

KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY.

Newsletter No. 5, June 1971.



Patron: Mr. Allen A. STROM,
Advisor in Conservation,
Dept. of Education, nsw.

"Conservation is like freedom, it can only be maintained by constant vigilance."
- Judith Wright.

X X X X X X X X X X X

IN THIS ISSUE:

Our Society: Meetings and New Office Bearers; Outings; New Members; the Hut, Workers and Work; Walks; New Store Room.

Tribute to Members.

Activities of Members: Walkabout with Graham; From our Secretary; Support for Myall Lakes National Park.

On Political Support.

Clutha - - In your backyard.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Society or its editor. Contributions for the next issue are anticipated before Sept. 1 1971.

Editor: Martin Kaub, 1 Clarence Street, Katoomba - 2780.
Phone: Leura 4 - 1754.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

OUR SOCIETY.

Meetings:

March: The following office bearers were elected:
President: Mr. Wilson Alcorn.
Vice Presidents: Messrs. Bob Douglass and Martin Kaub.
Secretary: Miss Winsome Gregory.
Membership Secretary and Hut Curator: Miss Isobel Bowden.
Treasurer: Mrs. Annelie Wintzler.
Hutroster Supervisor: Mr. Fred. Astle.
Convenor of Outings: Miss Nora Dillon.
Librarian: Miss Margaret Pinneger.
Publicity Officer: Mrs. Betty Kaub.
Tea Hostess: Mrs. M. Lamb.
Committee Members: Messrs. Jim Anderson, John Dreyer, Les Hill, Fred Wintxler.
Editor of Newsletter: Martin Kaub.

April: A members night.
We all wondered at the ingenuity and skill in nestbuilding of the little birds, and the soft dowdiness of the nest-interiors, when Graham Alcorn handed during his talk his collection of birds nests around. As ever a lot of Graham's enthusiasm and joy for his subject rubbed off to his audience. A caution here tho' - please don't go collecting nests - only professionals do know when a nest has been truly abandoned!
Betty Kaub showed colorslides of lovely wildflowers and our precious mountain's scenery.
Molly Vaughan shared her fascination for sailing ships with slides of the Cook's Bicentenary and Jim Anderson presented his colorslides of native birds and ran a tape on birdfeeding from the Argonauts.

May: A large and eager turnout heard our Patron -Allen Strom- on importance of understanding of, and dedication to Conservation.

In an hours review, with the aid of a blackboard and much chalk, Allen's talk on: "Conservation is much more than an interest, it is a Driving Force of Life" was geared on a lecture basis.

He gave the basic facts as: "Quality-in-Living" is proportional to the availability of nature resources, both in quantity and quality.

Components of these resources are:

- a/ Non-renewables, as coal, oil, minerals.
- b/ Renewables, as air, water, soil, living things, making up the existing naturalness.

Increasingly depleting these resources are:

- 1/ The accelerating increase of the world's population.
- 2/ The unavoidable increase in demand of 2/3 of the world's population, now living on a sub-standard.
- 3/ The final collapse of the hitherto-valid fallacy, in the Economic Buoyancy System: the vicious circle of an everincreasing population geared to an everincreasing demand !

The Writing-on-the-Wall:

Our resources are finite !

For the people of to-morrow the only cover-all solution is CONSERVATION EDUCATION, combined with a critical look at the present resourcesmanagement and follow-up ACTION.

A 5-step programme for a sound Conservation scheme was given. His final message:

The philosophy of conservation is the only realistic challenge to achieve the Perpetuity of the Quality (=Standard) of Living, requiring action by us and now.

COMING MEETINGS. (Always last Thursday in the month at 8 pm in the Conservation Hut.)

June: Mr. Ormsby of Springwood to talk SNAKES.

By the ripple of approval (or slight apprehension) when he was announced at our last meeting he is an impressive choice of lecturer.

July (maybe August) will see the Springwood Bushwalkers with us. As well as seeing and hearing about some of their tough excursions, we hope that they will drop a few hints about our proposed Youth Club.

Winsome Gregory.

OUTINGS. (First Saturday each month.)

The outings are growing in popularity, the usual number attending being 10 - 12. The opinions expressed are unanimous as to the worthwhilness and the enjoyment of the outings.

Over the last three months we have been to the Cox's River (Bowenfels), this distance being travelled to avoid the heavy mist and drizzle on the mountains. A point of special interest on the return journey was the lengthy observation of a number of Owlet Night Jars.

The Megalong Valley walk beyond the Packsaddlers at Green Gully was unique in that the valley was alive with Bellbirds making a constant ringing, and we were able to have a good view of them, on the trees and on the wing.

The walk to Mount Banks was a delight and the views were exceptional owing to the very clear atmosphere due largely to a slight westerly.

During the winter months we plan to keep more to the Lower Mountains and our next outing (June 5) is to be to Sasfras Gully, Springwood.

No plans are made in advance, but are discussed and settled at the previous outing and notified at the monthly meeting and in the local press.

Any further information can be had by phoning me at Wentworth Falls 293.

Nora Dillon.

NEW MEMBERS in the period.

It is gratifying to announce 14 new members.

Mrs. E. Barnes, Halliday, King, Johnston, Marr.
Miss Mackenzie, Mills, Robertson. Mr/Mrs Dean, Perry, Sainty.
Messrs. Booth, Bush.

JUNIOR (New) MEMBERS: Steward and Meredith Burns, John Fortescue.

WORK ON HUT AND ENVIRONS.

Blessed by motorists and potential leg-breakers our President fixed and filled in that dreadful gaping drain in the inner circle of the drive.

Not to be outdone, Jim Vaughan wielded the concrete trowel to oust marauding mice. We wish him good luck with his studies, remembering well his calmness and efficiency when he was our President.

WORKERS IN THE HUT.

Those on Hut Roster reported very busy days during the school holidays. At the week-ends too the number of visitors is steadily increasing. Our Hut-roster Organiser, Fred Astle (phone Springwood 51 1680) needs more helpers. If you could spare the time to do occasional Hut duty (that is to be called on in an emergency) or if you would like to assist those already on roster, please ring Fred Astle.

Hut hours are roughly: 11 am. to 5 pm. on Saturdays, Sundays, public- and school holidays.

On 29th March there was an afternoon party for those on Hut roster. The 28 present enjoyed the calories galore. We were pleased to have Wilson Alcorn, our new president-elect and the Sainty's from Oatley Conservation Scy. Fred Astle spoke words of welcome and wisdom; Isobel Bowden offered wise advice, such as: Please turn the Frig. to "warmest" when leaving Hut; always check the book on counter for price increases.

There is a new notice positioned over the Frig. Please feel free to put on this anything you would like to bring to the attention of fellow workers, but sign your name and put the date on the bottom right hand corner.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE WALKS AROUND THE HUT.

Nice to see again Jim Davies (District Commissioner of the Scouts in our area) at the May-meeting. At a suggestion of Jim Anderson our President has approached Jim Davies on the possibility of a Scout's working party on the Valley-of-the-Waters tracks, similar to the successful scouts week-end at Katoomba/Leura recently.

We announce with delight that it will take place next year. A lot of planning and careful preparation will be called for. SO: Planners and Preparators please step forward!

THE NEW STORE ROOM.

What a relief to have the New Store Room finished and filled with drink bottles, chairs, tools and all the odds and ends, which were cluttering the Hut. The Committee expressed their thanks to the builder, Mr. Browne, for his good job when the final payment was made.

TRIBUTE TO MEMBERS and MEMBERS who we lost through their passing away,

but whose work and memories are still with us.
BERNHARD SCHLEICHER. His Father was Principal of Moore Theological College; he himself held several degrees and taught Latin and Greek as well as other subjects.

He founded the Blue Mtns Branch of the RSPCA many years ago; he was the Secretary of the Hazelbrook Reserves Trust, which had the care and control over the Reserves at Hazelbrook and which came directly under the control of the Department of Lands.

His almost lifelong service to the Church of England is well known and a Memorial Service for him will be held at Hazelbrook on the third Sunday in June, when it is hoped that many of his friends and associates will be present.

Early in the 1950's he founded the Blue Mtns Flora and Fauna Protection Society and he was its President until 2 yrs ago when he took over the Secretaryship from his sister, Miss Ruth Schleicher, who became incapacitated. He died (16th May) only a few weeks after having relinquished this position. He was responsible directly for the formation of our own Conservation Scy. and indirectly for the Lower Blue Mtns Wildlife Conservation Scy. He was active in these matters when: conservation and protection were still ugly words. Up till the last three or four years he

(BERN.SCHL.cont.) attended all the Nature Conservation Conferences in Sydney. Both he and his sister Ruth wrote many excellent letters to the national and local Press on Conservation-matters and it was his action in writing to the Chief Secretary, which prevented the keeping of native animals in cages as a sideshow at Katoomba, a few years ago.

The last few months he was a patient at Bodington Hospital and while there, at well over 80 yrs old he volunteered to do translation work for Braille books for the blind.

Marjorie Jeavons.

As far back as 1963 due to Mr.Schleichers influence and assistance Miss MOIRA PEARCE contributed to Conservation-week with a display of Ferns and Mosses (at the Ch.of Engl.Hall at Hazelbrook), collected on her Permit in the Blue Mtns. Moira, however became incapacitated and could not be as active in the Society and conservation field as she would have liked to be. Her heart is with the cause all the time and we are pleased to mention, that occasionally we see her at a general meeting if she is able to come out.

SIDNEY VELLENGA. He passed away on 29th April. He was instrumental - both through his heart and the time and effort he put in - to the establishment of our now so treasured Conservation Hut at the Valley-of-the-Waters. At his passing away Hebrews 13:2 comes to the mind: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware". His name will always be with us through the research work his wife Reta and he put in on the "Behaviour of the Male Satin Bower-bird at the bower". For six long years they worked together on this project at their home at Leura (so appropriately called: "Melody Cottage") Side by side: banding birds, searching for their bowers and nests, getting up before sunrise to follow the birds movements. The result of their research was a comprehensive publication by RETA in the "Australian Bird Bander", March 1970 (available at the Hut for perusal). Without Sidney's help Reta could perhaps never have come to such an early report on their findings. Sidney's unending ingeniousness to put up hidden food-supplies to attract the birds to their garden, also his assistance to Reta to handle the birds for the closer investigation of their plumage etc., will go down in history. Our Society is proud to mention that his devotion to Nature and Nature-conservation stands out as an example for those who will follow up what has been started.

Reta on her own will continue the work; we wish her good luck with it. She has already attracted the interest of younger ones, no doubt also through her publication (by courtesey of the GOULD LEAGUE of Bird Lovers) of a list of "Some Birds of the City of the Blue Mountains", which list has been distributed to Blue-Mountains school and is also available at the Hut for perusal.

FORMATION OF A YOUTH GROUP.(from our Secretary)

This is something to which the Committee (and we hope YOU) is going to give a great deal of thought and planning. We aim to get it going in a few months time.

Conservation is very much the concern of the young ones; let us give them a go at taking the helm, and let them have and control their own group side by side with ours.

Have you any ideas that might be helpful? Are you interested in helping to form such a group? Have you had experience in this type of activity and are you willing to give advice? Are you young and would like to become a member of such a group? Then please drop a line, or phone the Secretary (23 Edward Pde, Phone 401, W.Worth Falls).

ACTIVITIES OF OUR MEMBERS:

WALKABOUT WITH GRAHAM- Birds amongst the Banksias.

At present on the slopes above the great cliffs of the Jamison Valley, the hill-Banksia, BANKSIA COLLINA, is flowering profusely. The flowers of this wonderful plant - large, dull-orange brushes with purply black "hairpins" protruding - provide food for many species of birds. Most of them belong to the most common Austr. bird family, the HONEY-EATERS. Reta Vellenga

(Walkabout with Graham cont.) mentions in her book sixteen species of honey eaters, which she observed within the Councils boundaries.

Anyone taking a stroll along Pr. Henry Cliff walk would have a good chance of seeing in the months of June, July and August six of these species feeding on Banksia nectar or "hawking" for insects in the air. Pick a spot where you hear a lot of birds calling. If you stand or sit still, most of the species will come and inspect you.

Commonest are: the EASTERN SPINEBILL and the NEW HOLLAND-HONEY EATER. The first one is small, sprightly, with long, curved bill, colored dark above, dull orange below, white chest and smoky bib. It has many brisk, cheerful calls and it will come right up to you. The other one is larger, black and white with yellow on wings, white eye, striped breast; it is also called: YELLOW-WINGED or WHITE BEARDED HONEY EATER.

Next is the YELLOW FACED HONEY EATER, - grey green above, grey beneath, yellow face stripe. Tens of thousands of these birds migrate North in Autumn. However there seems to be quite a large winter population here, living on nectar and insects. These birds are almost certainly migrants which have come up from the south of Victoria perhaps..?

The CRESCENT HONEY EATER is smaller than the last two; dark grey above, with bright yellow on wings and tail, light grey below, white chest with a black crescent-shaped mark each side. It has a shrill, strident voice - its chief call sounds like: "Egypt Egypt". It is a most exasperating bird in that it will perch in a bush near you and shriek derisively, but see it, you cannot! However if you stay still it will sometimes come and look at you. When you do see it, you will be surprised, that such a small bird could have such a loud voice. The female is much duller than the male, olive-brown in colour and even more elusive.

The LEWIN HONEY EATER is a handsome olive-green bird with a yellow earpatch. Larger and stouter than the others, it lives in the wet, overgrown gullies, but it comes up to feed on the Banksias. It calls freely, a single musical note repeated in a rapid staccato fashion.

The last and largest is the RED WATTLE BIRD; a slim mottled grey bird with a yellow stomach patch and small red wattles on its cheeks which are often hard to see. It travels round in flocks and has a raucous voice of which it makes full use, calling constantly "Kwok, Kwok", "Have Another, we'll have Another", and other calls.

Recently, without moving from one place, six species were observed hawking for insects in the late afternoon-sunlight. Even the elusive female CRESCENT HONEY EATER ventured forth long enough to focus the binoculars!

What a pleasant and exhilarating experience.

Graham Alcorn.

(Note Editor:

A walking map of Prince Henry Cliff walk is available from me at request. Send S.A.E.)

QUESTIONNAIRE. (From our Secretary).

Attached questionnaire gives you the opportunity (and we hope you will make good use of it) in helping the Committee to plan the meeting-programmes. Would please return it at your earliest convenience before the next general meeting?

NEW CONSTITUTION

Although a copy of the new Constitution has not been handed out, it is of course available to any member on request. Below is the most vital part, the "objects" of our organisation:

- A/ To disseminate and foster understanding of the ideals of Conservation
- B/ To conduct meetings, excursions and research, and to provide information to the general public on conservation
- C/ To maintain friendly relations with other Conservation-Societies

SUPPORT FOR MYALL LAKES NATIONAL PARK.

A Coffee morning will be held in or around the Hut at 10 A.M. on

(Support Myall Lakes cont.) Friday 18th June. Entry: 30 cts. Proceeds to Natural Areas Ltd., an organisation formed to purchase land to be added to the proposed Myall Lakes National Park.

Please bring your luncheon and join in a working bee afterwards.

Talking about working bees: Did you like the view through the Hut windows? A small working bee was active during last month.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN POLITICS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING - or HOW TO BRAINWASH THE CONSERVATIONIST (from Hansard Commonw. Senate No.8 pages 1044 and 1208)

Question from Senator MULVIHILL on 28 -4 -'71:

"When does the minister expect to be able to give a clear-cut statement on the boundaries of the proposed Northern Territory Top End National Park, considering the fact that I have been waiting many weeks for an answer, and - meantime mining depredations continue to intrude on the proposed area?"

Minister: "At the moment I do not know but I shall seek to find out."

Senator Mulvihill (30 - 8-'71): "My question is supplementary to a speech and three follow-up questions, relating to the final determination of the size of the Northern Territory Top-End National Park, - How long does the Minister expect me to wait for an answer?"

Minister: "I do not know. I shall do my best, as I said before."

ALICE IN WONDERLAND or THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE "CLUTHA'S DEVELOPMENT PTY. LTD. AGREEMENT ACT", 1970.

"Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

After the foreign owner of Clutha Pty.Ltd (-the largest individual fleetowner in the world -) planned to expand on a great scale the iron ore mining facilities in W.A., to build privately a 38-mile railway to a port at Cape Kenandren, to penetrate into the mining venture in the Robe River Scheme and in real-estate, and all these plans were declared unacceptable to the W.A.government, he turned to our East Coast; result: a coal-mining and export venture was started.

Oakdale Colliery was bought from the NSW Government; Wollclift (mining in the Burragorang Valley) was purchased, and from the Placer Group the existing Clutha was bought, which was to become the naming of the whole of the Development organisation.

Soon Clutha achieved the doubtful reputation of using less Australian labour for its coal output per unit than any other mining company in Australia.

In Dec., '69, the N.S.W.Minister for Mines flew to New York re the establishment by Clutha of private offshore coal loaders. A Clutha Agreement Act 1970 was introduced in Nov.1970 and passed within a week. Copies of the Act were made available to the public on Feb.1971, only one day before the agreement was signed and had become valid. It was then that it became known to the public, that the Government of NSW had approved to grant Clutha the following: (after - it had already granted Exploration Drilling Licences for practically the whole of the Blue Mountains area east of W.W.Falls, residential areas included)

- 1/ The opening up of new coal mines opposite to Burragorang L.O. (West of Wollondilly River) right in the Warragamba-water Catchment Area, including the building of a one span bridge over the scenic Wollondilly River, close to the L.O. (another car strangled spanner for the future)
- 2/ Building of a private railway line to bring coal from Burragorang to a private port on the coast (Coledale), travelling through beautiful countryside, O'Hares and Cataract Catchment areas, reaching the coast close to Sublime Point Reserve
- 3/ Constructing a Coal Fines (dust) Dump of 1 000 000 ton on top of the windswept and timbered cliffs south of Stanwell Park (a proposed Reserve area).
- 4/ The building of a wharf at the bottom of the cliffs, jetting one mile into the ocean. From here the own bulkfreighters of this concern, registered mostly in countries on little or no tax, like Panama, Liberia and the Bahamas - will carry the coal to Japan.

This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in August 2020 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.

KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY.

Newsletter No 5, June 1971.

Patron: Mr Allen Strom, advisor in Conservation, Dept. of Education, NSW.

“Conservation is like freedom, it can only be maintained by constant vigilance.” – Judith Wright.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

IN THIS ISSUE:

Our Society: Meetings and New Office Bearers; Outings; New Members; the Hut; Workers and Work; Walks; New Store Room.

Tribute to Members.

Activities of Members: Walkabout with Graham; From our Secretary; Support for Myall Lakes National Park.

On Political Support.

Clutha - - In your backyard.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Society or its editor.

Contributions for the next issue are anticipated before Sept 1 1971.

Editor: Martin Kaub, 1 Clarence Street, Katoomba 2780. Phone: Leura 4-1754

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

OUR SOCIETY.

Meetings:

March: The following office bearers were elected:

President:	Mr Wilson Alcorn
Vice Presidents:	Messers Bob Douglass and Martin Kaub.
Secretary:	Miss Winsome Gregory.
Membership Secretary and Hut Curator:	Miss Isobel Bowden.
Treasurer:	Mrs Annelie Wintzler.
Hut Roster Supervisor:	Mr Fred Astle.
Convenor of Outings:	Miss Nora Dillon.
Librarian:	Miss Margaret Pinnegar
Publicity Officer:	Mrs Betty Kaub.
Tea Hostess:	Mrs M Lamb.

Committee Members: Messrs Jim Anderson, John Dreyer, Les Hill, Fred Wintzler.

Editor of Newsletter: Martin Kaub.

April: A members night.

We all wondered at the ingenuity and skill in nest building of the little birds, and the soft doddiness of the nest interiors, when Graham Alcorn handed during his talk on his collection of birds nests around. As ever a lot of Graham's enthusiasm and joy for his subject rubbed off to his audience. A caution though – please don't go collecting nests – only professionals do know when a nest has been truly abandoned!

Betty Kaub showed colour slides of lovely wildflowers and our precious mountain's scenery.

Molly Vaughan shared her fascination for sailing ships with slides of the Cook's Bicentenary and Jim Anderson presented his colour slides of native birds and ran a tape on bird feeding from the Argonauts.

May: A large and eager turn up heard our Patron Allen Strom on importance of understanding, and dedication to Conservation.

In an hours review, with the aid of a blackboard and much chalk, Allen's talk on "Conservation is much more than an interest, it is a Driving Force of Life" was geared on a lecture basis.

He gave the basic fact as: "Quality in Living" is proportional to the availability of nature resources, both in quantity and quality.

Components of these resources are:

a/ Non-renewables, as coal, oil, minerals.

b/ Renewables, as air, water, soil, living things making up the existing naturalness.

Increasingly depleting these resources are:

1/ The accelerating increase of the world's population.

2/ The unavoidable increase in demand of 2/3 of the world's population, now living on a sub-standard.

3/ The final collapse of the hitherto-valid fallacy in the Economic Buoyancy System: the vicious circle of an ever increasing population geared to an ever increasing demand!

The Writing on the Wall: Our resources are finite!

For the people of tomorrow the only cover-all solution is CONSERVATION EDUCATION, combined with a critical look at the present resources management and follow up ACTION.

A 5 step program for a sound Conservation scheme was given.

His final message: The philosophy of conservation is the only realistic challenge to achieve the Perpetuity of the Quality (=Standard) of Living, requiring action by us and now.

COMING MEETINGS. (Always last Thursday in the month at 8pm in the Conservation Hut.)

June: Mr Ormsby of Springwood to talk SNAKES. By the ripple of approval (or slight apprehension) when he was announced at our last meeting he is an impressive choice lecturer.

July: (maybe August) will see the Springwood Bushwalkers with us. As well as seeing and hearing about some of their tough excursions, we hope that they will drop a few hints about our proposed Youth Club.

Winsome Gregory.

OUTINGS. (First Saturday each month.)

The outings are growing in popularity, the usual number attending being 10-12. The opinions expressed are unanimous as to the worthwhileness and the enjoyment of the outings.

Over the last three months we have been to the Cox's River (Bowenfels), this distance being travelled to avoid the heavy mist and drizzle on the mountains. A point of special interest on the return journey was the lengthy observation of a number of Owlet Night Jars.

The Megalong Valley walk beyond the Packsaddlers at Green Gully was unique in that the valley was alive with Bell birds making a constant ringing, and we were able to have a good view of them, on the trees and on the wing.

The walk to Mount Banks was a delight and the views were exceptional owing to the very clear atmosphere due largely to a slight westerly.

During the winter months we plan to keep more to the Lower Mountains and our next outing (June 5) is to be to Sassafras Gully, Springwood.

No plans are made in advance, but are discussed and settled at the previous outing and notified at the monthly meeting and in the local press.

Any further information can be had by phoning me at Wentworth Falls 293.

Nora Dillon.

NEW MEMBERS in the period.

It is gratifying to announce 14 new members.

Mrs E Barnes, Halliday, King, Johnston, Marr.

Miss Mackenzie, Mills, Robertson.

Mr/Mrs Dean, Perry, Sainty

Messrs. Booth, Bush.

JUNIOR (New) MEMBERS: Steward and Meredith Burns, John Fortescue.

WORK ON HUT AND ENVIRONS.

Blesses by motorists and potential leg breakers our President fixed and filled in that dreadful gaping drain in the inner circle of the drive.

Not to be outdone, Jim Vaughan wielded the concrete trowel to oust marauding mice. We wish him good luck with his studies, remembering well his calmness and efficiency when he was our President.

WORKERS IN THE HUT.

Those on Hut Roster reported very busy days during the school holidays. At the weekends too the number of visitors is steadily increasing. Our Hut Roster Organiser, Fred Astle (phone Springwood 51 1680) needs more helpers. If you could spare the time to do occasional Hut duty (that is to be called on in an emergency) or if you would like to assist those already on roster, please ring Fred Astle.

Hut hours are roughly: 11 am to 5 pm on Saturday's, Sundays, public and school holidays.

On the 29th March there was an afternoon party for those on Hut Roster. The 28 present enjoyed the calories galore. We were pleased to have Wilson Alcorn, our new president- elect and the Sainty's from Oatley Conservation Society. Fred Astle spoke words of welcome and wisdom; Isobel Bowden offered wise advice, such as: Please turn the fridge to "warmest" when leaving Hut: always check the book on counter for price increases.

There is a new notice positioned over the fridge. Please feel free to put on this anything you would like to bring to the attention of fellow workers, but sign your name and put the date on the bottom right hand corner.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE WALKS AROUND THE HUT.

Nice to see again Jim Davies (District Commissioner of the Scouts in our area) at the May meeting. At a suggestion of Jim Anderson our President has approached Jim Davies on the possibility of a Scout's working party on the Valley of the Waters tracks, similar to the successful scouts week end at Katoomba/Leura recently.

We announce with delight that it will take place next year. A lot of planning and careful preparation will be called for. SO: Planners and Preparators please step forward.

THE NEW STORE ROOM.

What a relief to have the New Store Room finished and filled with drink bottles, chairs, tools and all the odds and ends, which were cluttering the Hut. The Committee expressed their thanks to the builder, Mr Browne, for his job when the final payment was made.

TRIBUTE TO MEMBERS and MEMBERS who we lost through their passing away, but whose work and memories are still with us.

BERNHARD SCHLEICHER. His Father was Principal of Moore Theological College; he himself held several degrees and taught Latin and Greek as well as other subjects.

He founded the Blue Mountains Branch of the RSPCA many years ago; he was the Secretary of the Hazelbrook Reserves Trust, which came directly under the control of the Department of Lands.

His almost lifelong service to the Church of England is well known and a Memorial Service for him will be held at Hazelbrook on the third Sunday in June, when it is hoped that many of his friends and associates will be present.

Early in the 1950's he founded the Blue Mountains Flora and Fauna Protection Society and he was its President until 2 years ago when he took over the Secretaryship from his sister, Miss Ruth Schleicher, who became incapacitated. He died (16th May) only a few weeks after having relinquished this position.

He was responsible directly for the formation of our own Conservation Society and directly for the Lower Mountains Wildlife Conservation Society.

He was active in these matters when: conservation and protection were still ugly words. Up till the last three or four years he attended all the Nature Conservation Conferences in Sydney.

Both he and his sister Ruth wrote many excellent letters to the national and local Press on conservation matters and it was his action in writing to the Chief Secretary, which prevented the keeping of native animals in cages as a sideshow at Katoomba, a few years ago.

The last few months he was a patient at Bodington Hospital and while there, at well over 80 years old he volunteered to do translation work for Braille books for the blind.

Marjorie Jeavons.

As far back as 1963 due to Mr Schleichers influence and assistance MISS MOIRA PEARCE contributed to Conservation week with a display of Ferns and Mosses (at the Church Of England Hall at Hazelbrook), collected on her Permit in the Blue Mountains. Moira, however became incapacitated and could not be as active in this Society and conservation field as she would have liked to be. Her heart is with the cause all the time and we are pleased to mention, that occasionally we see her at a general meeting if she is able to come out.

SIDNEY VELLENGA. He passed away on the 29th April. He was instrumental both through his heart and the time and effort he put into the establishment of our now so treasured Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters.

At his passing away Hebrews 13:2 comes to the mind "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware".

His name will always be with us through the research work his wife Rita and he put in on the "Behaviour of the Male Satin Bower bird at the bower". For six long years they worked together on this project at their home at Leura (so appropriately called "Melody Cottage"). Side by side: banding birds, searching for their bowers and nests, getting up before sunrise to follow the birds movements.

The result of their research was a comprehensive publication by RETA in the "Australian Bird Bander", March 1970 (available at the Hut for perusal).

Without Sidney's help Reta could perhaps never have come to such an early report on their findings. Sidney's unending ingeniousness to put up hidden food supplies to attract the birds to their garden, also his assistance to Reta to handle the birds for the closer investigation of their plumage etc, will go down in history. Our Society is proud to mention that his devotion to Nature and Nature conservation stands out as an example for those who will follow up what has been started.

Reta on her own will continue the work; we wish her good luck with it. She has already attracted the interest of younger ones, no doubt also through her publication (by courtesy of the GOULD LEAGUE of Birds Lovers) of a list of "Some Birds of the City of the Blue Mountains", which list has been distributed to Blue Mountains school and is also available at the Hut for perusal

FORMATION OF A YOUTH GROUP. (from our Secretary)

This is something to which the Committee (and we hope YOU) is going to give a great deal of thought and planning. We aim to get it going in a few months' time.

Conservation is very much the concern of the young ones; let us give them a go at taking the helm, and let them have and control their own group side by side with ours.

Have you any ideas that might be helpful? Are you interested in helping to form such a group? Have you had experience in this type of activity and are you willing to give advice? Are you young and would like to become a member of such a group? Then please drop a line, or phone the Secretary (23 Edwards Pde, Phone 401, Wentworth Falls).

ACTIVITIES OF OUR MEMBERS:

WALKABOUT WITH GRAHAM- Birds amongst the Banksias.

At present on the slopes above the great cliffs of the Jamison Valley, the hill Banksias, BANKSIA COLLINA, is flowering profusely. The flowers of this wonderful plant, large dull orange brushes with purple black "hairpins" protruding provide food for many species of birds. Most of them belong to the most common Australian bird family, the HONEY-EATERS. Reta Vellenga mentions in her book sixteen species of honey eaters, which she observed within the Councils boundaries.

Anyone taking a stroll along the Prince Henry Cliff Walk would have a good chance of seeing in the months of June, July and August six of these species feeding on Banksia nectar or "hawking" for insects in the air. Pick a spot where you hear a lot of birds calling. If you stand or sit still, most of the species will come and inspect you.

Commonest are: the EASTERN SPINEBILL and the NEW HOLLAND HONEY EATER. The first one is small, sprightly, with long curved bill, coloured dark above, dull orange below, white chest and smoky bib. It has many brisk, cheerful calls and it will come right up to you. The other one is larger, black and white with yellow on wings, white eye, striped breast; it is also called: YELLOW WINGED or WHITE BEARDED HONEY EATER.

Next is the YELLOW FACED HONEY EATER, grey green above, grey beneath, yellow face stripe. Tens of thousands of these birds migrate North in Autumn. However there seems to be quite a large winter population here, living on nectar and insects. These birds are almost certainly migrants which have come up from the south of Victoria perhaps?

The CRESCENT HONEY EATER is smaller than the last two; dark grey above, with bright yellow on wings and tail, light grey below, white chest with a black crescent shaped mark each side. It has a shrill, strident voice; its chief call sounds like: "Egypt Egypt". It is a most exasperating bird in that it will perch in a bush near you and shriek derisively, but see it, you cannot! However if you stay still it will sometimes come and look at you. When you do see it, you will be surprised, that such a small bird could have such a loud voice. The female is much duller than the male, olive brown in colour and even more elusive.

The LEWIN HOONEY EATER is a handsome olive green bird with a yellow ear patch. Larger and stouter than the others, it lives in the wet, overgrown gullies, but it comes up to feed on the Banksias. It calls freely, a single musical note repeated in a rapid staccato fashion.

The last and largest is the RED WATTLE BIRD; a slim mottled grey bird with a yellow stomach patch and small red wattles on its cheeks which are often hard to see. It travels round in flocks and has a raucous voice of which it makes full use, calling constantly "Kwok, Kwok", "Have Another, we'll have Another", and other calls.

Recently, without moving from one place, six species were observed hawking for insects in the late afternoon sunlight. Even the elusive female CRESCENT HONEY EATER ventured forth long enough to focus the binoculars!

What a pleasant and exhilarating experience.

Graham Alcorn.

(Note Editor: A walking map of Prince Henry Cliff walk is available from me at request. Send S.A.E.)

QUESTIONNAIRE. (From our Secretary).

Attached questionnaire gives you the opportunity (and we hope you will make good use of it) in helping the Committee to plan the meeting programmes. Would you please return it at your earliest convenience before the next general meeting?

NEW CONSTITUTION

Although a copy of the new Constitution has not been handed out, it is available to any member on request. Below is the most vital part, the "objects" of our organisation:

A/ To disseminate and foster understanding of the ideals of Conservation...

B/ To conduct meetings, excursions and research, and to provide information to the general public on conservation...

C/ To maintain friendly relations with other Conservation Societies...

SUPPORT FOR MYALL LAKES NATIONAL PARK.

A Coffee morning will be held in or around the Hut at 10 am on Friday 18th June. Entry: 30 cents. Proceeds to Natural Areas Ltd, an organisation formed to purchase land to be added to the proposed Myall Lakes National Park.

Please bring your luncheon and join in a working bee afterwards.

Talking about working bees: Did you like the view through the Hut windows? A small working bee was active during last month.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN POLITICS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING or HOW TO BRAINWASH THE CONSERVATIONIST (from Hansard Commonwealth Senate No. 8 pages 1044 and 1208)

Question from Senator MULVIHILL on 28-Apr-1971:

“When does the minister expect to be able to give a clear cut statement on the boundaries of the proposed Northern Territory Top End National Park, considering the fact that I have been waiting many weeks for an answer, and meantime mining depredations continue to intrude on the proposed area?”

Minister: “At the moment I do not know but I shall seek to find out.”

Senator Mulvihill (30-Aug-1971): “My question is supplementary to a speech...and three follow up questions, relating to the final determination of the size of the Northern Territory Top End National Park, - How long does the Minister expect me to wait for an answer?”

Minister: “I do not know. I shall do my best, as I said before.”

ALICE IN WONDERLAND or THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE “CLUTHA’S DEVELOPMENT PTY. LTD. AGREEMENT ACT” 1970.

“Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

After the foreign owner of Clutha Pty Ltd (the largest individual fleet owner in the world) planned to expand on a great scale the iron ore mining facilities in WA, to build privately a 38 mile railway to a port at Cape Kenandren, to penetrate into the mining venture in the Robe River Scheme and in real estate, and all these plans were declared unacceptable to the WA government, he turned to our East Coast; result: a coal mining and export venture was started.

Oakdale Colliery was bought from the NSW Government; Wollclift (mining in the Burraborang Valley) was purchased, and from the Placer Group the existing Clutha was bought, which was to become the naming of the whole of the Development organisation.

Soon Clutha achieved the doubtful reputation of using less Australian labour for its coal output per unit than any other mining company in Australia.

In Dec 1969, the NSW Minister for Mines flew to New York re the establishment by Clutha of private offshore coal loaders. A Clutha Agreement Act 1970 was introduced in Nov 1970 and passed within a week. Copies of the Act were made available to the public on Feb 1971, only one day before the agreement was signed and had become valid. It was then that it became known to the public that the Government of NSW had approved to grant Clutha the following: (after it had already granted Exploration Drilling Licences for practically the whole of the Blue Mountains area east of Wentworth Falls residential areas included)

1/ The opening up of new coal mines opposite to Burragorang Lookout (West of Wollondilly River) right in the Warragamba water Catchment Area, including the building of a one span bridge over the scenic Wollondilly River, close to the lookout. (another car strangled spanner for the future)

2/ Building of a private railway line to bring coal from Burragorang to a private port on the coast (Coledale), travelling through beautiful countryside, O'Hares and Cataract Catchment areas, reaching the coast close to Sublime Point Reserve

3/ Constructing a Coal Fines (dust) Dump of 1,000,000 ton on top of the windswept and timbered cliffs south of Stanwell Park (proposed Reserve area).

4/ The building of a wharf at the bottom of the cliffs, jutting one mile into the ocean. From here the own bulkfreighters of this concern, registered mostly in countries on little or no tax, like Panama, Liberia and the Bahamas will carry the coal to Japan.

In the Act the Minister for Mines (and now also Conservation!) has written numerous immunities from existing legislation; statutory controls which would normally apply to you and me are not going to apply to Clutha.

1/ One cannot object in the normal way to plans on resumption by Clutha, as the Mining and Public Works Act are nullified for this project.

2/ The Planning Section of the Local Government Act is waived: Clutha can build what it likes and where it likes; it is not subject to zoning restriction by Local Government.

3/ Land required by Clutha will be obtained for them by the NSW Government and rented to Clutha at 50 cents/acre per year, "clear of rates, taxes and assessments".

4/ Clutha will not have to pay Stamp Duties.

5/ "No Government Agency nor private person shall be concerned whether the protective clauses in the Local Government Act (or any other Act) have been complied with". If Clutha wants your land, you must sell, even although Clutha is allowed specially to resell it at a profit!

6/ Clutha will have unlimited power "to enter and re-enter" (and also to "dig and bore" into) any land whatsoever and wherever during their feasibility study (exploration in the Blue Mountains?)

All the special rights do not only apply to Clutha, but also to any company or person associated with it, no matter how slightly, and they may operate in what commodities they like. It also applies of course to any future mining ventures they may set up. POLLUTION PREVENTION is covered by an array of vague and meaningless references in the Act. "Escape of coal shall be as far as possible prevented" , "shall inflict as less damage as can be". "shall not be responsible for the escape of any coal through accidental causes" , etc.

Ministerial restrictions may only be imposed "having regard for all the circumstances relative to the construction and operation of the works, including the cost thereof" (regard for the environment is not incorporated).

Many more upsetting facts can be mentioned from this Act, related to so much of our natural areas and resources. The Editors file on the Clutha Development Pty Ltd Agreement Act is available.

NOW FOR ACTION!

We have put up in the Hut a petition (drafted by a combination of allied societies) to the NSW Parliament, protesting against this ghastly Clutha Act. Of course you sign it, but it is better still, to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Hut or our Secretary and collect as many signatures as you can. You can also introduce the Petition into the Societies, clubs and groups you belong to. Business people, please display the Petition in your business, or office. Copies of the Petition in will be sent to you by the Editor on the receipt of a Self-addressed envelope).

If you are really concerned about the scenic value of our home grounds, our resources and our civil rights, if we really care, we ward off this "impossible thing", whether by petition or personal approach to our local Parliament member or the Minister concerned.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

STOP PRESS:

After we went to press the unpleasant news came to hand, that our new store room has been broken in to twice. The new fibro at the back had been battered in so that it became possible to reach inside for our supplies. Both Vandalism and theft! What a disappointment.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Despite disappointments and Governments short sightedness, Conservationism is here to stay; the number of concerned people is growing steadily and in the next issues we hope to charm you with better tunes.