



# Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Newsletter

No. 82 January 1991

## MEETINGS AND GUEST SPEAKERS

Public School Falls Road Wentworth Falls 7.30pm  
until further notice

January 25 1991 Gregor Manson on "Turkey".

February 22 1991 The Rev. Evans on "Stars and the Cosmos".

March 29 1991 Annual General Meeting. Election of Officers.  
Subject of talk is "Total Catchment Management".

## THE SOCIETY YEAR ENDS IN MARCH. TWO THINGS HAPPEN THEN.

First. Subscriptions are due. They remain unchanged. Please send with the enclosed form completed.

Second. The election of office bearers occurs in March. A vigorous election of the best candidates who intend to work as a team for the progression of Society aims is fundamental to the health of the conservation movement in the Blue Mountains.

## UPDATE

The **RAFFLE** of a stained glass plaque depicting a crimson rosella was won by Rachel Mackinson. Thanks to all who contributed.

**Spotlight Stroll.** Who can get twenty people to be quiet together for a couple of hours? David Thomas led a night spotlighting along the tall timbers of Kanimbla Valley Road, Shipley. The tally of animals was not impressive - two ring-tails possums, one fox seen, three sugar gliders and wood ducks heard. But what were all the creaks and rustles on that perfect warm starry night?

**Submissions.** have been made about :

- \* Mewah Park Cabins, Hat Hill Road Blackheath,
- \* Proposed Regional Sewerage Scheme for the Upper Blue Mountains,
- \* City Environmental Management Plan stage 1, re-exhibition.
- \* Woodford Bends - Captain Bull's Bath.

**November/December Meeting.** This was a convention of many groups, Bathurst, Orange, Lithgow, Aboriginal Support, Upper Blue Mountains Bushwalkers, Coalition of Residents for the Environment with fine and hospitable support from our own members and friends. Problems and methods were expounded, hopes and concerns aired. There is no doubt that it was a valuable learning experience that

should be repeated. To add to the pleasant sociability there was a warm walk, flowers, good people - this was the Society at its best.

## TOURISM

Guest speaker in October was Mr. Rob Giason, Manager of the Blue Mountains Tourist Authority. It was a persuasive talk on the importance of the tourist industry to the city. It seems that it is the major employer and that statistically there is a total direct annual expenditure by visitors of \$176 million!! There is also a great cost to council.

The industry at last admits that it depends on a decent degree of environment care. Questions were asked about the free exploitation of the industry's principle resource, that is, the scenery, and whether some responsibility ought to be shouldered. This same question surfaced at the Tourism/Environment Seminar in November where the audience was largely pro-environment. The State Minister avoided a competent answer and the sum of replies was that tourism is, like the environment, fragile. The Society is willing to meet the industry in any endeavour that might be suggested. Constructive schemes would be welcomed by the Committee.

## FAUNA SURVEY WOODFORD DAM CATCHMENT

The Society was the successful tenderer to the Water Board to undertake a survey of fauna in the Woodford Dam Catchment to provide information for a Management Plan. It is understood that this is the first such Plan for an individual catchment. The Survey is in two stages. Stage 1 has been completed. It was a reconnaissance of typical habitats described by vegetation type. The small mammals that were trapped and released are what might be expected, brown and yellow-footed Antechinus, bush and swamp rats and one black rat. Brushtail and ringtail possums and sugar gliders were sighted. Bats have been seen, winter and summer. Swamp wallabies and spotted-tailed quolls are known to be present. Introduced animals have been identified. A comprehensive report was written.

The further programme is to locate other species and to perhaps make a statement on movements, densities and preferences of identified animals. We end in mid-May.

Work like this, and that of Margaret Turton with her quolls, helps to expand knowledge of our valuable animals which will help protect them.

Four members are working. They turn out at dusk and dawn summer and winter. This has its own rewards of learning, seeing morning mists, hearing the early bird sounds and the late frogs. Stage 1 took 170 man hours. When Stage 2 is finished we will have earned \$3600 less expenses. This money has been offered to the Water Board to be used for a specific job in the same Scenic Reserve as the Survey. This is because the Water Board is actively pursuing good environment management ideals there and will be spending \$40 000 immediately on erosion control, removal of car bodies, track work and waterfall cleanups. Already Water Board scientists have given up a Saturday to cut up and remove a Holden dumped after the 1977 fire in Mabel Falls.

## THE CONSERVATION HUT

The New Hut is nearing completion but there is no opening date set yet nor is the degree of Society involvement decided. It is anticipated that members will be given an opportunity to express their views when details are available.

The destruction of the Hut and all that it represented was to some the loss of the

Society's alter ego. Take heart from these words from Mr. Tim Moore, Minister for the Environment, "I look forward to the Society's involvement with the new Conservation Hut, especially with establishing the environmental and visitor facilities."

## PLANT NURSERIES AND SALES

Again, the consistent efforts of a few dedicated members produced a successful sales day in October. Now native plants are being grown at the National Parks and Wildlife Service premises at Blackheath in addition to the Hazelbrook nursery. Green thumbs (and other sorts) are needed for the success of this venture. Hours are to suit. Your contact is Wyn Jones, 877511. Would those working with plants please make sure their anti-tetanus is up to date.

Because of the prohibitive cost of land the Land Preservation Fund has been closed. Plant sales contributed largely to the present balance of about \$33 000. This has been offered to the NSW Government towards a 'buy back' or similar arrangement for the redemption of Radiata Plateau which is privately owned. The offer stands till March 1991. Some members have made the suggestion that if the offer is not taken up enquiries be made to the Blue Mountains City Council about the environmentally sensitive land acquisition programme declared under the Environmental Management Plan Stage 1.

There is a special vote of thanks to Deidre Morton, the most recent Land Preservation Fund committee member, and to Winsome Gregory who steered its early days. Grete Vanry has been consistently generous over the years. There is great appreciation to all members and friends who contributed money, work and other energies to this valuable and highly visible act of conservation.

The profits from plant sales will now be directed to community education.

## LAND ASSESSMENT

Would you like to attend a mini-workshop? When Development Applications are lodged with Council submissions are often invited. The workshop will attempt to evaluate a demonstration application. Suggested programme is :- Date, Sat. Feb. 9 10am-4pm. Contact is R. Corringham 586561. No charge.

## WEEDS

The Society, through its representative on the District Noxious Weeds Co-ordinating Committee, has submitted a re-assessment of the year's activity which culminated in Weeds Awareness Week last October. The issues outlined in this report emphasise better pro-planning for a more efficient use of the minimal resources available. Broom has been targeted but other common noxious weeds are blackberry, gorse and pampas grass. The practical limitations of weed eradication are enormous but a start has been made.

Fact. There are thousands of seeds per broom plant.

Fact. The seed is viable for 70 years.

Fact. The Blue Mountains is especially favourable to the genetically vigorous broom.

A sturdy band of our own hard workers cleared broom from the south face of Gordon Falls Reserve, Leura. Others have undertaken broom eradication around their own precincts. Any broom in your street?

Frank Walford Park, Katoomba, needs more friends, too, to get rid of weeds. To know more, contact Carol Proberts, 821831.

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## SPIRIT OF PLACE

by Diane Johnson

Do you have a special place that you feel particularly drawn to? A special tree maybe? Or a special bird? Maybe there are rocky outcrops, the patterns on which simply send your spirits soaring. And mostly there are no words to describe the feeling. A track you keep weeded, a dell you keep clean, a rock platform where the presence of former folk lives on - I wonder which one is yours?

We are all guardians of the earth and its creatures, and for some of us that signals a special relationship in which we feel particularly appointed to protect or to nurture or to act as an advocate. It isn't a one-way relationship because that special plant or place has a near magical effect on us: an effect of connecting us to a wider family, a wider reality. I wonder which secret place is yours and how the relationship expresses itself?

The notion of human guardianship over the earth is a very ancient one, particularly in this country. Our Aboriginal forebears have much to teach us on the subject.

As is now fairly widely known, traditional Aboriginal peoples do not "own" land in the way we understand "Ownership": one cannot own the land, as one cannot own the clouds or the rain. Rather they see themselves as belonging to the land, being sustained by the land, and therefore having responsibilities towards it and the multifarious life forms it supports.

The simplest and most common way that Aboriginal people express their profound relationship to a particular tract of land is by means of the possessive adjective, (for example, "this land is ours"). Membership of land-"owning" groups is often based on patrilineal descent (that is, an individual belongs to the same group as his or her father). (over →)

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UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY. P.O.Box 29, Wentworth Falls. 2782

### Membership / Renewal Form

Name.....	Single	\$ 10 per year
Address.....	Family	\$ 15 " "
.....	Pensioner or Junior	\$ 6 "

Membership corresponds to the year April 1991 to 31 March 1992. Please enclose stamped addressed envelope if a receipt is required.

Symbolic representations of special places or significant sites can be seen as being similar to title deeds. And while these are vested in the patrilineal group (people related to each other through their fathers), these so-called title deeds are held in trust and proclaimed on appropriate occasions by uterine kin (that is, people related to each other and the land in question, through their mothers). In contemporary Aboriginal English, the patrilineal kin are referred to as "owners" or "bosses" of the land, while the uterine kin are known collectively as "managers" of the land.

Although people in many areas of Australia cannot inherit rights over their mother's land, they nevertheless play an important executive and custodial role in relation to its mystical foundations. In particular, they have the prerogative for artistic productions of the proper emblems of their mothers' group on ceremonial occasions. In many places, mother's country is referred to as a person's 'milk country'.

Life is not seen as inert or unchanging but as cyclical as running a course. And it is the responsibility of mature adults to keep natural and social cycles in motion and in harmony with each other. The sustaining effects they see as being reciprocal: if humans attend, as midwives, to the various manifestations of life, natural plenty will in turn nourish these same humans. Their efforts were not directed to mastering or taming or indeed overwhelming nature, but rather tuning in and understanding its rhythms and patterns, and harmonising with them.

Traditional Aboriginal people performed what are often called "increase" ceremonies and it is within these and other ceremonies that Aboriginal society reached the height of its artistic expression. A group of people (usually a clan), is responsible for ensuring the protection and continuity of a particular species. They regularly perform ceremonies and rituals, attempting to co-operate in the increase of the species that usually occurs normally and naturally each year.

"Increase ceremonies" usually occur during periods of natural transition, such as when trees flower or when it is the breeding time of particular animals. Each clan works to support a part of nature, and the result is that by the work of all the clans, all nature is supported.

Very few modern humans have such collective earth caring rituals. And we cannot copy Aboriginal ones. Yet, through gentle appreciation we can find kinship with and develop our own personal rituals for our own special species and places. We can honour their rhythms and their past voices.

Having the undeniable privilege of living within a National Park, puts us in a unique position to develop these bonds with special places and creatures. I wonder which one is yours?

\* \* \* \* \*

Newsletter compiled by R. Corringham. Service page and heading designed by M. Baker.

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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.

## Excursion Programme January – April 1991

It is essential on all excursions in the hot weather that members carry at least 1 litre of water.

Please carry on all walks: First Aid Kit, Torch, Matches, Warm shirt or Sweater, Protective Rainwear, Hat. Wear safe footwear

All people attending excursions do so at their own risk

Members arriving by train should advise contact prior to the excursion. Train timetable on week-days might be altered. Walks starting times and meeting places will remain as stated.

### **January 6th Sunday – Dargan's Creek**

Meet at Mt Victoria Station Car Park at 9.30 am. 5 hours

Contact: Olive Noble 87 8342 Sydney train arrives 9.30 am

### **January 17th Thursday – Govett's Leap Circuit**

Meet at Blackheath Station Car Park at 9.00 am. 4 hours

Contact: Bob Jones 58 8361 Sydney train arrives 8.50 am

### **January 19th Saturday – Mystery Walk**

Meet at Mt Victoria Station Car Park at 8.45 am. 7 hours

Contact: John Noble 87 8342 Sydney train arrives 8.37 am

### **February 3rd Sunday – National Pass**

Meet at Great Western Highway end of Falls Rd, Wentworth Falls at 9.15am. 4 – 5 hours

Contact: Bert Davies 58 8586 Sydney train arrives 9.02 am; Lithgow train arrives 8.39 am

### **February 16th Saturday – Rodriguez Pass**

Meet at Blackheath Station car park at 8.30 am. 7 hours

Contact: John Noble 87 8342 Sydney train arrives 8.29 am

### **February 21st Thursday – Adelina Falls, Cataract Falls**

Meet at Lawson Station (Bowling Club side) at 10.00 am. 3 – 4 hours

Contact: Bob Jones 58 8361 Sydney train arrives 9.59 am; Katoomba train arrives 9.47am

### **March 3rd Sunday – Lockley's Pylon**

Meet at the Leura Public School (Corner Mt Hay Rd & Great Western Highway) at 9.15am. 5 – 6 hours

Contact: David Thomas 84 2121 Sydney train arrives 9.08 am; Lithgow train arrives 8.33 am

### **March 16th Saturday – Darwin's Walk**

Meet at Great Western Highway end of Falls Rd, Wentworth Falls at 10.15am. 4 hours

Contact: Reg & Dulcie Toseland 84 1682 Sydney train arrives 10.09 am; Katoomba train arrives 9.39am

### **March 21st Thursday – Braeside Walk**

Meet at Blackheath Station Car Park at 10.30am. 4 hours

Contacts: Bob Jones 58 8361 Sydney train arrives 10.29 am; Lithgow train arrives 10.18am

### **April 7th Sunday – Pierce's Pass**

Meet at Mt Victoria Station Car Park at 9.30 am. 6 – 7 hours

Contact: Olive Noble 87 8342 Sydney train arrives 9.13 am

### **April 18th Thursday – Mark's Tomb**

Meet at Great Western Highway side of Medlow Bath Station at 10.30am. 4 – 5 hours

Contact: June & Eric Blick 88 1051 or Bob Jones 58 8361 Sydney train arrives 10.23 am; Lithgow train arrives 10.23am

### **April 20th Saturday – Ruined Castle**

Meet at Great Western side of Katoomba Station at 9.15am. 6 hours

Contacts: Bob Jones 58 8361 Sydney train arrives 9.11 am; Lithgow train arrives 8.29am

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by Jim Smith

Between 1909 and 1911 a 6km walking track was built at the base of the cliffs between Wentworth Falls and Leura. It was never opened and lay neglected for over 70 years. Many bushwalkers came to doubt its existence.

This book tells of the dedication of a few bushwalkers in finding, clearing and opening this elusive track, and of the life of Charles Lindeman who designed the track. It is a unique social history.

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