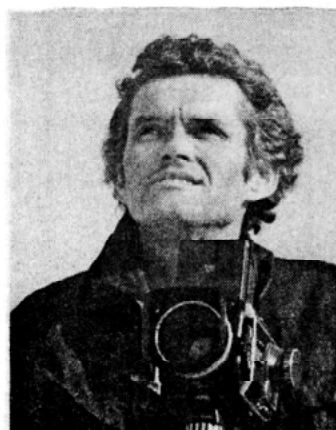




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Henry Gold

OUR HONORARY PHOTOGRAPHER

In our last issue we were pleased to report that Myles Dunphy had consented to become our Patron. Now we are pleased to report that Henry Gold has consented to be our Honorary Photographer. Both these titles merely confirm a relationship that has existed since the Colong Committee was formed.

Henry arrived in Australia in 1955 and started work as a lithographer, reproducing high quality art work for printing. This work complements his devotion to the art of photography.

He joined the Sydney Bush Walkers in 1956, an ideal way of getting to know our wilderness areas. Our bush has a reputation for sameness, and we take it for granted, but Henry saw it with the unprejudiced eyes of an artist, new to the country, and recognised its real beauty. It didn't pretend to the grandeur of the famous Alps of his native country, but it was fascinating and unique for those with eyes to see and the technique to capture its qualities on film. Although the bush has interest and contrast, it is difficult to impart on film the brilliance and sparkle necessary for good black and white photography, which is his favoured medium. It took Henry a few years to develop an appreciation of appropriate lighting and to determine suitable types of film and methods of development. He

learned a great deal about wilderness photography during a 2½ year sojourn in the U.S., where he kept in touch with the Sierra Club and studied the technique of the well known wilderness photographer, Ansel Adams, whose approach was very appropriate to the Australian bush.

In 1967, a year before the Colong Committee was formed, he worked with Tom Moppett (then N.P.A. president) and S.B.W. members Alan Rigby, Mick Elphick and John White, preparing a submission to Tom Lewis, then Minister for Lands, against the mining of Colong Caves. When Alan Rigby died, literally on the job, John White persuaded Henry to take over his role of principal photographer, and they produced the brochure "Quarry Valuable Scenery", virtually the first shot in the Colong campaign. Myles Dunphy supplied the information for the brochure and was presented with a set of photographs. Throughout the

THE COLONG COMMITTEE LTD A NATIONAL WILDERNESS SOCIETY

18 ARGYLE ST, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA 2000
TELEPHONE: (02) 27 4714

PATRON: Myles J. Dunphy, O.B.E.
CHAIRMAN: Peter Maslen
VICE-CHAIRMEN: Rodney Falconer
 John Dillon
HON. SECRETARY: Alex Colley
HON. TREASURER: Charles Culberg
HON. PHOTOGRAPHER: Henry Gold
HON. AUDITOR: Arthur Andersen & Co.

Colong and Boyd campaigns, Henry provided most of the photographic material, which was used for pamphlets, press articles and a special issue of "Habitat". He spent a fortnight alone, camping through a blizzard, on the Boyd Plateau, and the best of his photographs were used for a professionally mounted display book, only three copies of which were produced. Three days after one of these was left with the then Minister for Lands, Milton Morris, he announced that there would be no pines on the Boyd. How much his decision was due to Henry's photographs we don't know, but perhaps it tipped the scales. One of the photographs in the book is reproduced on page 3 of this Bulletin. Realising the value of photographs in persuading the decision-makers who cannot, or will not, visit the places we are trying to save, Henry was despatched to the Border Ranges, the Blue Mountains and Kakadu early in our campaigns to preserve these areas. The photographs were widely used, not only in Colong Committee publications, but in the press and in special issues of the National Parks Journal and "Habitat". Four posters were printed for the Colong Committee and two for the National Trust. Poster sales, which aggregated some thousands, provided much needed funds for the Committee.

More recently Henry has photographed the Forbes River, Upper Hastings and Washpool forests, provided illustrations for Australian Heritage Commission publications, and contributed to the A.C.F. books "Australian Natural Heritage" and "The Gift of the Forest". He has recently photographed the Mount Werong area for T.E.C.'s Canopy Committee.

Together with Frank Rigby he published the book "The Macdonnell Ranges" and later joined with Peter Prineas to establish Kalianna Press which has published "The Colo Wilderness", "Wild Places" and several N.S.W. Wilderness Calendars.

The strip photograph of Mount Colong which adorns the cover of this Bulletin, and our letterhead, is taken from one of Henry's early photographs.

There can be no doubt that Henry's photographs have won many to the cause

of wilderness preservation and that much of the success of the Colong Committee is derived from them.

OUR HONORARY AUDITOR

Our Honorary Auditor, Mr. Graham Paton, has resigned in favour of Arthur Andersen and Co., the firm of public accountants in which he is a partner. He will continue to handle our audit, but in the name of the Company. We feel very pleased and honoured to have Arthur Andersen and Co., recognised as one of the world's "big eight" accounting firms, as auditors of our accounts. Our records will remain in the best of hands.

WATER QUALITY IN BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

- by Peter Maslen

The recently released "Water Quality in the Hawkesbury - Nepean River", prepared by the State Pollution Control Commission, highlights the problems caused to the natural environment by inadequately treated sewage. While this study made recommendations for the Nepean below Camden to the Hawkesbury River mouth without any real consideration to the western tributaries and the effect on their water quality by pollutants, it does state that sewage treatment works are the dominant source of normal pollutants and nutrients.

While the Blue Mountains Sewage Treatment Works contribute a small volume to the Grose, Fitzgerald and Cox's Rivers, relative to the total discharge to the Hawkesbury system, these, along with the uncontrolled discharge of single household sewage through inefficient systems like septic tanks, cause significant lowering of the water quality of waterways of the surrounding national parks. The Colong Committee has spent the 15 years since its formation campaigning to have the Kanangra-Boyd, Blue Mountains and Wollemi National Parks dedicated and extended. Part of the Committee's aims is to ensure that these parks are managed satisfactorily and that the threats to their natural qualities are minimised. The deterioration of water quality in some



Kanangra Deep. Photograph by Henry Gold - taken from Boyd Plateau display book.

* * * * *

areas of these parks is one issue which has caused increasing concern.

The Grose and Cox's rivers are the most polluted, to the extent that it is inadvisable to drink water from these waterways without some form of disinfection. The main source of this pollution is from domestic wastes which cause considerable health risks. There are two main alternatives available to solve this problem. The most environmentally sound is for all domestic sewage to be treated in a limited number of municipal sewage works which would incorporate nutrient removal and disinfection with no contaminants such as chlorine being discharged to any receiving waterway. The second is for all existing septic tanks to be converted to pump out systems or to an aerobic system, which would give a significant improvement in the degree of treatment, so that at least 95% of organic wastes were

removed prior to discharge. With suitable disinfection this water would be suitable for domestic garden and lawn irrigation thereby reducing water usage.

All the above methods are technically feasible and are purely a problem of finance. The municipal works existing in the Blue Mountains are generally old-fashioned and overloaded. New works are being compromised in the interest of economics. If the pollution of the natural waterways of the Blue Mountains is to be stopped then the various government authorities must enforce existing pollution control regulations and augment the sewage systems to ensure that the regulations can be met. Relaxation of standards enforced for private development should not be permitted for municipal works. The State Government must make funds available to ensure that sewage treatment

works under control of the Metropolitan Water Sewage and Drainage Board are up to standards high enough to produce effluents with nutrient, suspended solids and organic levels below 1mg/l and zero bacteria level. Any residual chlorine should be scrubbed from the effluent after suitable disinfection times before discharge to a receiving waterway.

There is no reason why the waterways of our national parks should be subjected to pollution of any wastes, least of all those originating from inadequate sewage treatment, be it on an individual household basis, a total township or any development in between. If any area has any signs of pollution a formal complaint should be lodged with the State Pollution Control Commission.

The Colong Committee will be making further investigations in regard to water pollution of our Blue Mountains' National Parks in its continued aim to ensure that these parks are maintained in a natural condition.

CONSERVATIONISTS WIN OUT

James G. Watt was a lawyer specialising in handling public lands cases on behalf of resource developers. In 1980, President Reagan appointed him Secretary of the Interior, in which office he controlled 120 million hectares of public land and 405 million acres of offshore territory. He sought to open vast coastal stretches of the Atlantic and Pacific coasts to offshore oil and gas drilling, leased millions of acres for mineral development and opposed expansion of park and wildlife areas.

On 19th October, 1981 the Sierra Club presented petitions carrying more than 1 million signatures to the Speaker of the U.S. Senate, calling on Congress to replace Watt and resist the anti-environmental legislation. Five months later Watt announced that the Reagan administration would seek legislation to ban energy and mineral development in the nation's 80 million acres of designated wilderness areas and 61 million acres of proposed wilderness.

On 2nd June this year, former President Jimmy Carter, addressing the Global Tomorrow Coalition conference in Washington, reprimanded the Reagan administration for the "deliberate across-the-board abandonment of the U.S. leadership on environmental, resource, and related global issues". Citing many examples of the U.S. "refusal to co-operate with international efforts" on issues such as acid rain, the Law of the Sea, and hazardous export control, Carter warned that "every passing year of inaction exacerbates human suffering".

On 10th October this year, Watt resigned, not because of what he had done to the environment, which had the full backing of President Reagan, but because he insulted minority groups.

Nearer to home, the Herald's national columnist has this to say of Robin Gray's appearance in Queensland:

"The Franklin Dam is walking backwards into the Queensland election. Robin Gray became the catalyst in Malcolm Fraser's defeat on March 5 by scorning Fraser's compensation offer not to build the dam, thus delivering the environmental vote across Australia to Labor".

We didn't say it, Peter Bowers did.

LIBERAL PARTY CONSERVATION POLICY

In his address, on 29th October, to the Annual Conference of the Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W., Mr. Nick Greiner (our shadow Premier) extended "an open, clear and genuine invitation" to let the Liberal Party know just what conservationists think about Liberal Party conservation policy. "My door", he said, "and that of my shadow ministers is always open to you". Through the pages of this bulletin, every issue of which has been hand-delivered to every Liberal State parliamentarian, we have been letting the State Party know for 15 years exactly what we think. The results have been almost entirely negative, as Mr. Greiner's run down of policy proved. Their door was sometimes open but their minds were not. It took us 7 years of unremitt-

ing campaigning to persuade the Party, when in government, to save the Kanangra-Boyd wilderness. Since then they have either ignored or opposed nearly every issue we have raised. Perhaps, at last, a new era is dawning. Let us hope so.

It took Mr. Greiner only about two minutes to start talking about "balance", a word which he acknowledged was "notoriously imprecise"... Nevertheless policy point No. 2 in his list was "A sensible balance between the natural and man made environment". Since he admitted that to date "the balance has been too far in the anti-conservation and pro-exploitation direction", the only logical conclusion is that the balance should not be further weighted towards exploitation. Other policy points don't confirm this conclusion. It would have been better to save the two minutes devoted to "balance", since the term is invariably used to justify further degradation of the natural environment. The Colong Committee will award a special illuminated certificate to the first Liberal politician who makes a speech on conservation without using the word.

The wording of the State Party Platform, as outlined by Mr. Greiner, could hardly be bettered by the Colong Committee (except for point 2), but specific action on the platform is lacking. For example:

Involvement of citizens and organisations in all stages of planning.

We contributed to the Kosciuszko plan of management. The government is planning extensive resort development not provided in the plan without reference to us. What has the Party done to secure our "involvement"? We want representation on park advisory committees. Would the Party give it to us?

The establishment of a national park policy aimed at the preservation of examples of natural ecosystems.

The Party afforded no support to our rainforest campaign, nor our Greater Blue Mountains National Park campaign. We have heard no protest against grazing, mining, logging or burning of parks.

The preservation of the national estate.

There was no Party protest against logging of the Border Ranges, mining and resort development in the Blue Mountains, mining at Kakadu, or dam building on the Franklin, all parts of the national estate.

Government agencies being required, without exception, to conform to the same standards as the private sector.

The Forestry Commission is not subject to the standard erosion mitigation conditions, which the Forestry Commissioner admitted are "being breached, and seriously, almost all the time". (See Bulletin No. 68). What steps has the party taken to stop this?

Protection of the community from the disturbing effects of excessive noise.

One of the worst examples is off-road driving on public lands, including parks. Has the Party worked for their exclusion?

Mr. Greiner invited us to consider the Party's record in government at a Federal level, and listed its achievements. These fall into three categories:

(a) EFFECTIVE ACTION:

The halting of sand mining on Fraser Island: albeit after a stupendous campaign by FIDO, but in the teeth of the Queensland Government.

The ending of whaling in Australian waters: late but praiseworthy.

Greater tax deductibility for donations to conservation organisations: We didn't get any, but we are glad others did.

Declaration of Uluru National Park: This was accompanied by removal of unsightly buildings from the park, including accommodation, a policy we urge for Kosciuszko.

(b) COSMETIC ACTION:

Declaration of Kakadu National Park: This meant little. One mine was

approved and two others favoured within the small Stage 1 of the Park declared. Prospecting and mining would be allowed in the much larger area comprising Stages 2 and 3.

Listing of properties on the World Heritage List: This meant nothing in South West Tasmania, where the dam was allowed to proceed, nor at Kakadu where uranium mining was not only to continue, but to be greatly expanded. The Liberal Government never got round to protecting more than 15% of the Barrier Reef. The Hawke Government added most of it to the marine park within its first year of office.

Commencement of the National Tree Programme: This should be done by Forestry Commissions and private enterprise on under-utilised cleared lands. Planting a few trees in public places won't compensate for the millions of trees being destroyed in woodchip operations and overcut forests.

Direct funding to the sum of \$350,000 for voluntary conservation organisations: This was the sum fixed by the Whitlam Government. It remained at that level till this year, by which time it had lost two-thirds of its purchasing power. The Hawke Government has increased it by 68%.

Placing Tasmania on the World Heritage List: This meant nothing unless the Government was prepared to stop the dam.

(c) FALSE CLAIMS

Under this heading must be placed promotion of world and national conservation strategies and protection of the Alligator Rivers region. World heritage areas at Kakadu and the Franklin River were not protected. Mining proceeded on the Alligator Rivers (Kakadu).

Despite Mr. Greiner's brave words about the balance being tipped too far in the pro-exploitation direction, (if it's tipped, does it balance?) there is no repudiation of Mr. Dowd's statement in "Prologue" that "the Liberal Party believes the next stage is to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act, to allow non national

park uses to be conducted in national park areas", which, he said, "would remove the necessity of locking up valuable primary resources". (See Bulletin No. 77). Mr. Greiner's views on rainforests confirm this view. He believes in selective logging, which, taken in conjunction with Mr. Dowd's statement, means that rainforests would be re-opened for logging. When the Government announced its rainforest preservation decision, the only comment from the Liberal Party was that it would increase unemployment.

On national parks, the main policy initiative announced concerns, not the extension of the system, or its preservation, or the benefits it would bring to the people of N.S.W., but the rights of the few property owners who may be affected. His concern for the development of management plans is to be commended. It should mean more funds for the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

On the Franklin issue, Mr. Greiner says the Party is pledged to the principles of federalism, so does the Federal Shadow Minister for the Environment, Mr. Connolly. Neither define this principle, though it is a simple concept meaning that matters of State significance be handled by State Governments and matters of national and international significance by the Federal Government. Although the national and international significance of the Franklin was acknowledged by its listing on the Register of the National Estate and that of the World Heritage Commission, the Liberal Party stood up for the right of Tasmania to damage the area rather than the right of the Australian people to its preservation. Presumably for the same reason it would allow mining throughout Kakadu and the logging and subdivision of the Daintree rainforests, should this area be listed. It is predictable that no Federal Liberal voice will be raised against the land speculation, destructive road building, forestry and mining of the Daintree region which the Queensland Government wants. Those who changed their Party allegiance on account of the Franklin were not socialists, just environmentalists.

CURRENT ACTIVITIESBlue Mountains:

Back in 1977 the Colong Committee nominated the Greater Blue Mountains for listing on the register of the National Estate. Beyond a request for further information, we heard no more about it, despite inquiries. Knowledge of the boundary of the listed area is highly relevant to the Leura resort proposal, near the edge of the southern escarpment which would be a blight on the scenic value, both of the escarpment and the park beyond. In the opinion of the Committee, the Greater Blue Mountains should have been one of the first areas nominated for World Heritage listing and we decided to apply for listing. For this purpose, too, it was necessary to know exactly what area of the Mountains was listed on the National Estate Register, since such listing would precede World Heritage listing. We wrote to Michael O'Brien, Senior Conservation Officer of the Australian Conservation Commission, and were very pleased to receive a large map with the listed areas shaded

and the areas not yet included hatched. To have these areas added to the estate register would require details of boundaries and features within them. With some assistance from the Commission, which might be forthcoming, we could supply this information.

One of the areas not yet included is Mount Werong and the upper Abercrombie, threatened by pine plantations. The Total Environment Centre's "Canopy" Committee is already working for the preservation of this area. In response to a request from this committee, Henry Gold and three other Colong Committee photographers spent the week-end of October 22-24 photographing the attractive features of the area, and some of the damage already inflicted upon it. Extensive clearances of native forests at Gurnang and Newnes State Forests were also photographed. Prints will be supplied both to the Canopy Committee and the South-East Conservation Council. A further four day visit is planned.

* * * * *

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Bushfires Inquiry:

In Bulletin 79 we reported that the Committee had allocated \$1,000 to initiate a joint nature conservation movement submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation Inquiry on the Environmental Impact of Bushfires. The fund for the submission has since grown to nearly \$4,000, and Peter Prineas, who was commissioned for writing it and representing nature conservation interests, has completed a very comprehensive 57 page report, which the Nature Conservation Council is publishing for wide distribution.

The main theme of the Colong Committee's policy - that wilderness is not for the burning of firebreaks - comes through clearly, as does our alternative policy of hazard reduction on adjoining developed lands, appropriate urban planning and the zoning of bushfire hazard areas. We have been informed that the submission was welcomed by the Inquiry which has given it close attention.

In a letter dated November 10th, Peter reports progress as follows:

The main N.S.W. hearings and site inspections were held in Sydney and the Blue Mountains from October 25th to 27th.

I accompanied the Inquiry on all site inspections, representing the joint conservation groups and ensured that the itinerary included areas illustrating points made in the joint submissions. The site visits were organised in liaison with relevant local groups, namely Willoughby Environmental Protection Association, South Turrumurra Environment Protection Association and the Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

At the hearing I gave evidence supported by Dr. H. Recher of the Australian Museum and Mr. D.H. Benson of the National Herbarium, who acted in the capacity of consultants.

I plan to monitor the Inquiry's activities and ensure that when government bodies give evidence (e.g. the N.S.W. Bush Fire Council) later in the year, an adequate reply is made in

the form of a further written submission, and oral evidence if possible.

Representatives of the Forestry Commission, Bush Fire Council and Board of Fire Commissioners were present at the Sydney Hearings and took an obvious interest in the contents of our submission and evidence to the Inquiry.

Valuable help during the site visits was given by Bob Chapman of the L.B.M.C.S., Gaye Spies and Jennie Murray of W.E.P.A., Helen Petersen of S.T.E.P. and Alan Catford of the A.C.F.

Vehicles Recreation Bill:

The Committee has written to Mr. Wran as follows:

As a member of the Nature Conservation Council of N.S.W., the Colong Committee strongly supports the representations of the Council for provisions to exclude the off road use of vehicles on public lands.

Public lands include nearly all the wilderness areas in the State. Any vehicle using a wilderness area causes auditory and visual pollution, and it is impossible to take a vehicle off a maintained road without damaging flora, fauna and soil structure. Wilderness should contain no roads, maintained or not.

The damage caused by off road operation of vehicles was stressed by every public authority represented at the State Pollution Control Commission's Off-Road Vehicle Inquiry. The only areas suggested as suitable for the off road use of vehicles were quarries.

The report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation recommended that "Vehicular use should be restricted and if necessary prohibited in areas with high nature conservation or wilderness value" (conclusion 14) and that "At no time and under no circumstances should 4WD vehicles or any other type of vehicle go off the road in ecologically sensitive fragile areas or in national parks".

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We therefore urge that the Vehicles Recreation Bill be strengthened to enable vehicles to be excluded from wilderness areas.

Draft National Wilderness Bill:

We were pleased to receive from the Australian Democrats a copy of their environmental policy, and a request for suggestions, which we made. The principal ones were for a national wilderness survey and a National Wilderness Act. We believe that the time is opportune for the introduction of such a bill in Parliament, and we have commissioned Michael Rae, Total Environment Centre project officer, to draft one. It is our hope that the Australian Democrats will accept it and Government members will support it. The bill would afford Liberal members an opportunity of demonstrating their concern for wilderness conservation, but it is unlikely they would do so. (The main purpose and contents of such a bill were described in Bulletin No. 79 and the September issue of the National Parks Journal).

National Parks Advisory Committees:

On October 11th we wrote to the Premier as follows:

The Colong Committee greatly appreciates the dedication by your Government of extensive areas of national park. However we suggest that one aspect of park management - the appointment of Advisory Committees - leaves much to be desired.

The reason for our concern is the clear evidence that people opposed to the concept of national parks are now advising the Director, and through him the Minister, on how parks should be managed.

The result of appointing anti-park advisers is evident in the recent recommendation by the Barrington Tops National Park Advisory Committee that no additions should be made to the park. By an 8 to 1 vote (a report of which was leaked to the local press) these anti-park committee members sought to embarrass your Government. It is both illogical and inequitable

that these 8 people should advise on the management of an area they denigrate.

We therefore request that when the promised additions are made to Barrington Tops National Park under the provisions of the second Rainforest Bill, a new advisory committee be appointed consisting of those sympathetic to the conservation of natural areas.

We urge that the guidelines for appointments on advisory committees be revised to exclude persons who are not sympathetic to the conservation of natural areas. It is most discouraging to those who have voluntarily worked for many years to secure the reservation of these remnants of our natural heritage to have to continue to contend with the opposition of anti-conservationists even after parklands have been dedicated.

In reply, the Premier wrote on November 8th that:

I have carefully noted all that you have had to say and I appreciate the trouble taken by the Committee to write to me in this regard. As I feel sure that my colleague, the Minister for Planning and Environment, would be most interested in the Committee's comments, I have taken the opportunity to specially acquaint Mr. Bedford with the nature of your approach.

There is no doubt that the Committee's representations will receive close consideration.

* * * * *

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING?

The Environment Centre of N.S.W. has an extensive range of books, calendars, posters, T-shirts, badges, stickers, cards, etc.

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PUBLICATIONS

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Discussing the wilderness concept and examining 22 wilderness areas in eastern New South Wales, "Wild Places" will appeal to many interested in conservation, bushwalking and the outdoors. Price \$24.95 including postage.

HOW THE RAINFOREST WAS SAVED

This book should be of interest to all active conservationists, because it gives a detailed description of the conduct of a very difficult, but successful campaign. It is also a fine example of citizen action. Price \$5 including postage.

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Colong Committee
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Enclosed is.....for \$.....

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FORM FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

To: *The Secretary*
Colong Committee
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SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

I enclose \$5.00 being my subscription for all issues of the Save Colong Bulletin to the end of 1984.

I enclose \$.....being a donation to the Colong Committee's Fighting Fund.

I enclose \$.....being an interest free loan repayable at 4 weeks notice.

I have donated \$.....to the Australian Conservation Foundation (672B Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, Victoria, 3122) expressing a wish that my donation be spent for the purposes of the Colong Committee. I would like the grant which this has enabled to be allocated to the Committee's Fighting Fund/Investment Fund.

NAME: (Mr/Mrs/Miss).....

ADDRESS.....POSTCODE.....

SIGNED.....DATE.....