

/ JANUARY 1974

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



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forms, she speaks a various language."

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Nora Dillon

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#### Energy Crisis

The Hon .Sec . also submitted a memo on the imminent energy & minerals crisis, incorporating the following resolutions: "That this conference express deep concern at the portents now evident in the energy crisis and the reported shortages of certain minerals, and urges The Australian Government to; a. encourage research in this country into the use of solar energy and the reuse of all materials capable of reuse and b) to use its influence through the United Nations and otherwise to encourage other nations to study use of solar energy & the reuse of materials".

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(700 pupils) in England which has been heated for 12 years by solar energy without once using the oil-fired emergency heating system. But no one has copied it yet!

Even now it is obvious enormous fuel savings can be made. President Nixon's use of a commercial airline to Florida instead of his personal Boeing 707 saved an estimated 40,000 gallons of fuel on one flight alone.

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#### HARDENBERGIA SEED WANTED

The David Stead Foundation is co-operating in an hydro-seeding on D.M.R. embankments, (experiment with Hardenbergia violacea seed.)

Seed will be ripe about now. If you could help by collecting pods, shelling & packeting and sending to 14 Pacific Street Watson's Bay 2030 the Foundation would be most appreciative.

Hardenbergias is easily recognised by its long heads of purple pea flowers. When not in flower it can be recognised by:

- a. the fact that it is a creeper
- b. the leaves are hard, broad, pointed at the tip, strongly veined. smooth, broad at base. 5-10 cm long
- c. the pods are black.

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#### REFOLIATION ON SEWERAGE LINE

It is over twelve months since a sewerage line was cleared around the hill behind my place. At the time I was very upset because the area was on the topside of the reserve bounding Falls' Creek and very wide area was cleared of every vestige of growth. During heavy rains following, there also occurred some erosion of the hillside. However since then it is pleasing to report that a certain amount of refoliation has taken place.

The trees of course, will take a long time to grow, but there are some mallees and Leptospermum of the white flowering variety (which has flowered this year) coming on. Where there is seepage, white flowering epacris have flourished as well as some Bauera rubioides.

A species which was comparatively rare a few years ago but of which I found numerous plants in flower this year, is Olearia dentata. Another plant whose seeds have spread over the bare earth and is now flourishing, is the blue Dampiera. There are two species of this plant.

Gompholobium grandiflorum is also fairly numerous, as is Isopogon anemonifolius and Goodenia.

There are scattered small Lambertia formosa, Hakea tenuifolia and many other unidentified plants. This year on the hillside, I found some Pimelea also and was rather surprised as I had not found it in that area previously.

Before the area was cleared there had been some common Correa and bush Clematis but these, alas, appear to have been lost.

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Thousands of volunteers are sought "to give an hour or two of time on February 24 asking neighbourhood residents to support the Appeal in a generous way".

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The nest is cleverly disguised on the outside with flakes of bark and appears to be part of the branch. It is lined with grey-green lichen, the eggs are a similar colour, and the young are covered with a light grey down, giving a splendid further camouflage when the nest is viewed from above.

In December, in the Minnie Ha Ha Falls Reserve, we found such a nest containing 3 young. It was 50 feet up in a Peppermint Gum, the top branches of which had all been killed in a bushfire. Thus it was completely open to the sky and to the view of any passing crow, currawong or hawk.

It was most interesting to watch the behaviour of the parent birds when feeding the young. Sitellas feed on insects which they gather from under the bark on branches or trunks. They usually land at the top of a branch and work their way down.

A parent would arrive at the next tree from some way off, with an insect in its mouth. It would land on the top of the next branch to the nest, hop down it as if searching for food, poking its beak into crevices and behind bark flakes! Then it flies to the top of the next branch, repeats the same ritual until it reaches the nest, feeds the young, carries on down the branch, then flies off.

There seems little doubt that this dummy food gathering behaviour is designed to mislead predators into believing that the sitella is merely searching for insects in the normal manner.

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### MEGALONG VALLEY TO BE PRESERVED

Conservationists will warmly commend the Blue Mountains City Council for their decision to preserve the present and historic bushland-rural character of the Megalong Valley.

The Council is to be congratulated on their decision to commission an Environmental Impact Study of the Valley. Following discussion on this report, Council decided on a number of steps to preserve the Valley, says an article in the Blue Mountains' Advertiser.

These include: 300 acre minimum landholding; no further public lands to be passed over to private ownership; seek to have the Valley added to the Blue Mountains National Park; retain the existing rural activities on freeholdings; no additional access roads; no widening of present road through Blackheath Glen or denuding of its verges; conserve cliff-tops and walls of the escarpment by banning clearance of any natural vegetation or geological formation.

It is most pleasing to note that the points put forward by our Society to the Environmental Impact Study, and published in our last Newsletter, have been covered in the Council decisions.

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EDITOR: Graham Alcorn, Box 39, BLACKHEATH N.S.W. 2785.

*This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in October 2020 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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KATOOMBA & DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY.

NEWSLETTER NO 15. DECEMBER 1973. PRICE 10 CENTS

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