

KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY.

NEWSLETTER NO. 46. - NOVEMBER, 1981 - PRICE 20c.

Editor: R. W. Alcorn, 43 Rutland Rd., MEDLOW BATH.

Patron: Mr. Allen A. Strom, A.M.

".....all my life, the wrong people have controlled most situations in society and I fear it may be the same up there."
- Jack Munday on Heaven.

OUR SOCIETY.

COMING MEETINGS.

Friday, Jan. 29th. Our Patron, Mr Allen A. Strom, A.M., will be our speaker and the subject "Environmental Education in the community."

Friday Feb., 26th., Mr. Rodd of Mt. Tomah will speak on "Native Bccs."

Friday, March 26th., Annual Meeting.

COMING WALKS.

Saturday, Dec., 5th., A ramble from the Hut at Valley of the Waters to observe Wildflowers in area. Meet at 10a.m.

Sat., Jan. 2nd., Neates Glen - Grand Canyon - Beauchamp Falls - Evans Lookout. Leader: L. Jones, 57-2270
Meet at Neates Glen turn-off on Evans Lookout Rd., 10 a.m.

Sat. Feb. 6th., Botany excursion to Kanangra Walls. Leader Jill Dark, 58-7061. Meet opp. Railway Stn. Blackheath, 9.00a.m

Sat. March 6th., Cox Road. to Hartley Vale -return by Lawsons Long Alley. Leader K. Sherlock, 57-1927. Meet at Mt. Victoria Station, 10 a.m.

Anyone with suggestions for walks to contact Lloyd Jones, 57-2270 or Keith Sherlock, 57-1927.

COMING MID-WEEK WALKS.

January, 21st., Water Nymphs Dell. Meet at other side of Wentworth Falls Station at 10 a.m.

February, 18th., Bushrangers Cave, Mr. Victoria. Meet at Park in from Old Toll House, 10 a.m.

MEETING WITH B.M.C.C. CANDIDATES.

150 people attended the public meeting called by our Society in the Wentworth Falls School of Arts, on Saturday, Nov. 21st., to hear B.M.C.C. Ward 1 & 2 candidates present their views on preserving the Blue Mountains.

12 candidates from the two wards spoke for 5 minutes each and later answered questions from the audience.

All candidates were most orderly in observing the time

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limits set, and whilst there were, of course, different viewpoints on how to do it, there was general agreement on the importance of preserving the natural bushland character of the Mountains

EARLY HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY.

PART 3: The Official Opening of the Hut.

To give a proper account of the development of the Hut project from its inception in mid-1962 to its official opening in July 1963 would involve us in a wealth of detail and the mention of a large number of faithful workers; so much so that it might be tedious.

It was estimated at the time that the work - wholly voluntary - occupied no less than 1,000 man-hours spread over little more than twelve months. The overseers were George Batty, the late Sidney Vellenga (incidentally a fine bird-photographer and a co-worker with his wife, Reta, in a study of the Satin Bower-bird for C.S.I.R.O.), and the late Martin Kaub who became our President a few years later.

The cost, which ran into many hundreds of dollars (timber, locks, guttering, windows, etc. etc.), was covered by fund-raising activities and by donations from our more-than-a-hundred members and from junior branches in the local schools.

This, of course, was on top of the wonderfully generous donation by James Hardie & Company, of seventy (70) standard sheets of fibro-cement and of the useful donations of free cartage of the fibro from Sydney - by B. G. Lambert & Co. - and of gallons of paint each by the late Jim Crain of Blue Mountains Paints and by Taubmans Ltd. The B.M.C.C. carried out white-~~ant~~ treatment, did all the electrical installations, erected fire-places, and graded the roads in from Fletcher St. and Valley Rd.

By early 1963 it could be anticipated that the Hut would be ready for the public by about August. Then the thought came that the ideal thing would be an Official Opening by the Minister for Conservation on Conservation Sunday, the first day of Conservation Week in N.S.W., at the end of July.

In March or April 1963 the Secretary wrote to the Minister, outlining all the Society had done and asking the Minister to perform the Official Opening. The Minister soon replied indicating his strong interest and giving assent to the request.

This spurred the workers on and the Committee began its planning for the occasion. 300 gilt-edged invitation-cards were printed (a donation covered the cost) and sent out, in very many cases accompanied by a personal letter from the Secretary. The Treasurer, Mrs. Reta Vellenga, typed letters of invitation to all the members. A sub-committee and an ad-hoc Ladies' Auxiliary planned for shelters, seating and such, and for catering.

The 28th. July was, luckily, fine and relatively mild. There was an attendance of more than 300 when the Minister and Mrs. Enticknap arrived with police-escort.

The programme was as follows:

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1. The Chairman, Vice-President Les Hill, began by giving a very brief outline of the aims of the Society.
2. The Mayor, Alderman Keith Bates, gave a welcome to the Minister and visitors.
3. The member for the State Electorate of Hawkesbury, Mr. Bernard Deane, M.L.A., introduced the Minister.
4. The Minister's address and performing the Opening Ceremony. During his address, Mr. Enticknap said, "Isn't it good that so many of our Australians from overseas have been foremost in helping this work? Because they appreciate the need more than we native-born Australians do."
5. Greetings from Allen A. Strom, Chief Guardian of Fauna for N.S.W. and Chairman of the N.S.W. Fauna Protection Panel. Mr. Strom, present Patron of this Society and perhaps the most influential figure in the cause of wildlife conservation in this State, spoke of the world-wide urgency of wildlife conservation and referred to its material considerations, its scientific values and to its spiritual values.
6. Vote of thanks to the Minister by the Society's then Patron, the late Alderman Frank Walford.
7. Inspection of the Hut by the Minister and official party. (The Hut was decorated with appropriate posters etc. and by displays prepared and presented by Rex Gilroy, Isobel Bowden and Moira Pearce.)
8. Afternoon tea at the Hut. An invitation to take afternoon tea was extended to all present.

Among the organisations officially represented at the Opening were: B.M.C.C. (by the Mayor as indicated above, by several aldermen, by Deputy Town Clerk, Gordon Porter and by other high-ranking officers of the Council; Australian Broadcasting Commission (Clement Semmler, Assistant General Manager); Blue Mountains National Park Trust (John Yeaman, Deputy Chairman); Royal Zoological Society, Sydney (Mr. Alex. Holmes, President); Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W., (Mrs. Beryl Nipperess, Hon. Sec.); Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia (Mrs. F.R. Hooton, Hon. Sec.); N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs (Paul Driver); National Parks Association of N.S.W. (Henry Fairlie-Cunningham); Garden Clubs of Australia, (Mrs. Arthur Davis, President); Sydney Botanical Gardens and National Herbarium (Mr. E. Constable); Bathurst Naturalists' Society; Blue Mountains Flora and Fauna Preservation Society, centred at Hazelbrook, (Mrs. Marjorie Jeavons); Bathurst Historical Society; The Dubbo Arboretum; Manly-Warringah Flora and Fauna Protection Society; Hornsby Wildlife Conservation Society; N.S.W. Justices' Association; Pittwater Flora and Fauna Society; Blackheath Horticultural Society, (Mrs. Campbell, Hon. Sec)

The N.S.W. Police Department was represented by Sergeant First Class James Vency (O.I.C. Katoomba Police), by the Ministerial police escort, and by Constable First Class Barry Hodge, of Wentworth Falls, who supervised the traffic and organised and supervised the difficult parking problem.

As might be expected, not all those present signed the Visitors' Book, but the 160-odd signatures included those of residents of Bathurst, Dubbo, Tamworth, and Sydney suburbs of Thornleigh, Manly, Potts Point, Petershan, Fairfield, Eastwood,

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Berowra, Edgecliff, Sutherland, Loftus and St. Mary's.

The Committee and general membership worked hard and often long, but it was the resourceful and creative thinking and faultless attention to detail on the part of the Secretary, John Buki, that contributed most to the magnitude and success of the day.

One is tempted to look forward to another such occasion; for instance, the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Hut Opening in 1988, the Bi-Centenary Year of Australia. And maybe the highlight of the celebration could be the Official Opening of the Darwin Walk.

MUCH LAND USE ACTIVITY.

Our Land Use Committee has been busy in submitting to the B.M.C.C.:

1. An objection to sandmining on Newnes Plateau.
2. An objection to a development in York St., Katoomba.
3. A commendation of a development in Cascade Street, Katoomba, where some land was added to Katoomba Falls Reserve, and where we suggested a bit more.
4. An objection to a Crown Land Development of 41 building blocks at Blaxland.
5. An objection to a proposed Luna Park type rail-car to run from the Skyway to Frank Walford (Catalina) Park.

A deputation met the Town Clerk successfully urging the Council to bid for 3 environmentally important blocks of land in the Council Land Auction of November 21st.

A deputation met the Town Planner and Deputy Town Planner urging Council support for our negotiations with the Minister for Lands to have some environmentally sensitive Crown Land in Wentworth Falls added to the Valley of the Waters Reserve, and also urging that the Council negotiate with the company developing Lot 1 in Frog's Hollow, York St., for a reserve on the fine wooded slope above the Lot to protect the Laura Falls Creek catchment and save this fine piece of Mountain Ash forest as a backdrop for the village.

LEAP IN BLUE MOUNTAINS POPULATION.

On figures supplied by B.M.C.C. Town Planning Dept., population in 1974 was 42,000. At present (Nov. 1981) 56,780 (approx.) This is a growth of over 1/3rd. in 7 years, yet the population of Australia is stable or falling. (Deaths exceed births).

The present growth rate is 5% per annum, which means it is gaining momentum.

PROGRESS IN CONSERVATION MOVEMENT.

The membership of the Conservation Movement is at least 250,000. Milo Dunphy reckons this is twice the membership of all Political Parties. This was said by Murray Wilcox Q.C. in his inspiring opening address to the Nature Conservation Council of

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N.S.W. 1981 Annual Conference on October 31st.

Murray suggested that anyone who felt gloomy about things should look back 10 years and see the progress we have made.

Nowadays we are not involved in power struggles, parochialism or who gets the credit for what. Each campaign is treated on its merits and the leadership becomes the responsibility of the most appropriate body, whether it be local, state or federal.

Murray said the new N.S.W. Planning Legislation (Environmental Planning & Assessment Act) gives opportunities for conservationists. It is now mandatory to prepare and publish an environmental impact statement (E.I.S.) on all developments. Also, it must fulfil certain fairly rigorous standards.

Anyone can take Court proceedings in the Land and Environmental Court to stop a development, but under the present Minister the situation is not good. The Legislation is the best in Australia, the administration the worst. The Minister disallowed 3rd Party appeals even on the Parramatta Stadium.

On the Tasmanian referendum, where the Court has reneged on their promise of a "No dams" question, you can choose your form of death, but not your form of life!

1981 NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL CONFERENCE.

It was a fine experience to attend the 1981 Annual Conference of the Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W.

The Conference went over 2 days, (Oct. 31, Nov. 1) and debated all the motions submitted except the late ones. What struck me, after a lapse of some years since I was a delegate, was the maturity of the movement, the lack of dissention and parochialism, and the sense of purpose. I felt privileged to be a part of such a dedicated body of people.

Resolutions discussed were grouped under various headings. Under National Issues, such questions as ratification of International Conventions (on Antarctic Seals, Migratory Species etc.), Coastal Management, Export of Native Animals, Soil Conservation, Plant Variety Rights Legislation, Federal Govt. Funding (the lack of it!), Mining in Kakadu N.P., Murray Darling River System, National Tree Preservation.

The next section on National Parks & Nature Reserves, dealt with Classification of Areas for Nature Conservation Purposes, Motor Vehicles in National Parks, Mining in National Parks, Sand Mining, Colo-Hunter Wilderness, and our own Society's resolution "that there should be no further alienation of Crown Land in the Blue Mountains City Boundaries, and further that all Crown Lands adjoining a Reserve or National Park be added to same"

This was carried with the addition of the word "suitable", between "all" and "Crown"

There was a big section on Land Management, covering such issues as Soil Conservation on the State level, Fire Management of Natural Areas, Bushfire Hazard Reduction, Bush Fire Council of N.S.W. policies, Waterway Developments in Estuarine Areas, Peatlands, Roadside Verges, Macquarie Marshes, and one calling for a Regional Environment Plan for Newnes Plateau which we quoted in our objection to Sandmining in the area which we submitted to the B.N.C.C.

Under the section Forrestry, the Dept. came in for a lot of criticism, with a strong call for a reform of the Forrestry Act and reorganisation of the Forrestry Commission, which seems to be dominated by the wishes of saw-milling interests to the detriment of forest management.

There was a big section on Semi-Arid Zone Management which seemed to me to be a great advance by the movement. Resolutions dealt with covered Ecological changes since European Settlement, the need for a Conservation Survey, prohibit Mallee Clearing West of the Darling, limit cropping in the Western Division, attention to Stocking Rates, proposals for several new Parks & Reserves. The Western Land Division alone is larger than France!

There were several resolutions on Wildlife, also on Environmental Education, and on Energy & Recycling.

The Total Environment Centre submitted a resolution calling for pressure on the State Govt. for an immediate end to alienation of existing urban parks and the creation of an Urban Parks Authority as a defender of urban open space.

Altogether an inspiring conference.

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We need your support and interest and hope to hear from you soon.

WARRAGAMBA CATCHMENT AREA.

We have been advised by the Metropolitan Water Board that permits are no longer needed to enter the area except for the three kilometre restricted zone around the foreshores of Lake Burragorang. Bushwalkers may use the Mount Mouin, Mount Cookern and the Balloon Pass - Sheepwalk Road tracks. Motor Vehicles must still keep to public roads and park roads.

SUNDRIES.

The Frogmouths continue their nesting every year at Laura Baths Picnic Area, (Tree right beside the road on edge of stream).

This year they have 3 young.

An unusual sight at Medlow Bath this year is 4 enormous Channel Billed Cuckoos flying about giving their raucous calls. Usually passing through, they are probably staying for a while because of large numbers of Cicadas.

Christmas Bells are out in profusion on Overcliff Walk at Wentworth Falls.

This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in July 2022 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.

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