



# Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People

## Newsletter

P.O. BOX 29

WENTWORTH FALLS

N.S.W. 2782

No. 99  
April 1995

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

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### JUDY'S CORNER

### MEETINGS

April 28: Carol Probert on Lyrebirds  
Annual General Meeting

May 26: Wyn Jones on Protecting the Wollemi  
Pine and Other Endangered Species

June 30 and July 28: To be advised

✿ Members are reminded that subscriptions for this year are now due; there has been no alteration in membership fees.

Remember, too, the Annual General Meeting on Friday, April 28, 1995, in the Conservation Hut. It is vital that as many members as possible attend. Some members, when renewing their subscriptions, make donations as well. Thank you to these members even though we do not mention your names here.

Welcome to these new members:

Clare Walsh, John Ellis and girls, Mrs Isabel Barrell, Mr John R. Sands, Mrs A.N.Bower.

### STOP PRESS.

Members who are looking forward to the inspection of the land which the Society has helped to purchase at Kanangra Boyd, which is to be added to the National Park, please note that the trip is now planned for May. The exact date depends on the National Park and Wildlife Services, and they have offered to provide a bus and lunch for us. If you want to avail yourself of this privilege, please ring Judy Ferfoglita (84 3232) or Thor Schache (57 3272) to ascertain the date and book your seat and lunch.



Shine little bluebells, glimmer.  
Glow you boronias too.  
Make the most of your time all you waratahs and wattles  
For the R.T.A. is coming after you.

By James Thomson of Dooralong  
(Perhaps we in the mountains could substitute "developer" for R.T.A., who plant so many native shrubs along the new roads.)

The above poem appeared in STAY IN TOUCH in the Sydney Morning Herald. It is reprinted by permission.

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## MEETING REPORTS

January 27

Graham Alcorn charmed us with his slides of birds and with poems to match. Here's one from his book, 'The Bird Baths of Umbigumbi':

### WINTER COMFORTER

In winter the grey thrush comes to comfort me.  
'Cheer up,' he calls.  
It doesn't matter if the bleak winds blow,  
It doesn't matter if it rain or snow,  
Or if the temperature is two below,  
He calls, 'Cheer up.'  
I know in springtime he will sing a melody  
So sweet and rare.  
But now he hops around the garden quietly  
With spritely air.  
'Cheer up,' cries he.



Sketch of Graham by Lloyd Jones

February 24: Dick Turner on Mistletoe

Who would expect to find mistletoe so interesting? Dick Turner has made a thorough study and has unique pictures of this parasitic plant which we see hanging from eucalypts, rainforest trees and mangroves. He told us at this meeting that there are many species of mistletoe, nine of which live on eucalypts alone. It has a clever trick of copying the foliage of its host. Some trees are more susceptible than others and it selects its hosts. The yellow stringybark is one which resists it.

Birds spread the berries. Mistletoe is not all bad. The birds and insects love it and seem to prefer it to other blossoms. Fifty-four species of birds are known to thrive on it. There is also a mistletoe butterfly.

On the black side, it steals nutriment and water from the trees and appears to cause die-back and eventual death of the tree, but much more study needs to be done.



March 31 1995

### DARKS IN DARKEST AFRICA



There was a good attendance at the March meeting to hear Jill and Mick Dark. They told us of their shooting safari to southern Africa. I hasten to say that the shooting was with a camera. Their spectacular pictures of animals (Mainly taken from the back of a truck for safety reasons) were a delight. Added to this were magnificent shots of the scenery, plus a knowledgeable talk about the wide variety of animals, birds and plants. A thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Fred Bayley

At the March meeting it was announced that the Society has donated \$1,000 for books on conservation to be available to Blue Mountains schools.

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## **BONNIE DOON FAUNA STUDY - BUGS AWAY!!**

On Sunday, February 19th, the Society was well represented at the historic launch of the biological control program against Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*). Reg. Toseland and David Thomas were given the honour of representing the conservation-conscious members of the Blue Mountains community and jointly performed the ceremonial unveiling of the representative Scotch Broom plant which had been doctored with the larvae of a tiny moth, (*Lecoptera spartifoliella*).

This, the first biological control program against Scotch Broom in the Greater Sydney Area, took place at the disused brick-works quarry on the edge of the Bonnie Doon catchment area. The event was attended by some 140 representatives of no less than 31 local environmental groups - as well as by officers from Council, the State Department of Agriculture/CSIRO and the ubiquitous Barry Morris - the new Independent candidate for the Blue Mountains at the upcoming State elections.

The Blue Mountains thus joins several other locations in the State which have been selected for this well researched biological control program - the first of which is the 15,000 hectare infestation in the Barrington Tops area.

The local project would probably not have been possible without the local expertise and site-presence of the redoubtable Bonnie Doon duet of Joan Haeden and Leigh Taylor. For voluntary workers they are certainly having a remarkable impact on the environmental integrity of our beautiful "City in a National Park".

Other contributors to the afternoon's proceedings were Mayor Joy Anderson and our own West Country bard, Bert Davies, who regaled the congregation with some extremely interesting historical notes on Scotch Broom including its association with the Plantagenets and mediaeval English folk-lore. It seems to be a plant that is revered in its homeland and reviled in Australia, New Zealand and North America where it has been deliberately introduced over the centuries as a 'desirable' horticultural import.

The representative from the Department of Agriculture/CSIRO, Peter Hodge, who has worked closely with Council and Joan and Lee on the local project, stressed that the just-released predator would not provide a complete or very swift answer to the Scotch Broom infestation. At best it would achieve a slow reduction in vigour of the existing stands and hopefully provide a base for the introduction of other predators that were in the pipe-line.

These other predators include a psyllid (*Arytainilla spartiophila*) whose nymphs feed on the actively growing part of the Scotch Broom; a seed eating beetle (*Bruchidus villosus*), and a seed-eating weevil (*Exapion fuscirostre*). These biological controls will be released progressively as available quantities and quarantine-testing permit.

### In Memory of Fred Astle

On February 10, 1995, Mr Fred Astle, a pioneer of this Society, died at the age of 89. Mr Astle and his wife Dorothy moved to the Blue Mountains in 1958. Fred was the inspector of schools and it was said that he knew the name of every child in each school of his district.

He became very involved in community affairs and was the first president of this society, which commenced in October 1961 in the old Katoomba Townhall. When John Buki had the brainwave of rescuing the old tearoom, at the top of the steps from Valley of the Waters, I've no doubt that Fred was one of the volunteer workers, and The Hut was the venue for the meetings of the society until National Parks pulled it down and built the present Hut on the site. Certainly Fred and Dorothy were on the weekend roster to man the old Hut, make tea and soup and give information to walkers and tourists.

Fred was also very interested in music and in 1965 he and Mr Duncan McPhee-Smith founded the Blue Mountains Concert Society, which is still going strong.

We join the many friends of Dorothy and Fred Astle and their family in paying tribute to a kindly, gentle, friendly man whose enthusiasm and vision has enriched so many lives of children and adults, and played such an important part in the conservation and culture of the Blue Mountains.

Grace Bayley

Vale!

MOLLIE SIBIRAKOFF passed away 22.1.95

Mollie joined the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society after her husband's illness and death.

The Australian bush she loved, to be and walk in the quiet listening to the birds in sunshine, mist or rain. After some years of being overseas with Kenna and Michael and Ina it was her great pleasure to again be able to enjoy the beauty of the mountains.

Mollie was one of the most gentle, loving, caring people it has been my pleasure to know and call friend. Their children Michael and Ina have inherited and follow Mollie's and Kenna's caring and gentleness.

Marion Hawley.

### A Letter

I was saddened that the death of Fred Astle received no mention at the February meeting. This was nobody's fault for Fred had been out of Society's affairs for some years. Whether we should make an effort to remember these early members is open to debate. Do other members share my sentiments?

Hence this letter which seeks feedback for a suggestion that a special album be prepared in which to keep photos of old members. It need not be confined to ex-presidents and secretaries but could include any member, past or present who makes or has made a contribution to the work and enjoyment of the society.

So please give thought to the idea, fish around in your memorabilia for old photos or provide me with names. If there is a response I will submit the idea to the committee for its implementation. Are there any volunteers who would enjoy the task of ferreting out the data necessary to create such an album?

\*\*\*\*\*

Lloyd Jones 57 2270





## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### SOON .. ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AIR-CONDITIONERS IN CARS

Readers will no doubt be pleased to learn that within the next year all cars in Australia must have their air-conditioners converted to a system that does not use harmful CFC gas. The cost of between \$250 and \$350 would seem a small price to pay to reduce the emission of ozone-depleting substances to conform to Australia's signing of the Montreal Protocol in 1987.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lex and Ruby Graham Gardens, Mosman

This story illustrates what one or two people can do to save an environment. During February some of our members wandered further afield and walked along some of the delightful Sydney Harbour National Park walks. Above the waters of Mosman Bay they came upon a beautiful public garden built on what was, 40 years ago, a revolting rubbish dump. Lex and Ruby Graham had transformed it! Since Lex died the local council has taken responsibility for the upkeep of the garden. We were privileged to meet Ruby, doing a bit of weeding, and also the young council worker. We thanked her for the beauty of the garden and the inspiration it gave us all.

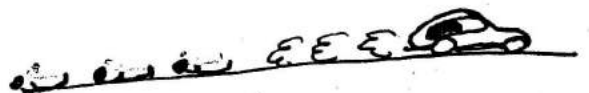
The noblest thing a man can do  
someone once said  
is to plant a tree which one day  
will give shade to someone  
he will never see.



(Words on a plaque in the garden)

Here's a poem by Liesel Scholem of Roseville; the poem was one of the winners in a competition organised by NSW Total Environment Centre, and was printed in the Feedback Column of The Sydney Morning Herald on 20 March 1995. Reprinted by permission of the editor Michael Sharp.

Do away with plants and trees  
For they only make us sneeze.  
Give us lots of roads instead,  
We enjoy inhaling lead:  
M2, 4, 6, 8 and 10  
Bitu-women, bitu-men  
Offer us the best solution -  
Euthanasia By Pollution.



I'm a big, bad truckie,  
I drive a big, loud truck.  
If you don't like big, loud truckin',  
That's your tough luck.  
From Cleveland Street to Kempsey,  
From Broken Hill to Broke,  
When I put the hammer down  
I blow off big, black smoke.  
At 3 am I hammer  
Through Wahroonga like a train,  
Deploy the exhaust brake  
And drive those city folk insane.  
They should close the bloody railways  
'Cos rail freight costs big bucks,  
And build bigger, wider freeways  
For more bigger, louder trucks.  
I am an oil executive,  
And we will not go bust.

Even when the oil runs out -  
As soon it surely must,  
We'll turn timber into petrol,  
A renewable resource,  
Unless it's all been woodchipped -  
We'll use rubbish then of course.  
But one thing is for certain,  
As sure as Hell won't freeze,  
We'll always have the money -  
Who said it don't grow on trees.  
'Cos I've looked into the future,  
It really is fantastic.  
We'll get around in bubble cars  
And live in flats of plastic.  
And when our time is up,  
When the curtain call is final,  
We'll go to meet our Maker  
In a box of poly-vinyl.

By Peter Diamond of Mt Colah - another winner  
Reprinted by permission, Sydney Morning Herald.

## WALKS REPORTS

Sunday 5 February 1995

Fifteen people left on a very hot day to walk to Terrace Falls. On the way we noticed some *Leptospermum obovatum* which grows in thickets on creek banks and nearby flats. There were some rufous fantails on the banks searching for insects in the low foliage. We could hear their high-pitched notes. Wherever one goes in the bush there is always a symphony of birds, and I am learning about them from friends on our walks.

On the way back one of our members suffered from heat exhaustion, but she was soon gallantly rescued by two of our male companions.

It was interesting to see two members sketching some wonderful scenery of the area. Even though it was hot, we all enjoyed the pleasant walk.

June Baxter.

### TWIN FALLS AND PULPIT ROCK

We met in misty rain and thick fog at Blackheath Station and it seemed an unlikely day for a clifftop walk above the Grose Valley. Nevertheless with a trace of optimism, or maybe stubbornness, we took cars to Pulpit Rock and then walked along Pope's Glen towards the cliffs. We had a tea stop at Boyd's Beach where we were joined by two red dogs who were eventually persuaded to follow someone else. Then we reached the clifftop walk and turned towards Pulpit Rock and stopped at the first lookout where we could see the Twin Falls (Bridal Veil and Horseshoe).

From there it was a series of short strolls and long stops. The mist had cleared and we had to drag ourselves away from each lookout as we gazed at the wonderful display of beauty and colour put on for us by the magnificent Grose Valley.

After the rain everything was bright and clear, leaves sparkled, the cliffs looked "steam-cleaned" (June Baxter's quote for the day). Around us was every shade of green in ferns, shrubs and trees, brilliant red of Christmas bushes, and every other colour in the exposed cliff faces.

We stopped for lunch in a cave above the track. The cave has a dry stone wall in front and a stone fireplace inside. From there we could see a waterfall in the valley near Blackwall Glen.

By the time we reached Pulpit Rock we were entering the third season of a day in Blackheath and it was becoming hot and steamy - But where else would you want to be?

Christine Davies, February 1995

Saturday 18 March: Aeroplane Hill, Kings Tableland

During World War 11 two airmen in a Wirraway crashed in mist on a tall tree on this part of Kings Tableland. It is a sad and little-known story, but for those who know where to look there can be seen a couple of little piles of parts of the plane. Eight or nine of our members went to see the place again. On the way they admired some pink flannelflowers and some bright red Christmas bush.

From a verbal report: Muriel Healey.



## 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.

### MAY 1995

Sunday 7 Kurrajong Heights. A mix of old road and indistinct bush tracks; some dry sclerophyll, some rainforest, VIEWS, small creeks and tiny waterfalls. Easy except for a couple of small rough & steep bits. Meet Mount Victoria Station at 10 a.m. or along Kurrajong Heights Health Farm Road at 11 a.m. Contact Nella Godfrey (045) 677113.

\* Wed. 17 Autumn bird walk with Graham Alcorn, on Narrowneck (hope to see migrating honeyeaters). Meet outside Gearins Hotel, Katoomba, at 9.30. Contact Ruth Milton (047) 573584.

Sat. 20 Packsaddlers to Tinpot (the easy way). Meet at Blackheath Station commuter carpark 9 a.m. Contact June & Len Baxter (047) 877312.

### JUNE

Sunday 4 Castle Head. Meet outside Gearins Hotel, Katoomba, at 9.30. Contact David Thomas (047) 842121.

Sat. 17 The Hanging Garden (Kings Tableland) to The Hut via Rocket Point. Meet at The Hut at 9.30. Contact Grace Bayley (047) 591955.

\* Wed. 21 Asgard Swamp. Meet at Mount Victoria Station at 9.30. Contact Bob Jones (047) 588361.

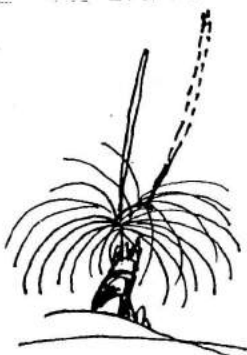
### JULY

Sunday 2 Yarramundi to Grose Head South. Meet outside Royal Hotel (opposite Springwood Station) at 9 a.m. Contact Ron Wheeler (047) 571526.

Sat. 15 Blue Gum Swamp and Grose Mountain Lookout. Meet at Springwood Station commuter carpark (northern side of station, past police station), at 9.30. Contact Christine Davies (047) 877246.

\* Wed. 19 Sublime Point, end of Prince Henry track, Pool of Siloam, (plus Gordon Falls Reserve for stronger walkers). Return via same route or arrange pickup from Gordon Falls Reserve. Meet at Leura Station near taxi rank at 9.30. Contact Lloyd Jones (047) 572270.

\* Please note the change of days for the mid-week walk. Wednesdays seem to be more convenient. New leaders are needed. If you would like to suggest and arrange a walk please ring Chris Davies, 87 7246.





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April 1995

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE ON MARCH 1st 1995

### Membership / Renewal Form

UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 29, WENTWORTH FALLS 2782

Name .....

Family	\$15 per year
Single	\$10 " "
Pensioner Family	\$10 " "
Single Pensioner	\$6 " "

Address .....

.....

Fees cover membership from 1st March (or date of application for new members) to end of February in following year.

Half fee applies for new membership from 1st September. If a receipt is required please forward a stamped self-addressed envelope.