

# HUT NEWS

*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"*



## The Home Based Sustainability Forum

Lis Bastion, Ian Lett, Peter Green and David Bowskill will be the Keynote Speakers at the **Home Based Sustainability Forum** at the Conservation Hut, Friday, October 30, commencing at 7:30pm. Lis will be speaking about permaculture and alternative technologies, Ian about residential energy assessments, energy efficiency and demand management, which is about shifting electrical loads out of the period of peak demand, Peter about his environmental lifestyle. David has installed a heat pump, hot water heater in his house that operates by taking heat from the outside air. The ratio of the energy of heat pumped into the water compared to the energy used from electricity supply can be, when the air is warm as high as three to one.

Contributions from the floor will be sought for lifestyle changes to reduce energy use inside a house, sustainable garden management techniques, linking the house and the garden by running grey water out onto the garden, sustainable lifestyle practices with recycling, reusable shopping bags, car pooling and sustainable house design and construction.

### Blue Mountains Conservation Society Monthly Meeting The Home Based Sustainability Forum

7:30pm, Friday, October 30, 2009  
The Conservation Hut, far western end of  
Fletcher St. Wentworth Falls

VISITORS ARE WELCOME

### Blue Mountains Conservation Society FAMILY PICNIC

For members and friends

SATURDAY, 17 OCTOBER, 2009  
11 am to 3 pm

Wilson Park (Corner Great Western Highway and Falls Road)  
Wentworth Falls

Come along for a day of fun.

Meet other members of the society  
and join in a 'toast' to celebrate the  
**50th birthday of the Blue  
Mountains National Park.**

Activities include sack races for the  
kids (and kids at heart), tug of war,  
a plant quiz and a bushwalk  
down Darwin's walk.

Lunchtime music by the  
**Gang Gang Bush Orchestra**

BARBEQUES PROVIDED  
BYO food and drinks, picnic  
blankets, picnic tables, chairs, etc.

For more information contact Tara  
[domtara@bigpond.com](mailto:domtara@bigpond.com) 4751 1130



## From the President

It has been an exciting time for us with our initial win in the Coxs River case. As reported in previous issues, the Society is taking legal action against Delta Electricity under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*, for allegedly causing water pollution. In order to even get our case heard, we applied for a "Protective Costs Order" to limit costs so that we could proceed with the case. The Court acknowledged this was a "test case" raising novel questions of a public interest nature. Justice Pain recognised that although any person can bring proceedings to stop a breach of environmental laws there have often been significant hurdles to doing this, including that if you lose you may have to pay the other side's costs. This is a landmark judgment which will make it easier, but certainly not easy, for members of the community to use the laws to protect the environment.

On a social note, I very much hope to see you at our Picnic on Saturday, October 17. This is a great chance to meet other members of the Society, go on a walk, eat nice food, listen to the music of the Gang Gangs, and celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Blue Mountains National Park. I am looking forward to seeing the bushwalkers take on the nursery volunteers in the tug of war.

See you at the picnic! Tara Cameron

## ECO HOMES TOUR

Discover the creativity, hard work and pay-off of local home owners who have decided to build their values into the dwellings they live in using a variety of natural, recycled and contemporary materials. See how "mainstream" design and construction is catching up! Meet the key people involved with each project as they tell their story of what worked—and what didn't.

Join a fully guided coach tour led by ECOdesign Architect's Nigel Bell across the towns within the World Heritage Blue Mountains. Each tour visits a different selection of fascinating homes, both new and renovations. The tours are held twice yearly (April and October). The next tour is on

**SATURDAY, 31st OCTOBER 2009**

For more information and  
to book for the tour go to  
<http://www.ecohomestour.com.au/>  
or phone Kathie Herbert 4782 3384

**"Hut News"**, the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.  
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#### HUT NEWS EDITORIALS

The deadline for the next issue of Hut News is **19th October** 2009

#### MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Lachlan Garland, phone: 4757 1929  
 email: [lachlan@hermes.net.au](mailto:lachlan@hermes.net.au)  
 PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

#### BUSHCARE GROUP

Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets second Saturday of each month, 9am till noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a hat. New members are always welcome. Phone Karen on 4757 1929.

## Nursery News

**Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager**

The unseasonably warm weather brought people out in droves to the Magpie Markets on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September and they contributed \$652 to the Society through our plant sales. Together with good weekly sales at our two nurseries, this past month has proved very profitable.

Also, the RTA have indicated that they will be taking the first batches of plants for Lawson at Loftus Street and the Golf Course Basin in October resulting in another welcome source of revenue so the Society can continue its fight for the environment, an area where the NSW Government seems to be lacking. Further, we have just received an order from the NPWS for another 500 plants for revegetation at Green Gully where we have been supplying plants for the past two years. The nursery volunteers enjoyed an afternoon picnic and bush-walk there on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September and viewed with pride and pleasure the progress of the plants they had propagated.

Our reconstructed facilities at our new Lawson site are almost complete which will ease the overcrowding we are currently experiencing. We are currently "minding" a worm farm at our Lawson nursery and we can wholeheartedly recommend the diluted effluent as an invigorating plant fertilizer.

#### ACTION! National Parks Association **River Red Gum Campaign**

On 30 June 2009 commercial logging ceased in the majority of Victoria's vulnerable River Red Gum forests in progress towards the creation of national parks.

In late July 2009 Premier Nathan Rees commissioned a regional assessment of River Red Gum wetlands in south-western NSW—an assessment that will lead to new National Parks and a restructured timber industry.

This is great news! It is exactly what environment groups and Traditional Owners have been asking for over the past decade. However, it is now well past the eleventh hour for the River Red Gum. The urgency of the ecological crisis is severe. It is crucial that the NSW Government now moves quickly to complete the assessment and create large new National Parks by the end of this year. Visit [www.npansw.org.au/web/conservation/western/redgum](http://www.npansw.org.au/web/conservation/western/redgum) to find out more. You can help by sending an email to the Premier or a donation to NPA NSW to help with the campaign.

## WHAT'S ON IN OCTOBER

**SAT 17 OCT, 11 am to 3 pm**

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society FAMILY PICNIC at Wilson Park, Wentworth Falls.** See Page 1.

**FRI TO SUN, 23-26 OCT**

**Footbeat Featival, at Wentworth Falls TAFE and grounds.** See page 7.

**FRI 30 OCT, 7.30 pm**

**Monthly Meeting at The Hut: "The Home Based Sustainability Forum"**  
 (See details on Page 1)

**SAT 31 OCT**

**eco Homes Tour with ECOdesign Architect Nigel Bell.** See page 1.

## OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

### BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK DISCOVERY PROGRAM

Walks, Talks and Tours in Blue Mountains, Wollemi and Kanangra-Boyd National Parks.

**Celebrating 50 years of conserving A GREAT AUSTRALIAN PARK**  
**Blue Mountains National Park 1959-2009 & 10 years of World Heritage, a millennia of evolution.**

There are lots of activities for kids of all ages (and bigger kids too) during the school holidays and beyond. For example: Spotlight Safari at Boyd River; Treasures of the Blue Mountains guided walks on Prince Henry Cliff Track and the National Pass; Junior Rangers—Creatures in the Clearing, for kids aged 7-12 years; Living Country—Little Women's Business, "girl time" enjoying indigenous craft and bush activities with Aboriginal Discovery Rangers; Different Lore, Same Song—presentation by archaeologist Wayne Brennan about research into recent rock-art finds in Wollemi NP..

Bookings are essential and prices are quoted in the program. Pick up a program from the NPWS Heritage Centre or phone 4787 8877.

### 50th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION FREE EVENT

**Saturday 31 October:**

**Moonlit walk in Leura Forest**

Experience a very special event to celebrate Blue Mountains National Park 50th birthday. Recreate history as we enjoy a moonlit adventure along the historic walking tracks through Leura Forest and ascending the Giants Stairway to Echo Point. Free ride on the Blue Mountains Explorer bus to start of walk.

A free community event for registered adult participants only. Phone 4787 8877.

## A GM-Free Blue Mountains: Your chance to have a say

A report prepared by council staff that recommends taking a “precautionary approach” to genetically modified (GM) food crops in our local government area has now been before the Blue Mountains council for several months without a decision being taken. On 8th September the councillors decided that to assist in their deliberations the report and recommendations would be put on public exhibition and public comment sought.

**If you want a precautionary approach to GM food crops adopted then it is vitally important that you let council know. A short email or letter clearly stating that you want such a precautionary approach adopted is all that is required.**

Without strong public support the recommendations may well fail to be adopted as some councillors may, for

their own reasons, choose to interpret silence as meaning people “don’t care”.

But care we must, for there is a growing body of evidence that GM food crops pose significant risks to human and animal health, and can have measurable deleterious impacts on the broader environment.

With the NSW and Victorian state governments succumbing to the lobbying of agribusiness and biotech corporate interests it is more important than ever that local councils take a precautionary approach in the interests of their communities. Many councils around Australia have already done so, and indeed the Tasmanian government has recently extended its total ban on the growing of all GM food crops until at least November 2014.

The full council report (including the precautionary recommendations) and

Craig Linn and Tara Cameron

other associated documents are available via an on-line consultation tool at [www.bangthetable.com/blue-mountains-city-council](http://www.bangthetable.com/blue-mountains-city-council) or by contacting Jen Guice, BMCC Sustainability Coordinator, [jguice@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jguice@bmcc.nsw.gov.au) or phone 4780 5451.

Written submissions should be marked “Submission: GM Food Production and Blue Mountains LGA” with file number F05348. Submissions can be posted to the General Manager, Blue Mountains City Council, Locked Bag 1005, Katoomba NSW 2780; or emailed to [council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au). The final date for submissions is 5pm on Friday 27 November 2009, but don’t delay, send a submission today.

If you would like more details and references on the environmental impact of GM crops please see the extended article in the July edition of Hut News.

## Hunting in National Parks

The NSW Government is sending out mixed signals regarding legislation to allow hunting in National Parks and the establishment of Private Game Reserves.

“The political reality is that the Rees Government does not have a majority in the Upper House” said Tara Cameron. “The Government needs the Shooters Party votes to get their legislation passed and the Shooters’ price seems to be to allow hunting in National Parks and the establishment of Private Game Reserves.”

The First Reading of a Bill to allow hunting in National Parks went through the Lower House in June without publicity. The Society believes that the Government is hesitating now only because of vigorous protests from environment and animal welfare groups.

“The Shooters Party legislation is still on the table” said Tara. “The Government has its legislative program to get through Parliament which means that NSW could soon have Private Game Reserves where not only native animals would be shot but introduced pests such as Pheasant and Partridge to serve as hunting targets that could escape into surrounding areas.”

The Society supports the Pest Control Programs managed by National Parks staff which is science based and extends across all National Parks and operates in co-operation with adjoining landholders and agriculturalists.

“The NSW Government gives three million dollars every year to the Game Council to support recreational hunting’s contribution to feral animal reduction” said Tara. “There is little environmental benefit from that. National Park staff can do it far better while also protecting the environment and providing safe recreation in National Parks for the community.”

“The Government has to state, in no uncertain words, if the Shooters Party Legislation is going to be supported or not.” Tara said.

Members are urged to write to the Premier and Minister for the Environment and Climate Change opposing any recreational hunting in National Parks.

**The Hon Nathan Rees, Premier  
[thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au](mailto:thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au)  
GPO Box 5341, Sydney NSW 2001**

**The John Robertson  
Minister for the Environment and Climate Change,  
[office@robertson.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@robertson.minister.nsw.gov.au)  
1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000**

## Dust, Snow and Waratahs

What a wonderful country, Australia. I am fortunate to have been on two trips with friends from the Thursday Interpretive Bushwalkers to Broken Hill and the desert and channel country beyond. The red soil, the dry creek beds, the River Red Gums, the tiny desert flowers, flocks of emus, kangaroos bounding away, Wedge tailed Eagles feeding on road kill, the birdlife where there is permanent water ... it is all pretty amazing.

I was reminded of this by the dust storm this week. I woke at sunrise to see an orange glow in the sky, not just from the direction of the rising sun, but all around, and it was so bright! I drove to Govett’s Leap. The atmosphere was quiet and felt different, like it is when there is snow on the ground, but instead of snow a layer of red dust covered the road, the grass verges, rooftops ... every surface. Beyond the lookout an orange void, with not a hint of the position of the morning sun.

Waratahs are flowering early this year in Blackheath. Usually they start to flower here in mid October and are at their best early November. This year many were in full bloom in early September.

And last night it snowed. I woke to find a white overcoat covering the red dust which is still coating the deck and deck furniture. I thought of this headline: “Snow falls on central Australian desert sands where Waratahs bloom” ... a highly unlikely scenario!

Christine Davies, Blackheath 27/9/09.

## LAKE BREWSTER

Today has been a special day.  
The sort of day to file away,  
if only that was possible,  
so we could take it out from time to time  
and savour it.

Last night, beside our Lachlan campfire,  
we watched the moon's eclipse.  
The River Red-gum logs gave splendid  
coals.

No cloud at this time in these wide skies.  
Darker grew the night, brighter the stars,  
as the earth's shadow hid the full moon's  
face,  
leaving, still visible, a dim, red globe,  
gleaming, mysterious, in three dimensions.

We watched two platypuses in a pool  
this morning, and a water rat  
swimming and diving for its food.  
Its gold-tipped fur glowed in the sunlit  
patches.

Its white-tipped tail snaked gracefully behind.  
Then out to the Lake-bright water, sunshine,  
the brooding mountain range and all the  
birds.

After lunch, leaving the water birds,  
we found a flock of fifty White-fronted Chats  
busily feeding on a flat  
Two Striped Honeyeaters courting in a tree  
allowed a close approach and warbled  
charmingly.

A bevy of small birds harassed  
a Carpet Python draped on a tree trunk,  
soaking up sun, oblivious.

At the day's end, back to our splendid camp  
by the Lachlan River, good food and wine,  
the fire's glow and the June full moon.

Graham Alcorn, June 1993.

## Wildlife too close for comfort?

### BOOK REVIEW

**Too Close for Comfort: Contentious Issues in Human-Wildlife Encounters.** Edited by Daniel Lunney, Adam Munn and Will Meikle  
2008, Published by Royal Zoological Society of NSW

This is a new book about the relationship between humans and wildlife. There is a story about Brushtail Possums in northern Sydney, where some people love and feed them whilst others trap, and try to remove them. What is to be done?

The Royal Zoological Society of NSW has compiled a series of 2008 conference papers, that all raise lots of questions about wildlife management. Koala management on Kangaroo Island and in Victoria makes fascinating reading. A close look at the practice of translocating koalas reveals links to the over browsing of *Eucalypts*. The koala story is one of saving individual koalas, but it has meant the loss of other species diversity within an ecosystem. As the population growth of koalas is an emotive issue played out in the media, Sarah Wilkes brings insight to conservation practices of wildlife management on Kangaroo Island.

Reading about road kills was depressing, however some good ideas on vegetation management on roadsides to deter kangaroos from roads is interesting. The benefits of exclusion fencing and overpasses to assist fauna migration and species genetic diversity are mentioned. What about here in the Blue Mountains, do we need to stop roadkills?

*The mere presence of humans* is enough to have a significant effect upon birds and affect their feeding, energy expenditure and breeding success according to Megan Price. What is the consequence of these findings for bushwalkers, dog walkers in the bush and ecotourist developers in National Parks?

Many aspects of wildlife management are discussed, from the role of Zoos in conservation - to wildlife tourism as a means of re-introducing threatened species, along with a commercial trade in wildlife. There is even some research revealing how far domestic cats roam. Have you wondered how far your cat roams?

Harry Recher quite rightly points out, that conservation managers frequently manage wildlife for the benefit of people, rather than for the benefit of the biodiverse species in our natural world.

Excellent photographs reveal the paradoxes of our relationships with wildlife. The book is available in Katoomba library. *Meredith Brownhill*

## The September Monthly Meeting Report by David Hall

Brett Hughes, Policy Director for the Australasian Railway Association was the keynote speaker with the topic – **'The Environmental and Economic Benefits of Rail versus Road'**.

Brett said all modes of transport have their place, depending on circumstances. Obviously, rail cannot provide a suburban courier service. Where Rail could be the preferred option, with bulk freight for example, it seems to be encumbered with old rolling stock, 30 years old in many cases versus an average of 8 years in USA.

Brett was also critical of Government transport planning which does not seem to be taking sufficient account of population growth on the edges of the suburban sprawl. As lower income people are obliged to go further from the CBD to find affordable housing, they have to spend more on fuel to get to work and to enjoy leisure options.

"Higher density living does not have to mean a lower standard of living" said

Brett "It depends upon the structure." Higher density living does mean better transport options, lower fuel use and carbon emissions. Brett also provided projections where population numbers, road congestion and carbon emissions are likely to grow much faster than jobs which means that governments are likely to have less revenue to provide better transport options.

Brett also highlighted the much smaller percentage of bulk freight carried by rail between Sydney and Melbourne compared to similar 800km journeys in other Developed Countries. The explanation seems to be that road transport is favoured as a matter of policy.

Michael Paag from the Blackheath Action Group highlighted the lack of rail facilities in terms of dual carriage ways and siding facilities to allow rail to effectively compete with road transport. He also told of an incident at the Clyde Shell Refinery where a 19 B-Dub truck hit a guard post and dropped 7,000 litres

of fuel which was not all its load.

Paul Trevaskis from Blue Mountains Commuters Assn spoke of the lack of support given to Commuters by State Rail Planning in terms of timetabling and the rostering of Station Staff.

Brett came with a stack of research reports for our library which the Society will make good use of to research submissions and working with other groups on transport issues.

## Welcome to new members

Robin Delahunt, Wentworth Falls  
Eric Ewin, Wentworth Falls  
Jane Anderson, Katoomba  
Elisabeth Cook, Katoomba  
Marley Haydon-Anderson, Katoomba  
Jill Robertson, Closely  
Genevieve Carey, Hazelbrook  
Paul Smith, Blackheath  
Jade Tinkler, Blackheath  
Meri Tinkler-Smith, Blackheath  
Carolyn van Langenberg, Blackheath  
Michael van Langenberg, Blackheath

## Environmental Notes

by David Hall

Around 1,000 Australian Companies will be covered by the Rudd Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. According to the Australian Securities Exchange, 50 of those Companies account for around 80% of Australia's carbon dioxide emissions. Of those 50, 21 are Generators. The top ten listed companies of this 50 are BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto, Bluescope Steel, Qantas, AGL, Alumina, OneSteel, Orica, Santos and Origin Energy.

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One ton of coal provides one house in the USA, on average, with electricity for about two months. 46% of the world's hard coal is produced by China.

In 2007, USA Power Plants emitted 2.4 billion tons of carbon dioxide.

Proven world wide reserves of oil and natural gas liquids – 1.2 trillion barrels.

Time it took the world to consume its first trillion barrels of oil – 140 years.

Time it will take to consume the next trillion – 30 years.

Around 2/3 of all energy is consumed in urban areas even though only around half of the World's population lives in cities.

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In 2008, for the first time, the European Union and the USA added more capacity from renewables than from fossil fuel and nuclear sources. From end-2004 to end-2008, total global power capacity from new renewable increased by 75% to 280 gigawatts and 250% increase in wind power capacity to 121 gigawatts. Wind power capacity grew by 29%. Renewable electricity in Germany is around 15.3% of the total and renewable provide almost 10% of all energy.

## Observing Nature

By Jim Smith

Congratulations to Christine Davies for her latest interesting nature observation (Hut News September 2009). I was able to identify the wattle flower eating grub by going through the chapter "Acacias and Arthropods" in A Biology of Acacias by T.R. New (Oxford University Press, 1984). New identified the butterfly Nacaduba biocellata as conforming with the observations by Christine.

This was confirmed by Common and Waterhouse in Butterflies of Australia (Angus and Robertson, 1972) on page 386, which shows that the species occurs in the Blue Mountains, feeds on the flowers of some local acacias and burrows into the ground to pupate, as observed by Christine.

*Extract from Common & Waterhouse: 'The larvae ... are very variable in colour, matching the colour and form of the buds and flowers upon which they feed ... have been found in several species of Acacia. Both larvae and pupae are attended by small black ants. Pupation occurs in curled leaves or under stones or pieces of bark on the ground beneath the food plant, or in ant galleries in the soil.'*

## Loose Feathers, with Carol Probets

Australian mistletoes are a tremendous resource for our native birds. At the moment the Drooping Mistletoe (*Amyema pendulum*) is carrying its bunches of long red flowers which attract small honeyeaters such as the Eastern Spinebill and the jewel-like Scarlet Honeyeater.

The male Scarlet Honeyeater takes you by surprise if you're lucky enough to see him: a tiny bird with an all red head so vibrant and shiny that it glistens like a ruby in the sun. Being small (they are the smallest honeyeater in Australia) and living in the treetops, they often go unnoticed but sometimes will come down to feed in *Callistemon* in gardens. And even then, the bright red flowers of the Crimson Bottlebrush provide a perfect camouflage.

Scarlet Honeyeaters usually turn up in the Blue Mountains from September on, although there are occasional records during winter. Recently I found a number of them calling in the tops of the ironbarks near Portal Waterhole, in the National Park at Glenbrook. Another spot to watch for them is along the Birdwood Gully walk at Springwood which last summer was a good place to see them. They rely heavily on nectar and, apart from flowering mistletoe and *Callistemon*, they frequent the tops of flowering eucalypts, turpentines and Melaleucas, wandering nomadically in search of blossom. The male's tinkling call is quite distinctive and has a "falling-leaf" quality a bit like the White-throated Gerygone's beautiful song, though the honeyeater's is shorter and more lively.

After flowering, the mistletoe will bear fruit containing sweet, gelatinous pulp surrounding a single seed. This fruit is the major food of the Mistletoebird - another tiny but beautiful gem. The relationship between mistletoe and the Mistletoebird is well known, with the bird depositing the sticky seeds onto branches to germinate into a new plant. Their nomadic movements are dictated by the progressive fruiting of various species of mistletoe around the landscape. Here in the mountains, the bird often appears as just a speck dashing bullet-like across the sky, recognisable only by its short high-pitched call-note. So, like the Scarlet Honeyeater they are easy to overlook until you know the call.

Carol Probets ([origma@westnet.com.au](mailto:origma@westnet.com.au))



### ***Nacaduba biocellata* Double Spotted Line Blue Butterfly**

Caterpillar with attendant ants on Wattle flowers

Photo by Don Herbison-Evans from

<http://www-staff.it.uts.edu.au/~don/larvae/lyca/biocell.html>

# The Golden Gumtree Postal Run at Katoomba High School

## Report by David Hall

Wyn Jones, Bronwen Maxwell and Chris Yates did very well in bringing the Golden Gumtree Postal Run to Katoomba High School and staging a formal welcome on September 24 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Blue Mountains National Park.

Around 30 Year 7 students had gathered around a campfire in the grounds of the school with the School Principal, a BMCC representative, Joan Domicelj, Chair of GBMWH Advisory Committee, Geoff Luscombe of the BMNPWS, Andy Macqueen, Historian, Janelle Randal-Court, Aboriginal Discovery Ranger with the BMNPWS, Alexander Gold, PhD Candidate sponsored by the BMWHI and David Brazil and David Hall from the BMCS.

The students around the campfire had given their postcards to Bush Postie Wyn. The postcards recorded their observations in their Bush Room and their aspirations for the natural environment.

Andy Macqueen told a great story of Miles Dunphy and friends coming across a farmer in the Grose Valley in 1932 in the act of cutting down a tree. Dunphy and friends protested, "You can't do that". The farmer replied, quite correctly that he was on his land and had the legal right to do so. Even so, they managed to talk him out of doing further damage and proceeded to raise enough money, at the height of the Depression to make it worth his while to leave the rest of the

trees where they were. This led to a movement which lobbied the NSW Government over the next 27 years to establish the Blue Mountains National Park. This finally happened in September, 1959.

Joan Domicelj spoke about the significance of the Greater Blue Mountains being listed as a World Heritage Area. Janelle Randal-Court spoke about what motivates her to be an Aboriginal Discovery Ranger while also demonstrating how Aboriginals were able to use natural materials for their utensils.

After the campfire, with Year 9 students in attendance, Alex Gold spoke about the problems of controlling weeds in wilderness areas, David Brazil spoke about Gardens of Stone Stage Two and David Hall spoke about the underfunding of the NPWS, particularly with maintenance, plans to allow commercial facilities inside National Parks and legislation introduced into the NSW Parliament by the Shooters Party to allow recreational hunting inside National Parks.

## Bushwalkers at the Campfire

by Christine Davies

The Thursday Interpretive Bushwalkers changed their scheduled walk to participate in the Golden Gumtree Postal Run campfire at Katoomba High School.

We met on Cliff Drive at 8.30 and,

after a cuppa and muffin, walked along the Clifftop Walk, about 1.2 km. We hadn't done this section of the walk before, from the Solitary Restaurant towards Echo Point. It is very beautiful with cool ferny gullies and hanging swamps, lookouts and lots of birds.

At Katoomba High School we were welcomed by Wyn Jones and Chris Yates and took our place beside the campfire.

Year 7 children sat around the campfire, were very attentive and didn't complain about the smoke. During the month they had gathered information from their "bush room" and made postcards which the Bush Postie was to deliver to Blackheath School. In return they received postcards from Blaxland School.

Talks were short and interesting. Wyn and others told us about the "postal run" and visits to schools along the way. The "postie" and the children exchanged postcards. It was all great fun!

Afterwards we had a cup of tea and a piece of birthday cake to celebrate the 50th Birthday of Blue Mountains National Park, and then walked back along the Clifftop Walk.

On the way some of us saw a Crimson Rosella using a hollow for a nest, and there were masses of *Dendrobium striolatum* (streaked rock orchid) flowering at one of the lookouts.

Congratulations to Wyn and Bronwyn and the team for organising this wonderful event. Christine.

## Airlie's Getting Busy

By Meredith Brownhill, September 2009



shale mines, have upon some magnificent pagodas.

Airlie is an interesting and wonderful place to walk and camp, so the sooner Mt. Airlie has protection as a State Conservation Area or National Park the better!

Photo: Mt Airlie pagoda by Emanuel Conomos.

Six Saturday walkers have just discovered that Mt. Airlie is becoming a busy place. The road to the top has been bulldozed and the coal mining activities of Centennial Coal Ltd are increasing on the western side.

Nonetheless, we had a lovely walk with several rest stops on pagodas that gave us fabulous views over Capertee Valley. The purple flowers of *Prostanthera rotundifolia* were at one lookout, whilst the yellow flowers of *Hibbertia monogyna* were spread through the bush.

A rounded wombat tunnel under a sandstone rock was a special discovery, as the roof of the tunnel is rounded to the shape of generations of wombats going in and out of their hideway.

Walking down through pagodas from the top, we discovered the old shale tramway formation that goes up over Airlie and down the western slope to Torbane, where two refinery ruins still stand. Whilst passing the old cave houses, we chatted to some trail bike riders, and noticed the pink flowers of *Indigofera australis* adding colour to the shale slopes.

Helicopter flights – five for the day, intruded upon our quiet too, but nothing dampened our spirits. What sort of impacts will coal mining in a mountain that is riddled with old

## **Do you have memories of or writings of BESSE BRAMSEN?**

Besse Bramsen was born at Mount Irvine 100 years ago (29 August). John Sinclair (defender of Fraser Island and head of Go Bush Safaris) asked me to find out if Besse had written about her life. Besse went on a few safaris with John and his crew and was much loved by them.

I had a couple of old issues of "Hut News" where Besse had contributed and paid a visit to John Merriman at Springwood Library—local history archivist. John Merriman became interested in Besse and started a file for her.

I'm hoping that you might be able to put a request in Hut News for any memories of or writings by Besse (and photos).

Many will still remember her involvement with the conservation movement, especially Upper and Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Societies, Australian Plant Society and people at Birdwood Gully (near where she lived). "Besse Battles Bitou Bush" was a slogan attached to her fight against this weed.

Any information should be directed to John Merriman at Springwood Library. Shirley Brown.

## **Footbeat Festival**

**"Our Sustainable Footprint"**  
**Wentworth Falls TAFE, Oct 23-25**

The Footbeat Festival celebrates the outstanding natural and cultural environment of the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains and its vibrant arts community. Plans are underway for a massive sustainability expo. The entire TAFE campus will come alive with world music, food, fun, eco and environmentally focused stalls.

For more information visit [www.footbeatfestival.com.au](http://www.footbeatfestival.com.au)

## **Talk on New Book**

**If You Love This Planet by Dr Helen Caldicott, revised and updated 2009**

Dr Helen Caldicott will talk about her new book at Wentworth Falls School of Arts on Saturday 7 November at 2pm. Entry will be by donation with afternoon tea provided. For more information contact Kathie Herbert, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 4782 3384.

## **HELP NEEDED**

Can you spare half a day to help at our stall at the Footbeat Festival during the weekend of 24-25 October? Or perhaps you might be available to help with stalls on other occasions.

Please phone Liz 4757 2694.

## **Down the Wallaby Track — a backward glance, with John Low**

### **A HELPING HAND (OR TAIL!)**

When former Melbourne businessman Frederick Goyder fell in love with the Blue Mountains he purchased the Great Western Hotel in 1886 and transformed it into the Carrington. Having thus cultivated Lord Carrington's enthusiasm for the region, Goyder and other Katoomba businessmen then persuaded the NSW Governor to assist them in promoting the new 'Six Foot' bridle track recently opened to Jenolan Caves. At this time Mount Victoria was enjoying an economic windfall from the Caves traffic and Katoomba wanted to retrieve its share.

Katoomba's business community was ecstatic when Lord and Lady Carrington agreed to hire horses and ride across country to the Caves. The 'adventure' caught the public's imagination and the party set out in early September 1887 with local coach driver and horseman, Harry Peckman, as guide.

Peckman was born at Kurrajong and had driven coaches over the Mountain roads since his youth. He knew the bush intimately, was an expert horseman and had established stables in Park Street in partnership with his brother John. They were keen to service the growing tourist demand and stood to benefit from the new bridal track. The kudos of a vice-regal engagement was worth a great deal and Peckman later became very successful at exploiting his popularity with the gentry.

There had been heavy rains and the Cox was in flood, so Harry's brother was sent ahead to fell a tree across the swollen river. The Governor and his wife crossed without getting wet, while Harry swam the horses at a ford upstream. Camp was made at Little River and out came champagne and fine food from the Governor's baggage while their guide, unfazed, set to work at the camp fire to produce his trademark tea and damper. When Lord and Lady Carrington tasted his 'billy tea', Peckman boasted later, they left the wine to their companions. No doubt this helped to lubricate Harry's renowned repertoire of poems, songs and stories!

Climbing the Black Range an odd little incident occurred. Lady Carrington dismounted, preferring to walk in order to relieve her horse. Her guide, who was riding a small piebald he clearly knew well, suggested she take hold of its tail. Understandably reluctant, she was eventually persuaded that the horse's temperament was such that she had nothing to fear. According to Peckman, she found the tail "of great assistance".

The Carringtons completed the trip in good shape, though the hoped for popularity of the track as an alternative route to the Caves proved ultimately elusive. The convenience and comfort of coach travel was too attractive. Peckman, adding another vice-regal notch to his curriculum vita, also kept a strange memento of the occasion. Not long after the trip his piebald horse was injured and had to be destroyed. Peckman cut off and preserved the tail that had assisted Lady Carrington up the Black Range!

John Low ([johnlow@iprimus.com.au](mailto:johnlow@iprimus.com.au))



Photo: Harry Peckman outside Balmoral House, Katoomba, c 1927

Local Studies Section, Blue Mountains City Library

There are still a few copies of the book, "The Prince of Whips", on the Life and Works of the Blue Mountains Pioneer Harry Peckman, by John Low and Jim Smith, available for sale (\$5 plus postage). Contact John Low if you would like one.

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) or can be posted on request. For more information call Liz van Reyswoud on 4757 2694, email [bushwalks@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:bushwalks@bluemountains.org.au) or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

**SATURDAY WALKS:** Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Before attending ring the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy 4758 6009 or email [jp34@tpg.com.au](mailto:jp34@tpg.com.au)

Date	Details	Contact	Meet at	(km)	Grade	Map
Oct 10	<b>Burra Korain Head</b> —Adventure guaranteed	Bob 4757 2694	Blackheath Station CP, 8.15 am	8	4	Mt Wilson
Oct 10-11	<b>St Helena Crater restoration</b>	Jim 4758 6009	Martins LO	10-12	4	Springwood and Penrith
Oct 13-15 mid week	<b>Kanangra—2 nights at Boyd Crossing.</b> Walks in this classic walking area. Half day walks on Tues and Thurs and a full day walk possibly to Crafts Wall, Pages Pinnacle and beyond? On the Wednesday	Meredith 4782 4823	Contact leader for further details and transport arrangements.	various	3/4	Kanangra
Oct 17	<b>BMCS picnic at Wentworth Falls.</b> See details elsewhere in this newsletter.					
Oct 24	<b>Attic Cave and Pisgah Rock to Erskine Creek,</b> adventurous and attractive part of lower BMNP, grade steep, rocks.	Ros 4733 3880	Glenbrook Station CP (Cars), 9.30 am	6	3/4	Penrith
Oct 31	<b>October Creek</b> —spectacular spring flowers expected—drop in to De Faurs Creek for the adventurous and great views at October Creek—in the past a popular Spring camp ground.	Bob 4757 2694	Blackheath Station CP 8.15 am	8	3	Mt Wilson
Nov 7	<b>Pierces Pass area, Oronga Ridge to Rigby Hill</b> —Different views of the Grose—Mostly off track	Hugh 0423 309 854	Ring Leader as party limit	8	4	Mt Wilson

**MONDAY LEISURE WALKS:** Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Maurice Kerkham, 4739 4942, email [mauricekerkham@hotmail.com](mailto:mauricekerkham@hotmail.com)

Date	Details	Grade	Contact	Meet
Oct 12	Florabella Pass and Pippa's Pass. Wildflower walk. Warrimoo to Blaxland.	2	Heather 4739 1493	9.30 am, Warrimoo Station.
Oct 19	Zig Zag, Bushrangers Cave, Reinert's Pass, Mount Victoria. Historic track for early access to Kanimbla Valley.	3	Norm 4784 1554.	9 am, Mount Victoria Rail Station.
Oct 26	Pope's Glen—Govett's Leap—Braeside Walk	2	Mary 4757 4569	9.30 am, Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre.
Nov 2	Bondi Beach to Coogee. Sculptures by the Sea annual exhibition.	2	Ros 4733 3880	9.30 am, Central Station, top of escalators
Nov 9	Point Pilcher, Medlow Bath. Walk from airstrip to Grose Valley views.	2	Mary 4757 4569	9.30 am, Hydro Majestic, car pool.

**THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS:** Walks of 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Simone Bowskill, 4757 3416, email [simbow@tpg.com.au](mailto:simbow@tpg.com.au)

Oct 8	<b>Campfire Creek loop and Red Hands Cave,</b> Glenbrook. Unique walk in the lower mountains. Bring NP sticker if you have one.	2	Heather 4739 1493	9.30 Glenbrook Station car park.
Oct 15	Solitary Restaurant to Silver Mist, Katoomba. Clifftop walk via lookouts.	1	Joan c/o 4782 5966	9.30 am, Gearins Hotel.
Oct 22	Rhododendron Gardens, Blackheath. Enjoy spring in this beautiful park	1	Simone 4757 3416	9.45 am, Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre.
Oct 29	BUS TRIP to Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens. Enjoy spring in this mountain garden.	1	Simone 4858 3416	8.30 am, Council Depot, South Street, North Katoomba. <b>Cost \$12. Bookings Essential</b>
Nov 5	Visit to Sculpture by the Sea.	2	Simone 4757 3416	Take train leaving Wentworth Falls at 8.36 am, meet at top of escalators at Central, to take train and bus to Bondi.
Nov 12	Mount Wilson Village walk. Visit this picturesque area in spring.	1	Maurice 4739 4942	9.40 am, Mt Victoria Station.

### Blue Mountains Conservation Society FAMILY PICNIC

**SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2009, 11a m to 3 pm at WILSON PARK, WENTWORTH FALLS**