JULY 1987 No. 68

# UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Black Cockatoos by G.J. Broinowski

# Newsletter

Registered by Australia Post-Publication No. NBHO 925

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: Pensioners and Juniors \$4.00 per year; Single Membership \$6.00 per year; Family Membership \$10.00 per year. Those joining after September pay half subscription to end of year.

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.

COMMITTEE FOR 1987

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

President	Dulcie Toseland	84.1682
Vice Presidents	Eric Blick	88.1051
	Mick Dark	58.7061
Secretary		84.1682
Treasurer	Elvine Thomas	84.2121
Membership Officer	Betty Collings	57.2131
Newsletter Editor	Ewart Collings	57.2131
Walks Convenors	Olive & John Noble	87.8342
Education Officer		57.3466
Librarian		88.1051
Hut Duty Organiser	Beverley Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer.	Deirdre Morton	58.8137
Hut Curator		

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.

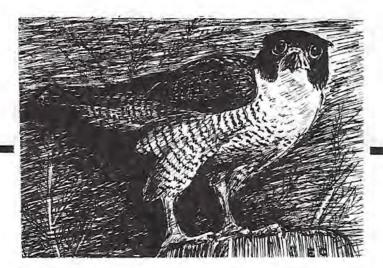
THE HUT: The Society maintains a small museum and information centre at the Conservation Hut. It is manned on weekends and holidays by voluntary helpers.

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 for the first Sunday, third Thursday and third Saturday 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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# Newsletter

No 68

July 1987

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#### COMING WALKS

July Sunday 5th Cox's Road - Lockyer's Road

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. Walk down Cox's Road and up Lockyer's road. Look at these historic roads and think of their beginnings. Magnificent views. Medium. 5-6 hours approximately. Leader: Jean Armstrong

#### July Thursday 16th Nature Trail

Meet at The Hut at 10.00 a.m. Walk along Nature Trail and understand a little more of this delightful area. Easy. 3-4 hours approx. Leader: Beverley Thompson 57-2076

#### July Saturday 18th Bruce's Walk - Bullaburra - Wentworth Falls

Meet at <u>LAWSON</u> station at 9.40 a.m. Walk along this historic walk into rain forest gullies and up ridges with fine views. Medium 5-6 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: Grace Bayley 59-1955

August Sunday 2nd - Valley of The Waters - Robert's Pass Inspiration Point - Golf Course - The Hut

Meet at The Hut at 9.30 a.m. Walk down the Valley of the Waters to Robert's Pass, up Inspiration Point to the Golf Course and back to The Hut. Medium. 5-6 hours Leaders: David and Elvine Thomas 84.2121 August Saturday 15th - Hazelbrook Area

Meet at Hazelbrook Commuter Car Park at 10.20 a.m. for trains. Walk to Victor and Terrace Falls and Bedford Pool Interesting area. Easy. 3 hours approx. Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

#### August Thursday 20th Prince Henry Cliff Walk

Meet at Leura Cascades Picnic Area (old swimming bath) at 10.00 a.m. Walk to Leura Cascades - Gordon Falls - Pool of Easy. 4-5 hours approx. Waterfalls, extensive views etc. Leaders: Reg and Dulcie Toseland 84-1682

#### September Sunday 6th Mt Hay Area

Meet at Leura Public School at 10.00 a.m. Walk in parts of this lovely area with extensive views and plenty of wild flowers. Easy - Medium. 5-6 hours approx. Leaders: John and Olive Noble. 87-8342

#### September Thursday 17th Dark's Common

Meet at Primary School, L.apstone (Explorer's Road) at 10.00 a.m. Historical route of funicular railway used in contruction of present Glenbrook Tunnel 1913. Easy 4 hours approx Leader: Mick Dark 58-7061

September Saturday 19th - Bungleboori River Area - Repeat

Meet at Mt Victoria Station for 9.30 a.m. train from Sydney. Medium. 4-5 hours approx. High ridges with extensive views. Pagoda country. Leader: John Noble 87-8342

#### October Sunday 4th - Mt Victoria Falls

Meet opposite Community Centre, Great Western Highway, Blackheath at 9.30 a.m. Walk to Cascades, Victoria Falls and Burra Korain Flat Medium. 5-6 hours approx. Leader: To be announced later

#### October Thursday 15th - Old Blair Athol Coal Mine

Meet at Mt. Victoria Station at 10.00 a.m. Bring torch and strong shoes as the way is slippery. Have a look at this historic coal mine. Easy. 2-3 hours approx. Leader; Beverley Thompson 57-2076

#### October Saturday 17th - Deep Pass

Meet at mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. 3/4 hour. drive each way. Shady gullies, high ridges and mysteries! Medium. 4-5 hours approx. Leader: John Noble 87-8342

#### November Sunday 1st - Blue Gum Forest

Meet at Blackheath Station (commuter car park, over level crossing and turn right) at 9.30 a.m. Walk down from Perry's Look-Down to Blue Gum Forest and return. Hard. We can take the return up slowly. 6-7 hours approx. Leaders: David and Elvine Thomas 84-2121 November Thursday 19th - Berghoffer's Pass - Mt York Meet at Mt Victoria station at 10.00 a.m. Walk along this historic road. Extensive views. Easy 3-4 hours approx. Leaders: ERic and June Blick 88-1051

#### November Saturday 21st Six Foot Track Final Part

Meet at mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. Walk from Department of Sport and Leisure Centre to Jenolan and back. Lovely walk. Medium. 4-5 hours approx. Leaders; John and Olive Noble 87-8342

#### December Sunday 6th End of Year Ramble

Meet at The Hut at 10.00 a.m. for a ramble through the Reserve. This will be followed by a barbeque (fire ban permitting) and social get-together. Bring your own food and refreshments. Tea and coffee will be provided.

#### December Thursday 17th Fairfax Heritage Track

Meet at Blackheath Post Office at 10.00 a.m. Visit Heritage Centre and walk along the Heritage Track. Easy. 2-3 hours approximately. Leader: To be announced later

#### WALK - PRINCE'S ROCK - ROCKET POINT - KING TABLE THURSDAY 16TH APRIL

On April 16, seventeen hardy souls ventured into the mist at the end of Falls Road. We headed first to Princes Rock, but were unable to see the falls but were fascinated by the way the mist cleared giving us brief glimpses of the Jamieson Valley where there were many blood woods in bloom it then would fall again quickly. Walking along Undercliff Pass we gained our first view of the falls. After crossing at the top of these we proceeded to Rocket Point where we were able to gaze down into the greeness of Prince Regents Glen. From here we walked up onto Kings' Tableland, but as the track is now fairly overgrown it wasn't long before we were all soaked as we pushed our way through the wet undergrowth. We ate lunch on a rock outcrop and just before we left, the mists parted to give us an excellent view of Vera Falls. We returned by the falls and Weeping Rock, then continued along Darwin's Walk to the Fletcher Street exit where the rest of the group left me to return to their cars, while I continued home along the track.

During the day we saw plenty of birdlife including thornbills, grey fantails, pardalotes, tree creepers, New Holland honeyeaters, rosellas and near the top of the falls a rock warbler enjoying a bath in a small puddle.

Beverley Thompson

#### WALK - LITTLE ZIG ZAG - CHARLES JOHNSON'S PROPERTY SUNDAY 3RD MAY

We had a perfect day for our descent into the Kanimbla Valley which smiled and beckoned us as we zig zagged along the ancient stock route, a route that Henry Lawson walked in the 1880s and was built long before that. Now alas it is showing obvious deterioration caused mainly by thoughtless people cutting across the carefully and sensitively constructed track. The red Mt Victoria clay stone descending here at a near 45 degree angle is not a surface that can withstand the tramplings of booted feet rushing headlong down, and in places the stone work supporting the track has fallen so that water then constantly scours and narrows the old route. However Rachel Makinson has made enquiries and it seems that Lands Department has renovation high on its list but is first attending to a devastating slip that tumbled off the Lawson's Long Alley.

From a rock lookout we could see the Johnson home snuggled reclusively among the trees and the whole valley below us breathed content. We explored Bushrangers Cave with its high triangular roof leading back into darkness. Ebena Isles showed me an interesting account of its discovery in Geoff Bates' book, <u>Gardners Inn, Blackheath</u>. He quotes from the Sydney Evening News of 1899 which tells of a farmer from the valley finding the cave while looking for cattle. It had apparently been used as a camp many years before and contained an "old flint-lock tower musket, sugar basin, cobblers last, some pieces of leather, an auger, gimblet, some old clothing, also a fragment of a Sydney Newspaper dated 1822."

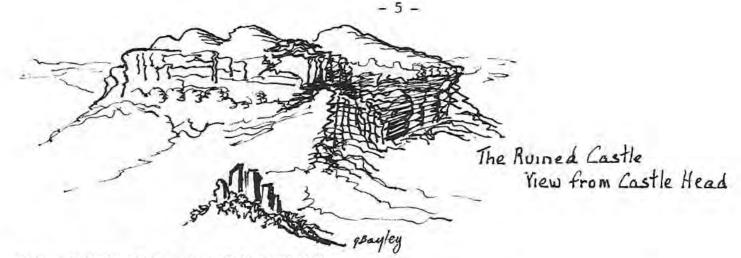
Not far beyond the cave we met Charles, Andrew and Hugh who led us along the more obscure route of the original Little Zig Zag. The track is bordered by a good variety of plants including several species of gee bung. The graceful persoonia linearis was still showing the odd yellow flower. There are large banksia spinulosa, their blossoms now attracting honey eaters and several blueberry ash to mention but a few. We cut off the track to the charming Johnson home and there in its beauty and warmth of sun and hospitality had our lunch, breatly improved by tea or coffee with biscuits and cheese.

After lunch, Charles and the boys conducted us on a circular tour of the property from where there is a grand view of the cliffs above, Little Zig Zag, Horne's point and Shipley Plateau. A hearty vote of thanks to Charles and his boys.

Some of us returned by Rienits Pass which follows along the foot of the steep descent and comes up below Piddington. It's well worth while the hour or so extra. We saw more of the forest giants and caught glimpses of red rock face above. We went along the creek and up its gully that supports a small rain forest environment and then climbed out at the bottom of the vertical cliffs and along to Wilson's Glen. Some rock climbers were crawling painfully up some of the more vertical verticals! We left the track by way of Ross Cave.

We saw streams of yellow faced and white naped honey eaters on their migratory holiday, but on the whole it is not a good time for birds. It's spring and summer that bring them to life along this track. But we did find a thrush's nest in an extraordinary situation, resting in the slender tips of a tea-tree! A good time was had by all.

Jean Armstrong



#### WALK - CASTLE HEAD - SATURDAY 16TH MAY

A nice sunny calm day greeted a group of twelve for the Castle Head walk. We left our cars on Cliff Drive and walked past the Golden Stairs about 2-3 km to a track that leads to Castle Head. We had our morning looking across the valley above the rain forest and the Ruined Castle track with views across the valley to Katoomba. We walked along to the end of Castle Head where we had a different view of the Ruined Castle as we looked down on it. Also splendid views of Mt. Solitary and Lake Burragorang could be had.

We returned back to Narrow Neck road on the way seeing some late flowering mountain devil and trigger plants. We continued along Narrow Neck road to the narrowest part of Narrow Neck where we had lunch. We enjoyed views of the Megalong on one side and on the other we could see as far as Sydney and confirmed sighting of the Airship above Sydney. After lunch half the party took the road to come back and the other half went via the Diamond Falls track scratching through the hakea. Dick Weston.

#### WALK - ENGINEER'S TRACK - SATURDAY 30TH MAY

A party of 19 attended the Old Engineer's track walk after the first scheduled walk was washed out by rain. Some of us had recently cleared parts of the track. We left the cars near the railway line opposite the site of the old Hartley Vale railway station. On this track evidence can be found of the original formation of the track which was built over 100 years ago with the intention of building the railway line in the valley to the Darling causeway. Well, back to the walk, about 16 of the party made it to our lunch spot where we met the Grose River coming in on our right. This was as far as we managed to clear the track to. After lunch we returned to our cars. On our way we found a nice hole under a rock which we believed to be a wombat's home. It is the intention of some of us to continue this walk onto Ikara Head and back to Victoria Falls road. Dick Weston.

#### WALK, SIX FOOT TRACK, PART 2 - OLD FORD RESERVE TO COX'S RIVER SUNDAY 7th JUNE 1987

The weather on Queen's Birthday weekend was not an invitation to outdoor activities. Sunday was a typical bleak example, continous rain and chilling fog. Nine members were present for the walk. Considering the weather I must say it was nine more than I expected.

Because of the continuous rain, alternative walks with some shelter for lunch were considered but acting on John Noble's assessment that the rain was high level we set out down into the Megalong Valley. John was right, it was a good day for walking, overcast with a comfortable temperature and just a few minutes of misty rain at lunch time.

The Cox's River is always a pleasant site for lunch. Due to the short June days we could only stay for an hour, but Chriss, Yvonne and Yvonne's son cut short their lunch to go down to the river crossing. On the way back we were treated to a sight not many people saw during Queen's Birthday weekend, some patches of blue sky and a few minutes of sunshine on the red cliffs under Medlow Bath. We reached the cars at 4 p.m. then back up into the fog and rain.

As always it was an enjoyable walk made more so with pleasant company. I would like to thank John and Olive Noble who gave up one of their weekdays to take myself and my wife over the walk as I was not familiar with the route.

\* \* \* \* \* Bob Jones

#### EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM BERYL COOLEY

On looking through some of my early Newsletters, I found on the front page of Newsletter No. 10, September 1972, an item for Earth Day written by Isobel Bowden. I like it so much I am enclosing a copy; would it be suitable for inclusion in the Newsletter (? July 1987) nearest to Earth Day (September).

Isobel suggested that as an Earth Day Project our Society should reopen the old Nature Trail, from West Street to the Hut. This we did, winning both regional and state prizes of the Daily Telegraph-Bank of N.S.W. Earth Day Competition. Isobel's map and description of the flora of various sections of the trail was included in the project, and are still available at the Hut.

#### 18th May, 1987.

#### THOUGHTS OF THE EARTH ON EARTH DAY

We on the Blue Mountains unconsciously, perhaps, drink in the beauty which enfolds us - - of sun, stars, airy clouds and distant horizons, of blue hills and ochre cliffs glowing in the sun. Yet to me personally, the superlative beauty is at my feet--the complexity of the mantle of life woven over these vast masses of sandstone. Magnified, a handful of soil comprises our coastal beaches. yet woven into this handful are vast masses of minute fibrous roots binding these particles together, living protoplasm, the beginning of life.

On the surfaces of the rocks minute plants--lichons mosses and liverworts-from a ceaseless uninterrupted movement of life, the very life of which we are a part, but building without man's interference the beautiful mantle of flowers, ferns, trees, which surround us in all their wealth of colour and detail.

There are few countries in the world today which can provide such areas for scientific study.But apart from any question of increases of knowledge or provision of man's material needs, here can be met man's deep need to renew his experience of nature, to which we all belong. Should the mysterious working of this fragile life pattern of earth cease to function our lives would cease with it. Man alone can reflect on these things, and experience reverence for life.'

Isobel Bowden

#### FALCONS FROM FLUFF TO FLIGHT

My first introduction to the peregrine falcons was through their call, and I knew they had eggs or young as their anger increased when I walked below a cliff face. Two angry peregrines were on the defensive. For them the best defense is attack. They circled overhead calling angrily, then wings back fell into a bullet-like stoop in my direction but always pulling out some metres off. I watched for some time, enthralled with the power, the speed, the grace of the birds, before leaving them to their domestic duties.

- 7 -

It was a month before I found the nest ledge. During that time I had heard them rocket past me, seen them with prey in their talons, been "verbally" abused and bodily attacked, had sat for hours on an opposite ledge hoping for some lead to their nest, went almost daily until finally rewarded. I was sheltering from rain with binoculars fixed on where I had last seen a peregrine when she dropped off her vantage point, soard up and landed on a ledge to be met by some indistinguishable movement. There was a dried out dracophyllum growing on the ledge among some rocks and it took some time to sort out the movements of what appeared to be four white speckled young being fed by a parent. My next visit three days later, confirmed the four young, which was exciting in itself as peregrines usually have two or three. Three now had darker plumage, one still in white mottled down. There could be near a week's difference in age as with raptors' incubating begins after the first egg is laid. Thus it is good parents who can supply enough food to guarantee the survival of the younger ones.

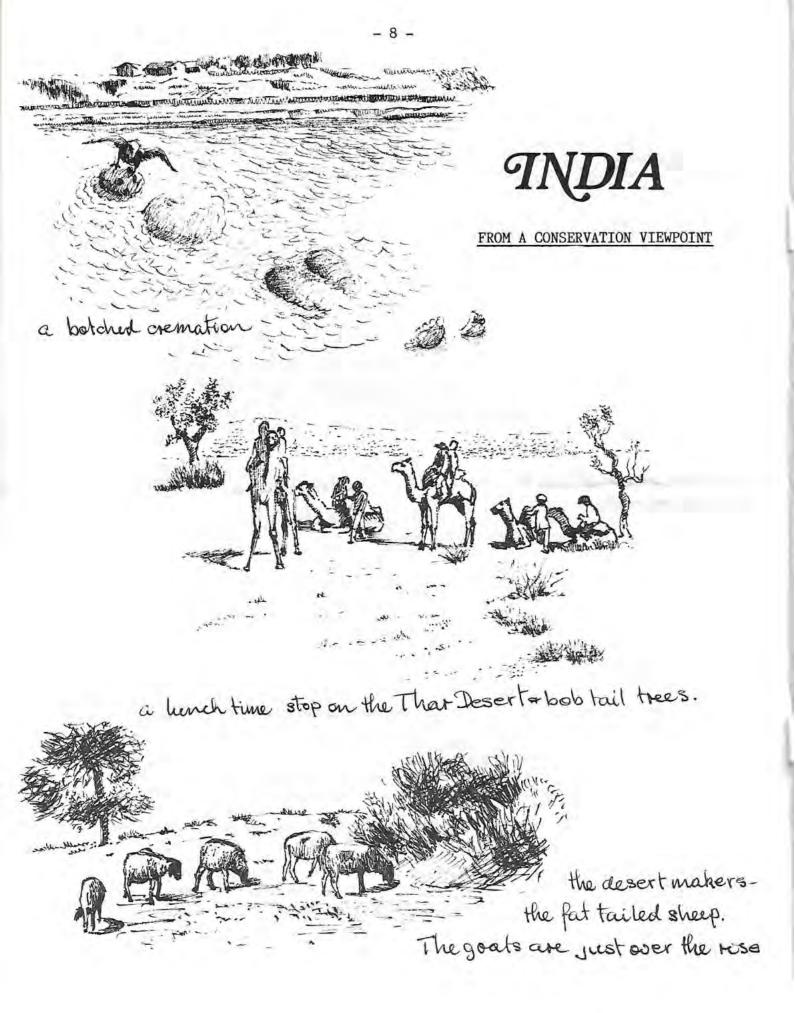
The next day I saw three young asleep while the little pale one pulled away at some remnant of food. Then heavily laden a parent flew along the cliffs with prey and was greeted with a burst of excitement and clamouring. It patiently, gently fed the youngsters for thirty minutes and was still doing so when I left. Before the week was out all young had lost their dappled appearance and enjoyed wandering about on the ledge and exercising their wings.

In ten days time they were all flying. Two remained on the nest ledge some days after the others, then one, while the others had short practice flights from cliff to cliff, growing bolder daily. At this time I spotted a parent plucking a bird some 200m from the young. One flew in to her but soon left. After nearly twenty minutes she flew with the prey to a ledge above the nest, the young swept in an took over, sharing the feast except for the youngest still on the next ledge.

It was a week after this that I was shown the best performance from three young peregrines learning to enjoy flight. They flew in unison, played follow the leader, tag, touched talons, caught moths, stooped and swooped and ran through all the peregrine tricks of aeronautics. It was breathtaking. And when a parent came in with food they all noisily swarmed in after it, one young mantling over the prey. Two went off with the parent while the fourth watched big brother eat. After about eight minutes the watching one joined in and then the other two. It took 45 minutes for the four to leave just a few bare bones attached to a grey wing flapping in the wind.

Since then I see the odd peregrine sitting majestically on a point of cliff, gliding above the valley or swooping by at its 300 Kms an hour, and feel happy that this endangered but I hope recovering species was able to rear four young free from poachers and insecticides.

Jean Armstrong



# INDIA - FROM A CONSERVATION VIEWPOINT PART 1

A cr@w casually per<sup>c</sup>hed on the eyeless face of a drifting corpse and fastidiously picking the remaining flesh, the ragged beggars and hosts of hawkers that descend on the visitor at tourist spots, the overly lean build of the vast majority, the run down air of public utilities are just a few of the recalls one has of India after a five weeks stay. The recalls listed all tell a covert tale of India's conservational climate.

Take the drifting corpse observed on the Ganges - in theory the ashes of the cremated are scattered on its sacred waters. Wood is now a scarce and expensive commodity so the average deceased Indian is given little more than a scorch, back and sides, and poked into the river. We saw groups assembling at cremation sites on the river bank with the chief mourners carrying pathetically small amounts of timber. Small wonder then that almost complete skeletons were a not uncommon sight on silt banks and mud islands as we journeyed down the Ganges.

The beggars and desperate hawkers lead one to assume that resources are insufficient to go round. India's population in 1986 had passed the 750 million mark and the annual increase is said to equal Australia's total population. India ranks second in the world in population numbers. Today India claims about 15% of the world's population on 2.4% of the world's total land area with about 2% of the world's income. Though India is only two-fifths the size of the U.S.A. she shelters more than three times the U.S. population.

To me India supplies proof positive that we are what we eat. India is a land of Twiggies. Cold statistics state that the average Indian consumes slightly over half a kilogram of grain a day. The average Australian consumes the equivalent of five times as much if we take into account the grain needed to provide the meat and dairy products he consumes. Nevertheless, I noticed railway porters and village maidens lift loads beyond our strength with ease. At one desert campsite I recall one of our female companions, a fitness addict, prevailed upon an Indian slip of a village girl to transfer her pot of water being carried on her head. The resultant transfer caused a cricked neck and a buckling of the knees and a hasty return of the pot to the original carrier who strode off towards her village a half a mile further on.

Small flocks of goats and sheep were seen in every village usually with shepherds who controlled their movement among grain crops. Their wool and hide were extensively used in village handcrafts. In the marginal areas of the Thar Desert of N.W. India where cropping is sparcer they seem to wander at will to forage and no herbage escapes their attention.

The government is apparently concerned at the encroachment of the desert towards the east and forbids the felling of trees. Each tree trunk bears a carved identification number. The water table is generally fairly high and quite substantial trees are seen. Most have a bob-tailed look about them as pruning of the branches is permitted for fuel. There are no signs of natural regeneration so the existing trees must predate the grazing.

A government subsidy operates in these areas to keep the price of home use kerosene within the purchasing power of the villagers and so remove the temptation to destroy trees. Nevertheless every village has a thriving cowpat fuel industry. The pats are moulded by hand to set a pattern and size and are sun dried before use. When properly stacked they burn quite well. That fields are denied the recycling of animal manure shows the desperate position of many villagers regarding cooking fuel.

Lloyd Jones

# OF CERTAIN ALLOCHTHONOUS ROCKS AT BLACKHEATH

"Allochthonous" is defined in The Dictionary of Geological Terms, Dolphin 1962, as

"a term applied to rocks of which the dominant constituents have not been formed in situ"

and more recently, in a paper published in Vol 87, April 1976, of the Geological Society of America Bulletin, as

"denotes any materials in which the dominant constituents have not formed in place but rather have been transported from their original depositional site into a significantly different depositional environment."

The National Parks and Wildlife Service has had erected at Blackheath, in the Blue Mountains National Park, a building which it has called The Blue Mountains Heritage Centre and, with funds provided by the Fairfax Family Trust, a graded pathway allowing infirm and elderly people to enjoy a pleasant piece of Bush.

The Service has planned and built this Centre largely of conrete with a visible aggregate of granite-type rocks. However, for a Service charged with preservation of the environment to have imposed a structure largely dominated by granite on a sandstone landscape appears to me to display disregard of their obligation to preserve that environment.

Notices in the vestibule of the Centre explain

- that the granite came from Council roadworks in Megalong Valley
- that "Early planning for The Heritage Centre specified that any rehabilitation works or landscaping would use species already existing in the area"
- that "ironstone" pieces excavated in trenching on the building site and used for paving "were carefully selected"



The Centre has a well staged exhibition of "natural and cultural history of the Blue Mountains National Park" including references to local geology, flora and fauna and bushwalking.

But not only rare granite-type rocks extravagantly exposed in the building and its immediate surroundings including a polished plate bearing their insignia and proclaiming "Blue Mountains National Park" but they have also been used in pedestals carrying notices and for culverts and to define edges on the Fairfax Heritage Track, near the Phillips Lookout. This, to me, is

insensitive to the sandstone environment. I don't know if willy-nilly distribution of granites excavated in other places is widespread but I have also noted placement of a granite-type boulder on the Plateau Path at Kanangra. This must be considered a thoughtless interference with the present state of the geological cycle in this region where it is generally accepted that Permian seas may have undercut Devonian cliffs. And now the National Parks and Wildlife Service has emplaced, close to the megabreccia, a boulder presumably of Carboniferous age. (Submitted also for publication in the Newsletter of the Australian Field Geology Club)

## Society News

Soup, Song and Sundries .... plus Denis Kevans. Last year we had a happy singalong cum jumble sale to raise funds for Conservation. Once again its your chance to recycle old friends for a good cause - that friendly chair or table, books or wheelbarrow, knick-knack or whatnot, perhaps a pot of jam or cake that you would like to see have a new home. Bring your donations and/or throwouts to the Hut on the afternoon of Friday 28th August (Meeting night), <u>for</u> or Saturday 29th August, when we will have a sale of all these goodies to raise money for the Land Preservation Fund.

To ease the pain of parting with your friends or money, we'll have soup, bread rolls, folk singers and poetry readings on Saturday, between 10 a.m.and 4 p.m. (soup at 12 noon). Start saving now and watch the local press for details.

<u>Guest Speakers</u>. Speakers for April and May took us from one end of Australia to the other. Paul Nagle spoke of Tropical Rainforests and the Islands of the Barrier Reef and Chris Cleary showed slides of the rugged country of South West Tasmania, both areas having one thing in common - the concern of Conservationists to preserve the natural environment against encroaching commercial interests. Neither speaker was militant - they showed us peaceful scenes of the beach at Daintree River in North Queensland, views of Mount Anne, Frenchmans Cap, Lots Wife and the drowned Lake Pedder in South West Tasmania. They were adventurers who loved these wild untouched places and wanted to keep them so.

June's speakers were chosen purely for political reasons. With elections a mere fortnight away we were interested to know how the candidates stood on conservation. They were given twenty minutes each to state their case - David March for Labor, Bruce Forbes for Democrats. A statement was read from Alasdair Webster, Liberal, who was unable to attend. Some very pertinent questions were asked by the audience, but no blood was spilt and the evening ended amicably.

<u>New Hut</u>. At last after many years defending the old Hut against the ravages of white ants, vandals and the weather, we are to have a new Hut for our meetings and our Society's activities. The new Hut is to be built on the same site as the old one which was originally for a cottage - there are stone walls and a peach tree still in existence from those days.

The new Hut is to be built by the Public Works Department for the National Parks and Wild Life Service. Plans are being drawn up and when completed will be on display at the Heritage Centre, the B.M.C.C. Council Chambers and the Hut. Suggestions have been submitted by members of the Management Committee and hopefully we will see a brighter, lighter and stronger structure that will withstand the onslaught of vandals who have been such a nuisance in the past.

<u>Hut Duty</u>. We need more members to help on Hut Duty. It means giving up one day a month for regular duty or an occasional day for emergency duty in school holidays, or when regular volunteers are unable to attend. P-1-e-a-s-e make one more sacrifice - contact <u>Beverley Thompson 57.2076</u> and discuss with her how you can help.

#### LAND PURCHASE - SUCCESS AT LAST!

In April after lengthy negotiations, the Society secured environmental protection of Lot 39 Taylor Avenue, Wentworth Falls (A on the plan) the only remaining block bearing thick undisturbed natural vegetation in an area that was once an extensive swamp, above the Water Nymph's Dell rainforest. Under the guidance of our solicitor, Hal Gingis, the Society bought the land with \$6000 from the Land Preservation Fund for Open Space under a new 'Envir-

onmental' zone which Blue Mountains City Council has undertaken to create for protection of publicly owned environmentally sensitive land.

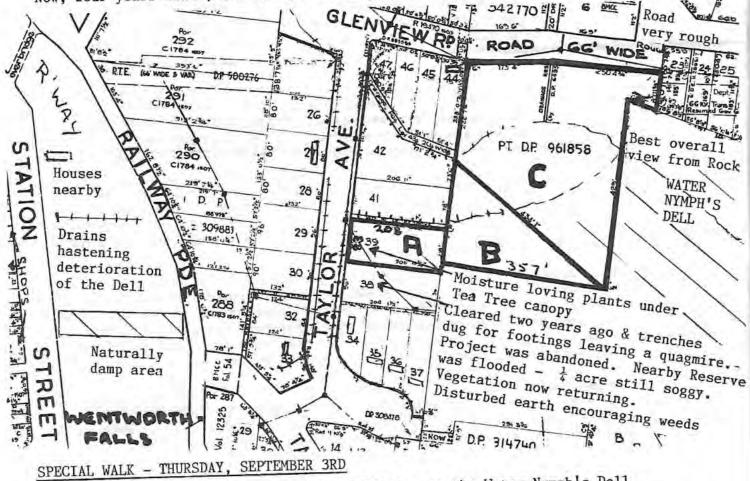
The Land Fund Committee would like to thank members for their many generous donations and for supporting fund raising functions and so making this purchase possible.

A glance at the plan will show what the Society has achieved in the Dell catchment - a small step towards protecting the rainforest.

Members will recall that in 1982 Len Symes generously offered to donate part (B) of his property if the Lands Department would add it and the adjoining crown land (C) to the Water Nymph's Dell reserve. The Society submitted the proposition to the Crown Lands' Dept. which was most co-operative. The Department, with Blue Mountains Council's consent, had the land gazetted as Reserve 97599 in November 1984.

In the meantime we wrote to the owners of undisturbed swamp, Lots 38 and 39, asking if they would consider selling.

Now, four years later, Lot 38 is a sad sight, but Lot 39 is saved (A).



Perhaps you would like to see this new addition to the Water Nymph's Dell Reserve. Meet at Wentworth Falls Station at 10 a.m. Inspect Lot 39 Taylor Avenue and finish with walk to Water Nymph's Dell. <u>Leader</u>: <u>Deirdre Morton 58.8137</u>.

#### 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 \$10.00)

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.

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, WENIWORTH 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......Address......

#### UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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

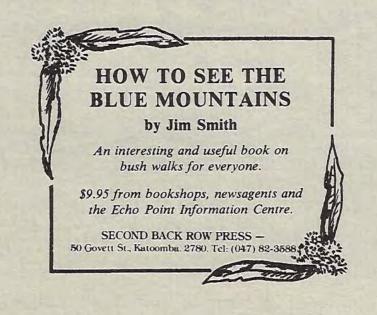
- (a) To disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation among members of the Society and the public generally, particularly in relation to the unique resources of the Blue Mountains.
- (b) To conduct meetings, excursions and research, and such other activities as may be determined by the Society in relation to Wildlife Concervation, 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.

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls. MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM\*

#### The Membership Secretary:

I enclose a cheque or postal note for	for mer	mbership or
renewal of my membership.	Single	\$6.00
Name	Family	\$10.00
Address	Concession	\$4.00
	*strike out wh	nich does not apply.

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

July 1987 No. 68

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.

<u>SUBSCRIPTIONS</u>: Pensioners & Juniors \$4.00 per year; Single Membership \$6.00 per year; Family Membership \$10.00 per year. Those joining after September pay half subscription to end of year.

<u>MEETINGS</u>: 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 1987

President	Reg Toseland	84.1682
Vice-Presidents	Eric Blick	88.1051
	Michael Dark	58.7061
Secretary	Reg Toseland	84.1682
Treasurer	Elvine Thomas	84.2121
Membership Officer	Betty Collings	57.2131
Newsletter Editor	Ewart Collings	57.2131
Walks Conveners	Olive and John Noble	87.8342
Education Officer	Dorothy Davis	57.3466
Librarian	June Blick	88.1051
Hut Duty Organiser	Beverly Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer	Deidre Morton	58.8137
Hut Curator	Barry Barnes	

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

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

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

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

<u>SALE OF NATIVE PLANTS</u>: 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.

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

<u>LAND PRESERVATION</u>: 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.

#### **Contents**

Coming Talks & Walks Reports on Walk Letter from Beryl Cooley Falcons India, Part 1 Allochthonous Rocks Society News Land Purchase

#### Coming Talks

<u>July</u> – Ian Brown National Parks & Wildlife Service

August – Yet to be decided

<u>September</u> – Yet to be decided.

#### Coming Walks

#### July Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Cox's Road – Lockyer's Road

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 am. Walk down Cox's Road and up Lockyer's road. Look at these historic roads and think of their beginnings. Magnificent views. Medium. 5-6 hours approximately. <u>Leader</u>: Jean Armstrong

#### <u>July Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Nature Trail</u>

Meet at The Hut at 10.00 am. Walk along Nature Trail and understand a little more of this delightful area. Easy. 3-4 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: Beverley Thompson 57-2076

#### July Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> Bruce's Walk – Bullaburra – Wentworth Falls

Meet at <u>LAWSON</u> station at 9.40 am. Walk along this historic walk into rain forest gullies and up ridges with fine views. Medium 5-6 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: Grace Bayley 59-1955

<u>August Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Valley of The Waters – Robert's Pass – Inspiration Point – Golf Course –</u> <u>The Hut.</u>

Meet at The Hut at 9.30 am. Walk down the Valley of the Waters to Robert's Pass, up Inspiration Point to the Golf Course and back to The Hut. Medium. 5-6 hours <u>Leaders</u>: David and Elvine Thomas 84-2121

#### <u>August Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> – Hazelbrook Area</u>

Meet at Hazelbrook Commuter Car Park at 10.20 am. for trains. Walk to Victor and Terrace Falls and Bedford Pool. Interesting area. Easy. 3-4 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: Bob Jones 58-8361

#### August Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> Prince Henry Cliff Walk

Meet at Leura Cascades Picnic Area (old swimming bath) at 10.00 am. Walk to Leura Easy Cascades – Gordon Falls – Pool of Siloam. Easy. 4-5 hours approx. Waterfalls, extensive views etc. Leaders: Reg and Dulcie Toseland 84-1682

#### September Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Mt Hay Area

Meet at Lerua Public School at 10.00 am. Walk in parts of this lovely area with extensive views and plenty of wild flowers. Easy – Medium. 5-6 hours approx. <u>Leaders</u>: John and Olive Noble. 87-8342

#### September Thursday 17th Dark's Common

Meet at Primary School, Lapstone (Explorer's Road) at 10.00. Historical route of funicular railway used in construction of present Glenbrook Tunnel 1913. Easy 4 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: Mick Dark 58-7061

#### <u>September Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> – Bungleboori River Area – Repeat</u>

Meet at Mt Victoria Station for 9.30 train from Sydney. Medium. 4-5 hours approx. High ridges with extensive views. Pagoda country. <u>Leader</u>: John Noble 87-8342

### October Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> – Mt Victoria Falls

Meet opposite Community Centre, Great Western Highway, Blackheath at 9.30 am. Walk to Cascades, Victoria Falls and Burra Korain Flat. Medium. 5-6 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: To be announced later

#### October Thursday 15th – Old Blair Athol Coal Mine

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 10.00 am. Bring torch and strong shoes as the way is slippery. Have a look at this historic coal mine. Easy. 2-3 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: Beverly Thompson 57-2076

#### October Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> – Deep Pass

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hour, drive each way. Shady gullies, high ridges and mysteries! Medium. 4-5 hours approx. <u>Leader</u>: John Noble 87-8342

#### November Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> – Blue Gum Forest

Meet at Blackheath Station (commuter car park, over level crossing and turn right) at 9.30 am. Walk down from Perry's Look-Down to Blue Gum Forest and return. Hard. We can take the return up slowly. 6-7 hours approx.

Leaders: David and Elvine Thomas 84-2121

#### November Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> – Berghoffer's Pass – Mt York

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 10.00 am. Walk along this historic road. Extensive views. Easy 3-4 hours approx.

Leaders: Eric and June Blick 88-1051

#### November Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> – Six Foot Track – Final Part

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. Walk from Department of Sport and Leisure Centre to Jenolan and back. Lovely walk. Medium. 4-5 hours approx. <u>Leaders</u>: John and Olive Noble 87-8342

#### December Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> – End of Year Ramble

Meet at The Hut at 10.00 am. for a ramble through the Reserve. This will be followed by a barbeque (fire ban permitting) and social get-together. Bring your own food and refreshments. Tea and coffee will be provided.

#### <u>December Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> – Fairfax Heritage Track</u>

Meet at Blackheath Post Office at 10.00 am. Visit Heritage Centre and walk along the Heritage Track. Easy. 2-3 hours Approx. Leader: To be announced later.

# Walk – Prince's Rock – Rocket point – King Table – Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April

On April 16, seventeen hardy souls ventured into the mist at the end of Falls Road. We headed first to Prince's Rock, but were unable to see the falls but were fascinated by the way the mist cleared giving us brief glimpses of the Jamison Valley where there were many blood woods in bloom it then would fall again quickly. Walking along Undercliff Pass we gained our first view of the falls. After crossing at the top of these we proceeded to Rocket Point where we were able to gaze down into the greenness of Prince Regents Glen. From here we walked up onto King's Tableland, but as the track is now fairly overgrown it wasn't long before we were all soaked as we pushed our way through the wet undergrowth. We ate lunch on a rock outcrop and just before we left, the mists parted to give us an excellent view of Vera Falls. We returned by the falls and Weeping Rock, then continued along Darwin's Walk to the Fletcher Street exit where the rest of the group left me to return to their cars, while I continued home along the track.

During the day we saw plenty of birdlife including thornbills, grey fantails, pardalotes, tree creepers, New Holland honeyeaters, rosellas and near the top of the falls a rock warbler enjoying a bath in a small puddle.

Beverly Thompson.

#### Walk – Little Zig Zag – Charles Johnson's Property Sunday 3rd May.

We had a perfect day for our descent into the Kanimbla Valley which smiled and beckoned us as we zig zagged along the ancient stock route, a route that Henry Lawson walked in the 1880's and was built long before that. Now alas it is showing obvious deterioration caused mainly by thoughtless people cutting across the carefully and sensitively constructed track. The red Mt Victoria clay stone descending here at a near 45 degree angle is not a surface that can withstand the tramplings of booted feet rushing headlong down, and in places the stone work supporting the track has fallen so that the water then constantly scours and narrows the old route. However Rachel Makinson has made enquiries and it seems that Lands Department has renovation high on its list but is first attending to a devastating slip that tumbled off the Lawson's Long Alley.

From a rock lookout we could see the Johnson home snuggled reclusively among the trees and the whole valley below us breathed content. We explored Bushrangers Cave with its high triangular roof leading back into darkness. Ebena Isles showed me an interesting account of its discovery in Geoff Bates book, <u>Gardners Inn, Blackheath</u>. He quotes from the Sydney Evening News of 1899 which tells of a farmer from the valley finding the cave while looking for cattle. It had apparently been used as a camp many years before and contained an "old flint-lock tower musket, sugar basin, cobblers last, some pieces of leather, an auger, gimblet, some old clothing, also a fragment of a Sydney Newspaper dated 1822." This described four escaped prisoners and offered a reward.

Not far beyond the cave we met Charles, Andrew and Hugh who led us along the more obscure route of the original Little Zig Zag. The track is bordered by a good variety of plants including several species of gee bung. The graceful *Persoonia linearis* was still showing the odd yellow flower. There are large *Banksia spinulosa*, their blossoms now attracting honey eaters and several blueberry ash to mention but a few. We cut off the track to the charming Johnson home and there is its beauty and warmth of sun and hospitality had our lunch, greatly improved by tea or coffee with biscuits and cheese.

After lunch, Charles and the boys conducted us a circular tour of the property from where there is a grand view of the cliffs above, Little Zig Zag, Horne's point and Shipley Plateau. A hearty vote of thanks to Charles and his boys.

Some of us returned by Rienits Pass which follows along the foot of the steep descent and comes up below Piddington. It's well worth while the hour or so extra. We saw more of the forest giants and caught glimpses of red rock face above. We went along the creek and up its gully that supports a small rain forest environment and then climbed out at the bottom of the vertical cliffs and along to Wilson's Glen. Some rock climbers were crawling painfully up some of the more vertical verticals! We left the track by way of Ross Cave. We saw streams of yellow faced and white naped honey eaters on their migratory holiday, but on the whole it is not a good time for birds. It's spring and summer that bring them to life along this track. But we did find a thrush's nest in an extraordinary situation, resting in the slender tips of a tea-tree! A good time was had by all.

Jean Armstrong

#### <u>Walk – Castle Head – Saturday 16 May</u>

A nice sunny calm day greeted a group of twelve for the Castle Head walk. We left our cars on Cliff Drive and walked past the Golden Stairs about 2-3 km to a track that leads to Castle Head. We had our morning looking across the valley above the rain forest and the Ruined Castle track with views across the valley to Katoomba. We walked along to the end of Castle Head where we had a different view of the Ruined Castle as we looked down on it. Also splendid views of Mt. Solitary and Lake Burragorang could be had.

We returned back to Narrow Neck road on the way seeing some late flowering mountain devil and trigger plants. We continued along Narrow Neck road to the narrowest part of Narrow Neck where we had lunch. We enjoyed views of the Megalong on one side and on the other we could see as far as Sydney and confirmed sighting of the Airship above Sydney. After lunch half the party took the road to come back and the other half went via the Diamond Falls track scratching through the hakea.

Dick Weston.

#### <u>Walk – Engineer's Track – Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May</u>

A party of 19 attended the Old Engineer's track walk after the first scheduled walk was washed out by rain. Some of us had recently cleared parts of the track. We left the cars near the railway line opposite the site of the old Hartley Vale railway station. On this track evidence can be found of the original formation of the track which was built over 100 years ago with the intention of building the railway line in the valley to the Darling causeway. Well, back to the walk, about 16 of the party made it to our lunch spot where we met the Grose River coming in on our right. This was as far as we managed to clear the track to. After lunch we returned to our cars. On our way we found a nice hole under a rock which we believed to be a wombat's home. It is the intention of some of us to continue this walk onto Ikara Head and walk to Victoria Falls road.

Dick Weston.

#### Walk, Six Foot Track, Part 2 – Old Ford Reserve To Cox's River – Sunday 7th June 1987

The weather on Queen's Birthday weekend was not an invitation to outdoor activities. Sunday was a typical bleak example, continuous rain and chilling fog. Nine members were present for the walk. Considering the weather I must say it was nine more than I expected.

Because of the continuous rain, alternative walks with some shelter for lunch were considered but acting on John Noble's assessment that the rain was high level we set out down into the Megalong Valley. John was right, it was a good day for walking, overcast with a comfortable temperature and just a few minutes of misty rain at lunch time.

The Cox's River is always a pleasant site for lunch. Due to the short June days we could only stay for an hour, but Chriss, Yvonne and Yvonne's son cut short their lunch to go down to the river crossing. On the way back we were treated to a sight not many people saw during Queen's Birthday weekend, some patches of blue sky and a few minutes of sunshine on the red cliffs under Medlow Bath. We reached the cars at 4 pm. Then back up into the fog and rain.

As always it was an enjoyable walk made more so with pleasant company. I would like to thank John and Olive Noble who gave up one of their weekends to take myself and my wife over the walk as I was not familiar with the route.

**Bob Jones** 

#### Extract From Letter From Beryl Cooley

On looking through some of my early Newsletters, I found on the front page of Newsletter NO. 10, September 1972, an item for Earth Day written by Isobel Bowden. I like it so much I am enclosing a copy; would it be suitable for inclusion in the Newsletter (? July 1987) nearest to Earth Day (September).

Isobel suggested that as an Earth Day Project our Society should reopen the old Nature Trail, from West Street to the Hut. This we did, winning both regional and state prizes of the Daily Telegraph-Bank of N.S.W. Earth Day Competition. Isobel's map and description of the flora of various sections of the trail was included in the project, and are still available at the Hut.

18<sup>th</sup> May, 1987

#### Thoughts of The Earth On Earth Day

We on the Blue Mountains unconsciously, perhaps, drink in the beauty which enfolds as – of sun, stars, airy clouds and distant horizons, of blue hills and ochre cliffs glowing in the sun. Yet to me personally, the superlative beauty is at my feet – the complexity of the mantle of life woven over vast masses of sandstone. Magnified, a handful of soil becomes no more than a pile of gleaming fragments of sand, such sand as comprises our coastal beaches. Yet woven into this handful are vast masses of minute fibrous roots binding these particles together, living protoplasm, the beginning of life.

On the surface of the rocks minute plants – lichens mosses and liverworts – form a ceaseless uninterrupted movement of life, the very life of which we are a part, but building without man's interference the beautiful mantle of flowers, ferns, trees, which surround us in all their wealth of colour and detail.

There are few countries in the world which can provide such area for scientific study. But apart from any question of increases of knowledge or provision of man's material needs, here can be met man's deep need to renew his experience of nature, to which we all belong. Should the mysterious working of this fragile life pattern of earth cease to function our lives would cease with it. Men alone can reflect on these things, and experience reverence for life.

Isobel Bowden

#### Falcons from Fluff to Flight

My first introduction to the peregrine falcons was through their call, and I knew they had eggs or young as their anger increased when I walked below a cliff face. Two angry peregrines were on the defensive. For them the best defence is attack. They circled overhead calling angrily, then wings back fell into a bullet-like stoop in my direction but always pulling out some metres off. I watched for some time, enthralled with the power, the speed, the grace of the birds, before leaving them to their domestic duties.

It was a month before I found the nest ledge. During that time I had heard them rocket past me, seen them with prey in their talons, been "verbally" abused and bodily attacked, had sat for hours on an opposite ledge hoping for some lead to their nest, went almost daily until finally rewarded. I was sheltering from rain with binoculars fixed on where I had last seen a peregrine when she dropped off her vantage point, soared up and landed on a ledge to be met by some indistinguishable movement. There was a dried out dracophyllum growing on the ledge among some rocks and it took some time to sort out the movements of what appeared to be four white speckled young being fed by a parent. My next visit three days later, confirmed the four young, which was exciting in itself as peregrines usually have two or three. Three now had darker plumage, one still in white mottled down. There could be near a weeks difference in age as with raptors incubating begins after the first egg is laid. Thus it is good parents who can supply enough food to guarantee the survival of the younger ones.

The next day I saw three young asleep while the little pale one pulled away at some remnant food. Then heavily laden a parent flew along the cliffs with prey and was greeted with a burst of excitement and clamouring. It patiently, gently fed the youngsters for thirty minutes and was still doing so when I left. Before the week was out all young had lost their dappled appearance and enjoyed wandering about on the ledge and exercising their wings.

In ten days time they were all flying. Two remained on the nest ledge some days after the others, then one, while the others had short practice flights from cliff to cliff, growing bolder daily. At this time I spotted a parent plucking a bird some 200m from the young. One flew in to her but soon left. After nearly twenty minutes she flew with the prey to a ledge above the nest, the young swept in and took over, sharing the feast except for the youngest still on the next ledge.

It was a week after this that I was shown the best performance from three young peregrines learning to enjoy flight. They flew in unison, played follow the leader, tag, touched talons, caught moths, stooped and swooped and ran through all the peregrine tricks of aeronautics. It was breathtaking. And when a parent came in with food they all noisily swarmed in after it, one young mantling over the prey. Two went off with the parent while the fourth watched big brother eat. After about eight minutes the watching one joined in and then the other two. It took 45 minutes for the four to leave just a few bare bones attached to a grey wing flapping in the wind.

Since then I see the odd peregrine sitting majestically on a point of cliff, gliding above the valley or swooping by at its 300 kilometres an hour, and feel happy that this endangered but I hope recovering species was able to rear four young free from poachers and insecticides.

Jean Armstrong

<u>INDIA</u>

#### From a Conservation Viewpoint

Full page illustrations not reproduced.

A crew casually perched on the eyeless face of a drifting corpse and fastidiously picking the remaining flesh, the ragged beggars and hosts of hawkers that descend on the visitor at tourist spots, the overly lean build of the vast majority, the run down air of public utilities are just a few of the recalls one has of India after a five weeks stay. The recalls listed all tell a covert tale of India's conservational climate.

Take the drifting corpse observed on the Ganges – in theory the ashes of the cremated are scattered on its sacred waters. Wood is now a scarce and expensive commodity so the average deceased Indian is given little more than a scorch, back and sides, and poked into the river. We saw groups assembling at cremation sites on the river bank with the chief mourners carrying pathetically small amounts of timber. Small wonder then that almost complete skeletons were a not uncommon sight on silt banks and mud islands as we journeyed down the Ganges.

The beggars and desperate hawkers lead one to assume that resources are insufficient to go round. India's population in 1986 had passed the 750 million mark and the annual increase is said to equal Australia's total population. India ranks second in the world in population numbers. Today India claims about 15% of the world's population on 2.4% of the world's total land area with about 2% of the world's income. Though India is only two-fifths the size of the USA she shelters more than three times the US population.

To me India supplies proof positive that we are what we eat. India is a land of Twiggies. Cold statistics state that the average Indian consumes slightly over half a kilogram of grain a day. The average Australian consumes the equivalent of five times as much if we into account the grain needed to provide the meat and dairy products he consumes. Nevertheless, I noticed railway porters and village maidens lift loads beyond our strength with ease. At one desert campsite I recall one of our female companions, a fitness addict, prevailed upon an Indian slip of a village girl to transfer her pot of water being carried on her head. The resultant transfer caused a cricked neck and a buckling of the knees and a hasty return of the pot to the original carrier who strode off towards her village a half a mile further on.

Small flocks of goats and sheep were seen in every village usually with shepherds who controlled their movement among grain crops. Their wool and hide were extensively used in village handcrafts. In the marginal areas of the Thar Desert of north-west India were cropping is sparcer they seem to wander at will to forage and no herbage escapes their attention.

The government is apparently concerned at the encroachment of the desert towards the east and forbids the felling of trees. Each tree trunk bears a carved identification number. The water table is generally fairly high and quite substantial trees are seen. Most have a bob-tailed look about them as pruning of the branches is permitted for fuel. There are no signs of natural regeneration so the existing trees must predate the grazing.

A government subsidy operates in these areas to keep the price of home use kerosene within the purchasing power of the villagers and so remove the temptation to destroy trees. Nevertheless every village has a thriving cowpat fuel industry. The pats are mouldered by hand to set a pattern and size and are sun dried before use. When properly stacked they burn quite well. That fields are denied the recycling of animal manure shows the desperate position of many villagers regarding cooking fuel.

Lloyd Jones

#### Of Certain Allochthonous Rocks at Blackheath

R.T. Compagnoni

"Allochthonous" is defined in The Dictonary of Geological Terms, Dolphin 1962, as "a term to rocks of which the dominant constituents have not been formed in situ"

and more recently, in a paper published in Vol 87, April 1976, of the Geological Society of America Bulletin, as

"denotes any materials in which the dominant constituents have not formed in place but rather have been transported from their original depositional site into a significantly different depositional environment."

The National Parks and Wildlife Service has had erected at Blackheath, in the Blue Mountains National Park, a building which it has called The Blue Mountains Heritage Centre and, with funds provided by the Fairfax Family Trust, a graded pathway allowing infirm and elderly people to enjoy a pleasant piece of Bush.

The Service has planned and built this Centre largely of concrete with a visible aggregate of granite-type rocks. However, for a Service charged with preservation of the environment to have imposed a structure largely dominated by granite on a sandstone landscape appears to me to display disregard of their obligation to preserve that environment.

Notices in the vestibule of the Centre explain

that the granite came from Council roadworks in Megalong Valley

that "Early Planning for The Heritage Centre specifies that any rehabilitation works or landscaping would use species already existing in the area"

that "ironstone" pieces excavated in trenching on the building site and used for paving "were carefully selected"

The Centre has a well staged exhibition of "natural and cultural history of the Blue Mountains National Park" including references to local geology, flora and fauna and bushwalking.

But not only rare granite-type rocks extravagantly exposed in the building and its immediate surroundings including a polished plate bearing their insignia and proclaiming "Blue Mountains National Park" but they have also been used in pedestals carrying notices and for culverts and to define edges on the Fairfax Heritage Track, near the Phillips Lookout. This, to me, is insensitive to the sandstone environment.

I don't know if willy-nilly distribution of granites excavated in other places is widespread but I have also noted placement of a granite-type boulder on the Plateau Path at Kanangra. This must be considered a thoughtless interference with the present state of the geological cycle in this region where it is generally accepted that Permian seas may have undercut Devonian cliffs. And now the National Parks and Wildlife Service has emplaced, close to the megabreccia, a boulder presumably of Carboniferous age. (Submitted also for publication in the Newsletter of the Australian Geology Club)

# Society News

<u>Soup, Song and Sundries...plus Denis Kevans</u>. Last year we had a happy singalong cum jumble sale to raise funds for Conservation. Once again its your chance to recycle old friends for a good cause – that friendly chair or table, books or wheelbarrow, knick-knack or whatnot, perhaps a pot of jam or cake that you would like to see have a new home. Bring your donations and/or throwouts to the Hut on the afternoon of Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August (Meeting night), or Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August, when we will have a sale of all these goodies to raise money for the Land Preservation Fund.

To ease the pain of parting with your friends or money, we'll have soup, bread rolls, folk singers and poetry readings on Saturday, between 10 am and 4 pm (soup at 12 noon). Start saving now and watch the local press for details.

<u>Guest Speakers</u>. Speakers for April and May took us from one end of Australia to the other. Paul Nagle spoke of Tropical Rainforests and the Islands of the Barrier Reef and Chris Cleary showed slides of the rugged country of South West Tasmania, both areas having one thing in common – the concern of Conservationists to preserve the natural environment against encroaching commercial interests. Neither speaker was militant – they showed us peaceful scenes of the beach at Daintree River in North Queensland, views of Mount Anne, Frenchmans Cap, Lots Wife and the drowned Lake Pedder in South West Tasmania. They were adventurers who loved these wild untouched places and wanted to keep them so.

June's speakers were chosen purely for political reasons. With elections a mere fortnight away we were interested to know how the candidates stood on conservation. They were given twenty minutes each to state their case – David March for Labor, Bruce Forbes for Democrats. A statement was read from Alasdair Webster, Liberal, who was unable to attend. Some very pertinent questions were asked by the audience, but no blood was spilt and the evening ended amicably.

<u>New Hut</u>. At last after many years defending the old Hut against the ravages of white ants, vandals and the weather, we are able to have a new Hut for our meetings and our Society's activities. The new Hut is to be built on the same site as the old one which was originally for a cottage – there are stone walls and a peach tree still in existence from those days.

The new Hut is to be built by the Public Works Department for the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Plans are being drawn up and when completed will be on display at the Heritage Centre, the BMCC Council Chambers and the Hut. Suggestions have been submitted by members of the Management Committee and hopefully we will see a brighter, lighter and stronger structure that will withstand the onslaught of vandals who have been such a nuisance in the past.

<u>Hut Duty</u>. We need more members to help on Hut Duty. It means giving up one day a month for regular duty or an occasional day for emergency duty in school holidays, or when regular volunteers are unable to attend. P-I-e-a-s-e make one more sacrifice – contact <u>Beverly Thompson</u> <u>57.2076</u> and discuss with her how you can help.

#### LAND PURCHASE - SUCCESS AT LAST!

In April after lengthy negotiations, the Society secured environmental protection of Lot 39 Taylor Avenue Wentworth Falls (A on the plan) the only remaining block bearing thick undisturbed natural vegetation in an area that was once an extensive swamp, above the Water Nymph's Dell rainforest. Under the guidance of our solicitor, Hal Gingis, the Society bought the land with \$6000 from the Land Preservation Fund for Open Space under a new "Environmental" zone which Blue Mountains City Council has undertaken to create for protection of publicly owned environmentally sensitive land.

The Land Fund Committee would like to thank members for their many generous donations and for supporting fund raising functions and so making this purchase possible.

A glance at the plan will show what the Society has achieved in the Dell catchment – a small step towards protecting the rainforest.

Members will recall that in 1982 Len Symes generously offered to donate part (B) of his property of the Lands Department would add it and the adjoining crown land (C) to the Water Nymph's Dell reserve. The Society submitted the proposition to the Crown Lands Department which was most co-operative. The Department, with Blue Mountains Council's consent, had the land gazetted as Reserve 97599 in November 1984.

In the meantime we wrote to the owners of undisturbed swamp, Lots 38 and 39, asking if they would consider selling.

Now, four years later, Lot 38 is a sad sight, but Lot 39 is saved (A).

Illustrated Plan not replicated.

#### <u>SPECIAL WALK – THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3<sup>rd</sup>.</u>

Perhaps you would like to see this new addition to the Water Nymph's Dell Reserve. Meet at Wentworth Falls Station at 10 am. Inspect Lot 39 Taylor Avenue and finish with walk to Water Nymph's Dell. Leader: Deirdre Morton 58.8137.