



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Sunset Get-together

THURSDAY, 23 FEBRUARY, 7 PM
at the CONSERVATION HUT, Wentworth Falls

You are invited to join us and share one of the best sunset views to be had in our glorious Blue Mountains.

Meet old and new friends ... talk to new and not-so-new members and exchange ideas ... if you are not already a member find out more ... meet some of the management committee and learn a little about recent Society activities ... find out how you can become involved. There will be a slide show and some songs from Blue Mountains songwriters Jim Low and Alan Foster. Supper will be provided.

The Conservation Hut at Wentworth Falls is the traditional home of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. The old weatherboard hut which was the predecessor to the current building was operated by Society volunteers as a tea room and information and education centre and was the headquarters for the planning and execution of the environmental protection campaigns waged by the Society in the first three decades of its existence.

The Conservation Hut is situated in the Blue Mountains National Park at the end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls.

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS!

It's time to remove the flower heads of Agapanthas before the seeds set. Cut or twist them off NOW and put them in the green bin.



Agapanthus is on the move! At Mount Victoria, Blackheath, Medlow Bath, Katoomba, Leura, Wentworth Falls, Bullaburra, Lawson ... there is more and more of this environmental weed, planted and spreading in gardens, moving onto the grass verges, across the road into bushland reserves, into our World Heritage National Parks.

A row of Agapanthus flowers on the cliff-edge at Echo Point, on Council land, is directly above the Blue Mountains National Park. Council regularly has bush regeneration contractors working in this area. This sounds like a difficult and dangerous job. The contractors cannot remove all the weeds at once for fear of destabilising the site.

The Agapanthus originates from South Africa and is probably very nice in its natural habitat. But our Blue Mountains World Heritage Area has an enormous diversity of unique plants and fauna which relies on it. Do we really want to replace them with a weed?

Management Committee vacancy filled

Madi Maclean has been appointed to fill the casual vacancy on the Management Committee as Second Vice President. Madi has contributed to the society's campaign to protect the Gardens of Stone region and writes for Hut News. Contact details on page 2.

The Great Grose Weed Walk

The Great Grose Weed Walk, now in its 22nd year, is a volunteer program within Blue Mountains National Park that helps protect the Grose Wilderness and the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. It also offers the public a chance to join in and experience a wide range of activities, meet new friends and make a difference.

The Great Grose Weed Walk – Autumn 2017 (25 February to 8 April) has activities for everyone. Most do not guarantee wet feet and bush regeneration skills can be learned on the job.

These include "Weeding with a View" at Govetts Leap (March 1), Braeside Blitz at Blackheath (March 26), Swampcare at Kittyhawk, North Wentworth Falls (March 29), Swampcare at Valley View Swamp, Blackheath (6 April).

The Society's website has a full program http://bluemountains.org.au/2017_Autumn_GGWW_prog/am.pdf or contact Vanessa Richardson 4787 3112 or vanessa.richardson@environment.nsw.gov.au

AGM

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut on Thursday 30 March 2017, at 7PM.

This will be followed by, at 7.45 pm:

"Mysteries of Kimberley Rock Art" a presentation by Dr Alan Lane

In September 2016, Alan had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel with a group of Climate Council supporters to the Kimberley led by Prof Tim Flannery and Dr Tim Willing, to study some rare rock art. A highlight was a painting recently discovered by Tim Willing of a Thylacoleo (marsupial lion), not previously seen by any other group and described by Prof Flannery as perhaps the most scientifically important rock art in Australia.

Alan will discuss the art forms and show delightful ancient images of a variety of wildlife and mythical monsters, as well as a snapshot of the remarkable Kimberley landscape and wildlife.

More information in March Hut News.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY www.bluemountains.org.au

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Weeding for a Better View .



“Weeding with a view”: organisers and volunteers during the Spring 2016 Great Grose Weed Walk. Photo by Nikki McGrath from Greater Sydney Local Land Services

As part of the bi-annual Great Grose Weed Walk program, the Weeding with a View activity was carried out at Govetts Leap Lookout in November 2016. A wide range of volunteers came together for the morning in November to continue the regeneration in this spectacular area.

The main attraction to this site for most people is obviously the view over the Grose valley and beyond. What better place to enjoy a gastronomic morning tea after some sweaty, hard work pulling and poisoning a wide range of weeds.

Regeneration of this site began eight years ago and over 1,000 volunteer hours have been invested to treat weeds as well as plant native seedlings to assist with the restoration of the creek line. With the ongoing support of volunteers, including Springwood Bushwalkers, this program has attracted grant funding from a number of sources, including NPWS and the Greater Sydney Local Land Services, which we are hoping will continue in 2017 and beyond.

Works in the future will continue to be along the creek line as well as below Govetts Leap Lookout where there is a healthy population of *Montbretia* and blackberry. It is widely understood that the weeds on top of the escarpment, like at Govetts Leap, are just a waterfall away from dropping further into the Grose Valley and becoming even a bigger problem for our native plants and animals.

The other benefit of these works is to protect the threatened *Isopogon fletcheri* (Fletcher's drumstick). This rare species is only found in the upper mountains in certain micro-climates such as Govetts Leap, which supports the largest and healthiest population in the wild. If you would like to join us next time or get involved in other Great Grose Weed Walk activities please contact Ranger Vanessa Richardson on 47873112 or at vanessa.richardson@environment.nsw.gov.au.



Isopogon fletcheri, photo by Vanessa Richardson.

The **DEADLINE** for the next issue of HUT NEWS is
18 FEBRUARY 2017
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MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES
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BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

We offer the home gardener, landscaper or contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

Plants can be purchased at:

Blackheath Community Market, 1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm

Tube stock \$3. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries Sue Nicol 4787 8887
nursery@bluemountains.org.au

BLUE MOUNTAINS BAT NIGHT



IT'S A BAT FEST!!

Bat cave for the kids

Bat talks

Bat films

Bat walks (bring torches)



When: Friday 10th March at 6.30pm onwards
Where: NPWS Heritage Centre, Govetts Leap Rd, Blackheath

Talks, walks and fun activities for adults and children of all ages; learn about flying foxes and our fascinating microbats. Come dressed as a bat! There'll be a range of speakers including local ecologist Marg Turton, and Flying Fox expert, Tim Pearson.

Discovery Rangers will help spot the microbats chasing their dinner, and you will be able to hear their calls via a bat detector! Bring a torch, you may also see other wildlife on the way. **The Bat Cave** will be running children's activities, craft, mask-making and temporary tattoos.

Come along any time between 6:30 – 9:00pm all weather. Bring the family; dress in costume. There's something for everyone on the night. This event is supported by Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Blue Mountains City Council, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Greater Sydney Local Land Services, the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the Australasian Bat Society. If members would like to volunteer to help on the night, please contact Marg Turton marg@turton.com.au

Scenic Eastern Escarpment MasterPlan

The Scenic Eastern Escarpment Masterplan is a Council initiative that will help guide the future development of nature and culture based recreation and tourism opportunities in the lower Blue Mountains.

The project site extends from Darks Common in the south, adjoining Blue Mountains National Park to Knapsack Reserve in the north and connecting with Yellomundee Regional Park. It is bounded by the residential areas of Glenbrook, Blaxland, Winmalee, Mt Riverview, Yellow Rock and Hawkesbury Heights to the west, and Lapstone, Emu Plains, Leonay and Emu Heights, and the Nepean River to the east. Included in the scope of the plan are Darks Common and the 1892 Glenbrook Railway tunnel, currently managed by Crown Lands.

Council will be developing the Masterplan over the first half of 2017 and is currently seeking feedback on how residents and visitors use the area. Those interested in finding out more about the project and providing information on how they use the site can go to www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am - noon.

Tools and gloves are available.

Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.

Court to decide Elphinstone (Radiata) Plateau DAs

The NSW Land and Environment Court will be determining the three development applications currently lodged for Elphinstone (Radiata) Plateau, as the developer Transcendental Meditation Organisation (TMO) has appealed Council's deemed refusal of the development applications.

Court-ordered conciliation between Council and TMO in 2016 did not result in variations to the developments both parties were happy with. As a result, the Court will now decide whether the developments will proceed or not. Blue Mountains Conservation Society, along with other objectors to the developments, will be attending a court hearing on-site on February 20 to present evidence as to why the developments should not be approved by the Court.

The majority of the Plateau (305 hectares), including escarpment areas, consists of land owned by the TMO, who have submitted development applications for three "private" dwellings on the Plateau. The Society is concerned that TMO's intention is to commercially develop the Plateau. TMO's submission to the LEP 2015 public exhibition process highlighted their desire for future development of the Plateau, including "a spa retreat, an eco-tourism lodge and a boutique residential conference facility".

The Society, along with local residents, has been actively opposing the development applications proposed for Elphinstone (Radiata) Plateau. The Plateau is the last remaining parcel of undeveloped southern escarpment land in the Upper Blue Mountains and includes spectacular and stunning views along the escarpment and down to the Megalong Valley. It contains significant biodiversity values, including vegetation communities such as Blue Mountain Swamps and *Eucalyptus Oreades* Open Forest as well as many endangered plants and animals. The Society is campaigning for the Plateau to be purchased by the State or Commonwealth government to form part of the Blue Mountains National Park. This will ensure the Plateau is conserved forever and that public access continues.

Land Use Subcommittee
lus@bluemountains.org.au

Western Sydney Airport - Time to Write a Letter

One of our members, Kath Sneddon, wrote to the Environment Minister recently, and was fobbed off with an automated reply. Perhaps if he hears from hundreds of us, he will pay attention.

Here is Kath's letter, reproduced with her permission:

Dear Sir

I am appalled at your approval of the Western Sydney Airport even with the so-called conditions. You are supposed to represent your constituents and yet you have ignored the very real concerns of residents of Western Sydney.

I was part of a delegation from the Blue Mountains who attended a meeting with you and the Minister for Urban Infrastructure on 17th October 2016. There were 11 so-called stakeholders but seven of those were adjacent land owners with vested interest in the airport. These few will make a lot of money out of the airport but at the expense of the many residents of Western Sydney.

You have ignored the pleas of the four delegates who will have no monetary gain from the construction of the airport.

We explained:

** that no curfew will have a severe effect on Western Sydney residents' quality of life;*

** the deleterious effect on children's sleep patterns and*

learning in schools from 24 hour flights;

** that there is no mention of noise protection/insulation for any residents in the EIS;*

** the air pollution that will be added to the Sydney Basin where there are already high levels in certain weather conditions;*

** the higher decibel readings which have been revealed through our organisation's thorough research compared to those which were reported in the EIS and which have not been corrected;*

** the fact that until flight paths are set there can be no accurate prediction of where the major effect of noise will be but wherever they go, there will be increased noise and pollution over heavily populated, residential areas in the Western suburbs;*

** the disastrous effect the airport will have on the World Heritage Area of the Blue Mountains with effects on bats, birds and wildlife as well as the peaceful ambiance of the National Parks; tourism will be negatively affected.*

All of the above have been ignored or discounted by the acceptance of this flawed and inadequate EIS and I am disappointed that you have not been listening to our concerns.

continued on page 7.



Images: Full moon, Mount Banks and flowering sedgeland at dawn over Grose Valley - Blue Mountains National Park.

Credit Ian Brown.

The lizard is a Mountain Dragon, on Broad-leaf Drumsticks (*Isopogon anemonifolius*).

Credit Alan Page

New **Blue Mountains Nature** website

Do you ever get frustrated with hunting around to find out about the natural heritage of the Blue Mountains? Wanting somewhere you can learn about the flora, fauna, ecology, landscape and geology?

Two enthusiasts are trying to solve this problem, by building, over time, a comprehensive and accurate online collection of information on nature in the Greater Blue Mountains.

The website, called simply *Blue Mountains Nature* at <http://bmnature.info> is a collaboration between Alan Page, keen botanist and former webmaster for Blue Mountains Conservation Society, and Ian Brown, a photographer, naturalist and conservationist.

Alan and Ian want the website to be engaging and evocative so they are including artistic responses to the Blue Mountains environment: writings/stories, music and visual arts. Many local experts and artists are contributing.

This is a completely non-commercial enterprise, a group effort by enthusiasts for the environment. Take a look, and come back regularly as more material is added.

OPINION

¹Global warming, denialism, mugwumps², and naivety

Dr Brian Marshall

The nexus between global warming, anthropomorphic greenhouse gas emissions (GGEs), and population-growth is real and unequivocal. The nexus, although apparent at the beginning of the twentieth century, became increasingly obvious since the late 1970s due to the accelerating nature of its three components.

Climate-change encompasses a range of outcomes consequent upon global warming. They include: shrinking mountain glaciers, accelerating ice-loss in Greenland, Antarctica and the Arctic, rising sea levels, ocean-acidification, species-migration and impacts on sessile systems such as coral reefs and vineyards, and the increasing number and magnitude of extreme weather events. Such outcomes are direct evidence of climate-change and indirect evidence of global warming; they complement the direct measurement of GGEs, global temperatures, and population-growth.

Reprising the numerous and well established pieces of evidence is not the aim of this article. Such data are readily available. My present concerns are the rise of denialism in the US, the outrageous short-term self-interest dictating the Australian and State governments' parsimonious approach to global warming and climate-change, and the illogical thinking of naive individuals who accept the 'science' but disbelieve the magnitude of the consequences.

Denialism about human-induced global warming and climate-change will gain strength under President Trump. He has suggested that the whole thing is a Chinese hoax! At a practical level, he will seemingly exacerbate GGEs by removing restrictions on oil and gas exploitation, in and off the northern coast of Alaska and elsewhere in the US, increase coal-fired power generation to help American industry, and renege on Obama's agreement with China and the pledges made in relation to the Paris agreement on global warming. Such denialism and disregard for the planet's future will precipitate an environmental catastrophe.

In Australia, the Commonwealth and State governments are mugwumps, sitting on the fence with their mugs on one side and their wumps on the other. They profess to believe in human-induced global warming and climate change, and Australia has at last signed the Paris agreement. Yet with Prime Minister Turnbull setting the course, and under Environment Ministers Hunt and now Frydenberg at the helm, Australia continues to pursue its inadequate GGE reduction targets using methods seemingly incapable of meeting those targets. Furthermore, NSW seems uninclined to wean itself of coal-fired power generation and coal exports, whilst Queensland continues with the Adani abomination despite it having the potential to undermine the Paris agreement and negate any chance of keeping global warming below 2°C.

It is totally unsurprising that Bill McKibben accuses the US and Australia of being "...two rogue developed nations openly trashing global climate efforts", whilst China's President (Xi Jinping) is claiming global leadership on trade and climate in the vacuum created by President Trump's intended withdrawal.

The naive are disturbing. They accept human-induced global warming and the role of population-growth, but although acknowledging the climate-change consequences of global warming, opine that they are over-exaggerated; she'll be right mate! They hope that global warming will be 'adequately' mitigated through the Paris agreement, despite contrary evidence, and that adaptation through civil engineering works and other more 'ambitious' concepts will (if necessary) take care of 'the rest'. This is extremely short sighted. It disregards the assessment of many economists regarding the costs of globally coherent mitigation versus long-term potentially selfish adaptation³.

Adaptation is already too costly and too late for some Pacific island communities. The Netherlands, Venice, Shanghai, New Orleans and many coastal regions have debatably adapted to present sea levels, but when do costs and practicable limitations become insurmountable? Australian east-coast properties on sand-dunes and unstable cliffs are already vulnerable, but who should pay for their adaptations? Major deltas and flood plains are fundamental to food production for hundreds of millions of people, especially so in less developed countries; who will supply the wherewithal for adaptation?

The truth is that the inequitable and potential misallocation of funds and technology for selective adaptation will engender human population-migrations, enhance racism and terrorism, and induce territorial wars. Yet it is even sadder that adaptation, beyond genetic engineering, rarely considers the world's non-human biota; we need it more than it needs us. Mitigation helps all life-forms.

The bottom line: concerted global mitigation is paramount; equitable adaptation can support mitigation but must never supplant it; the naïve live in false hope, need to face reality and vote accordingly.

¹ The fully referenced article is available from the Editor or Author.

² The first mugwumps were Republicans who supported the Democratic candidate rather than the Republican nominee. A mugwump was subsequently termed and depicted as *“a bird who sits with its mug on one side of the fence and its wump on the other”*.

³ As a starting point, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stern_Review. But remember, if all economists were laid end-to-end they would never reach a conclusion (acknowledgements to George Bernard Shaw).

BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly?

Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?

Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml

The Sustainable Home, by Gary McCue and Alex Bergmann

Maximising Use of Solar-generated Electricity

Whether you currently have solar (PV) panels or are considering purchasing a PV system for your home or business, it's important to determine how you can maximise use of your solar-generated electricity. This is especially relevant for homes with gross feed-in meters in the NSW Solar Bonus Scheme that ended 31st December, 2016. The days of 60 or 20 cents/kWh are over. Participants in this scheme are now having to install a net feed-in meter or a smart meter, and any surplus solar electricity generated by PV panels that is not consumed by the home or business will be exported to the grid at low buy-back rates of 5.2-10 cents/kWh, depending on what's offered by your electricity retailer. Working at home or having a business operating during peak solar hours (10-3pm) is ideal. However many people are away from home during these hours, complicating efforts to utilise solar-generated electricity.

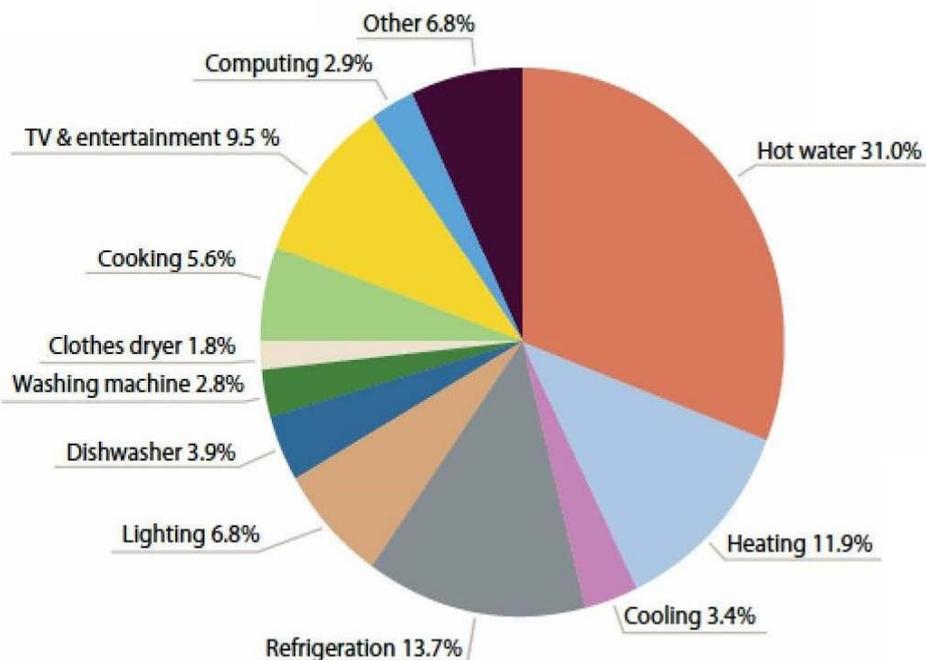
A great starting point is to conserve electricity by reducing consumption. Small changes can make a big difference over the course of several years. Start by turning off unnecessary lights, or any appliances and computers when not in use, and replace incandescent light bulbs with low-energy/long-life compact fluro bulbs, or even better, LED bulbs. Switch off appliances at the wall, particularly TVs and stereos with illuminated clocks or a stand-by light, and unplug unused mobile phone chargers. The average home in Australia consumes 0.25kWh of electricity per day with these "phantom loads." If an appliance is more than 5 years old, consider

purchasing a highly efficient "smart" appliance with an integrated timer and the highest Energy Star Rating. The cost for additional stars will be compensated by reduced electricity usage over the appliance's lifetime.

Next is assessing your electricity consumption and how to "load shift" this usage to peak solar hours. Home heating, air conditioning, hot water heating, refrigerators and pool heaters are typically the biggest users of electricity. Heaters, aircon and pool heaters can be set to run during the day, pre-heating or cooling your home with solar generated electricity if you're at work. "Smart" washing machines, dryers and dishwashers can be set to operate during the day. Opt to do vacuuming or other appliance-oriented chores during peak solar hours. Electricity-monitoring software such as Solaranalytics, Wattwatchers or Efergy accurately measures electricity production and usage patterns to help reduce consumption and maximise load shifting.

If you have a larger PV system (3kW or more) and an aging hot water system, consider installing a highly efficient electric heat pump system. These take about 4 hours to heat a full tank of cold water and a timer can be set for operation during peak solar hours. Another option, though currently expensive, is adding battery storage to your PV system.

This column is by local solar experts Gary McCue, with the Sustainability Guys in Blackheath, and Alex Bergmann with Energywise Living in Katoomba. Future columns will address adding battery storage to your solar panels, solar hot water choices and other sustainable home topics.



An Example of Electricity Consumption in a Typical Three Person Household in Western Sydney. Source: NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/368561/3.9-05-Reducing-Energy-Costs-Final.pdf

Farewell Dulcie Toseland

It was with sadness that we have heard of the death of Dulcie Toseland from her granddaughter. Dulcie and her husband Reg, who passed away in 2012, were early members of the Society. They were both very active in the Society and were among the volunteers who helped to operate the tearoom at the old Conservation Hut at weekends and holidays, providing light refreshments, information and environmental education to the public. Both held management committee positions at times and were a great inspiration and support to later management members.

There are not many of the pioneer members left and we sometimes don't learn of their passing. We owe them all a debt of gratitude. They loved the Blue Mountains and fought to preserve them for us and for future generations.

Western Sydney Airport - Time to Write a Letter

(continued from page 4)

I am not objecting to this project for myself; I am retired and won't be around to see this project come to fruition. I despair for my grandchildren and future generations who will ask: "Who was it that allowed this to happen?". Your name will be at the top of the list.

Yours in regret, Kathleen Sneddon.

Kath writes a great letter. You may also like to write a letter to:

Josh Frydenberg, Minister for the Environment; Paul Fletcher, Minister for Urban Infrastructure; Susan Templeman, Member for Macquarie; Anthony Albanese, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure. They can all be written to at the same address: PO Box 6022, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600.

I believe emails are less effective, but if you prefer to use email, the addresses are: Josh.Frydenberg.MP@aph.gov.au;

Paul.Fletcher.MP@aph.gov.au;

Susan.Templeman.MP@aph.gov.au; A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au

Get to it ... write a letter, please!

Ross Coster, nwsa@bluemountains.org.au

JETLOVERS WOULD SACRIFICE WORLD HERITAGE

On 18 January 2017, the Blue Mountains Gazette published a letter decrying World Heritage and suggesting that Blue Mountains tourism could survive perfectly well without it. The letter came from one of a group of people who have consistently tried to play down the negative effects that Badgerys Creek airport would have on the Greater Blue Mountains.

I was a student in Jim Smith's lectures in local history of the Blue Mountains at TAFE in the early 1990s and have definite ideas about how Blue Mountains tourism has evolved to its current status. Following the arrival of the railway in the upper Blue Mountains in 1868-1869, the mountains went through a series of peaks and troughs in its tourist appeal. Its main market was Sydney and Sydneysiders were even more aware of the foul air in many parts of the city than they are today and valued the freshness of the mountains. During economic downturns, a mountains holiday was the greatest luxury many Sydney residents could afford – there were over 5,000 tourist beds in the upper mountains in the early 1930s.

No return to this kind of "captive market" is imaginable in 2017. Blue Mountains tourism needs to compete with myriad Australian and overseas destinations. The image of the Blue Mountains in the minds of overseas visitors has never been more important for local jobs than it is now.

World Heritage is of great value to our future. The discussions that took place involving Australian and international scientists before and after the initial World Heritage listing in 2000 identified the specialness of the Greater Blue Mountains in many ways not previously understood. The United Nations, whose agency determined the listing, is a multi-faceted body. Its cohesion is sufficient that its contribution, together with other international organisations working for the environment, has a profound positive impact on multiple issues of importance to Blue Mountains residents.

Some conservative Australians dislike some activities of certain United Nations agencies and seek to smear everything associated with the United Nations as a result. Those of us who care about the Blue Mountains should pay them no attention. Maintaining our World Heritage listing remains a central objective for us.

Don Morison.

Poets' Corner

THINGS TO DO IN LEURA

In the morning
before the tourist buses, observe
the currawongs tumbling
down Megalong Street, shooting up
to greet the sun, skidding
over rooftops.

At noon
listen to the green torpor
of the valley, the track quiet,
save for the scrunch of shoe
on stony path; wait for the coming
of the brown dove.

When evening comes
and the day is done, shout!
Those cockatoos will be rolling the light
over the escarpment, chasing it
into tawny-feathered
dusk.

John Low

Readers of Hut News are invited to send a poem inspired by the Blue Mountains, maximum of 20 lines. Poems can be emailed to Brendan Doyle brendan049@gmail.com or posted to Poets' Corner at 5 Lurline Street, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Nightlife at Echo Point

It is interesting to visit Echo Point at Katoomba at night during the summer months. Floodlights shine on the Three Sisters from dusk until around 11 pm. Microbats know that moths and other insects are attracted to those lights and, when the weather is fine, come nightly for a feed.

In early January there were lots of visitors to the upper Mountains. We arrived at Echo Point shortly before dusk one day to find numerous people there, individuals and groups and families. Everybody appeared very relaxed and not in a hurry to leave, unlike the bustling crowds you often experience at the lookout when day-trippers are grabbing quick "selfies" before hurrying to the next stop. Some were photographing the marvellous view as daylight faded from the mountains and valleys, but we were there to watch the lights.

The insects started to arrive at the source of the lights, some of them quite large, and as it got darker they filled the sky between Echo Point and the Three Sisters, their aerobics reflected brightly in the floodlight.

Then larger creatures flew rapidly among them – these were the microbats. It was a marvellous aerial display. Christine Davies.

That iconic chair ...

This scene which shows an extensive Blue Mountains swamp against the backdrop of the peaks above Banks Wall appeared in Blue Trail No 31 in our previous newsletter.

The photograph was taken during a bushwalk of the Thursday Interpretive Bushwalkers in July 2009. The chair was found lying on its side but it seemed to belong in the picture and one of the walkers moved it into position.

Alan Lane writes to Hut News: "That iconic chair is a memorial to Richard Neville, who died in 2016. His house was on the hill above this spot and his property stretched to the creek at the bottom of the gully shown in the photo, which is called Orang Utan Gully. Richard put a chair



there many years ago and spent very many hours in it, in quiet contemplation. I once came upon him there when I was surveying frogs and he politely informed me that at that time it was private land but welcomed me to do my research.

"This is not the original chair, which was burned in a bushfire; Richard replaced it and watched the bushland recover. The one in the photo

was also burned in the more recent fires, but not destroyed and Richard never got to replace it again. The bushland has recovered again and the charred chair stays on in Richard's memory. I'm sure Richard would love passers-by to pause there for a moment and enjoy the scene he valued so much."

In Memory of Joe and Mary by Jim Low

I am always intrigued by the various ways people are remembered through their association with certain places. A couple of years ago my attention was drawn to a ten centimetre square metal plaque on a sandstone rock face. Engraved on the plaque are the words:

'In memory of Mary
Remembered and missed by her friends'

This small, unobtrusive plaque is positioned beside a natural stone bench. Situated right on the edge of a valley ridge, it overlooks Fitzgerald Creek at Mt River-view. It is a perfect location to sit and watch the sun set over the junction of Fitzgerald and Cripple Creek.

For forty years I have been regularly walking out along the fire track to this vantage point and, just like I imagine for Mary, it became a favourite place for me too. I do not know who Mary was and have not yet met a local who knew her. I sometimes wonder whether I ever met her myself while walking on the track over the years.. I now make a point of visiting the plaque and sitting on the natural stone seat next to it. Mary has become part of my story at this special, shared place.

My family used to holiday regularly on the far south coast of New South Wales at Tathra. I would often climb to the southern headland to look back along the spectacular coastline. Positioned at this spot is a wooden seat. A small, metal plaque is fixed to the back of the seat and it reads as follows:

'Sit awhile and listen to Joe Caddy he had a few fishing tales to tell Enjoy !!!!! Zel and family'

And over the years I have accepted this invitation before continuing on to the highly picturesque Tathra Wharf.

One day while sitting where Mary sat, I was reminded again of Joe and his seat. Two different but special places had brought the three of us together. And I liked the feel of that, as well as its randomness.

As both plaques indicate, Mary and Joe left behind friends and loved ones. We come into the world on our own and we leave it the same way. Perhaps there can be found a certain reassurance in those simple truths.



Mary

In memory of Mary
Someone I never knew
In days gone by she treasured
The wonder of this view.

Across the valley's splendour
She glimpsed the other side
Reflecting on its beauty
How Nature mystified.

Jim Low (May 2015)



Wild Life in Blackheath Christine Davies

January 2017 observations:

Even in Blackheath, it has been hot this summer. Little birds have been queuing up at the bird bath to beat the heat. Most regular have been three or four Eastern Spinebills, a couple of White-browed Scrubwrens, a little flock of tiny thornbills, and a larger number of New Holland Honeyeaters. They all come several times a day. Different species have their own bathing styles. The rarer appearance of the Grey Fantail is exciting. He/she dances on the side of the bath and is never still. The Crimson Rosellas come sometimes for a drink but do not bathe. During January, I have sometimes found myself sitting in a comfortable armchair, beside a fan, looking through the window to watch the birds in the bath while sweaty tennis players struggle for supremacy on the television.

The call of the Koel from his favourite tree (just far enough away) has been a constant reminder of summer. I didn't hear the adult Channel-billed Cuckoos this year, but in early January one of their offspring—very loud and persistent—was harassing its unfortunate Pied Currawong foster parents. When I last saw them the “parents” seemed to be trying to escape the youngster, but he/she was a strong flyer and could find them some distance away.

A Huntsman Spider on the outside of the kitchen window one night found a steady stream of food, grabbing and eating all the moths which came within reach, dropping their wings and clouding the window with moth dust. A few nights later, an optimistic Huntsman Spider on the same window but on the INSIDE of the glass wasn't doing as well.

How and why do the Huntsmen Spiders keep finding their way into the house? Are the Leaf-curling Spiders, plentiful this January, earlier than usual? I remember seeing them mainly in March. How big do stick insects grow? The one in the photo was about 23 cm long. How do lyrebirds learn to sing? The young lyrebird heard out the back, in the National Park behind the houses, had a longish but not very convincing repertoire.



In the bush there is a great variety of wildflowers including a lovely tea tree which is prominent. Looking down into the Grose Valley from Govetts Leap Lookout, in the forest canopy you can see white flowers of a Eucalypt and red in the Coachwood trees. The Coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apetalum*) has a similar flower to the NSW Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*). Like the Christmas bush, the sepals enlarge when fruiting and become red so that, from above, the tree can be seen from a distance.

Photos: “Now, where have they gone?” The young Channel-billed Cuckoo looks around for its foster parents, and soon flies to join them. A stick insect (plasmid).

You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

- Post this Application Form with your cheque or money order to: Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782, OR
- Join online at: www.bluemountains.org.au

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address:
.....PC

Phone(s)

Email

I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.
2.
3.

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$35 Concession (Senior/Student) \$25

Household \$40 Household Concession \$30

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add
\$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box mail internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline):

Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

A BEQUEST: Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: “I bequeath the sum of \$... to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society”.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.

Welcome to new members

Robin Shannon
Louise Upsall
John Franklin
Norma Denicolay
Severo Cinquetti
Mary Laws
Keith Davies
Judith Kenyon

Read about our bushwalkers' exploits on Facebook with lots of wonderful photos.

<https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks>

The Giant Dragonfly



In our previous newsletter, in Blue Trail No 31, this photograph of a male Giant Dragonfly was wrongly attributed. This was corrected in the electronic copy of the newsletter.

The photograph was taken by Ian Baird in December 2007. Dr Ian Baird is one of Australia's foremost experts on giant dragonflies and has been studying this family of dragonflies (*Petaluridae*) and their peat swamp habitats since 2003.

CAN YOU HELP FIND A LOST QUOTE?

Peter Wilson (peterbat1@tpg.com.au) has a request to our membership to help him locate a lost quote. The background to this request is as follows:

"I lost everything in the 2013 Winmalee fire including all my computer systems. One of the files I lost was a collection of quotes about conservation and the environment. Amongst them was a moving and inspirational passage I came across in, I recollect, a former Blue Mountains newspaper published, I think, in the 1930s. I cannot recall the entire quote but I do recall one fragment which makes the connection between the damage to native species and human well-being with words something like "... just as they are diminished so are we diminished."

Peter has been unable to find the source and text of this passage using "Trove" or Google. Can you help?

Henry Lawson in the Blue Mountains

2017 is the sesquicentennial of Henry Lawson's birth. He was born in Grenfell on 17 June 1867 and died in Sydney on 2 September 1922. This is an extract from a chapter written by Arthur Parker in "Henry Lawson by his Mates", published in 1931. They worked together as young men in the Blue Mountains in 1887 and were friends for nearly forty years.

We were near Soldier's Pinch, a mile on the Sydney side of Mount Victoria, and swagmen were always coming along. They stopped for a smoke and a feed, and we would yarn to them... Mount Victoria was mostly bush in those days. It was a romantic spot for a poet. The bush came up all round our camp, and in front of it a track led down through Fairy Bower to the Kanimbla Valley. Henry loved the beauty of the gullies and the ranges. It has been said that he had no eye for the wonders of nature, but I know differently. He was always prowling through the bush and tramping down the long roads. He was very restless even in those days. Once he roused me out at nine o'clock at night, to walk to Blackheath with him, just to look at Govett's Leap by moonlight. He enjoyed beautiful scenery in a quiet way. He was more interested in other things afterwards. But he had time to feel and appreciate it, too, in those days. Read "The Blue Mountains" and "Rain in the Mountains", "The Old Stone Chimney" and other poems that he wrote then.

Calling all Bushwalkers

Society members walk with the Saturday, Monday or Thursday groups (perhaps all three!). There may be other members who don't participate in the organised walks but enjoy getting out and experiencing the many walks in our beautiful Blue Mountains and beyond.

We'd love members to share information on some of their walks; perhaps some interesting flora or fauna was seen along the way or an unusual bird call was heard. Maybe a picture or two could be included.

Please send your stories and photos to Hut News.

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au or PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

32. THE ELUSIVE LEGACY OF MURDO McLENNAN,
Medlow Bath

A landslip at Medlow Bath in September 2016 has complicated preservation of the legacy of a renowned late 19th century and early 20th century stoneworker. Centuries of landslips have carved the striking escarpments of the Kedumba and Megalong Valleys. A coal mine at Katoomba was probably responsible for the massive 1931 collapse at Dogface Rock while the 1992 slip on the east end of Korrowal (Mount Solitary) was natural.

Murdo McLennan (1842-1930) was a stoneworker and landscape architect, born in Scotland. He first began working at Medlow Bath when the Hargraves family owned properties there and was retained when retailer Mark Foy instituted the Hydro Majestic. Under Foy the high quality walking track network, much of it on the current private holding of the Hydro, expanded to a total of 18 km (source: Jim Smith, lectures on local history, Blue Mountains TAFE, 1990).

In 2017, access to McLennan's treasures, even with permission, is difficult. The 2016 landslip has affected the elaborate Colosseum. While the great majority of interpretive tracks in the Blue Mountains are less intrusive, McLennan's tracks remain a very interesting concept for enticing visitors into the Blue Mountains bush.

Without intervention, dramatic and less dramatic natural processes will progressively reclaim McLennan's creations. The "dry stone wall" features and other hallmarks of the Foy period at the Hydro will recede under soil and native vegetation. Even major achievements such as the Colosseum and Glen Rosa,



further into the interior of the Hydro private property, will become less prominent. The track from Old Point Pilcher to the main Grand Canyon track, commissioned by Foy to allow his Hydro guests to visit the Grand Canyon, in part by horse-drawn vehicle, may remain one of the most accessible remnants of the Foy stonework period. Today this track can be visited by following the unsealed road at the end of Rutland Road and veering northward onto a rough vehicular track some way before reaching the modern Point Pilcher Lookout.

Photos:

2016 landslip below the Hydro Majestic. (Christine Davies)

A gentleman at "the Colosseum" in Mark Foy's day.

Photographer: Harry Phillips. Source: Blue Mountains Historical Society



This "Blue Trail" is a collective description for sites in the western Blue Mountains that arouse natural or cultural interest or both. Most are only a short walk from roads or vehicular tracks. One day, a high quality walking path may link them.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942, mobile 04024 02783, email mauricekerkham@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Harold Thompson harold.thompson@bigpond.com 6355 1762 or mobile 0409 010 737

Saturday Walks driver reimbursement: *In an effort to ensure that car drivers are adequately compensated for the use of their vehicles a driver reimbursement policy applies* (Check www.bluemountains.org.au Saturday Walks page for details)

Jan 28. – Feb 25 No walks scheduled. Walkers can meet at Wentworth Falls Stockyard Carpark, at 8.00am, elect a leader and a walk, according to weather conditions. Remember to keep cool and hydrated.

Mar 4 Lions Head. Leader Harold -0409010737. Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockyard Car Park 8.30am. 7km. Grade 3. Map Jamison.

Mar 11 Crayfish Pool. Great opportunities for swimming. Leader Bart 4739_9947. Meet Glenbrook Station CP 8.00. 7km. Grade 3. Map Penrith.

Mar 18 Glowworm Tunnel Circuit. There will be a creek crossing (wet feet) and bring a torch for the tunnel. Leader Mike 47573660. Meet Mt Vic Station CP 8.30. 10k. Grade 3. Map Ben Bullen.

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, 04111 62345, keithdor53@hotmail.com

Feb 13 Leura WW1 Memorial to Lyrebird Dell, Golf Links LO, Fairmont Resort, Lillians Bridge, Conservation Hut and then to Wentworth Falls village via Darwins Walk. 10 km. Some worn steps and tracks. Meet Leura Station commuter car park (outside Baptist Church) 9.30 am. Bob Taylor 4784 1060. Grade 3.

Feb 20 Jack Evans Track, Glenbrook NP. Bring pass if you have one. Walk down to Erskine Creek for a swim to cool off or explore area if not too hot. Meet Glenbrook Station car park east 8.30 am. Car pool fare \$5. National Park entry free may also apply. Mary and Wayne Read 4739 0786. Grade 3.

Feb 27 Numantia Falls, Faulconbridge. Walk along trail and down gully to falls and back. Meet Faulconbridge Station car park north 8.50 am. Maurice 4739 4942, 0402 402 783. Grade 2.

Mar 6 Nature Trail, Wentworth Falls. Walk from station to Conservation Hut then around trail and return to Wentworth Falls via Darwins Walk. Meet Wentworth Falls Station car park 8.45 am. Mary Giddins 0427 390 645 or 4784 2034.

Mar 13 Martins Lookout to Lost World, Springwood. Steep climb down and up, 6 km. Great views. Meet Springwood Station car park 8.15 am. Car pool fare \$4. Ros King 0417 261 465. Grade 3.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, denfenella12@bigpond.com

Feb 9 South Lawson Waterfalls, Lawson. Meet Honour Avenue near shops 8.45am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Feb 16 History tour of the Rocks and St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Sydney. Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Rose 9420 2103. Take lunch. Grade 1

Feb 23 Dante's Glen, Lawson. Meet Lawson Bowling Club 8.45am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Gr

Mar 2 Braeside Walk to Govett's Leap Lookout, Blackheath. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Mar 9 National Pass, Wentworth Falls. Meet Stockyard Car Park, Wentworth Falls 9.30am. Leaders Alan and Jeanette 4757 3750. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 3

Mar 16 Fort Rock, Blackheath. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

A Sugar Glider

One morning in December 2016, our Interpretive Bushwalkers were walking at Wentworth Falls and discovered a Sugar Glider clinging to the trunk of a shrub. They managed to wrap it in a triangle bandage, which was the only suitable thing they had, and one of the walkers immediately left the walk and took it to NPWS at Katoomba and then to the Katoomba vet. (Photo by Corinne Gaston).

We made enquiries from Blue Mountains WIRES whose volunteer had collected it from the vet.

"We are very grateful to the bushwalkers for rescuing this little fellow but unfortunately he passed away," said WIRES carer Lilli Mader. "At 34 grams he would have still been dependent on his mum and unfortunately we do not know how or why he was separated from her or if he had any injuries or illnesses that are not easily visible."

About Sugar Gliders: Sugar gliders are found in tall eucalypt forests and woodlands along eastern NSW.

They are nocturnal and feed on insects, nectar and pollens and make their nests in tree hollows sometimes sharing their nests with

other sugar gliders and their young. These agile marsupials are the most common gliders in Australia and their square membrane allows them to glide up to 90 metres when foraging for food amongst the treetops.

If you come across any native animal needing help please call WIRES on 1300 094 737.

