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		
	Betty Collings	57.2131		
	Ewart Collings	57.2131		
Walks Convenors .	Olive & John Noble	87.8342		
	June Blick	88,1051		
	Beverley Thompson	57.2076		
	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.

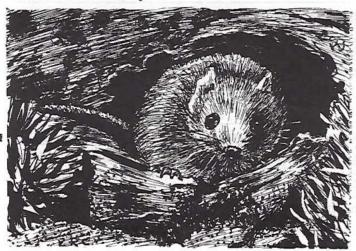
THE HUT: The Society maintains a small museum and information centre at the Conservation Hut. It is manned on weakends and holidays by voluntary helpers.

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.



UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Newsletter

No. 72

July, 1988

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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

WEAR SAFE FOOTWEAR

Hat

ALL PEOPLE ATTENDING WALKS DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK

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 5-6 hours approximately. Medium

Leader: Deirdre Morton 58.8137

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

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m.. One hours drive approx. (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

August Sunday 7th - Bruce's Walk

Meet at Leura Public School at 9.00 a.m. Mt Hay Road to Medlow Bath Aerodrome and return. Bruce's Walk was the longest walk ever constructed in the Blue Mountains. Opened in 1931 it was constructed as a maintenance access track for an electrical transmission line. This section should take about three hours approx (6 hours return). Medium-Hard. Leader: David Thomas 84.2121

August Thursday 18th - Wentworth Falls Walk.

Meet at Falls Reserve at the south end of Falls Road at 9.30 a.m. The walk will go from the Reserve down to Den Fenella then on to Breakfast Point. We proceed from this point along the Overcliff Walk to Lyrebird Lookout. From here several options are open for the return walk to our starting point.

4-5 hours approx. Easy-Medium

Leader: Beverley Thompson 57.2076

August Saturday 20th - Mt Wilson Walk

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. Du Faurs Rock, Chinaman's Hat, Pheasants Cave. After this pleasant round trip walk, for those interested, a visit to the Cathedral of Ferms where there are short trails through the rainforest. 5-6 hours approx. Medium. Leader: Grace Bayley 59.1955

September Sunday 4th - Blue Gum Swamp

Meet at end of Whitecross Road Winmalee (turn left off Hawkesbury Road about 5½ K.M. from Springwood towards Hawkesbury Look Out) at 10 a.m. Wild flowers, birds and the beauty of the bush. 3-4 hours approx. Easy. Leader: Enid Schaffer 54.1244

September Thursday 15th - Part of Arethusa Falls Walk

Meet at Leura Public School at 10.00 a.m. Start at Mt Hay Road and finish Mt Hay Road. Spring wild flowers, open country and waterfalls. 4 hours approx Easy.

Leader: Elvine Thomas (or David) 84 2121

September Saturday 17th - First Leg of Six Foot Track

Meet in front of Gearin's Hotel which is adjacent to Katoomba Railway Station (Great Western highway side) at 9.30 a.m. Start at Marked Tree and proceed down into Nelly's Glen along the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley. Lunch at Ford Crossing before the return walk. The rest of the Six Foot Track will be covered by one day walks in other walks programmes. 6 hours approx. Medium-Hard. Leader; Bob Jones. 58.8361

October Sunday 2nd - Gladstone Pass - Roberts Pass

Meet at east end of Fitzroy Street Leura at 9.00 a.m. Gladstone Pass dates back to 1895 and Roberts Pass to 1903. There is an interesting stone stairway on Gladstone Pass. The walkers will see the first of the Spring wildflowers and some fine escarpment view. 6 hours approximately. Medium - Hard. Leader: David Thomas 84.2121

October Saturday 15th - Walls Cave Walk

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 10.30 p.m. This is a chance to see part of the start of the Grand Canyon. The walk will touch at Walls Cave and Lake Medlow. More information can be obtained from the leader who has walked the area several times. 4 hours approx. Easy.

Leader: Rachel Makinson 87.1302

October Thursday 20th - Mt York - Cox's Road - Lockyer's Road

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. The walk will start at Mt York, go down the old Cox's Road to Hartley Vale, the optional return is up Lockyer's Road to Mt York Road (Car ferry for drivers will be arranged). 5 hours approx.

Leader: Bob Jones 58.8361

November Sunday 6th

Arrangements are in hand for a walk on this date. Details will be published in the October News Letter and Local Press.

November Thursday 17th - Hassan's Walls

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car park at 9.45 a.m. Wild flowers and birds, see side effects of mining. Local geology and history, interesting talk on these subjects from the leader. 3-4 hours approx. Easy walking. Leader; Ron Compagnoni 87.8899

November Saturday 19th - Bell Trees Property, Bell

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. Bell Trees property has many interesting features including natural pagodas (rock formations). The semi-closed over clearing, in a canyon called The Cathedral is unforgetable. 5-6 hours approx. Easy - Medium.

Leaders: June and Eric Blick. 88-1051

December Sunday 4th - Annual Barbeque

Meet at The Hut at 10.00 a.m. for a ramble on one of the tracks around the area. 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 15th - Wilson's Glen

Meet at Woodford Station Commuter Car Park (adjacent to the station in Railway Parade) at 10.45 a.m. to meet trains from Sydney and Lithgow. A leisurely walk down Wilson's Glen to Gypsy Pool. Long lunch in a large cool over-hang. Wilson's Glen has a romantic story to it, which will be narrated by the leader. 3 hours approx. Easy.

Leader: Deirdre Morton 58.8137

December Saturday 17th - Federal Falls Walk

Meet at corner of Great Western Highway and Honour Parade (opposite Lawson Station) at 9.45 a.m. to meet trains from Sydney and Lithgow. This walk is in the Lawson area and goes through Adelina Falls, Junction Falls a side track to Federal Falls (200m) then back to the main track to Cataract Falls. Plenty of cool spots. 4-5 hours approx. Easy Leader: Ruth Jones 58 8361

WALK - EMPIRE PASS LAWSON - SATURDAY 19TH MARCH 1988

Although it was a misty and slightly rainy day, twenty people turned up to walk through this beautiful little ravine. We were quite glad of our raincapes and umbrellas but at no time did the dampness spoil our pleasure. One treasure disclosed by the mist was the beauty of the spiders' webs stretched from reed to reed, or across the track, like crystal-beaded shawls.

We reversed the usual order of the walk, walking first along the upper track from Fairy Falls to Echo Point, which is not to be confused with the one at Katoomba. Here there is a wide area of fairly flat rocks, just fine for a picnic, so we had morning tea. A steep little track leads down to the Echo point, where sometimes two echoes can be heard. The flowers along the uppper track were mainly red lambertia formosa, tiny actinotus minor, and a star-dusting of little white flowers which I think are called platysace linearfolia, if I have identified it correctly from the BOOK.

From Echo Point to Frederica Falls is not the pleasantest part of the walk, but had to be endured to get on to the actual Empire Pass. This was a different world of moss, ferns, rocks, rainforest and creek. The ferns were young and bright red. The path was narrow and clung to the side of the little gorge. There was a difficult creek crossing almost below the rock at Echo Point where we had stood two hours before. Then we thankfully took refuge from the moist air in the only shelter cave large enough for twenty people and had our lunch.

The rest of the walk through deep shade and mossy trees and rocks brought us to the abrupt end of the canyon, at Dante's Glen, where one hundred year old names are carved into a large rock. The short sharp climb to the top brought us back to our starting point, just $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours from the beginning of the walk.

Grace Bayley.

WALK - WENTWORTH PASS - SUNDAY 3RD APRIL 1988

The excellent walk with fine views across the Jamison Valley turned out to be a little different. Owing to the uncompleted state of Slack Stairs it turned out to be a National Pass walk. It turned out to be a very wet day but waterfalls were numerous and superb. Deirdre Morton, as leader, turned out to be Dave Thomas. Five people turned out, one reluctant, two willing and two enthusiastic - 'What a turn out'!!!

WALK CREEK, FAULCONBRIDGE - THURSDAY 21ST APRIL 1988

Eighteen people, including five new walkers, set out on a pleasant morning. We commenced at the head of Faulconbridge Creek. After the heavy rains, the hillside and crossing were rather slippery but from there on, a well defined track followed the creek. A few flowers only were blooming but the bush held promise of a bountiful spring. Some brilliant scarlet and blue toadstools were found and photographed by one of our group. Tall, ancient blackboys were of interest as were the ferns and tree ferns bordering the creek.

Lunch was taken at a broad rocky area of sinkholes. A short distance further on the creek plunged over a beautiful waterfall into a quite substantial pool, surrounded by white sand, below.

A few younger members crossed the top and descended the opposite slope to the pool area. The rest of us admired the fern filled grotto behind the fall, from above. It was a satisfying walk and we decided we would do it again in the Spring.

W.Millar

WALK - WILLAWONG POOL - SUNDAY 1ST MAY 1988

After all the rainy days, Sunday seemed to be a miracle. Sunny and Mild. The original idea for this walk was to walk to Willawong Pool via Victor Falls and Terrace Falls then walk down to what is known as The Lake for lunch. After lunch I planned to explore down Bedford Creek to Lester Take and, if the way was reasonable, to push on a bit further before retracing our steps. Both these Lakes are lakes in name only, they are very medium size pools.

We had seven walkers which was good considering the weather for the three previous days. The creeks were running high so in the morning after a group discussion, for safety reasons, we decided to give the parts of the walk to Willawong Pool and down to Lester Lake a miss.

To make up for the abandoned parts of the walk we decided to go over into the next valley and have a look at Cataract Falls.

We arrived at Cataract Falls about 1.00 p.m. and had a leasurely lunch on a TABLE in the picnic area. Nice and dry, no wet bottoms. Being weather wise after the last month we eyed the clouds forming up and decided to walk back to Hazelbrook past the old bush swimming pool. This pool formed by a small concrete dam had been very popular with the visitors until dwellings with septic outlets made it unhygienic. It is now derelict. We arrived at the car park about 3.00 p.m.

Sorry folks that the walk was a bit patchy but it was the best I could do under the circumstances. Thanks for coming along. Yes it did rain that night.

Bob Jones





WILDLIFE INFORMATION AND RESCUE SERVICE INC.

WILDLIFE INSIGHTS 11

From the 16th July to the 7th August WIRES will be holding its second Wildlife Insights Art Exhibition at the Long Gallery in the Australian Museum.

WIRES has had a few difficult months in regard to finances and hope the Exhibition will improve the health of their bank account. They are very lucky to have some of Australia's best artists in the fields of painting, prints, glass, ceramics and fabric. On the back page is an advert for the Wildlife Insights 11.

WIRES would particularly like to bring to your notice the Preview, on Friday night, 7pm July 15, where Tim Moore, Minister for the Environment will speak. (\$5 entrance fee).

WATER! WATER!! EVERYWHERE

For seventeen years my family have lived in an unsewered area on a battle-axe block with the entry by a long, muddy, gently sloping drive. In wet weather drainage from other houses up the hill combines with rainwater to create a problem with access to our house. We spend some time making sure the water can leave the drive quickly. If it does not it either lies on the surface making the soil soft and liable to damage, or worse, it careers along the wheel tracks taking everything before it. If we can look after the water, the drive looks after itself, the alternative being a very expensive repair job. A little drainage saves a lot of blue metal!

During the recent wet weather I spent a few days in the Blue Mountains. As I sloshed along the tracks in your beautiful area I found it impossible to ignore the behaviour of the water. On all but the most degraded of tracks there were some remains of the drains constructed by the original track builders, but in most cases these were barely operational. In dry weather sticks fall and leaves blow into open drains, then when it rains silt is washed against these to form an effective barrier. I found myself continually pausing during walks to pull sticks and sand out of the mouth of a drain and placing the debris in the path of the water to turn it back the way the track-builders intended.

Tracks, if kept dry, seem to withstand the pounding of innumerable feet to an amazing degree. But if water lies on them the soil remains soft, it is kept loose by walkers and when heavy rain comes, that loose soil is washed away, creating a deeper hole which collects more water which... Eventually the track becomes a gulley down which the water rushes, taking all the soil with it before cascading into the bush in a harmful torrent. If the water can be removed from the track in small quantities at close intervals, it travels gently into the adjoining vegetation as it would have done had the track not been there.

A number of different problems met my eye during those few days. In some places a rock weeps water beside the track so a little groove has been cut in the rock to collect the seepage. It can probably carry only two or three litres an hour but in the case of a rock which weeps most of the time that is a lot of water and the little groove does a great job. Unfortunately it only takes a passing leaf or two to block it but at least it is easy to fix. More difficult were cases where a little ditch has been dug along the uphill side of the track to direct water into the drain. Often these ditches appeared not to have been cleared for years and emptying them would have been very tedious without an implement. I contented myself with clearing a little bit on each side of the drain so that at least small volumes of water could be accommodated by the ditch.

Pipes are often used to take water across the path, and on the whole these remain entirely open -- except at the mouth. An occasional deluge will wash large bits of debris across the opening and all water thenceforth jumps the pipe and rushes off to gouge out the track downhill. Happily it was generally easy to remove the debris and place it, perhaps with the help of a couple of stones, to direct the water back into the pipe.

Logs placed at intervals along a track are usually intended to catch water and send it to the side. Silt deposited by the water can turn the log into a little step, which is all to the good, but if too much sand builds up along the side of the track the water tumbles over the log and builds into a destructive force. I found a stick or sharp stone scratched into the litter at one point on the downhill side opened a passage so the rain could trickle in a natural direction.

My husband, whose love for the great outdoors can only be described as limited, recently walked down to Prince's Rock. I convinced him that the track had been re-built and that the journey from the Falls Road car park would not occasion undue privations. While admiring the new track work he noticed even there small signs of erosion and remarked how hard it must be to judge water movements when building a track in dry weather. We also commented that siltation on a new track can be severe because there is so much loose material lying around.

While paddling along I decided that next time I go walking during or after rain I must carry a little trowel -- where there is a lot of silt a small spade would be a great help. I also reflected that though I was leaving behind me many little rivulets trickling gently into the bush, one person during an occasional visit to the Mountains is not going to achieve a great deal. Drains on tracks must necessarily be small and explosed to blockage. They are easy to clear but it needs to be done often. I began to reflect on the possibility of several dozen people, or even a couple of hundred, all of whom were willing to give a few minutes of their average walking hour to fixing up a drain or two.

I am aware that there has been recent controversy about amateur track building and maintenance in the Blue Mountains area, but the clearance of established drains, though distinctly less glamorous, would be very unlikely to cause any damage, even when carried out by the untrained. From my family's experience maintaining our drive, I would think that the life expectancy of a walking track where the drains are kept clear might well be ten or twenty times that of the same track where the water is allowed to follow its destructive path.

Nothing will be able to contain the results of the occasional cloudburst -- it is not practicable nor perhaps even desirable to build drains large enough to cope with exceptional conditions, but even then, if the drains are clear they should cope with half the water and the other half will do less harm during its brief rampage. There is more potential damage in the trickling and seeping that can continue for days or weeks after wet weather than in the short period of a deluge.

Ideally Council or NPWS should have maintenance teams roving the tracks several times a year dealing with these problems but in practice this does not happen, and given the cost of such teams it is unlikely to happen in the forseeable future.

If a number of people who walk regularly along the tracks were willing to pause occasionally when they saw silt in a drain, they might ultimately save the tax-payer thousands in track restoration -- and more important, keep the walks in good condition for us to enjoy. Eroded tracks and damaged bush do nothing to improve a day's outing! By its very nature the work of clearing drains needs to be done continually, as the need arises. It is an ideal job for someone like me who loves the mountains and would like to spend a few minutes giving something back. If there were a hundred like me...?

I should be most interested to hear the views of other members.

Jill Curnow Dural

* EARLY CONSERVATION

"The run of water that supplied the settlement was observed to be only a drain from a swamp at the head of it; to protect it, therefore, as much as possible from the sun, an order was given out, forbidding the cutting down of any trees within fifty feet of the run."

Captain Collins, from 'Sydney Cove 1788' by John Cobley.

ANTECHINUS - LIFE STORY

We are fortunate in having three species of Antichinne in the Upper Blue Mountains. They are commonly called marsupial mice although they are not related to rodents.

The word antechinus is derived from the Greek meaning 'hedgehog-like' probably because of the spikey appearance of their fur. Of these three species Antechinus Swansonii is the largest with very dark brown, almost black fur. This is followed in size by Antechinus Flavipes - referring to the yellowish light brown fur on the upper parts of its feet. The rest of the fur is mousey brown on the main body with paleunderparts. The third and smallest Antechinus Stuartii could well be mistaken for a house mouse. Fur is greyish brown with paler underparts.

All the three have flatish, pointed faces, more pointed than any of the rodents and their ability to reverse their hind feet gives added mobility in climbing and descending. Their swiftness and ability is one of the many means of identification.

They are equally at home in diverse habitats whether bushland, garden sheds, outhouses, wood piles, kitchens and living rooms, even in lounge chairs. They are very clean with little or no smell except at mating time when the sternal gland becomes active. They are mainly insectivorous e.g. spiders, moths, beetles etc but would not refuse a small bird, mouse or lizard should the opportunity arise.

It would be unwise to use weight and measurement for identification purposes as they increase in weight considerably prior to mating, which takes place late winter to early spring depending on the geographical location. Copulation can last as long as 7-8 hours or even longer and is anything but gentle. Within 3-4 weeks all the males will die (not surprising!).

It appears the build up to and during mating causes such upheavals within his system and hormones that it affects his immune system, leaving him open to disorders of the blood and intestine, and also bacterial infections of the liver.

The more placid female avoids this extreme syndrome and may survive to breed the following year provided she is not eaten by her numerous offspring which could number 6-10 or even 12! Gestation lasts almost a month. The young will cling to the mammae glands of the foraging mother for about five weeks by which time movement of the mother becomes cumbersome and the young are left in a nest, hollow logs, rock crevices for instance, the female returning periodically to give food and warmth.

We commend Rachel Makinson for her interest and concern when she had a visitation from these Dasyuridae.

David Thomas

A HUNDRED HARDY NATIVES

A new publication by Jill Dark should be out in time for the Land Preservation Fund's next Native Plant Sale in October. This is called "A Hundred Hardy Natives for Blue Mountain Gardens". It describes a hundred native trees, shrubs, ground covers and climbers, and should be a handy reference guide for selecting the right plants for your garden.

CONFRONTING THE FUTURE

Birch's Chapter III is entitled Nuisance or Nemesis? He is referring to the ever increasing environmental deterioration of the globe. A nuisance to the short term thinkers but a nemesis to the long term thinker. After some facts and figures he writes "A society committed to growth for growths sake, and production for production's sake, not only pits man against the natural world, but also man against man because of the inherently competitive nature of the enterprise".

In the 1950s he states environmental stress was seen as a local nuisance but by the 1970s a new term had entered the ecological vocabulary - global monitoring. He introduces us to the ecological formula EI=PxCxD where P= population size C=consumption of resources per person and D= environmental deterioration of life support systems per person. EI or Environmental Impact is the product of those three.

This chapter is mainly concerned with Component D, ie deterioration of life support systems, but he points out that no matter how much C & D are reduced if P continues to grow the end product will remain or increase. Birch divides the deterioration of life supports into two categories (a) "Direct assaults on human well-being such as damage to health from radioactive fall out, lead mercury and cadmium poisoning, aggravation of lung disease by air pollution, damage to goods and buildings, by the quality of life from noise and litter." b) Indirect effects on human well-being through interference with the natural functions of biological systems such as the death of rivers and lakes arising from overloading with organic wastes, fertilizers and industrial chemicals, the side effects of insecticides on non-target organisms, soil erosion and deterioration of land through irrigation and changes in the gaseous composition and temperature of the atmosphere".

Direct effects receive much more attention from scientists than chronic manifestations yet the latter may be far worse. The sponging effect of the earth's environment may reach a saturation point and trigger off an ecological disaster. Birch points out the political problems, national and international to initiate change. How many of us would take kindly to legislation financing the outlawing of garbage dumps, outfall sewers and compulsory returns of all cans, bottles and paper?

Under the heading of "Three Australian Scenarios" he outlines the plight of the George's, Parramatta and Cook's rivers and the degradation of their estuaries and their loss as fish nurseries. Similar problems he claims exist right along Australia's eastern seaboard. The second scenario is unsatisfactory disposal of sewage into the sea and its effect on marine life. The third problem in water polution is the contamination of the largest river system in the country, the Murray River and its tributaries.

That most of the above is not news to us shows how far public awareness has come since Birch's book was published in 1976.

Thought provoking however is his contention that government and science 'treat symptoms and ignore causes' of polution. He suggests we need to change the direction of growth and to reduce the extent of production of some sorts of things. He develops this theme and asks "why we need any more G.N.P., any more factories any more advertising that simply increases consumption. What we really need is a redistribution of existing wealth and a reallocation of society's resources. If this sounds Utopian it is less Utopian by far than the supposit-

ion that our present soceity, geared to increasing growth in consumer goods with little concern for social goals, can provide effective reforms to permit mankind to sustain life on this earth". He quotes Dr Schumacher as saying 'the earth cannot afford the modern world, it requires too much and accomplishes too little. It is too uneconomic."

Among other conclusions with which he rounds off this chapter, there is in my opinion the most important one. He states "Australians need to ask themselves what advantage there is in having more people, more industries, more environmental deterioration and reduced quality of life"

P.S.

'Habitat' in its latest issue features statements made by Professor Bellamy from a public address on the state of the world's environment (I feel they give more credence to the writings of Professor Birch). Here are a few of the statistics he gave. United Nations designated the 11th July 1987 as the day on which the world's population reached the 5 billion mark. It increases by 250,000 people each day.

The developed industrialised world contains only 25% of the population and yet uses 80% of the world's resources.

100,000 people die of starvation each and every day.

The export of tropical hardwoods to developed countries has increased 15 fold since 1950.

Nine out of every ten babies are born into the third world.

80,000 square miles of tropical forest are destroyed every year.

People in rich countries spend less than a fifth of their personal income on food, those in the third world 80-90% of their income on food and many starve.

Every acre of the world is losing 8 tonnes of soil a year. One third of the world's total agricultural and pastoral land is now threatened by desertification.

Bellamy marvels at the paradoxical situation whereby humans so dependent on the plant and animal kingdom are so actively destroying the diversity of natural life on which their future welfare depends.

I apologise for such unpalatable reading, but a knowledge of the situation confronting us is the first step towards doing something about it.

Lloyd Jones

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MANY
HAPPY
RETURNS GRETE !

Every member of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society joins together in wishing our most dedicated member -Grete Vanry - a very happy birthday on Saturday, July 16th.

Society News

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

Chris Todd gave a very interesting talk with slides about "Birds" at our April General Meeting. Chris has been photographing birds for many years and makes good use of the latest technical equipment. He knows birds very well. He knows how to approach them without frightening them; how to set up hides and how to attract them within the range of his camera. With the use of an electronic flash he was able to catch an owl in the act of catching a mouse; or a parrot feeding on honey specially spread on a banksia flower; birds on the wing; the beauty of the plumage of sombre coloured birds like ducks, hawks, Cape Barren geese, etc. The colours of gawdy rainbow lorikeets were unbelievable.

Years of skill, patience and care must have gone into the making of such a marvellous collection of slides.

CAMERA IN BRITAIN

For the May General Meeting, Graham & Judy Kerr showed us slides of their travels in England and Scotland. They started in the north of Scotland in the Orkney Islands. These islands are cold and bleak, have figured in two world wars and are the home of countless sea birds. In recent times archaeological studies have uncovered very ancient ruins dating back to 3100 B.C.

The discovery and exploitation of oil in the North Sea has made a difference to the economy of many of the east coast towns of England which were formerly dependent on fishing. This was the next area visited by Graham and Judy. Footpaths and walking tracks cut across farming properties and have done since ancient times - the right of access to which is stoutly defended by English conservationists.

The Lakes District is rightly famous for its beauty and the Kerr's camera did it proud. We could not help noticing, however, the bareness of the hills, where deforestation and sheep grazing over the centuries has had its effect. It reminded me of parts of southern Queensland where thick rain forests gave way to grazing.

BOOK SALE DAY - SATURDAY 30TH JULY from 11 a.m.

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 pickled onions (home made by David Thomas), washed down by mountain cider. There will also be Folk Music — Warren Addicott and his didgeridoo; Graham Alcorn — poems; and folk singers John and Dale Dengate; and Denis Kevans and Sonya Bennett.

ISOBEL BOWDEN'S COLLECTION

In May a working bee was organised to clean up and re-organise the Hut. A busy day was spent, sorting, cleaning out and even re-building some kitchen cupboards. Jim Smith and his students have taken on the task of sorting and cataloging Isobel Bowden's very valuable collection of plant specimens.

JOHN BUKI

Born at Sopron (Hungary) on 13th November, 1917. Died at Sydney (Australia) on 17th May, 1988.

It is to John Buki alone that we of the Society owe thanks for "The Hut" and for the viability and vitality that our control of "The Hut" has brought to the Society. The story of this has been told in earlier issues of "The Newsletter"; let it suffice to say here that it was John who conceived the idea of the Hut and whose unremitting work and rather charming persistence brought the idea to fruition.

The Committee in those early days was unwilling to launch the Society on a scheme that seemed beyond us; we had no money and few members. John changed all that. He wrote innumerable letters and secured donations of materials that enabled the restoration of the building to proceed. His infectious enthusiasm brought many, many hands to the work and what seemed impossible was gradually accomplished.

He organised the "Official Opening" by a Minister of the Crown (who arrived with motor-cycle police escort). A perusal of the Visitors' Book will show that more than three hundred attended.

John had had a chequered life. In his native Hungary he was a university teacher of modern languages until he was required to join the army as an officer. Then he was a P.O.W. in Russia until after World War 11, when he and Elizabeth came to Ausralia. He worked from Broken Hill in a N.S.W. Railways gang for two years and then joined the N.S.W. Education Department as a teacher, serving at Seven Hills and then at Katoomba Primary School until he was promoted and had to transfer.

His was a fertile and creative mind yet for all that he was a truly modest and humble man. We are thankful for his years among us and we mourn his passing. To his very dear wife, Elizabeth, we offer our condolences in her great sorrow.

* * * * *

OVERDUE LIBRARY BOOKS

The following books have been borrowed from your Library and are now overdue.

- *FLOWERING PLANTS IN AUSTRALIA.
- *A THREATENED SPECIES. CONSERVATION STRATEGY FOR AUSTRALIA.
- *THE VOYAGES OF MATTHEW FLINDERS.
- *TREES OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH.
- *GROWING AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS.
- *ENDANGERED ANIMALS OF N.S.W.
- *CONSERVATION IN VICTORIA.
- *ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE DREAMTIME.
- *THE GREAT EXTERMINATION.
- *TOPOGRAPHICAL & ECOLOGICAL NOTES ON THE FLORA OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS.
- *THE FIGHT FOR THE FORESTS.
- *GEOLOGY OF THE WESTERN BLUE MOUNTAINS.

These books are long overdue - please make sure you haven't overlooked them - as lost books should be replaced.

June Blick, Librarian.

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., HAWIHORN VIC 3122

Amount Signed

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 th	
donation is tax deductible and therefore look forward to your	receipt.

Conservation Society Land Preservation Fund. I understand that this donation is tax deductible and therefore look forward to your receipt.
Name (block letters)
Address
Amount Signed Date
The Treasurer, Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society, P.O. Box 29, WENIWORTH FALLS 2782
Dear Sir,
I have forwarded today to the Australian Conservation Foundation a donation expressing a preference that it be spent for the purpose of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Land Preservation Fund.
Name
Address
••••••

..... Date.....

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Objects of the Society as set out in the Consitution 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.

WILDLIFE INSIGHTS II

ARTISTS FOR WILDLIFE

an Exhibition of
Paintings, Ceramics Prints, Glass, Fabric
at the
Long Gallery
Australian Museum

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Proceeds to WIRES NSW Wildlife Information and Rescue Service

We Invite You to the Preview and First Choice of the Works at 7pm on Friday 15 July.

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Ring Diane 887 2703 or Glen 525 1528 to book

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls.

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

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

July 1988 No. 72

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER.

Registered by Australia Post – Publication No. NBHO 925

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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

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

<u>SUBSCRIPTIONS:</u> Pensioners & Juniors \$4.00 per year; Single Membership \$6.00 per year; Family Membership \$10.00 per year.

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

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

COMMITTEE FOR 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 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Confronting the Future
Society News
John Buki

Coming Talks

July – 'The Platypus' Tom Grant August – Environment Topic - Michael Eades September – 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

ALL PEOPLE ATTENDING WALKS DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK

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 5-6 hours approx. Medium.

Leader: Deidre Morton 58.8137

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

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. One hours drive approx. (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

<u>July Thursday 21st – Pulpit Rock – Horseshoe Falls</u>

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

August Sunday 7th – Bruce's Walk

Meet at Leura Public School at 9.00 am. Mt Hay Road to Medlow Bath Aerodrome and return. Bruce's Walk was the longest walk ever constructed in the Blue Mountains. Opened in 1931 it was constructed as a maintenance access track for an electrical transmission line. This section should take about three hours approx (6 hour return). Medium- Hard

Leader: David Thomas 84.2121

August Thursday 18th – Wentworth Falls Walk

Meet at Falls Reserve at the south end of Falls Road at 9.30 am. The walk will go from the Reserve down to Den Fenella then on to Breakfast Point. We proceed from this point along the Overcliff Walk to Lyrebird Lookout. From here several options are open for the return walk to our starting point. 4-5 hours approx. Easy-Medium.

Leader: Beverley Thompson 57.2076

August Saturday 20th – Mt Wilson Walk

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. Du Faurs Rock, Chinaman's Hat, Pheasants Cave. After this pleasant round trip walk, for those interested, a visit to the Cathedral of Ferns where there are short trails through the rainforest. 5-6 hours approx. Medium

<u>Leader</u>: Grace Bayley 59.1955

September Sunday 4th – Blue Gum Swamp

Meet at end of Whitecross Road Winmalee (turn left off Hawkesbury Road about 5 ½ km from Springwood towards Hawkesbury Look Out) at 10.00 am. Wild flowers, birds and the beauty of the bush. 3-4 hours approx. Easy.

Leader: Enid Schaffer 54.1244

September Thursday 15th – Part of Arethusa Falls Walk

Meet at Leura Public School at 10.00 am. Start at Mt Hay Road and finish Mt Hay Road. Spring wild flowers, open country and waterfalls. 4 hours approx. Easy.

<u>Leader</u>: Elvine Thomas (or David) 84.2121

September Saturday 17th – First Leg of Six Foot Track

Meet in front of Gearin's Hotel which is adjacent to Katoomba Railway Station (Great Western Highway side) at 9.30 am. Start at Marked Tree and proceed down into Nelly's Glen along the Six Foot Track to Megalong Valley. Lunch at Ford Crossing before the return walk. The rest of the Six Foot Track will be covered by one day walks in other walks programmes. 6 hours approx. Medium-Hard.

Leader: Bob Jones. 58.8361

October Sunday 2nd – Gladstone Pass – Roberts Pass

Meet at east end of Fitzroy Street Leura at 9.00 am. Gladstone Pass dates back to 1895 and Roberts Pass to 1903. There is an interesting stone stairway on Gladstone Pass. The walkers will see the first of the Spring wildflowers and some fine escarpment view. 6 hours approx. Medium – Hard. Leader: David Thomas 84.2121

October Saturday 15th – Walls Cave Walk

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park (over level crossing and turn right) at 10.30 pm. This is a chance to see part of the start of the Grand Canyon. The walk will touch at Walls Cave and Lake Medlow. More information can be obtained from the leader who has walked the area several times. 4 hour approx. Easy.

Leader: Rachel Makinson 87.1302

October Thursday 20th – Mt York – Cox's Raod – Lockyer's Road

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. The walk will start at Mt York, go down the old Cox's Road to Hartley Vale, the optional return is up Lockyer's Road to Mt York Road (Car ferry for drivers will be arranged). 5 hour approx. Medium

Leader: Bob Jones 58.8361

November Sunday 6th

Arrangements are in hand for a walk on this date. Details will be published in the October News Letter and Local Press.

November Thursday 17th – Hassan's Walls

Meet at Blackheath Station Commuter Car Park at 9.45 am. Wild flowers and birds, see side effects of mining. Local geology and history, interesting talk on these subjects from the leader. 3-4 hours approx. Easy walking.

Leader: Ron Compagnoni 87.8899

November Saturday 19th – Bell Trees Property, Bell

Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 9.30 am. Bell Trees property has many interesting features including natural pagodas (rock formations). The semi closed over clearing, in a canyon called The Cathedral is unforgettable. 5-6 hours approx. Easy – Medium.

<u>Leader</u>: June and Eric Blick. 88-1051

December Sunday 4th – Annual Barbeque

Meet at The Hut at 10.00 am for a ramble on one of the tracks around the area. 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 15th – Wilson's Glen

Meet at Woodford Station Commuter Park (adjacent to the station in Railway Parade) at 10.45 am. to meet trains from Sydney and Lithgow. A leisurely walk down Wilson's Glen to Gypsy Pool. Long lunch in a large cool over-hang. Wilson's Glen has a romantic story to it, which will be narrated by the leader. 3 hours approx. Easy.

Leader: Deirdre Morton 58.8137

December Saturday 17th – Federal Falls Walk

Meet at corner of Great Western Highway and Honour Parade (opposite Lawson Station) at 9.45 am. to meet trains from Sydney and Lithgow. This walk is in the Lawson area and goes through Adelina Falls, Junction Falls a side track to Federal Falls (200m) then back to the main track to Cataract Falls. Plenty of cool spots. 4-5 hours approx. Easy.

<u>Leader</u>: Ruth Jones 58.8361

WALK - EMPIRE PASS LAWSON - SATURDAY 19th MARCH 1988

Although it was a misty and slightly rainy day, twenty people turned up to walk through this beautiful little ravine. We were quite glad of our raincapes and umbrellas but at no time did the dampness spoil our pleasure. One treasure disclosed by the mist was the beauty of the spiders webs stretched from reed to reed, or across the track, like crystal-beaded shawls.

We reversed the usual order of the walk, walking first along the upper track from Fairy Falls to Echo Point, which is not to be confused with the one at Katoomba. Here there is a wide area of fairly flat rocks, just fine for a picnic, so we had morning tea. A steep little track leads down to the Echo point, where sometimes two echoes can be heard. The flowers along the upper track were mainly red *Lambertia formosa*, tiny *Actinotus minor*, and a star-dusting of little white flowers which I think are called *Platysace linearfolia*, if I have identified it correctly from the BOOK.

From Echo Point to Frederica Falls is not the pleasantest part of the walk, but had to be endured to get on to the actual Empire Pass. This was a different world of moss, ferns, rocks, rainforest and creek. The ferns were young and bright red. The path was narrow and clung to the side of the little gorge. There was a difficult creek crossing almost below the rock at Echo Point where we had stood two hours before. Then we thankfully took refuge from the moist air in the only shelter cave large enough for twenty people and had our lunch.

The rest of the walk through deep shade and mossy trees and rocks brought us to the abrupt end of the canyon, at Dante's Glen, where one hundred year old names are carved into a large rock. The short sharp climb to the top brought us back to our starting point, just 5 ½ hours from the beginning of the walk.

Grace Bayley

WALK – WENTWORTH PASS – SUNDAY 3rd APRIL 1988

The excellent walk with fine views across the Jamison Valley turned out to be a little different. Owing to the uncompleted state of Slack Stairs it turned out to be a National Pass walk. It turned out to be a very wet day but waterfalls were numerous and superb. Deirdre Morton, as leader, turned out to be Dave Thomas. Five people turned out, one reluctant, two willing and two enthusiastic – 'What a turn out'!!!

David Thomas

WALK CREEK, FAULCONBRIDGE – THURSDAY 21st APRIL 1988

Eighteen people, including five new walkers, set out on a pleasant morning. We commenced at the head of Faulconbridge Creek. After the heavy rains, the hillside and crossing were rather slippery but from there on, a well defined track followed the creek. A few flowers only were blooming but the bush held promise of a bountiful spring. Some brilliance scarlet and blue toadstools were found and photographed by one of our group. Tall, ancient blackboys were of interest as were the ferns and tree ferns bordering the creek.

Lunch was taken at a broad rocky area of sinkholes. A short distance further on the creek plunged over a beautiful waterfall into a quite substantial pool, surrounded by white sand, below.

A few younger members crossed the top and descended the opposite slope to the pool area. The rest of us admired the fern filled grotto behind the fall, from above. It was a satisfying walk and we decided we would do it again in Spring.

W. Millar

WALK – WILLAWONG POOL – SUNDAY 1st MAY 1988

After all the rainy days, Sunday seemed to be a miracle. Sunny and mild. The original idea for this walk was to walk to Willawong Pool via Victor Falls and Terrace Falls then walk down to what is known as The Lake for lunch. After lunch I planned to explore down Bedford Creek to Lester Lake and, if the way was reasonable, to push on a bit further before retracing our steps. Both these Lakes are lakes in name only, they are very medium size pools.

We had seven walkers which was good considering the weather for the three previous days. The creeks were running high so in the morning after a group discussion, for safety reasons, we decided to give the parts of the walk to Willawong Pool and down to Lester Lake a miss.

To make up for the abandoned parts of the walk we decided to go over into the next valley and have a look at Cataract Falls.

We arrived at Cataract Falls about 1.00 pm. and had a leisurely lunch on a TABLE in the picnic area. Nice and dry, no wet bottoms. Being weather wise after the last month we eyed the clouds forming up and decided to walk back to Hazelbrook past the old bush swimming pool. This pool formed by a small concrete dam had been very popular with the visitors until dwellings with septic outlets made it unhygienic. It is now derelict. We arrived at the car park about 3.00 pm.

Sorry folks that the walk was a bit patchy but us was the best I could do under the circumstances. Thanks for coming along. Yes it did rain that night.

Bob Jones.

WILDLIFE INSIGHTS 11

From the 16th July to the 7th August WIRES will be holding its second Wildlife Insights Art Exhibition at the Long Gallery in the Australian Museum.

WIRES has had a few difficult months in regard to finances and hope the Exhibition will improve the health of their bank account. They are very lucky to have some of Australia's best artists in the fields of painting, prints, glass, ceramics and fabric. On the back page is an advert for the Wildlife Insights 11.

WIRES would particularly like to bring to your notice the Preview, on Friday night, 7 pm July, where Tim Moore, Minister for the Environment will speak. (\$5 entrance fee).

WATER! WATER!! EVERYWHERE

For seventeen years my family have lived in an unsewered area on a battle-axe block with the entry by a long, muddy, gently sloping drive. In wet weather drainage from other houses up the hill combines with rainwater to create a problem with access to our house. We spend some time making sure the water can leave the drive quickly. If it does not it either lies on the surface making the soil soft and liable to damage, or worse, it careers along the wheel tracks taking everything before it. If we can look after the water, the drive looks after itself, the alternative being a very expensive repair job. A little drainage saves a lot of blue metal!

During the recent wet weather I spent a few days in the Blue Mountains. As I sloshed along the tracks in your beautiful area I found it impossible to ignore the behaviour of the water. On all but the most degraded of tracks there were some remains of the drains constructed by the original track builders, but in most cases these were barely operational. In dry weather sticks fall and leaves blow into open drains, then it rains silt is washed against these to form an effective barrier. I found myself continually pausing during walks to pull sticks and sand out of the mouth of a drain and placing the debris in the path of the water to turn it back the way the track-builders intended.

Tracks, if kept dry, seem to withstand the pounding of innumerable feet to an amazing degree. But if water lies on them the soil remains soft, it is kept loose by walkers and when heavy rain comes, that loose soil is washed away, creating a deeper hole which collects more water which... Eventually the track becomes a gully down which the water rushes, taking all the soil with it before cascading into the bush in a harmful torrent. If the water can be removed from the track in small quantities at close intervals, it travels gently into the adjoining vegetation as it would have done had the track not been there.

A number of different problems met my eye during those few days. In some places a rock weeps water beside the track so a little groove has been cut in the rock to collect the seepage. It can probably carry only two or three litres an hour but in the case of a rock which weeps most of the time that is a lot of water and the little groove does a great job.

Unfortunately it only takes a passing leaf or two to block it but at least it is easy to fix. More difficult were cases where a little ditch has been dug along the uphill side of the track to direct water into the drain. Often these ditches appeared not to have been cleared for years and emptying them would have been very tedious without an implement. I contented myself with clearing a little bit on each side of the drain so that at least small volumes of water could be accommodated by the ditch.

Pipes are often used to take water across the path, and on the whole these remain entirely open -- except at the mouth. An occasional deluge will wash large bits of debris across the opening and all water thenceforth jumps the pipe and rushes off to gouge out the track downhill. Happily it was generally easy to remove the debris and place it, perhaps with the help of a couple of stones, to direct the water back into the pipe.

Logs placed at intervals along a track are usually intended to catch water and send it to the side. Silt deposited by the water can turn the log into a little step, which is all to the good, but if too much sand builds up along the side of the track the water tumbles over the log and builds into a destructive force. I found a stick or sharp stone scratched into the litter at one point on the downhill side opened a passage so the rain could trickle in a natural direction.

My husband, whose love for the great outdoors can only be described as limited, recently walked down to Prince's Rock. I convinced him that the track had been re-built and that the journey from the Falls Road car park would not occasion undue privations. While admiring the new track he noticed even there small signs of erosion and remarked how hard it must be to judge water movements when building a track in dry weather. We also commented that siltation on a new track can be severe because there is so much loose material lying around.

While paddling along I decided that next time I go walking during or after rain I must carry a little trowel - - where there is a lot of silt a small spade would be a great help. I also reflected that though I was leaving behind me many little rivulets trickling gently into the bush, one person during an occasional visit to the Mountains is not going to achieve a great deal. Drains on tracks must necessarily be small and exposed to blockage. They are easy to clear but it needs to be done often. I began to reflect on the possibility of several dozen people, or even a couple of hundred, all of whom were willing to give a few minutes of their average walking hour to fixing up a drain or two.

I am aware that there has been recent controversy about amateur track building and maintenance in the Blue Mountains area, but the clearance of established drains, though distinctly less glamorous, would be very unlikely to cause any damage, even when carried out by the untrained. From my family's experience maintaining our drive, I would think that the life expectancy of a walking track where the drains are kept clear might well be ten or twenty times that of the same track where the water is allowed to follow its destructive path.

Nothing will be able to contain the results of the occasional cloudburst — it is not practicable nor perhaps even desirable to build drains large enough to cope with exceptional conditions, but even then, if the drains are clear they should cope with half the water and the other half will do less during its brief rampage. There is more potential damage in the trickling and seeping that can continue for days or weeks after wet weather than in the short period of a deluge.

Ideally Council or NPWS should have maintenance teams roving the tracks several times a year dealing with these problems but in practice this does not happen, and given the cost of such teams it is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.

If a number of people who walk regularly along the tracks were willing to pause occasionally when they saw silt in a drain, they might ultimately save the taxpayer thousands in track restoration - - and more important, keep the walks in good condition for us to enjoy. Eroded tracks and damaged bush do nothing to improve a day's outing! By its very nature the work of clearing drains needs to be done continually, as the need arises. It is an ideal job for someone like me who loves the mountains and would like to spend a few minutes giving something back. If there were a hundred like me..?

I should be most interested to hear the views of other members.

Jill Curnow Dural

EARLY CONSERVATION

"The run of water that supplied the settlement was observed to be only a drain from a swamp at the head of it; to protect it, therefore, as much as possible from the sun, an order was given out, forbidding the cutting down of trees within fifty feet of the run."

Captain Collins, from 'Sydney Cove 1788' by John Cobley.

ANTECHINUS – LIFE STORY

We are fortunate in having three species of Antichinne in the Upper Blue Mountains. They are commonly called marsupial mice although they are not related to rodents.

The word antechinus is derived from the Greek meaning 'hedgehog-like' probably because of the spikey appearance of their fur. Of these three species Antechinus Swansonii is the largest with very dark brown, almost black fur. This is followed in size by Antechinus Flavines – referring to the yellowish light brown for on the upper parts of its feet. The rest of the fur is mousey brown on the main body with pale underparts. The third and smallest Antechinus Stuartii could well be mistaken for a house mouse. Fur is greyish brown with a paler underparts.

All the three have flatish, pointed faces, more pointed than any of the rodents and their ability to reverse their hind feet gives added mobility in climbing and descending. Their swiftness and ability is one of the many means of identification.

They are equally at home in diverse habitats whether bushland, garden sheds, outhouses, wood piles, kitchens and living rooms, even in lounge chairs. They are very clean with little or no smell except at mating time when the sternal gland becomes active. They are mainly insectivorous e.g. spiders, moths, beetles etc but would not refuse a small bird, mouse or lizard should the opportunity arise.

It would be unwise to use weight and measurement for identification purposes as they increase in weight considerably prior to mating, which takes place late winter to early spring depending on the geographical location. Copulation can last as long as 7-8 hours or even longer and is anything but gentle. Within 3-4 weeks all the males will die (not surprising!).

It appears the build up to and during mating causes upheavals within his system and hormones that it affects his immune system, leaving him open to disorders of the blood and intestine, and also bacterial infections of the liver.

The more placid female avoids this extreme syndrome and may survive to breed the following year provided she is not eaten by her numerous offspring which could number 6-10 or even 12! Gestation lasts a month. The young will cling to the mammae glands of the foraging mother for about five weeks by which time movement of the mother becomes cumbersome and the young are left in a nest, hollow logs, rock crevices for instance, the female returning periodically to give food and warmth.

We commend Rachel Makinson for her interest and concern when she had a visitation from these Dasyuridae.

David Thomas

A HUNDRED HARDY NATIVES

A new publication by Jill Dark should be out in time for the Land Preservation Fund's next Native Sale on October. This is called "A Hundred Hardy Natives for Blue Mountain Gardens". It describes a hundred native trees, shrubs, ground covers and climbers, and should be a handy reference guide for selecting the right plants for your garden.

CONFRONTING THE FUTURE

Birsh's Chapter III is entitled Nuisance or Nemesis? He is referring to the ever increasing environmental deterioration of the globe. A nuisance to the short term thinkers but a nemesis to the long term thinker. After some facts and figures he writes "A society committed to growth for growths sake, and production for production's sake, not only pits man against the natural world, but also man against man because of the inherently competitive nature of the enterprise".

In the 1950's he states environmental stress was seen as a local nuisance but by the 1970's a new term had entered the ecological vocabulary – global monitoring. He introduces us to the ecological formula EI+PxCxD where P = population size C=consumption of resources per person and D=environmental deterioration of life support systems per person. EI or Environmental Impact is the product of those three.

This chapter is mainly concerned with Component D, ie deterioration of life support systems, but he points out that no matter how much C & D are reduced if P continues to grow the end product will remain or increase. Birch divides the deterioration of life supports into two categories:

(a) "Direct assaults on human well-being such as damage to health from radioactive fall out, lead mercury and cadmium poisoning, aggravation of lung disease by air pollution, damage to goods and buildings, by the quality of life from noise and litter."

(b) Indirect effects on human well-being through interference with the natural functions of biological systems such as the death of rivers and lakes arising from overloading with organic wastes, fertilizers and industrial chemicals, the side effects of insecticides on non-target organisms, soil erosion and deterioration of land through irrigation and changes in the gaseous composition and temperature of the atmosphere".

Direct effects received much more attention from scientists than chronic manifestations yet the latter may be far worse. The sponging effect of the earth's environment may reach a saturation point and trigger off an ecological disaster. Birch points out the political problems, national and international to initiate change. How many of us would take kindly to legislation financing the outlawing of garbage dumps, outfall sewers and compulsory returns of all cans, bottles and paper?

Under the heading of "Three Australian Scenarios" he outlines the plight of the George's, Parramatta and Cook's rivers and the degradation of their estuaries and their loss as fish nurseries. Similar problems he claims exist right along Australia's eastern seaboard. The second scenario is unsatisfactory disposal of sewage into the sea and its effect on marine life. The third problem in water pollution is the contamination of the largest river system in the country, the Murray River and its tributaries.

That most of the above is not news to us shows how far public awareness has come since Birch's book was published in 1976.

Thought provoking however is his contention that government and science 'treat symptoms and ignore causes' of pollution. He suggests we need to change the direction of growth and to reduce the extent of production of some sorts of things. He develops this theme and asks 'why we need any more GNP, any more factories any more advertising that simply increases consumption. What we really need is a redistribution of existing wealth and a reallocation of society's resources. If this sounds Utopian it is less Utopian by far than the supposition that our present society, geared to increasing growth in consumer goods with little concern for social goals, can provide effective reforms to permit mankind to sustain life on this earth". He quotes Dr Schumacher as saying 'The earth cannot afford the modern world, it requires too much and accomplishes too little. It is too uneconomic."

Among other conclusions with which he rounds off this chapter, there is in my opinion the most important one. He states "Australians need to ask themselves what advantage there is in having more people, more industries, more environmental deterioration and reduced quality of life".

<u>P.S.</u>

'Habitat' in its latest issue features statements made by Professor Bellamy from a public address on the state of the world's environment (I feel they give more credence to the writings of Professor Birch). Here are a few of the statistics he gave. United Nations designated the 11th July 1987 as the day on which the world's population reached the 5 billion mark. It increases by 250,000 people each day.

The developed industrialised world contains only 25% of the population and yet uses 80% of the world's resources.

100,000 people die of starvation each and every day.

The export of tropical hardwoods to developed countries has increased 156 fold since 1950.

Nine out of every ten babies are born into the thirds world.

80,000 square miles of tropical forest are destroyed every year.

People in rich countries spend less than a fifth of their personal income on food, those in the third world 80-90% of their income on food and many starve.

Every acre of the world is losing 8 tonnes of soil a year. One third of the world's total agricultural and pastoral land is now threatened by desertification.

Bellay marvels at the paradoxical situation whereby humans so dependent on the plant and animal kingdom are so actively destroying the diversity of natural life on which their future welfare depends.

I apologise for such unpalatable reading, but a knowledge of the situation confronting us is the first step towards doing something about it.

Lloyd Jones

MANY HAPPEN RETURNS GRETA

Every member of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society join together in wishing our most dedicated member – Grete Vanry – a very happy birthday on Saturday, July 16th.

Society News

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

Chris Todd gave a very interesting talk with slides about "Birds" at our April General Meeting. Chris has been photographing birds for many years and makes good use of the latest technical equipment. He knows birds very well. He knows how to approach them without frightening them; how to set up hides and how to attract them within the range of his camera. With the use of an electronic flash he was able to catch an owl in the act of catching a mouse; or a parrot feeding on honey specially spread on a banksia flower; birds on the wing; the beauty of the plumage of sombre coloured birds like ducks, hawks, Cape Barren geese, etc. The colours of gawdy rainbow lorikeets were unbelievable.

Years of skill, patience and care must have gone into the making of such a marvellous collection of slides.

CAMERA IN BRITAIN

For the May General Meeting, Graham & Judy Kerr showed us slides of their travels in England and Scotland. They started in the north of Scotland in the Orkney Islands. These islands are cold and bleak, have figured in two world wars and are the home of countless sea birds. In recent times archaeological studies have uncovered very ancient ruins dating back to 3100 B.C.

The discovery and exploitation of oil in the North Sea has made a difference to the economy of many of the east coast towns of England which were formerly dependent on fishing. This was the next area visited by Graham and Judy. Footpaths and walking tracks cut across farming properties and have done since ancient times – the right of access to which is stoutly defended by English conservationists.

The Lakes District is rightly famous for its beauty and the Kerr's camera did it proud. We could not help noticing, however, the bareness of the hills, where deforestation and sheep grazing over the centuries has had its effect. It reminded me of parts of southern Queensland where thick rain forests gave way to grazing.

BOOK SALE DAY – SATURDAY 30th JULY from 11 am.

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 pickled onions (home made by David Thomas), washed down by mountain cider. There will also be Folk Music – Warren Addicott and his didgeridoo; Graham Alcorn – poems; and folk singers John and Dale Dengate; and Denis Kevans and Sonya Bennett.

ISOBEL BOWDEN'S COLLECTION

In May a working bee was organised to clean up and re-organise the Hut. A busy day was spent, sorting, cleaning out and even re-building some kitchen cupboards. Jim Smith and his students have taken on the task of sorting and cataloguing Isobel Bowden's very valuable collection of plant specimens.

JOHN BUKI

Born at Sapron (hungary) on 13th November, 1917 Died at Sydney (Australia) on 17th May, 1988

It is to John Buki alone that we of the Society owe thanks for "The Hut" and for the viability and vitality that our control of "The Hut" has brought to the Society. The story of this has been told in earlier issues of "The Newsletter"; let it suffice to say here that it was John who conceived the idea of the Hut and whose unremitting work and rather charming persistence brought the idea to fruition.

The Committee in those early days was unwilling to launch the Society on a scheme that seemed beyond us; we had no money and few members. John changed all that. He wrote innumerable letters and secured donations of materials that enabled the restoration of the building to proceed. His infectious enthusiasm brought many, many hands to the work and what seemed impossible was gradually accomplished.

He organised the "Official Opening" by a Minister of the Crown (who arrived with motor-cycle police escort). A perusal of the Visitors Book will show that more than three hundred attended.

John had a chequered life. In his native Hungary he was a university teacher of modern languages until he was required to join the army as an officer. Then he was a POW in Russia until after World War II, when he and Elizabeth came to Australia. He worked from Broken Hill in a NSW Railways gang for two years then joined the NSW Education Department as a teacher, serving at Seven Hills and then at Katoomba Primary School until he was promoted and had to transfer.

His was a fertile and creative mind for all that he was a truly modest and humble man. We are thankful for his years among us and we mourn his passing. To his very dear wife, Elizabeth, we offer our condolences in her great sorrow.

OVERDUE LIBRARY BOOKS

The following books have been borrowed from your Library and are now overdue.

- FLOWERING PLANTS IN AUSTRALIA.
- A THREATENED SPECIES. CONSERVATION STRATEGY FOR AUSTRALIA.
- THE VOYAGES OF MATHEW FLINDERS.
- TREES OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH.
- GROWING AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS.
- ENDANGERED ANIMALS OF NSW.
- CONSERVATION IN VICTORIA.
- ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE DREAMTIME.
- THE GREAT EXTERMINATION.
- TOPOGRAPHICAL & ECOLOGICAL NOTES ON THE FLORA OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS.
- THE FIGHT FOR THE FORESTS.
- GEOLOGY OF THE WESTERN BLUE MOUNTAINS.

These books are long overdue – please make sure you haven't overlooked them – as lost books should be replaced.

June Blick, Librarian