



Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc Newsletter

Number 88 July 1992

Meetings are held in the new Conservation Hut at the end of Fletcher St Wentworth Falls on the last Friday of each month. Please bring a cushion or chair as the Hut is not yet furnished.



July 31

The meeting will take the form of a MEMBERS' NIGHT. Please bring 10 slides of interest to the other members.

August 28

Mr D. WOTHERSPOON will speak on SNAKES OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS. His talk will be illustrated - but don't worry, it will be with slides.

September 25

Mrs ROBIN CORRINGHAM will speak about WEEDS.

GUEST SPEAKERS



KEEPING IN TOUCH

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 6 June 1992

An information stall was organised in Wentworth Falls shopping centre, with pleasing results. Free literature was given to a responsive and interested public. A donation tin and sale of environment books netted \$58.85, and the day was considered a success.

WELCOME to the following new members to date this year:

Yvonne Asquith, Sam and Beryl Black, Kevin and Margaret Duffy, Nella Godfrey, Valerie Collins, Pam Johnston, Mr H.R.Tuck, Joy and Shashi Galliara, Barbara Searle, Mr and Mrs Tickner, Philippa Coleman, John and Helen Kershaw.

MEETING THE MINISTER

June 12. About 20 of our members attended a function in the new National Parks building built on the site of the old Hut. Mr Tim Moore, Federal Minister for the Environment, was there to see the building and to meet our State member, our mayor and various aldermen, National Parks officers, tourism personnel, and members of the public. All were impressed with the building, the view, the fire in the hearth, and the food prepared by ladies of the Bushfire Brigade. This seemed to be a preparation for the grand opening for which the date is not fixed.

SOME INTERESTING ITEMS OF HISTORY

These two snippets which are of interest to our Society have been passed on from a recent publication of the Blue Mountains Family History Society. The first concerns the old 'Hut' where we had our meetings for so long, and the other tells about the first person to occupy it.



Extract from 'The Mountaineer' December 1904

'WENTWORTH FALLS. The refreshment pavilion at the top of the Valley of the Waters recently erected will be open for business on Saturday 10th and as it will open daily from 9.30 am visitors will be able to depend on getting supplies. Mr James King is the lessee and already has had application for prices for supplying picnic parties. The open verandah facing the Jamison Valley commands a splendid view and the pavillion being close to both the cab stand and the stone rest house could supply a long felt want in this much frequented resort.'

Extract from 'Our Past Blue Mountaineers' Vol.V
page 168. Published by Blue Mountains Family History Society 1992

'JAMES KING: When 88 year-old James died he was the last of the King brothers who for many years conducted a dairy at Wentworth Falls. James also drove horse coaches between Jenolan Caves and Mount Victoria. He was also one of the first pupils enrolled at Katoomba Public School when it opened in 1882, and was a foundation member of the Katoomba Rifle Club.'

'James King is buried in the cemetery at Wentworth Falls, Church of England, section B, row 6, No.7. White marble plaque, sandstone headstone and surround with pebble deck.'

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
JAMES KING
Died 4th June 1963
Aged 88 years
AT REST

HISTORY OF GOOCH'S CRATER

In January this year, 1992, John Noble led one of his famous 'Mystery Walks' to a fascinating place known to not many people as 'Gooch's Crater'. No one seemed to know the origin of the name of such a beautiful place. But by some detective work worthy of Sherlock Holmes I found Mr Gooch and herewith print his letter telling of his discovery.

(Editor)



'Dear Mrs Bayley,

In response to your phone call here are a few notes on my discovery of 'Gooch's Crater'; I hope the area can remain a pristine wilderness and the delicate ecology of the crater remain as it was when I first saw it.

On Saturday 30th December 1978 a party of four: John Susmitch, Chris Rowland, my wife Rae, and myself, all members of the Kameruka Bushwalking Club, set out on a long weekend trip to Bungleboori Creek. We started at Bell Railway Station where we left the car. We crossed the Wollangambe and on to Bungleboori Creek. We walked along the bed of the creek and made camp beside the creek Saturday night.

The next day, Sunday 31st December 1978 we followed the creek for a short time before heading south up to the main fire road that runs along the watershed between Bungleboori Creek and the Wollangambe River. Cutting over the fire road we picked up a creek that followed south into the Wollangambe.

In the mid-afternoon we had a break beside a rock pagoda. I decided to scramble up into the pagoda for a view. From the top I looked down to the west and saw a beautiful lagoon, with high cliffs on either side, a grass flat at the north end which then turned into a steep slope. The southern end was also blocked by rocks and trees. About one third of the lagoon was covered in reeds.

I called the others and we went and explored. We were so impressed with the area we decided to camp the night. The discovery of a peculiar rock tunnel like a great wombat hole halfway along the eastern cliff and at its base suggested a name to me. I called the area Cave Swamp Crater. The creek that ran parallel and to the west we called Vanishing Creek as it disappeared underground.

Monday 1st January 1979

We followed the creek south of the crater, which we called Cave Swamp Creek, although it is a continuation of Vanishing Creek, to the northern arm of the Wollangambe. We had no trouble crossing the river and following a ridge back to Bell railway station.

At the time I was working at Paddy Pallin's bushwalking shop and did so for another two years. Although I was very much in touch with the whole local bushwalking scene I never found any person who claimed to have found the crater before me, and a careful examination of the crater on our first visit revealed no evidence of fires or rubbish.

I hope these brief notes that deliberately do not include any grid reference, may be of use to you

Regards,

Nicholas A Gooch

.....

A WALK IN A WARM TEMPERATE RAINFOREST

6 April 1992

At very short notice and on a glorious autumn day a small group had the opportunity to visit the Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens rainforest section which is usually a no-go area. Many of the deep mountain gorges have enclaves of rainforest confined to the shelter of the valley floor. Because of the fertile basalt soil in this location one was hardly aware of exchanging the luxuriant brown-barrel eucalypts of the heights for the great coachwoods and sassafras trees which created a closed canopy. The trunks of tall treeferns supported climbing ferns and in the extreme depths there was very little light at all. Sharp eyes found a brilliant orange fungus on the top of a high decaying tree, and all the top hampers hosted orchids and ferns. Our guide, Don, said that the gully had not been logged and was essentially pristine.

As soon as the track skirted an exposed north-facing bluff, typical sandstone flora appeared and the call of the wonga pigeon faded. We stopped for a breather on a spacious rock shelf and tried to imagine George Caley's reactions to the tumble of gorges and ridges when he was thereabouts in 1804.

The sandstone vegetation had been modified by a hazard reduction burn last year. Regrowth from underground stems was fair but there was very little seed germination except for the brilliant blue of the dainty lobelias. Not a lot of them but they perfectly reflected the sky. Bright yellow paper daisies lined the highway where we crossed to return to the gardens. The growth there is phenominal - the great rocky avalanche is covered with plants now.

Robin Corringham



President's Corner

A NOTE FROM BILL TOMASETTI

1 June 1992

All would know that there is an international conference on the environment being held in Rio de Janeiro in South America. That is a long way from the Upper Blue Mountains. But except (of course) for the vast difference in scale, the situation in each place has much in common with the other. In both places two different philosophies face each other.

On the one side are those who believe that humankind has already critically damaged our planet, and that it is urgent to stop this destruction; and indeed to start the vast task of restoring our planet. This side is convinced that its views are in harmony with the weight of scientific opinion.

On the other side are those who believe that the descriptions of damage are grossly exaggerated, and that humanity's prime task must be to continue with its 'development'. What a misuse of our language!

Many people are convinced that the future well-being of humanity is at stake and that a no-risk balance between these two philosophies should be achieved as soon as possible, and of course that this process will involve all levels of government at which ecological issues are decided.

Our Society (and others) has been and is doing much to preserve our Blue Mountains; we see this as our prime task. But the Society's activities require expansion if it is to play a full part both in this prime task and also to assist in a modest way other environmentalists here, and at State, National, and International levels.

Each of our members will decide how to assist in the Society's activities, and how to balance the conflicting demands on finite resources of time and effort. But if the Society is to remain effective its activities must expand as threats to the environment increase.

The matter is urgent! About ten percent of our members are currently active in the Society's affairs. What do you think?

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NURSERY REPORT

The plant sale at the Conservation Hut has been moved to Sunday November 8 1992.

Winter in the top mountains is unkind to some plants in some positions. At the Blackheath nursery the seedlings are overwintering and the staff does not recommend planting out until spring. But the work of propagation and care goes on.

As you are aware the aim of this nursery is twofold. First we supply a need for local species to be used in bush regeneration. Thus we achieve the object of the Constitution to care for our unique flora. Secondly, the sale of the plants generates a cash flow to be used for community education and allied purposes.

We have made good sales of the tube stock of local species to the Society for Growing Australian Plants at the Glenbrook Native Plant Reserve, Minna-ha-ha Land Care Group, Friends of Woodford Academy Paddock, stage 1 of the new Conservation Hut and stage 1 of Middle Cascade Dam (Water Board). Jobs underway are Nellie's Glen restoration, Cascade Dam stage 2, finishing off of the Conservation Hut landscaping, Heritage Centre and Govetts Leap, and Deep Pass at Newnes. Negotiations are proceeding on other projects. The Society successfully tendered for the propagation and supply of 5,300 plants to the Roads and Traffic Authority for stage 2 Of the Woodford Bends reconstruction.

Jobs undertaken are tailored to the capacity of the team to finish them to a professional and satisfactory standard.

This is a terrific record for a new small group which consistently works very hard, often in uncomfortable weather conditions. The Society is very proud to have such members.

Meanwhile Shirley Brown is minding the Hazelbrook nursery for the winter. She says that the plants from there will be in top condition for the November sale.

There will be an expansion of work hours at the Blackheath nursery, National Park Heritage Centre. In addition to Tuesday 9am to 3pm, Thursday 9am to 12 noon is available. This is being done to encourage more members to learn new skills and to permit more flexible hours to suit those already in the team. All volunteer workers are covered by insurance.

A result of all this energy is that we have a cash surplus of about \$2000. The nursery team recommends that this be spent and is offering proposals to the management committee for a prompt consideration and decision. A similar amount should be available again, so if you have an idea on how it can be usefully employed, please tell us.

We have noticed the decimation of Eucalyptus oreades in the urban area. It is the characteristic tree of the upper mountains. At the present rate of destruction the town landscape will be reduced to conifers and flowering cherries. The nursery has a limited number of this species propagated from local seed. It is proposed that a

replacement programme be started.

TO JOIN THE PROGRAMME: If you know a place which is suitable for you to plant and look after one of these trees, please ring Robin on 586561 or write to The Nursery Manager, P.O.Box 29 Wentworth Falls. We'll be advertising in the Gazette in spring so reserve your tree early. Further instructions will be given. The trees will be ready in spring, price is \$3.

R. Corringham

LAND USE

R. Corringham

June 1992

This office on the Management Committee remains vacant. It is one of the very important fields of Society activity and until it can be filled Robin Corringham will supply a co-ordinating role.

Development proposals handled in the past quarter include Mewah Park Cabins, Blackheath, and Radiata Plateau; Kerry and Bart Brown have sorted out the Mount York road closure from the Society's field of interest. The Society is attending meetings of the steering committee for the upgrading of the Reserve and catchment area of Wentworth Falls Lake.

Guidelines have been prepared for those who will undertake to peruse land use proposals from time to time. Please contact Robin, 586561.

One extremely interesting project is a survey of some walking tracks in the Mount Victoria, Mount York area. Rachel Makinson fears that some of these historic and valuable tracks are no longer usable. I am seeking a group of people to plan and carry out a programme to establish the status of walks in jeopardy.

We received a gracious letter of thanks from Council's Legal Officer for the Society's representation as a witness at the Land and Environment Court. The hearing was an appeal by the developer against Council's negative decision on the Kedumba Emporium, Echo Point. The witness, Robin, was interrogated closely on each point raised in the Society's submission, which opposed the application. Grounds for our objection included destruction of a Blue Mountains Ash, failure to adhere to the local development Control Plan, inadequate measures for control of destruction disturbance, and absence of sympathetic scale in the residential precinct.

NELLIES GLEN

At the turn of the century Nellies Glen was one of the most beautiful places on the mountains. The area was wrecked when a developer tried to build a road by tipping soil from the top down into the Glen!!

Consequently incredible ugliness resulted. Students of Katoomba TAFE's outdoor worker course, working with National Parks and Wildlife officers (and our native plant nursery) have regenerated the cliff top and built a fine walking track to the lookout. Some of our members went to have a look and join in thanking those who have worked so hard.

A WORD OF WARNING FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

If a red dot has been placed on your address label it means that you have not paid your subscription this year. So if you intend to renew, please pay promptly or, regretfully, this will be the last copy of the Newsletter you will receive.

EXCURSION PROGRAMME

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.

- **SPECIAL INVITATION FOR SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER:** Members of the Conservation Society are invited to join the Society for Growing Australian Plants on a garden inspection and walk of historic interest. Meet at Mount Victoria Station at 9.45 am and proceed to the home of Rachel Makinson, 8 Beaufort Avenue, Mt. Victoria. View her garden. Tea and coffee provided for morning tea. (Phone 87 1302) Then drive to Kanimbla Valley for easy walk commencing in private property. Mill Creek, then to an old sawmill, a coalmine and the remains of an old railway. All now are abandoned. Leader, Charles Johnson 87 1354. Take lunch.
- **JULY WALKS** Note, no train times are included due to uncertain timetables.

Sunday 5 July: Murphy's Glen area. Meet at Hazelbrook Station carpark at 9.15 am. Muriel Healey, leader. 58 6975

Thursday 16 July: The Grotto. Meet at the end of White Cross Road, Winmalee at 10 am. 4km walk. Grace Bayley, leader. 59 1955

Saturday 18 July: Rhubarb Falls. Meet at Faulconbridge car park, Great Western Highway side, at 9am. Alan Macaulay, leader. 39 2767

- **AUGUST WALKS**

Sunday 2 August: Cox's Rd, Lockyer's Rd. Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 8.30 am. Val Carlross, leader. 87 8837. Approximately 6 hours.

Saturday 15 August: Slacks Stairs. Meet at Wentworth Falls Station at carpark at 9.30 am. Bob Jones, leader. 58 8361. Approximately 5 hours.

Thursday 20 August: Pool of Siloam to Lyrebird's Dell. Meet at corner of Gladstone Rd and Fitzroy St, Leura at 10 am. Reg and Dulcie Toseland, leaders. 84 1682. Approximately 3 hours.

- **SEPTEMBER WALKS**

Sunday 6 September: Upper Wolgan River. Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 8.30 am. John Noble, leader. 87 8342. Approximately 7 hours.

Thursday 17 September: Wall's Lookout (Bell's Line of Road). Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 10 am. Grace Bayley 59 1955. 3km walk.

Saturday 19 September: Dargans Creek. Meet at Mt Victoria Station at 8.30 am. Olive Noble 87 8342. Approximately 6 hours.

- **OCTOBER WALKS**

Sunday 4 October: Waratah Walk, Golden Stairs, Ruined Castle, Mount Solitary. Meet at G.W.Highway side of Katoomba Station at 8.30am. David Thomas, leader. 84 2121. Approximately 7 hours.

Thursday 15 October: Mystery Wildflower Walk. Meet behind Springwood Library at 9.30 am. Alan Macaulay, leader. 39 2767. Approx. 5 hours.

Saturday 17 October: Burra-Kurrarn Flats. Meet Mt Victoria car park at 8.30 am. Olive Noble, leader. 87 8342. Approximately 6 hours.

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