

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



Good News Year!

Looking back over 1998, there have been many positive happenings which will be good for the Blue Mountains environment.

World Heritage Nomination: In July, the World Heritage submission for the Greater Blue Mountains was completed and sent to UNESCO in Paris for assessment. The nomination covers an area of 10,326 sq. km. (about one-third the size of Belgium, or one-seventh the size of the Irish Republic) which includes seven National Parks — Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Yengo, Gardens of Stone, Kanangra-Boyd, Nattai and Thirlmere Lakes — and Jenolan Caves Karst Conservation Reserve. A determination will be made at the end of this year.

Urban Runoff Control Program. Thanks to Bob Debus who worked hard to get State Government funds for the Blue Mountains.

Opening of sewerage tunnel to Winnmalee. The old polluting sewage works in the Upper Mountains have been closed. The Society and other environmental groups have been working over the past year in consultation with Sydney Water on the rehabilitation of the three sites, which will begin in March, 1999. (In his recent talk, Jim Smith told us that Kedumba River was first polluted by sewage in 1907. Now after 91 years, the Kedumba River can start to cleanse itself.) Congratulations, Sydney Water.

Blue Mountains Walking Tracks Heritage Study. The unique walking tracks system of the Blue Mountains has officially been recognised as part of our heritage. Don't forget to see the draft reports and make a submission.

Draft Amendment 25 to LEP1991 was passed by Council. It is now with the Minister and we expect its ratification very soon. Along with other local environment groups, we put in many months of work (submissions, meetings and workshops with Council Officers, including commissioning the Smith & Smith report on Sensitive Vegetation Units and their Buffers) to get these issues and the exclusion of slopes greater than 20% (1 in 5) on development land, included into LEP1991.

Living Near the Bush booklet: This has

been a long-term project with a lot of preparation work done by BMCS and others. In December 1997 a grant was obtained from Natural Heritage Trust to allow us to employ someone to produce the book. Well, it has now been completed, printed, and will be launched soon.

The Society has had a busy year. During 1998 we made umpteen submissions and many representations at Council meetings and had several significant wins. We had representatives at major conferences (two of our motions were passed at the recent National Conservation Council Conference).

Our **Nursery** has earned \$10,166 since March, with orders for a further \$9,500 outstanding. The Nursery has tendered to supply plants for one of the STP sites which will make quite a considerable sum for the Society — a very busy year lies ahead for all the volunteers who work in the Nursery.

Digger Cooper Reserve was named and a Plan of Management prepared; **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group** received a grant from the Urban Runoff Control Project.

Our **Bushwalks** Program has expanded; **Leisure Walkers** continue to enjoy Monday walks; We have had interesting **Guest Speakers** at general meetings; **The Kids' Club** now has an activity every month; The Society is **On the Internet**; AND, in December we reached our **600th member**.

There are negatives. Badgery's Creek Airport still hangs over us (it remains the Federal Government's preferred site). Genowlan and Airly are unprotected. Agreement on an effective Tree Preservation Order has been delayed. Our creeks and swamps are still not protected by adequate buffers. The election of a Coalition Government in the coming state election could still see the raising of Warragamba Dam wall and drowning of wilderness areas. Environmentalists lost Coughlan Road and "won" Winnicoopa, but the developers are going for a replay

But, let's look forward to another "Good News Year" in 1999. Happy New Year!

Caldicott's Message to the Mountains

A vital forum on Nuclear Issues for Australia will be held at Old Parliament House, Canberra, on March 19 and 20 (contact Dr Sabine Erika 4787.8784).

This was part of Dr Helen Caldicott's message to a large gathering at Katoomba on 12/12/98. Dr. Caldicott said that Uranium mining was a medical issue. She spoke of the dangers of radar gas to miners and the radiation peril to all life from the numerous isotopes and by-products resulting from the nuclear industry. She insisted the nuclear waste problem was not solved and that there were major nuclear ramifications of the 'Millennium Bug'.

Chris Doran of the Wilderness Society also spoke, citing the uranium threat to World Heritage.

Wilderness Access

The Carr Government is now deciding whether to preserve the integrity of the Wollemi wilderness or allow it to be dissected by allowing four-wheel drive vehicles on the trails of the Hunter and Wirraba ranges.

Members are urged to write to Labor and Coalition candidates with this message: NO four-wheel drives on the ranges of the Wollemi; NO reduction in the size of the proposed wilderness; and NO chopping the Wollemi Wilderness in two or three.

Talk About World Heritage

Joan Domicelj will be the guest speaker at our general meeting on Friday 29 January. Ms Domicelj prepared the nomination documents for Blue Mountains for World Heritage, and will talk about the nomination and the many people who contributed.

In the words of local member Bob Debus (BM Gazette 1/7/98) "They (the documents) are superb and do great justice to the magnificent natural and cultural resources of the Blue Mountains. They are well researched, well argued and well presented. In the opinion of one international specialist

on World Heritage they are of similar standard to the best documents he has seen in over thirty years."

The meeting at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, starts at 7.30 pm.

"Hut News", the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

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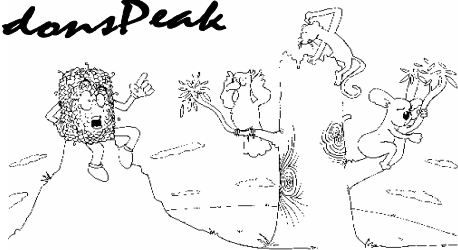
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THE DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY



State Election — Two Months Out

A list of 1998 achievements in this issue is some indication of how hard Bob Debus has worked as local member to improve the Blue Mountains environment.

What we must choose between on 27-Mar-1999 is a Carr-led cabinet or a Chikarovski-led cabinet which would almost certainly include National Party ministers in key environment-related portfolios.

The NSW Election is 'Optional Preferential' so we could just vote for a particularly environmentally responsible candidate and not allocate our second or subsequent preference, but that is a cop-out — it is vital to face up to which major party is least irresponsible.

Both sets of front-benchers have done and said plenty to upset environmentalists recently. A major issue for Mountains environmentalists is the so-called pro-access lobby threatening wilderness areas. The Carr Government's decisions on access into Wollemi Wilderness will be an important test of its Wilderness commitment.

While, at the time of writing, I have met no-one who claims to understand Kerry Chikarovski's environment policies, she has made some disturbing statements appearing to favour the 'access' lobby. The Medical Journals would have informed us if anyone had been born inseparably attached to a four-wheel drive, a horse or a gun. All that those who want access to Wilderness Areas have to do is leave such objects behind when they enter.

**The Burghers are Gross
But the Peasants are Revolting**

Dr Peter Ellyard, a 'futurist', believes that information technology will soon allow many more people to live wherever they want and work from home. At present, many rural communities are pessimistic about retaining their population. Some rural leaders believe that accepting 'dirty' activities, unwanted in cities, is a way to boost rural economies.

But can we control the environmental 'fallout' from what the city can't contain? Some people in the Lithgow area, for example, are happy to have sewage sludge sprayed on their State Forests and would like a twenty-four hour major airport on Newnes Plateau. But they draw the line at a gigantic tip for Sydney's dangerous waste.

If we accept the logic that polluting land uses can be refused in cities but adopted in the country, how can we be sure that rural citizens will be given any choice about what kind of activities we accept?

Isn't it time we chose a different kind of logic? ... a logic that demands the by-

products of urban activities be contained within urban areas?

This means that city people would have to pay for quieter planes or use land transport, or put up with the noise themselves. They would have to find a way of dealing with sewage sludge and general waste without exporting them.

They might have to look at water recycling or rainwater tanks instead of alienating vast areas for water catchments ... and they would not be able to make profit from the nuclear industry and then dump nuclear waste in inland Australia.

Don Morison.

Environment Friendly Transport

Members of 14 other groups joined BMCS representatives in Lithgow on 28.11.98 to promote the Nature Conservation Council's campaign for **Environment-Friendly Transport**.

Resolutions were adopted supporting greater use of rail and bicycles and also calling for road construction to be handled in a more environmentally sensitive way.

The resolutions will be put to 1999 State Election candidates and *Hut News* will keep you informed.

Why Restrict Horse Access?

One of the first statements made by Kerry Chikarovski as leader of the NSW Opposition was that she should like to see greater access for horse riders to the national parks. The Society has written to enlighten Ms Chikarovski about the effect of horses on national parks.

In the first instance, because of their hard hooves and the weight exerted, horses and other hard hoofed animals such as goats and sheep, cause damage to softer soils by compaction of the soil they walk on, thus killing native plants — the faster they move, the greater the compaction. On walking trails they tend to break up the soil aggravating erosion problems. Where the trails are rocky there is a great tendency to cause slippage and land slides. They also require a wider path than humans on foot, thus they and their riders, damage more plants as they walk through.

Secondly, their droppings contain a high concentration of undigested weed seeds which, along with the high nutrient content of their excreta, favours the growth of weeds over native plants, which are killed by the strongly alkaline nature of their urine. Horse droppings are a guaranteed method of spreading weeds deep into the bush!

The horse riding lobby say they are responsible people and they bring out everything they take in. We have no doubt that they are responsible and probably bring out all that they take in, in the way of rubbish and litter. What they cannot bring out are the weeds and nutrients in the horse excreta and the damage the animals do to the soil structure.

We have urged Ms Chikarovski to investigate this issue far more fully before advocating relaxing the present restriction on access for horses. The primary purpose of national parks is to maintain biodiversity and recreation is only a secondary consideration.

ESD Workshop

A workshop about Ecologically Sustainable Development was organised by BMCC and facilitated by the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the UTS. It was well attended by members of the community and other stakeholders, including the Conservation Society.

The invitation had stated that 'the outcomes ... will be used by the Institute, Council and the community to determine future priorities for improving our environment and the lifestyles of all Blue Mountains residents'. Subjects covered ranged from the natural environment to social equity issues and economic indicators.

One message that stands out clearly is that the future is everyone's agenda, and, we should leave things alone if we are not sure what we are doing and the effects our action will have. Similar workshops are planned for the New Year, with more opportunities for the community to provide constructive input into future directions.

Welcome to New Members

Pamela and Ray Smith, Springwood
Roz Hodgson, Blackheath
Jo Barrett and Bernard Usher, Glenbrook
Roger Clarke, Medlow Bath
Tony and Jenny Smith, Wentworth Falls
Robin & Warwick Mosman, W.Falls.
Patricia Hogan, Wentworth Falls
GS and FA Georgiou, Leura
Kas Moskwa, Glenbrook

Forests Update (11-Dec-1998)

Have we lost our bite? Green groups have lost out yet again in the acts passed recently by the NSW Government regarding the Eden and North East forests.

A Forest Sub-committee is being set up to monitor and take action on the issue. Fortnightly meetings will be held at the Katoomba Community Centre, 93 Waratah Street, from Tuesday 19 January 1999.

Environmentalists have slogged for years to get a decent outcome in the forests. It was hoped that a World Class reserve system, together with a sustainable timber industry, would be set up. We have been unable to achieve either.

Worse, logging has begun in areas which will become National Parks on the 1-January-1999. Two successful blockades have already been undertaken, stopping the dishonest logging of these reserves-in-waiting.

Currently 1023 flora and fauna species and 218 old growth ecosystems are vulnerable to extinction due to logging in the North East alone.

None of this was "necessary". In both the North East and Eden, plans were put forward which fully protected all species and forest types and resulted in no job losses in the medium and long term.

For more information: Contact Daniel on 4759.2417.

Membership Enquiries

Contact Ross Coster
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A Journey to Jabiluka (Pt.2)

'Morning action, morning action'. The cry rang through the camp. It was 4.15 am and time to struggle out of our tents to take part in an action at the gates of the mine. Half asleep, we travelled to the site to be there at the change of shift. About 100 of us gathered in the early morning silence. It was dark, we held candles and a huge banner simply saying, 'peace'. For an hour we stood in silence as the workers came in and out. Always we were watched and photographed by mine guards and police. Occasionally the workers made comments, mostly they were silent.

As the day dawned, three women, representing three generations, stepped forward and made statements about their objections to the mining there. They spoke of their support for the Mirrar people on whose land they stood. Holding their Mirrar passports they walked onto the land and were arrested.

We followed them into town and waited until they were bailed several hours later. As they emerged from the Jabiru Police Station a cheer went up.

These women had truly represented all of us and our objections to mining in the heart of Kakadu. *Sabine.*

Looking Back

(A letter from a member)

I was born on Mt Irvine (1909) — my father was the first timber miller there. His contract was to cut the heavy timber for the Scriviners, Knights-Brown and Morleys to clear for farming. So that was really pristine forest.

The original C.P. Scriviner owned the mountain and was cutting up share areas for his eldest son and two of the son's Hawkesbury Ag College educated friends to farm. And they had to clear their lands.

My family lived there till 1912, when

a house and small orchard at Bilpin became the home, with my father walking via the Bowens Creek track from work at weekends — and back late on Sundays or very early Monday mornings.

The children spent part of school holidays with the Scriviners. And the forest, the birds and wallabies were a delight. The Lyre Birds were numerous and they mimicked the scream of the circular saw and the drone of the cross-cut, the bullockies whip-cracking — and one bird even the ring of an axe.

In the nearest creek to the house at Bilpin there were two "territorians" (male lyre birds), of course a good distance apart. There were more in Bowens and Tootie Creeks and other smaller creeks about. *Besse Bramsen*

The Three Wise Men

The recent Christmas festivities gave me the idea to retell the story of three wise men. Not the biblical story, but one of three wise men who had the greatest influence on the direction of my life that led me into the Conservation movement. Through this story runs a common theme, the love of the Mountains and the Australian bush. This thread that connects these three men has become woven into the fabric of my life.

First wise man, a Mr Scott, primary school teacher at Ryde Public School, the time is the early years of World War 2. He gave to his boys a hero, a role model, but not one taken from the daily news of military heroism on land sea or air. No, he chose for us Bernard O'Reilly, a simple bushman made national hero by his exploit in finding the survivors of the Stinson crash, the first commercial air line disaster in Australia, in the 1930's. This man, with incredible bush craft and navigational skill, made his way alone and with only a hessian bag for protection through the wet jungles of the MacPherson Ranges to affect the rescue of the survivors.

I was lucky enough to meet this childhood hero of mine and talk with him, or at least listen to him talk, at Carlon's farm in Megalong when I was in my teens. Bernard was Norb Carlon's cousin.

Second wise man, Norbert Carlon of Green Gully, Megalong, now known as Packsaddlers. This old man during my many stays at his house taught me the true values in life, as much by the example of his simple way of life as by the words of his numerous stories. Norbert and his wife Alice had a simple home that sheltered lovely Skink lizards and Huntsmen spiders in the cracks of the walls, possums in the ceiling and Scrubwrens searching for crumbs on the floor. This simple homestead with large open fireplace often provided sanctuary for bushwalkers during weekends of inclement weather. It was probably the romantic idea of emulating these pioneering Carlon and O'Reilly families that brought Pat and me to Hartley Vale in 1959. Here we attempted a lifestyle of self-sufficiency without even knowing the word "hippies". Now 40 years later, here in our peaceful valley home, we too share our house with the Scrubwrens.

The third wise man is Jim Smith. With Jim as teacher, my knowledge of the Blue Mountains broadened immensely. He told me of its people and history. He led me on bushwalks to places I had never been. He showed me the wonders of the plants and wildlife of the Blue Mountains bushland. He showed how much there is still to learn, so many places to see, so many experiences still to be had! But most of all he introduced me to a great bunch of friends in the Conservation movement.

Perhaps we should all pause to reflect and give thanks for the people and events that brought us all into the great international family of Conservationists.

— Dave Lovegrove.

In the Bush

There are many dramatic walking areas on Bells Line of Road which provides access to the many ridges which run south to the Grose River. These ridges are fairly level and because of the frequent fires that have swept over them, are free of dense undergrowth. Their exposure to strong westerlies also helps in stunting and reducing vegetation.

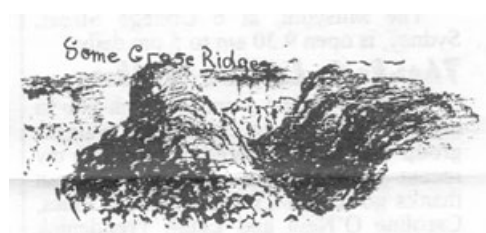
Despite this harsh treatment spring-time sees much of the area resplendent with wild flowers. How such colour and variety can emerge from the sandy impoverished soil is a mystery to me.

I did a rave about the wild flowers this time last year, to be seen along the Mt Banks access road. They are still there! Boronia, pink and fast fading, Flannel Flowers, white and abundant, Cone-spernum even more so, Isopogon, bright yellow and abundant, Mirbelia, magenta and in scattered clumps, Dampiera, blue and abundant, the Microsacme, white,

insignificant alone but most attractive in light sprinkles, Gompholobiums, yellow, the last of the pea flowers so prevalent in October, Pimelia and Epacris, white and scattered.

The eight aforementioned genus are quite likely to be seen within a twenty metre stroll along the ridges. Learn these eight and you have the most common at your command. Of course there are many more but once those eight are memorised the rest are easier tracked down. The same goes for the birds — currawongs, pied and grey, thrush, cockatoo, crimson rosella, king parrot, magpie, spinebill, New Holland honeyeater. Once you have these fixed in your mind anything new you spot will have the full focus of your attention. Identify it and so your core list gradually widens.

As I mentioned, these ridges are easily accessible, fairly level and easy to walk. They all terminate at cliff edges which look down on the Grose and across it to the massive colourful



walls of sandstone on the southern side of the river.

Walls Lookout, reached from Pierces Pass parking area, is an easy one for starters as it has a well worn footpath. Recently I did Wongarra Hill ridge which is the next to the east. It has a wilder lonelier feel but is not at all difficult.

So if you like wildflowers and bleak heathlands, open your Mount Wilson sheet and look for the white patches among the general green colouration, pursue them and become an addict.

— The Bunyip —



Glenbrook Gorge Rock Hop

A group of nine bushwalkers, both novice and experienced, convened on Saturday December 5, to walk through Glenbrook Gorge. Our leader, Jacqueline suggested that we start at the Lapstone end of the Gorge so that we could appreciate the Gorge at its most picturesque at Glenbrook.

We made our way along a weedy river trackside and observed yellow water gums and trigger plants galore. As we proceeded, the landscape changed, with the huge craggy cliffs honeycombed with caves, birds' nests and solitary trees, changing colour and texture from dark brown to terracotta and russet red.

Some of us had more developed rock-hopping skills and avoided a baptism in the rock pools and waterfalls, while others enjoyed getting their feet wet on what turned out to be a hot day!

Along the way we observed some beautiful examples of flora and fauna — Acacia elata, perfect fringe lilies, copper skinks, and colourful dragonflies.

Though I have been a member of the Society for three years, this was my first bushwalk. I particularly appreciated learning from the more experienced walkers and those with expert knowledge of flora and fauna. I am looking forward to future walks in 1999. *Kate McManus.*

Exhibition on Biodiversity

An exhibition at the Australian Museum, "Biodiversity: life supporting life" enables kids and adults to explore the environment in a totally novel way using the latest technology, specimens, art, habitat displays and theatre techniques.

Four areas have been set aside just for kids — the Rainforest Cubby House (hands-on activities), the Kids Kitchen (shows effects on the environment), the Bird Hide (in this case for people watching), and Which Wings Where (try and make the insects).

The Museum, at 6 College Street, Sydney, is open 9.30 am to 5 pm daily.

Thanks to Leisure Walkers

I wish to extend a sincere thank-you to my many friends in the leisure walkers group who kindly offered to help with my recent move to Hazelbrook. Special thanks go to Jan Cutler, Christina Jones, Caroline O'Neill and Leigh Treddenick who put themselves out to come and help pack, supplied cartons, offered meals, and replanted pot plants. Much appreciated moral support was provided by Corrie Brook and Millie Rogers. *Fay Arnold.*

A Visit to Wombeyan Caves

During a visit to Wombeyan Caves, Mr Mike Chalker, manager of the Wombeyan Karst Reserve, took members of our management committee and their families on a guided tour of the recently closed marble quarries.

We had a wonderful time and added greatly to our knowledge of this important restoration project and the management of the Karst reserve in general.

It is a beautiful area and well worth a

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
JANUARY						3 Bushcare
						17 Bushwalk
18 Bushcare 18 LeisWalk	19 KidsClub	20 Bushwalk			23 MCMeet 23 Bushwalk	
25 LeisWalk				29 GenMeet		31 Bushwalk
FEBRUARY						
1 LeisWalk					6 Bushwalk	7 Bushcare
8 Leis Walk					13 Bushwalk	
15 LeisWalk 15 Bushcare					20 MCMeet	21 Bushwalk
22 LeisWalk		24 Bushwalk		26 GenMeet		28 Bushwalk

JANUARY

- 23 (Sat) **Management Committee Meeting**, 9 am, Lawson Community Centre.
29 (Fri) **General Meeting at The Hut — Ms Joan Domicelj.** (see page 1)

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES (Parents are welcome to come along.)

JANUARY

- 19 (Tues) **A Visit to the Tip** — What happens to our rubbish? How does the weighbridge work? See a car being crushed! Meet 10 am Katoomba Tip entrance. Wear strong footwear. ☎ David Atmore 4784.1954.

BUSHCARE (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves. Contact Blue Mountains City Council to find out about other bushcare groups in your area.)

JANUARY

- 03 (Sun) **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group.** Meet 9 am at the Reserve. Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.
18 (Mon) **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group.** Meet 9 am Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. Contact Jessica 4757.2783. (following Monday if

wet)

FEBRUARY

- 07 (Sun) **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group.** (Details as above)
15 (Mon) **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group.** (Details as above)

BUSHWALKS (Usually day walks — bring lunch and **minimum 1 litre water**)
Walks have been graded: 1-3 easy; 4-7 medium; 8-10 hard. If coming by train or in need of transport, contact the leader. If you would like to lead a walk or organise an excursion, contact the Bushwalks Co-ordinator, Jim Wallace 4784.3305.

JANUARY

- 17 (Sun) **Grand Canyon.** Meet Blackheath Commuter Carpark, 9.30. Contact Meredith Brownhill 4782.4823. Grade M6.
20 (Wed) **Empire Pass.** Meet Lawson Bowling Club Carpark, 9.30. Contact Jim Warburton 4759.1312. Grade M5.
23 (Sat) **Terrace Falls.** Meet Hazelbrook Commuter Carpark, 9.30. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. Grade M5. (Creek crossings)
31 (Sun) **The Jungle.** Meet Blackheath Commuter Carpark, 9.30. Contact Jim Wallace 4784.3305. Grade M7. (Many steps, but a slow ascent in afternoon shade.)

FEBRUARY

- 06 (Sat) **Walls Cave.** Meet Blackheath Commuter Carpark, 9.30. Contact Ron Amos 02.9727.8931. Grade M5.
13 (Sat) **Den Fenella.**
21 (Sun) **Mount Wilson Mystery Walk.**
24 (Wed) **Beauchamp Falls.**
28 (Sun) **Leura Forest.**

LEISURE WALKS (Usually morning walks — bring a drink and morning tea.)

JANUARY

- 18 (Mon) **Leura Forest/Scenic Railway.** (walking down lots of steps). Meet 8.30. Fork & View Restaurant, Cliff Drive. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958.
25 (Mon) **Bus Trip to West Head** (Kuring-gai Chase NP). Limited seats. Contact Mervin Bird 4787.7959. Bring lunch and swimmers.

FEBRUARY

- 01 (Mon) **Birdwood Gully, Springwood.** Meet Springwood Station 8.30. Contact Pat Warner 4751.4413.
08 (Mon) **Bonnie Doon.** Meet at Gearins Hotel 8.30. Corrie Brook 4757.4574.
15 (Mon) **Cliff walk. Leura Cascades to Echo Point.**
22 (Mon) **Grand Canyon.**

visit. *Christine Davies.*

... As Time Goes By ...

A while ago I purchased, for a few dollars, an old pewter mug at an op-shop. After polishing, it came up like new. I bought it because of its timeless shape and the old-fashioned careful engravings, which include on one side 'To Mr Grant', and on the other 'From Emelia'. I wonder who these people are, what their relationship was like and whether they are still alive. When we are long gone we are

remembered by our relationships, love we gave (or otherwise) and the things we leave behind.

I relate this very much to our natural environment, the bush, water and clean air. Many generations have passed, but none before us have contributed so much to pollution and waste. I often talk to children who are very aware of this and, I think, they will look after things better than we did. It is only fair to leave the world as best we can, for them. A happy New Year to you all. *Helga.*