

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Environmental Legacy of Industry in the Lithgow Region

We all know that Australians produce more greenhouse gases, per capita, than just about anyone else on the planet, the main reason being that most of our electricity is generated in coal-fired power stations. But there is another compelling reason why our society needs to cure its addiction to coal and there's a good example right here on our doorstep.

The Lithgow region has a long and proud industrial history and has contributed much to the prosperity of both NSW and Australia - but at what cost to human health, water quality and the environment? More coal is being extracted from the region than ever before - so why, "in the middle of the greatest resources boom this country has ever seen" ('Boomtime,' 60 Minutes report, 16/07/06), do the people of Lithgow feel that their town is going backwards? And why is a series of cheap and nasty open-cut mines, that would never have been justifiable on economic, social, or environmental terms before, suddenly getting the nod?



Site of the proposed 'Invincible Open-cut Coal Mine': 10 hectares of forest within a State Conservation Area under the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal- or enough coal to run Mt Piper and Wallerawang power stations for just three weeks.

In 2005, a group of residents formed the Lithgow Environment Group, which became the Lithgow Regional Sub-committee of the BMCS earlier this year. You may be more familiar with the efforts this group has put into the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal, but their work encompasses a much broader range of issues. So who better to tell us all about them at our next monthly meeting than the group's Co-ordinator, **Chris Jonkers** - who lives right in the middle of the action at Blackman's Flat.

The meeting and talk will commence at 7.30 pm on Friday 25 August at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls.

Visitors most welcome.

PUBLIC FORUM

SAFE FORESTS, SAFE COMMUNITIES

Can we overturn new laws that allow hunting in state forests?

Last month, we ran a couple of stories deploring the NSW Government's recent decision to allow recreational shooters to hunt feral animals in many of the State's public forests. Although euphemistically called 'conservation hunting', this is no more than the promotion of recreational game hunting. There are no guarantees that it will be either safe or humane - and even less likelihood that such an ad-hoc approach would reduce the number of feral animals.

What is certain is that all the people who currently visit forests such as Newnes - for bushwalking, camping, fishing, bird-watching, canoeing, school trips and field studies, etc. - will be effectively locked out.

Members of hunting parties have been known to accidentally shoot themselves or each other - now they want us to trust them not to shoot people they may not even know are there.

The Conservation Society, along with many other community, environment and animal welfare groups, opposes the legislation, but it will need a concerted state-wide campaign to overturn the new laws.

Greens MLCs Lee Rhiannon and Ian Cohen have organised a public forum to be held in NSW Parliament with the aim of highlighting the level of public concern over safety, animal welfare and the environment.

Let's reclaim the forests for the safe enjoyment of the community!

The details of the public forum are:

What: Safe forests, safe communities - Can we overturn new laws that allow hunting in state forests?

When: Monday 14 August, 2006 10:00am - 1:00pm

Where: Jubilee Room, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney

All welcome. No cost.

If you can't make it to the forum, you can write to the Premier, asking him to overturn the new laws.

The Hon. Morris Iemma
Level 40, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney NSW 2000

HUT NEWS

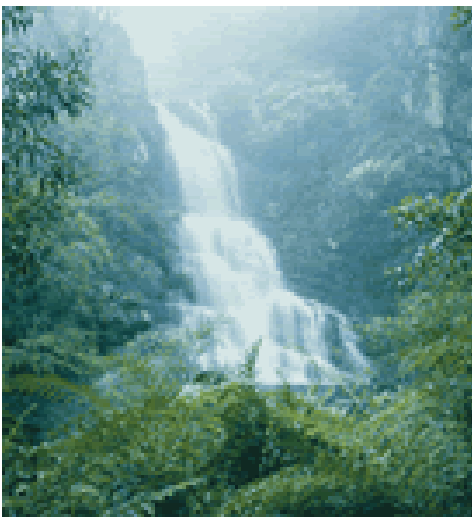
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Celebrating Wilderness

THE FIFTH NATIONAL WILDERNESS CONFERENCE

8-10 September 2006

Main Campus, University of Technology,
Sydney



Letter of the Month—August 2006

Energy Superpower or Fossil Fuel Super Polluter?

In his recent address to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, the Prime Minister said he wants Australia to become an energy superpower. "Australia has a massive opportunity to increase its share of global energy trade" he said (Sydney Morning Herald, 18/7/06). He said renewable energy sources would play a limited role in Australia's energy mix because they are more expensive.

However, "The Howard vision of Australia as a storehouse of clean energy for the world depends on technical fixes" (Editorial, SMH, 18/7/06). He failed to point out that clean coal technology is still in the experimental stage and would sharply increase the cost of electricity if implemented. Nuclear is one of the world's most heavily subsidised forms of power, even without the cost of dismantling reactors at the end of their lives. It will require improved safety standards and acceptable safe solutions for the storage of radioactive waste. Neither are likely to be available for another decade.

Energy expert and economist Dr Hermann Scheer, who came to Australia in March to meet with Federal and State MPs, scientists and academics, was dismayed that Australia is doing so little to promote renewable energy. "In no country in the world would it be easier to replace conventional energy with free, sustainable energy like wind and solar. Australia has all the preconditions for renewable energy – a large land mass, a small well-educated population and quality technology." (SMH, 11/3/06).

Send a short message to the Prime Minister making some or all of the following points:

- How can Australia ethically increase its export of coal and the resulting increase in carbon emissions world-wide when clean coal technology is still in the experimental stage? Even if successfully developed, there is no compulsion for any country to use it.
- Renewable energy is not more expensive if the real costs of clean coal and safe nuclear are factored in.
- South Australian and Victorian governments recently adopted renewable energy targets of 10% in the next 10 years. The Federal Government should raise the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target immediately for all states, to bring Australia in line with British and German targets.

It is important that the Federal Opposition also understand our concerns about global warming so you might like to send them a copy of your message too.

Contact Details: Post to Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600, or email:

The Hon John Howard: <http://www.pm.gov.au/email.cfm>

The Hon Kim Beazley: Kim.Beazley.MP@aph.gov.au

For information on how you can reduce your personal contribution to greenhouse emissions, visit the ACF Greenhome Guide at www.acfonline.org.au/greenhome (or take a look at the newly-released BMCs publication 'Sustainability: Concepts and Action' at <http://members.optusnet.com.au/~bmsustain>. Ed.)

Rosemary Lathouris and Robin Mosman

This issue of Hut News contains a brochure for Celebrating Wilderness, the Fifth National Wilderness Conference.

Subtitled 'Wilderness and an environmentally sustainable future', the conference aims to ensure that wilderness makes an even bigger contribution to human well-being and environmental conservation as we try to create a more environmentally aware and sustainable society.

Speakers include Helen Gee, Bob Brown; John Sinclair, Keith Muir, Alec Marr, Virginia Young, Haydn Washington Peter Prineas. Over three days the speakers and the closely integrated workshops will discuss progress in wilderness conservation, the many values of wilderness, how to best present these values, and how the wilderness estate can be extended as part of a truly national system.

This is an important conference and at only \$90.00 for three days you can't complain about the price!

To help promote the Conference, renowned photographer Henry Gold, has compiled a Photographic Gallery (see www.colongwilderness.org.au/CelebratingWilderness/Photo_Gallery.htm). Now you can buy one of Henry's stunning colour photographs or classic black and white images, tastefully framed and ready to hang, and the proceeds will help preserve our Wild Places.

Visit our website at: www.bluemountains.org.au

Can you help us?

Yes, we are still looking for an Administration Officer and a Meetings Secretary. If you find your way around an office (computer, printer, photocopier) and can spare a bit of time each month, we need your help. You don't have to be on the Management Committee if you don't want to (although it can be very interesting) and the Admin position could be shared by a couple of people.

If you can help with either of these positions, please ring

Heather (4739 1493) or Brian (4784 1148, after 28 August) to discuss possibilities.

Administration Officer (30 hours per month)

- Receive and distribute incoming mail from post and email
- Prepare monthly schedules of correspondence
- Manage office, including files, archives, stationery supplies, computer and other office equipment

Meetings Secretary (15 hours per month)

- Prepare meeting agendas and minutes.

JOHN HOWARD'S BLINKERED VISION: DOLLARS AND DISASTER!

COMMENT by Brian Marshall, BMCS President

The Society is apolitical and has an eclectic membership with a common mission of conserving the environment of the Blue Mountains. We focus on local environmental issues such as domestic development applications, destruction of habitat through over-clearing, extraction of groundwater and harvesting run-off, surface water flows, coal mining in the western Blue Mountains, sand extraction on Newnes Plateau, opening Blue Mountains State Forests to 'conservation' hunting of feral species, and protecting the values of the World Heritage Area.

But a range of much broader issues impacts on our local mission.

Do you consider that the increasing petrol price reflects trouble in the Middle East, or are these factors a perturbation of a trend reflecting the 'Peak Oil' outcome?

Did you shudder at items in the Sydney Morning Herald (14/07/06, 17/07/06) about oil companies being ready to seek oil in Antarctica when the price rises a little higher? If you did, you will be even more concerned to know that geological research over several decades in Antarctica has held exploration implications (for coal, oil and minerals), regardless of the integrity of the researchers. Countries such as China and South Korea are currently building research stations to maximise their presence once the free-for-all starts.

Do you still feel relaxed and comfortable? Another article (SMH, 15/07/06) said India is increasing its nuclear weapons capacity to match the existing Chinese capability, but China is concurrently planning to greatly expand its capacity. Japan is contemplating nuclear capability to counteract North Korea and China, and the USA is increasing its capability so as to maintain an advantage over China and Russia. Iran's nuclear capability is causing concern, not least for Israel, whilst Pakistan's nuclear weapons threaten India and vice versa.

Do you acknowledge the reality of climate change? Hardly a day goes by without an article in the SMH registering concerns about coal-sourced energy and greenhouse gases, the implications of nuclear power and weapons, and the role of renewable energy resources.

All these issues bear on the Society's mission. Local issues fall to Council or State Government; wider issues are the domain of the Federal Government and international action (e.g. global warming, whaling and over-populating the planet). Management Committee confronts the State and Federal governments in power, so some members see us as anti-Labor, while others think we are anti-Liberal. Still others query why we don't give unqualified support to The Greens. The answer is relatively simple: governments make decisions; oppositions offer 'commitments'. In consequence, Management Committee is inevitably 'agin the government', whatever its persuasion.

The above sets the scene for views that are personal and undoubtedly political. But when the Prime Minister advocates an open nuclear debate and then uses a one-eyed contribution (SMH, 18/07/06) to endorse reliance on coal and nuclear power, the issue becomes intensely politicised. So be it!

John Howard wants Australians to embrace 'pragmatic environmentalism' (perhaps an oxymoron?), through using and exporting coal, natural gas and uranium to meet the goals of "prosperity, security and sustainability". Sounds good, doesn't

it? Drag in the dollars, pull up the drawbridge (though Chinese and North Korean missiles can reach Australia), and persist until finite resources are 'sustainably' exhausted! The impact of fossil fuels on climate change, the unresolved issues of uranium export, nuclear power and nuclear weapons, the worldwide inundation of low-lying coastal regions, and the drowning of the Maldives Islands and some Pacific Island nations are collateral damage.

He says the Kyoto agreement is ineffective, conveniently disregarding it being a starting point not a panacea, and the roles of USA and Australia in undermining it. He invokes Kyoto's economic distortions that opposed Australia's short-term economic self-interest, this apparently being the benchmark for any Australian contribution to combating climate change. His selective statistics on global emissions (*op. cit.*) are used to suggest that slowing the rate of increase is of no consequence.

Instead of Kyoto, he offers the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate. This is a group of major polluting countries joining forces to combat climate change but preserve their economic self-interest. I say this because self-regulating big business, 'technical innovations' and nuclear power are invoked to achieve un-mandated indeterminate reductions, some time in the future.

Renewable energy sources can deliver low-emission electricity, but the processes are largely dismissed as being more expensive than fossil fuels. Yet clean coal technologies will inevitably increase electricity costs, and so will nuclear power unless it is heavily subsidised.

The PM will export uranium for nuclear power to countries offering 'appropriate safeguards', but notes that commercial factors are critical to the future of nuclear power (*op. cit.*). He says it emits virtually no greenhouse gases, but this sidesteps emission costs associated with mining, upgrading and transporting uranium, and constructing nuclear plants. Furthermore, it ignores the unresolved practical and moral problems associated with the safe and economic disposal of nuclear waste, and embraces the insane notion that the nuclear power and nuclear weapons industries are totally dissociated.

In concluding his speech on energy and water, the PM stated (*op. cit.*): Australia should either "...fully consider its interest and responsibilities in the global nuclear energy debate or...succumb to a dogma of denial." It is not denial to assemble the technical data and costs, evaluate risks, and examine the moral dimension. Denial is when the potential export earnings of coal, gas and uranium make one blind to all other considerations.

Through pursuing the gods of expedience and economic rationalism, John Howard may have irreparably damaged the public school system, tertiary education, the public health system, industrial relations, aboriginal reconciliation, and any belief in political integrity. He now brings these dubious values to the environment. He pays lip service to the nexus between greenhouse gases and climate change, the need to curtail greenhouse emissions, and the need for an appropriate energy mix. But these are sidelined by his blinkered and intensely selfish vision of Australia as an 'energy superpower' punctuated by the dollar.

Legal Battles for RAID Inc

Virginia King, BRIAD

RAID Inc, through its sub-committee BRAID, has been engaged in two life-and-death legal struggles over the past few months.

As you have read in Hut News, Council has joined RAID in a Supreme Court Appeal to uphold the intention of Clause 10.8(e) of LEP 1991 that land zoned Residential Bushland Conservation should be connected to the sewer before it can be subdivided and developed. The Appeal is set down for October 17. But meanwhile, RAID's opponents have initiated two actions which could have resulted in the end of RAID and possibly the end of the Appeal.

The first action was a Security for Costs Motion which if successful would have required RAID to put up \$80,000 security or the Appeal be dismissed. However, after requiring RAID to produce copies of all financial records for the past two years (a mountain of photocopying), RAID's opponents withdrew the Motion and the Court awarded RAID 50% of its costs.

The second action purported to be a Statutory Demand. It required RAID to pay \$15,000 within 21 days or wind-up proceedings would be initiated against it under the Corporations Act. To resolve

this action, RAID had to brief a barrister and take out a counter action in the Supreme Court, where the Judge threw out the matter and awarded RAID indemnity costs (all costs).

Alongside these legal battles, RAID continues to raise funds, through BRAID, since Council voted not to share legal costs for the Appeal. The recent Oliver Twist movie night at Mt Vic Flicks was a sell-out and a great community event. (BRAID thanks everyone who contributed to the success of this event.)

"Bigger than Blackheath" Bric-a-Brac Sale

Saturday, September 9, 8am - 2pm

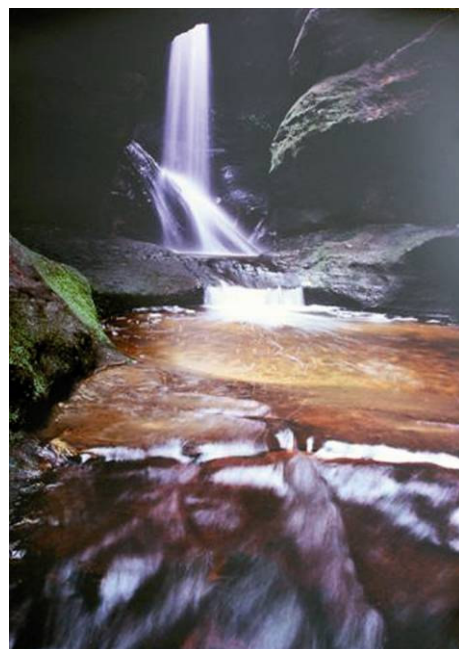
BRAID is holding a giant bric-a-brac sale with goods donated by the whole Blackheath community. The sale will be held in the Blackheath RSL Hall (turn left at the lights over the railway line). If you can donate a box of goods (books, kitchenware, etc) please phone John to arrange a pickup: 4787 5753.

BRAID Raffle

BRAID has launched a raffle with wonderful prizes donated locally, including a limited edition framed photograph, *The Grotto at Porter's Pass*, by John Martin (1943-2004) valued at \$600. Other prizes include a handmade

patchwork double bed quilt (value \$1000) and three individually designed and screen-printed cushions from Cloth (value \$380).

Tickets are \$2 and are available at both Jed's Place and The Bogbean in Blackheath, or by mail (minimum of 5 tickets to offset postage costs) to PO Box 354 Blackheath 2785.



The Grotto at Porter's Pass,
by John Martin

Is this our last chance to banish Biobanking?

By now most of us are used to hearing the oft-repeated mantra that 'the market' can be used to solve all our problems. But whilst a carbon emissions trading scheme could help the world combat global warming (after all, a molecule of CO₂ in Sydney is exactly the same as one in Berlin, and next week they could both be in Los Angeles), how on earth can the same concept be applied to biodiversity?

However that is what "biobanking", a biodiversity offsets and banking scheme, seeks to do. The scheme would allow developments on pristine land to be offset by the rehabilitation of degraded land, or the preservation of pristine land, in another area.

Following the release of the proposal for public input, the Society sent a submission to the Department of Environment and Conservation, explaining why conservation groups were opposed to the scheme (Hut News, February 2006). Since then, the proposal has become a bill which is due for consideration when parliament resumes at the end of August, but serious concerns remain.

The Environment Liaison Office (representing the Australian Conservation Foundation, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, Greenpeace, National Parks Association of NSW, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Wilderness Society and the Total Environment Centre) has now written to the NSW Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus, requesting a meeting to discuss our concerns.

Some of the issues raised in the letter are:

- biobanking does not stop the destruction of irreplaceable high conservation value areas
- crucial details, including the definition of 'maintaining or improving' biodiversity, are left to the assessment methodology, which is as yet untested (and there is no firm commitment to fund monitoring, auditing and enforcement)

- no statutory protection in the Bill for "like for like" trading and other established offset principles
- offset sites are not permanently protected - they can be offset themselves or affected by developments of 'special significance'
- There appears to be no requirement that biodiversity improvements are delivered on the offset site before a development commences
- existing threatened species impact assessment, and associated public participation procedures, can be bypassed, thereby diminishing the quality of information on which development decisions are based
- increased decision-making powers are given to Ministers, which could lead to further developer influence on planning decisions at the expense of the Local Councils and the community
- protection appears to be weaker than that afforded by the Native Vegetation Act - if farmers tried to obtain similar concessions, implementation of the Government's land-clearing policies could be thrown into disarray

We are encouraging all our members who are concerned about preserving biodiversity and threatened species to also write to Minister Debus. It could be our last chance to stop (or at least mitigate the effects of) this legislation.

The Hon. R.J. Debus
Level 36, Governor Macquarie Tower,
1 Farrer Place,
Sydney NSW 2000

More information on the bill, the full name of which is the *Threatened Species Conservation Amendment (Biodiversity Banking) Bill 2006*, can be found on the DEC website at www.dec.nsw.gov.au/threatspec/biobankbill.htm.

What's On

Plant Propagation Seminar

Sunday 6 August, 9.30am-4.00pm, Blaxland Neighbourhood Centre

If you're quick, you might just get into this seminar, organised by the Blue Mountains Group of the Australian Plants Society, where experts will share their knowledge of recent developments in propagation. Admission \$15 (Students \$12), includes lunch, teas and printed matter.

Although they wanted bookings by 3rd August, they may accept later bookings if there's still room. Call Jane Toxward 4739 1905, Teresa Bernacki 4739 5906 or email jane.toxward@ozemail.com.au.

Blue Mountains Stream Bank Workshop

Friday 1 September, Bushfire Control Centre and various field sites

Organised by the Blue Mountains City Council, this free workshop is aimed at Council staff, professional contractors and the community. Presenters Brad Davies and Paul Bennet (CMA) and Lyndal Sullivan (A&S Bushcare) will discuss the range of stream types that occur in the Blue Mountains and the impacts associated with urban development. The workshop will look at various options for dealing with erosion and sedimentation of our local streams.

Bookings essential, email csinclair@bmcc.nsw.gov.au before 29/8/06.

Spring Biodiversity Workshop

Saturday 16 September, Wilson's Glen, Woodford

Organised by the Blue Mountains City Council, primarily for Bushcare volunteers, this workshop aims to introduce the skills of flora and fauna observation and biodiversity monitoring. Earlier Biodiversity Workshops in Springwood's Deanei Forest, the Megalong Valley and Mt Wilson were very popular.

Bookings essential, contact Chris 4780 5528, cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

Nursery News Kevin Bell

All our plants have survived the winter months nicely and are ready to find a home in a Blue Mountains garden this Spring. The Blackheath Nursery will re-open on the morning of Tuesday 1st August and we look forward to meeting our regular and new customers. As usual, the Lawson Nursery will be open on Wednesday mornings.

All our plants are sold as tube-stock for just \$2.50 each with a 20% discount for orders over 50 plants. We can also undertake contract work to supply quantities of plants in the thousands for specific areas, again with generous discounts. For further information, contact Kevin Bell (phone/fax 4787 6436 or khbell@pnc.com.au).

Over the coming months we will be looking at members of the pea family, the Fabaceae, the third largest family in the plant kingdom after the orchids and daisies. This family is characterised by the familiar pea-flowers with 5 petals and 10 stamens, structurally consisting of an erect petal (the standard) surmounting two lateral petals (the wings) which partly cover two lower petals (the keel).

The family contains numerous useful food plants such as peas, beans, lentils, soybeans, and peanuts. In the roots of some are found useful dyes (eg. Indigo), insecticides (eg. Derris), and who could live without liquorice, found in *Glycyrrhiza*?

Many of these leguminous plants develop root nodules in association with *Rhizobium* bacteria which convert atmospheric nitrogen into soluble nitrogen fertilizers and this ability to fix

nitrogen makes them useful in establishing bare areas. The familiar practice of ploughing clover and lucerne back into the soil also makes use of this property.

For our first genus of pea-plants we have chosen *Indigofera*. Although there are about 700 species world-wide, only 30 occur in Australia and only one in our local area. This is *Indigofera australis* or Native Indigo, large stands of which occur on Mt. Wilson and the flush of purple it produces in Spring make the hike up there worthwhile.

Indigofera australis is a slender shrub, usually about 1-2m tall, with 7-8cm leaves consisting of numerous leaflets. It would make a lovely feature in any garden and looks particularly attractive amongst other red or yellow pea plants (which will be featured in forthcoming issues). Native Indigo grows well in all areas of the Mountains and we have good stocks at both our nurseries.



Native Indigo, *Indigofera australis*
(Photo: Aust. National Botanic Gardens)

Winter Haiku from Woodford

Diana Levy

In the middle of winter last year I led a haiku walk at Murphy's Glen in Woodford. It was brisk but lit up by sunshine wattle of every hue, which was blowing around in the wind. The glen is a diatrema – a long time ago a volcano brewed up, cast hot stuff all around, then the core of it subsided and left a depression with rich soil that is perfect for Blue Gums (*Eucalyptus deanei*) to grow in .

Creaking young deanei.

Spinning, drifting winter leaves,

A whistler's song.

Bernadette

And also frogs, massive fallen rocks, the nest of a yellow-throated scrub wren or maybe a gerygone hanging like a twig teardrop from the end of a branch ... five of us sat quietly on the path in the sun and wrote haiku.

Warmth of the sun

Soaking through my winter coat

Brings a peaceful daze

Heather

Around us on the side of a ridge were Xanthorrhoea media plants. They're also called black boy, grass tree, and they were very useful to Aboriginal people.

Grass people

camped around us

sharing morning tea

Diana

Down at Bedford Creek we scraped white containers along the side of the bank, to see what was living in the water. Spicks and specks, dots and twigs became believable creatures under a magnifying glass.

There are so many moods to water - flowing syllabically through boulders near our lunch place, a tan-tinted pool paved in different coloured stones, or:

White as it hits -

fall of water

onto wet black rock

Diana

What else to include? A lyrebird's song... and on the way back up that side creek we watched a male golden whistler fly over a rock. He was followed by the female or some other LBB's (little brown birds), but they flew through a hole in the rock. Muriel said, "That tells you that they are not migrants, they are locals."

BMCS Bushcare

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare group works in the Blue Mountains National Park at Wentworth Falls on the 2nd Saturday of each month.

Tools are provided but bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water. New members are always welcome. Contact Karen on 4757 1929 for more information.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. **Cost of insurance and affiliation fees is \$15 per member.** For further information, contact the coordinator (listed) or Walks Convenor, David Bowskill (4757 3416, davidbow@tpg.com.au)

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS

Usually 'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of average fitness. Graded **MEDIUM**, these walks may include some short rock scrambles or sections off track. Bring morning tea and lunch. Carry at least 1 litre of **WATER**, 2 litres on warm days.

Aug-14	The Victory Track, Faulconbridge <i>Mountain creek and tall forests.</i>	Mary	4787 6584	Faulconbridge Station carpark	9.00am
Aug-21	Rose Bay to Watson's Bay <i>Sydney Harbour NP, walk around harbour foreshore. Lunch at Doyle's, Watsons Bay.</i>	Mary	4787 6918	Top of escalators at Central Station	9.30am
Aug-28	Birdwood Gully, Springwood <i>Angophora forests and creek.</i>	Kees	4759 1958	Springwood Station carpark	9.00am
Sep-4	Glen Rosa Track to Coluseum <i>Medlow Bath, walk through open forest.</i>	Phil	4787 5560	Outside Hydro Majestic, Medlow Bath	9.30am
Sep-11	Gooch's Crater, Wollangambe <i>Absolutely spectacular! Full day.</i>	David	4757 3416	Mt Victoria Station Ring leader if transport required.	8.30am
Sep-18	Euroka, Glenbrook <i>Walk to Nepean River, BBQ lunch among local wildlife.</i>	Heather	4739 1493	Glenbrook Station carpark	9.00am

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS

EASY to **MEDIUM** grade walks conducted to suit walkers on the day. Slower walkers are catered for; on longer walks there may be an option for a slower group to complete only a section of the walk. Carry at least 1 litre of **WATER**, 2 litres on warm days.

Aug-17	Minihaha Falls, Katoomba <i>Level walk to falls to see vegetation regenerating after the 2002 bushfires.</i>	Joan	4782 2218	Gearins Hotel, Katoomba	10.00am
Aug-24	Sublime Pt: hanging swamps, rare plants* <i>Visit a Bushcare site, brought back from an eroded and damaged state, with David Coleby. LIMIT OF 10 ONLY</i>	Simone	4757 3416	Cnr Leura Mall & Megalong St	10.00am
Aug-31	Sun Valley near Valley Heights <i>Easy walk along firetrail in old volcanic crater with tall forest.</i>	Joan	4782 2218	Valley Heights Station carpark	10.00am
Sep-7	In Darwin's footsteps, with John Low* <i>Learn about our local history, the Weatherboard Inn, Darwin's Oak and the Walk, with BMCC Historian, John Low.</i>	Simone	4757 3416	Wentworth Falls carpark (near clock)	10.00am
Sep-14	Mt Piddington to Pulpit Rock, Mt Vic <i>Mt Piddington to Witches Glen on bush tracks, views from Pulpit Rock.</i>	Phil	4787 5560	Mt Victoria Station	10.00am
Oct-26	Advance notice of bus trip to Mt Annan Botanic Gardens Contact Simone on 4757 3416.				

* **These walks are part of the new THURSDAY INFORMATIVE WALKS SERIES.**

For practical reasons, numbers may be limited on some walks and registration will be necessary.

See our website for a full program or contact Simone Bowskill on 4757 3416 for one to be mailed to you.

WEEKEND WALKS

These walks are all graded **MEDIUM**: + indicates they include some hard climbing; (+) indicates the hard climbing is optional. Before attending, please discuss the walk with the leader or the **Weekend Walks organiser, Jim Percy (4758 6009)**, especially if this is your first walk, or you are unsure of the classification. Carry at least 1 litre of **WATER**, 2 litres on warm days.

Aug-12	Pulpit Rock EASY	Bill	4758 8545	Blackheath Station carpark	9.45am
Aug-19	Terrace Falls & Adams Lookout MEDIUM <i>A popular walking area since the first track was established in the 1890's. Distance approx. 6km.</i>	Bob	4757 2694	Hazelbrook Station carpark	9.00am
Aug-26	Tunnel Gully & Lapstone Zig-Zag MEDIUM <i>Historic rail cuttings of the original single-track railway. Approx. 7km, lots of steps to Elizabeth & Marges Lookouts.</i>	Karen	4751 9695	Glenbrook Station	9.30am
Sep-2	Glen Davis to Newnes MEDIUM <i>Walk the Pipeline Track from Glen Davis to Newnes Junction - a bit our industrial history. Bus fare (to Glen Davis & from Newnes) approx. \$12, please pay when booking. Seats may be available for non-walkers, enquire after Aug-26.</i>	Meredith	4782 4823	Katoomba Council Depot	8.00am
Sep-9	Dantes Glen & Empire Pass MEDIUM <i>Dantes Glen track opened in 1879. Approx. 5km, some rough track with creek crossings.</i>	Bill	4758 8545	Lawson Station carpark	9.00am
Sep-16	Faulconbridge to Linden MEDIUM/HARD <i>Following the route of Joyce's Sawmill Tramway, explore the remains of a steam-driven sawmill. Total distance 8km: 3km on firetrail, 1km on rough track, 4km off track through thick scrub, gaiters and gloves highly recommended.</i>	Jim	4758 6009	Faulconbridge Stn carpark (N side)	8:30 am

HABITATS OF BLACKHEATH

Simone Bowskill

A perfect Winter day provided the setting for the first walk in the Thursday Informative walks series, led by botanist Ian Olsen, on 13 July.

Twenty-seven enthusiastic members met at Govett's Leap to hear a brief description of the geology of the Sydney Basin and the Blue Mountains. Ian described how the present landforms of canyons, valleys and gorges are the result of continuing erosion. This has formed a variety of soil types, which in turn affect the vegetation.

Ian described the characteristics of the cliff top eucalypts and their associated understorey before we descended to the top of Bridal Veil Falls - aptly named as we were bathed with spray from time to time.

The morning tea spot had the most spectacular views of the cliff faces and the rainforest in the sheltered gullies below. We then set off up the Braeside Track, passing hanging swamps and discussing the different vegetation found in these environments. Further upstream we reached areas with *Eucalyptus oreades* and the occasional *E. moorei*. At ground level, Ian pointed out some specimens of snow daisy, probably at their northern limit.

This was an encouraging start to the Informative Walks Series and demonstrated the desire for this type of activity.

The full program of walks in this series can be found on our website at www.bluemountains.org.au.

Welcome to new members

Kerrie Lander, Quakers Hill
Barbara Carfrae, Leura
Dennis Isaacs, Wentworth Falls
Lotti Heinz, Wentworth Falls
Gillian Green, Wentworth Falls
Sharryn Ryan, Wentworth Falls
Margaret Fryer, Katoomba
Wade Smith, Kingswood
Victoria Shenow, Leura

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Until we have a new Membership Secretary, please send enquires to:
bmc@bluemountains.org.au or
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

This issue of *Hut News* has been