

Lower Mountains Eco-News

Newsletter of the
Lower Blue Mountains
Conservation Society

January-March, 1988

Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

PO Box 119, Springwood, NSW, 2777

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6 Ross Crescent
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Meetings (members and visitors welcome):
Second Friday of each month except January – 8pm at Springwood Preschool, Macquarie Road, Springwood.

Walks (all welcome):
Third weekend of each month, weather permitting. Routes, meeting places and times are announced in *Eco-News* – but always book in with the organiser.

All who walk with the Society do so at their own risk. Costs resulting from accident, injury or becoming overdue or lost must be borne by the walker!

Works meetings at which Society business is discussed (open to all members):
Usually the fourth Tuesday of the month, 8pm.

Membership:
Single \$7, family \$10, life member \$50.

Aims:
1. **Education** of the general public and public leaders on environmental issues.
2. **Conservation** of natural areas.
3. **Research** into the distribution and population of flora and fauna in the Blue Mountains.

Coming events

Friday, December 11, 8pm (Christmas party): Illustrated talk by Margaret Esson on conservation in China. Springwood Preschool. Bring a plate of your favourite food and a guest or two!

Saturday, December 19, 6pm: Christmas get-together with fellow conservationists from the upper Mountains at Murphy's Glen, Woodford. Barbeque – bring tea and a good torch for spotlighting.

January: no formal walk but if you're not going away, for the interested there's a surprise walk/swim. Check with Richard.

Friday, February 12, 8pm: Eugene Stockton is to talk on Aborigines of the Mountains. Supper after; bring plate. Springwood Preschool.

Sunday, February 21, meet 11.45am at Glenbrook station: short and easy walk to the Duck Hole, Glenbrook Creek. Swim and explore gorge. We bring our lunch and wait until it's cooler to drag ourselves back up the hill. Book with Richard Phillipps, phone 392 568.

Tuesday, February 23, 8pm: Works meeting at Eunice Holmes' place, 9 Plateau Parade, Blaxland. Some big issues to be decided.

Friday, March 11, 8pm: Margaret Baker is talking on the flora of the Blue Mountains. Supper after; bring plate. Springwood Preschool.

Sunday, March 20, 10am: meet at Springwood station, Macquarie Road side. Drive to White Cross, walk to Blue Gum Swamp and beyond. Easy. Bring camera, lunch. Book with Peter Mobbs, 512 884.

Tuesday, March 29, 8pm: Works meeting at Richard Phillipps' place, 6 Ross Crescent, Blaxland.

Friday, April 8, 8pm: Beverley Fielder or a member of Springwood Camera Club will give an illustrated talk on nature photography. Supper after; bring plate. Springwood Preschool.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Society, George Threlfo, President, gave his report on the year's activities.

He gave an outline of the Society's activities over the past 21 years, with special reference to the aims and directions of the Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Members singled out for special mention were Lyn Paice, K. King, M. Dark, M. Smithson, D. Payne, B. Bramson, C. Stickly and W. Godfrey.

THIS YEAR

The President then summarised the main points of the Society's activities over the past twelve months. These were:

- Redevelopment of links with the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society.
- Formation of the Blue Mountains Environment Council.
- Establishment of links with T.E.C., N.C.C. and the A.C.F.

THE FUTURE

Future plans outlined by George included:

- George Threlfo standing for a position on the executive of the N.C.C.
- Establishment of an Environment Centre as a base for all groups interested in Blue Mountains Conservation.
- Wider, more regular and more effective publicity for the Society and the issues it deals with.
- A regular Newsletter with more contributions and more readers.

HARD WORKERS

The President then closed his address with special thanks to the following members:

B. Bramsen -	suppers at general meetings and works meetings.
M. Edmonds -	Black Cockatoo Survey.
A. Hanly -	Ivy Markets.
P. Mobbs -	Walks.
Z. Manners -	Newsletters and T-Shirts.
C. Ramsay -	T-Shirts and Minutes.
E. Holmes -	Finance / Works Meetings / Suppers.
M. Esson -	Submission work.
C. Cleary -	B.M.E.C. representative.
R. Phillips -	Walks and Publicity.

THE F4 - AN ANSWER AT LAST ??

Mr. Peter Anderson is apparently about to make an announcement on the resolution of the F4 Freeway issue.

Apart from information already released to the media about a single corridor and separated carriageways, he is also expected to announce that among other things there will be a full interchange at the

Russell Street Emu Plains intersection.

KNAPSACK GULLY BRIDGE

Also there will be provision of an emergency fire access only across the Knapsack Gully Bridge. The remainder will then be opened for other recreation pursuits.

DISAPPOINTMENT

When contacted for comment, George Threlfo, the L.B.M.C.S. representative at the discussions,

said, "The expected announcement of the bowstring design bridge for the Railway Crossing remains a disappointment to the Society."

He continued, "This proposal represents a significant result for this Society, as we have constantly battled for twelve months to obtain just such a result."

BMCC BOUQUET

"Though we have had our disagreements with the BMCC, it was largely their efforts that forced the DMR to re-assess the planned Jersey Strip and separated car-railways," said Mr. Threlfo.

NCC MOTION ON EP & A ACT

Another issue raised in the negotiations was the ability of Government Authorities, in this case the DMR, to carry out their own assessment of the environmental impact of the decisions under Part V of the Environmental and Planning Assessment Act. A motion was put from this Society at the recent NCC Conference to allow members of the public to trigger an Environmental Impact Statement.

BURRENDONG ARBORETUM - THE FUTURE.

W. Ramage.

Following the imminent retirement of Peter Althofer as overseer of the Burrendong Arboretum, the future of this essential part of the preservation of rare and endangered species of native flowers and trees appears to be in jeopardy.

The Althofers', Peter in particular, and the Burrendong State Recreation Authority Trust have been responsible for the creation, care and upkeep of this national treasure for the best part of their lives. It seems that the National Parks and

Wildlife Service are poised to take over on Peter's retirement.

At present, there appear to be no plans in hand for the continuation of the Althofers' research and plans for the Arboretum. Instead, it would appear that the NPWS are going to create a "touristy" type atmosphere, by appointing a supervisor more versed in public relations than Botany. This has shown up in an interim plan of management prepared by the NPWS, with no consultation with Wellington residents, the trustees or the Althofers.

We must not let the almighty Dollar destroy what in some cases is the last chance for the repropagation of various endangered and unique plants. A letter has been sent to Mr. Hallam and the Director of the NPWS, but individual letters from members can do no harm.

EASTERN ESCARPMENT COMMITTEE

The Eastern Escarpment 530A Advisory Committee reports that most of the reserve areas have now been examined and draft plans of management are ready to present in 1988.

MORE BMCC FUNDING

Also, BMCC has been receptive to a number of requests for equipment and funding in such areas as improvements at lookouts, (Echo Point ?? - Ed.), track signs, gates and maps to name a few.

LAPSTONE OVAL

The Group is confident that one of the initiatives of this Society, a Plan of Management for Lapstone Oval, will be determined during the coming year.

WETLAND AREAS REPTILES

On the recent Society Snake walk, members expressed the desire to see the wetland areas containing reptiles to be declared reserves. Work will begin on this shortly.

PERMANENT ORDER ?

Also, the Interim Conservation Order on Agnes Banks Floral Area has been renewed. All that is needed here is for the order to become permanent - **WHEN ??**

URBAN ACTION GROUPS CONFERENCE

George Threlfo recently attended an Urban Action Group Conference in Sydney. Discussions held resulted in the formation of an Urban Coalition, similar to the Nature Conservation Council, but concentrating on Urban Conservation issues.

(Yellow Bloodwood), *E. Punctata* (Grey Gum) and *Angophora Costata*. In flower were *Boronia Pinnata*, *Grevillea Speciosa* (Red Flowering) and *Boronia Ledifolia*, in both its Pink and White forms.

Lunch was taken on a sandstone ledge overlooking the Hawkesbury River and surrounding areas. The views from this vantage point were fantastic. Following lunch, the walk continued through an area burnt out in a wildfire around Christmas 1986. Here we found *Xanthorrhoea Species* (Black Boy) not only regenerating, but in flower

Going down the Southern side of the ridge, we passed stands of *Dorganthes Excelsa* (Gymea Lily) in flower and also a lone *Dandrobium Speciosum* (Rock Lily). From here we emerged again on the banks of the Hawkesbury.

All 14 walkers had a great day. Particular thanks must go to Margaret Essen for introducing us to this delightful spot.

WALKS TALKS AND TOURS

DHARUG NATIONAL PARK WALK

Peter Mobbs.

After meeting at the entrance to the park near Wiseman's Ferry, we ascended a section of the Old Great North Road, which is still intact today. Roadwork was begun in 1829 and completed six months later. (Should we compare with the F4 - Ed.) Up to 520 convicts were employed to carve the road out of the solid bedrock. In some places, the steep stone retaining walls are 12 meters high, and are supported by massive buttresses every 20 meters.

Vegetation throughout the walk was plentiful. The canopy towering above consisted of *E. Eximia*

THE SNAKE WALK

Richard Phillips

No less than 36 people turned out for the Society's snake walk in the Castlereagh / Agnes Banks area. The walk was led by the resident herpetologist (snake person to anyone else). With such a horde thrashing through the undergrowth, it's a wonder any wild-life at all was spotted. As it was we saw a great deal - 11 different species of reptiles, including five snakes. Jim Turner, the Jewel Beetle expert was among the throng and found a rare beetle in the 23 that were spotted (sighted, not colour description - Ed.). All of the snakes were from two species - Red-Bellied Black (*Pseudechis Porphyriacus*) and the Eastern Brown (*Pseudonaja Textilis*). Both

these species are venomous and were treated with the respect they deserve.

Before the day had advanced very far, we had sighted and in some cases, handled, a huge range of lizards. Amongst these were specimens of the Jacky Lizard, Eastern Bearded Dragon, Eastern Blue-Tongued Lizard, a Tree Goanna, Wall Skink, Copper-Tailed Skink, Black-Palmed Grass Skink, Lunney's Grass Skink and a Striped Skink. As well, there were unusual Jewel Beetles. Jim informed us that these help pollinate bushes and trees.

No injuries were reported - no bites, no frights. Some were a trifle put out when it was pointed out they had walked right past an Eastern Brown Snake without seeing it. They were most surprised when Richard held it up by its tail! The snake looked surprised too, and somewhat annoyed.

The worst some of us suffered was not from the reptiles, but from the Sun, which was making its presence felt by midday. However, the walk in the woods was mostly sheltered, and a wonderful experience for all, from the young to the young at heart.

To all of us it was a great day. I for one never imagined myself walking knee-deep through swamps and enjoying it into the bargain.

POWER HOUSE MUSEUM MOBBSED!

Peter, Lynda, Jonathon & Kirsti
Mobbs.

On Saturday 14th November, the Mobbs family honoured an invitation to preview the Power House Museum. This museum was started in 1979 and will open in March 1988. Admission will be

Many people attended this tour, which proved to be entertaining, informative and educational. This Museum will definitely be worth a visit when completed, as there will be many worthwhile exhibits on display.

One of the exhibits already on display was a Boulton & Watt Beam Engine. This unit was built in 1787 and was donated to the Australian Government by the British Government in 1889. This item is still in working order today (General Motors please note - Ed.) Power output is about 12 Watts when working.

Also on display is Locomotive No. 1, the first train to run between Sydney and Parramatta in 1857. (The Engineer on the first run, a Mr. Stark was the great great grandfather of Elizabeth Ramage, Society member - Ed.) This exhibition contains three carriages plus the Engine and Tender in a static display. When finished, the display will include "Animatronic" mannequins dressed in period costume holding conversation on topics of interest in that era. It should prove quite an interesting display when completed.

Included in the Museum are three picture theatres. Two of these are to be hired out to raise revenue, but the other is a replica of a 1930's Talking Picture Show Theatre. It also will be available for hire after opening.

As well as static displays, many of the proposed exhibits the public will be allowed to handle and operate, thus getting a feel of how things were accomplished in by-gone days.

We feel that anyone visiting the Museum on completion will need to allow at least three days to cover all of the exhibits and see everything, possibly extend their tours

over a number of visits. No matter how you organise your visit, you will enjoy every minute. There will be displays to satisfy everyone's curiosity and imagination.

Our thanks go to the Society and the Power House Museum Authorities for giving us the opportunity to preview this fascinating place, and rest assured, we will be returning definitely next year when it is fully operational.

BLAXLAND TO ST HELENA IMPROMPTU Richard Phillips

The Society's November walk was a week later than scheduled - Bent's Basin had to be cancelled because the leader - not yours truly - was ill. The walk was re-scheduled to one from Blaxland to St. Helena, then back to Glenbrook via the Duck Hole.

What a walk it was. We departed Blaxland station at 10.15 and waited at Taringha Street for the Holy to complete their prayers and start walking. She was along sermon that morning!!!

Finally we were under way and headed down the steps at the end of Ross Crescent into the Glenbrook Gorge. After some searching, we found the right place to cross and keep our sandshoes dry. We then continued up a rather overgrown path to the spur which heads west-south-west to the St. Helena Ridge.

Up on top again, we found it mostly tough going. The growth in the past few years has been phenomenal. The shrubs are all head high!!!

We saw some strange mounds like scrub turkey nests and lots of wildflowers. Flannel flowers, many types of Orchids and Trigger Plants. Even some *Boronia floribunda* hanging on late.

After crashing through the overgrowth (we could hardly call it undergrowth!), we eventually found our way onto the St. Helena spur, and a handy fire trail which we followed to St. Helena. We arrived there in time for lunch at 1.00 pm. We shared this beautiful volcanic valley with at least a million cicadas, some King Parrots, and lots of Crows. The latter had obviously been feasting on the cicadas and weren't too pleased with our presence.

About 2.30, after exploring the rain-forested creek below St. Helena, we headed down the long spur to the Duck Hole. The day was still warm when we got there at 4pm, so half an hour was spent swimming. Great!! we were up at Glenbrook at about 5.15.

All told a very enjoyable walk.

MOTIONS GALORE AT NCC CONFERENCE

Nine people from the Western Sydney Conservation Groups attended the recent 2 day NCC conference. As usual, many and varied items of concern to conservationists throughout Australia were discussed.

CONTROVERSY OVER DUCKS

One of the significant motions initiated by this Society, and carried with some controversy, was the vexing question of banning duck and quail shooting. Following pressure from many groups, Mr. Carr is reportedly teetering on the brink of banning shooting for the coming season. Write more letters and push him over the edge!

NEPEAN RIVER WORKING PARTY - IS IT UNBIASED?

The Society has been speaking to the Nepean River Working Party about the banning of high speed boats and skiers from the Gorge. The delegates feel that no strong

recommendation will come from the Party. There appeared to be too many with vested interests to conduct a fair enquiry. The Society is now lobbying Alderpersons individually.

ELECTION COMING UP ???

Good news has come to hand with the passing of the Wilderness Act through State Parliament with approval from all parties. This feat is usually reserved for Pollies Pay Rises!!

Also from Macquarie Street, the State Planning Policy on Wild and Scenic Rivers is to be announced shortly.

BMEC CREDITABILITY

The Blue Mountains Environment is gradually making ground in becoming a unified Conservation voice on the Mountains. Recognition has been accorded from the Australian Conservation Foundation and moves are afoot for admission shortly of the Friends of the Earth (Blue Mountains) and the local branch of the Wilderness Society.

ECHO POINT - WHERE WILL IT END.

Once again, Echo Point is under threat. Every Member is urged to write a submission, (even a one-liner), about the proposed developments at Echo Point.

ROUNABOUTS

The Draft Plan of Management is being used as a round about device to give the appearance of public approval for an 85 room motel adjacent to Lillianfels House. This plan has been well publicised by the developer as an altruistic way to preserve this historic building.

HYPOCRISY

This is yet another exercise in hypocrisy by developers. As usual, the real aim is to make money and the DPM becomes a means to an end. It boils down to another Tourist Facility in an area already showing signs of

distress from overdevelopment. These developments would be better served in the existing population centres of the Mountain towns and cities.

MORE DPM SHENNANIGANS

Yet another use of the DPM by developers is in Subdivisions. One motion of the BMEC put at the recent NCC conference called for a moratorium on all subdivisions within the Mountains.

MILO ON THE MOVE

Milo Dunphy, long-time champion of Conservation causes, is running for the Upper House, along with others of similar persuasion, in the up-coming State Elections.

HELP

George Threlfo is assisting with Milos Campaign on the Mountains, and has put the loud call out for hands to help. Publicity, letter-box drops, manning polling booths on the day are among some of the things George could do with help on. A most worthy cause and all it costs is time!!

A night at a works meeting!!

I went along to the LBMCS for discussion on the BMCC. The NCC sat with the ACF just behind the BMEC. GT had claimed that the PCC had betrayed the WESNEO and the ALP, like the LIBS had an incorrect policy. JE from the CDC, objected strongly to BE grouping the FCD and the ECP in the same camp as the TFG. ET, EC and PE - all members of the TEC - felt that JT of the CTC had aligned with the FMD. It appeared that the SPC were a tendency within the DMR who critically supported the EIS fusing with the DPM. BB stormed out with the CTB and so did the left in the KTG. RP went off to the WC as he was dying for another PEE.

NEW FORMAT NEWSLETTER

As can be seen, this is a new way of laying out our newsletter. In the future, we expect to have more illustrations, more informative articles and as usual, keep you up to date on conservation happenings and events in the Mountains and elsewhere.

We do need contributions - articles or recipes or handy hints (what do you do with a dead Big Bin??). It's your Society, tell us what you want.

Warren Ramage
Editor

STOP PRESS

As ECOnews went to press, news came to hand of the meeting to discuss the future of the Dark's residence at Katoomba. Details are sketchy at the moment, but it may have a significant bearing on the future of both ourselves and the BMEC in general. Further news will appear next issue.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT AS AT 1st OCTOBER, 1987

INCOME:

Balance from Commonwealth Bank	557.98	
Ivy Market	786.40	
Membership Fees	334.00	
Sale of Books Calenders and T-Shirts	217.00	
Interest	37.46	
Donations	100.00	
		<u>2032.84</u>

EXPENDITURE:

Subscriptions and Donations:

Friends of Botanic Gardens	25.00	
Nature Conservation Council	80.00	
North Arm Cove EIS	20.00	
Wildlife Protection Agency	12.00	
Blue Mountains Environment Council	50.00	
Springwood Pre-School	50.00	
East Gippsland Coalition	30.00	
Australian Museum Society	20.00	
Australian Conservation Foundation	27.00	
National Parks Association	25.00	
Blue Mountains W.I.R.E.S	50.00	
Wilderness Society	30.00	
Environmental Centre of NSW	25.00	
National Parks & Wildlife Service	28.00	
Australian Trust for Conservation Foundation	25.00	
Total Environment Centre	50.00	
		<u>547.00</u>

EXPENSES:

Reimbursements	G Threlfo	340.00	
	M Esson	70.00	
	C Cleary	25.00	
	B Clarke	25.00	
			<u>460.00</u>
T-Shirts		90.00	
Calendars		187.20	
Petty Cash		60.00	
Photocopying		80.40	
Leaflets		95.20	
Post Office Box Rental, Postage		85.66	
B.M.C.C. Minutes		110.00	
Audit Fees		60.00	
			<u>749.66</u>
			<u>1756.66</u>
			<u>276.18</u>

Balance at Blue Mountains Credit Union

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