



JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1992

Lower Mountains Eco-News

NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

RETURN ADDRESS:

LBMCS

P.O. BOX 119

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Notice of Meetings

AIMS

To inform the public on environmental and conservation issues; research into population and distribution of flora and fauna in the Blue Mountains and neighbouring regions.

MEMBERSHIPS

Nature Conservation Council of NSW
Australian Conservation Foundation

OTHER GROUP INVOLVEMENT

Society for Growing Australian Plants (Blue Mountains Branch)
National Parks Association (NSW)
Australian Museum
Upper Blue Mountains Cons. Society
National Parks and Wildlife Service
The Wilderness Society (NSW)

C.H.A.N.G.E.

Glenbrook Lagoon Society
Eastern Escarpment 530A Cmte
Nepean River Committee
Darks Common Trust
The Colong Foundation Inc.
The Total Environment Centre

SOCIETY CONTACTS:

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General Enquiries and Talks
Organiser: Aileen Hanley (39-4079)

REPORT FROM GEORGE THRELFO - 10/7/92

1. Blue Mountains sewerage system upgrade. You may recall that the the sewerage plan centred on Winmalee was to treat all sewage West of Springwood. The plants at Glenbrook and Mt. Riverview remain. An indication was given about two years ago that they may be eventually closed and all products directed to an upgraded Penrith plant. This process is now taking shape. The Water Board and Public Works Department are currently examining all options. If the above action is taken, sewage will be transferred by pipe (underground) to the Penrith plant by about 1997. This is basically the best option as both lower mountains plants are outdated and have limited room for efficient upgrades. As well, the Penrith plant is currently undergoing a massive upgrade using a biological treatment which will produce effluent of full tertiary standard which we should press to be used on a number of local irrigation projects e.g. a 50 ha city forest on Penrith land near the plant and on for landscaping on the Lakes Scheme.
2. A formalised Landcare network is emerging in the Lower Mountains/Penrith region. An initial meeting at Penrith in May was attended by about 15 representatives of local groups. A follow meeting will be held in August when a Landcare representative will be on hand to explain how the group can apply for Landcare grants in 1993.
3. The failure of the efforts of the RTA in 1990 to re-vegetate and landscape the entire F4 freeway, was the subject of a meeting at Blacktown last Tuesday. RTA landscapers and environment officers were willing to formulate a follow-up plan in the short and longer term. Within the coming year, together we expect to trial approximately one kilometre of direct seeding and develop plans for mass plantings at two of the interchanges. Volunteers for this latter operation will be needed so please indicate if you are interested in assisting.
4. The Environment Protection Authority has set up a number of Community Advisory Forums across the State. George Threlfo and Jenny Smith from WREN (Wilton way) have both gained positions on the West/South West Sydney group.
5. Members of CHANGE have been quietly working within the confines of the Hawkesbury Nepean Task Force to gain acceptable legislation for formulation of a river Trust. At this stage we are satisfied on most points. A major hassle has been caused through efforts by the Local Government Association to have a disproportionate numbr of representatives on the Trust. The legislation should be presented to Parliament in the September session.

BLUE MOUNTAINS FOR WORLD HERITAGE

THE LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE DRIVE TO HAVE THE GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK NOMINATED FOR WORLD HERITAGE STATUS.

Geoff Mosley's book 'Blue Mountains for World Heritage' (1989) gives a succinct look at the history of the area and a sound argument as to why the area meets the set criteria of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage relating to:- its place in the earth's evolution, examples of ongoing processes in the development of the environment, obvious natural beauty and existence of wilderness areas.

In his talk at Springwood on 16/8/91 Mosely spoke of integrity conditions which apply to world heritage nomination:

"As well as having qualities of unusual value, a site to qualify must satisfy the conditions of integrity. There are two aspects to this. First, all the features of interest must still exist. This is easily met by the landforms, the vegetation and the wilderness areas. Second, they must be adequately protected as befits world heritage. The main deficiencies here are that the wilderness areas have not been secured and the Blue Mountains townships have various adverse effects on the proposed world heritage area and the arrangements to contain them are probably still inadequate. This requires a special study."

He also spoke of what world heritage means and the effect it has on the administration of the area.

"Generally, the effect is to upgrade the priority given to conservation, particularly with regard to protecting the area against those things which impinge on world heritage qualities. Some of the consequences which I would expect for the Blue Mountains are as follows:

1. Speed up extension of or declaration of parks - such as Nattai. (Nattai has since been declared - The Gardens of Stone await declaration)
2. Speed up declaration of wilderness areas;
3. Increase protective arrangements in the world heritage buffer zone around the townships. Possibly some of these areas could be included in the world heritage area;
4. Make raising of the Warragamba Dam less likely;
5. Increase priority given to protection of water quality;
6. More money to ensure fire protection policies are consistent with conservation of world heritage values;
7. Higher standard of heritage interpretation."

About a month ago the BMCC initiated a meeting with Roz Kelly in Canberra. This meeting was attended by Bob Clarke, Carol Gaul, Max Fragar of the BMCC and a representative from NPWS. The outcome of the meeting was that the Commonwealth agreed to finance with the State Govt, a detailed study to assess whether the proposed Greater Blue Mountains National Park in fact conforms to World Heritage Criteria.

Letters to the Editor or any contributions very welcome.

Thanks to everyone for your continued support through subscription renewals.

Bouquets to
Marg. Baker and Margaret
Essen for their constant
lobbying at BMCC Meetings.



BESSIE BRAMSEN came to the Blue Mountains many years ago as a young girl. This is the first in a series of articles in which Bessie tells of her observations and experiences of times gone past.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these - it might have been".

A quotation of school days - by whom is not remembered.

My earliest impressions of Mt Irvine come, perhaps from the subconscious. They are of green - green all around, with sky of brilliant blue above, when not misted over with fog or rain.

As time progressed, the consciousness and activities were in a long water trough beside a big steam engine and a mountain of deliciously aromatic sawdust. Later, gradually awakening interest found joy in the music of morning. With first dim light came the soft, sweet twittering and piping of tiny birds, to be overpowered by the scolding of satin birds, the song and crack of whip-birds, estatic notes of the grey song-thrust, warbling of magpies, carolling and shrieking of kurrawongs and sometimes the mournful cawing of crows. This was soft sweet music escalating to symphony, rhapsody and cacophony! The rapturous greetings of day. And with the sun lyre-birds joined the raucous glee of kookaburras with their own lyrics and imitations. Imitations of all the birds of the bush, creaking of waggon wheels, crack of drivers whips, and more rarely the ring of an axe, the whine of the circular saw and toneless drone of the cross-cut.

Growing to enjoy exploring the bush I found, at ground level, myriads of ferns and lovely moist mosses and mats of wild violets. Looking up through the lace of tree ferns to the great canopy above revealed dark green thicket of massed tree leafage and twining vines. And on the way up were climbing ferns and enormous birds-nest ferns on the tree trunks and meandering mainstems of various lianas. The wonga vine grew main stems to the thickness of trunks of sapling trees. An axeman would slice a blade through one of these and offer the children a drink of trickling sweet water. In Spring, epiphitic orchids on tree trunks were graced with their white or green waxen flowers.

This was the rainforest covering the upper attitude of the mountain and the small valleys of creeks of its eastern decline into Bowens Creek.

This was Mt Irvine of the early years of this century. This, but for the ignorance and indifference of government, is what we may have had as a National Park today.

It was in October 1897 that Robert Charles Scrivener came on the scene. He had earlier been Surveyor General of NSW and worked all over the State. At this time he had been five years with the Lands Department. He cut a track along the sandstone ridge from Mt Wilson through thick sassafras brush, across the volcanic country (locally known as The Long Saddle) to the cap, which he named Mt Irvine. The name was taken from the map by which he was working - the Parish Map of Irvine. He wanted to have the Mountain declared a National Reserve. But approaches to government were fruitless.

Considering the land ideal for orcharding, he acquired it and divided a large area between his eldest son Charles Pacifield Scrivener and two of his friends - Basil Knight-Brown and Harold Morley. They had graduated together from Hawkesbury Agricultural College. Each of these young men spent a month cutting the first primitive road through from Mt. Wilson.

Early on this century, my father John Anderson and his brother Andrew were persuaded to move their timber milling business from the Pilliga Scrub to Mt. Irvine to cut the large timber and allow for land clearing.

By 1913 my father decided that all mature timber had been removed and transferred the mill to Mt Tomah.

ELECTRIC CARS - THE WAY OF THE FUTURE?

Electric cars are on the way.

By 1994, only electric vehicles will be allowed in the centre of certain cities in France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Scandinavia. Legislation in Stn California - the so-called "Los Angeles Initiative" - aims to ensure that 2% of all cars sold by 1998 (in California) are electric and that by 2007 there will be 4 million electric cars on the roads.

This legislative trend has motivated many car manufacturers, including Nissan GM and Ford, to develop electric cars. These cars use batteries to power electric motors which drive the wheels. The degree of environmental benefit achievable from using electric cars depends on where the power comes from to charge the batteries.

We could use power from fossil fuel power stations. In effect, this means that instead of burning the fossil fuel in lots of our engines, we burn it in a few big power stations. This moves the polluting gases from the city to the country, but does not eliminate them. It is possible to burn the fossil fuel more cleanly in a large power station than in lots of small engines, so the total pollution could be reduced. On the other hand, we would need more power transmission lines, transformers, etc. to get the power from the power station to the cars.

We could use solar cells on the cars. Australia leads the world in photovoltaic cell technology. The problem is that the sun doesn't shine enough energy onto the car to keep it going at the speeds we like, so solar cells will probably be needed to augment the power supply rather than as a complete energy source.

An electric car can also use "regenerative braking" to top up the batteries when the car stops. A moving car has energy because of its motion. To stop the car this motion energy must be removed. When a conventional car stops, friction with the surrounding air, the road, the brakes and the moving parts of the engine convert the motion energy to heat energy. This heat energy is wasted.

It is possible to build an electric car which can stop itself by converting the cars motion energy into electrical energy stored in the batteries. The equipment required to do this would add to the cost of the car, but would save lots of energy in thick start-stop city traffic.

Whatever the pros and cons, the competition from electric cars will force conventional engine suppliers to make cleaner and more efficient conventional engines. And that must be good.

If we used electric cars in Sydney, then our air would be cleaner. Besides improving our health, this would clean up the rainwater. And then people in Sydney could use rainwater tanks for drinking. And then we would not have to spend billions to increase Sydney's water supply. For example we would not need the Welcome Reef dam on the Shoalhaven, currently mooted by the Water Board.

Rowan Huxtable... July 1991.

THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO SUPPORTED THE GARAGE SALE HELD IN MAY. \$120 WAS RAISED FOR THE SOCIETY.

***** WITH MUCH REGRET, THE SOCIETY HAS ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATION OF EILEEN BRAMMALL AS TREASURER. EILEEN HELD THIS POSITION FOR 3 YEARS. FAMILY COMMITMENTS HAVE NECESSITATED A MOVE OUT OF THE AREA.

THE NEW TREASURER IS ELIZABETH RAMAGE. THANKS TO ELIZABETH FOR TAKING THE JOB ON AND WELCOME TO THE COMMITTEE. *****

COUNCIL CAPERS:

DEFERRED MATTERS LEP 1991-92

Results of last weeks two Council meetings are summarised in the Gazette (8.7.92). The Hilderleigh Close saga continues. The current zoning proposal from Aldermen of 1/ha (not 4/ha) is not acceptable to the developer who is also enraged that Council has not yet released the engineering plans.

The current zoning proposal would allow 4 houses and the current approval DA 24 houses. We consider this would be disastrous environmentally and is not very different from the 28 lots in the previous DA. So another court case is looming which would be the third on this issue.

The majority of Aldermen are of the opinion of this Society that no development should occur on this environmentally sensitive area with its 3 rare plant species and extreme high fire risk, poor access etc etc. They are prepared to investigate ways to acquire this land.

M. Essen. Vice-President.

9.7.92

GLENBROOK

On Friday 3 July a special meeting of the BMCC voted to allow a 4/hectare subdivision of land on Cougland Road, Blaxland. "Approximately 30 lots would be possible at a density of 4/ha" (BMCC Papers 7/4/92). The site was zoned residential bushland conservation with environment protection. This land belongs to ex-Mayor Ralph Williams.

The voting was:

For subdivision - Neall, Gillies, Deahm, Anderson, Berriman, Clarke.

Against subdivision - O'Toole, Byrne, Hamilton, McEnnes, Gaul, Pascoe.

The Mayor and Ward 4 rep Bob Clarke used his casting vote to balance the result in favour of subdivision.

Ald. Pascoe then moved an amendment that a 30m. buffer be provided on the west edge of the land, as this edge abuts the National Park. This eminently sensible amendment was lost, with exactly the same voting.

This stands in contrast to voting on the Cox Street subdivision owned by the State Govt where all Councillors voted against sub-division and declared the land environmental protection.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE FIGHT TO SAVE THE COX ST SITE FROM EXPLOITATION.

R. Huxtable

10.7.92

CHANGES TO GENERAL MEETINGS

** Our General Meetings with invited guest speakers have not been well attended. It has been suggested as an alternative that Committee/General membership meetings be held quarterly. The next open meeting to be held in the 2nd week of October.

This would give members an opportunity to participate in the Society's activities.

Phone Aleen Hanley on 39-4079 if you have any ideas.

