

Patron Mr. Allen Strom
Advisor in Conservation
Department of Education N.S.W.

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-- Urban Systems Report on Strategy Plan Questionnaire to Ratepayers. --

O U R S O C I E T Y

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This is not a small local issue, but a national one, and the National Parks Association of N.S.W. and the Australian Conservation Foundation oppose the above stated policy.

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From The Countryman, Watling Street, Bletchley, Bucks. U.K.

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On Saturday, March 1st, cold, driving rain and mist greeted thirteen walkers when they arrived at the meeting place at Blackheath. Our original walk was out of the question, we had planned to go to Hat Hill, so we decided instead to go to Mt. York and then descend via the Old Cox's Road to Collets Inn. This was a fortunate choice as, on nearing Mt. York, the weather began to improve and as we descended by the old road, the wind dropped and we all felt much warmer. Soon the rain was just a matter of an occasional shower of very short duration.

There were not many flowers to see, but our interest was awakened by hosts of butterflies, they rose in clouds from the ground and bushes as we passed and flitted in front of us like will-o-the-wisps, and as will-o-the-wisps they led us astray; Cox's Road vanished and we wandered on through the trees and out into the open meadows. This became more of an historical walk, and as we had with us an English girl, here on holiday, it was nice to be able to show her some of the convict work done on the old road. We reached the little graveyard just near Collets Inn and our visitor was able to admire the many beer-cans so plentifully strewn around. On our return we all got busy and we picked up every one. One wonders how long before people learn to respect the land in which they live, and the dead who lie buried there.

Lunch was partaken at the Inn which is beautifully clean and well kept.

Our return journey once again saw us 'off the road' but with the help of a few 'breathers' and a tune from Kevin, who produced a mouth organ and song book from his seemingly bottomless rucksack, we climbed up and found the old road again.

Afternoon tea was served by two kind members and we dispersed after a most enjoyable day.

On May 3rd, 22 members assembled at Leura School for a ramble along the track that turns off the Mt. Hay Road to Locksleys Pylon. - This was a memorable day for two reasons; the first that we actually reached the Pylon, three previous attempts being frustrated by bad weather, however, it proved well worth waiting for. The second was the Banksias; this was indeed "Banksia Day". They were everywhere in great variety, especially the lovely little Banksia Paludosa. The full flower is a good clear yellow, but in the bud it is exquisite, a soft mauve. Here it was quite a small shrub and at first hard to see, but once pointed out, we were able to find several more. We are fortunate in having so many botanists and bird watchers in our party, their sharp eyes find so much to interest and educate. We were shown a valiant and fierce little spider, and we watched the migrating honey-eaters wending their leisurely way north.

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one of our party. As often happens, lunch brought forth various opinions about what is good for the internal environment, although it was the occasion too for the discussion of another kind of consumption, unnecessary in our eyes, of large areas of bushland by fire. Something new to outings was also appreciated, in that one of our members did some water sampling for observation of minute forms of life.

After doing our bit of consuming, we returned along much the same direction we had come. Towards the end we were befriended by a kockaburra, much to our mutual gain, which was for us his proximity for photographs, and for him, our food scraps. As in all our walks, we could say in conclusion that the day was pleasurable, the encounter to our satisfaction, and anticipation aroused for the next outing.

-- Kevin Smith.

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Destination - Parkes Gully.

September: This has still to be discussed as Kevin has been unable to contact his friend at Brisbane Waters National Park.

October 4th: Meet at Kevin Smith's house, 3rd Avenue, North Hat. 10.00 a.m. - for a mystery ramble.

SPRING SCHOOLS FOR NATURE LOVERS

Enquiries to U.N.E. Continuing Education, P.O. Box 591, Tamworth, 2340.

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NOTE: Clancy Country - Apply: The Cashier,
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New South Wales. 2308.....

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN STRATEGY PLAN

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From the Bus Exhibition, only 300 replies were received from 3,000 questionnaires handed out, and of these a particularly high percentage did not answer the questions about Alternative Futures.

There was a much better response to the simple questionnaire card sent out with the rates notices, the 4,374 replies representing 15% of all ratepayers. 60% of these were residents, and it is noticeable that they favoured the lower population alternative futures, 43.13% for Alternative II of 64,900 people and 18.95% for Alternative I of 47,300, which is near the present population.

Significantly, the non-resident ratepayers (40% of replies voted for higher populations, 33.27% for II, 28.26% for Alternative III of 112,400 people, with Alternative I coming in a bad last with 5.92% of replies.) Also, the non-residents gave a higher vote for the dense population Alternatives IV and V. Perhaps a proportion of them hold land for speculative purposes and vote for the higher populations in the hope that land prices will rise. Nevertheless, the combined resident - non-resident vote still give Alternative II by far the highest percentage at 39.23%.

Best Land Use for Greatest Number.

The policy of our Society is quoted that "all planning decisions should ultimately rest on the results of a detailed environmental/ecological study", and that, pending this, Alternative I would provide the best land use for the greatest number of people in keeping the mountains as a natural fresh air scenic and recreational region.

Questions concerning the environment drew a high consensus of opinion, the report says. An attitude of conservation and preservation prevailed, particularly with regard to escarpments. 58% of respondents consider escarpments to be extremely important and 82% felt that all development should be stopped in these areas.

An important attitude to tourism was that 41% of respondents wished to encourage activities which related to the natural environment - bush walks, horse riding.

In the main, the general attitude of residents seems to be to keep the natural environment of the Mountains as it is. We understand that Urban Systems Corp. is nearing completion of their final Report and Recommendations on the whole Strategy Plan. Presumably this will then go to the Blue Mountains City Council for vital decisions on the future of the region.

"HABITAT"

"Habitat" is the educational journal of the A.C.F., obtainable from newsagents, by subscription, or at our library at the Hut. From a past issue, from an article by Dr. Moss Cass - "Community Control or Community Destruction", we quote:-

"While tens of thousands of ordinary people pay huge prices for their natural inheritance, and many others seek desperately for adequate accommodation, millions of square feet of office space lie vacant. This is one of the great outrages of urban life -- a new version of private affluence and public squalor -- which stems directly from the disproportionate influences wielded by profit budgets and human needs".

THE MOUSE SPIDER

Spiders can be divided into two suborders - Araneomorphs and Mygalomorphs. To the former belong the Red Back and Huntsman, to mention a couple of well known ones. Mygalomorphs include the Funnel Web, Trapdoor, and the Mouse Spider here described.

Identification

Mygalomorphs can be identified fairly easily by the following characteristics:-

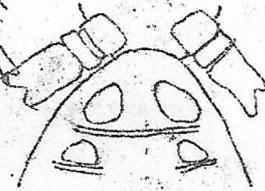
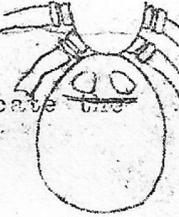
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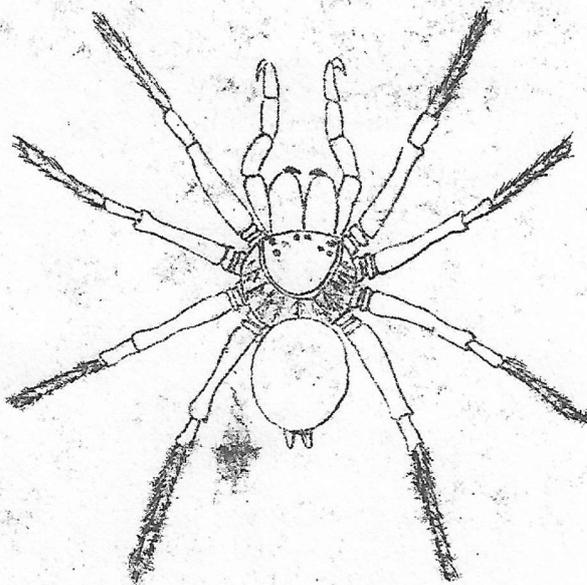
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2. There are two pairs of book lungs, as opposed to one in Araneomorphs. These are seen as pale patches on the undersurface of the abdomen, and indicate the position of the lungs underneath the skin. The tissues of the lungs are arranged as thin-walled leaves, like the pages of a book, hence the term 'book lungs'.



Those members who were on the walk to Lockley's Pylon will remember that attractive but aggressive spider with the bright red thorax. I have checked on the spider literature, and it can almost certainly be said that this was the Mouse Spider, *Missulena occatoria*. This spider, also called the 'Red-headed Trapdoor Spider', is thought to be the first spider to be collected in Australia. This was at Port Jackson in 1802 by a Frenchman called Peron.

There is a marked difference between the male and female, so much so that the two sexes were thought different species. The female is larger, blackish-brown, slow and sluggish. She makes very little attempt to defend herself. The male has a bright red cephalothorax, deep rich blue abdomen, and long slender legs. It is often found wandering about the bush in daylight hours, especially after rain. This distinguishes it from most other Mygalomorphs, which are nocturnal. If there is still doubt about it, have a look at the broad carapace across which the eyes are spread.



MISSULENA OCCATORIA

This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in February 2021 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.

KATOOMBA & DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NO. 21 – July, 1975

Price 10 cents

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Editor: G. Alcorn PO Box 39 Blackheath NSW

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