

SAVE COLONG BULLETIN

THE COLONG COMMITTEE

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"Conservation is a particularly difficult problem for Australia because it has been a pioneering community for so long. The attitude in Australia, as it is in Canada, is that all this is here for us to exploit. And after all if you are a pioneer you have to exploit it, otherwise you don't survive. The difficulty in Australia is in getting over this hump. You have to learn to live with your environment and not exploit it."

H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, President of the Australian Conservation Foundation, quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald of 4th December.

RESERVES ARE NOT FOR MINING The Bungonia Proposal

The long-awaited decision on Colong, foreshadowed by the Minister for Mines since April, was announced by the Premier on November 2nd. The press statement was as follows:

"The Premier, Mr. Askin, said today that Cabinet, on the recommendation of the Minister for Mines, Mr. Fife, had decided to adopt a proposal that Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers (Australia) Limited be granted an additional area at Marulan to mine for limestone.

"For some time the question of providing a viable economic alternative to the mining of limestone at Mt. Armour has been under close investigation," said Mr. Askin.

"A special Cabinet sub-Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Fife and including the Minister for Decentralisation and Development, Mr. Fuller, the Minister for Environment Control, Mr. Beale, and the Minister for Lands, Mr. Lewis, was set up to examine the many implications associated with the Company's proposal to extend its cement works at Maldon and the need to ensure that sufficient reserves of limestone were available to justify such expansion.

"Because of the intense and wide interest that has been shown, a Parliamentary Joint Government Parties Committee was also established to assist in the consideration of the matter.

"After a careful and exhaustive appraisal of the many features associated with this question and a site inspection of the Marulan area, the proposal to grant an additional area was examined in relation to the Company's present operations," Mr. Askin said.

"It was a unanimous recommendation of the sub-Committee that the Company be granted an additional area at Marulan to mine for limestone, and Cabinet has decided to adopt this proposal.

"The proposed additional area at Marulan will give the Company sufficient reserves of limestone to justify the expenditure of many millions of dollars on the extension of its cement works at Maldon to supply the ever increasing demand of the public for cement.

"However," said the Premier, "the grant of the additional area will be contingent on the Company relinquishing its Special Lease for limestone at Mt. Armour. When this has been done action will be taken to add the area covered by the lease to the Kanangra-Boyd National Park."

At 2.30 p.m. on Friday, November 5, the Government Gazette recorded the revocation of parts of Public Reserves Nos. 2755, 2263 and 31526. This area of approximately 90 acres includes about 50 chains of the bed on Bungonia Creek and about 5 chains of the north face of Bungonia Gorge. At 3.35 p.m. the same day, APCM (A) lodged applications in Goulburn for mining leases over the whole area of the revoked reserves. At 4.00 p.m. the same afternoon copies of maps were located in Mr. Fife's offices where inquiries for them had begun nearly two days before.

Included in the overall plan is revocation of a section of an existing mining lease, ML.24, to preserve the view from Adams Lookout, and an extension of a new lease, ML.26, which will have the effect of legalising existing spillage of spoil into a public reserve.

On Saturday, November 6, "The Australian" reported Mr. Fife as saying that the Government's proposal conformed with the original representations of the Colong Committee.

The Colong Committee then issued a press statement, over the name of Father Tierney, in which it was pointed out that it had repeatedly questioned the validity of granting additional reserves of limestone to APCM (A). Attention was drawn to the Save Colong Bulletin of 8th April 1970 in which the Committee stated that "The only real solution to APCM(A)'s problem is to voluntarily relinquish its lease over part of Colong Caves and utilise the Marulan deposits jointly with Southern Portland Cement in a responsible fashion, i.e. on the plateau, and not on the scenic rim."

In a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald, published on Tuesday, November 9th, Dr. David Branagan of the Geology Department of the University of Sydney wrote:

"Sir — It would be pleasant to be able to congratulate State Cabinet on its decision concerning the limestone leases at Mt. Armour.

However, the price the community is being asked to pay at Marulan is heavy.

The proposed additional lease to permit mining close to Bungonia Gorge will mean the end of a magnificent and unique piece of our landscape of easy access to tourists.

This proposed additional lease at Bungonia Creek nullifies to a considerable degree the recent decision of the minister concerning the dumping leases in Barber's Creek.

The recommendations of the Mining Warden and the sincere efforts of the Southern Portland Cement Company to protect the environment marked a significant change in the attitude to quarrying in New South Wales.

The present proposal reverses this trend.

Is there any significance in the present silence about a proposed joint mining venture at Marulan?

This suggestion, which I put forward some years ago, proposed a single quarrying operation in which the resources were shared in proportion to present company 'ownership'.

It has been stated on several occasions that this proposal is being seriously investigated by both Southern Portland and Metropolitan Cement.

It seems curious that it gets no mention in the recent news releases.

Not only should a single mining venture prove more efficient, but with a lowering of depth restriction on mining and a redesign of workings to produce a single large quarry, it should be possible to save the Bungonia Gorge face, or what still remains unscarred, and yet provide sufficient limestone.

The move away from the Colong region is to be commended. Is it possible for the quarrying at Marulan to be reationalised?"

On November 12th, Milo Dunphy, Secretary of the Colong Committee, wrote to the Australian Financial Review, pointing out that Dr. Branagan's proposal was first made in May 1968, when the Minister had said that it "could hardly be taken seriously". Mr. Fife's disparagement was proved wrong when the Directors of APCM(A) reported, on April 10th 1970 that "a joint investigation by APCM and Southern Portland Cement Co. Ltd., into the feasibility of jointly working the Marulan leases, and sharing a common slurry pipe line from Marulan, has been under way for some time."

On November 9th Milo Dunphy, on behalf of the Colong Committee, lodged objection in the Mining Warden's Court to the granting of the additional lease. As in the case of the Committee's objection to the granting of a lease to Southern Portland Cement, the objection was made "in the public interest" The grounds of objection are:

1. That part of the land included in the subject application is within the boundary of the proposed extension to a National Park.
2. That part of the land included in the subject application is within the boundary of Public Reserves Nos. R.31526, R.2755 and R.2263.
3. That part of the land included in the subject application is within the boundary of Reserve R.660354 for Public Recreation and that the conduct of limestone mining and activities incidental thereto are inconsistent with and detrimental to the objects of a reserve for public

recreation.

4. That part of the land included in the subject application is adjacent to Reserve R. 66035 for public recreation and that the conduct of limestone mining and activities incidental thereto is inconsistent with and detrimental to the objects of a reserve for public recreation.
5. That part of the land included in the subject application is within the boundary of a Bird and Animal Sanctuary and that the conduct of limestone mining and activities incidental thereto is inconsistent with and detrimental to the objects of a Bird and Animal Sanctuary.
6. That part of the land included in the subject application is adjacent to a Bird and Animal Sanctuary and that conduct of limestone mining and activities incidental thereto is inconsistent with and detrimental to the objects of a Bird and Animal Sanctuary.
7. That part of the land included in the subject application is within the boundary of a Wild Life Refuge No. 30 and that the conduct of limestone mining and activities incidental thereto is inconsistent with and detrimental to the objects of a Wild Life Refuge.
8. That part of the land included in the subject application is adjacent to Wild Life Refuge No. 30 and that the conduct of limestone mining and activities incidental thereto is inconsistent with and detrimental to the objects of a Wild Life Refuge.
9. That part of the land included in the subject application is within the boundary of a Reserve R.1532 and that a lease such as the applicant seeks may not be granted over such land.
10. That part of the land included in the subject application is of such spectacular scenic quality as to justify its preservation for posterity free from encroachment by mining or activities incidental thereto.
11. That the land included in the subject application includes the bed and either bank of Bongonia Creek which is used by a great number of bushwalkers, picnickers and other persons who enjoy natural scenery and the conduct of mining operations and activities incidental thereto on or in proximity to the subject land is inconsistent with the enjoyment thereof by the said persons and would involve a risk of injury to such persons.
12. That the conduct of mining operations and activities incidental thereto or around the land the subject of the present application would be unsightly for bushwalkers, picnickers and other persons who walk on or near the subject land and would spoil the scenic nature of the subject land and surrounding land.
13. That, by reason of its scenic grandeur, Bungonia Creek and the surrounding countryside should be freely accessible to all members of the public at all times and that the said land should not be subject to the control of any private commercial organisation.

And so the Colong Committee fights on, struggling, not to extend our very limited area of protected wilderness, but to protect areas reserved for this purpose, but later thrown open to mining interests.

Some criticism has been levelled at the Committee for not accepting the Government's proposed solution to the Colong controversy. Such criticism ignores the Committee's undeviating principle that reserves should be inviolable. This was the central theme of its Save Colong campaign and of its objection to the S.P.C. mining purposes application covering the reserve on Barber's Creek. The reasons for its opposition were clearly stated in Bulletin No. 21 of September 30th. They were:

1. To further the principle on which the Colong and Boyd cases are based — that public reserves should not be revoked for the purpose of economic exploitation.
2. To save another area of scenic grandeur readily accessible to the people of N.S.W.
3. To forestall any move to save Colong, but at the expense of Marulan.

As Milo Dunphy has stated "the Minister's proposals involve destruction of three public reserves (R.2263, R.2755 and R.31526). They transgress one of the basic principles for which the Colong Committee has fought for 4 years at Colong that existing public reserves must not be alienated for private profit. Our case is made all the stronger by the high quality of the scenery at both Bungonia and Colong."

BUNGONIA MINING LEASES

**Speech to the Town Hall Mining Law Protest Meeting
held on November 21st, 1971,**

**by Warwick V. Counsell, Vice President of the
University of New South Wales Speleological Society**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As mining of the Bungonia - Marulan Limestone started in the 1920's, there is not much point in my getting up here and advocating stopping it; but the two enormous quarries near Marulan must not be allowed to wander over the landscape unrestrained. For the spectacular Creek Gorges are being despoiled, and public use and enjoyment of the recreational opportunities they offer seriously interfered with.

The Southern Portland Cement Quarry covers 500 acres on the western side of the Barber's Creek Gorge. Illegal dumping into this Gorge was brought to the public's attention and tidied up quite a bit by this year's Mining Warden's Court. But this was really tame compared with the desecration going on further south. The incredibly ugly Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers (Australia) quarry on the north side of the Bungonia Creek, spewing from its south eastern edge massive rubble screes lead 1200 feet down the cliff to the creek. These scars have continued to grow despite many protests.

The Mines Department refuses to do anything about them. The company disclaims any knowledge of deliberate dumping despite witnesses to the contrary.

Early in 1970 when APCM(A) were assessing their limestone reserves west of this quarry, they constructed several roads off their leases. One cut into an adjacent reserve involved rubble and trees being bulldozed over the edge of an 800 foot cliff. At the end of this illegal road, within 300 feet of the North Wall of the Bungonia Gorge a site was cleared and a drilling rig set up (all illegal).

Immediate representations to Mr. Lewis, Minister for Lands (and former Mines) through Mr. Brewer, the Country Party member for Goulburn, brought no action in three months. So, on the 9th of August, 1970, members of the University of New South Wales Speleological Society entered the area, interviewed the drill operators, and prepared a map of the road in relation to lease and reserve boundaries and the Gorge. Three days later the map and photographs showing the drill 700 feet into the reserve were taken to Mr. Brewer at Parliament House for delivery with written complaint to the same Mr. Lewis.

Concerned that this would still bring no action, Mr. Brewer advised me to write to Mulwaree Shire Council. I did, and a fortnight later, on the 8th of September, the Council ordered the company to cease operations outside its leases.

Two days after this, Mr. Lewis, having stalled for four months, handed the matter over to Mr. Fife, Minister for Mines, who, six weeks after this, advised that my complaint was still under investigation!

On the 12th of November, 1970, in reply to a question asked in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Fife stated (quote): *"I did not give my consent for the road construction and drilling,"* but offered no reason for the road construction.

A month later, when Mr. Fife was asked about prosecution of APCM(A) for violation of reserves in this area, he explained that he had been in Parliament for a long time and most of the legislation he had been involved in was to prevent people doing one thing or to punish them for doing another and he was sick of it. Was he implying that penal clauses had no place in the Mining Act?

So, naturally, I accused him of encouraging, in this area anyway, wanton destruction of scenery and woodland by those engaged in exploration, as this gets them half way towards success in future lease applications. He angrily replied that the Mines Department has observers who watch every move these companies make and report infringements to the Department for action. I wonder where they were this time? And what action?

Soon after, a letter from Mr. Fife stated that (quote): *"APCM(A) had inadvertently constructed the access roads and drill site because of a misinterpretation of instructions issued to site personnel."* But the humdinger came in a letter from Mr. Lewis who contradicted Mr. Fife by saying (quote): *"The road construction was necessary for the progressive movement of a drilling rig used in connection with open cut mining in the area."*

This brings us (very briefly) to January this year. Two weeks ago, APCM(A) applied for an 87 acre Special Lease over the eastern end of this spectacular limestone gorge, one third of a mile of the bed of the creek and most of their revolting infringements. Luckily, the Mining Act's ridiculous 7 days for objection law didn't beat us this time, and nine people will soon be challenging the company in a Mining Warden's Court. This application includes the illegal road and drill site and nicely supports Mr. Lewis' explanation of the illegal road as necessary for further mining, but makes Mr. Fife's "inadvertent construction" excuse look **deliberately misleading**. Or maybe Mr. Fife is just too gullible for the big business with which he is dealing. Gullible or not, Mr. Fife has crippled the already inadequate penal provisions of this Act. He has allowed despoliation of public reserves to provide an excuse for needlessly handing them over to the mining companies.

He, and his act, are clearly unfit to supervise land utilisation in this state.

THE BOYD

The Committee's folding pamphlet "Park or Pines" has been brought up to date and re-printed. The history of reserves in the area, and its suitability for addition to the Kanangra-Boyd National Park, are described and illustrated. At the same time a "white paper" has been prepared with the purpose of indicating alternative means of increasing pinus radiata plantations. A strong case is presented for up-grading the land use status of pine plantations. Evidence is presented that pine culture is a profitable enterprise and could be substituted for wool growing in many climatically suitable areas. It is claimed that the re-forestation of eroded land, no longer profitable for grazing, would be far preferable in the national interest to clearing important catchments, now protected by native forest.

Copies of both publications have been sent to all State Parliamentarians.

The Committee was enabled to incur the expense of these publications as a result of the very gratifying response it received to its appeal for funds made in the last issue of the Bulletin.

MAXWELL FREDERICK ARTHUR KEEN, O.B.E.

The following article, written by Fred Keen's old friend Anthony Disney, is reproduced from the spring, 1971, number of the Sudan Diocesan Review with the kind permission of the editor, Mr. C. B. Tracey of Agarton Cottage, Lymore, Milton-on-Sea. Mr. Tracey, who sends all good wishes for our cause, used to sail with Fred, and says that his boat, the "Astrophel", is still going strong. Most of us only knew Fred as the enthusiastic secretary of the Colong Committee in its early days. None of us knew the story of his full and varied life.

"There's a hole in my bucket, dear Georgie, dear Georgie ..." To many who were children in Khartoum in the late 40's and early 50's, (and their parents) the highlight of a party was Freddy Keen's playing of his guitar and his singing of his own special selection of songs, of which this was always the favourite.

Freddy was born in India on 27th November, 1903. After the Dragon School, Haileybury and St. John's College, Cambridge, where he rowed bow in the Cambridge VIII of 1926, he joined the Sudan Political Service at the end of that year and was posted to Darfur—claiming to have been the last newly-appointed A.D.C. to arrive in Fasher by camel.

The great Relapsing Fever epidemic broke out soon afterwards and for many months he was on trek, doing nothing but give injections against that disease—an unusual start to a D.C.'s career.

Thereafter, he served in White Nile, Equatoria and Northern Province before becoming Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, on its inauguration, in 1948, and in due course Clerk of the House of Representatives, in 1954, at the end of which year he retired, having taken a vital part in the launching of the Sudan's first Parliament, which was recognised by the award of the O.B.E.

During his time as a D.C., Freddy was always very interested in agriculture and afforestation and gave energetic encouragement to all development schemes in his districts. Perhaps his happiest time of all was in Shendi, in 1941/2, when "vintage" steam engines from old flour mills were being refurbished up and made to drive pumps to irrigate land for the production of wheat and vegetables in wartime.

On leave, he was seldom far from the water and developed into a fine yachtsman, doing well in ocean racing. Just before the war, he had achieved his great ambition of having his own boat, "Astrophel", specially built; but the joy was short-lived

and the outbreak of war meant a hurried return to harbour and the frustration of all his plans.

Freddy and Joan were married in Khartoum Cathedral in 1948 and after his retirement they lived at Headcorn, in Kent, where he farmed with great vigour and enthusiasm until they decided to take the three children to Joan's home country, Australia, where they settled on Scotland Island, near Sydney— and so were assured of having to use a boat to get anywhere!

There he took an active part in local affairs. For five years he was the President of the Scotland Island Progress Association. An ardent conservationist, he was secretary of a movement to save the Colong Caves from mining despoliation by the Government and for three years was President of the Pittwater Flora and Fauna Association.

He had not been really fit for some time, but he went on happily, making plans for another visit to England, to see his many friends, and writing to them with all the news of the family. But, alas, that visit was not to be, and he died suddenly at the turn of the year.

Freddy was one of the friendliest of men and his quiet humour and broad grin brought good cheer to many, both British and Sudanese— and perhaps especially to children.

A.W.M.D.

ANNUAL MEETING OF SUPPORTING SOCIETIES

The fifth annual meeting of supporting societies will be held on March 7th, at a place to be decided. Proposals for strengthening the Committee, and extending its scope, will be put to the meeting. Note the date— March 7th, 1972.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE "SAVE COLONG BULLETIN".

The annual subscription to the "Save Colong Bulletin" for the year 1972 is now due. The amount is \$1.00, and this covers 6 bi-monthly issues. Those who paid their subscription in the last quarter of this year will be covered for the full year to December, 1972.

The Bulletin is now registered for posting as a periodical. This saves some two-thirds of our previous postage costs. But it can only be posted to subscribers, and to be a subscriber you must be financial, so please fill in and return the remainder of this notice to the Treasurer.

The Treasurer,
The Colong Committee,
18 Argyle Street,
Sydney, N.S.W. 2000

Dear Sir,

Attached is my subscription of \$1.00 to cover the 1972 issues of the Save Colong Bulletin.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

NAME IN FULL: _____
(block letter)

ADDRESS: _____

Post Code _____