

APRIL 1988
No.71



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.

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 1988

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
Librarian	..... June Blick	88.1051
Hut Duty Organiser	..... Beverley Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer.	Deirdre Morton	58.8137

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

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

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

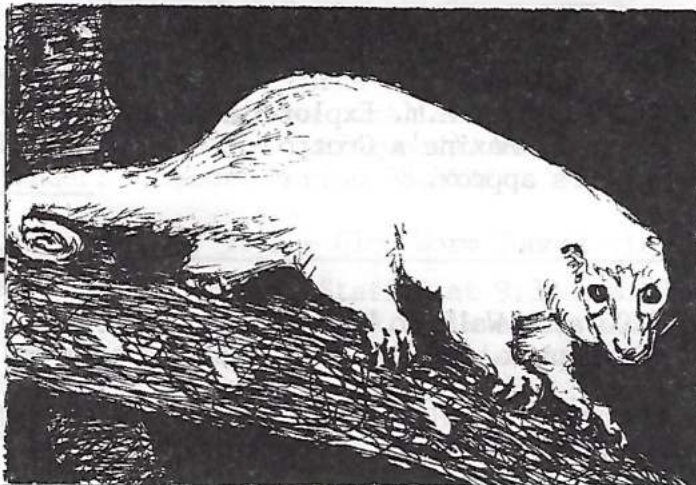
PUBLICATIONS: A range of specialist booklets, posters, maps, postcards etc
may be purchased at the Hut.

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

WALKS: Walks are organised 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.

Cuscus - Cape York.



UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Newsletter

No. 71

April, 1988

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Coming Talks & Walks ...	1
Reports on Walks ...	3
More Thoughts Arising ...	6
A Walk on the East Side ...	8
January Discussion ...	9
Graham Alcorn on Birds ...	10
Society News ...	11
Nocturnal Visitors ...	12

COMING TALKS

<u>April</u>	-	Chris Todd
'Birds' - Talk with Slides		
<u>May</u>	-	Graham Kerr
Slides of Overseas Trip		
<u>June</u>	-	To be decided

WALKS PROGRAMME 1988

IT IS ESSENTIAL ON ALL WALKS IN THE HOT WEATHER THAT MEMBERS SHOULD
CARRY AT LEAST 1 LITRE OF WATER

- CARRY ON ALL WALKS:
- ☐ First Aid Kit
 - ☐ Torch
 - ☐ Matches
 - ☐ Warm Shirt or Sweater
 - ☐ Protective Rainwear
 - ☐ Hat

WEAR SAFE FOOTWEAR

April Sunday 3rd - Wentworth Pass

Meet at the Hut at 9.30 a.m. Excellent walk with fine views across the Jamison Valley, then down into the rain forest area. 5-6 hours approx. Medium - Hard.

Leader: Dierdre Morton 58.8137

April Thursday 21st - Creek Walk

Meet at High School, Chapman Parade, Faulconbridge at 10.30 a.m. Unusual rock formations, sink holes, caves and a variety of things to see. 3-4 hours approx. Easy.

Leader: Win Millar 57.1464

April Saturday 23rd - Medlow Bath Wander

Meet at 24 Bellevue Crescent, Medlow Bath at 10.00 a.m. Explore around the Three Brothers area. Walk to the Sun Bath, Maxine's Grotto, Flying Fox and Mark's Tomb. Medium 4-5 hours approx.

Leader: Eric Blick 88.1051

May Sunday 1st - Willawong Pool

Meet at Car Park, South Hazelbrook at 9.00 a.m. Walk to Willawong Pool, Terrace Falls and Victoria Falls. 5 hours approx. Medium.

Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

May Thursday 19th - Lyre Bird Dell Area

Meet at Gordon Falls Bus Stop, Olympian Parade at 9.30 a.m. Walk to Lyre Bird Dell, Pool of Siloam, Gordon Falls and Prince Henry Walk. Extensive views, waterfalls etc. Easy. 4-5 hrs approx.

Leaders: Dulcie & Reg Toseland

May Saturday 21st - Black Jerry's Ridge - Cox River - Six Foot Track

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 8.30 a.m. PROMPT. Proceed along Megalong Valley road to Six Foot Track entrance (some cars will be left here). The rest to the Mountains River Riders gate entrance. Along Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox River, walk by the river, then up the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley Road. Very Hard - Hard 7 hours approx. Kangaroos can be sighted along the ridge.

Leaders: John & Olive Noble. 87.8342

June Sunday 5th - Leura Forest

Meet at the Old Swimming Pool, Leura at 9.30 a.m. A walk through Leura Forest 5-6 hours approx. Medium for regular walkers. Hard for casual walkers.

Leader: David THOMAS 84 2121

June Thursday 16th - National Pass

Meet at The Hut at 9.00 a.m. Overcliff walk - Fletchers Lookout Queen's Cascade and National Pass. Extensive views across the Jamison Valley. 5-6 hours approx. Medium.

Leader: Bob Jones 58-8361

June Saturday 18th - Queen's Road Ramble

Meet at the Bowling Club Lawson at 9.30 a.m. for an exploratory walk along Queen's Road. Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Grace Bayley 59.1955

July Sunday 3rd - Martin's Lookout - Glenbrook Creek

Meet at corner of Burns Road and Macquarie Road Springwood at 10.00 a.m. (Macquarie Road runs parallel to railway line on southern side between Faulconbridge and Springwood). Walk through rain forest to pools.

Leader: Dierdre Morton 58.8137 5-6 hours approx. Medium - Hard.

July Saturday 16th - Glow Worm Tunnel via the Old Coach Road

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. One hours drive approximately (road in good condition). Walk along Old Coach Road down to Glow Worm Tunnel and return. Different views of an old favourite walk. BRING A TORCH 6-7 hours approx. Medium.

Leaders: John and Olive Noble 87.8342

July Thursday 21st - Pulpit Rock - Horseshoe Falls

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right). At 10.00 a.m. Walk along escarpment to Horseshoe Falls and return. Extensive views across the Grose Valley. 4-5 hours approx. Easy-Medium.

Leader: Rachel Makinson 87.1302

WALK - ROSS CAVE TO PULPIT ROCK - THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 1988

This is a short but attractive circular walk through a glen and along the escarpment at Mount Victoria. We were lucky to have perfect weather for it, and more than twenty people turned up.

Ross Cave is quite striking, rather like a smaller version of Mark's Tomb at Medlow Bath. Features of interest near it are a rare Olearia ("undescribed" species) and a Satin Bower Bird's bower. The bower is well decorated with blue objects, which the bird rearranged from time to time. He used to have small blue pegs, blue drinking straws and pieces of blue plastic. Recently the pegs have disappeared (would anybody rob a bower bird?) and the straws have been sorted out from the plastic. The bird moved the bower a few metres two or three years ago, from one side of the track to the other.

At the lowest point of the walk we made a diversion along Renitz' Pass to a rockclimbers' track which led us to a small waterfall. It was almost above this waterfall that the peregrine falcons nested the season before last. They did not return last year.

Returning to the main track, we had lunch on a red shale point overlooking Kanimbla Valley, before continuing to Pulpit Rock. During lunch we watched rockclimbers on the other side of Renitz' Pass.

The Council Zoning map, and other maps, show as reserves two handkerchief-sized areas around Ross Cave and Pulpit Rock, and a narrow strip of land along the line of the track between them, which is called Renitz' Pass Pathway. (Try saying that to cure hiccups!). The Department of Lands' own maps show these reserved areas as surveyed in full detail, but somehow they were never gazetted. Consequently, they are all on private land. This is

true of most of the reserves and access paths in Mount Victoria. Fortunately the Mount Victoria Progress Association became aware of this situation and asked the BMCC to nominate all the areas, together, in some cases, with enough surrounding land to protect them, as Open Space under the State's Bicentennial programme. Most of the threatened areas have been placed on the State's list, including the whole of this walk and some surrounding land.

A note on the name Renitz: You may see it spelt Rienits, or various other ways. He was the schoolteacher at Mount Victoria round the time of the First World War, and changed the spelling of his name because of the hostility towards Germans at that time.

Rachel Makinson

WALKS REPORT - PORTER'S PASS - SUNDAY 3RD JANUARY 1988

On a cold, drizzly day of Summer, nine of us set off to walk Porter's Pass. We drove to the start of the walk in Centennial Glen Road, walked across the wind swept ridge to Walls Ledge, then lingered along this track looking at the various wild flowers, which always seem to be in profusion along the Ledge. Down the stone steps to the waterfall, here there was so much water that the steps beside the falls were very slippery and wet. Crossing the creek at the bottom of the falls was quite a hassle, most of us paddling through. As we walked under the cliff face, the weather improved, we saw a Nanking Kestrel high overhead and even a few cicadas made themselves known. We wandered on, up the stone steps and along the top of the escarpment to Fort Rock. Down into Centennial Glen, here the waterfall was a picture, on to the steps leading to Blackheath and so through the low scrub and back to the cars, just as the weather deteriorated into the inevitable thunderstorm. We spent six hours doing this lovely walk and everyone seemed to enjoy it, despite the weather!

Olive Noble

WALKS REPORT - MYSTERY WALK - SATURDAY, 16TH JANUARY 1988

The day was cloudy as twenty curious people set off on the walk. First we had a long drive to the Newnes State Forest, then on to Natural Bridge, where the walk began. We rambled through low scrub to a rocky pass and down into the valley, we went to look at a large rock overhang by a waterfall. We followed the track down to Budgary Creek, where we took a left hand turn up the creek. The way appears impassable but with some paddling you can cross the creek to a sandy beach under a rock overhang. Here the River Caves are entered, the rock formation appears very much like a railway tunnel with a narrow slot cut through its ceiling. We walked (paddled) through two one hundred metre sections and came out into the creek at the other end of the canyon. We paddled along the creek, enjoying the cool, clear water and watching a colourful yabbie of dark greeny blue with bright red marking. Lunch was under an overhang by the creek before returning through the mysterious canyon. As we came to the entrance Rufus Fantails and Flame Robins were busy in the stunted trees and rock faces. We climbed back up to Natural Bridge, the cars and the world of reality.

Olive Noble.

EVANS'S CROWN

On 20 February 1988 a goodly party gathered at Blackheath to assail Evan's Crown. A further group joined us at South Bowenfels and 19 of us, man, woman, boy, girl drove the 50 km to the mountain.

Up a gentle valley to the boulder strewn slopes then we struggled through thickets of Paterson's Curse infested with sticky seeds. It may have been alright for him but.....!

We attained the backbone of the ridge and blackthorn replaced Paterson. The Tors were large and their foundations precarious. Strict silence and no coughing was demanded as we traversed a large Tor balanced on about 0.9% of its spheroidal surface.

From here a gentler rise between Tors till we strung a rope as light entertainment in reaching the summit platform (but not the actual summit).

It being our Bicentennial Year and approaching the 175th anniversary of Evans claiming his crown, it seems fitting to record that application has been made for inclusion of certain records in the combined Bicentennial-Guinness Special Records Category.

1. For persistence in making the first recorded ascent of Evan's Crown in thongs.

Some chap who didn't leave his name but was last seen sliding down the east side of the mountain.

2. For the largest tribal group recorded as climbing the mountain.

Dianna Edmunds - 6 Souls

3. For the first annual Evan's Crown to Graham Alcorn Book Launch Cross Country Marathon

Shirley Brown and sub party.

4. For the largest number of geriatric ascents since 1975.

The leader - 11½

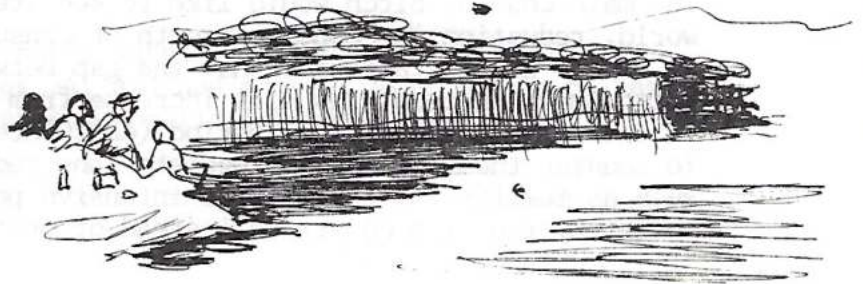
Ron Campagnoni

* * * * *

March Thursday 17th - Woodford Dam

With a damp, misty start, the walk was cut short, but the weather improved through the day. 17 folk ventured out and were rewarded with many bird songs and plenty of attractive flora. The various eucalypts were interesting and the Christmas Bush was blooming. Lunch on the rocks by the dam - attended by Swallows - was a delight.

Dulcie & Reg Toseland

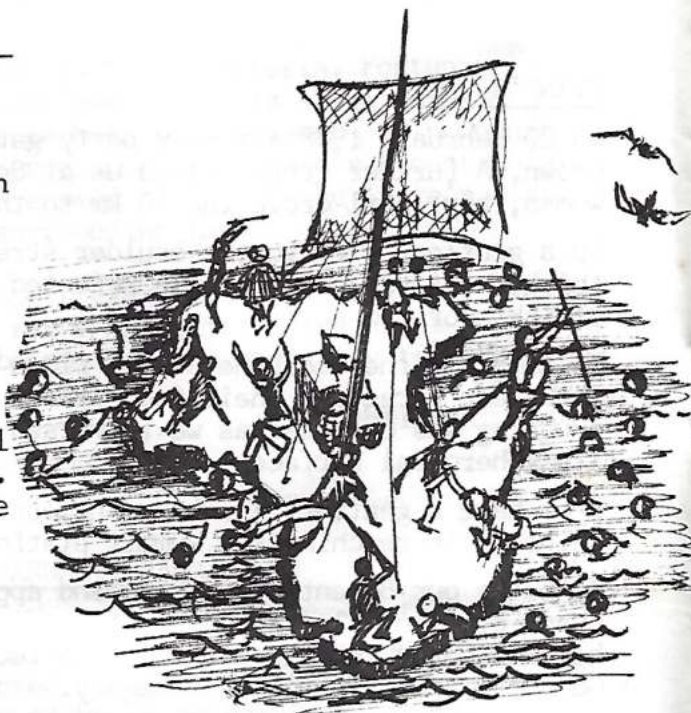


MORE THOUGHTS ARISING

You may recall my previous article in which I attempted to convey Birch's belief that a sustainable society was the goal mankind should seek.

In Chapter II 'Living in a Lifeboat' I endeavour to paraphrase his belief that no nation can turn its back on current world problems. We are all in the same boat. The problems of the third class passengers will eventually threaten the safety of the boat. He then goes on to discuss Australia's role in global development.

He lists numerous injustices and dilemmas which if left unchecked will wreck the status quo - "Transformation to a new sort of society will involve a revolution in economic and political systems".



He then discusses the weaknesses in the 'Lifeboat Theory' which some thinkers suggest as a solution for Australia - This theory likens the rich countries to well stocked lifeboats in troubled waters. Should they help outsiders to survive? Logical reasons for not doing so are readily available.

Birch points out that those who make a deliberate decision to let nations starve would not be involved in the digging of mass graves.

Apart from the humanitarian angle he points out the world is now one huge lifeboat where the behaviour of any group of passengers affects the fate of the boat. In other words, no country can go it alone.

He then raises a most disturbing discussion point....'the resources of the earth are unevenly distributed amongst the countries of the earth. Who owns the resources? Because Australia happened by geographical accident to have camped on a wealth of minerals, should it be theirs for ever and ever?.....
...The future of mankind can no longer be left to the market place.

A reallocation of the world's resources so that they become available to those whose need is greatest rather than to those with the capacity to pay

The world is carved up in an illogical way'. Birch suggests that international taxation could eventually replace traditional assistance programmes. 'Only if we have decided that human life is meaningless and valueless may we rationally deny any moral responsibility towards others'.

Perhaps the last sentence is the most important in his book. He assumes human life has meaning and value and the rest of his thinking is directed towards changing the structure of society to give relief from the evils and injustices that are so obvious.

The main changes Birch would like to see are: zero population growth in the world, reduction in economic growth of consumer goods in the developed world. As things stand statistics show the gap between the developed world and the Latin American countries will increase from a ratio of five to one to eight to one within a fifty year period (calculated in 1974),

To counter these trends he suggests 'The reduction of impediments to trade, such as tariffs, so that labour intensive products of poor countries are bought by the rich countries instead of protecting inefficient industries...

'a world income tax would provide a central resource which would be re-allocated on the basis of need. Citizens of one world must eventually be willing to make sacrifices for that world, just as they sacrifice some of their income now for development in their home countries!'

Australia's role in Global Development. Birch says 'Think not what Australia can do for you but what can Australia do for the rest of the world.'

Strategy No 1: He suggests a strategy for the use and management of non-renewable resources. He and he quotes others, question the 'mad rush to exploit for immediate gain every known or suspect mineral resource on this continent.' Far better he says to make:

- a. provision for the needs of future generations;
- b. to organise cartels with developing countries to see they receive a fair return for their mineral exports;
- c. rather than trading with the highest bidder, allocate resources according to need;
- d. arrange joint plans of action with poorer SE Asian countries to search and use rationally, finds of oil, gas and minerals.

Strategy No 2: Another strategy Birch suggests, is to increase the opportunity for developing countries to sell their goods. The establishment of labour intense industries in developing countries would create much needed employment and income. Australia and developed countries would need to remove their quota and tariff barriers and retrain workers for other industries.

Strategy No 3: is co-operation in the Pacific region that will give scope to indigenous development. Instead of persisting with the Westernisation of the area; he urges regional integration to handle the production and marketing of their products eg tuna, coconut oil.

Strategy No 4: - aid aimed principally to relieve poverty and promote self reliance. Despite the United Nations General Assembly recommendation that developed countries should contribute a minimum net amount of 0.7% of its G.N.P. for international aid, the average contribution has only been 0.35% (i.e. in 1976). However Birch questions the value of aid which assists the entrenchment of a middle and upper class elite in some recipient countries. He would prefer aid to be directed towards workers co-operatives.

Strategy No 5: is to assist developing countries to become self sufficient in food. Birch suggests Australia should develop a food bank to meet emergency needs in developing countries.

He concludes this chapter with a call to educate the younger generation into a 'global awareness of the interdependence of all countries.'

Lloyd Jones

KYLIE TENNANT

The death occurred in February of the noted author, Kylie Tennant. She had her first novel published at the age of 24, and had another nine novels to her credit, as well as plays, short stories and non fiction works.

She had a cottage at Shipley and had a great sympathy for our aims and objects and gave her support in the fight against the development of the Fairmont Resort.

A WALK ON THE EAST SIDE

Ian Brown, our guest speaker for February, told how he walked with three companions up the East Coast of Cape York. This was through wild, inhospitable country - jungle, rain forest, coastal heath land, long lonely beaches and some of the most beautiful sand dune areas in the world.

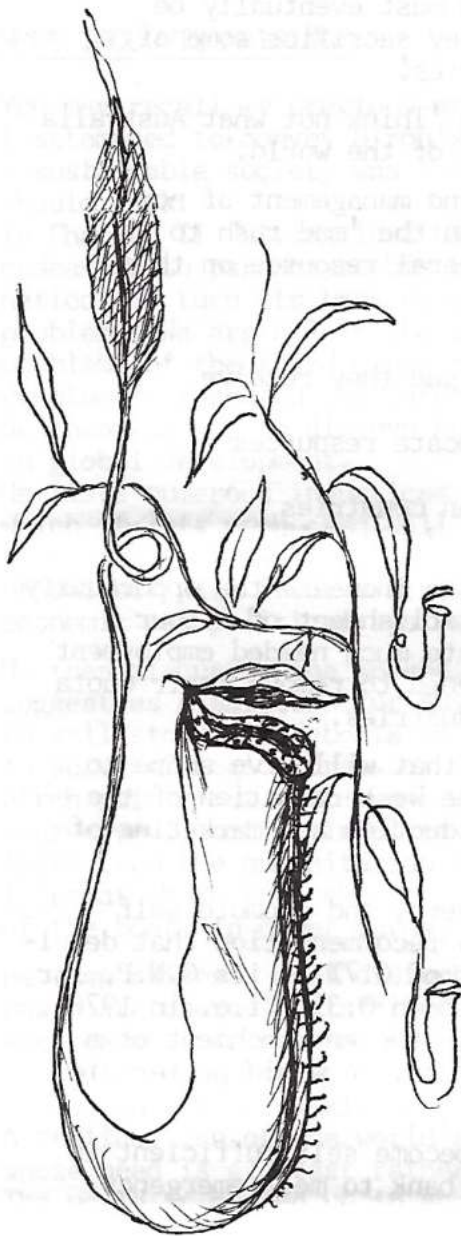
The route followed was over some of the same terrain as that of Edmund Kennedy's fatal expedition in 1848. Kennedy set out from Rockingham Bay to find his way to Cape York with 12 men and 27 horses and tons of provisions and drays to carry them in. Also as a guide he took the faithful aboriginal, Jackey Jackey.

One look at a slide of the thick jungle rain forest shown by Ian Brown is enough to convince anybody of the impossibility of getting a cart laden with provisions, let alone a horse, through this difficult terrain.

Ian Brown's group planned well in advance with all the modern convenience of maps, helicopters radio transmitters and receivers, food drops etc to help them.

They started from the small settlement of Coen (population 400, mostly aboriginal) with six carefully planned food drops along the way. These were chosen by helicopter beforehand and marked on aerial photographs carried by the walkers. Even so the food containers were hard to find in the long grass and undergrowth. Each walker carried large packs and protective covering on their legs and first aid kits to guard against scrub typhus, snake bite, sandflies and crocodiles!

The country varied from rugged mountain rain forest with creeks and waterfalls to flat coastal grasslands with rivers to cross and the fear of crocodiles. At Shellburne Bay, there was an area of over 150 giant white sand dunes rising out of a unique mosaic of lush rain forest, open heath, marshland and lakes. The Commonwealth was recently subject to considerable pressure by a Japanese mining consortium to allow silica mining to proceed in this area. As well as being on the National Estate it has been listed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and was recommended by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service as a National Park. Fortunately the Federal Government decided against the proposal.



CARNIVOROUS PITCHER PLANT
(*Nepenthes mirabilis*)

The last stage of the trek was along the Jardine River where a depot with two rubber dinghies was arranged and the group were able to proceed by water down this considerable stream. They finally arrived at Somerset and Cape York where rusting old cannons were set in the sand guarding the entrance to Torres Strait. During the trek 170 species of birds were recorded, a seagoing taipan was photographed, carnivorous pitcher plants, unique orchids and ant colonies living in strange labarinthine growths on trees were observed.

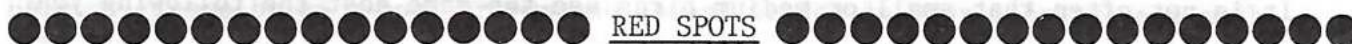
January Discussion with N.P.W.S.

During January the National Parkes and Wild Life Service set up a very well designed display unit to outline the future development of the Wentworth Falls and Valley of the Waters areas. This was for the purpose of inviting public comment and criticism of the proposed plans. At the January general meeting, Gregor Mansell, of N.P.W.S. was present to explain the plans and answer questions about the future development of the area.

Members were anxious to hear what our new hut would look like, but unfortunately this is still undecided, as the first plans proposed are being revised. Extensive maintenance works are being undertaken on all tracks and lookouts, car parks at Wentworth Falls and Valley of the Waters are to be relocated and expanded, roads are to be realigned to provide bus movement and provide lay-by facilities.

Gregor Mansell answered all questions patiently and in detail, but the feeling at the end of the meeting was that the cost of upgrading and restoring tracks was very expensive and that work would proceed as funds became available. The present budget has been allocated to the improvement of the Wentworth Falls area, so that the Hut and Valley of the Waters improvements will come later.

One rumour is that the new Conservation Hut will house the Wentworth Falls triptych, three paintings by Reinis Zusters, which is part of his great exhibition 'Birth of a Nation' a personal Bicentennial commitment by this internationally acclaimed artist who lives in Wentworth Falls.



If you see a red spot on page 1 of your Newsletter, it means your membership is in arrears.

The Society's year ends officially on February 28th each year. Therefore all fees for 1988 start on March 1st. All Office Bearers were elected at the Annual General Meeting on the last Friday in March and are listed on the inside of the front cover.



1988 SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE
PENSIONERS AND JUNIORS \$4.00
SINGLE \$6.00, FAMILY \$10.00
PLEASE RENEW PROMPTLY OR
THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST
NEWSLETTER. RENEWAL FORM ON
BACK COVER

DO BIRDS RE-USE THEIR NESTS?

Graham Alcorn



LEADEN FLYCATCHER
Myiagra rubecula

I have often been asked if birds re-use their nests. After many years of participation in the R.A.O.U. Nest Record Scheme, my experience is that some do, some don't. If a nest has been visited by predators, they certainly don't lay in it again. Some species, Striated Thornbills for instance, use the material from the old nest and build a new one, which you can often find by watching the old one.

But if young are successfully reared in a nest, some species will use it again. Last year I had an instance of a Spotted Pardalote raising three broods in succession in the same nest hole.

Some years ago a Buff-rumped Thornbill raised two broods in a nest built under a tussock at Minnehaha Falls Reserve. Then there was the remarkable instance of a Flame Robin that built a nest on a ledge on the front wall of Barry Barnes' house. Having reared the brood, the bright male was found dead in the garden. The female acquired another mate, a young male in juvenile grey-brown plumage, laid again in the same nest, successfully fledged the young, then repeated the performance a third time! Then the following season, which was this Spring, a pair of Flame Robins used the same nest again, presumably the same female laying in it. Unfortunately the eggs were taken by predators.

It is not often that small or medium birds use the same nest the following year. As a rule it is generally badly weathered and partly disintegrated. There was one instance this year of a Ground Thrush laying two eggs and successfully raising two young in an old nest which was empty when I first found it the year before. This species makes a solid nest which preserves well.

Birds do, however, sometimes use the same site each year - Leaden Flycatchers did, two years running at Medlow Bath, and Tawny Frogmouths for many years at Leura Cascades building a new nest in the same fork each season. Birds of prey, on the other hand, often do use the same nest or eyrie year after year, particularly the Fish Hawk, Osprey. The smallest National Park in Australia is a single rock off the coast of Western Australia surmounted by a huge Osprey's nest which has been used for years.

Yet Grey Fantails, which build a closely woven masterpiece of a nest, having successfully raised two young in one this year, left it in flawless condition, built a second nest a few metres away and raised two more young! They must get a kick out of their nest building artistry.

Rock Warblers, on two occasions to my knowledge, attached a new nest to a perfectly good old one - in fact in one instance, having reared young in the second nest, attached a third and bred again in the same season!

You never know what to expect when studying birds.

Society News

PLANT SALE

The Land Preservation Fund held a very successful Plant Sale at the end of February, over \$1000 being raised towards buying environmentally endangered land.

Many local and interesting plants were for sale, all grown locally for mountain gardens. Thanks are due to our hard-working propagators, Jill Dark, Greta Vanry and Len Symes. Jill's enthusiastic talk on "Do's & Dont's in Mountain Gardens" had us anxious to get home and plant all those wonderful new plants.

A ramble in the afternoon to Denfenella and back covered old tracks but with Jill in charge there is always something new to see. This time from Lady See's Lookout we saw a wonderful flight by a Peregrene Falcon, riding the thermal currents in higher and higher circles until it seemed to reach the height it wanted. Then it flew straight towards the cliff top where it was lost to sight.

Winning Ticket in the raffle for a Hanging Basket of combined Elkhorn and Orchids was won by Diana Edmonds, with yellow ticket C.45.

The Spring Plant Sale will be held in conjunction with our October Meeting.

RECYCLE

The Plant Propagators wish to ask that any surplus pots left after plants are planted out be recycled for future plant sales. If you have a surplus of other empty pots we will be only too happy to receive your donations.

BOOK SALE DAY

On Saturday 30th July, the Land Preservation Fund Committee will hold a Book Sale. Please bring a book or two, no longer needed in your library, and maybe find something you really want from another library. Books will also be for sale and collected at Friday's Meeting.

If you have books you would like to donate and need transport, please 'phone Deirdre 588137.

On Saturday, there will be a Ploughman's Lunch on sale - bread and cheese and pickles washed down by mountain cider. This will be followed by poetry reading.

Mount Tomah Botanic Garden

Wednesday, April 20 - A visit to Mount Tomah Botanic Garden. One of the few places in the world where a large collection of cool climate plants from the Southern Hemisphere is grown. Plants from the Northern Hemisphere are also featured and should be in full Autumn colours. Magnificent stands of eucalypts (Brown Barrel Gums and Blaxlands Stringy Bark). Meet at the Hut at 9.30 a.m., weather permitting. Bring your own lunch. B.B.Q. facilities and coffee bar available. If you need transport please ring Dulcie Toseland - 84.1682 or Deirdre Morton - 58.8137

NOCTURNAL VISITORS

About 10 p.m. March 21st, 1988: Reading peacefully in lounge-room, startled by noises, scrabbling and bumping. Cannot locate source. May be a bird of prey on the balcony: one ate there previously. Cannot see it.

Noises getting louder. Possums in roof? No galloping noises. Rats in roof? Then something runs across the carpet. Mouse! Better find the mouse trap I bought several years ago.

Pause with trap in hand, remembering that a few weeks ago I came face to face with an *Antechinus Swainsonii* in the woodshed, and that I had seen others around. Better identify it. Placed piece of cheese on floor, and turned the lights down.

The creature came out almost at once, at first reluctant to leave the shadows, but then rushing to the dish, snatching the cheese, and returning behind the furniture. Definitely an *Antechinus Swainsonii* (Dusky *Antechinus*). Dark brown all over, nose-cone pretty well black. Movement quite different from that of a mouse, more low bounding than running. Much bigger than a mouse, about the size of a small (laboratory-sized) rat. It is not learning from being frightened. (David has remarked on this). It keeps running out, and is very noisy when it is hidden. Perhaps I can lure it out on to the balcony with cheese. Succeed after several attempts and close the glass door behind it. It is running up and down trying to get back in, and I realise that it is going to be very vulnerable to birds if I leave it there. What to do next?

Thought interrupted by the sight of another one running across the carpet! How to get this one out without letting the other one in? Open door and place cheese just outside. Both rush towards the door at the same time, meet almost nose to nose and rush back to their respective positions.

Finally I get both out and close the door. They are running up and down trying to get back in, but keeping well away from each other. Not a pair? (David says they don't mate till August.) I now think that when they were making so much noise they may have been fighting. I don't want to let them back in, as I have spent about two hours identifying them and getting them out. My problems is solved when they suddenly disappear. They must have decided to jump.

Then I begin to put two and two together. Earlier that evening I had noticed an unpleasant smell in the laundry, and had been unable to find the source. I had left the laundry door open to clear the smell. I had noticed it faintly the evening before, after a day during which I had done the washing and been in and out a lot. I think they must have been shut in the laundry for a day or more.

The Fire Brigade control burnt the bush on the other side of the road a week ago, and then the lower part of our back gardens. The *Antechini* must be hungry. I shall have to put food out at night for a while.

Moral: Spare that mouse until you have identified it!

Rachel Makinson

Note: An *Antechinus* is a Marsupial Mouse. Ed.



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,
WENIORTH 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.

Plans Plans Plans

EXPERT DRAUGHTING SERVICE TO
YOUR NEEDS FROM HOUSE
PLANS - EXTENSIONS ETC. -TO
MECHANICAL SERVICES DESIGN
AND LAYOUT.

B.E.L.L. Draughting

1 TABLELAND RD.
WENTWORTH FALLS (047) 57 3480

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 \$ 6.00

Family \$10.00

Concession \$ 4.00

*strike out which does not apply.



Bankcard, Visa, American Express Cards accepted

FOR ALL YOUR CAMPING GEAR . . .
Maps, Repairs to Rucksacks and Friendly
Service . . . and Much More

Call in at

Katoomba Outdoor Centre Pty. Ltd.

UNIT 2, 88 KATOOMBA STREET, KATOOMBA 2780

Monday to Friday - 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Saturday - 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. (047) 82 3467

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

April 1988

No. 71

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.....	Dulcie 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
Librarian.....	June Blick	88.1051
Hut Duty Organiser.....	Beverly Thompson	57.2076
Land Preservation Officer...	Deidre Morton	58.8137

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

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

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

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

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

WALKS: Walks are organised on the first Sunday, 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.

Contents

Coming Talks and Walks

Reports on Walks

More Thoughts Arising

A Walk on the East Side

January Discussion

Graham Alcorn on Birds

Society News

Nocturnal Visitors

COMING TALKS

April – 'Birds' Talk with Slides

May – Slides of Overseas Trip

June – To Be Decided

WALKS PROGRAMME 1988

IT IS ESSENTIAL ON ALL WALKS IN THE HOT WEATHER THAT MEMBERS SHOULD CARRY AT LEAST 1 LITRE OF WATER

CARRY ON ALL WALKS:

- First Aid Kit
- Torch
- Matches
- Warm Shirt or Sweater
- Protective Rainwear
- Hat

WEAR SAFE FOOTWEAR

April Sunday 3rd – Wentworth Pass

Meet at the Hut at 9.30 am. Excellent walk with fine views across the Jamison Valley, then down into the rain forest area. 5-6 hours approx. Medium – Hard

Leader: Dierdre Morton 58.8137

April Thursday 21st – Creek Walk

Meet at High School, Chapman Parade, Faulconbridge at 10.30 am. Unusual rock formations, sink holes, caves and a variety of things to see. 3-4 hours approx. Easy.

Leader: Win Millar 57.1464

April Saturday 23rd – Medlow Bath Wander

Meet at 24 Bellevue Crescent, Medlow Bath at 10.00 am. Explore around the Three Brothers area. Walk to the Sun Bath, Maxine's Grotto, Flying Fox and Mark's Tomb. Medium 4-5 hours approx.

Leader: Eric Blick 88.1051

May Sunday 1st – Willawong Pool

Meet at Car Park, South Hazelbrook at 9.00 am. Walk to Willawong Pool, Terrace Falls and Victoria Falls. 5 hours approx. Medium.

Leader: Bob Jones 58.8361

May Thursday 19th – Lyre Bird Dell Area

Meet at Gordon Falls Bus Stop, Olympian Parade at 9.30 am. Walk to Lyre Bird Dell, Pool of Siloam, Gordon Falls and Prince Henry Walk. Extensive views, waterfalls etc. Easy 4-5 hours approx.

Leader: Dulcie & Reg Toseland

May Saturday 21st – Black Jerry's Ridge – Cox River – Six Foot Track

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 8.30 am. PROMPT. Proceed along Megalong Valley road to Six Foot Track entrance (some cars will be left here). The rest to the Mountains River Riders gate entrance. Along Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox River, walk by the river, then up the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley Road. Very Hard – Hard 7 hours approx. Kangaroos can be sighted along the ridge.

Leaders: John & Olive Noble. 87.8342

June Sunday 5th – Leura Forest

Meet at the Old Swimming Pool, Leura at 9.30 am. A walk through Leura Forest 5-6 hours approx. Medium for regular walkers. Hard for casual walkers.

Leader: David Thomas 84.2121

June Thursday 16th – National Pass

Meet at The Hut at 9.00 am. Overcliff walk – Fletchers Lookout Queen's Cascade and National Pass. Extensive views across the Jamison Valley. 5-6 hours approx. Medium.

Leader: Bob Jones 58.8361

June Saturday 18th – Queen's Road Ramble

Meet at the Bowling Club Lawson at 9.30 am. for an exploratory walk along Queen's Road. Medium. 5-6 hours approx.

Leader: Grace Bayley 59.1955

July Sunday 3rd – Martin's Lookout – Glenbrook Creek

Meet at corner of Burns Road and Macquarie Road Springwood at 10.00 am. (Macquarie Road runs parallel to railway line on southern side between Faulconbridge and Springwood). Walk through rain forest to pools.

Leader: Dierdre Morton 58.8137 5-6 hours approx. Medium – Hard.

July Saturday 16th – Glow Worm Tunnel via the Old Coach Road

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. One hours drive approximately (road in good condition). Walk along Old Coach Road down to Glow Worm Tunnel and return. Different views of an old favourite walk. **BRING A TORCH** 6-7 hours approx. Medium.

Leaders: John and Olive Noble 87.8342

July Thursday 21st – Pulpit Rock – Horseshoe Falls

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right). At 10.00 am. Walk along escarpment to Horseshoe Falls and return. Extensive views across the Grose Valley. 4-5 hours approx. Easy – Medium.

Leader: Rachel Makinson 87.1302

WALK – ROSS CAVE TO PULPIT ROCK – THURSDAY 18th FEBRUARY 1988

This is a short but attractive circular walk through a glen and along the escarpment at Mount Victoria. We were lucky to have perfect weather for it, and more than twenty people turned up.

Ross Cave is quite striking, rather like a smaller version of Mark's Tomb at Medlow Bath. Features of interest near it are a rare *Olearia* ("undescribed" species) and a Satin Bower Bird's bower. The bower is well decorated with blue objects, which the bird rearranged from time to time. He used to have small blue pegs, blue drinking straws and pieces of blue plastic. Recently the pegs have disappeared (would anybody rob a bower bird?) and the straws have been sorted out from the plastic. The bird moved the bower a few metres two or three years ago, from one side of the track to the other.

At the lowest point of the walk we made a diversion along Renitz' Pass to a rockclimbers' track which led us to a small waterfall. It was almost above this waterfall that the peregrine falcons nested the season before last. They did not return last year.

Returning to the main track, we had lunch on a red shale point overlooking Kanimbla Valley, before continuing to Pulpit Rock. During lunch we watched rockclimbers on the other side of Renitz' Pass.

The Council Zoning map, and other maps, show as reserves two handkerchief sized areas around Ross Cave and Pulpit Rock, and a narrow strip of land along the line of the track between them, which is called Renitz' Pass Pathway. (Try saying that to cure hiccups!). The Department of Lands' own maps show these reserved areas as surveyed in full detail, but somehow they were never gazetted. Consequently, they are all on private land. This is true of most of the reserves and access paths in Mount Victoria. Fortunately the Mount Victoria Progress Association became aware of this situation and asked the BMCC to nominate all the areas, together, in some cases, with enough surrounding land to protect them, as Open Space under the State's Bicentennial programme. Most of the threatened areas have been placed on the State's list, including the whole of this walk and some surrounding land.

A note on the name Renitz; You may see it spelt Rienits, or various other ways. He was the school teacher at Mount Victoria round the time of the First World War, and changed the spelling of his name because of the hostility towards Germans at that time.

Rachel Makinson

WALKS REPORT – PORTER’S PASS – SUNDAY 3rd JANUARY 1988

On a cold, drizzly day of Summer, nine of us set off to walk Porter’s Pass. We drove to the start of the walk in Centennial Glen Road, walked across the wind swept ridge to Walls Ledge, then lingered along this track looking at the various wild flowers, which always seem to be in profusion along the Ledge. Down the stone steps to the waterfall, here there was so much water that the steps beside the falls were very slippery and wet. Crossing the creek at the bottom of the falls was quite a hassle, most of us paddling through. As we walked under the cliff face, the weather improved, we saw a Nanking Kestrel high overhead and even a few cicadas made themselves known. We wandered on, up the stone steps and along the top of the escarpment to Fort Rock. Down into Centennial Glen, here the waterfall was a picture, on to the steps leading to Blackheath and so through the low scrub and back to the cars, just as the weather deteriorated into the inevitable thunderstorm. We spent six hours doing this lovely walk and everyone seemed to enjoy it, despite the weather!

Olive Noble

WALKS REPORT – MYSTERY WALK – SATURDAY, 16th JANUARY 1988

The day was cloudy as twenty curious people set off on the walk. First we had a long drive to the Newnes State Forest, then on to Natural Bridge, where the walk began. We rambled through low scrub to a rocky pass and down into the valley, we went to look at a large rock over-hang by a waterfall. We followed the track down to Budgary Creek, where we took a left hand turn up the creek. The way appears impassable but with some paddling you can cross the creek to a sandy beach under a rock overhang. Here the River Caves are entered, the rock formation appears very much like a railway tunnel with a narrow slot cut through its ceiling. We walked (paddled) through two one hundred metre sections and came out into the creek at the other end of the canyon. We paddled along the creek, enjoying the cool, clear water and watching a colourful yabbie of dark greeny blue with bright red markings. Lunch was under an overhang by the creek before returning through the mysterious canyon. As we came to the entrance Rufus Fantails and Flame Robins were busy in the stunted trees and rock faces. We climbed back up to Natural Bridge, the cars and the world of reality.

Olive Noble.

EVAN’S CROWN

On 20 February 1988 a goodly party gathered at Blackheath to assail Evan’s Crown. A further group joined us at South Bowenfels and 19 of us, man, woman, boy, girl drove the 50 km to the mountain.

Up a gentle valley to the boulder strewn slopes then we struggled through thickets of Paterson’s Curse infested with sticky seeds. It may have been alright for him but...!

We attained the backbone of the ridge and blackthorn replaced Paterson. The Tors were large and their foundations precarious. Strict silence and no coughing was demanded as we traversed a large Tor balanced on about 0.9% of its spheroidal surface.

From here a gentler rise between Tors till we strung a rope as light entertainment in reaching the summit platform (but not the actual summit).

It being our Bicentennial Year and approaching the 175th anniversary of Evans claiming his crown, it seems fitting to record that application has been made for inclusion of certain records in the combined Bicentennial Guinness Special Records Category.

1. For persistence in making the first recorded ascent of Evan's Crown in thongs.
Some chap who didn't leave his name but was last seen sliding down the east side of the mountain.
2. For the largest tribal group recorded as climbing the mountain.
Dianna Edmunds – 6 Souls
3. For the first annual Evan's Crown to Graham Alcorn Book Launch Cross Country Marathon
Shirley Brown and sub party.
4. For the largest number of geriatric ascents since 1975.
The leader – 11 ½

Ron Campagnoni

March Thursday 17th – Woodford Dam

With a damp, misty start, the walk was cut short, but the weather improved through the day. 17 folk ventured out and were rewarded with many bird songs and plenty of attractive flora. The various eucalypts were interesting and the Christmas Bush was blooming. Lunch on the rocks by the dam – attended by Swallows – was a delight.

Dulcie & Reg Toseland

MORE THOUGHTS ARISING

You may recall my previous article in which I attempted to convey Birch's belief that a sustainable society was the goal mankind should seek.

In chapter II "Living in a Lifeboat" I endeavour to paraphrase his belief that no nation can turn its back on current world problems. We are all in the same boat. The problems of the third class passengers will eventually threaten the safety of the boat. He then goes on to discuss Australia's role in global development.

He lists numerous injustices and dilemmas which if left unchecked will wreck the status quo – "Transformation to a new sort of society will involve a revolution in economic and political systems".

He then discusses the weakness in the "Lifeboat Theory" which some thinkers suggest as a solution for Australia – This theory likens the rich countries to well stocked lifeboats in troubled waters. Should they help outsiders to survive? Logical reasons for not doing so are readily available.

Birch points out that those who make a deliberate decision to let nations starve would not be involved in the digging of mass graves.

Apart from the humanitarian angle he points out the world is now one huge lifeboat where the behaviour of any group of passengers affects the fate of the boat. In other words, no country can go it alone.

He then raises a most disturbing discussion point..."the resources of the earth are unevenly distributed amongst the countries of the earth. Who owns the resources? Because Australia happened by geographical accident to have camped on a wealth of minerals, should it be theirs for ever and ever?....The future of mankind can no longer be left to the market place.

A reallocation of the world's resources so that they become available to those whose need is greatest rather than to those with the capacity to pay....The world is carved up in an illogical way". Birch suggests that international taxation could eventually replace traditional assistance programmes. "Only if we decided that human life is meaningless and valueless may we rationally deny any moral responsibility towards others.

Perhaps the last sentence is the most important in his book. He assumes human life has meaning and value and the rest of his thinking is directed towards changing the structure of society to give relief from the evils and injustices that are so obvious.

The main changes Birch would like to see are: zero population growth in the world, reduction in economic growth of consumer goods in the developed world. As things stand statistics show the gap between the developed world and the Latin American countries will increase from a ratio of five to one to eight to one within a fifty year period (calculated in 1974), to counter these trends he suggests "The reduction of impediments to trade, such as tariffs, so that labour intensive products of poor countries are bought by the rich countries instead of protecting inefficient industries...'a world income tax would provide a central resource which would be reallocated on the basis of need. Citizens of one world must eventually be willing to make sacrifices for that world, just as they sacrifice some of their income now for development in their home countries'.

Australia's role in Global Development. Birch says 'Think not what Australia can do for you but what can Australia do for the rest of the world'.

Strategy No 1: He suggests a strategy for the use and management of non-renewable resources. He and he quotes others, question the 'mad rush to exploit for immediate gain every known or suspect mineral resource on this continent'. Far better he says to make:

- a. provision for the needs of future generations;
- b. to organise cartels with developing countries to see they receive a fair return for their mineral exports;
- c. rather than trading with the highest bidder, allocate resources according to need;
- d. arrange joint plans of action with poorer SE Asian countries to search and use rationally, finds of oil, gas and minerals.

Strategy No 2: Another strategy Birch suggests, is to increase the opportunity for developing countries to sell their goods. The establishment of labour intense industries in developing countries would create much needed employment and income. Australia and developed countries would need to remove their quota and tariff barriers and retrain workers for other industries.

Strategy No 3: is co-operation in the Pacific region that will give scope to indigenous development. Instead of persisting with the Westernisation of the area, he urges regional integration to handle the production and marketing of their products eg tuna, coconut oil.

Strategy No 4: aid aimed principally to relieve poverty and promote self-reliance. Despite the United Nations General Assembly recommendation that developed countries should contribute a minimum net amount of 0.7% of its G.N.P. for international aid, the average contribution has only been 0.35% (ie in 1976). However Birch questions the value of aid which assists the entrenchment of a middle and upper class elite in some recipient countries. He would prefer aid to be directed towards workers co-operatives.

Strategy No 5: is to assist developing countries to become self-sufficient in food. Birch suggests Australia should develop a food bank to meet emergency needs in developing countries.

He concludes this chapter with a call to educate the younger generation into a 'global awareness of the interdependence of all countries'.

Lloyd Jones

KYLIE TENNANT

The death occurred in February of the noted author, Kylie Tennant. She had her first novel published at the age of 24, and had another nine novels to her credit, as well as plays, short stories and non-fiction works.

She had a cottage at Shipley and had a great sympathy for our aims and objects and gave her support in the fight against the development of the Fairmont Resort.

A WALK ON THE EAST SIDE

Ian Brown, our guest speaker for February, told how he walked with three companions up the East Coast of Cape York. This was through wild, inhospitable country – jungle, rain forest, coastal heath land, long lonely beaches and some of the most beautiful sand dune areas in the world.

The route followed was over some of the same terrain as that of Edmund Kennedy's fatal expedition in 1848. Kennedy set out from Rockingham Bay to find his way to Cape York with 12 men and 27 horses and tons of provisions and drays to carry them in. Also as a guide he took the faithful aboriginal, Jackey Jackey.

One look at a slide of the thick jungle rain forest shown by Ian Brown is enough to convince anybody of the impossibility of getting a cart laden with provisions, let alone a horse, through this difficult terrain.

Ian Brown's group planned well in advance with all the modern convenience of maps, helicopters radio transmitters and receivers, food drop etc to help them.

They started from the small settlement of Coen (population 400, mostly aboriginal) with six carefully planned food drops along the way. These were chosen by helicopter beforehand and marked on aerial photographs carried by the walkers. Even so the containers were hard to find in the long grass and undergrowth. Each walker carried large packs and protective covering on their legs and first aid kits to guard against scrub typhus, snake bite, sand flies and crocodiles!

The country varied from rugged mountain rain forest with creeks and waterfalls to flat coastal grassland with rivers to cross and the fear of crocodiles. At Shellburne Bay, there was an area of over 150 giant white sand dunes rising out of a unique mosaic of lush rain forest, open heath, marshland and lakes. The Commonwealth was recently subject to considerable pressure by a Japanese mining consortium to allow silica mining to proceed in this area. As well as being on the National Estate it has been listed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and was recommended by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service as a National Park. Fortunately the federal Government decided against the proposal.

The last stage of the trek was along the Jardine River where a depot with two rubber dinghies was arranged and the group were able to proceed by water down this considerable stream. They finally arrived at Somerset and Cape York where rusting old cannons were set in the sand guarding the entrance to Torres Strait.

During the trek 170 species of birds were recorded, a seagoing taipan was photographed, carnivorous pitcher plants, unique orchids and ant colonies living in strange labarinthine growths on trees were observed.

January Discussion with NPWS

During January the National Parkes and Wildlife Service set up a very well designed display unit to outline the future development of the Wentworth Falls and Valley of the Waters areas. This was for the purpose of inviting public comment and criticism of the proposed plans. At the January general meeting, Gregor Mansell, of NPWS was present to explain the plans and answer questions about the future development of the area.

Members were anxious to hear what our new hut would look like , but unfortunately this is still undecided, as the first plans proposed are being revised. Extensive maintenance works are being undertaken on all tracks and lookouts, car parks at Wentworth Falls and Valley of the Waters are to be located and expanded, roads are to be realigned to provide bus movement and provide lay-by facilities.

Gregor Mansell answered all questions patiently and in detail, but the feeling at the end of the meeting was that the cost of upgrading and restoring tracks was very expensive and that work would proceed as funds became available. The present budget has been allocated to the improvement of the Wentworth Falls area, so that the Hut and Valley of the Waters improvements will come later.

One rumour is that the new Conservation Hut will house the Wentworth Falls Triptych, three paintings by Reinis Zusters, which is part of his great exhibition 'Birth of a Nation' a personal Bicentennial commitment by this internationally acclaimed artist who lives in Wentworth Falls.

RED SPOTS

If you see a red spot on page 1 of your Newsletter, it means your membership is in arrears.

The Society's year ends officially on February 28th each year. Therefore all fees for 1988 start on March 1st. All Office Bearers were elected at the Annual General Meeting on the last Friday in March and listed on the inside of the front cover.

Don't Forget 1988 SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE
PENSIONERS AND JUNIORS \$4.00
SINGLE \$6.00, FAMILY \$10.00
PLEASE RENEW PROMPTLY OR
THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST
NEWSLETTER. RENEWAL FORM ON BACK COVER

DO BIRDS RE-USE THEIR NESTS?

Graham Alcorn

I have often been asked if birds re-use their nests. After many years of participation in the RAOU Nest Record Scheme, my experience is that some do, some don't. If a nest has been visited by predators, they certainly don't lay in it again. Some species, Striated Thornbills for instance, use the material from the old nest and build a new one, which you can often find by watching the old one.

But if young are successfully reared in a nest, some species will use it again. Last year I had an instance of a Spotted Pardalote raising three broods in succession in the same nest hole.

Some years ago a Buff-rumped Thornbill raised two broods in a nest built under a tussock at Minnehaha Falls Reserve. Then there was the remarkable instance of a Flame Robin that built a nest on a ledge on the front wall of Barry Barnes house. Having reared the brood, the bright male was found dead in the garden. The female acquired another mate, a young male in juvenile grey-brown plumage, laid again in the same nest, successfully fledged the young, then repeated the performance a third time! Then the following season, which was this Spring, a pair of Flame Robins used the same nest again, presumably the same female laying in it. Unfortunately the eggs were taken by predators.

It is not often that small or medium birds use the same nest the following year. As a rule it is generally badly weathered and partly disintegrated. There was one instance this year of a Ground Thrush laying two eggs and successfully raising two young in an old nest which was empty when I first found it the year before. This species makes a solid nest which preserves well.

Birds do, however, sometimes use the same site each year – Leaden Flycatchers did, two years running at Medlow Bath, and Tawny Frogmouths for many years at Leura Cascades building a new nest in the same fork each season. Birds of prey, on the other hand, often do use the same nest or eyrie year after year, particularly the Fish Hawk, Osprey. The smallest National Park in Australia is a single rock off the coast of Western Australia surmounted by a huge Osprey's nest which has been used for years.

Yet Grey Fantails, which build a closely woven masterpiece of a nest, having successfully raised two young in one year, left it in flawless condition, built a second nest a few metres away and raised two more young! They must get a kick out of their nest building artistry.

Rock Warblers, on two occasions to my knowledge, attached a new nest to a perfectly good old one – in fact in one instance, having reared young in the second nest, attached a third and bred again in the same season!

You never know what to expect when studying birds.

Society News

PLANT SALE

The Land Preservation Fund held a successful Plant Sale at the end of February, over \$1000 being raised towards buying environmentally endangered land.

Many local and interesting plants were for sale, all grown locally for mountain gardens. Thanks are due to our hard-working propagators, Jill Dark, Greta Vanry and Len Symes. Jill's enthusiastic talk on "Do's and Dont's in Mountain Gardens" had us anxious to get home and plant all those wonderful new plants.

A ramble in the afternoon to Denfenella and back covered old tracks but with Jill in charge there is always something new to see. This time from Lady See's Lookout we saw a wonderful flight by a Peregrine Falcon, riding the thermal currents in higher and higher circles until it seemed to reach the height it wanted. Then it flew straight towards the cliff top where it was lost to sight.

Winning Ticket in the raffle for a Hanging Basket of combined Elkhorn and Orchids was won by Diana Edmonds, with yellow ticket C.45.

The Spring Plant Sale will be held in conjunction with our October Meeting.

RECYCLE

The Plant Propagators wish that any surplus pots after plants are planted out be recycled for future plant sales. If you have a surplus of other empty pots we will be only too happy to receive your donations.

BOOK SALE DAY

On Saturday 30th July, the Land Preservation Fund Committee will hold a Book Sale. Please bring a book or two, no longer needed in your library, and maybe find something you really want from another library. Books will also be for sale and collected at Friday's Meeting.

If you have books you would like to donate and need transport, please phone Deidre 58 8137.

On Saturday, there will be a Ploughman's Lunch on sale – bread and cheese and pickles washed down by mountain cider. This will be followed by poetry reading.

Mount Tomah Botanic Garden

Wednesday, April 20 – A visit to Mount Tomah Botanic Garden. One of the few places in the world where a large collection of cool climate plants from the Southern Hemisphere is grown. Plants from the Northern Hemisphere are also featured and should be in full Autumn colours.

Magnificent stands of eucalyptus (Brown Barrel Gums and Blaxlands Stringy Bark). Meet at the Hut at 9.30 am, weather permitting. Bring your own lunch. BBQ facilities and coffee bar available. If you need transport please ring Dulcie Toseland – 84.1682 or Deidre Morton – 58.8137

NOCTURNAL VISITORS

About 10 pm March 21st 1988: Reading peacefully in lounge-room, startled by noises, scrabbling and bumping. Cannot locate source. May be a bird of prey on the balcony: one ate there previously. Cannot see it.

Noises getting louder. Possums in roof? No galloping noises. Rats in roof? Then something runs across the carpet. Mouse? Better find the mouse trap I bought several years ago.

Pause with trap in hand, remembering a few weeks ago I came face to face with an *Antechinus Swainsonii* in the woodshed, and that I had seen others around. Better identify it. Placed piece of cheese on floor, and turned the lights down.

The creature came out almost at once, at first reluctant to leave the shadows, but then rushing to the dish, snatching the cheese, and returning behind the furniture. Definitely an *Antechinus Swainsonii* (Dusky *Antechinus*). Dark brown all over, nose-cone pretty well black. Movement quite different from that of a mouse, more low bounding than running. Much bigger than a mouse, about the size of a small (laboratory-sized) rat. It is not learning from being frightened. (David has remarked on this). It keeps running out, and is very noisy when it is hidden. Perhaps I can lure it out on to the balcony with cheese. Succeed after several attempts and close the glass door behind it. It is running up and down trying to get back in, and I realise that it is going to be very vulnerable to birds if I leave it there. What to do next?

Thought interrupted by the sight of another one running across the carpet! How to get this one out without letting the other one in? Open door and place cheese just outside. Both rush towards the door at the same time, meet almost nose to nose and rush back to their respective positions.

Finally I get both out and close the door. They are running up and down trying to get back in, but keeping well away from each other. Not a pair? (David says they don't mate till August). I now think that when they were making so much noise they may have been fighting. I don't want to let them back in, as I have spent about two hours identifying them and getting them out. My problem is solved when they suddenly disappear. They must have decided to jump.

Then I begin to put two and two together. Earlier that evening I had noticed an unpleasant smell in the laundry, and had been unable to find the source. I had left the laundry door open to clear the smell. I had noticed it faintly the evening before, after a day during which I had done the washing and been in and out a lot. I think they must have been shut in the laundry for a day or more.

The Fire Brigade control burnt the bush on the other side of the road a week ago, and then the lower part of our back gardens. The *Antechini* must be hungry. I shall have to put food out at night for a while!

Moral: Spare that mouse until you have identified it!

Rachel Makinson

Note: An Antechinus is a Marsupial Mouse. Ed.