

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY LTD.

NEWSLETTER No. 52 - MAY, 1983 - Price 20¢

Editor: R.W. Alcorn, 43 Rutland Road, Medlow Bath.

Patron: Mr Allan A. Strom, A.M.



CLEFT-FRONTED SHORE-CRAB x 1/2

"Future people will have no say in the matter if wilderness is destroyed before they are born, but we will have only ourselves to blame if we do not defend wilderness now"

- Geoff Mcsley, Director, A.C.F.

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COMING MEETINGS: AT THE CONSERVATION HUT, VALLEY OF WATERS RESERVE, VALLEY ROAD, WENTWORTH FALLS.

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Sat., August 6 - Down the Devil's Hole, up the Six Foot Track to Nellie's Glen. Meet where Cliff Drive meets Great Western Highway, Katoomba, near Caravan Park, Shell Corner, 10.00 a.m. Leader - [Name obscured] (Ph. 57.1927)

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- Editor

Dear Mr. Alcorn,

I am in receipt of your Newsletter No. 51 ... February, 1983, and I would like to make some complimentary comments about the priorities which the Society is giving to environmental matters. It is also rather obvious that the Society is being listened to and is at least on the road to being accepted as a source of advice. This position must be seen as a major development and should be jealously cultivated.

I was very glad to see that the Society was aware of the proposed State Planning Policies on medium density housing and surplus public lands, and that action has been taken to seek major clarification.

In the case of medium density housing, the problems of water, sewerage, transport and other services are exacerbated, and obviously people-pressure threatens your particular environment. Surplus public lands proposals in your area, must be seen as a rough disregard of public interest.

Your Society was established at a time when nature conservationists faced specific problems of wildlife management; whilst that problem or those problems, still require continuing attention, we now better understand the over-riding significance of land-use and resource management generally. Hence nature conservation organisations must expand their area of operation and realise that it is the "total environment" which is facing the challenge of faulty management. We cannot afford to dither with single facets alone. As I see it, those organisations in nature conservation which continue to fail to broaden their charter, are going or have gone to the wall.

The community of course, flounders as it is without knowledge and without the necessary skills to use any knowledge about environmental matter and approaches. The Society must then, become a strong agency for environmental education on the Mountains. I know you regard your Conservation Hut as a source of information; my idea would be to broaden the nature of the information available so that the Hut is known to be a resource

LETTER FROM OUR PATRON CONTD.

Centre on total environmental matters.

Perhaps I can again offer my congratulations ... dare I say as something of a veteran in work for the environment?

Kind regards to you all and to my old contacts, in particular.

Yours sincerely,

ALLEN A. STROM

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WE CHANGE OUR NAME

A notice of motion, submitted in accordance with our Constitution, to our February meeting, was carried at our March Annual Meeting, to change our name to the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

There was general agreement that the term "wildlife Conservation" had become too limiting, but some members were understandably reluctant to see the name "Katoomba and District" go after over 21 years. An amendment for the "Katoomba and District Nature Conservation Society" was lost, the majority feeling that the name adopted more clearly defined our area and related us to the Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society, with whom we are working more and more closely as conservation problems become more complex.

Apparently our patron Allen Strom is clairvoyant as his remarks in his letter quoted above about "total environment" were made without any knowledge of the notice of motion to change our name. His letter was read to the meeting.

Another decision on a notice of motion to the Annual Meeting was to become incorporated as a limited liability company. This protects our financial liabilities and facilitates re-negotiation of our Hut lease with the Blue Mountains City Council. So we must now also put Ltd. after our name.

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MID-WEEK WALK ON APRIL 21 - KANIMBLE VALLEY

The walkers began by following the firetrail that runs from the bottom of the Little Zig Zag to just below Victoria Pass. Our thanks are due to the private landowners who allowed us to cross their land, and to Charles Johnson, who obtained their permission for us. Along the firetrail, which climbs steadily and in places steeply, we noticed some fine manna gums. At the end of the trail (which not all the walkers reached) we heard a concert of lyrebird. Two of us climbed the remaining few hundred feet to Victoria Pass, arriving at the top of the safety ramp.

On the return journey two of us turned on to the newer firetrail which runs up and along the flank of the Camel's Back. This is a most beautiful and astonishing area. The side of the mountain is a series of rock ledges which must hold water. As we rose, suddenly the dry sclerophyll forest changed to a forest of tall paperbarks (*Melaleuca styphelioides*), which were very beautiful with their dark green foliage and white papery trunks. The paperbark forest was extensive. Above it there was a forest of grey gums (*Eucalyptus punctata*), some grey, and some in their fresh ochre colour. There

MID-WEEK WALK ON APRIL 21 CONTD.

were also casuarinas and manna gums at the boundary between these two forests.

Presumably the unusual location and extent of the paperbark forest is due to the entrapment of water by the rock ledges, and the existence of the grey gum forest to the shelter from the west provided by the side of the mountain.

- K. Rachel Makinson

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SUBMISSIONS TO HERITAGE STUDY

Thanks to the co-operation of several members, we were able to submit a number of items of environmental heritage to the current Blue Mountains Heritage Study being undertaken for the Blue Mountains City Council by a firm of consultants.

In particular we concentrated on streams as one of the most vital of our natural heritages and advanced overall proposals for a special protection zoning of all water systems. We also gave detailed and specific proposals, with maps and photographs, for the protection of stream systems containing features of unquestionable heritage significance such as Katoomba Falls and Floodlit Cascades, Leura Cascades and Falls, Minni Ha Ha Falls, Jamison Creek and Valley of Waters, Wentworth Falls, Water Nymphs Dell, Frank's Creek and Wentworth Creek headwaters. It would be of little value to declare say, a waterfall as a heritage if you did not protect the whole creek system that feeds it from drying up.

Without doubt the greatest heritage the Blue Mountains have are their great cliffs and escarpments. It is these that give the Mountains their distinctive character and make them a world-renowned tourist attraction. In our submission we particularly stressed the need to protect the escarpment from Mt Victoria to King's Tableland, as much of it is privately owned and threatened with development - for instance the proposed huge convention centre on the Leura Golf Course.

Other proposals were for the protection of the Narrow Neck peninsular and the retention of the peaceful, rural character of the Megalong Valley as an historic heritage.

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A MOCK SUN

When driving back to Mount Victoria after the walk around Federal Pass on May 7, I saw a very unusual natural atmospheric phenomenon which I believe was what is known to students of such things as a "mock sun".

It was between 4 and 4.15 p.m., and there was a fair amount of light cloud in the sky, some at least of it being cirrus. Straight ahead of me, which would have been more or less north, or a bit to the west of north, I saw a brightly coloured patch in the sky, at about the same height of the sun, but well to the right of it. It was at the right hand end of a long, fairly dark grey cloud, which had a fringed edge at that end, and the colours followed the shape of the fringed edge, a yellow band merging into a red one (sunset tones). Immediately to the right of the coloured bands was a very bright, diffuse light, like the sun shining through clouds. The whole thing

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lasted for 15 or 20 minutes after I first noticed it, although the brightness began to decrease after about 10 minutes.

Later that evening I spoke to Beryl Cocley, and she said that she had seen, about 4.00 p.m. from Wentworth Falls, a "second sun" shining through cloud, though in her case it was at the middle of the cloud and there were no colours.

I have identified this phenomenon as a "mock sun" or parhelion, also known as a "sundog" or "Nebensonne". The essential requirements for its occurrence are a fine, still day, with ice crystals in the atmosphere. As they fall under gravity in the absence of wind, the ice crystals orient themselves with their biggest faces horizontal and most of their other faces vertical. In this position each one acts as a prism, bending the light rays that pass through it, and forming an image of a small part of the sun. The observer's eye sees the images from the crystals that are in the right orientation as an image of the sun in a position  $22^\circ$  or more from the true position. Typically, the mock suns are coloured, but unusual ones can be formed, at much larger angles, which are not coloured.

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*This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in September 2022 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.*

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