

JANUARY 1987  
No.66

# UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Black Cockatoos  
by G.J. Broinowski

## Newsletter

Registered by Australia Post—Publication No. NBHO 925



UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.

Incorporated in New South Wales. Registered Office: The Conservation Hut,  
Valley of Waters Reserve, Valley Road, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Address for Correspondence: P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Single Pensioners and Juniors \$2.00 per year; Married Pensioners \$3.00; Single Membership \$5.00; Family Membership \$8.00.

MEETINGS: Held on last Friday in the month, January to November inclusive at the Conservation Hut, Valley of Waters Reserve, Valley Road Wentworth Falls at 7.30 p.m.

For speakers at coming meetings, please see Public notices in the Gazette.

COMMITTEE FOR 1986

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President.....	Reg Toseland	84.1682
Vice-Presidents.....	Michael Dark	58.7061
	Eric Blick	88.1051
Secretary.....	David Horton-James	57.3270
Treasurer.....	Joy Anderson	57.1602
Membership Officer.....	Joy Anderson	57.1602
Newsletter Editor .....	Ewart Collings	57.2131
Walks Convenors .....	Olive & John Noble	87.8342
Hut Convenor .....	Lois Horton-James	57.3270
Education Officer.....	Dorothy Davis	57.1258
Librarian.....	Betty Collings	57.2131
Hut Duty Organiser.....	Beverley Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer..	Deirdre Morton	58.8137

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NEWSLETTER: Four issues a year - April, July, October, January  
Advertising space available.

LIBRARY: A wide range of books on wildlife and conservation available to members. Facilities for borrowing and returning books at Monthly Meetings.

THE HUT: The Society maintains a small museum and information centre at the Conservation Hut. It is manned on weekends and holidays by voluntary helpers.

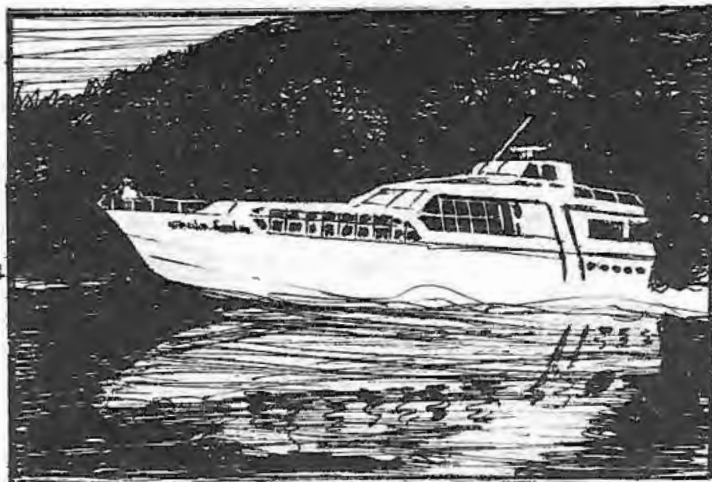
PUBLICATIONS: A range of specialist booklets, posters, maps, postcards etc may be purchased at the Hut.

SALE OF NATIVE PLANTS: Opportunities to purchase native plants grown by Members are organised from time to time during the year. These sales are held at the Hut, proceeds to the Land Preservation Fund.

WALKS: Walks are organised on the first Sunday and third Thursday of the month, conducted by experienced leaders.

LAND PRESERVATION: The Society has a Land Preservation Fund which was set up to give lovers of the bush an opportunity to preserve environmentally important land in the Blue Mountains by purchase and dedication as a reserve.





# UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

## Newsletter

No. 66

January, 1987

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### COMING TALKS

January - David Thomas  
Small Mammals at the Zoo

February - Helen George  
Friends of the Bats

### COMING WALKS

#### January Sunday 4th - Walk No 2 - Newnes Plateau Area

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. One hours drive each way. Medium 4-5 hours approx. Exploring dry canyons and rain forest gullies.

Leader: John Noble 87-8342

N.B. Train time given in previous Newsletter was in error, unfortunately no train is available at this time on Sunday.

#### January Thursday 15th - Waterfall Wander - Cascade Falls - Cataract Falls

Meet at top of Honour Avenue, Lawson at 9.30 a.m. Easy walk 2-3 hours approx. Linger by the water falls. Leader: Beverly Thompson 57 2076

#### January Saturday 17th 1987 - Black Jerry's Ridge - Cox River - Six Foot Track

Meet at Blackheath station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 9.30 a.m. PROMPT. Proceed along Megalong Valley Road to Six Foot Track entrance (some cars will be left here). The rest to the Mountain River Riders gate entrance. Along Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox River, easy walk by the river, then up the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley Road. Medium walk. 7 hrs approx. Kangaroos can be sighted along the ridge. Leader Olive Noble 87 8342

#### February Sunday 1st. Florabella Pass

Meet at Warrimoo Station at 10.15 a.m. Interesting walk, waterfall and caves. Swimming hole. 4 hrs walk approx. Medium

Leader: Brian Wynands 39-4752

February Thursday 19th - Resort Site - Roberts Pass - Inspiration Point

Meet at entrance Leura Golf Club, Fitzroy Street, 10.00 a.m. View Leura Resort Site and see what progress has been made.

Leaders: Reg and Dulcie Toseland 84 1682

February Saturday 21st - Bungleboori River Area

Meet at Mt Victoria station for 9.30 a.m. train from Sydney. Medium 4-5 hrs approx. Rain forest gullies. High ridges with extensive views. Leader: John Noble 87 8342

March Sunday 1st - A Look at the Engineers Track

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 10.30 a.m. Medium 4-5 hours. approx. Wander along this historic track for a while.

Leader: Reg Baumgarten 87-8342

March Thursday 19th - Old Shale Railway, Off Darling Causeway

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 10.30 a.m. Historic walk, pleasant with magnificent views. Maybe a visit to the Museum at Mt Victoria. Easy. 3-4 hrs approx.

Leader: Rachel Makinson 87 8342

March Saturday 21st - Blue Gum Swamp

Meet at the end of White Cross Road, Winmalee (down the Great Western Highway to Richmond, about 5½ k.m. on left off Hawkesbury Road) at 10.00 a.m. Easy 3-4 hours approx. Wildflowers, birds and the beauty of the bush.

Leader: Enid Schaffer 54 1244

April Sunday 5th - Bell Trees

Details to be announced later. Leader: Eric Blick 88-1051

April Thursday 16th - Prince's Rock - Rocket Point - King's Tableland

Meet at Car Park at end of Falls Road at 10.00 a.m. Walk through open swampland and see Vera Falls from a different angle. 3-4 hrs approx. Easy

Leader: Kay Lammers 57-3253

May Sunday 3rd - Tentative Date - Little Zig Zag to Charles Johnson's Property - Little Hartley

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. Walk down little Zig Zag, check erosion. Explore around. 5-6 hours approx. Medium walk with a climb up the Little Zig Zag. Leader: To be arranged

May Saturday 16th - Narrow Neck Area

Details to be announced later. Leader: Dick Weston 53-1003

May Thursday 21st - Wilson's Glen

Meet at Woodford Station at 10.45 a.m. for trains from Sydney and Lithgow. Easy walk. 2-3 hours approx.

Leader: Deidre Morton 58-8137

June Sunday 7th - Six Foot Track - Part 2 - Old Ford Reserve - Cox's River and Return

Meet in street over Blackheath Railway Crossing at 9.30 a.m. A steady walk over a fair track, along parts of this historic track to the Cox River.

Medium. 5-6 hours approx. Leader: To be arranged later



June Thursday 18th - North Faulconbridge

Along tributary of Linden River - blue gum forest. Meet at Primary School Grose Road, Faulconbridge 10.00 a.m. Leader: Jill Dark

June Saturday 20th - Arethusa Falls

Details to be announced later, but this walk will be a hard one of 13 kms approx and for experienced bush walkers.

Leader: Brian Wynands 39-4752

WALK - BIRDWOOD GULLY SPRINGWOOD - 16 SEPTEMBER 1986

This track has been in existence for many years but our group has not included it on the walks' agenda, to my knowledge. So the 15 walkers did not know what to expect and were delighted with the beauties revealed.

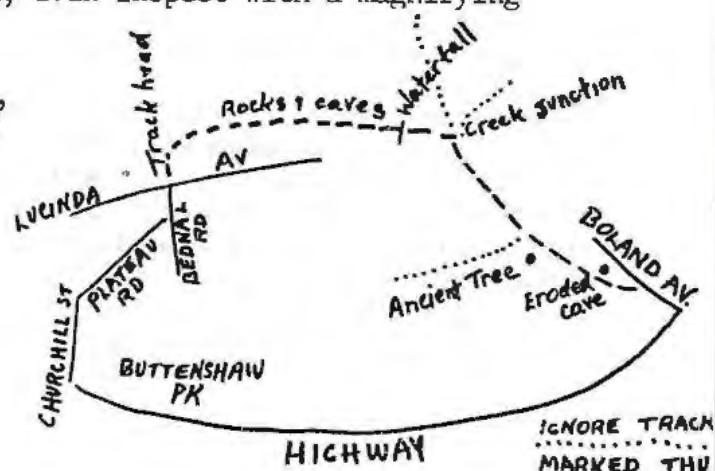
We met at Buttenshaw Park, on the Highway at Springwood, then drove to the faded red sign at the junction of Badnal road and Lucinda Avenue, where the track begins beside a house. It descends into a deep gully in Hunter Park, passing fascintaint rocks, caves and a waterfall. There are some ancient turpentines and angopheras, and on this occasion the flowers were in masses of yellow and white, with patches of blue dampiera and exciting red glimpses of waratahs. The star of the show was undoubtedly the enormous "glory pea" flowers which must have been the biggest we have ever seen. In all there were about 20 varieties of flowers in riotous bloom, musically accompanied by satisfied bees.

The track comes to a creek junction and branches left and right. The signpost is twisted out of shape but the right hand path across the rocky creek bed leads to Boland Avenue. I have read that the other track goes on a long way and is worth exploring, but one has to return to the same spot, so maybe we can investigate that another time.

The track we were now travelling was drier and not so flower-decked. But it surprised us with a Christmas Bush 10 metres high and an ancient angophera which bore on its scarred trunk some fungi of great age. We had lunch near the end of the track in an eroded cave swirled with marvellous designs. We had decided to make the return walk so had not left any cars at the Boland Avenue end. We got back in an hour, without hurrying, but much faster than our trip out. Those who go walking with the Thursday group know just how long we can take when there is so much to admire and discuss, photograph, even inspect with a magnifying glass.

(A diagram is enclosed to show the way, but is not meant to be an exact map of the bends and creek crossings.)

Grace Bayley



WALK - PINNACLES. NEWNES PLATEAU. SATURDAY 18TH OCTOBER

Nine turned up for the walk on a cold, cloudy morning. First, a pleasant drive along the Glow Worm Tunnel Road to a point about two kilometres before the first tunnel and then down into the bush amongst the pinnacles. Unfortunately, due to the cold winter, the flowers are about six to eight weeks later than usual and the ones that were out were loathe to open (especially the Boronias). Lunch was taken on top of one of the Pinnacles and then more exploring among the rock formations. The threatening rain at last started to fall so we retreated to the cars before the walk was finished. On the way out we stopped at Mt Horne and looked at an Aboriginal site. Axe grinding grooves and rock shelter. Here, there were some good stands of Waratahs.

John Noble

WALK - WOLLONGAMBE RIVER. SATURDAY 15TH NOVEMBER

A lovely sunny day. After three days of continual rain four of us walked down to the Wollongambe River. The river was running fast so plans of li-loing had been abandoned. We walked up river to the junction of Bell's Creek, bush bashing at times. The Waratah's made a colourful picture against the sombre green of the bush. We had lunch under a rock shelter where coachwood and lilly-pilly were growing. We were very interested in the antics of the rufus fantails and even a water-dragon was seen on the track. After exploring around we eventually started back up the track through open patches of wild flowers, boronia floribunda, dillwynia and stypantra being in profusion.

Olive Noble

EXCURSION - HASSAN'S WALLS - 20TH NOVEMBER 1986

Following the previous day's snow, it was an ideal day for walking. There was occasional drizzle and rain drops on the plants accentuated the odours of the highland flora.

Thirteen of us, including English visitors Jack and Sally Bennet made the trip. this time into country new to some of us. The Hassan's Walls massif, threatened by valley widening from three sides, is higher than our main Blue Mountains region and provides spectacular views.

As we ascended by car through Brown's Gap, we passed coal seams and observed on the walls cliff collapse forming a landslide. From an old look-out near the top we straddled a 100 mm wide crack running at least 100 metres across a hillside - a future landslide probably related to local coalmining.

The main walk was along an old vehicle track branching a little south of west from a V.H.F. antenna (Newsletter space does not permit comment on the leader having taken a wrong turn). The track followed a high ridge for some two kilometres through a dry sclerophyll forest. The sparse, low understorey was rich in flowers. A Boronia, identified by Jill, as B. microphylla, was widespread and hundreds of native orchids fringed the track; Caladenias and Thelymitras, Flying Duck and Donkey Orchids and varieties of the Leek orchid, Prasophyllum. Jill's knowledge contributed greatly to this part of the walk.



At the end of the ridge was a deep, transverse, quarry-like excavation which on first sight had aroused my curiosity; obviously neither sandstone quarry, as there is so much sandstone closer to Lithgow, nor a coalmine or prospecting tunnel as we were stratigraphically well above the coal measures. This was the history I had promised on pre-trip notes. Enquiries of Lithgow mining, historical and bushwalking people did not help but a long-term Blackheathen supplied the answer. It was the site excavated for an anti-aircraft gun platform to protect the Small Arms Factory during the 1939-1945 war.

We lunched, sheltered from the rain, in the large cave near Padley's Pedestal from which the view should have covered the granite valleys of Kanimbla, the course of the Cox's River and the Wilds Dogs and Gangerangs as Permian outliers resting unconformably on Devonian rocks of the type I have described near Kanangra Walls.

It is pleasant to record that most of the happy dozen who followed me had done so before and knew what to expect. My thanks to them.

R.T. Compagnoni

#### MOUNT TOMAH BOTANIC GARDEN INSPECTION

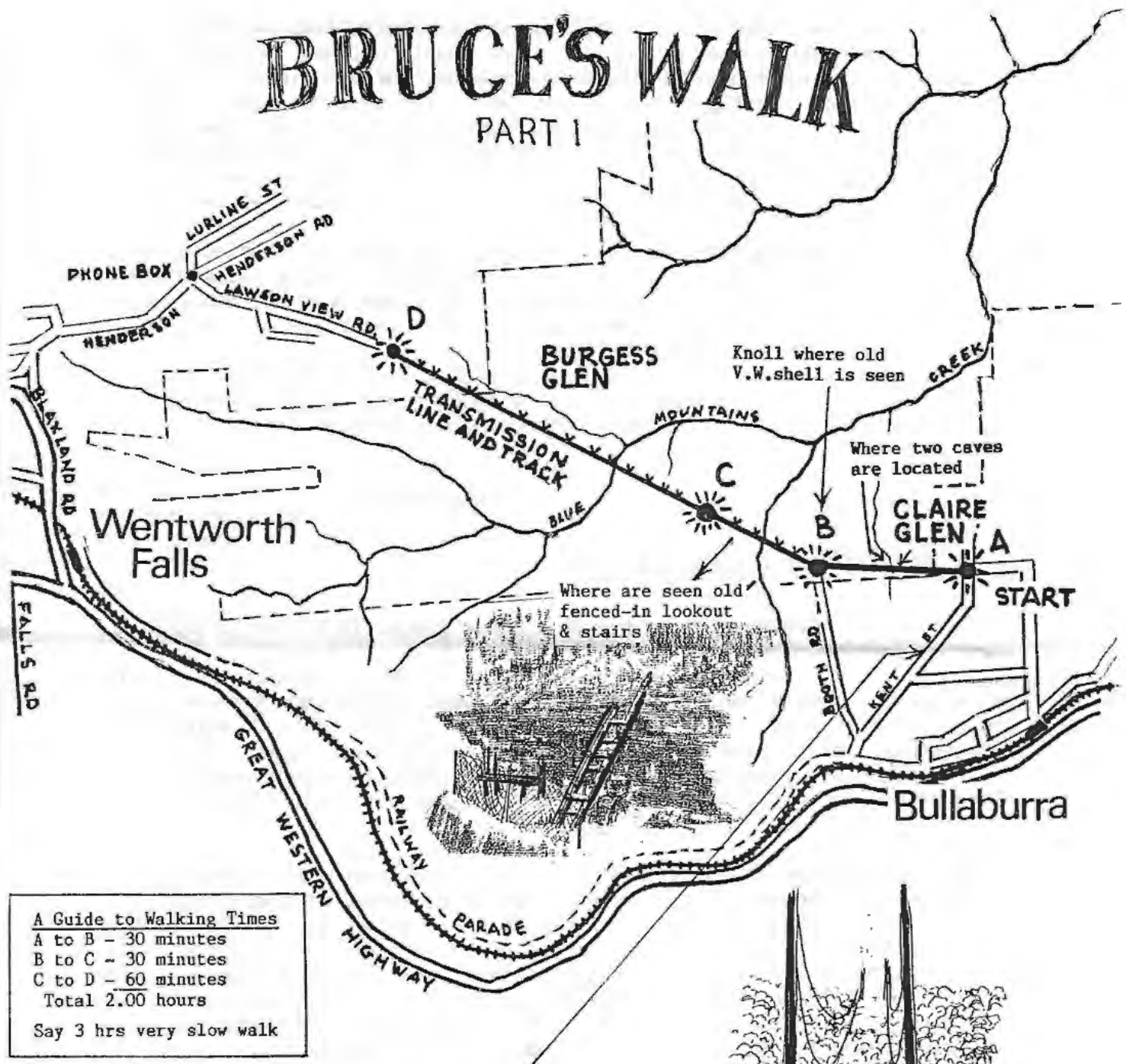
The Mount Tomah Garden will be one of the few places in the world where a large collection of cool climate plants from the Southern Hemisphere is grown. Plants from the cooler regions of the Northern Hemisphere will also be featured. Located on the Bell's Line of Road, 120 kilometres west of the centre of Sydney, the Garden is a Commonwealth and State Government Bicentennial project and is being developed by the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. The 31 hectare site will be a true botanical garden as well as a place of beauty, where recreation can be combined with scientific and educational purposes.

On Saturday 22nd November, Reg and Dulcie Toseland represented the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society at the third annual inspection of these gardens. After a week of rain which undoubtedly slowed some of the work in preparation for the day's inspection - Saturday was a glorious day. Once the formalities of registering, receiving name labels - with coloured spots (which later divided us into tour groups for garden progress inspection) was completed, morning tea was served, followed by introductions to V.I.P.'s, members of Government and Royal Botanic Gardens Directors and staff. Speeches were made by some of them, followed by the inspections of the grounds, and plant nurseries - with a very well informed guide - who was, of course, bombarded with questions. The days proceedings were finalised with a banquet lunch, and a chance to talk to some of the numerous Associations who were attending. The whole project appears to be very well planned and with the highest motives - vastly different to the one in progress at Leura.

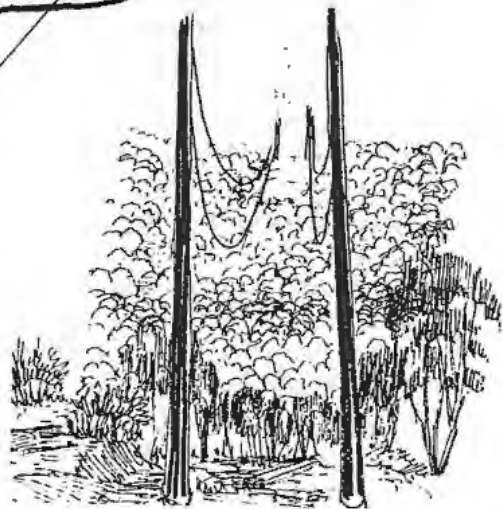
Reg Toseland

# BRUCE'S WALK

## PART I



Kent Street is rough gravel but not dangerous - just drive until the power lines are seen. Two sets cross so take the start from the second or more northerly set. Power lines are practically overhead all the way.





## BRUCES WALK - PART 1

How pleasant it was for me to "discover" this walk following my return to the district after a long absence. I knew nothing of its conception, gestation or birth, nor the furore as the legitimacy of this creation was debated.

Traversing the walk is a strange experience. Standing at the power poles at the Kent Street start the view ahead looks unpromising as great scars of bare earth and denuded bushland and ridge top houses intrude. As one proceeds these rapidly disappear from view and the quietness of the bush takes over.

The three gullies between Bullaburra and Wentworth Falls which the track crosses over are quite undisturbed. They dissect an area where no one had or has cause to go.

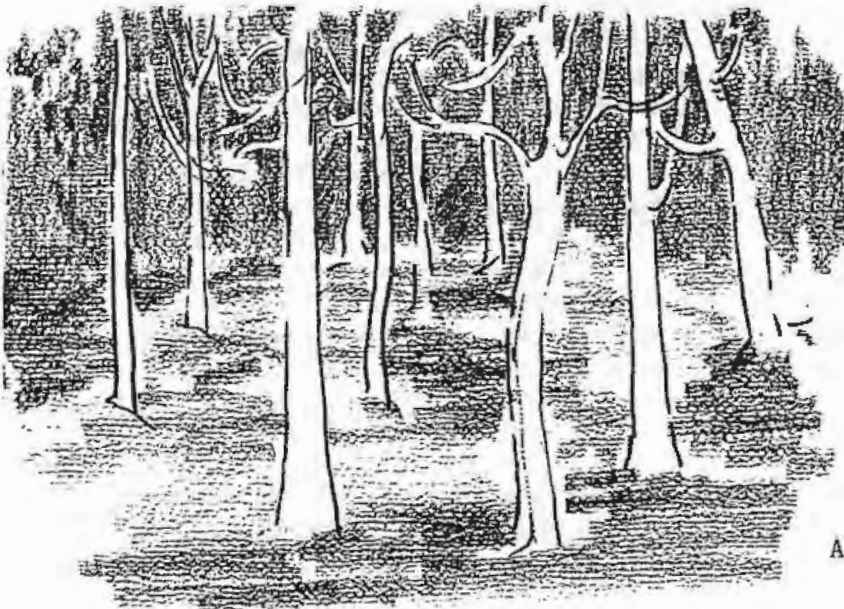


BRUCE'S WALK between A & B

Yet apparently this was not always so, for patiently picked out steps, rock shelters with old halves or adzed logs serving as seats, pipe handrails and old steel ladders provide evidence of one heavy usage.

It is an awkward route to reach. Of course the easiest way is to have a car at the Kent Street start and one at the end of Lawson View Road where the driver would take his companion back to the starting point. Or one can take the train to Bullaburra and walk through to Wentworth Falls though to us pampered moderns the street plod is a bit off putting.

Lloyd Jones



ANGOPHORA IMPRESSION  
Bruce's Walk





RECENTLY ACQUIRED  
BY THE LIBRARY

"A Threatened Species  
Conservation Strategy  
for Australia"

This is an illustration from the book "A Threatened Species Conservation Strategy for Australia".

It is not a fun book, but a very serious attempt to work out an Endangered Species programme for the future. It has major contributions by Ian Fry, Martyn Robinson and John Benson and Forewords by Professor Harry Messel and Dr. Fred Bell. It has separate chapters on the Threatened Vertebrates and Invertebrates and Australia's Threatened Plants, each with a detailed alphabetical list of the species under threat.

It outlines the present situation of increasing extinctions, and proposes plans for the protection and preservation of habitats in which the species live. Finally, it has a chapter on the form of legislature necessary to carry out the reforms needed to prevent the disappearance of threatened species of Australian Animals.

GARDEN ROBBERS

What can I do with the Bower Birds?  
The Bower Birds eat my beans.  
They also eat my lettuces  
And other kinds of greens,  
And raspberries and gooseberries  
And currents, black and red.  
I sometimes feel like giving up  
And growing flowers instead.

But in my garden is a bower  
With ornaments of blue,  
Where Bluey dances, hour on hour,  
And brings each day a yellow flower  
To charm the females he would woo.  
And in my garden was a nest  
Last Spring, with eggs of mottled brown  
And, later, nestlings covered all  
In long and misty grey-blue down.

And so I think I'll buy a net  
To cover up my berries.  
I'll beat the thieving Bower Birds yet.  
Might even plant some cherries.



Graham Alcorn





## Gordon Explorer

The Gordon River is one of Tasmania's largest rivers and flows through some of the wildest country in the world's most mountainous island. In its lower reaches it is calm and peaceful, the last place you would expect to attract world-wide attention and confrontation. Today the water is so still and the reflections so perfect its hard to know if you're on your head or your heels.

The Gordon flows into Macquarie Harbour which is "twice as large as Sydney Harbour" with a narrow entrance from the sea known as Hells Gates. A convict settlement was established as early as 1822 and convict labour was used to build retaining walls to the entrance to ensure a deeper channel. Even so, Hells Gates is only 75 metres wide and must have been a real hazard for the old sailing ships. There are still remains of the convict settlement on Sarah Island which was the scene of great harshness and cruelty which caused many convicts to attempt the hopeless task of trying to escape. This was used as background for the Marcus Clark's novel "For the Term of His Natural Life".

With the discovery of rich mineral deposits at Queenstown and Zeehan, Strahan became a busy port in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Today a three-storey Council Chambers on the waterfront, now occupied by a souvenir shop, is a reminder of the town's former glory. Tourism and fishing are the main activities nowadays. A light seaplane is ready on hand for those who wish to explore the river from the air. Large amounts of huon pine and other timbers used to be rafted down the river earlier but good stands of pine are harder to find and difficult to extract from the rain forests along the banks.

We did our exploring by water in the "Gordon Explorer" a large high-powered launch capable of carrying many passengers at speeds of 25 to 30 knots, on a four-hour cruise as far as Sir John's Falls landing, not far from the



junction with the Franklin River. The river is deep with dense forest growing to the water's edge. A great variety of timber was pointed out to us, Huon Pine, King Billy Pine, Blackwood, Celery Top, Sassafras, Leatherwood and flowering Wattles, falling into the water from the banks eroded by the wash from tourist cruisers. Near Sir John's Falls were men in high powered runabouts fishing for English salmon. When we approached, one of the boat's crew threw overboard a couple of sacks of crushed ice which floated in the darkish water to be picked up by the fishermen, to preserve their salmon - sometimes weighing as much as 25lbs. We were shown a slight track on the bank which led to the site of the proposed Gordon-below-Franklin Dam, but very little mention was made and very little evidence was seen of the great hubbub and confrontation which took place there before the building of the dam was finally stopped. The river is calm and beautiful and hopefully will stay that way for many generations to come.

In the afternoon after the cruise we went out to the Ocean Beach six miles from Strahan. It is a beautiful beach, forty miles long with very good surf - unfortunately the beach was black and the surf a dirty gray green colour, not tempting at all. According to one local, it was polluted by drilling in an unsuccessful search for oil. The country along the coast was flat heathland, ablaze with wildflowers - pink heath (*epacris impressa*) predominating.

P.S. Since returning from Tasmania, I have read "The Battle for the Franklin" by Roger Green. That changes the whole picture.

From what the tourist sees today, it is hard to imagine what it was like during the blockade in the summer of 1982-83 - 1440 Protestors arrested; "Greenie Acres" camp established; boats; police. Every day protestors chained themselves to bulldozers, cranes, crane booms and machinery and had to be cut free by oxywelders and removed by police. One old lady tied herself to a crane with strong string, much to the amusement of the oxy-welder, who'd come to remove her. "You don't have to worry about the welder on me", she said, "Just a sharp knife will do",

Considering the emotions aroused it is amazing there was no bloodshed, it was the biggest conservation protest ever held in Australia.

Betty and Ewart Collings

#### ANYONE FOR HUT DUTY?

Over the last couple of years many people have given up doing Hut duty. This means that a willing few are doing duty more frequently. We desperately need more people to help in this way. The Hut is a good source of revenue and we are fortunate to have it as most other conservation organisations have to resort to raffles and other means to raise funds. It means giving up about one day a month to succour the weary, the hungry, the tired, the frozen and the thirsty who stagger in from the bush, by serving cups of tea, cool drinks, sweets, maps and information, etc., You meet a lot of people and it can be fun. If you are able to help occasionally, it will mean that the Hut need not be closed on some day when it could be open and making money for the Society.

SO PLEASE CONTACT BEVERLEY THOMPSON - 57.2076 - WE WILL BE VERY GRATEFUL.



## Society News

Darwin's Walk - Wentworth Falls. The track from the highway to the top of the Falls is not yet complete. It goes as far as Fletcher Street from the highway. Apparently there is some difficulty with one land owner who will not allow access along the Jamison Creek. Hopefully negotiations will be successful and we will see the track complete in the near future. It is now well signposted at the highway and in Wilson Park. Some members feel strongly about track building through swamps. They would like to see "duck boarding" (i.e. building an elevated pathway) or stepping stones through these sensitive areas. The track is an easy walk and has some very interesting sections along it.

Blue Mountains National Park Extensions. At last, part of the new extensions to the Blue Mountains/Burraborang Valley National Park has been gazetted. This is the Mt. Werong area which used to be predominantly reserved for forestry purposes (i.e. pine plantations). The area is west of Kanangra Walls and is mostly "wilderness". The other part of the extensions, announced last year by the then Premier, Neville Wran, extends from Kings Tableland around to Narrow Neck and includes much of the Jamison Valley. This part is still not gazetted but the National Parks & Wildlife Society is eager to start improving the facilities and walking tracks - they have the money; there is hope that N.P. & W.S. can take over the management of the area before gazettal.

Land Preservation Fund. The October Native Plant Weekend held by the Society was the best ever. Over \$1,100 of the plants were sold and more than \$600 profit was made. The profit goes to the Land Preservation Fund. Jill Dark's talk on native flowers was well attended and received. The land that the Society wishes to purchase in Taylor Avenue, Wentworth Falls, is one step closer. We hope that it will be completed after the New Year.

Guest Speakers. Over the last six months the Society has had many interesting guest-speakers after General Meetings. Wyn Jones gave a fascinating look into the habits of wombats and to see how N.P. & W.S. manages the difficult problem of negotiation with some farmers. Peter Smith presented a talk on the effect of bush fires on native bird habitations. His study was carried out in the Bega area and showed that the major effect was because of changes in vegetation. Margaret Baker gave a most interesting talk on the geology of the Blue Mountains. This talk was packed full of information - a little difficult to take it all in - but most interesting. All members were surprised at the complexity of what is known about the geology in our area. We hope that Margaret will be able to put this talk down in written form so that all may learn this little known facet of the Blue Mountains.

Wentworth Falls School of Arts 530A Committee. Bruce Forbes from the 530A Committee has asked the Society for its support in the need to revegetate the area between the School of Arts and the shopping centre. This area includes a marshy area on the Jamison Creek which is full of rubbish and weeds. The Society has given its support and would like to see this happen as soon as possible.



## PREDATION OF SMALL BIRDS NESTS

Taking part in the R.A.O.U. Nest Record Scheme, you learn a lot about the breeding behaviour of birds. It is surprising sometimes how few of the skilfully constructed, cunningly camouflaged, carefully hidden nests of the small birds succeed in producing fledged young. In my experience, only about 50% succeed in raising fledged young, on the average, with considerable variation of course. This Spring, in the area I study in Medlow Bath, only 2 nests out of 12 have succeeded so far - a bit over 16%. Eggs were stolen from Yellow Robins (4), Golden Whistlers (2), Grey Fantail (1); young stolen from Spinebill and Mountain Thrush; nest deserted by Redbrowed Finch (2 cold eggs); nest deserted or predated (high up) Flame Robin - female is now shifting the nest. The two successful breeders nest on or near the ground - Brown Thornbill and White Browed Scrub Wren. Currently sitting on eggs are Rufous Whistler (2), Grey Thrush (1) Yellow Robin (1) and a Yellow Robin nest just built.

I suspect the main predators here are a pair of Grey Currawongs who patrol the area regularly. Strangely enough, in a small part of this area where 7 nests succeeded last Spring out of 9 built, only 1 nest is built this year - in the same fork of a giant tea tree - as last year, a Grey Thrush sits on three speckled eggs. There are many predators in addition to Currawongs; Kookaburras, Shrike Thrushes, Snakes, Lizards, Bush Rats as well as Foxes and Feral Cats. However, most of the small birds soon set about building a new nest, no doubt seeking a better hiding place and better camouflage. They often use the material from the old nest. They will never lay again in a nest that has been predated, but many species use a successful nest again the same season - a female Flame Robin raised three broods in the same nest last season, in Barry Barnes' garden! Furthermore, her first mate was killed, but she soon got another one and raised two more broods. This Spring she has repaired the old nest and is sitting there again.

The small birds are very persistent breeders - they have to be for their species to survive.

Graham Alcorn

### From the Visitors' Book

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| John Atherton -<br>Selbourne, England | Yes, that is as in "The Natural History of Selbourne". My only day in the Blue Mts., but one I shall remember. |
| G. Fairfax -<br>Sydney                | As a fourth generation Blue Mts. admirer and mother of fifth - Please fight to conserve.                       |
| K. Whiting -<br>Victoria              | Thanks for the displays.   |



TANDBERG - Sydney Morning Herald



## LAND PRESERVATION FUND

The Society has a Land Preservation Fund which was set up to give lovers of the bush an opportunity to help to preserve some environmentally important land in the Blue Mountains by its purchase and dedication as a reserve.

### Tax Deductible Donations (Minimum \$20.00)

The forms below show you how to make a tax deductible donation to the Australian Conservation Foundation, advising ACF of your preference that the funds be used for the Land Preservation Fund of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

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The Director  
Australian Conservation Foundation,  
672B Glenferrie Rd.,  
HAWTHORN VIC 3122

Dear Sir,

I attach a donation to the Australian Conservation Foundation. I prefer that this donation be spent for the purposes of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Land Preservation Fund. I understand that this donation is tax deductible and therefore look forward to your receipt.

Name (block letters) .....

Address .....

.....

Amount ..... Signed ..... Date .....

---

The Treasurer,  
Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society,  
P.O. Box 29,  
WENTWORTH FALLS 2782

Dear Sir,

I have forwarded today to the Australian Conservation Foundation a donation expressing a preference that it be spent for the purpose of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Land Preservation Fund.

Name .....

Address.....

.....

Amount ..... Signed ..... Date.....



## UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Objects of the Society as set out in the Constitution are:

- (a) To disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation among members of the Society and the public generally, particularly in relation to the unique resources of the Blue Mountains.
- (b) To conduct meetings, excursions and research, and such other activities as may be determined by the Society in relation to Wildlife Conservation, and especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls, to provide information on Conservation matters.
- (c) To maintain friendly relations with other Conservation Societies especially local bodies.

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## UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls.

### MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM\*

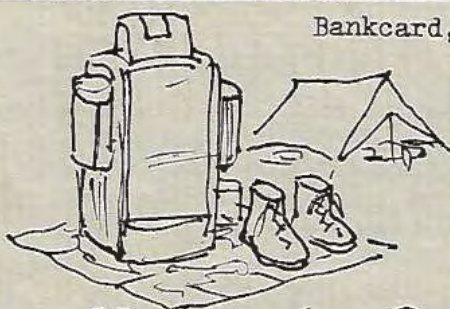
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*This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in June 2023 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.*

January 1987  
No. 66

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER.

Registered by Australia Post – Publication No. NBHO 925

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Incorporated in New South Wales. Registered Office: The Conservation Hut, Valley of Waters Reserve, Valley Road Wentworth Falls 2782.

Address for Correspondence: P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Single Pension & Juniors \$2.00 per year; Married Pensioners \$3.00; Single Membership \$5.00; Family Membership \$8.00.

MEETINGS: Held on last Friday in the month, January to December inclusive at the Conservation Hut, Valley of Waters Reserve, Valley Road Wentworth Falls at 7.30 p.m.

For speakers at coming meetings, please see Public Notices in the Gazette.

COMMITTEE FOR 1986

President.....	Reg Toseland	84.4682
Vice-Presidents.....	Michael Dark	58.7061
	Eric Blick	88.1051
Secretary.....	David Horton James	57.3270
Treasurer.....	Joy Anderson	57.1602
Membership Officer.....	Joy Anderson	57.1602
Newsletter Editor.....	Ewart Collings	57.2131
Walks Convener.....	Olive and John Noble	87.8342
Hut Convener.....	Lois Horton-James	57.3270
Education Officer	Dorothy Davis	57.1258
Librarian.....	Betty Collings	57.2131
Hut Duty Organiser.....	Beverly Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer...	Deidre Morton	58.8137

NEWSLETTER: Four issues a year – April, July, October, January. Advertising space available.

LIBRARY: A wide range of books on wildlife and conservation available to Members. Facilities for borrowing and returning books at Monthly Meetings.



THE HUT: The Society maintains a small museum and information centre at the Conservation Hut. It is manned on weekends and holidays by voluntary helpers.

PUBLICATIONS: A range of specialist booklets, posters, maps, postcards etc may be purchased at the Hut.

SALE OF NATIVE PLANTS: Opportunities to purchase native plants grown by Members are organised from time to time during the year. These sales are held at the Hut, proceeds to the Land Preservation Fund.

WALKS: Walks are organised on the first Sunday and second Thursday of the month, conducted by experienced leaders.

LAND PRESERVATION: The Society has a Land Preservation Fund which was set up to give lovers of the bush an opportunity to preserve environmentally important land in the Blue Mountains by purchase and dedication as a reserve.

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## COMING TALKS

January – David Thomas  
Small Mammals at the Zoo

February – Helen George  
Friends of the Bats

## COMING WALKS

### January Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> – Walk No2 – Newnes Plateau Area

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 am. One hours drive each way. Medium 4-5 hours approx.  
Exploring dry canyons and rain forest gullies.

Leader: John Noble 87-8342

N.B. Train time given in previous Newsletter was in error, unfortunately no train is available at this time on Sunday.

### January Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> – Waterfall Wander – Cascade Falls – Cataract Falls

Meet at top of Honour Avenue, Lawson at 9.30 am. Easy walk 2-3 hours approx. Linger by the water falls.

Leader: Beverly Thompson 57 2076

January Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> 1987 – Black Jerry's Ridge – Cox River – Six Foot Track

Meet at Blackheath station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 9.30 am PROMPT. Proceed along Megalong Valley Road to Six Foot Track entrance (some cars will be left here). The rest to the Mountain River Riders gate entrance. Along Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox River, easy walk by the river, then up the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley Road. Medium walk. 7 hours approx. Kangaroos can be sighted along the ridge.

Leader: Olive Noble 87 8342

February Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> Florabella Pass

Meet at Warrimoo Station at 10.15 am. Interesting walk, waterfall and caves. Swimming hole. 4 hours walk approx. Medium

Leader: Brian Wynands 39-4752

February Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> – Resort Site – Roberts Pass – Inspiration Point

Meet at entrance Leura Golf Club, Fitzroy Street, 10:00 am. View Leura Resort Site and see what progress has been made.

Leaders: Reg and Dulcie Toseland 84 1682

February Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> – Bungleboori River Area

Meet at Mt Victoria station for 9.30 train from Sydney. Medium 4-5 hours approx. Rain forest gullies. High ridges with extensive views.

Leader: John Noble 87 8342

March Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> – A Look at the Engineers Track

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 10.30 am. Medium 4-5 hours, approx. Wander along this historic track for a while.

Leader: Reg Baumgarten 87 8342

March Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> – Old Shale Railway, Off Darling Causeway

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 10.30 am. Historic walk, pleasant with magnificent views. Maybe a visit to the Museum at Mt Victoria. Easy 3-4 hrs approx.

Leader: Rachel Makinson 87 8342

March Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> – Blue Gum Swamp

Meet at the end of White Cross Road, Winmalee (down the Great Western Highway to Richmond, about 5 ½ km. On left off Hawkesbury Road) at 10 am. Easy 3-4 hours approx. Wildflowers, birds and the beauty of the bush.

Leader: Enid Schaffer 54 1244

April Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> – Bell Trees

Details to be announced later.

Leader: Eric Blick 88-1051

April Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> – Prince's Rock – Rocket Point – King's Tableland

Meet at Car Park at end of Falls Road at 10.00 am. Walk through open swampland and see Vera Falls from a different angle. 3-4 hrs approx. Easy.

Leader: Kay Lammers 57-3253



May Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Tentative Date – Little Zig Zag to Charles Johnson's Property – Little Hartley

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 am. Walk down little Zig Zag, check erosion. Explore around. 5-6 hours approx. Medium walk with a climb up the Little Zig Zag.

Leader: To be arranged.

May Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> – Narrow Neck Area

Details to be announced later.

Leader: Dick Weston 53-1003

May Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> – Wilson's Glen

Meet at Woodford Station at 10.45 am. for trains from Sydney and Lithgow. Easy walk. 2-3 hours approx.

Leader: Deidre Morton 58-8137

June Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> – Six Foot Track – Part 2 – Old Ford Reserve – Cox's River and Return

Meet in street over Blackheath Railway Crossing at 9.30 am. A steady walk over a fair track, along parts of this historic track to the Cox River. Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: To be arranged later.

June Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> – North Faulconbridge

Along tributary of Linden River – blue gum forest. Meet at Primary School Grose Road Faulconbridge 10.00 am.

Leader: Jill Dark

June Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> – Arethusa Falls

Details to be announced later, but this walk will be a hard one of 13 kms approx and for experienced bush walkers.

Leader: Brian Wynands 39-4752

WALK – BIRDWOOD GULLY SPRINGWOOD – 16<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1986

This track has been in existence for many years but our group has not included it on the walk's agenda, to my knowledge. So the 15 walkers did not know what to expect and were delighted with the beauties revealed.

We met at Buttenshaw Park, on the Highway at Springwood, then drove to the faded red sign at the junction of Badnal road and Lucinda Avenue, where the track begins beside a house. It descends into a deep gully in Hunter Park, passing fascinating rocks, caves and a waterfall. There are some ancient turpentine and angophoras, and on this occasion the flowers were in masses of yellow and white, with patches of blue damiera and exciting glimpses of waratahs. The star of the show was undoubtedly the enormous "glory pea" flowers which must have been the biggest we have ever seen. In all there were about 20 varieties of flowers in riotous bloom, musically accompanied by satisfied bees.

The track comes to a creek junction and branches left and right. The signpost is twisted out of shape but the right hand path across the rocky creek bed leads to Boland Avenue. I have read that the other track goes on a long way and is worth exploring, but one has to return to the same spot, so maybe we can investigate that another time.

The track we were now travelling was drier and not so flower-decked. But it surprised us with a Christmas Bush 10 metres high and an ancient angophora which bore on its scarred trunk some fungi of great age. We had lunch near the end of the track in an eroded cave swirled with marvellous designs. We had decided to make the return walk so had not left any cars at the Boland Avenue end. We got back in an hour, without hurrying, but much faster than our trip out. Those who go walking with the Thursday group know just how long it can take when there is so much to admire and discuss, photograph, even inspect with a magnifying glass.

Grace Bayley

#### WALK – PINNACLES. NEWNES PLATEAU. SATURDAY 18<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER

Nine turned up for the walk on a cold, cloudy morning. First, a pleasant drive along the Glow Worm Tunnel Road to a point about two kilometres before the first tunnel and then down into the bush amongst the pinnacles. Unfortunately, due to the cold winter, the flowers are about six to eight weeks later than usual and the ones that were out were loathe to open (especially the *Boronias*). Lunch was taken on top of the Pinnacles and then more exploring among the rock formations. The threatening rain at last started to fall so we retreated to the cars before the walk was finished. On the way out we stopped at Mt Horne and looked at an Aboriginal site. Axe grinding grooves and rock shelter. Here, there were some good stands of Waratahs.

John Noble

#### WALK – WOLLANGAMBE RIVER. SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER

A lovely sunny day. After three days of continual rain four of us walked down to the Wollangambe River. The river was running fast so plans of li-loing had been abandoned. We walked up river to the junction of Bell's Creek, bush bashing at times. The Waratah's made a colourful picture against the sombre green of the bush. We had lunch under a rock shelter where coachwood and lilly-pilly were growing. We were very interested in the antics of the rufus fantails and even a water-dragon was seen on the track. After exploring around we eventually started back up the track through open patches of wild flowers, *Boronia floribunda*, *dillwynia*, and *stypandra* being in profusion.

Olive Noble

#### EXCURSION – HASSAN'S WALLS - 20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1986

Following the previous day's snow, it was an ideal day for walking. There was occasional drizzle and rain drops on the plants accentuated the odours of the highland flora.

Thirteen of us, including English visitors Jack and Sally Bennet made the trip, this time into country new to some of us. The Hassan's Walls massif, threatened by valley widening from three sides, is higher than our main Blue Mountains region and provides spectacular views.



As we ascended by car through Browns Gap, we passed coal seams and observed on the walls cliff collapse forming a landslide. From an old look-out near the top we straddled a 100 mm wide crack running at least 100 metres across a hillside – a future landslide probably related to local coal mining.

The main walk was along an old vehicle track branching a little south of west from a VHF antenna (Newsletter space does not permit comment on the leader having taken a wrong turn). The track followed a high ridge for some two kilometres through a dry *sclerophyll* forest. The sparse, low understory was rich in flowers. A *Boronia*, identified by Jill, as *B.microphylla*, was wide spread and hundreds of native orchids fringed the track; *Caledonias* and *Thelymitras*, Flying Duck and Donkey Orchids and varieties of the Leak orchid, *Prasophyllum*. Jill's knowledge contributed greatly to this part of the walk.

At the end of the ridge was a deep, transverse, quarry-like excavation which on first sight had aroused my curiosity; obviously neither sandstone quarry, as there is so much sandstone closer to Lithgow, nor a coalmine or prospecting tunnel as we were stratigraphically well above the coal measures. This was the history I had promised on pre-trip notes. Enquiries of Lithgow mining, historical and bushwalking people did not help but a long-term Blackheathen supplied the answer. It was the site excavated for an anti-aircraft gun platform to protect the Small Arms Factory during the 1939-1945 war.

We lunched, sheltered from the rain, in the large cave near Padley's Pedestal from which the view should have covered the granite valleys of Kanimbla, the course of the Cox's River and the Wild Dogs and Gangerangs as Permian outliers resting unconformably on Devonian rocks of the type I have described near Kanangra Walls.

It is pleasant to record that most of the happy dozen who followed me had done so before and knew what to expect. My thanks to them.

R.T. Compagnoni

### MOUNT TOMAH BOTANIC GARDEN INSPECTION

The Mount Tomah Garden will be one of the few places in the world where a large collection of cool climate plants from the Southern Hemisphere is grown. Plants from the cooler regions of the Northern Hemisphere will also be featured. Located on the Bell's Line of Road, 120 kilometres west of the centre of Sydney, the Garden is a Commonwealth and State Government bicentennial project and is being developed by the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. The 31 hectare site will be a true botanical garden as well as a place of beauty, where recreation can be combined with scientific and educational purposes.

On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, Reg and Dulcie Toseland represented the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society at the third annual inspection of these gardens. After a week of rain which undoubtedly slowed some of the work in preparation for the day's inspection – Saturday was a glorious day. Once the formalities of registering, receiving name labels – with coloured spots (which later divided us into tour groups for garden progress inspection) was completed, morning tea was served, followed by introductions to VIP's, members of Government and Royal Botanic Gardens Directors and staff.

Speeches were made by some of them, followed by the inspections of the grounds, and plant nurseries – with a very well informed guide – who was, of course, bombarded with questions. The days proceedings were finalised with a banquet lunch, and a chance to talk to some of the numerous Associations who were attending. The whole project appears to be very well planned and with the highest motives – vastly different to the one in progress at Leura.

Reg Toseland

BRUCE'S WALK  
PART 1  
ILLUSTRATION NOT INSERTED.

How pleasant it was for me to “discover” this walk following my return to the district after a long absence. I knew of its conception, gestation or birth, nor the furore as the legitimacy of this creation was debated.

Traversing the walk is a strange experience. Standing at the power poles at the Kent Street start the view ahead looks unpromising as great scars of bare earth and denuded bushland and ridge top houses intrude. As one proceeds these rapidly disappear from view and the quietness of the bush takes over.

The three gullies between Bullaburra and Wentworth Falls which the track crosses over are quite undisturbed. They dissect an area where no one had or has cause to go.

Yet apparently this was not always so, for patiently picked out steps, rock shelters with old halves or adzed logs serving as seats, pipe handrails and old steel ladders provide evidence of once heavy usage. It is an awkward route to reach. Of course the easiest way is to have a car at the Kent Street start and one at the end of Lawson View Road where the driver would take his companion back to the starting point. Or one can take the train to Bullaburra and walk through to Wentworth Falls though to us pampered moderns the street plod is a bit off putting.

Lloyd Jones

RECENTLY ACQUIRED BY THE LIBRARY

This is an illustration (not inserted) from the book “A Threatened Species Conservation Strategy for Australia”.

It is not a fun book, but a very serious attempt to work out an Endangered Species programme for the future. It has major contributions by Ian Fry, Martyn Robinson and John Benson and Forewords by Professor Harry Messel and Dr Fred Bell. It has separate chapters on the Threatened Vertebrates and Invertebrates and Australia's Threatened Plants, each with a detailed alphabetical list of the species under threat.



It outlines the present situation of increasing extinctions, and proposes plans for the protection and preservation of habitats in which the species live. Finally, it has a chapter on the form of legislature necessary to carry out the reforms needed to prevent the disappearance of threatened species of Australian Animals.

### GARDEN ROBBERS

What can I do with the Bower Birds?

The Bower Birds eat my beans.

They also eat my lettuces

And other kinds of greens,

And raspberries and gooseberries

And currents, black and red.

I sometimes feel like giving up

And growing flowers instead.

But in my garden is a bower

With ornaments of blue,

Where Bluey dances, hour on hour,

And brings each day a yellow flower

To charm the females he would woo.

And, in my garden was a nest

Last Spring, with eggs of mottled brown

And, later, nestling covered all

In long and misty grey-blue down.

And so I think I'll buy a net

To cover up my berries.

I'll beat the thieving Bower Birds yet.

Might even plant some cherries.

Graham Alcorn

### GORDON EXPLORER

The Gordon River is one of Tasmania's largest rivers and flows through some of the wildest country in the world's most mountainous island. In its lower reaches it is calm and peaceful, the last place you would expect to attract world-wide attention and confrontation. Today the water is so still and the reflections so perfect its hard to know if you're on your head or your heels.

The Gordon flows into Macquarie Harbour which is "twice as large as Sydney Harbour" with a narrow entrance from the sea known as Hells Gates. A convict settlement was established as early as 1822 and convict labour was used to build retaining walls to the entrance to ensure a deeper channel. Even so, Hells Gates is only 75 metres wide and must have been a real hazard for the old sailing ships.

There are still remains of the convict settlement on Sarah Island which was the scene of great harshness and cruelty which caused many convicts to attempt the hopeless task of trying to escape. This was used as background for the Marcus Clark's novel "For the Term of His Natural Life".

With the discovery of rich mineral deposits at Queenstown and Zeehan, Strahan became a busy port in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Today a three-story Council Chambers on the waterfront, now occupied by a souvenir shop, is a reminder of the town's former glory. Tourism and fishing are the main activities nowadays. A light seaplane is read on hand for those who wish to explore the river from the air. Large amounts of huon pine and other timbers used to be rafted down the river earlier but good stands of pine are harder to find and difficult to extract from the rain forests along the banks.

We did our exploring by water in the "Gordon Explorer" a large high-powered launch capable of carrying many passengers at speeds of 25 to 30 knots, on a four-hour cruise as far as Sir John's Falls landing, not far from the junction with the Franklin River. The river is deep with dense forest growing to the water's edge. A great variety of timber was pointed out to us, Huon Pine, King Billy Pine, Blackwood, Celery Top, Sassafras, Leatherwood and flowering Wattles, falling into the water from the banks eroded by the wash from tourist cruisers. Near Sir John's Falls were men in high powered runabouts fishing for English salmon. When we approached, one of the boat's crew threw overboard a couple of sacks of crushed ice which floated in the darkish water to be picked up by the fishermen, to preserve their salmon sometimes weighing as much as 25lbs. We were shown a slight track on the bank which lead to the site of the proposed Gordon-below-Franklin Dam, but very little mention was made and very little evidence was seen of the great hubbub and confrontation which took place there before the building of the dam was finally stopped. The river is calm and beautiful and hopefully will stay that way for many generations to come.

In the afternoon after the cruise we went out to the Ocean Beach six miles from Strahan. It is a beautiful beach, forty miles long with very good surf – unfortunately the beach was black and the surf a dirty grey green colour, not tempting at all. According to one local, it was polluted by drilling in an unsuccessful search for oil. The country along the coast was flat heathland, ablaze with wildflowers – pink heath (*epacris impressa*) predominating.

P.S. Since returning from Tasmania I have read "The Battle for the Franklin" by Roger Green. That changes the whole picture.

From what the tourists sees today, it is hard to imagine what it was like during the blockade in the summer of 1982-83 – 1440 Protesters arrested; "Greenie Acres" camp established; boats; police. Every day protesters chained themselves to bulldozers, cranes, crane booms and machinery and had to be cut free by oxywelders and removed by police. One old lady ties herself to a crane with strong string, much to the amusement of the oxywelder, who'd come to remove her. "You don't have to worry about the welder on me", she said, "Just a sharp knife will do",

Considering the emotions aroused it is amazing there was no bloodshed, it was the biggest conservation protest ever held in Australia.

Betty and Ewart Collings



## ANYONE FOR HUT DUTY?

Over the last couple of years many people have given up doing Hut duty. This means that a willing few are doing duty more frequently. We desperately need more people to help in this way. The Hut is a good source of revenue and we are fortunate to have it as most other conservation organisations have to resort to raffles and other means to raise funds. It means giving up about one day a month to succour the weary, the hungry, the tired, the frozen and the thirsty who stagger in from the bush, by serving cups of tea, cool drinks, sweets, maps and information, etc. You meet a lot of people and it can be fun. If you are able to help occasionally, it will mean that the Hut need not be closed on some day when it could be open and making money for the Society.

SO PLEASE CONTACT BEVERLY THOMPSON – 57.2076 – WE WILL BE GRATEFUL.

## **Society News**

Darwin's Walk – Wentworth Falls. The track from the highway to the top of the Falls is not yet complete. It goes as far as Fletcher Street from the highway. Apparently there is some difficulty with one land owner who will not allow access along the Jamison Creek. Hopefully negotiations will be successful and we will see the track complete in the near future. It is now well signposted at the highway and in Wilson Park. Some members feel strongly about track building through swamps. They would like to see "duck boarding" (ie. building an elevated pathway) or stepping stones through these sensitive areas. The track is an easy walk and has some very interesting sections along it.

Blue Mountains National Park Extensions. At last, part of the new extensions to the Blue Mountains/Burraborang Valley National Park has been gazetted. This is the Mt. Werong area which used to be predominantly reserved for forestry purposes (ie: pine plantations). The area is west of Kanangra Walls and is mostly "wilderness". The other part of the extensions, announced last year by the then Premier, Neville Wran, extends from Kings Tableland around to Narrow Neck and includes much of the Jamison Valley. This part is still gazetted but the National Parks & Wildlife Society is eager to start improving the facilities and walking tracks – they have the money, there is hope that NP&WS can take over the management of the area before gazettal.

Land Preservation Fund. The October Native Plant Weekend held by the Society was the best ever. Over \$1,100 of the plants were sold and more than \$600 profit was made. The profit goes to the Land Preservation Fund. Jill Dark's talk on native flowers was well attended and received. The land that the Society wishes to purchase in Taylor Avenue, Wentworth Falls, is one step closer. We hope that it will be completed after the New Year.

Guest Speakers. Over the last six months the Society has had many interesting guest speakers after General Meetings. Wyn Jones gave a fascinating look into the habits of wombats and to see how NP&WS manages the difficult problem of negotiation with some farmers. Peter Smith presented a talk on the effect of bush fires on native bird habitations. His study was carried out in the Bega area and showed that the major effect was because of changes in vegetation. Margaret Baker gave a most interesting talk on the geology of the Blue Mountains. This talk was packed full of information a little difficult to take it all in – but most interesting. All members were surprised at the complexity of what is known about the geology in our area.

We hope that Margret will be able to put this talk down in written form so that all may learn this little known facet of the Blue Mountains.

Wentworth Falls School of Arts 530A Committee. Bruce Forbes from the 530A Committee has asked the Society for its support in the need to revegetate the area between the School of Arts and the shopping centre. This area includes a marshy area on the Jamison Creek which is full of rubbish and weeds. The Society has given its support and would like to see this happen as soon as possible.

#### PREDATION OF SMALL BIRDS NESTS

Taking part in the R.A.O.U. Nest Record Scheme, you learn a lot about the breeding behaviour of birds. It is surprising sometimes how few of the skilfully constructed, cunningly camouflaged, carefully hidden nests of the small birds succeed in producing fledged young. In my experience, only about 50% succeed in raising fledged young, on the average, with considerable variation of course. This Spring, in the area I study in Medlow Bath, only 2 nests out of 12 have succeeded so far – a bit over 16%. Eggs were stolen from Yellow Robins (4), Golden Whistlers (2) Grey Fantail (1); young stolen from Spinebill and Mountain Thrush; nest deserted by Redbrowed Finch (2 cold eggs); nest deserted or predated (high up) Flame Robin – female is now shifting the nest. The two successful breeders nest on or near the ground – Brown Thornbill and White Browed Scrub Wren. Currently sitting on eggs are Rufous Whistler (2), Grey Thrush (1) Yellow Robin (1) and a Yellow Robin nest just built.

I suspect the main predators here are a pair of Grey Currawongs who patrol the area regularly. Strangely enough, in small part of this area where 7 nests succeeded last Spring out of 9 built, only 1 nest is built this year in the same fork of a giant tea tree – as last year, a Grey Thrush sits on three speckled eggs. There are many predators in addition to Currawongs; Kookaburras, Shrike Thrushes, Snakes, Lizards, Bush Rats as well as Foxes and Feral Cats. However, most of the small birds soon set about building a new nest, no doubt seeking a better hiding place and better camouflage. They often use the material from the old nest. They will never lay again in a nest that has been predated, but many species use a successful nest again the same season – a female Flame Robin raised three broods in the same nest last season, in Barry Barnes garden! Furthermore, her first mate was killed, but she soon got another one and raised two more broods. This Spring she has repaired the old nest and is sitting there again.

The small birds are very persistent breeders – they have to be for their species to survive.

Graham Alcorn

#### From the Visitor's Book

John Atherton -  
Selbourne, England

Yes, that is as in "The  
Natural History of Selbourne".  
My only day in the Blue Mts.,  
but one I shall remember.

G. Fairfax -  
Sydney

As a fourth generation Blue  
Mts, admirer and mother of  
fifth – Please fight to conserve.



K. Whiting -  
Victoria

Thanks for the displays.