

# Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People

## Newsletter

No. 98  
January 1995

P.O. BOX 29  
WENTWORTH FALLS  
N.S.W. 2782



Meetings of the Society are held in the Conservation Hut at the end of Fletcher St, Wentworth Falls on the last Friday of every month, at 7.30pm.

President: Mr Thor Schache  
(047) 57 3272  
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(047) 59 1955

### TOPICS FOR THIS QUARTER

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Walks Programme

January 27: Graham Alcorn is the speaker  
Topic: "Birds and Poems"

February 24: Dick Turner will speak  
Topic: "Mistletoe"

March 31: Jill Dark  
"Darks in Darkest Africa"

April 28: Carol Probert  
"Lyrebirds"

This will be the Annual General Meeting.

On Sunday February 19 1995 at 3pm  
Joan and Leigh invite us all to the launching of the programme of the biological control of the villainous SCOTCH BROOM.

This will take place at the old brickworks site on the Great Western Highway just before you reach the Explorers' Tree, past Katoomba. Please park at the Explorers' Tree reserve and there will be signs to direct you to the old brickworks site. Bring your own folding chair.

Reg Toseland and David Thomas will launch the control programme, representing all who helped secure this land. The Mayor will be present. Afternoon tea will be provided by our City Council. If it is raining the whole function will take place at the Council Chambers in Katoomba.

Joan and Leigh welcome everyone who is interested and because of catering would appreciate your reply to this invitation.

RSVP Leigh Taylor (047) 82 2218

Don't  
Miss  
this!

#### JUDY'S CORNER

New members since October 1994 are: Mrs Rosemary Christmas, Mrs Joyce Crawford, Mr Ron Brown, Ms K. Perrin, Ms Karen Taylor, Ms Pamela Evans, Ms Pauline Ingal, Ms Susan Rahiman, Shirley and Laurie Harvey.

Welcome to you all!

Judy (our membership secretary) thanks all who brought or sent goods to sell at the Plant Sale and the Christmas party. The lovely cushion donated by Anna Fundelic was won by Joan Storey. The other raffle winners were (1) Diana Clark of Springwood, (2) C.Langbein of Medlow Bath, and (3) C.Evans of Leura.

## SOCIETY DOINGS

### November Meeting

Mr Andy McQueen spoke about the life and explorations of Francis Barrallier, a French Royalist who escaped from the horrors of the French Revolution and came to Australia in 1880. He worked as a surveyor along the Hunter River, in Bass Strait and in the Blue Mountains. The journal which he wrote was in French and was not translated for 100 years, so very little has been known or told about him.

Andy McQueen decided to find out more about Barrallier and has actually followed his expedition to Kanangra Walls, faithfully retracing his steps as described in the journal. Andy showed us the slides and we can only marvel at the courage and tenacity of these early explorers who had none of our advantages, not even decent boots to wear. The country of the Kowmung and neighbouring rivers is hardly changed where Barrallier plodded.

Andy's book, 'The Life and Journeys of Barrallier' is available from the Hut and many other outlets.

Thursday 20/10/94

### Springtime Birdwalk with Graham Alcorn

The drought broke that morning. Graham phoned early and he decided to meet at Blackheath and make a decision then. Eight members arrived. It was raining and it was cold. Graham suggested that we cancel the walk and he invited us to his home. He said we could sit by a warm fire and he would show us some bird slides and his collection of birds' nests.

What a pleasant experience this turned out to be! Graham showed us slides of many birds, some on their nests with their young, and from many parts of Australia. He delighted us with recitations of his poems as many of the birds appeared on the screen, and this of course added to our enjoyment. We learned so much of the habits of different birds and were reminded of the necessity to protect the environment, including retaining dead trees which provide nesting places.

After the slides we dug into our packs, brought out our luncheon and continued our lively discussion round Graham's kitchen table. Some who had only brought cold drinks warmed up with a hot cuppa provided by Graham.

Lunch partaken, we cleared the kitchen table to make room for two large boxes of birds' nests which Graham lovingly showed us and let us handle gently. We were filled with wonder as we examined the intricate weaving of the materials so delicately and mysteriously used by the birds, to blend in with the colours of the particular tree, shrub or reeds where the nests were built.

Our final treat as we left the house was a visit to the bower of the satin bower bird, surrounded by his collection of blue objects. Graham told us this bower has been in the same place, or once or twice rebuilt by the same bird just a few centimetres away, for about 20 years. This bower has been shown to friends and has appeared on T.V. The bower bird does not regard the visits of humans as an intrusion, because he has continued to use the bower to attract many females, mating with them and sending them on their way to build a nest and rear their young without any further help from him.

Thank you, Graham for your generosity in sharing your knowledge, poems and friendship in this unusual "indoor bird watch".

Contributed by Ruth Milton

GOOD NEWS!

THE WOLLEMI PINE

Members of our Society who know John and Olive Noble were especially excited to read on the front page of the Herald about the "tree from the Dinosaur Age" and that the discoverer was their son David.

David is a project officer with National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) and his passion is for bushwalking, canyoning and abseiling. He and two companions were deep in a gorge in Wollemi National Park one weekend in August 1994, and David noticed a grove of trees unlike any he had seen. Having been trained by his friend Wyn Jones, senior naturalist of NPWS, to note and bring back any unusual plants, David brought back a branch in his backpack.

The largest trees of the mysterious grove were 40m tall, covered with thick waxy fernlike foliage, and with bubbly bark. Only fossils more than 150 million years old bear record of the existence of this tree, called for the present the Wollemi Pine. It is hoped that the tree will be officially named after David Noble.

There is so much more we would like to know and hope that David will come to one of our meetings. We understand that the position of the grove must remain a secret known only to scientists, but look forward to seeing this wonderful tree one day in native gardens, propagated from seeds gathered by nurserymen of Mt Annan or Mt. Tomah.

Congratulations to David and to John and Olive for training their son to love the bush.

THE GARDENS OF STONE

John and Olive Noble have a great love for the area known as the Gardens of Stone and often lead walks there among the rock pagodas. We of this Society have signed petitions etc to have this area declared National Park before it is crumbled by mining underneath.

It is good news that the NSW Government has now declared this area as part of our National Park. Let's hope nothing changes the decision.

PLEASE! NPWS TAKE NOTE!

Please, NPWS, when are you going to fix that terrible bit of the Round Walk in Leura Cascades Park? The part which once had steps but is now very dangerous - having neither safe footholds nor handholds. Even some temporary steps cut into the ground would be better than the present slide. Some of us encountered some German tourists there. Their early enthusiasm turned to dismay at the missing staircase and they returned rather than go further along Prince Henry Cliff Walk in case they found more horrors. We were embarrassed at the bad impression on visitors to such a popular place.



The fossil  
and the living  
leaf

SPEAKING OF THE PAST  
The Isobel Bowden Story

As so many people are joining the Conservation Society in the Upper Blue Mountains it is good to tell the stories of some of the foundation members.

Isobel Bowden was one. She was born at Woodford in 1908, the fourth child of the Member for Nepean, Eric Kendall Bowden and his wife Reinetta. Murphy's Glen was named after Reinetta's family. The family owned several acres of land at Woodford around their two homes, "Ye Humpey" in Murphy's Glen and "The Bungalow" in Appian Way. Isobel was one of those who could drink unpolluted water from mountain streams.

Isobel was a dedicated lady, to her mountains and to nature, to history, to music and to God. A meticulous naturalist, she kept detailed diaries of her walks and painted accurately the flowers and plants she observed. She collected, identified, pressed and catalogued many plant specimens including one very rare species known as *Isopogon fletcherii*. There were sixty species of orchids in her collection and one was named after her. Some of her plant records are now the only ones available to show what once grew on land now "developed".

Passionately concerned about bushfires, Isobel purchased nine acres of land at Woodford in the 1950s and there she experimented with growing trees as firebreaks. She had much practical knowledge about bushfire control.

As a local historian Isobel was equally influential and was a member of the Blue Mountains Historical Society for more than thirty years. She wrote much about the history of Woodford and produced illustrated maps. Her book "Linden to Woodford" was published in 1963.

Isobel was a gifted teacher of young children and wrote many stories and poems for them, which were collected into a small volume "Stories and Rhymes". In the Methodist Church she took an active part in the music and youth work. She was also a foundation member of the Good Neighbour Choir.

We of the Conservation Society remember her best by the Nature Trail, for which she did so much work in identifying the plants. This walk starts from the Conservation Hut. Her plant specimens are housed in the Society's office in the Conservation Hut. TAFE students under Jim Smith's leadership have, over 10 years, carefully put this collection into a Reference Herbarium and anyone who wishes to look at it may make application to the Society.

Isobel Kendall Bowden was awarded the O.A.M. in 1985.

Over the last few months of her life she sorted her papers and arranged for them to be preserved in the Blue Mountains City Library and in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

No one knew more about the Blue Mountains than Isobel Bowden. Nobody cared more. This tribute came from Ald David Lawton at her death in 1986.

This information was gathered from Jim Smith and John Low  
Thanks to them both. G. Bayley



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WALKS 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.

THURSDAY WALKS: It seems that the Thursday walks have fallen by the wayside. Perhaps it is just the summer weather to blame. So no Thursday walks are organised for February to April. If you want them back please contact Chris Davies (047) 877246. New leaders are needed.

FEBRUARY 1995

Sunday 5 South Lawson Waterfalls. Meet at shops on corner Honour Avenue and Great Western Highway, Lawson, at 9.30am  
Contact Bert Davies (047) 588586

Sat. 18 Twin Falls and Pulpit Rock. (Easy clifftop walk)  
Meet Blackheath Station carpark at 9.30am  
Contact Christine Davies (047) 877246

MARCH

Sunday 5 Mount York. Meet at Mt Victoria Station carpark at 9am  
Bring a rubbish bag to clean up Australia as we go.  
Contact Ron Wheeler (047) 571526

Sat. 18 Aeroplane Hill. Meet south side of Hazelbrook Station at 8.30am.  
Contact Muriel Healey (047) 586575

APRIL

Sunday 2 Six Foot Track from cemetery to river. Meet at Blackheath Station carpark (across railway line) at 8.30am. Contact Ron Wheeler (047) 571526

Sat. 15 Kedumba Pass. Meet at Wentworth Falls Commuter Carpark at 9am  
Contact David Thomas (047) 842121

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DO THE RIGHT THING

Excerpts from the newsletter of Waste Crisis Network July/Sept 1994

Most people regard packaging as an unnecessarily expensive and wasteful part of modern life and few can understand why the vested interest activities of the packaging industry have not been reined-in long ago.

Local Governments and their communities can no longer bear the recycling and disposal costs of the packaging industry's wasteful production.

Australia....is the biggest producer of household garbage.  
A large part of the waste stream consists of single-use containers.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) (has) initiated a consumer boycott of Coca-Cola Amatil (CCA) the Australian arm of the US beverage plant, claiming that its 'excessive use of plastic packaging, failure to introduce world-class environmental packaging standards, and the gluttonous promotion of its products' were having serious environmental and economic impacts in Australia. If these charges are correct .... what can we do about it?

Whatever caused 'the dramatic decline in the use of refillable glass bottles?' It must be because 'the beverage and container industries chose to undermine the market for refillables.'

For more information, contact Peter Hopper, The Nature Conservation Council of NSW, 39 George St, The Rocks, 2000. The newsletter is \$5 per annum.



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Saturday - 9.00 am to 12 noon (047) 82 3467

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE ON MARCH 1st 1995

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

Membership / Renewal Form (1st March 1995 - 28th Feb 1996)

|              |                  |      |          |
|--------------|------------------|------|----------|
| Name.....    | Family           | \$15 | per year |
| Address..... | Single           | \$10 | " "      |
| .....        | Pensioner Family | \$10 | " "      |
| .....        | Single Pensioner | \$6  | " "      |