

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



A FIERY DEBATE—PUTTING ANGER ON THE BACKBURNER

"Snow and sleet are falling on two bushfires burning in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney."

ABC Radio news, 15 November 2006.

Spoken without a trace of irony, the words of the newsreader encapsulate the extraordinary, and sometimes perversely unpredictable, nature of life in this landscape forged by fire. The Grose Valley holds a special place in the hearts of Australia's conservationists, being the site of the first great victory for the movement in Australia in 1931-32—but it would not be as we know and love it if it were not occasionally shrouded in smoke rather than mist.

However, coming after a long period of drought and amidst dire warnings that Australia is facing an even hotter and drier future, the most recent fire in the Grose Valley has reignited an increasingly heated debate over fire management practices, both within the local community and further afield. (As a result of these concerns, the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute hosted a forum on the Grose Valley fire in February, the outcomes of which are discussed on page 3.)

So with bushfires predicted to increase in both frequency and intensity, how do we protect people and property whilst preserving the biological integrity of the World Heritage Area? How well do we understand the ecological responses to fire? Are we managing fire risk in the most appropriate way for both the community and the environment?

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society has organised a meeting to examine these issues—come and hear five experts in fire management and ecology give their views, with the opportunity for questions and discussion afterwards.

Options for the Risk Management of Bushfires in the Blue Mountains



Bushfire in the Grose Valley, November 2006.
(N. Holland, Parks & Wildlife Division, Dept. Environment & Conservation)

TIME & DATE: 7.30pm, Friday 25 May

VENUE: Conservation Hut,
western end of Fletcher St, Wentworth Falls

SPEAKERS:

Professor Ross Bradstock,

Director, Centre for Environmental Risk Management of Bushfires, University of Wollongong

Geoff Luscombe,

Blue Mountains Regional Manager, Parks and Wildlife Division, Dept. Environment and Conservation

Mal Cronstedt,

Blue Mountains District Manager, Rural Fire Service

Nic Gellie,

Fire Ecologist and former Fire Manager

Judy Smith,

Consultant Ecologist

FREE ENTRY, ALL WELCOME

Autumn in the Mountains

I love autumn! The summer heat has gone, honeyeaters are migrating, lyrebirds are starting to call, we find tiny orchids beside the track and this year after the summer rains there is a profusion of multi-coloured and variably shaped fungi.

On a balmy autumn day in early April we walked along the Prince Henry Clifftop Walk from Gordon Falls to Leura Cascades. This part of the historic walking track, although going to rack and ruin through lack of simple maintenance such as drainage, is still a delightful walk. The original track builders planned the walk with loving care to meander between lookouts and shady overhangs, beside lichen-covered cliffs, and through a variety of vegetation types. Along the way there are seats (some still functional) for walkers to rest and enjoy the panoramic views or the coolness of sheltered areas.

We stopped for a long time at Tarpeian Rock to watch frequent groups of honeyeaters stream up out of the Kedumba

Valley to continue their northward journey. These Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters migrate north through the Blue Mountains every autumn, flying at treetop level, calling "chip chip" as they go. In a single day there might be tens of thousands crossing the Blue Mountains. They return south to their breeding areas in the spring.

On this day, also coming out of the valley at the same place, were flocks of Noisy Friarbirds, nomadic birds who follow the food sources. And below in the valley a huge flock of Yellow-crested White Cockatoos would take off in flight and circle before disappearing from sight beneath the cliff-line again. At Leura Cascades a White-browed Scrub Wren, oblivious to his audience, danced daintily on the shiny water-filmed rock, catching insects.

There is room for one or two more people on our Thursday interpretive bushwalks. Contact me on 4787 7246 or email davica@bigpond.net.au if you would like to find out more.

Christine Davies

HUT NEWS

"Hut News" is the newsletter of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
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Bowerbirds and Blue Plastic Rings

Yesterday I visited a Bowerbird's bower near the caravan park at Blackheath. It was decorated with all sorts of blue plastic objects, including four rings from the tops of dairy containers. These plastic rings are a danger to bowerbirds. They are the exact shade of blue which the birds collect. As the bird decorates and rearranges its display the ring can flip over the bird's head and stay stuck in the beak, like a halter. The bird eventually dies of starvation.

I remember a few years ago there was some discussion with the dairy companies and an agreement to make the rings so they would break. For some reason they were

reluctant to change the colour of the tops. The rings I found yesterday did not break.

If you use containers with loose blue plastic rings which do not break or find blue plastic rings lying around please cut them before you dispose of them. Better still, why not cut the ring and post it to the dairy company and tell them you're not going to buy their product until they change their packaging so that it is not a danger to wildlife.

Christine Davies

Letter of the Month—May 2007

AFTER EARTHHOUR – WHAT THE POLITICIANS ARE SAYING

More than half of Sydney's residents – an estimated 2.2 million people – switched off their lights for Earthhour on Saturday night 31st March. They were joined by residents of other towns and cities across NSW and even Hobart! News of this initiative has spread around the world, inspiring plans for the awareness-raising event to go global.

It was a huge demonstration by Australian citizens of their concern about global warming and their willingness to make changes in their lifestyles to combat it.

So what has been the response of Australia's political leaders?

- "The Prime Minister, John Howard, travelled to a uranium mine to pretend to be offering a solution to global warming. How does the NSW government plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in NSW to 2000 levels by 2025 if coal mining is allowed to expand?"
- The Opposition Leader, Kevin Rudd, travelled to a coal mine to pretend he had a better solution.
- The Treasurer, Peter Costello, took to the stage at the National Press Club to pretend he couldn't even begin to estimate the size of the problem to which the others were pretending to offer solutions" (*Sydney Morning Herald* 3/4/07).
- Malcolm Turnbull, Environment Minister, said that the Howard Government would not set aggressive targets to cut Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, despite calls for immediate action from business chiefs, leading scientists and environmental groups at Labor's weekend Climate Summit, claiming they would devastate the Australian economy (*SMH* 2/4/07).

Send a short message to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, asking:

- When will your party stop hiding behind the smoke screen of "clean" coal or nuclear, and start supporting the renewable energy industry? A Federal Government report published 15 years ago found we could get 30% of our electricity from renewables by 2020, at no more than 10% extra cost (*SMH* 3/2/07).
- Will your party legislate a target for renewable energy of 25% by 2020?
- Will your party release an energy plan to show how Australia can achieve the CSIRO's recommended emissions reduction target of 60% by 2050?
- Will your party call a moratorium on new or expanded coal-fired power stations and coal mines until "clean" coal technology has proved to be commercially viable?
- When will your party give corporate Australia the certainty of a clear carbon policy?

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

The Hon John Howard: <http://www.pm.gov.au/contact/index.cfm>
(This is the only way you can send an email to the Prime Minister.)

Kevin Rudd: Kevin.Rudd.MP@aph.gov.au

Rosemary Lathouris and Robin Mosman

BMCC Biodiversity Workshops

Sunday 13 May—Sun Valley

- ◆ The Sun Valley Cabbage Gum Endangered Ecological Community
- ◆ The fauna of Sun Valley
- ◆ Introduction to Bird Watching

Saturday 9 June—South Lawson

- ◆ Learn about the interesting ecology of the the Lawson area, the day will focus on swamps, plants and fauna.

Bookings are essential as workshop participant numbers are limited. To book email cdewhurst@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or phone 4780 5528 (leaving a message will be ok).

The Grose Valley Fire Forum

Forum produces detailed action plan BMWHI Media Release, 18th April, 2007

In late February 2007, the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute organised a forum of representative community members and fire authorities to address issues relating to a fire in the Grose Valley in the Blue Mountains in November 2006. The then Minister for the Environment and local member, Bob Debus, had called for the forum in response to community concerns about management strategies used for the fire.

All participants felt that the forum was extremely worthwhile and that the recommendations are significant for necessary change. Organisations represented at the forum were: NSW Dept of Environment and Conservation; NSW Rural Fire Service; Blue Mountains Conservation Society; Nature Conservation Council of NSW; Blue Mountains City Council; NPWS Regional Advisory Committee and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory Committee.

The forum report is now available at www.bmwhi.org.au.

It contains a comprehensive action plan with recommendations that focus on:

- ◆ Preparing for the more extreme conditions associated with climate change, by addressing the policy and management implications for control strategies and landscape management, including improved fire detection systems and resourcing of remote area response teams;
- ◆ The need for bushfire management plans to provide for protection of World Heritage values;
- ◆ Developing information systems and fire management guidelines for significant heritage values to help guide decisions about fire suppression and restoration strategies;

- ◆ Improving bushfire risk management planning such as the inclusion of maps which highlight assets at risk, desirable fire regimes, sensitive areas and fire advantages across different land tenures;
- ◆ Improving information flow between fire authorities and the community during and after major fires, including more transparency and public involvement in the fire debrief processes;
- ◆ Increasing the commitment to fire-related research, planning, risk mitigation, and post-fire ecological rehabilitation.

The Grose Valley Forum report acknowledges that a big challenge in bushfire management is how to better integrate valid community interests with those of fire management agencies. Over recent years, the public has come to demand and expect a greater say in decision-making processes that impact upon their local environment. The Forum represents a significant step forward in this process of better integrating community knowledge and interests into natural resource and public land management.

The report has been submitted to Phil Koperberg the Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water, for attention. The action plan will be implemented by the various organisations represented at the forum (and others as appropriate, including Indigenous communities), with an annual review of progress.

For further information please contact:

Yvonne Hellmers, Communications
Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute
4782 6370 or 0438 223 675,
yvonnehellmers@bigpond.com

A BMCS Perspective

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society thanks former local member Bob Debus and the World Heritage Institute for organizing the Grose Valley Fire Forum. It provided a much-needed opportunity for representatives from fire authorities and community members to meet face to face.

Skilful preparation and facilitation set the scene for sensitive issues to be discussed in a conciliatory manner. The detailed action plan contained in the Grose Valley Fire Forum Report was promptly compiled with ample opportunity for feedback.

A large amount of momentum had gathered to decisively tackle the increasing complexities of bushfires and fire operations in the face of climate change. This momentum that was initiated by the 'Burning Issues' statement by concerned residents (published in the Blue Mountains Gazette on 6 December, 2006), which was written to address longstanding concerns about bushfire management.

Yet again, however, it seems that political imperatives are severely hampering progress towards improved fire management which would benefit both the community and the environment. This is because the Section 44 Report (see the boxed text for explanation) for the 2006 Grose Valley fires has still not been released – four months after the event. I understand the completed report is still with the Acting Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service.

The BMCS participants in the forum (Ian Brown, Hugh Paterson and Don Cameron) were advised that we would receive the S44 Report prior to the forum. The report would have been of most use at this time. The fall back position we hoped for was to obtain the report on the day of the forum. Our reading of the report would have been rushed, but still expedited proceedings.

What transpired was that a single copy of the S44 Report

A Section 44 (S44) Report is required to be written in the aftermath of a bush fire that was declared to be a 'section 44 declaration fire' by the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service. This declaration is made for major bush fires that are fought by multiple fire fighting authorities.

was present at the forum, as it had not been cleared by the Acting RFS Commissioner for release. We were not allowed to view it, but a verbal summary was given by the local RFS manager (and Incident Controller during the fire). This report lacked detail on some key events and issues of the fire. The absence of the written report meant that we had to rely on the author of the report assessing whether or not each specific concern which was raised during the forum had already been adequately assessed in the report.

Improving fire management is an exercise in problem solving. An essential step in problem solving is timely and candid presentation of information. Failure to do this undermines efforts to deal with the problem. Withholding of the S44 Report, and in fact any official account of the factual events of the fire, is undermining efforts to improve fire management in the Blue Mountains.

The 'comprehensive action plan' presented in the Fire Forum Report is a very worthwhile initiative, despite the lack of critical information discussed above. Time will tell if it gets the commitment from the government and key agencies that it deserves.

**Don Cameron, Project Officer
(BMCS National Parks Officer, 2006-07)**

A Recipe for Environmental Madness!

TAKE warring politicians from both sides of politics,
STIR in the unmitigated self-interest that characterises
elections (just past, and heading your way soon),
BAKE in an oven of global warming,
SPRINKLE with short-term expediency, misallocated
dollars and chauvinism,
& SERVE via the hip-pocket nerve.



All must now be aware of the plight facing the Murray-Darling Basin and much of southeastern Australia, unless our prayers or rain dances are successful. No amount of blustering by John Howard about the \$10 billion plan and naughty Steven Bracks for opposing its implementation will alter this. Federal and State politicians have procrastinated until it is too late to fix without, or even with, painful consequences to the environment and various sections of the community.

The \$10 billion plan, that I generously labelled a work in progress (April Hut News), has emerged in its true colours as an exercise in wedge politics aimed at dividing the eastern states, whilst concurrently shoring up the irrigation industry (courtesy of taxpayers) to the detriment of environmental flows. The plan has already spawned 'son of plan' in terms of quick-fix madness such as damming the north Queensland coastal rivers and turning the water south to the Murray-Darling Basin, damming the Clarence River and piping the water to southeast Queensland, and draining wetlands thereby forgoing any pretence about the maintenance of environmental flows in terms of the *Living Murray* agreement. With such 'solutions' being invoked, massive nuclear powered desalination plants cluttering the coastal fringe and towing icebergs from Antarctica must soon be part of 'Australia arising'. Or is this just taking the rise out of Australia?

With shameless inconsistency, we are told that water is owned by all Australians and is bigger than State rights, yet mineral, coal and gas resources directly benefit individual State economies, and Federal funds are allocated to States according to formulae that largely disregard resource-based windfalls. After years of disregarding expert advice, politicians are realising that fresh water resources are finite. The poorly constrained needs of our growing population and resource intensive society are 'emptying the bucket'; social, economic and environmental demands have out-stripped supply. And this at a time when evaporative losses are worsening through rising temperatures and 'Hughie' is decreasing the fill-rate through lower rainfall. Even the most obdurate and/or obtuse sceptics now recognise the reality of climate change, regardless of their mindless quibbling over the man-generated contribution.

Political short-sightedness is forgotten amidst dire predictions of the collapse of agricultural industries, loss of jobs, the demise of rural communities, the increased price of locally produced food and the need to import more food. **Nothing is said about tailoring demand to supply.** Solutions are all about bolstering supply to meet uncurtailed demand. After all, a demand driven economy is the debt-based financial wisdom that

COMMENT by Brian Marshall

is kept afloat by exporting our natural resources. Ah! But we have escaped another interest rate rise (meaning that the targeted handouts in the run-up to the election will be 'justified'), so keep the coal trains moving and bring on the uranium!

Lest this be seen as solely attacking the Federal Government, I emphasise that the Opposition endorsed the \$10 billion plan and is pathetically disunited in relation to coal and uranium. Likewise, State Governments are united in the belief that 'the Feds are dudding them', but are otherwise characterised by parochial self-interest, confident in the belief that their voters' vision is constrained by state boundaries. For example, Premier Rann strongly endorses mining and export of uranium (but stops short of an Australian nuclear power industry), Premier Bracks opposes the \$10 billion plan because it is not in Victoria's interests (and unfair to taxpayers), Premier Beatty has seen the light on water recycling but seems wedded to coal-fired power stations and 'clean-coal' technology, whilst Premier Lemma's strength seems to be his capacity to weather crises, courtesy of an inept Opposition.

NSW does not see beyond coal, coal-fired power stations and 'clean-coal' technology. The State Government has no commitment to potable recycling, preferring to pray for rain (clearly catching!) so that it can defer a range of 'micky-mouse' schemes (in terms of water produced, not capital and operating costs) such as exploiting groundwater at Leonay, Kangaloon and Wallacia, and desalination at Kurnell. Once again there has been substantial coastal rain (much less in the catchments), yet the provision for rainwater tanks and plumbing is miserly and plans for large-scale coastal harvesting verge on non-existent.

There is similarly little NSW commitment (beyond grasping the \$10 billion straw) to the Murray-Darling. Minister Macdonald announced (Media Release, March 2007) the purchase from Murray Irrigation Limited's (MIL) supplementary water licence, 100 gigalitres (100 billion litres) of environmental water for the Murray. To make the volume appreciable, he equated it with 100,000 Olympic swimming pools, thereby introducing a 250% error¹. Mistakes do happen, so should we look further? Publicly available data on supplementary usage over the past few years suggest that the claimed environmental flows will potentially be available only in wet to very wet years. Under the present and anticipated drought conditions where the threat of draining many wetlands exists (SMH, 21/04/07; Murray-Darling Basin Contingency Planning Report, April 2007), the Minister's purchase is less than eyewash.

Is there a pain-free answer? Not while Australia continues to live beyond its means by borrowing against the future. Not while Australia justifies environmental vandalism in terms of 'their total emissions are bigger than ours'. Not while Australia thinks that being "a confident nation at ease with the world and with itself" (John Howard, in *The Australian* 23/04/07) is compatible with never hurting the economy. And not while Australia believes that its security, economic wellbeing and identity should be gained through the suffering of other nations.

Must be time to take a holiday!

¹ An Olympic swimming pool typically holds 2,500,000 litres, so the purchase equates with 40,000 rather than 100,000 Olympic pools.

Ode to the PM (& Premiers)

I love a sunburnt country,
With dusty desert plains,
Of dry and arid river beds,
Because it never rains.
As long as there is coal to burn,
And profits I can see,
My vision never sees the need,
For renewable energy.

John Fowler, Charlestown
(SMH, 25 April 2007)

Springwood Re-development

The Council is considering re-developing three sites in Springwood: the Civic Centre and the northern and southern carparks. Options include upgrading and/or building community facilities, a supermarket, offices and housing. The development raises issues of the sale of public land, green building design and impacts on the environment.

If you would like to be involved in or contribute to BMCS's response to the proposals, contact Tara Cameron on 4751 1130 or dontara@ozemail.com.au.

Tara Cameron, Project Officer, Land Use Sub-committee

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. For more information, contact Karen on 4757 1929.

Several articles objecting to the NSW Government's decision to allow recreational hunting in State Forests were published in the 'Hut News' last year (in July, August and October).

Since then, one of our keen bushwalkers has received several disturbing reports from within our local area and was prompted to write the following article....

Local Forests No Longer Safe

Local reports are starting to come in about unlicensed and licensed shooters entering private property, shooters killing wildlife, cutting fences, releasing deer and pigs into State forests and threatening landowners. Some landowners no longer feel safe on their own properties.

It is not even a year since State Forests were made available

Nursery News

Our annual Autumn sale raised \$750 which, while pleasing for a morning's work, amounted to only a quarter of the stock we had available. Consequently, we find ourselves overstocked coming into winter and we need to make way for new seedlings in Spring.

SPECIAL OFFER!

All tube-stock is reduced to just \$1 throughout May, June and July

and for every plant purchased, you can select another, FREE, from specially marked boxes.

Our Blackheath and Lawson nurseries will be closed in June and July but you will find us at the Lawson Magpie Markets on the third Sunday of the month right through winter. At the last Magpie Markets in April we sold \$626 worth of plants.

This month we are featuring *Bauera rubioides*, a common plant along creeks and in damp areas in the Blue Mountains and along the southeast coast right down to Tasmania. Commonly called Rose Heath, River Rose and Dog Rose, it is a scrambling shrub, frost-hardy, rarely more than 1m tall and can be trimmed to make an informal hedge. It bears profuse pink, occasionally white, flowers for long periods and makes a lovely garden plant for a sheltered position. We have good stocks of this special plant available for just \$1 over the next few months.

The genus name honours the famous Austrian botanical illustrator, Ferdinand

Lukas Bauer (1760-1826) while the species name derives from the resemblance of its leaves to those of *Rubia*, a genus of largely Mediterranean herbs. (Other Australian plants named after Bauer include *Prasophyllum baueri*, *Grevillea baueri* and *Eucalyptus baueriana*.)

Ferdinand Bauer was the youngest of three sons of the widower Lukas Bauer, court painter to the Prince of Liechtenstein. Orphaned just one year after his birth, Ferdinand and his brothers were taken under the wing of Norbert Boccius, prior of Feldsburg monastery, who taught them drawing. Around 1780 the three boys, now accomplished botanical artists, moved to Vienna to pursue their careers. The eldest, Joseph, eventually followed in his father's footsteps, returning to Feldsburg as curator of the Count of Liechtenstein's art collection. Franz, the middle brother, was the botanical artist at Kew Gardens from 1790 to 1840 whilst Ferdinand's exceptional talent was recognized internationally.

In 1801, on the recommendation of Sir Joseph Banks, Ferdinand accompanied captain Matthew Flinders and botanist Robert Brown aboard the *Investigator* to study the flora of the east coast of Australia. After two years, the *Investigator* was declared unseaworthy and Flinders was forced to return to England but Bauer and Brown stayed in Australia to continue their work. They returned to England in 1805, laden with thousands of specimens and hundreds of sketches. There they sought to publish their *Illustrations of Florae Novae Hollandiae* but were frustrated when

to shooters by the NSW Government. Clearly, State Forests are no longer safe for recreational users such as horse riders, cyclists, bushwalkers and tourists. Public safety is a primary issue for everyone in NSW.

The Jenolan/Oberon Range and Newnes Plateau are high-use recreational areas, popular with both locals and tourists. The release of feral animals and presence of armed amateur hunters will have a negative impact upon the natural and cultural values of this Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. We are all entitled to be safe.

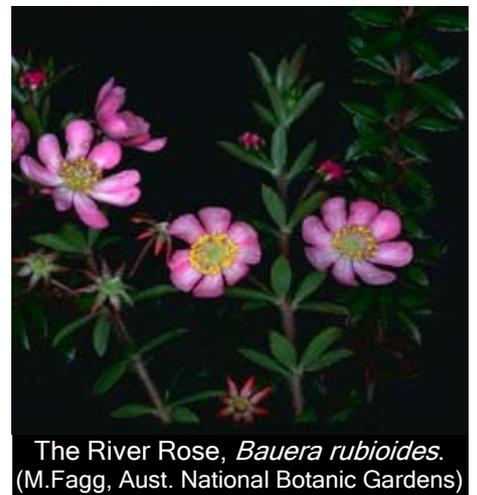
For more information and to find out what you can do to help make our forests safe again, visit the Keep Our Forests Safe website which is being run by the Bega Valley Community at www.thebegavalley.org.au/keepforestssafe.html.

large-scale publication of the work failed. Eventually Bauer himself undertook the task of engraving the printing plates and colouring the illustrations. (It has been estimated that less than fifty copies of this magnificent work were published and its rarity is reflected in the \$A57,000 price paid for a copy at auction in 1997.) Discouraged by the lack of interest in his book, Bauer left England for his native Austria, where he died in 1826.

Ferdinand's original drawings from Australia are in the British Museum, London. It has been said of Ferdinand and Franz Bauer that "they came nearer to perfection in the field of botanical illustration than any artist before or since".

A free exhibition of superb botanical drawings by contemporary artists is currently on display at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney.

Kevin Bell



The River Rose, *Bauera rubioides*. (M.Fagg, Aust. National Botanic Gardens)

In the long grasses
an old sloughed snake-skin –
step carefully!

I met Judith Wright once, at her home near the Mongarlowe Forest. She was deaf by that stage and so we communicated by notepad. What a wonderful woman – the wellspring of a river of poems, including these last eight lines from "Snakeskin on a Gate".

...“the snakeskin blew in the wind on the closed gate;
and I went uneasily, watching, for my life's sake,
for a coil of poisonous dark in the pools of shade.

Then at last I saw him, stretching warm in the sun;
shining; his patterned length clean as a cut jewel.
Set free of its dim shell, his glinting eye
saw only movement and light and had no fear of me.
Like this from our change, my soul, let us drink renewal.”

Celebrating a life in poetry Diana Levy

Recently I taught at the Two Fires Festival in Braidwood, which is a celebration of the legacy of Judith Wright who was a poet, conservationist and activist for indigenous rights. Down by the banks of the Monkittee Creek, which runs through the outskirts of the town we walked. LH wrote this:

eye's corner catches
a flock of dots
attaching to a tree

And I wrote:

A slow combat -
willows versus
the landcare group

Thanks to their efforts there was a lot to look at, birds, plants and animals and insects. Everything has to come to water eventually.

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 Walks Convenor, Christine Davies (4787 7246, davica@bigpond.net.au).

BEFORE ATTENDING, PLEASE DISCUSS THE WALK WITH THE LEADER (listed below)

- THIS IS ESSENTIAL IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST WALK OR YOU ARE UNSURE OF THE CLASSIFICATION.

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS

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

May-14	Dangar Island, Brooklyn (3) <i>Small, historic, Hawkesbury River island. Ferry fare \$5.</i>	Mary 4787 6918	Train from Blackheath, <i>(change at Strathfield for train to Brooklyn).</i>	6.50am
May-21	Old mill site, Faulconbridge (3) <i>Timber mill site.</i>	David 4757 3416	Faulconbridge Station carpark	9.00am
May-28	Panther Track, Lithgow (3) <i>Short walk, lunch at the club.</i>	Terry 4784 6918	Mt Victoria Station	9.30am
Jun-4	Tesselated pavement, Mt Irvine (3) <i>Extensive sandstone rock platform.</i>	Ron 4757 1526	Mt Victoria Station	9.00am
Jun-11	Banks Walls, Bells Line of Road (3) <i>Views over Grose Valley.</i>	Norm 4784 1554	Mt Victoria Station	9.00am
Jun-18	Bus trip to Noble Canyon, W'gambe (3) <i>Magnificent dry canyon- don't miss it! BBQ lunch. Bookings required.</i>	Birgitta 4784 3191	Bus Depot, South St, N.Katoomba	9.00am

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS

Grade 1—3 (EASY—MEDIUM) walks conducted to suit walkers on the day. Slower walkers catered for; on longer walks there may be an option for a slower group to complete only part of the walk. Carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warm days.

May-17	Radiata Plateau Katoomba (2) <i>Walk mainly on firetrails.</i>	Joan 4782 2218	Gearins Hotel, Katoomba	9.30am
May-24	Wilsons Glen, Woodford (2) <i>Leisurely walk to cave and waterfalls.</i>	Simone 4757 3416	North side of Woodford Station	10.00am
May-31	Bus trip to Deep Pass, Newnes Plateau (3) <i>Visit to creek with interesting and unusual rock formations. Cost \$10.</i>	David 4757 3416	Bus Depot, South St, Nth Katoomba	8.30am
Jun-7	Sunbath, Wonderland Track, Mark's Tomb (2) <i>Easy walk on gentle tracks with views of the Megalong Valley.</i>	Phil 4787 5560	In front of Hydro, Medlow Bath	9.30am
Jun-14	South Lawson waterfalls (2) <i>Circuit bush track past waterfalls, some steps.</i>	John 4757 1558	Cnr GWH & Honour Ave, Lawson	10.00am

WEEKEND WALKS

Before attending, please discuss the walk with the leader or the Weekend Walks organiser, Jim Percy (4758 6009). Carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warm days. Grade 2 = EASY/MEDIUM, Grade 3 = MEDIUM, Grade 4 = MEDIUM/HARD.

May-12	Lawson Ridge to Urella Lookdown (3) <i>Extensive views over Wentworth Creek to the Mt Hay ridge. Track & firetrail, short section off track to reach lookout.</i>	Andy 4758 9770	Lawson Station carpark (N side)	9.00am
May-19	Bluegum Swamp, Grose Head South (3) <i>14km: undulating track with significant steep sections but the magnificent views over Paterson Hill to Grose Head North and the Paterson Range make it all worthwhile.</i>	Liz 4754 4966	Springwood Stn carpark (N side)	9.00am
May-26	Hurley Heights Fire trail (2) <i>Great views along 11km of undulating firetrail. Optional exploring at end of track to find an elusive rock overhang.</i>	Jim 4758 6009	Leura Public School	8.30am
Jun-2	Gooches Crater (2) <i>Take a look at this unique area and see why it should be protected. 8-9km: mostly firetrail/track, scrambling optional.</i>	Bill 4758 8545	Mt Vic Station carpark	8.30am
Jun-9	Blaxland to Springwood (4) <i>13km on track, some fairly rough, 2 crossings of Glenbrook Ck. Possible side trip to Lost World Lookout.</i>	John 4739 2508	Springwood - 9.05am train to Blaxland	
Jun-16	Urella Lookdown & Jim's Creek Circuit (4) <i>Extensive views over Wentworth Creek to the Mt Hay ridge then descend to a pristine, hanging swamp-fed creek. 15 km with 5km off track, steep, good navigational opportunities.</i>	Jim 4758 6009	Lawson Station carpark (N side)	9.00am

Missing your favourite walk but not confident about leading it yourself? - Contact Jim on 4758 6009 or at jp34@tpg.com.au.

Overnight walk – Lawson to Linden

Tuesday 12 - Wednesday 13 June

An ideal introduction to overnight walking in our own wilderness area.

Day 1 - Lawson Ridge then follow NE side-ridge to camp above Woodford Creek (water available from unnamed side creek.)

Day 2 - Descend to and cross Woodford Creek, ascend to Dawes Ridge then walk out via Dawes and Linden Ridges.

Maybe some exploring of the side creek before the climb out (270m).

16 km, half off track, Grade 3 (Medium).

Bookings essential due to party size limit and the need to consolidate transport.

Contact Jim on 4758 6009

before Friday 1 June.

(If you're new to overnight walking, Jim can also give advice on equipment and food.)

Welcome to our new members

Friedegard Tomasetti,

Wentworth Falls

David Brazil, Leura

Maurice Kerkham, Glenbrook

Barnaby Heatom, Katoomba

Ray & Carolyn Stanford, Katoomba

Chris & Gill Yates, Leura

John & Christine Wightman,

Wentworth Falls

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Ilan Salbe 4759 2372

ilan.salbe@bigpond.com

PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Membership Matters...

Have you ever received a reminder notice when you've already paid your membership renewal? Please don't think we've lost your payment or that you can't do any bushwalks. Receipts are only sent out once a month (with the Hut News) so don't worry about the reminder notice — you should receive your receipt with the following month's Hut News.

Unlike businesses, or even some other environmental groups, the Society is run entirely by volunteers. We are passionate about the work of the Society and are trying hard to improve our services to members. We take pride in doing a good job - but we can make mistakes. If you have a problem, or an idea on how we can improve things, please contact me directly (see details at left).

Ilan Salbe, Membership Secretary