-shore processing of the gas to be piped in from the North-West Shelf. When it was broadcast by the ABC it struck many viewers as a free advertisement for Woodside Petroleum.



According to Harry Robinson, TV critic for the Sydney Morning Herald, 'the total effect of the show... was to feel totally washed in public-relations pap'. There are many environmental consultants but only by engaging Harry Butler could Woodside, and the mining industry as a whole, hope to obtain such favourable publicity.

Governments, whose responsibilities include the welfare of all people and living things, but who have no intentions of fulfilling such responsibilities, also recognise the value of a popular figure who has the confidence of the public in environmental matters. They know someone like Butler can mislead the public into thinking decisions relating to the environment are taken carefully and democratically. They welcome Harry Butler because he can convince people that conservation means, pretty much, business as usual.

It is hard to believe that, only a few years ago, Butler's conservation views were generally held to be publicly unacceptable, and that relations between him and other conservationists were amicable. Nowadays Harry is in increasing demand as a speaker at gatherings of commercial, industrial and mining representatives, while he portrays 'environmental protesters' as 'basically selfish'. When asked to define a voluntary conservationist Butler once replied 'a person, who works at another job, takes his living, or her living, from that job, then goes out trying to stop someone else earning their living. That's one interpretation'. He did not put forward any other interpretation.

Harry appears prepared to reject environmentalism as soon as it challenges some aspect of the existing order. This is apparent in his stances on a number of major environmental issues:

#### OIL DRILLING ON THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Butler does not advocate drilling, but does not see that it would create any great problems. Harry reportedly told the 'Man (sic) and the Sea' conference in Canberra last March, that 'oil drilling near the Great Barrier Reef could be done safely... Experience as an environmental consultant to oil drillers in Western Australia had taught him that oil drilling was environmentally safe'. There is no need to risk despoiling the Reef.

#### HYDRO-DAMS IN S.W. TASMANIA

Butler, for the A.C.F., appeared in a pro-wilderness television advertisement about S.W. Tasmania. The advertisement was scarcely



consistent with Butler's views on the damming of the Franklin and Gordon rivers as part of a hydro-electric power scheme. 'My reasoned view is that we need the HEC scheme. We have to choose between our kids living on, or the kangaroos'. Butler's response is emotively pro-exploitation. He takes no account of the various alternative methods proposed to meet Tasmania's employment and end-use energy needs.

#### URANIUM MINING AND NUCLEAR POWER

Butler has written that 'there is no difference between uranium mining and other mining...so far as the inherent dangers to miners and other involved people are concerned'.

#### WOODCHIPPING

Butler claims that 'the real problem does not lie with the forestry or woodchippers. Our problem lies with the lack of suitable reserves'.

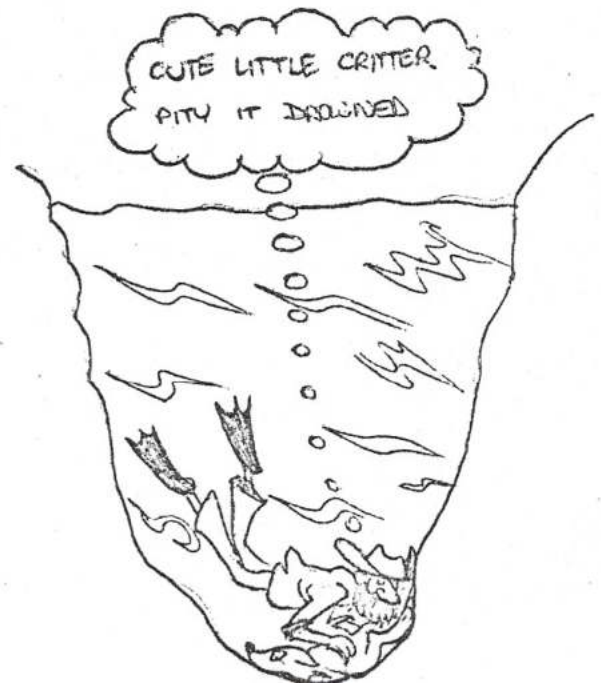
#### THE JARRAH CLASS ACTION

When the Cons. Council of W.A. decided this year to bring a class action suit in a U.S.A. court against bauxite mining in the Jarrah forests by Alcoa, Butler was strongly opposed, arguing that this would be giving a U.S.A. court jurisdiction in Aust. Alcoa's consultant Butler also claimed that he was favourably impressed by the company's mining and rehabilitation practices and went as far as to resign from the A.C.F. and bodies associated with the C.C.W.A. in protest.

The experience with Harry Butler reaffirms the view that environmentalists must define their overall goals and strategies.

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Sydney Morning Herald, 10.5.82, in a discussion paper by Butler submitted to Tassie Premier's Dept, he says, 'that growth and development are the most important single drives of life'!!!





### AREA OF NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVES

The area of Australia (excluding external territories) is 768,242,785 hectares and of this, 4% was reserved for nature conservation on 30 June, 1980. The distribution of such areas within the States and mainland territories was as follows;

New South Wales	3.58%	(includes Wollemi National Park)
Victoria	3.86%	
Queensland	1.67%	!!!!!!
South Australia	4.44%	
Western Australia	5.29%	
Tasmania	10.98%	
Northern Territory	4.11%	
A.C.T.	25.63%	(Gudgenby Nature Reserve 51,000ha)

Of course, activities allowed in these reserves varies between States.

Source; Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service  
Occasional Paper No. 5  
"Nature Conservation Reserves in Australian (1980)  
edited by M.D. Hinchey.

### Quotable Quotes

"Two copies of the Simplified Environmental Impact Statement on Forest Development in the Far North East of Tasmania, plus maps, are enclosed for your information and comments. We require comments on the E.I.S. to be received by 31.8.81 so that urgent road construction work can be commenced."

A letter to the Tas. Wilderness Society from J. Quick, Forests Commissioner.

### Editor's Note

Letters to the Editor will be welcomed, but please keep them brief due to space limitations. This lengthy edition is a one-off production. However, articles of a page or two would be appreciated. They should be forwarded to 7 Kent Street, Glenbrook. 2773.