



**"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"**

## Volunteers needed to help at the Mick Dark Talk for the Future

**Table volunteers:** Talking to guests and handing out information bags, from about 6pm till the talk. Then after the talk till everyone has left.

**Ushers:** A more physical job but very rewarding. Will be needed around 6pm for training, then from before the doors open until the theatre is empty.

**Please contact:** Heather Coster, Events Coordinator, on 0408-223-843 or email [Heather@coster.com.au](mailto:Heather@coster.com.au)

**Mick Dark Talk for the Future**  
**THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER, 7.30 pm**  
Blue Mountains Theatre & Community Hub  
106-108 Macquarie Road, Springwood

### **SPEAKER—BOB BROWN**

The Mick Dark Talk for the Future honours the extraordinary generosity and legacy of Mick Dark, a past president and life member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society and patron of Varuna. The talk aims to inspire community discussion of environmental issues of local and global significance.

Buy your ticket (\$30/\$27/\$18 adults/concession/under 18s) online <http://bluemountainstheatreandhub.com.au/box-office/> by phone 4723 5050 or in person at the Theatre. The event is co-sponsored by Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Varuna Writers Centre. More info: [varuna.com.au](http://varuna.com.au)

## POSITION VACANT - TREASURER

The long-standing Treasurer of the Society is moving to England which creates an opportunity for someone able and willing to take on this role. The Treasurer is responsible for managing the financial affairs of the Society and also incorporates the position of Public Officer who has the responsibility of submission of several formal reports.

This is a voluntary position. Detailed duties include maintaining the Society's financial records, payment of accounts, preparation of monthly reports and organising the Society's annual audit. The Society is exempt from income tax and not registered for GST so there is no requirement for significant taxation expertise.

More details can be obtained by contacting Bart Beech, the incumbent Treasurer, on 4739 9947 or 0413 751 282.

## WATERWAYS FESTIVAL

Get up close to a crayfish - Family walks and talks -  
Meet a turtle - Go on a swamp safari

**SUNDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 10am-2pm**  
at Wentworth Falls Lake Reserve

### **FREE EVENT**

We have a great group of expert scientists, artists and storytellers putting on a **walks, talks and workshops program**. Spaces are limited, go to [www.eventbrite.com.au/e/waterways-festival-tickets-36534296063](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/waterways-festival-tickets-36534296063) to find out more and register to secure your spot.

*Organised by Blue Mountains City Council, in collaboration with Blue Mountains Grammar School, Wentworth Falls Primary School, Kindlehill Steiner School and the Jamison Creek Catchment Community Group, NSW Environmental Trust Saving our Species*

## a leaf, a tree, a forest ...

**Wild Gardens of the Blue Mountains**  
**An exhibition by Ian Brown**

Domestic gardens are designed by gardeners, but wild plant communities arise from natural processes. Sometimes random and chaotic, wild gardens can also reveal order and beauty and the underlying rules of nature. In this exhibition Ian Brown explores the richness and beauty of wild Blue Mountains bush in fine art photographs ... from leaf, bark and flower to massive eucalypts, rainforests and heathland.

**2 September to 22 October, 2017**

**Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah (Visitor Centre). Free entry.**

Photo: Waratah, spring rain. Newnes Plateau



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The **DEADLINE** for the next issue  
of HUT NEWS is

**16 SEPTEMBER 2017**

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## Threatened Fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area: Yellow-bellied Glider *Petaurus australis*

by Judy Smith

The nocturnal Yellow-bellied Glider is arguably the most beautiful of the 66 native species of mammals recorded within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area since European settlement. Greyish above, creamy below and, apart from the long pointed ears, fluffy all over. The tail is especially fluffy. At night, when spotlighted, the eyes shine dull red and the dark markings on the legs and edges of the gliding membrane suggest a largish glider wearing a four legged pair of dark trousers. Most special is the call – on-going whirring, bubbling, shrieking and gurgling - that starts soon after dusk and bounces between small groups of hyperactive gliders moving through the trees. I first heard Yellow-bellies some 40 years ago in southern NSW and most recently in the Kedumba Valley last year. They made me laugh 40 years ago and still do. To hear the call is magic.



The Yellow-bellies' high energy diet includes nectar, honeydew, invertebrates and pollen. A staple is eucalypt sap. Locally, the Grey Gum *Eucalyptus punctata* and Ribbon Gum *E. viminalis* are favoured sources of sap, which is obtained by chewing characteristic V-shaped notches into the tree trunks. At one favoured feeding ground in the Mount Werong area of Blue Mountains National Park the Ribbon Gums appear to be covered by glider graffiti.

Daytime dens and nesting sites are in the hollows of mature eucalypts.

Since 2000, Yellow-bellies have been recorded across the World Heritage Area although we have no records at all (as yet) from within the Thirlmere Lakes section of the World Heritage Area. They are usually in tall forests on sheltered slopes and in gullies where soil fertility is relatively high, but their movement patterns and favoured feeding grounds are not well documented.

The Yellow-bellied Glider in this area (subspecies *australis*) is threatened (a vulnerable species) at state level. Loss of habitat, loss of hollow-bearing trees and inappropriate fire regime all threaten this species. It is sobering to realise that of the 66 native mammals that have been recorded in the World Heritage Area, almost one half (42%) are currently considered to be threatened.

Photos: Yellow-bellied Glider feeding at Grey Gum trunk, Megalong Valley, copyright Jess Bear; Yellow-bellied Glider feeding marks on a Ribbon Gum in south-western Blue Mountains NP, copyright Peter Smith.

### Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

The Visitors Map is full of suggested walks and trips. It is in full colour, 60 by 85 cm in size, and covers the entire Gardens of Stone region at a 1:100,000 scale, making it ideal for planning your next trip to the area.

You can buy a map on the society's website at

[www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS\\_VisitorsMap.htm](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS_VisitorsMap.htm)

## GREAT GROSE WEED WALK SPRING 2017

Blue Mountains National Park is a spectacular World Heritage wilderness right on Sydney's doorstep. NSW National Parks has long recognised the community's deep love for this place, and appreciation of its natural, conservation and economic values. The desire to protect it is strong, and brings its own rewards.

The Great Grose Weed Walk has been going for over 23 years. This volunteer program encourages everyone to join in and protect this precious area by helping to stop the spread of weeds. All are welcome, and most activities don't require bushcare experience.

The Spring 2017 program offers a wide range of activities in remote and accessible places.

### BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW!

Contact Vanessa on (02) 4787 3112  
[vanessa.richardson@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:vanessa.richardson@environment.nsw.gov.au)

### BOOK LAUNCH: *Wayfaring in Wollemi: stories of people in wilderness*, by *Andy Macqueen*

Sunday 22 October 2017, 10.30 am

Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah

The stories of 28 explorers, surveyors, wanderers, cattlemen, would-be developers, adventurers and conservationists who each spent a part of their life in the Wollemi, the largest declared Wilderness in NSW. What took them there and what did they get up to? Did the experience change their lives? The author follows their footsteps through the gorges, over the mountains and into the hideaways.

[www.colongwilderness.org.au/news/2017/andy-macqueen-wayfaring-wollemi-book-launch](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/news/2017/andy-macqueen-wayfaring-wollemi-book-launch)

### BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

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

**Blackheath Community Market**, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm

**Magpie Market**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm

Tube stock \$3. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries: Hugh Brougham 04079 55028  
[nursery@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:nursery@bluemountains.org.au)

### Blue Mountains nature [www.bmnature.info](http://www.bmnature.info)

An Alan Page - Ian Brown initiative, this website aims to provide comprehensive information on the natural heritage of the Blue Mountains and to inspire and inform with a combination of visual, artistic, personal and technical content. A work of art and highly recommended. Editor.

## Say NO to Raising Warragamba

Our overworked volunteer forgot to enclose the promised 'Don't Raise the Dam' brochure with August Hut News. It will be sent to members with October Hut News. In the meantime, you can find a copy at [http://bluemountains.org.au/warragamba/Kowmung\\_Brochure.pdf](http://bluemountains.org.au/warragamba/Kowmung_Brochure.pdf)

A higher spillway will hold all small and medium floods behind the dam wall for several weeks. The submerged vegetation will die, leaving a scarred landscape of silt and dead trees to be infested by weeds after the waters subside. Famous Blue Mountains World Heritage listed wild rivers will be ruined.

Raising the dam wall will **fragment and degrade** two World Heritage listed wilderness national parks; **degrade** world famous scenery of the southern Blue Mountains; **reduce** rare biodiversity, including 40% of the Nationally Threatened Camden White Gum forest; **destroy** Aboriginal cultural heritage; **cause** loss of classic bushwalking areas, historic campsites drowned and access restricted; **promote** further urban sprawl on the floodplain and degradation to the Hawkesbury-Nepean River

**WRITE A LETTER** and oppose raising the dam wall by 14m:

- The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, Premier of NSW
  - The Hon. Luke Foley, Opposition Leader
- (The postal address for both is Parliament House, Sydney 2000)

**ASK THE NSW GOVERNMENT** to adopt a solution that:

- avoids temporary flooding and degradation of World Heritage wilderness and loss of national endangered threatened species
- uses the current dam for flood mitigation, has no additional impacts and ensures floodplain management downstream prevents urban sprawl across the floodplain

Read more: [www.donraisethedam.com/environmental-issues](http://www.donraisethedam.com/environmental-issues)

## Blackheath Caravan Park withdrawn from rezoning proposal

Blue Mountains City Council has considered a planning proposal to introduce a new intensive tourism zone (called SP3 -Tourist) into the Blue Mountains LEP. The new zone is to be applied to sites "where tourism is the focus" and where the intention "is to further develop tourism". During the public exhibition of the planning proposal, four sites were proposed to be rezoned - the Hydro Majestic, Fairmont Resort, Scenic World and the Blackheath Caravan Park.

After strong community opposition, Council withdrew the Blackheath Caravan Park from the proposal. Blue Mountains Conservation Society fully supports this decision. Blackheath Caravan Park offers a low cost accommodation alternative to the high-end resorts. With the lovely Memorial Park and the Blackheath swimming pool opposite, it is very popular with families. Next to bushland at the head of Popes Glen Creek, the site is totally unsuitable for intensive tourism development.

The remaining three sites which are proposed to be zoned SP3 are located in highly sensitive scenic escarpment areas and directly benefit from their location in terms of attracting tourists and visitation. Council now proposes to add additional objectives to the SP3 Zone which relate to protecting these values. We also support the imposition of additional controls by Council which prevent future subdivision of the sites to be zoned SP3.

While the Society remains unconvinced that the new zone is warranted in the Blue Mountains, we are pleased that its application will be limited to sites already intensively developed as high end tourism and resort areas.

## Blue Mountains community and Council committed to Leaving Radiata Plateau Wild!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the rally to **Leave Radiata Plateau Wild**. We had a fantastic turnout!

We were delighted that Mayor Mark Greenhill was able to join us and thrilled that he has now received unanimous approval from Council for full protection of the Plateau. This includes asking the State and/or Commonwealth Government to acquire the land for inclusion in the Blue Mountains National Park. The community thanks the Mayor and all Blue Mountains City councillors for their support for the campaign.

Suzie van Opdorp spoke on behalf of Trish Doyle MP. Our local member recognises the community's determination to protect the Plateau and committed to urgently seek a meeting between the NSW Minister for the Environment, Blue Mountains Conservation Society and community members.



**A terrific thank you, too, goes to the climbers who joined us on the day ... awesome work!**  
(Look for the small figures in the photo below)



Blue Mountains Mayor, Mark Greenhill, committed to seek Council support for the protection of the Plateau.

**Leave Radiata Plateau Wild** has been building momentum over the past few months in a bid to see the Plateau's future secured and saved from development.

Part of the southern escarpment, located between Katoomba and Medlow Bath, Radiata Plateau is the last remaining undeveloped peninsula-plateau in the upper Blue Mountains. The future of the Plateau has been in the balance for over two decades, with the community campaigning for its protection since the early 1990s.

Local residents and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society have long argued that the Plateau should be purchased for inclusion in the Blue Mountains National Park. Now with the support of Council and the outdoor community, we are actively campaigning and raising awareness to secure the future of the Plateau once and for all.

(Continued on page 5)

## Community committed to Leaving Radiata Plateau Wild! (continued from page 4)

### Why is the Plateau special?

- The Plateau has some of the most spectacular sandstone cliffs in the Blue Mountains, including unique crags and rock formations. Unlike many escarpment areas, the natural bushland at the top of the cliffline is untouched. Radiata Plateau is what you see when you go to lookouts such as Cahills Lookout.
- The area has outstanding environmental values - home to two extremely rare plants including one of only ten locations in the world where the Dwarf Mountain Pine grows. It is also habitat to rare fauna, including gliders and quolls and at least five threatened bird species.
- Extensive areas of Blue Mountains Swamp can be found on the Plateau, a nationally recognised endangered ecological community and habitat for threatened species such as Blue Mountains Skink and Giant Dragonfly.
- The Plateau is well known for its historic tracks and passes which are extensively used by bushwalkers, bird watchers and local residents.
- The cliffs are internationally recognised for rock climbing.
- The Plateau has significant Aboriginal cultural values, including being a traditional pathway into the Megalong Valley. However, a comprehensive Aboriginal site survey has never been undertaken on the Plateau.



We are delighted to launch our campaign video, which you can view at <https://vimeo.com/230457411>



Many people believe, because the Plateau is undeveloped, it is part of the national park – it's not. In fact, the vast majority of the Plateau (around 300h), including parts along the cliffline, is owned by *Maharishi's Global Administration Through Natural Law Group (TM Group)*. The group is part of a worldwide organisation, originally founded by Mararishi Mahesh Yogi, which promotes Transcendental Meditation and runs schools, centres and residential retreats throughout Australia.

For over 30 years, the TM Group has wanted to develop the Plateau. This included a proposal for a 400 bed conference centre back in the 1990s (which never proceeded despite Stage One for a 50 bed development being approved).

More recently, in 2012, TM publicly stated that they hoped to build a spa resort and conference facility.

In 2014, two development applications were lodged by TM for three buildings on the Plateau. The Land and Environment Court ultimately refused two of the buildings on environmental grounds. The third building has been approved to proceed. The Society and residents fear over-development by small increments. We also fear that the current public access to virtually the whole of the property is now under threat.

TM's plans are still unknown but, only recently, they have indicated to the Society that they are considering their options in terms of the Plateau and are open to further conversation about its future. We are delighted this communication has begun, though remain mindful of the need to maintain pressure to seek full protection.

Any fragmentation and development of the Plateau will compromise its high conservation values and public accessibility. Join the campaign to ensure that we secure its future, and **Leave Radiata Plateau Wild**

### You can help us protect Radiata Plateau:

- **Letters to the Environment Ministers, calling for protection of the Plateau, are enclosed with this newsletter for BMCS members or available online at [bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplataeuwild/what.htm#email](http://bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplataeuwild/what.htm#email). Please sign and send to show your support for Leave Radiata Plateau Wild.**
- **join the campaign - for further details go to [www.bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplataeuwild](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplataeuwild)**

## **BOOK REVIEW: *Sunlight and Seaweed*, by Tim Flannery, Text Publishing, 2017**

With his trademark light and accessible touch, Professor Flannery brings us up to the minute with the latest technological and social developments relevant to human sustainability in the age of climate change. He sees hope for the long-term sustainability of the globe provided these technologies can be brought to sufficient scale quickly enough, which he admits is by no means certain.

As Flannery notes, remarkable advances have been made in the couple of years since he wrote “Atmosphere of Hope”<sup>1</sup>, change made all the more striking when he compares the world today with the world of the 1950s. These observations prompted me to look back through some of my climate-related books to rediscover the contemporary wisdom when these were written, between 6 and 19 years ago (Evans<sup>2</sup>, Lynas<sup>3</sup>, Kunstler<sup>4</sup>, Pretty<sup>5</sup>, Hamilton<sup>6</sup>, Gilding<sup>7</sup>).

What is striking is the universal plea from these authors that we were running out of time, that it was not too late to turn the situation around, but that we must start taking serious, global action *now* (whenever that was). The first warnings were sounded soon after the famous saw-toothed CO<sub>2</sub> graph from Manua Loa first appeared around 1970. But still the global body politic vacillates. Pretty puts it like this: “Despite great scientific consensus on the harm being done to our planet, there is extraordinarily little macro-political or economic imperative that something might need to change”. Hamilton explains this as a kind of head-in-the-sand ostrich defence to avoid confronting distressing facts. Gilding believes there will be a tipping point, a Great Awakening, when denial will end and we will respond “with extraordinary speed and focus”, going onto a global war footing to overcome the universal challenge. All well and good, but Lynas is correct in saying that by the time the catastrophe becomes undeniably and unavoidably imminent, it may well be too late to do anything about it. And in Hamilton’s assessment, the global body politic has determined that the world is unwilling to trade off a 0.1% decrease in predicted economic growth even in the face of a potentially catastrophic transformation of the conditions of life on Earth.

The one suggestion that had some currency at the time, as perhaps the only solution that was both workable and equitable, was “contraction and convergence”<sup>3</sup>. In this scheme, the global body politic would come together in a spirit of mutual problem-solving goodwill and agree on a total global CO<sub>2</sub> emission, which would be divided between the world’s nations on a *per capita* basis. Advanced, high-emitting nations would agree to reduce their outputs – and hence their living standards – to allow room for developing, low-emitting nations room to increase theirs. The flaw in this plan was that it depended upon the altruism of the developed nations and their willingness to make this sacrifice for the common good. Needless to say, nothing came of it.

In *Sunlight and Seaweed*, Flannery deftly links these environmental challenges with the interwoven challenges presented by a population predicted to reach between

9.6 and 12.3 billion by 2100. Concern about what he terms The Population Bomb has been with us for a long time.

In his capacity as Australian Statistician 1906 – 1921, G.H. Knibbs, became alarmed that the global population had increased by 0.864% (equating to doubling each 80.54 years) in the century 1800 – 1900, a rate which “cannot possibly extend far into the future...” At that rate a population of 7800 million would be reached in 2089, severely taxing the calculated maximum carrying capacity of global agricultural land and supplies of available water. Avoiding the resulting stresses, he anticipated, would require “the virtual elimination of all forms of unscrupulous egoism in the life of nations and in the relations of races.”<sup>8</sup> That situation has now come to pass and yet there has been no sign of any such “elimination of unscrupulous egoism” that might provide some optimism for the future. Nor could Knibbs have anticipated the additional stresses caused by climate change and widespread contamination of land and water that so greatly complicate the picture we face today.

The brilliance of Flannery’s book is that he sees glimpses of emerging technologies that could, if developed on sufficient scale and at sufficient speed, provide a permanent, workable solution to these inter-linked demons threatening the future of humanity.

The twin technologies that offer this hope are, in his evaluation, Concentrated Solar Thermal (CST) and PV-powered mid-ocean kelp farming (PMKF). These could provide what Flannery calls “fundamental building blocks towards solutions to multiple problems”, providing electrical power on a global scale, huge quantities of protein food in the form of abundant fish and shellfish, and abundant fresh water distilled from the ocean or from contaminated rivers or lakes.

An additional and crucial benefit of PMKF would be that the vast forests of giant kelp would absorb such huge quantities of CO<sub>2</sub> that the oceans’ pH would begin to return to normal, allowing the marine ecosystems to recover. And because the ocean CO<sub>2</sub> is dissolved from the atmosphere, over time atmospheric levels would begin to fall too and the damage caused by global warming would begin to abate.

Although various prototypes of these technologies are being developed and some have reached the “proof of concept” stage, Flannery acknowledges that there remains an enormous gulf between what has been done and what needs to be done. He asks “Will it come fast enough?” Nothing to address the climate change issue has happened fast enough yet, but given the recent rapid decoupling of government from other (corporate and private) investment in sustainability-related technologies, is there reason now to hope for the arrival of Gilding’s “Great Awakening”?

ALAN LANE

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(Endnotes on page 7)

## SHELTERING

The Currawong leans into a baleful sky  
with one defiant call  
retreats to bush beneath the ridge  
where wattles splay yellow balls of light  
and banksia quills in tones of palest lime  
paint nectar drop by drop upon their  
leaves  
a family of wrens jitters through the scrub  
the storm - a distant howl above our  
heads.

Michele Fermanis-Winward

*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](mailto:brendan049@gmail.com) or posted to Poets' Corner at 5 Lurline Street, Wentworth Falls 2782.*

### Book Review: Sunlight and Seaweed, by Tim Flannery. Continued from page 6

<sup>1</sup> Atmosphere of Hope: Searching for solutions to the climate crisis, Tim Flannery, 'Text Publishing, Melbourne 2015

<sup>2</sup> Feeding the Ten Billion, L.T. Evans, CUP, 1998

<sup>3</sup> High Tide: News from a Warming World, Mark Lynas, Flamingo, 2004

<sup>4</sup> The Long Emergency, James H Kunstler, Grove, 2005

<sup>5</sup> The Earth only Endures, Jules Pretty, Earthscan, 2007

<sup>6</sup> Requiem for a Species, Clive Hamilton, Earthscan, 2010

<sup>7</sup> The Great Disruption, Paul Gilding, Bloomsbury, 2011

<sup>8</sup> The Shadow of the World's Future", George Handley Knibbs, Ernest Benn, London 1928

## BITING THE HAND THAT FEEDS THEM Don Morison

Since Australia's chief scientist, Dr Alan Finkel, delivered his report on Australia's future energy needs, many Australians have been feeling apprehensive. The contributors to political debate in our nation have been working themselves up for an all-out left versus right culture war, embracing multiple topics.

Is there any chance of a national discussion about energy options that relies on the facts? Not when a former Prime Minister rabbits on about "green theology". Not when a sizeable chunk of the loudest politicians and commentators ignores the consensus of scientific findings and considered predictions about alternatives for the creation of energy.

We might ask if those who are jeering at science have been particularly deprived of the benefits of it. Are the shock jocks using bicycle pedals to crank up their radio transmitters? Or are they taking advantage of the latest electronic technology to spread their messages of dubious value? Are the "clean coal" supporters struggling with a life of subsistence in tumble-down shacks? Or are they driving around in late-model cars with everything that opens and shuts?

Those who dismiss the scientific consensus about energy need to understand. It was science that gave you your extremely comfortable lifestyles. Destroy the reputation and effectiveness of science and the Australian community at your peril.

## Court of Appeal decision to protect the Coxs River and Sydney's drinking water catchment

The NSW Court of Appeal has ruled in favour of conservation group 4Nature to protect Sydney's drinking water catchment from the impacts of Springvale coal mine. The appeal court overturned the Land and Environment Court's earlier decision in favour of Centennial Coal, which operates the mine, and found that the original approval was in fact unlawful. This was a unanimous decision of the three judges. The court ordered Centennial to pay 4nature's costs for legal representation and experts.

This is a great win for the environment. Centennial has been sending millions of litres of highly saline, polluted water into the Coxs River which runs through the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and into Lake Burrangorang, Sydney's main drinking water supply.

### What the case was about

The case revolved around how the decision-maker should have applied the Sydney Drinking Water State Environmental Planning Policy to the mine discharge and whether it was done correctly. This policy says that consent cannot be granted unless the decision-maker is satisfied that the development (in this case Springvale mine expansion) would have a *neutral or beneficial effect* on the water. This means there needs to be a comparison with a baseline measure. The first judge (Land and Environment Court) said that it was up to the decision-maker to decide what the baseline would be. The Court of Appeal rejected this and decided that the appropriate baseline was the actual water quality if there was no discharge. In other words, if the project wasn't approved.

### How the decision may influence other court cases:

This is the first time a court has decided on how the drinking water policy should be applied. Thus, this decision will potentially have implications for all developments across the Sydney drinking water catchment. It also confirms that all planning policies (there is one on koala habitat and another for mining, for instance) must be interpreted as strictly as legislation rather than more loosely.

The Sydney Morning Herald has reported that the Springvale Mine decision may be relevant in a challenge to the extension to the Wilpinjong mine near Mudgee.

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/staggering-nsw-emissions-rule-to-be-tested-in-court-for-the-first-time-20170816-gxxga3.html>

Madi Maclean

## 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.

## Margaret Esson (1926 – 2016) by Margaret Baker

Margaret was a New Zealander by birth, a world traveller, pen-pal to many, a keen gardener, bird observer and photographer, and most of all a dedicated conservationist with a special passion for plants. By the late 1960s Margaret had settled in Faulconbridge and was a teacher of Biological Sciences and Head Teacher Science at Katoomba and Blaxland High Schools. In her out-of-school hours and in retirement she expressed her wider interests in her lovely garden of native plants, in painting, as a teacher of Blue Mountains plants and geology at the Katoomba Day and Evening College, and as a volunteer for a number of organisations including the Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Always keen on plant evolutionary history, Margaret was a valued guide at Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens, as well as a worker for more than 40 years with the Australian Plants Society Blue Mountains Group (then the SGAP) where she served a term as President.

I first met Margaret in the late 1970s when I joined the SGAP and the Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society (that later merged with the Upper BMCS to become the BMCS). At that time she was engaged in a one-woman fight to save the rare *Eucalyptus burgessiana*, the Faulconbridge Mallee Ash, from the encroachment of housing estates and over-zealous hazard reduction fires on the northern side of Faulconbridge and Linden. In April 1986 Margaret compiled a detailed submission for the LBMCS that proposed to Bob Carr, the Minister for Planning and Environment, that the land in the headwaters of Linden Creek between Meeks Crescent and Shirlow Avenue Faulconbridge be incorporated into the Blue Mountains National Park. This land parcel of 143 hectares was originally occupied by Aboriginal people whose visible legacy included axe-grinding grooves along the creek. It contained significant stands of *E. burgessiana* and *E. deanei* as well as the historic walking track to Peggy's Pool that was used by bushwalkers and local residents. A subsequent article by Margaret in the National Parks Journal left no doubt about the historic and biodiversity value of this ridge and valley complex.

The campaign for the Linden Creek sub-catchment continued for five years during which time Margaret mustered all the political and media interest and assistance she could. However despite some hope in 1990 that the land could be acquired under the newly created Open Space and Heritage Fund, it remains today in private hands. Undaunted however, all subdivision proposals for sections of the catchment were vigorously opposed. In the late 1980s I worked closely with Margaret as we moved between President and Vice-president roles in the LBMCS and I well remember her determination to alter the 1988 subdivision plans for a land parcel at the end of Hilderleigh Close (Muriel St), Faulconbridge that would otherwise see the bulldozing of a significant stand of the Faulconbridge Mallee. The developer of "The Knoll" as this estate had become



*Eucalyptus burgessiana* buds, flowers and fruit Shirlow Avenue Faulconbridge (Mark Baker Aug 2016)

known, proposed 28 house sites, the LBMCS under Margaret's guidance suggested 20. In February 1991 the final deliberation on the subdivision set out plans for 25 houses plus the 4.2 hectare Burgessiana Reserve along Taronga Way in Faulconbridge. Disappointingly significant numbers of the mallee were removed for the construction of the estate.

The late 1980s/early 1990s was a significantly busy time for local conservationists with the changeover from Town and Country Plans to Local Environment Plans. There was much controversy about proposed planning changes and all Blue Mountains conservation

groups became involved in the fight to stop planned rezoning that would result in the subdivision of many blocks of bushland on the fringes of towns and villages that had previously been zoned rural. Margaret threw herself into the thick of this activity and vigorously fought against subdivision proposals for land that still supported *E. burgessiana*. I was tasked with following the zoning changes through Winmalee to Hawkesbury Heights. Together we realised that the Blue Mountains Local Environment Plan that had been submitted to the Department of Planning for approval contained violations of at least 16 of the aims and objectives of the Local Environment Plan as well as last minute changes to proposed zonings following complaints by landowners and developers. These changes had not been exhibited to the public, a direct contravention of Section 66 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

I learnt much about lobbying from Margaret at this time as she instigated correspondence with NSW politicians and government representatives, the Department of Planning and the Sydney Morning Herald. We found ourselves at long meetings with the editor of the Blue Mountains Gazette and with the Department of Planning and were eventually interviewed and photographed for a SMH article (*Battle lines drawn in War of the Mountains* Sept 9, 1991). Leaving no stone unturned, Margaret turned to direct political influence and organised for us to actively and successfully campaign (i.e. wear-out shoes while letterboxing) for an environmental candidate in the 1991 Council elections in Ward 3. Similar actions by others contributed to the dramatic change in the make-up of the BMCC councillors. A less development inclined Council undertook the revision of LEP 1991 as required by the Department of Planning and significant bushland areas were removed from the threat of development.

(Continued on page 9)

Margaret Esson, by Margaret Baker (continued from page 8)

While Margaret had not been successful in her aim of adding the 143 hectare Linden Creek sub-catchment to the neighbouring National Park, she saw most of this land achieve an Environmental Protection zoning in LEP 1991. Today under LEP 2015 it remains as E2 land which does not allow subdivision. Frustratingly however, part of this property that is at the end of Shirlow Avenue retains an E4 zoning that does allow residential development. Some of the best examples of *E. burgessiana* in this part of Faulconbridge are in the E4 zone. Margaret's fight is not over.

In more recent times Margaret suffered dreadful injuries in a motor vehicle accident and spent a long period in Nepean and Katoomba Hospitals. After a brief return home she was placed into care, first in Edinglassie at Emu Plains, then at Buckland in Springwood. Despite her declining physical abilities she maintained an active interest in botanical and conservation societies and enveloped her bedside with mailed magazines and journals. She was always keen to know about the latest goings on at the various local societies of which she was a part and especially wanted to converse about local conservation issues and campaigns. She invariably required news about the Faulconbridge Mallee.

Margaret was a generous monetary supporter of many organisations and appeals throughout her life. As well as her bequest to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, she left gifts for Mount Tomah Botanical Gardens, National Trust and the Wilderness Society. The Aboriginal Medical Service was the major beneficiary of her estate. While her conservation involvement was better known, few people would have been aware of the deep humanitarian concern for indigenous people held by this quietly compassionate woman.

## Wild Life in Blackheath

Christine Davies

I have sometimes come across a large Case Moth caterpillar (*Metura elongates*) which has sticks attached to its case. On 22 August I found a similar, smaller caterpillar on the outside of the house. It could have been mistaken for a bit of detritus, except it was walking up the aluminium window frame. Just 1.2 cm long, its lightweight case, made of chopped up leaves and silk, was being buffeted by quite a strong wind.

I emailed Australian Museum's Search and Discover Team ([SAND@austmus.gov.au](mailto:SAND@austmus.gov.au)) to find out what it was. As usual, they were very helpful. Three days later I received this reply:

Case moths, bag moths or bagworms are names given to a group of moths (Family Psychidae) whose caterpillars make portable homes from silk, usually attaching plant material, detritus or sand grains to the outside. Caterpillars of each species build quite distinctive cases, although there can be considerable variation within a single species, especially in those that feed on a wide variety of different plants.

The species in your photo looks like a Leaf Case Moth *Hyalarcta huebneri*. A common and widespread species, especially in coastal areas, found from north Queensland south to Victoria and South Australia and across to Western Australia. The caterpillars feed on a very wide range of plants including eucalypts, brush boxes (*Lophostemon*), tea trees (*Leptospermum*) and other natives, as well as a wide range of fruit trees and ornamentals. The caterpillars attach pieces of leaves from the food plant to their cases.

Further reading: [www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane\\_moths/LeafCaseMoth.htm](http://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_moths/LeafCaseMoth.htm) and [www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane\\_moths/PSYCHIDAE.htm](http://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_moths/PSYCHIDAE.htm)



Leaf Case Moth *Hyalarcta huebneri*



*Metura elongates*

### 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](http://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](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)

### Welcome to new members

Patricia Johnson

Sue-Ellen Smith

Ann Montague

Stephen Ransom

Jenny Day

**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.

**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**  
[www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

'Like' us on Facebook:  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society  
Follow us on Twitter: [bmcnsnw](https://twitter.com/bmcnsnw)

## Henry Lawson in the Blue Mountains

Celebrating the sesquicentenary of Henry Lawson's birth

At the end of 1921, following a spell in hospital, Henry Lawson was sent by friends to the Blue Mountains in the hope that the clean mountain air would revive his failing health. Lawson spent Christmas and New Year 'resuscitating in the Hills' and the local newspaper, the Blue Mountains Echo, noted his presence in its issue of 6 January 1922. *He is no new chum to Katoomba*, it reported: *he knew it nearly 40 years ago and in a chat with Harry Peckman, the Mountain Poet of the early days, many memories long dead were revived.* (source: The Prince of Whips, the Life and Works of the Blue Mountains Pioneer Harry Peckman, by John Low and Jim Smith)

The Echo also published a poem, "**When the Visitors Go**", written by Henry at the end of his stay where he reminisces about being "permanent", living and working in the mountains, and coming back as a visitor. An extract:

When the house is full – and it holds a score –  
And you've known them all for a week or more,  
And the last day comes and they crowd the hall  
With babies and baskets and rugs and all.

When the time is close and the train is near,  
And startingly shrill the whistle you hear,  
When "Good-byes" are said and handkerchiefs wave,  
The house is as dead as a bushman's grave.

With a sinking feeling you can't resist,  
You go outside and see in the mist –  
Through something nearly akin to tears –  
The hurrying ghosts of the vanished years.

I never dreamed in the dead old days,  
When we all worked hard in our different ways,  
That I'd come back to the hill and glen,  
A Visitor, Tourist, or "Specimen".

(Henry Lawson, January 1922)

### Letter to the Editor:

Thanks for another interesting issue of Hut News (August 2017). Jim Smith's piece on the Darwin's Walk plaques was of special interest. It brought back memories of that special walk in 1986 organised by Peter Stanbury and Reinis Zusters at which I was present.

The late Tim Elliot was indeed memorable as Charles Darwin and your printing of several verses of Henry Lawson's "Ghost at the Second Bridge" on the following page reminded me of another occasion at which Tim excelled.

He and I and my brother Jim did a historical presentation for a group at the Albert & Victoria Hotel at Mount Victoria sometime in the 1990s. I spoke, Jim sang and Tim read/performed various pieces including Lawson's 'Ghost'. I suggested that he only read an edited version as I thought the poem was too long. Tim, however, insisted on reading the whole sixteen verses and held us all enthralled. He was right, of course, and I was wrong. He was a fine actor and very generous with his time. I think the three of us might have worked together on at least one other such occasion.

One more thing from the recent issue. Your suggestion that Lawson's mates Jack Jones and Arthur Parker rode down Mount Victoria on a bicycle is I think incorrect. I'm sure it would have been a horse drawn 'sociable', a type of carriage. Here are some good photos on an English website devoted to horse-drawn vehicles:

<http://gail-thornton.co.uk/private-vehicles/sociable.php>

John Low, 7 August 2017



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.

#### **42. McKANES BRIDGE**, Middle Coxs catchment

Although the roads around Lithgow are often lacking in easy places to stop and devoid of luxurious facilities, there are some intriguing spots along lonely thoroughfares.

The reserve beside the bridge on McKanes Falls Road looks initially to be a haven for weeds. However, there is a pleasant walk through the Casuarinas along the rock pools of the Coxs River

#### **41. MARKS TOMB CAVE**, Medlow Bath

In early Spring, a corridor of golden wattle, nectar rich hairpin banksias and fallen gum leaves leads to an overhang. Four full-size “portals” plus “keyholes” create complex plays of sunlight on the earth below the dark sandstone.

A most unusual rock formation. The man who gave instructions for his mortal remains to have this as their final resting place was a most unusual man.

Mark Foy (1865-1950) can be appreciated through the history of buildings he conceived. There was the Hydro. In 1904, Foy amalgamated the Belgravia building and other parts of the old Hargraves holding and nearby buildings into a hot and cold spa resort. After multiple incarnations and hibernations, it's now a mountains venue known for its warm welcomes.

There was his wife's half-way house. Mrs Foy found Blue Mountains trains slow, dirty and annoying so her husband built a little place where her coach could lay up overnight on trips from Darling Point to Medlow Bath and she could rest her head. He later sold this Faulconbridge property to Norman Lindsay and now its one of the National Trust's showpieces.

Finally, there's the ornate department store building opposite Sydney's Museum Station. Foy was an honest retailer and the thousands of Sydney-siders entering the building to purchase something important had a fair idea what the charge would be. In 2017, the building is part of the “Downing Centre” complex of NSW courts and most entering still have a good understanding of the charge.

Standing before the bent old Black Ash tree, the orange lichen, the “Old Man's Beard” plant, the grey flaky-barked tea trees and the geebung, it's easy to understand Mark Foy's love for the hideaway that contrasted to the intensity of his life.

But his family didn't put him there. Maybe they seized the opportunity to stop doing what he said. One thing we can take from the story of Mark Foy: If you are one of those wise people who want to spend lots of time communing with your favourite piece of Blue Mountains bushland, do it while you're alive.

not far away. The sub-structure of the bridge itself lives up to the claims made for it by the historic marker.

The truss bridge is a reminder of how stone and timber infrastructure helped the development of New South Wales transport system. This is particularly so in the rugged valley areas of the Greater Blue Mountains.

**The plaque beside the bridge reads:**  
**HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER** McKanes Bridge, Lithgow, as a representative of McDonald Truss Road Bridges  
In 1884 John A McDonald introduced a new timber truss design. His bridges were a significant technical improvement on earlier designs being stronger, easier to build and maintain and allowing for a future increase in loads. McDonald Truss bridges were significant in the development of the colonial road network. This 1893 bridge was an important transport link within this region and is an excellent example of the 91 built, of which only five remained in 2002.  
The Institution of Engineers, Australia and  
Roads and Traffic Authority NSW, 2002

Photos:

Top: A bushwalker at Marks Tomb. (David Noble <http://www.david-noble.net/blog/?tag=marks-tomb>)

Below: Only a few man-made structures can live up to the natural beauty of the Coxs River countryside. (Christine Davies)



## 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) Saturday Walks page for details)

Sep 16 **Gardens of Stone.** A new adventure of discovery – off track, part exploratory wilderness area so party size limited. Dependent on 4WD availability Book early. 5km., Gr 3. May be scratchy so protective clothing necessary. Leader: Hugh [huespe47@gmail.com](mailto:huespe47@gmail.com) 0423 309 854 after 8pm.

**Walkers preferring on-track/longer walk** should meet at Wentworth Falls. CP at 8.30am, choose a walk and leader on the day.

Sep 23/24 **Overnight pack walk. Camp alongside the beautiful Nattai River and walk along Starlight's Track.** Leader: Diana 0432619305. Dist approx. 6km, Map Hill Top. Contact leader to book in and for more details.

Sep 30 **Mystery Walk to an exciting place!!** Leader: Mike 47573660. To book in and for all the details contact leader.

Oct 7 **Glenbrook to Springwood.** Leader: Bart 47399947. Map Springwood. Walkers should contact leader for more details and to book in.

Oct 14. **Victory Track.** (Falconbridge) Leader: Eddie 47842691. Starting from Falconbridge Station at 9.00am. Map Springwood. For full details and to book in, contact leader.

**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](mailto:keithdor53@hotmail.com)

Sep 11 **Neates Glen, Grand Canyon, Beauchamp Falls and up to Evans Lookout,** Blackheath. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.40 am. Car pool. Wayne and Mary Read 4739 0786 M 0429 021 296. Grade 3.

Sep 18 **Lawson Station to Hazelbrook Station via Lawson Waterfalls.** Fire trail to Victor Falls (Hazelbrook), track to Adams Lookout, Valley Road to Hazelbrook Station. Approx 9 km. Meet Lawson Bowling Club car park 8.45 am. Kate Litchfield 4759 1943. Grade 3.

Sep 25 **October Creek, Mount Wilson.** Meet Mt Victoria Station 8.50 am. Car pool fare \$5. Liz Stark 4754 4966. Grade 2.

Oct 2 Public holiday – no walk.

Oct 9 **Blaxland to Warrimoo via Cripple Creek.** Easy/medium walk (2 hills) 8 km. Meet Blaxland Station north side 9.15 am. Maurice 0402 402 783. Grade 2.

**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](mailto:denfenella12@bigpond.com)

Sep 14 **Birdwood Gully and Madeline Glen, Springwood.** Meet Springwood Station Car Park north side 9.00am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942 or 0402 402 783. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Sep 21 **Leura Cascades.** Meet cnr Megalong St and the Mall 9.30am. Leader Christine 4757 2864. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Sep 28 **Bus trip to Great North Road, Wisemans Ferry.** Book and pay Tracy \$12 0434 362 611. Meet Springwood Car Park behind Westpac Bank 8.00am sharp. Leader Keith 0411 162 345. Take lunch. Grade 2

Oct 5 **October Creek, Mount Wilson.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2

Oct 12 **Cronulla to Gunnamatta Bay.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.05am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942 or 0402 402 783. Take lunch. Grade 2

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

### NURSERY NEWS

The Society is back at the Markets, selling native plants which over-wintered at Blackheath. 'Prostanthera ovalifolia' – flowering examples of this mintbush went well at the Blackheath market – more are available.

Negotiations have ceased on the two potential sites for a new operational nursery we were reviewing in Lawson – one due to council zoning and other due to lack of interest by the owner. However the council have been asked about any potential sites they may have for us between and including Lawson and Hazelbrook.

Several new volunteers contacted me during the 'winter break' with one commencing on 01/08/17 – always room for more!

Hugh Brougham 04079 55028  
[nursery@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:nursery@bluemountains.org.au)

### 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](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml)

### SPRING SHOW

#### GLENBROOK NATIVE PLANTS RESERVE

**9-10 SEPTEMBER, 10 am to 4 pm**

Great Western Highway, Glenbrook  
Opposite the Information Centre

**FREE ENTRY**

An annual event of the Blue Mountains Group  
Australian Plants Society NSW