

OCTOBER 1987
No. 69



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: 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.

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

COMMITTEE FOR 1987

President	..... Dulcie Toseland	84.1682
Vice Presidents	..... Eric Blick	88.1051
	..... Mick 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 Convenors	..... Olive & John Noble	87.8342
Education Officer	..... Dorothy Davis	57.3466
Librarian	..... June Blick	88.1051
Hut Duty Organiser	..... Beverley Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer	..... Deirdre Morton	58.8137
Hut Curator	..... Barry Barnes	

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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WALKS PROGRAMME 1987

COMING TALKS

<u>October</u>	-	Jim Smith
<u>Walking Track</u>	-	National Pass
<u>November</u>	-	Margaret Essen
<u>Kakadu</u>		
<u>Early New Year</u>	-	Ian Brown
<u>East Coast, Cape York</u>		

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 approximately

Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

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 approximately.

Leader: Beverley Thompson 57-2076

October Saturday 17th - Deep Pass

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. 45 minutes drive each way.

Shady gullies, high ridges and mysteries! Medium. 4-5 hours approximately.

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, very slowly! 6-7 hours approximately.

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 approximately.
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 approximately.
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

WALKS PROGRAMME

1988

January Sunday 3rd - Porter's Pass

Meet at Bundarra Street Blackheath, over level crossing, at 10.00 a.m. Walk through Porter's Pass, steep in places with slippery steps. Flat sections with extensive views over Kanimbla Valley 5-6 hours approx. Medium. Leader: To be announced later.

January Saturday 16th - Mystery Walk

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 a.m. 45 minute drive. Be prepared to paddle in cool waters. 5-6 hours approx. Medium.
Leader: John Noble 87-8342

January Thursday 21st - Sassafras Gully

Meet across Railway line at Faulconbridge 10.00 a.m. Cool area for walking in Summer. Rainforest and Turpentine. 4-5 hours approximately. Medium. Leader: Dierdre Morton - 58-8137

February Sunday 7th - Pierce's Pass

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. Drive along Bell's Line of Road to start of track. Walk down to Grose River, through rain-forest area and wet sclerophyll forest. Medium. 5-6 hours approx.
Leader: Bob Jones. 58-8361

February Thursday 18th

Details to be announced later.

February Saturday 20th - Evan's Crown

Meet at Bundarra Street, Blackheath, over level crossing, at 9.00 a.m. Interesting area with short rock scrambles. Extensive views. Medium. 5-6 hours approx. Leader: Ron Compagnoni 87-8899

March Sunday 6th - Ruined Castle (By popular request)

Meet at the head of the track to the Golden Stairs on Narrowneck at 10.00 a.m. Rainforest, eucalypts, shale mining and rock formations. Historic area. Medium. 5-6 hours approx.
Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

March Thursday 17th - Waterhouse Park

Meet at Hazelbrook School at 10.00 a.m. Meander down to the Lake, seeing rock formations on the way. Easy.
Leaders: Dulcie and Reg Toseland 84-1682

March Saturday 19th - Empire Pass

Meet Lawson Bowling Club Parking Area, i.e. turn left after crossing railway bridge at Lawson, at 10.00 a.m. Rain forest area, canyons, waterfalls. 7-9 ks. round walk. 5 hours approx. Medium
Leader: Grace Bayley 59-1877

WALK - COX'S ROAD - LOCKYER'S LINE
SUNDAY 5TH JULY

Seventeen days after setting out to cross the mountains, Blaxland and his companions looked down from Mt. York and saw "Meadowland clear of trees and covered with grass 2 or 3 ft. high, sufficient to support the stock of the colony for the next 30 years." Today we see farmland and orchard with a highway snaking through, but perhaps more trees. Could it be that aborigines burnt so regularly that few trees grew?

We left some cars at the car park off Mt. York Road and drove on to Mt. York where we descended the first road to the west. The rock formation at the top of the track gives a spectacular beginning and one can't help thinking of those early travellers and their difficulties. Attempts to cross the mountain barrier had been made since 1793, but it was a severe drought in 1812 that made the crossing imperative if the colony were to survive. After the original crossing, Surveyor Evans followed and went on to the site of Bathurst, suggesting the first route for the new road. Cox, with 30 carefully chosen convicts and 8 guards, began the road in 1814 and reached Mt. York in November. It must have been a cruel winter for those convict road makers, with the hardest part still to come, the descent from Mt. York.

The road could only take a cart with a light load and logs were tied to the back for a brake. Staples were fastened to rocks and pullies were used to assist the ascent. Governor Macquarie used the road in April, 1815, spending his first night at a stop he called Springwood.

There are glimpses of the valley on the way down. Tall, twisty monkey gums, *E. cypellocarp*, dominate the forest and the main acacia is *falciformis*, a tall tree with large curved leaves that can also be seen along Victoria Pass and below.

By 1827 Cox's descent was falling apart and one attributed to William Lawson, now known as Lawson's Long Alley, was used until 1832. Lockyer's Line of Road begins on the right of the car park on the Hartley Vale Road. It is easy to see at first as it is fairly wide and stone work is evident. A landslide stopped work on the road and also Mitchell began the road down Victoria Pass.

We lunched perched on rocks overlooking the valley of Clwydd and beyond. Here Ron told us a "story", as he called it, and much of it was, except that this would be the last walk I'd be leading and I knew I'd miss the good companionship of such an enjoyable group of people.

Lockyer's Line along the ridge has views on either side and often presents us with massive rocks. The birds were shy of 22 homo sapiens; only golden whistlers entertained us briefly and we occasionally heard a lyre bird. This is usually a good place to hear our famous mimic.

At the end of Lockyer's, some walked back to Mt. York inspecting the wells and enjoying the distant view. The rest of us took the Nature Trail back to the car park. A most enjoyable day.

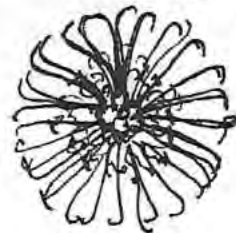
WALK - BRUCE'S WALK - JULY 18TH, 1987

Jean Armstrong

The weather was perfect. There were nine adult walkers and three children as starters from the Bullaburra end of the track. We had organised our transport so that there would be a car to pick up the other drivers an estimated five hours later at the Lawson View Road end of the track at Wentworth Falls.



This walk has been described in this magazine so I won't say much that would be repetitious. But I do disagree with the previous article which stated that two hours was sufficient for the track and three hours for very slow walkers. Not even three hours would allow time for reasonably experienced walkers to enjoy the sights and sit on a log for lunch.



We took full advantage of the rest spots, having morning tea in the rest cave in Claire Glen, a lovely mossy place, and three hours later, lunch in Burgess Glen. If I were to do the walk again I would suggest having lunch in Podger's Glen as there is more room there at the creek and it is nearer to the half-way mark. Burgess Glen cave could be for another rest break later.

At the top of Booth's Ridge, after climbing up the first zig-zag, one of the children was obviously too tired and his father had to carry him, so the father took the opportunity to return to his car by taking the convenient road back, and later reported that it only took twenty minutes easy walking. So this is a handy way of shortening the walk if desired, and is the only place where it can be done.

Special pleasures of this walk were the sunshine wattle blossoms, the interesting rocks, the tiny stalactites in one of the caves, and the slices of banksia flowers like rising sun emblems scattered on the ground by cockatoos. We also went off the beaten track in Burgess Glen to scramble knee-deep in leaves and fallen bark to see the tiny water-fall at the end of a narrow gulch crowded with ancient trees. In here

it was almost too dim to see, but Olive pointed out an ironstone stalactite beside the water trickle.

We reached the cars at 3.15 p.m., close to our estimated time.

Grace Bayley

WALK - ROBERTS PASS - AUGUST 2ND 1987

Weather was very doubtful before the start. Numbers were also doubtful as there were some late comers. Greta Vanry very kindly led off at 9.30 sharp, down and over Lilian's Bridge towards the golf course. It was very gratifying to find that the "KEEP OUT" sign nailed to a tree by some misguided person had 'disappeared'. While crossing the greens people unfamiliar with this walk were warned not to look over their right shoulder. Many did but fortunately were not turned to a pillar of salt! There were no favourable comments.

By now the weather had improved and on counting heads our number was found to be 27. After the golf course we came to Inspiration Point or is it now Moya Point? Perhaps this point will be cleared up soon. Down the ramp ladder, which some treated with apprehension and two of the party turned back, were down to 25. Weather improved by the minute with sunshine along the base of the cliff which in places was damp underfoot becoming wet in places and then quite wet. Among the party were a number of Zoological persons, mostly primates, although when we stopped for lunch food was produced from various marsupiums. The break was taken in a pleasant rocky glade at the base of Cathedral Point and at the head count we had become 29!. At this stage mathematics were thrown out of the window.

After lunch came the agreeable but hard climb up the Valley of the Waters, some reaching the Hut at 2 p.m., the last about 2.45 p.m. This is a very pleasant walk and the company was enjoyable. However in future we should class this walk as Medium to Hard for experienced walkers and Hard to Difficult for the inexperienced. Despite the previous mathematical difficulties, all 29 were brought out satisfactorily. Elaine and Ron Compagnoni were about the last to arrive after helping a newcomer and long musical discussions.

David & Elvine Thomas

WALK - HAZELBROOK AREA - SATURDAY 15TH AUGUST 1987

The walk was scheduled to leave at 10.20 a.m. to meet anybody from the Sydney train. Three enquiries were received from Sydney and one from Liverpool. Also two Hazelbrook people wanted to make contact with the Society. These five people were present on the walk and had seen the walk advertised in the "Gazette".

Eighteen people set out on the walk and after much counting on my part eighteen returned. The area visited was South Hazelbrook which had been a very popular walking area in the days when the mountains were famous for its Guest Houses and walks. I was interested to see that the National Parks had sign posted the tracks recently.



Terrace Falls

The walk went into the valley to the Lake on Bedford Creek. We then went up Bedford Creek to Willawong Pool. From there we went up a side creek to Salote Pool, Terrace Falls and Victor Falls. After the recent rains, the falls, cascades and creeks were at their best. In the valley the ferns and mosses made a delightful contrast between the trees up on the ridges.

As the walk was listed as a three hour walk, I would like to apologise to the party for the time it did take. I have walked this area many times but walking in the bush on my own is not an activity I time myself on as I like to stop, look and make side excursions, so I just subtracted what I thought was a reasonable time for loitering and came up with three hours. As the walkers were not a slow party, it appears that the members enjoy poking around as much as I do, so we came up with a six hours walk. Thanks for your company.

Bob Jones

WALKS REPORT. SUNDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER. MT HAY AREA

Despite a rainy start to the day 27 members turned up, the rain cleared as we left Leura on the road to Mt Hay. The wild flowers along the road were prolific, especially the Boronia. We walked along the track from the car park, then went to Butterbox where we had lunch and admired the views. The light and shade from the clouds moving across the area, gave us ever changing views of Mt Banks, Mt Charles, Mt Tomah and the Camel's Hump. Some members walked to the top of Mt Hay to see the basalt cappings, while others sat and admired the scenery. On the way back to Leura, we stopped to see the scar on the hillside. It appeared to be an old quarry with some trees being cleared around it, why ? we wondered! A delightful walk with pleasant company.

O. Noble

JOURNEY TO KAKADU.

If I don't write down something of Kakadu I fear it will all disappear in a haze of events and change, and as you asked specifically to be told about it, to you I will try to remember. Firstly, my dear friend, to say how I was filled with gratitude, we both felt warmed by the marvellous "send off" you gave us - so full of thought, so perfectly executed. That has not faded into mistiness - it remains clear as a beacon. A little episode that will clearly remain - from champagne in exquisite "glasses" to rock warblers and happy gay wildflowers, boronia scented.

The last birds I saw in Australia were fig birds in a marvellous rain tree. The first bird I saw in U.K., a magpie. I think the latter have increased as I have seen eight and I don't remember them as common birds. I recorded a new bird today, the spotted flycatcher. I have a pocket guide but I intended getting a new one. My new Slater is coming unstuck - very poor binding for a book that is used as reference constantly.

Our first night was Fogg Dam. Got there well before sunset. What a place it is. An expanse of shallow water, dotted with patches of reeds and birds by

the millions. Noted about fifty different species including six new ones. I was up at 5.30 and watched the dark shapes of fruit bats against the lighter sky. The night had been full of noises, good noises of creatures including the bats. It was wonderful watching the light grow and the bird world come to life. Among the new ones was the dainty little white browed crake moving on the lily leaves but always near the reeds. We had breakfast and another feast at Fogg Dam on the way back. I was not disappointed with the birds during the trip, for they were abundant, but I was disappointed not to see more of the escarpment country. You need a four wheel drive. Did you have one? Our camper van felt as if it were shaking to pieces on corrugations so we did not do the 30 Ks. of it to the Obiri Rock and could not get to Jim Jim, but Nourlangie was a grand experience. A very well informed guide took us around that majestic art gallery. The rock formations and their colour superb - also saw a pair of chestnut quilled rock pigeons there - very lucky to do so, as everyone had passed by and Hugh and I went back to look at something, and there they were. Also walked out to the blue paintings. We had the second night at Muirella and nearby a walk by a series of billabongs - now very low. Then on to Yellow Waters. I wonder if you were there - it's a part of South Alligator River. We had a boat cruise along it and a marvellous time with the birds - there were crocodiles too! We watched the evening disappear by the river the night before and that brought me a young black bittern. The poor thing was being attacked by pee wees - not too badly and in the a.m. before the cruise we walked up the river and I would have liked days there. That's where I saw gold wings hover over a patch of water and dive away leaving me full of joy, but most perplexed - after a little searching I saw two female shining fly catchers, angry with each other, crests upright, feathers fluffed but too restless to stay long. That was the golden winged bird, the male I had met the day before while cooling off in the garden of the hotel. I was amazed to see him there as I thought he was mainly a mangrove bird and here was this gem of birds flitting about and calling from the trees above us. I hope he finds the females in the creek - or at least one of them! Then on the cruise, two rare events - the great billed heron untangled itself from a fallen tree on the edge of the river and moved up the bank and a little further on its gigantic mate - what a bird!

Then at the other end of the scale - the little Kingfisher, a brilliant flash then still on its branch. In colour very like the forest Kingfisher we had been enjoying so much and seeing frequently. Most of the birds I hoped to see I saw though not the white throated grass wren. It was wickedly hot, very little cover - walking 3 Ks. there far more exhausting than 10 Ks. at home.

Another spectacular sight was Mamookoola - a billabong of birds - packed tight, Mainly geese but as we searched many others emerged including pratincoles and sharp tailed sandpipers. There is a bird hide there but we didn't go to it, just sat under a tree and marvelled. A good day in Darwin, walked miles. I liked that little city with its turquoise water

Quite a lot of birds were nesting in Kakadu - it would keep a recorder busy there as it seems to be any time of the year.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM JEAN ARMSTRONG.

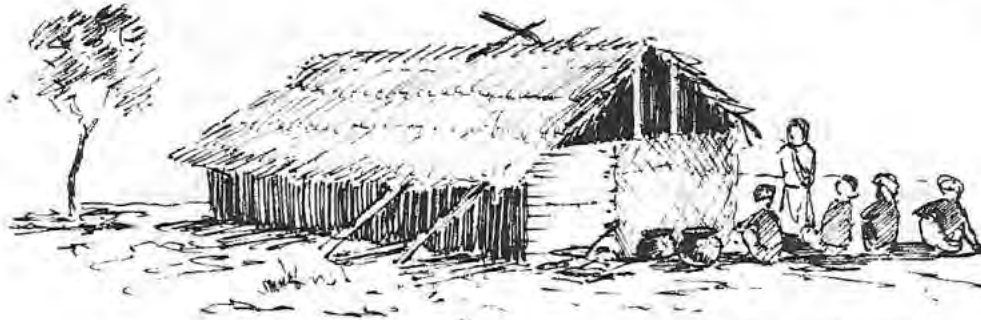
INDIA

FROM A CONSERVATION VIEWPOINT

PART 11



a city dweller - at least the family has a roof



a country dwelling



preparing elephants to carry tourists. I heard the government has an embarrassing number of idle elephants on its hands as there are no large trees left in the forests to be dragged to clearance points.



these enterprising folk are found in any thick canopy be it in jungle or adjoining village or town. They can raid and disperse in a matter of moments.

INDIA - FROM A CONSERVATION VIEWPOINT PART 11

In the marginal areas of the Thar Desert tree planting seems an obsession. The roadside was pitted with holes in which seedling trees will be planted at the onset of the rainy season. Our attention was drawn to a barren hillside covered with spots of colour. Closer inspection proved the spots to be hundreds of villagers, male and female, up there digging holes. Tasmanian Blue Gum seems the most favoured species for planting out. The true blue conservationists of India protest at their prevalence in the same way as we do about *pinus radiata*. How the trees will be protected from goats and sheep puzzles me. I saw sufficient thorn hedges around small enclosures but I doubt if there would be enough thorn bush to surround such vast projects. Possibly the absence of trees accounts for the widespread use of sandstone for many structural uses. Slivers or needles of stone about 5"x18"x6" are used to make fence posts, bus shelters, homes, grain silos and anything which a piece of timber that dimension would do.

As far as I can gather there are no social services apart from medical for the two-thirds who are illiterate. They provide their own by producing large families, the logic being that some of the children will survive to help in the fields and care for the aged parents. With some religious groups it is important to have a son to sanctify the funeral rites so while there have been successes in curbing population growth amongst the literates, there seems to me little prospect of doing so with the illiterates. An awareness of the population pressure is, apart from the deserts, always with one. The people seem to regard the roads as footpaths and traffic as intruders. The traffic is chaotic and I died a thousand deaths when sitting by the taxi drivers. With horns blaring out some strange code system they plunge at speed into a seemingly impenetrable crush of people. They weave, brake, dodge and overtake with gusto and unconcern.

The rail and air facilities are also under great pressure. Platforms and air terminals are thronged with all types of people and the trains and planes have a tired air about them. It is easy to feel critical and superior about everything one observes in India but to satisfy basic need is India's goal. Toilet facilities are practically non-existent outside hotels - the wandering pigs are the night cart operators. Water is carried to village homes from a communal well or tap. Vehicles, clothes, shoes, utensils which we would cast away as worn out, live on until unwearable or unuseable. Small wonder the well nourished tourist with all his appurtenances of western affluence dangling about him is fair game for the Indian battling to survive. One developed a distant gaze or an unseeing eye and breathed a shameful sigh of relief when back in the cocoon of a hotel. It was only relative relief but at least the pressure was more polite if no less insistent. If one fumbled at opening one's hotel room door, instant help materialised from the shadows, the lights were switched on, the bed cover given a straightening touch, the T.V... if any, switched on, a curtain drawn aside, etc., - then came the awkward pause and the unspoken request.

Only the hardest heart could ignore the appeal. My irritation at being 'conned' was, as I learned of the near starvation wages, replaced by a feeling that I was helping a fellow human. It was just the luck of the draw that saw me born in such an affluent country as Australia. After all what was the loss through a 50¢ tip by me compared to the windfall it gave to a man on \$40 a month.

That same man could well be going to his lean-to residence of coir matting draped over a few poles to be greeted by his wife and numerous children. No sanitation, power or water, cooking done on a footpath, fire kindled from scraps of any combustible material found in the gutters and rubbish bins. Every large town has large quotas of shanty dwellers. In Calcutta I read that about a third of that city's people live in temporary single story huts shared by an average of five families. There are several hundred thousand who do not have access even to those and are forced to live on the city's pavements or in other public places.

Yet wonder of wonders, I saw more smiling faces per hundred yards of humanity than ever I see in Australia. I can only hazard wild guesses as to why this should be. Maybe its better for the morale to have nothing to lose than to have possessions which cause us so much stress to keep secure or to increase. Maybe its the extended family system so sanctified in India. Each individual can feel he or she is part of a meaningful whole. Maybe there is a certain togetherness among those on the bottom of the heap. Be what it may I saw few signs of anger, aggression or rudeness. The masses seemed to be a most tolerant and gentle lot.

Five weeks is too short a time to be authoritative about any aspects of our journey. Some of my interpretations of what I saw and experienced may be quite out of perspective. I can say that more questions were raised than were answered and any traveller returning from that land will have a broader base to ponder the eternal question "What is life all about?"

Some factual sources:-

Newspaper Article "The Hindu" Sunday Feb.15, 1987. Article by Prof.Chandrasekhar.
The Commercial Travellers Atlas of India.

'Confronting the Future' Charles Birch

Lloyd Jones

* * * * *

FAREWELL - JEAN ARMSTRONG

By the time this note is read, Jean Armstrong and her husband, Hugh, will have left Australia for England.

One speaker has likened Jean's short time in the mountains to a brief orbit of a star, throwing warmth and light on our members, then moving on to light another place.

Jean deeply loves our bush and its creatures and shared that love with us. Some remember clambering up a rock on Renitz Pass to look at a grey fantail on its nest. Some of us were taken to see a pair of peregrine falcons training their young among the crags of Mt Victoria. On the last walk Jean led, up Lockyer's old road, we passed the usual lunchsites and Jean led us gently on, up the pass to a large rock platform, where we gathered and ate - talking, reminiscing, enjoying a quiet gathering of her many friends in the wilderness.

Jean, we all wish you and Hugh many happy years in your new home - maybe you will also be inspired as were Judy and Graham in their letters from Orkney.

Ron Campagnoni

Society News

New Hut. There are proposals for the building of a new Hut and we have been promised a chance to see them and to make final suggestions as to the style of construction and fittings to be included. However, it now appears that the National Parks & Wildlife Service who are prepared to finance the structure for us, are not going to be paid all the money that was initially promised by the State Government. If this is the situation, we must expect delays in both the construction of the replacement building, and some of the proposed additions and alterations to the parks controlled by the Service. Whatever the final outcome your whole-hearted support is still required to keep our Society operating smoothly, and we would appreciate additional volunteers to assist with the operations involved during weekends and school holidays at "The Hut".

Wires. Very pleased to have a Wildlife Information and Rescue Service (Wires) now operating in the Springwood area, offering information and help in the handling of injured and orphaned birds, animals and reptiles. Several members of our own Society are active in this group.

Council Elections. There have been a lot of problems in trying to get answers from the local Council to our letters asking for a wide variety of details and activities during the last few years - three in the last few months. It will be very interesting to see if this scarcity of information continues when the new Aldermen and Alderwomen (?) are in operation. During the last few months we have been invited, and have sent delegates to several meetings at Council with prospective developers and our comments and questions have most certainly been written down - even if we are not sure whether they are ever referred to again. At least it appears to be a step in the right direction.

Fairmont Resort. Several efforts have been made recently to have articles printed in the newspaper, correcting the mis-information regarding the "Fairmont Resort" and the statements by Peter Quirk regarding doubtful transactions with another un-named developer but there are threatened legal actions against the Editor - so unfortunately our comments and protests have not been featured.

Our Old Hut. A picture of our old building - 'The Hut' - has been painted by one of our stalwarts - Lloyd Jones, and offered for sale to help with our finances. If the painting is purchased he has volunteered to supply more.

Conservation News. The latest Newsletters from a wide variety of Conservation groups and some very attractive magazines are available through our Library.

Native Plant Weekend - at The Hut There will be another sale of native plants in aid of the Land Preservation Fund -

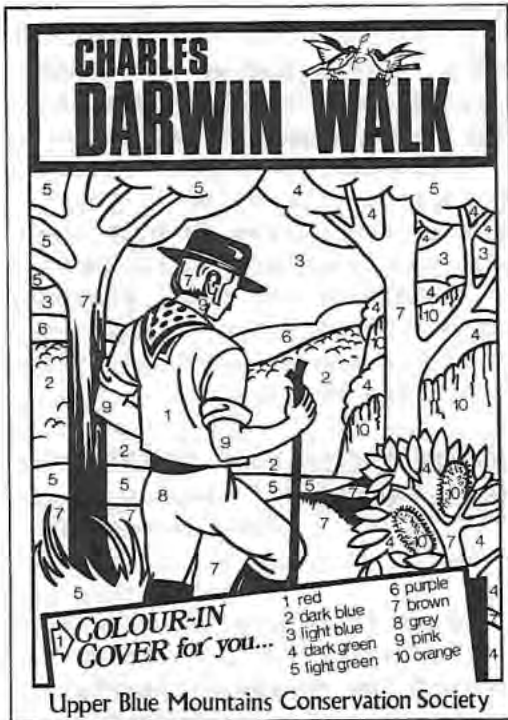
31st October & 1st November - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Plants also for sale on meeting night, 30th October.

11 a.m. Saturday - "Question Time with Jill Dark" Jill will answer your queries about native plants and also suggest plants suitable for our gardens.

1.30 p.m. Saturday - A Bird and Botany Walk from the Hut, led by Jill, in the area round the Hut - Always interesting and informative

Despite the weather, a cosy poetry reading, folk song singing, soup and sundries was held at the Hut on August 29th, and raised \$390 for the Land Preservation Fund.



FOR THE YOUNG IN HEART.

The Education Committee has recently completed production of a small brochure shown on the left. It consists of a large sheet folded into four and was designed to promote an interest in conservation among children. It was designed for children but even oldies can enjoy reading about Darwin's celebrated walk in 1836 from the Weatherboard Inn to the top of Wentworth Falls - or playing the 'Charles Darwin Walk' game with the kids. On the cover there's a colour-in picture of Darwin on the track beside the Jamison Creek. Just colour in the areas as numbered below the picture. Inside there's a story of the famous walk and a Crossword Puzzle with some of the clues in the story.

The brochure opens out into a large sheet game actually based on Charles Darwin's Walk. It is played with a dice like 'Snakes & Ladders' and is good fun and shows some of the pleasures and hazards of a walk through the bush. On the back are two more games - 'Crazy Birds' is a list of twelve well known birds with all the letters jumbled up. The correct spelling is given at the bottom of the page. Then there's the 'Follow the Dots' game - trace a line from Dot 1 to Dot 80 and see what creatures result. Its fun for children and very educational. This little booklet sells for \$1.00 and can be purchased at the Hut.

LOST AND FOUND

When Greta and myself were doing Hut Duty one Sunday recently, a wallet was left behind on the counter. As we didn't see the owner before closing, I took the wallet home and sent it off to the young man the next day. I received a very nice letter in return and would like to quote the last two paragraphs.

"My escapes to the bush are an integral part of city living, for without them, I would find it incredibly difficult to think clearly and positively about myself.

To me, the Valley of the Waters is one of the most beautiful places I have visited in Australia and I thank you and your organisation for giving me the pleasure to be part of that beauty".

Elvine Thomas

AS FROM THE 23RD JULY, 1987, THE UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY IS AN INCORPORATED BODY.
A COPY OF THE CONSTITUTION IS AT THE HUT FOR YOUR PERUSAL AND IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

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,
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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by Jim Smith

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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 membership or renewal of my membership.

Name

Address

.....

Single \$5.00 ~~\$6.00~~

Family \$8.00 ~~\$10.00~~

Consess. \$2.00 ~~\$4.00~~

*strike out which does not apply.



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

October 1987
No. 69

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: 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.

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 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	

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, 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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For the Young in Heart

COMING TALKS

October – Jim Smith – Walking Track – National Pass

November – Margaret Essen – Kakadu

Early New Year – Ian Brown – East Coast, Cape York

WALKS PROGRAMME 1987

October Sunday 4th – 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 approximately

Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

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 approximately.

Leader: Beverley Thompson 57-2076

October Saturday 17th – Deep Pass

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. 45 minutes' drive each way. Shady gullies, high ridges and mysteries!

Medium. 4-5 hours approximately.

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 am.

Walk down from Perry's Look-Down to Blue Gum Forest and return.

Hard! We can take the return slowly, very slowly! 6-7 hours approximately

Leaders: David and Elvine Thomas 84-2121

November Thursday 19th – Berghoffer's Pass – Mt York

Meet at Mt Victoria station 10.00 am. Walk along this historic road. Extensive views.

Easy. 3-4 hours approximately.

Leaders: Eric and June Blick 88-1051

November Saturday 21st – 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 approximately.

Leaders: John and Olive Noble 87-8342

December Sunday 6th – End of year Ramble

Meet at The Hut at 10.00am for 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 am. Visit Heritage Centre and walk along the Heritage Track.

Easy. 2-3 hours approximately.

Leader: To be announced later

WALKS PROGRAMME 1988

January Sunday 3rd – Porter's Pass

Meet at Bundarra Street Blackheath, over level crossing, at 10.00 am. Walk through Porter's Pass, steep in places with slippery steps. Flat sections with extensive views over Kanimbla Valley.

Medium 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: To be announced later.

January Saturday 16th – Mystery Walk

Meet at Mt Victoria station at 9.30 am. 45 minute drive. Be prepared to paddle in cool waters.

Medium 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: John Noble 87-8342

January Thursday 21st – Sassafras Gully

Meet across Railway line at Faulconbridge 10.00 am. Cool area for walking in Summer. Rainforest and Turpentines.

Medium. 4-5 hours approximately.

Leader: Dierdre Morton 58-8137

February Sunday 7th – Pierce's Pass

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. Drive along Bell's Line of Road to start of track. Walk down to Grose River, through rain-forest area and wet sclerophyll forest.

Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

February Thursday 18th

Details to be announced later.

February Saturday 20th – Evan's Crown

Meet at Bundarra Street, Blackheath, over level crossing, at 9.00 am. Interesting area with short rock scrambles. Extensive views.

Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Ron Compagnoni 87-8899

March Sunday 6th – Ruined Castle (By popular request)

Meet at the head of the track to the Golden Stairs on Narrowneck at 10.00 am. Rainforest, eucalypts, shale mining and rock formations. Historic area.

Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

March Thursday 17th – Waterhouse Park

Meet at Hazelbrook School at 10.00 am. Meander down to the Lake, seeing rock formations on the way.

Easy.

Leaders: Dulcie and Reg Toseland 84-1682

March Saturday 19th – Empire Pass

Meet Lawson Bowling Club Parking Area, i.e. turn left after crossing railway bridge at Lawson, at 10.00 am. Rain forest area, canyons, waterfalls.

Medium 5 hours approx.

Leader: Grace Bayley 59-1877

WALK – COX'S ROAD – LOCKYER'S LINE SUNDAY 5th JULY

Seventeen days after setting out to cross the mountains, Blaxland and his companions looked down from Mt York and saw "Meadowland clear of trees and covered with grass 2 or 3 feet high, sufficient to support the stock of the colony for the next 30 years." Today we see farmland and orchard with a high way snaking through, but perhaps more trees. Could it be that aborigines burnt so regularly that few trees grew?

We left some cars at the car park off Mt York Road and drove on to Mt York where we descended the first road to the west. The rock formation at the top of the track gives a spectacular beginning and one can't help thinking of those early travellers and their difficulties. Attempts to cross the mountain barrier had been made since 1793, but it was severe drought in 1812 that made the crossing imperative if the colony were to survive. After the original crossing, Surveyor Evans followed and went on to the site of Bathurst, suggesting the first route for the new road. Cox, with 30 carefully chosen convicts and 8 guards, began the road in 1814 and reached Mt York in November. It must have been a cruel winter for those convict road makers, with the hardest part still to come, the descent from Mt York.

The road could only take a cart with a light load and logs were tied to the back for a brake. Staples were fastened to rocks and pullies were used to assist the ascent. Governor Macquarie used the road in April, 1815, spending his first night at a stop he called Springwood.

There are glimpses of the valley on the way down. Tall, twisty monkey gums, *E. cypellocarp*, dominate the forest and the main *acacia* is *falciformis*, a tall tree with large curved leaves that can also be seen along Victoria Pass and below.

By 1827 Cox's descent was falling apart and one attributed to William Lawson, now known as Lawson's Long Alley, was used until 1832. Lockyer's Line of Road begins on the right of the car park on the Hartley Vale Road. It is easy to see at first as it is fairly wide and stone work is evident. A landslide stopped work on the road and also Mitchell began the road down Victoria Pass.

We lunched perched on rocks overlooking the valley of Clwydd and beyond. Here Ron told us a "story" as he called it, and much of it was, except that this would be the last walk I'd be leading and I knew I'd miss the good companionship of such an enjoyable group of people.

Lockyer's Line along the ridge has views on either side and often presents us with massive rocks. The birds were shy of 22 homo sapiens; only golden whistlers entertained us briefly and we occasionally heard a lyre bird. This is usually a good place to hear our famous mimic.

At the end of Lockyer's, some walked back to Mt York inspecting the wells and enjoying the distant view. The rest of us took the Nature Trail back to the car park. A most enjoyable day.

Jean Armstrong

WALK – BRUCE'S WALK – JULY 18th, 1987

The weather was perfect. There were nine walkers and three children as starters from the Bullaburra end of the track. We had organised our transport so that there would be a car to pick up the other drivers an estimated five hours later at the Lawson View Road end of the track at Wentworth Falls.

This walk has been described in this magazine so I won't say much that would be repetitious. But I do disagree with the previous article which stated that two hours was sufficient for the track and three hours for very slow walkers. Not even three hours would allow time for reasonably experienced walkers to enjoy the sights and sit on a log for lunch.

We took full advantage of the rest spots, having morning tea in the rest cave in Claire Glen, a lovely mossy place, and three hours later, lunch in Burgess Glen. If I were to do the walk again I would suggest having lunch in Podger's Glen as there is more room there at the creek and it is nearer to the half-way mark. Burgess Glen cave could be for another rest break later.

At the top of Booth's Ridge, after climbing up the first zig-zag, one of the children was obviously too tired and his father had to carry him, so the father took the opportunity to return to his car by taking the convenient road back, and later reported that it only took twenty minutes easy walking. So this is a handy way of shortening the walk if desired, and is the only place where it can be done.

Special pleasures of this walk were the sunshine wattle blossoms, the interesting rocks, the tiny stalactites in one of the caves, and the slices of banksia flowers like rising sun emblems scattered on the ground by cockatoos. We also went off the beaten track in Burgess Glen to scramble knee-deep in leaves and fallen bark to see the tiny waterfall at the end of a narrow gulch crowded with ancient trees. In here it was almost too dim to see, but Olive pointed out an ironstone stalactite beside the water trickle.

We reached the cars at 3.15 pm, close to our estimated time.

Grace Bayley

WALK – ROBERT'S PASS – AUGUST 2nd 1987

Weather was very doubtful before the start. Numbers were also doubtful as there were some late comers. Greta Vanry very kindly led off at 9.30 sharp, down and over Lilian's Bridge towards the golf course. It was very gratifying to find that the "KEEP OUT" sign nailed to a tree by some misguided person had 'disappeared'. While crossing the greens people unfamiliar with this walk were warned not to look over their tight shoulder. Many did but fortunately were not turned to a pillar of salt! There were no favourable comments.

By now the weather had improved and on counting heads our number was found to be 27. After the golf course we came to Inspiration Point or is it now Moya Point? Perhaps this point will be cleared up soon. Down the ramp ladder, which some treated with apprehension and two of the party turned back, were down to 25. Weather improved by the minute with sunshine along the base of the cliff which in places was damp underfoot becoming wet in places and then quite wet. Among the party were a number of Zoological persons, mostly primates, although when we stopped for lunch food was produced from various marsupiums. The break was taken in a pleasant rocky glade at the base of Cathedral Point and at the head count we had become 29! At this stage mathematics were thrown out of the window.

After lunch came the agreeable but hard climb up the Valley of the Waters, some reaching the Hut at 2 pm, the last about 2.45 pm. This is a very pleasant walk and the company was enjoyable. However in future we should class this walk as Medium to Hard for experienced walkers and Hard to Difficult for the inexperienced. Despite the previous mathematical difficulties, all 29 were brought out satisfactorily. Elaine and Ron Compagnoni were about the last to arrive after helping a newcomer and long musical discussions.

David & Elvine Thomas

WALK – HAZELBROOK AREA – SATURDAY 15th AUGUST 1987

The walk was scheduled to leave at 10.20 am to meet anybody from Sydney train. Three enquiries were received from Sydney and one from Liverpool. Also two Hazelbrook people wanted to make contact with the Society. These five people were present on the walk and had seen the walk advertised in the "Gazette".

Eighteen people set out on the walk and after much counting on my part eighteen returned. The area visited was South Hazelbrook which had been a very popular walking area in the days when the mountains were famous for its Guest Houses and walks. I was interested to see that the National Parks had sign posted tracks recently.

The walk went into the valley to the Lake on Bedford Creek. We then went up Bedford Creek to Willawong Pool. From there we went up a side creek to Salote Pool, Terrace Falls and Victor Falls. After the recent rains, the falls, cascades and creeks were at their best. In the valley the ferns and mosses made a delightful contrast between the trees up on the ridges.

As the walk was listed as a three hour walk, I would like to apologise to the party for the time it did take. I have walked this area many times but walking in the bush on my own is not an activity I time myself on as I like to stop, look and make side excursions, so I just subtracted what I thought was a reasonable time for loitering and came up with three hours. As the walkers were not a slow party, it appears that the members enjoy poking around as much as I do, so we came up with a six hour walk. Thanks for your company.

Bob Jones

WALKS REPORT – SUNDAY, 6th SEPTEMBER – MT HAY AREA

Despite a rainy start to the day 27 members turned up, the rain cleared as we left Leura on the road to Mt Hay. The wild flowers along the road were prolific, especially the *Boronia*. We walked along the track from the car park, then went to Butterbox where we had lunch and admired the views. The light and shade from the clouds moving across the area, gave us ever changing views of Mt Banks, Mt Charles, Mt Tomah and the Camel's Hump. Some members walked to the top of Mt Hay to see the basalt cappings, while others sat and admired the scenery. On the way back to Leura, we stopped to see the scar on the hillside. It appeared to be an old quarry with some trees being cleared around it, why? We wondered! A delightful walk with pleasant company.

O. Noble

JOURNEY TO KAKADU.

If I don't write down something of Kakadu I fear it will all disappear in a haze of events and change, and as you asked specifically to be told about it, to you I will try to remember. Firstly, my dear friend, to say how I was filled with gratitude, we both felt warmed by the marvellous "send off" you gave us – so full of thought, so perfectly executed.

That has not faded into mistiness – it remains clear as a beacon. A little episode that will clearly remain – from champagne in exquisite “glasses” to rock warblers and happy gay wildflowers, boronia scented.

The last birds I saw in Australia were fig birds in a marvellous rain tree. The first bird I saw in U.K., a magpie. I think the latter have increased as I have seen eight and I don't remember them as common birds. I recorded a new bird today, the spotted flycatcher. I have a pocket guide but I intended getting a new one. My new Slater is coming unstuck – very poor binding for a book that is used as reference constantly.

Our first night was Fogg Dam. Got there well before sunset. What a place it is. An expanse of shallow water, dotted with patches of reeds and birds by the millions. Noted about fifty different species including six new ones. I was up at 5.30 and watched the dark shapes of fruit bats against the lighter sky. The night had been full of noises, good noises of creatures including the bats. It was wonderful watching the light grow and the bird world come to life. Among the new ones was the dainty little white browed crake moving on the lily leaves but always near the reeds. We had breakfast and another feast at Fogg Dam on the way back.

I was not disappointed with the birds during the trip, for they were abundant, but I was disappointed not to see more of the escarpment country. You need a four wheel drive. Did you have one? Our camper van felt as if it were shaking to pieces on corrugations so we did not do the 30 Ks. of it to the Obiri Rock and could not get to Jim Jim, but Nourlangie was a grand experience. A very well informed guide took us around that majestic art gallery. The rock formations and their colour superb – also saw a pair of chestnut quilled rock pigeons there – very lucky to do so, as everyone had passed by Hugh and I went back to look at something, and there they were. Also walked out to the blue paintings.

We had the second night at Muirella and nearby a walk by a series of billabongs – now very low. Then on to Yellow Waters. I wonder if you were there – it's a part of South Alligator River. We had a boat cruise along it and a marvellous time with the birds – there were crocodiles too! We watched the evening disappear by the river the night before and that brought me a young black bittern. The poor thing was being attacked by pee wees – not too badly and in the am before the cruise we walked up the river and I would have liked days there. That's where I saw gold wings hover over a patch of water and dive away leaving me full of joy, but most perplexed – after a little searching I saw two female shining fly catchers, angry with each other, crests upright, feathers fluffed but too restless to stay long. That was the golden winged bird, the male I had met the day before while cooling off in the garden of the hotel. I was amazed to see him there as I thought he was mainly a mangrove bird and here was this gem of birds flitting about and calling from the trees above us. I hope he finds the females in the creek – or at least one of them! Then on the cruise, two rare events – the great billed heron untangles itself from a fallen tree on the edge of the river and moved up the bank and a little further on its gigantic mate – what a bird!

Then at the other end of the scale – the little Kingfisher, a brilliant flash then still on its branch. In colour very like the forest Kingfisher we had been enjoying so much and seeing frequently. Most of the birds I hoped to see I saw though not the white throated grass wren. It was wickedly hot, very little cover – walking 3 Ks. there far more exhausting than 10 Ks. at home. Another spectacular sight was Mamookoola – a billabong of birds – packed tight. Mainly geese but as we searched many others emerged including pratincoles and sharp tailed andpipers.

There is a bird hide there but we didn't go to it, just sat under a tree and marvelled. A good day in Darwin, walked miles. I liked that little city with its turquoise water.

Quite a lot of birds were nesting in Kakadu – it would keep a recorder busy there as it seems to be any time of the year.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM JEAN ARMSTRONG.

INDIA
FROM A CONSERVATION VIEWPOINT
PART II

Illustrations not copied.

A city dweller – at least the family has a roof

A country dwelling,

These enterprising folk are found in any thick canopy be it village or town. They can raid and disperse in a matter of moments preparing elephants to carry tourists. I heard the government has an embarrassing number of idle elephants on its hands as there are no large trees left in the forests to be dragged to clearance point.

In the marginal areas of the Thar Desert tree planting seems an obsession. The roadside was pitted with holes in which seedling trees will be planted at the onset of the rainy season. Our attention was drawn to a barren hillside covered with spots of colour. Closer inspection proved the spots to be hundreds of villagers, male and females, up there digging holes. Tasmanian Blue Gum seems the most favoured species for planting out. The true blue conservationists of India protest at their prevalence in the same way as we do about *pinus radiati*. How the trees will be protected from goats and sheep puzzles me. I saw sufficient thorn hedges around small enclosures but I doubt if there would be enough thorn bush to surround such vast projects.

Possibly the absence of trees accounts for the widespread use of sandstone for many structural uses. Slivers or needles of stone about 5"x18"x6" are used to make fence posts, bus shelters, homes, grain silos and anything which a piece of timber that dimension would do.

As far as I can gather there are no social services apart from medical for the two-thirds who are illiterate. They provide their own by producing large families, the logic being that some of the children will survive to help in the fields and care for the aged parents. With some religious groups it is important to have a son to sanctify the funeral rites so while there have been successes in cubing population growth amongst the literates, there seems to me little prospect of doing so with the illiterates.

An awareness of the population pressure is, apart from the deserts, always with one. The people seem to regard the roads as footpaths and traffic as intruders. The traffic is chaotic and I died a thousand deaths when sitting by the taxi drivers. With horns blaring out some strange code system they plunge at speed into a seemingly impenetrable crush of people. They weave, brake, dodge and overtake with gusto and unconcern.

The rail and air facilities are also under great pressure. Platforms and air terminals are thronged with all types of people and the trains and planes have a tires air about them. It is easy to feel critical and superior about everything one observes in India but to satisfy basic need is India's goal. Toilet facilities are practically non-existent outside hotels – the wandering pigs are the night cart operators. Water is carried to village homes from a communal well or tap. Vehicles, clothes, shoes, utensils which we would cast away as worn out, live on until unwearable or unusable.

Small wonder the well nourished tourist with all his appurtenances of western affluence dangling about him is fair game for the Indian battling to survive. One developed a distance gaze or an unseeing eye and breathed a shameful sigh of relief when back in the cocoon of a hotel. It was only relative relief but at least the pressure was more polite if no less insistent. If one fumbled at opening one's hotel room door, instant help materialised from the shadows, the lights were switched on, the bed cover given a straightening touch, the TV if any, switched on, a curtain drawn aside, etc, - then came the awkward pause and the unspoken request.

Only the hardest heart could ignore the appeal. My irritation at being 'conned' was, as I learned of the near starvation wages, replaced by a feeling that I was helping a fellow human. It was just the luck of the draw that saw me born in such an affluent country as Australia. After all what was the loss through a 50 cent tip by me compared to the windfall it gave to a man on \$40 a month.

That same man could well be going to his lean-to residence of coir matting draped over a few poles to be greeted by his wife and numerous children. No sanitation, power or water, cooking done on a footpath, fire kindled from scraps of any combustible material found in the gutters and rubbish bins. Every large town has large quotas of shanty dwellers. In Calcutta I read that about a third of that city's people live in temporary single story huts shared by an average of five families. There are several hundred thousand who do not have access even to those and are forced to live on the city's pavements or in other public places.

Yet wonder of wonders, I saw more smiling faces per hundred yards of humanity than ever I see in Australia. I can only hazard wild guesses as to why this should be. Maybe it's better for the morale to have nothing to lose than to have possessions which cause us so much stress to keep secure or to increase. Maybe it's the extended family system so sanctified in India. Each individual can feel he or she is part of a meaningful whole. Maybe there is a certain togetherness among those on the bottom of the heap. Be what it may I saw few signs of anger, aggression or rudeness. The masses seemed to be a most tolerant and gentle lot.

Five weeks is too short a time to be authoritative about any aspects of our journey. Some of my interpretations of what I saw and experienced may be quite out of perspective. I can say that more questions were raised than were answered and any traveller returning from that land will have a broader base to ponder the eternal question "What is life all about?"

Some factual sources:-

Newspaper Article "The Hindu" Sunday Feb. 15, 1987. Article by Prof. Chandrasekhar. The Commercial Travellers Atlas of India.

'Confronting the Future' Charles Birch

Llyod Jones

FAREWELL – JEAN ARMSTRONG

By the time this note is read, Jean Armstrong and her husband, Hugh, will have left Australia for England.

One speaker has likened Jean's short time in the mountains to a brief orbit of a star, throwing warmth and light on our members, then moving on to light another place.

Jean deeply loves our bush and its creatures and shared that love with us. Some remember clambering up a rock on Renitz Pass to look at a grey fantail on its nest. Some of us were taken to see a pair of peregrine falcons training their young among the crags of Mt Victoria. On the last walk Jean led, up Lockyer's old road, we passed the usual lunchsites and Jean led us gently on, up the pass to a large rock platform, where we gathered and ate – talking, reminiscing, enjoying a quiet gathering of her many friends in the wilderness.

Jean, we wish you and Hugh many happy years in your new home – maybe you will also be inspired as were Judy and Graham in their letter from Orkney.

Ron Camagnoni

Society News

New Hut. There are proposals for the building of a new Hut and we have been promised a chance to see them and to make final suggestions as to the style of construction and fittings to be included. However, it now appears that the National Parks & Wildlife Service who are prepared to finance the structure for us, are not going to be paid all the money that was initially promised by the State Government. If this is the situation, we must expect delays in both the construction of the replacement building, and some of the proposed additions and alterations to the parks controlled by the Service. Whatever the final outcome your whole-hearted support is still required to keep our Society operating smoothly, and we would appreciate additional volunteers to assist with the operations involved during weekends and school holidays at "The Hut".

Wires. Very pleased to have a Wildlife Information and Rescue Service (Wires) now operating in the Springwood area, offering information and help in the handling of injured and orphaned birds, animals and reptiles. Several members of our Society are active in this group.

Council Elections. There have been a lot of problems in trying to get answers from the local Council to our letters asking for a wide variety of details and activities during the last few years – three in the last few months. It will be very interesting to see if this scarcity of information continues when the new Aldermen and Alderwomen (?) are in operation. During the last few months we have been invited, and have sent delegates to several meetings at Council with prospective developers and our comments and questions have most certainly been written down – even if we are not sure whether they are ever referred to again. At least it appears to be a step in the right direction.

Fairmont Resort. Several efforts have been made recently to have articles printed in the newspaper, correcting the mis-information regarding the “Fairmont Resort” and the statements by Peter Quirk regarding doubtful transaction with another un-named developer...but there are threatened legal action against the Editor – so unfortunately our comments and protests have been featured.

Our Old Hut. A picture of our old building – ‘The Hut’ – has been painted by one of our stalwarts – Lloyd Jones, and offered for sale to help with our finances. If the painting is purchased he has volunteered to supply more.

Conservation News. The latest Newsletters from a wide variety of Conservation groups and some very attractive magazines are available through our Library.

Native Plant Weekend – at The Hut. There will be another sale of native plants in aid of the Land Preservation Fund - 31st October & 1st November – 10 am to 4 pm. Saturday and Sunday. Plants also for sale on meeting night, 30th October.

11 am Saturday – “Question Time with Jill Dark” Jill will answer your queries about native plants and also suggest plants suitable for our gardens.

1.30 pm Saturday – A Bird and Botany Walk from the Hut, led by Jill, in the area round the Hut – Always interesting and informative.

Despite the weather, a cosy poetry reading, folk song singing, soup and sundries was held at the Hut on August 29th, and raised \$390 for the Land Preservation Fund.

FOR THE YOUNG IN HEART.

The Education Committee has recently completed production of a small brochure shown on the left. It consists of a large sheet folded into four and was designed to promote an interest in conservation among children. It was designed for children but even oldies can enjoy reading about Darwin’s celebrated walk in 1836 from the Weather – board Inn to the top of Wentworth Falls – or playing the ‘Charles Darwin Walk’ game with the kids. On the cover there’s a colour-in picture of Darwin on the track beside the Jamison Creek. Just colour in the areas as numbered below the picture. Inside there’s a story of the famous walk and a Crossword Puzzle with some of the clues in the story.

The brochure opens out into a large sheet game actually based on Charles Darwin’s Walk. It is played with a dice like ‘Snakes & Ladders’ and is good fun and shows some of the pleasures and hazards of a walk through the bush. On the back are two games – “Crazy Birds” is a list of twelve well known birds with all the letters jumbled up. The correct spelling is given at the bottom of the page. Then there’s the ‘Follow the Dots’ game – trace a line from Dot 1 to Dot 80 and see what creatures result. It’s fun for children and very educational. This little booklet sells for \$1.00 and can be purchased at the Hut.

LOST AND FOUND.

When Greta and myself were doing Hut Duty one Sunday recently, a wallet was left behind on the counter. As we didn't see the owner before closing, I took the wallet home and sent it off to the young man the next day. I received a very nice letter in return and would like to quote the last two paragraphs.

"My escapes to the bush are an integral part of city living, for without them, I would find it incredibly difficult to think clearly and positively about myself.

To me, the Valley of the waters is one of the most beautiful places I have visited in Australia and I thank you and your organisation for giving me the pleasure to be part of that beauty".

Elvine Thomas

→ AS FROM THE 23rd JULY, 1987, THE UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY IS AN INCORPORATED BODY.

A COPY OF THE CONSTITUTION IS AT THE HUT FOR YOUR PERSUSAL AND IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.