



*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"*



## A tribute to Joan Gahl

Members of the Society will be sad to learn that Joan Gahl passed away in November. Joan will always be remembered for her strength of mind and purpose and her amazing no nonsense approach to life, a life that she lived to the full.

Over many years she made an enormous contribution to the Society. She supported her husband Imre when he was president, she looked after refreshments at monthly meetings, and she and Imre were tireless devotees at our native plant nursery, there from the beginning. Joan always encouraged new volunteers with her enthusiasm and love for the plants. Her contributions were recognised by her being awarded a life membership.

Joan was a founding member of the Sublime Point Bushcare Group, formed in 1996, and she worked tirelessly for the Orpheus Strings Orchestra and Blue Mountains hospital's Women's Auxiliary.

You would meet Joan wherever good works were going on, working at the nursery or bushcare, selling things at fetes for the Hospital Auxiliary, generally just "being there" at various events. And some will "always remember her wonderful hugs". Joan and Imre were passionate about growing native plants and their Leura garden reflects that passion. The photo shows Joan in the nursery greenhouse.

## Hello Lithgow! – a Banner Day in the Gardens of Stone

150 people gathered near Lithgow to celebrate the Gardens of Stone region on the last Sunday in Spring.

The welcoming address by Waradjuri Elder Aunt Helen Riley gave the right note for this event that sought "Respect for Country and People". These words were on one of the 30x3 metre banners in Waradjuri and English. Stirring songs by Peter Drinkall and inspirational pagoda poetry by Wyn Jones also helped put us into the right frame of mind.

All participants received a "We Love Lithgow, Protect Gardens of Stone" bumper sticker and a program that offered Wild Cafés on one side and a map of mysterious "Sphinx Spur" on the other!!!

Those who had never seen the internationally significant pagodas before included three Srilankan women on the 8.15am train that Janine Kitson, with boundless enthusiasm, had roped into this event. Janine also brought along John Koch, a retired member of the CFMEU, who is now going to raise protection of the Gardens of Stone region at the next union meeting.

Informative lunchtime workshops, held under shady tarps, outlined our hopes and plans to save the Gardens of Stone, the Kowmung River and Radiata Plateau and to develop community-based renewable energy in Lithgow. The Wild Cafés were professionally facilitated by Dr Eugene Fernandez and others to uplift spirits to inspire deeper involvement in these issues.

Tim Harris, Dave Noble, Ian Brown and Henry Gold expertly captured by drone and camera our professionally produced banners. Through these efforts the message that Lithgow needs to reserve 39,000 hectares of internationally significant bushland if it is to grow its tourism industry went out.

Keith Muir (Photo by David Noble)



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## Dick Smith Fair Go

In about 1900, geographer Edgeworth David accurately predicted Australia's population growth through the 20th century on the basis of his detailed knowledge of the environmental constraints. The economic growth advocates of the day rubbished or ignored him and predicted there would be more than 100 million Australians by 2000. In 2017, Dick Smith faces eerily similar challenges in trying to launch a responsible debate about population. Few words should be wasted on his critics—enough to say that their opinions are short-sighted and self-serving in the extreme.

Visit <https://www.dicksmithfairgo.com.au/> and find out about the Dick Smith Fair Go campaign. The following is an extract of an article which appeared in The Australian newspaper.

*I believe we are on our way to destroying Australia as we know it today. Renowned building developer Harry Triguboff wants an Australia of 150 million people. My friend the billionaire retailer Gerry Harvey says Australia's population is more likely to grow to 100 million by the end of the century and we have no control over it. How can that be? Surely as a democracy we have control over the size of our country.*

*After two years of extensive research, I produced a 20-page Fair Go manifesto. It explains what experts say we need to do to fix this crucial problem. Most importantly, it's clear that most of our population growth is coming from record immigration levels and our government has complete control of that.*

*My document also links population growth with the rapid increase in the disparity of wealth in our country. Australia's wealthiest 1 per cent owns more than the bottom 70 per cent — that's 17 million Aussies.*

*Eight out of the 10 wealthiest countries, per capita, have populations of less than 10 million. At the same time, countries such as Japan, Germany and Italy have population growth running at close to zero, or even negative.*

*Three months ago, I launched my Fair Go campaign supported by \$1 million of television advertisements focusing on the impossibility of endless growth. The campaign highlighted how every time a politician says growth, he or she means 'endless growth', and that's not possible in a finite world."*

Dick Smith goes on to say that since the launch of the Fair Go campaign, the major points have received little coverage and some have misinterpreted his proposals as an anti-immigration campaign. He supports immigration but believes it should be set at sensible and sustainable levels.

*When it comes to my concern about population, I am not a lone eccentric. Eight out of 10 Australians believe we should have a population policy. It is common sense. Every Australian family has a population policy of its own. Parents could have 20 kids, but they don't. Most choose to have the number of children to whom they can give a good life.*

*As a country we need to do the same and we need our politicians to be completely open and game to talk about this important issue.*

The **DEADLINE** for the next issue  
of HUT NEWS is  
**20 JANUARY 2018**  
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**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December**  
**FIRED UP on climate change**

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Speakers – Info – Live music

Carrington Hotel Gardens, Katoomba Street  
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[https://www.facebook.com/  
events/495652450811352/](https://www.facebook.com/events/495652450811352/)

## Adani protest – Success or failure, by Susanne Rix



"My granddaughter has just turned five. I'm here to stop Adani and protect the environment and our water for her future."

Susanne Rix, grandmother, NSW

On 25<sup>th</sup> October at 2.00 am, in a convoy of 5 vehicles, we left a secret site and headed deep into Northern Queensland mining territory. Three hours later, a team of us climbed a locked gate and walked one km to where there were five large earthmoving machines and a temporary Adani office.

Our intention was to stop work on the Adani construction and to get publicity for the fact that work had begun. With the help of our supporters, two of us were then locked on to a bulldozer and a grader.

The lock-on device consists of two thick steel pipes about 12 cm diameter welded together to form a V. We inserted our arms into the pipes and, wearing fitted metal bracelets attached by wire to carabiners, locked our arms together at the junction of the two pipes. As long as we were conscious, we could unlock ourselves at any time. A camera crew from FLAC (Front Line Action against Coal) took photos, movies, conducted interviews and began posting to social media.

Not long after daybreak, several workers arrived but seeing the vehicles and crowd at the gate ventured no further, instead calling for management. The first part of our mission was successful. We had stopped work for the day.

Soon a group of Adani workers drove up and began photographing us. Of course, these workers were fairly hostile – shoving their cameras within inches of our faces. I'm easily intimidated by aggression. This, combined with being locked under the engine of a bulldozer for an uncertain number of hours and 15 cm from the fuel line, triggered unbelievable fear.

When the police arrived our supporters left, and John and I were left locked on to our machines (out of sight of each other) while the police and workers watched us. We shared stories, sang and meditated the hours away. The temperature by the coast that day was over 35 degrees. By noon, the sun was landing on much of my body and I was miserably hot.

Police kept coming over to us and asking us again to have ourselves unlocked. We were then informed that a 'cut team' had been ordered and would be coming from Mackay (2 hours away). A cut team?!

Of course I knew that if I stayed attached, my lock-on device would be cut by some kind of oxyacetylene welding. I thought about the implications of an oxyacetylene torch and a fuel line. Heat + fuel. Hmmm. So for another 2 hours I worked myself into a frenzy of fear. I could see the headlines. "Grandmother stops Adani. Construction stops while they bury her remains."

By this time, I had been locked on for about 8 or 9 hours, sitting on the ground in a twisted uncomfortable position. Hot and busting.

Thinking about the cut team I agreed to unlock. I was arrested, charged, taken to the "watch house" and finally released about 9.30 pm. We arrived back at camp about 2.00 am. I'm now on bail, waiting for a court case and a huge fine. So is John.

The action was reported in most of the Queensland papers, some national papers, was on TV and radio in Queensland, and has had thousands of view on social media. This was our mission.

A week later, Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk stated that her Government would veto any Federal Government loan to Adani's Carmichael coal mine rail project.

Already, the beaches of Northern Queensland are tinged grey with coal dust. Tourism, which provides over 60,000 jobs on the Barrier Reef, is suffering. In Cairns it is down 30%. More jobs are threatened than the Adani mine could ever provide. But the greatest threat is its effect on climate change. To build the largest coal mine in the southern hemisphere is madness. If it goes ahead, several other companies (like Rinehart's) are waiting to open their mines in the Galilee basin, making the area the largest coal producer in the world.

I won't really know if my crazy, fearful action was successful until any threat of mining in the Galilee Basin ceases forever.

### Compost, not landfill Christine Davies

I long advocated replacing the heavy china cups and mugs we used at Society events. The boxes of cups are too heavy for some of our volunteers and are probably a work safety issue. After some investigation, we started using BioCups from BioPak. There is always at least one complaint from a well-meaning member or visitor that we should be more environmentally responsible and not use disposable cups, but this risk of injury to our valuable volunteers has been eliminated.

A recent article in the Sydney Morning Herald caught my attention. You can read it at <http://www.biopak.com.au/blog/biopak-news/would-you-like-landfill-with-that-australias-coffee-obsession-comes-at-a-cost>

Richard Fine and Gary Smith of BioTek write that Australians are big coffee drinkers and a lot of it comes in disposable or take-away coffee cups. Australians use about one billion of these cups every year. Most of

(Continued on page 10)

## The holidays are nigh – time to clear the desk?<sup>1</sup> Dr Brian Marshall

The NSW and Federal governments, with one and two sitting weeks remaining respectively, will soon be in holiday mode. Public-service desks will be cleared and the 'silly season' will be underway. If only life were that simple!

For non-government organizations (ngos), such as volunteer-based environment groups, the outcome of governmental and company 'desk-clearing' is the creation of work over the holiday period. At best, this is an inadvertent result of statutory public-exhibition periods within which an ngo's response to a project must be lodged. At worst, it could mask blatant attempts to sneak a proposal through whilst overloaded volunteers are drowning!

This year seems worse than 'usual'! Not only are there company-sourced development proposals to be dealt with, but the NSW government has released final versions or drafts of legislative changes relating to assessment, and has issued directions statements regarding the evolution of the national parks system and conservation on private lands.

These government-sourced documents are part of philosophical changes initiated under the Baird government and unfortunately progressed under the Berejiklian government. In most cases, the associated language ticks all the boxes. For example, Minister Roberts' media release in relation to the *EPA Amendment Bill* emphasises the role of the changes in promoting community participation, creating a simpler and faster planning system, and engendering confidence in outcomes. All such objectives are admirable at face-value, but to what extent are they achieved and what is hidden beneath them?

In the case of the *EPA Amendment Bill*, 'community participation' was largely disregarded in and between the Parliamentary sessions devoted to debating the Bill. The Better Planning Network (BPN) identified significant problems which were put forward in the Upper House debate but none were adopted.

In another DPE document, a 'simpler and faster' planning system is said to "...*better accommodate growth...and economic development across the state, while protecting the environment.*" The last phrase comprises empty words; the types of growth and development which the NSW government holds dear invariably have adverse environmental consequences. It is for precisely this reason that environmental organizations attempt to stop or modify development proposals, and why the NSW biodiversity offsets policy for major projects enables developers to meet offset requirements through payment to an offsets fund.

Make no mistake about it, new-found simplicity and speed in the planning system facilitate developments to the detriment of the natural environment. It follows that 'confidence in outcomes' is deceptively two-faced: developers are confident that the long-standing system of planning and environmental protection has been re-jigged to fit the NSW government's philosophy of growth and greed; environmental groups are conversely operating within a system where the dice is loaded against them.

In a recent document (*Beyond Tenure*<sup>2</sup>), Timber NSW has become so emboldened by the NSW government's lack of environmental empathy, that it advocates bringing all native forest (irrespective of whether it is in national parks, state forests, lease-hold or private land) under one system of management. The aim is to have sustainable, active and adaptive management over all tenures, with due reference to social, economic and environmental factors. Unsurprisingly, this would open national parks and other tenures to logging, thinning and removal of 'undergrowth', and would financially benefit the timber and forest-products industry which Timber NSW represents.

The 'Beyond Tenure' proposal could complement the NSW government's growth-greed philosophy, and is consistent with the financial and human-resource emasculation of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The proposal is totally incompatible with the concepts of national parks and wilderness, and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Environmental groups will strongly oppose it in 2018.

This article was to have finished with a list of submissions, presentations and meetings scheduled between now and late-January, particularly those involving council-area land-use, Gardens of Stone aspects, and parks and world heritage, but it would be too long. Suffice to say that, irrespective of whether it reflects a deliberate ploy or an inadvertent outcome, the work-volume means that in some cases the dark forces will go unchallenged. Such is life!

<sup>1</sup> The fully referenced article is available from <http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/articles/TheHolidaysAreComing.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://timbernsw.com.au/beyond-tenure/>

### Denfenella

*in memory of Denis Kevans, 1939-2005*

When craven politicians are forgotten  
and their names covered over with slime  
and their tasteful caskets are rotten,  
O poet, it will still be your time.

When the ocean is lapping round Penrith  
and horses and buggies are back,  
the pilgrimage to Denfenella  
will become a well-worn mountain track.

Your heart was as big as your laughter,  
your mind was as big as the plain,  
your dreams were the dreams of the people.  
Will one such come this way again?

As I gaze at galah and rosella  
under deep blue mountain heavens  
I like to think Denfenella  
was named after you, Denis Kevans.

Brendan Doyle

## “Wayfaring in Wollemi” by Andy Macqueen Reviewed by Don Morison

Why does a white fella—woman or man—leave behind the civilised comforts applying to their century of birth and penetrate deep into one of the least accessible temperate wildernesses on earth? The question is answered through descriptions of 200 years of journeys by more than two dozen excursionists in Andy Macqueen’s new book, “Wayfaring in Wollemi”.

Surveyors, soldiers, squatters, adventurers, activists, self-styled champions of the Australian economy, they all have their reasons. In prose, Macqueen depicts a balance between the landscape, the motivations of the wayfarers and the passage of time in a realm where familiar points of reference for time have vanished.

We are curious about how urban landscapes affect people’s thought processes but we make a leap forward when we research and speculate, as Macqueen has so thoroughly, about the mindset of a human travelling through unfamiliar wilderness. A large part of the first half of the work deals with surveyors supervised by Major Thomas Mitchell. While reasonable attention is given to any virtues Mitchell might have possessed, Macqueen leaves us with a sharply defined portrait of “the boss from hell”. He makes multiple surveyors stand on a spectrum of positive and negative engagement with the Wollemi but oppression by Mitchell was their common fate.

Having read Pat Studdy-Cliff’s biography of Elizabeth Jessie Hickman, the supposed “lady bushranger” of Nullo Mountain and also excerpts of Michael Keats’ and Brian Fox’s works about the Wollemi, I found Macqueen charting a very pleasant middle course. “Wayfaring in Wollemi” is highly readable but it’s neither overly gossipy nor scientifically clinical, useful as that can be. Like Studdy-Cliff, Macqueen has served us doses of nudity, illicit behaviour and chase scenes, but he admits they’re embellished.

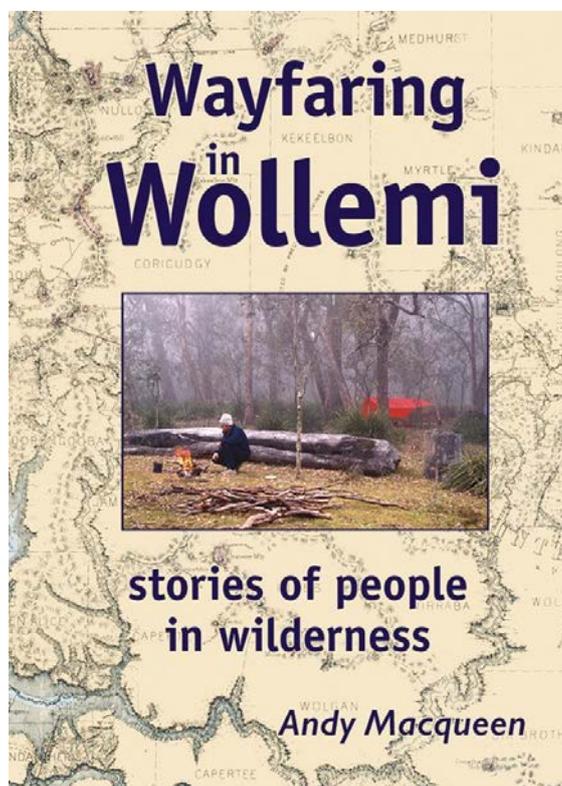
The author introduces highly inspirational and poetical material appropriately, especially when he talks of conservation heroes and heroines like the late Sue Morrison (no relation to me as Macqueen points out on page 309). The reader is left feeling he or she has been personally introduced to Win Duncombe, particularly through a marvellous satirical lyric about her Colo River odyssey by Cedric Barnes.

In his conclusion, “Eagle’s Reach”, Macqueen makes sense of his own psychological bond with the Wollemi. Someone you care about deserves a gift copy of “Wayfaring in Wollemi” because it’s Christmas or because it’s Summer Solstice—or like the best of the world’s mountains including the Blue Mountains—because it’s there.

Andy Macqueen is a Blue Mountains bushwalker and historian, and has been a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society for around 25 years. This is his fifth book. It is beautifully presented, and deserves to be as well received as his previous four. It has 352 pages, a hard cover and a wealth of images and sketch maps. It retails for \$40, and is available from Blue Mountains bookshops or post-free from [andymacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:andymacqueen@gmail.com)

### ***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)



### **NATIVE FRUIT**

D’ye mind the little five-corner -  
The sweetest every found -  
The native cherry and geebung  
That grew in stony ground?  
The manna and the wattle gum  
Where wattle shrubs take root:  
You’ve heard of very many things;  
Have you heard of Native Fruit?

Or native vegetables—the yams,  
The sweet, and nutty too?  
The way to live away from home  
That all Bush children knew.  
Cress, boggabri, sap of stringy-bark,  
And many a leaf and root.  
A man who knows could live on these,  
When lost—and Native Fruit

**Henry Lawson, October 1910**

### **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

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## Lives spent caring for plants

Many of us belong to ethnic groups who imported exotic plants into Australia over the past 230 years. As conservationists, we now want to suppress the “weeds”, one by one rehabilitating the patches of the Australian land mass whose plant mix is not as it should be.

Recent excursions were cause for reflecting on who are our personal heroes in the great struggle to help deserving plants survive and multiply. The Thursday Interpretive Bushwalkers visited the garden nurtured by Wendy Whiteley at North Sydney. It has come to fame recently and an army of volunteers keep it in good condition. Some volunteers who’ve made outstanding contributions are named on plaques.

The same day, BMCS member Jim Low addressed the walkers on the life of Gladys Carey (1882-1972). Miss Carey’s love of natural places may have come from being brought up by her feisty single mother on the foothills of Mount Gibraltar near Bowral. In adulthood, Gladys Carey transformed at least two patches of public land into lovingly tended gardens. One of them was in the road reservation of Walgett Street Katoomba which, sadly, has been permitted to return to weed infestation. Another was in Bradley Avenue, North Sydney, with some help from a very youthful Jim Low. In 1967, North Sydney Council named this land “Miss Gladys Carey Reserve”, and it is maintained although not, Jim assures us, as magnificently as when an octogenarian Gladys attended to it every day.

Other conservationists to be honoured by the naming of a reserve include the sisters Joan and Eileen Bradley. Their contribution to “No Dig” bushcare is widely documented.



Mary Morison and her “golden trowel”

Thursday Interpretive bushwalkers with Jim Low, front left.



This writer remembers waiting in a laneway of Mosman for the unveiling of their plaque in 1983. Finally arriving to do the honours was the sometime barrister, National Trust president, rock star’s brother and TV quiz host’s father, the late Barry O’Keefe. He turned up with his white shirt sleeve covered in blood. He explained apologetically that he’d been enthusiastically grilling a court witness, had then rushed downstairs and a truck had bounced off his arm as he crossed Macquarie Street to his taxi. The fate of the truck is not recorded.

It is ironic, but perhaps appropriate, that Joan Bradley, whose life affected so many people and plants for the better, passed away in solitude while playing the card game “patience”.

We certainly would not have so many bushcare reserves in such good condition were it not for the tens of thousands of foot soldiers who make up the voluntary bushcare groups around Australia, in the Blue Mountains perhaps more than anywhere else. My mother, Mary Morison (born 1924), another BMCS member, did not retire from bushcare until age 85. She had earlier been encouraged when Ryde Council urged residents to maintain the plant life of their nature strips and sent her a letter of appreciation when she took on this task zestfully. Her bushcare career was with Willoughby Council, a council that established a practice of presenting long-term and much appreciated bushcarers with a gold-painted trowel on their retirement.

Don Morison

## “IT’S SO QUIET! ...”

It is springtime and Blackheath town is just bursting with tourists. The City of the Blue Mountains is one of only two cities in the world within a World Heritage listed National Park and it is Australia’s most visited national park, attracting over three million visitors every year. The Government claims that an airport at Badgerys Creek will bring more tourists to the Blue Mountains – or will it drive them away?

The findings of a study commissioned by Blue Mountains City Council reveal the impact of Western Sydney Airport flight paths on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and the lack of standards regarding aircraft noise management in natural areas.

“A key concern is the duration and frequency of noise rather than maximum noise level of any single overflight”, said the Mayor. “The study demonstrates how the cumulative effect of increased aircraft overflights, and their noise events, could significantly diminish the amount of time in which the natural soundscape is experienced.”

At home, I sit on the deck and listen. There are only natural sounds. A currawong calls in the distance, the young wattle bird lands clumsily on a nearby shrub, a small bird cheeps, a fly buzzes. It’s not always so quiet on the edge of town but in the adjoining national park it is most of the time. I have taken visitors to lookouts who have commented (when I have been listening to the calls of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and the wind rustling the leaves in the trees) “it’s so quiet”. The natural ‘silence’ is precious. It enables native animals to communicate with each other and raise their young. The smallest sound can give warning of a predator. And it is very much a part of the visitor experience.

Some years ago there were joy flights from the Medlow airport, a light plane and a helicopter. One day I walked to a secluded lookout in the national park and the natural silence was gone. Between the two aircraft, the noise was almost continuous over a couple of hours. Do we want this to happen, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in national parks and wilderness areas in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area?

There is little doubt that natural areas will bear the brunt of aircraft overflights. During a visit to Katoomba in September, Paul Fletcher, Minister for Urban Infrastructure, said that the proposed airport would have no impact on World Heritage values. And when explaining that the airport would not need a curfew, he said that planes would be instructed to take off and land from the south-west, a “very lightly populated area”. Only one of these two statements can be true.

Aircraft overflights and the associated noise in national parks is an environmental management issue. The protection of natural quiet is considered important, as evidenced by legislative measures in the US and guidance provided by European jurisdictions.

“The US is trying to restore peace and tranquillity across their National Parks including the Grand Canyon, one of their most prized World Heritage Listed locations”, the Mayor said. “Let’s learn from their mistakes and not introduce aircraft noise here from the outset”.

You can read the report and the Mayor’s press release at [http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/airport/Guidelines\\_for\\_Minimising\\_Aircraft\\_Overflight.pdf](http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/airport/Guidelines_for_Minimising_Aircraft_Overflight.pdf) and [http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/airport/Airport\\_Noise\\_on\\_Natural\\_Areas\\_Overlooked.pdf](http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/airport/Airport_Noise_on_Natural_Areas_Overlooked.pdf)

Christine Davies, November 2017

## Volunteer power

### Objective 3 (Gardens of Stone)

#### Subcommittee

The Objective 3 Subcommittee typically comprises 5-10 volunteers from Blue Mountains Conservation Society, the Colong Foundation and the Lithgow Environment Group. A major campaign is to gain reservation of the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 proposal and thereby protect Newnes Plateau and the Western Escarpment of the Blue Mountains. This requires engaging with existing and proposed underground and open-cut coal-mining to minimise impacts on pagodas and cliff-lines, biodiversity, endangered swamps and groundwater and surface-water quality. It also involves dealing with such things as the Bells Line of Road upgrades, sand/kaolin extraction, forestry and high-impact recreation on Newnes Plateau, and promoting sustainable tourism as an answer to the declining coal industry. There is never a dull moment!

#### Why Objective 3?

In 2004-5 BMCS formalised a series of objectives. Four of those objectives involved Newnes Plateau (protection of swamps and scenic values, and opposing sand/kaolin mining) and Mt Airly (achieving protection of scenic values and heritage). They became objectives 3 and 4 in 2005-6, but the expanding work-load necessitated more change.

In 2006-7, Management Committee (MC) opted for standing subcommittees, each being convened by an MC member. The aim was to attract volunteers from BMCS (not just MC) and closely aligned organisations. The **Objective 3 Subcommittee** was appointed to handle the then-merged objectives 3 and 4.

Developing a more informative name for the subcommittee has generally foundered on the diversity of issues, the broad area involved, and overlap with National Parks and World Heritage issues and the ill-conceived mess related to the long-term operations of Western Sydney Airport. The Gardens of Stone is creeping in and will soon take over, but until then Objective 3 has brevity on its side!

Dr Brian Marshall  
Objective 3 Convenor

## Welcome to new members

Davyd Hodgekiss	Emily Pitt
Jodie van der Velden	Sophie Pitt
Julia Booth	Claire Bettington
Rowan Druce	Kate Stavert
Annalisa Humphrys	Robert Wilson
Digby Hughes	Narelle Chambers
Ted Woodley	Madeleine Wilson
David Rae	Charles Wilson
Ian Pitt	Tommy Wiedmann
Elizabeth Sheen	Vera Yee

## Commemorating Charles Darwin in the Blue Mountains by Jim Smith

### PART 2 OF 2.

In September 2008 Charles Nicholas reminded members of the Royal Australian Historical Society that the year 2009 was not only the bicentenary of Darwin's birth but the sesquicentenary of the publication of his book *The Origin of Species*. He suggested a series of events to mark these occasions and concluded: "One issue that should be addressed before the beginning of 2009 is the need for improved signage at the end of Charles Darwin Walk (including the naming of the site as Charles Darwin View) and even more importantly, for the removal of recent vegetative growth that completely obscures the actual view!" While the idea of naming a lookout after Darwin has merit, I can't see that anyone can know exactly where he was when he was overwhelmed by the view of the Jamison Valley. As it turned out, community celebrations during 2009 were low key, with the only local event being a gathering of enthusiasts at the Weatherboard Inn site in December. A medium density housing development on Falls Road, close to the start of Darwin's Walk, included a 'Charles Darwin Court'.

Three interpretive brochures have been published on Darwin's Walk. The first of these was produced by the (Upper) Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Aimed at children, it included a drawing to colour in, a board game, a crossword, a scrambled letter game, a join-the-dots puzzle and illustrations by the late Lloyd Jones. Blue Mountains City Council later published a colour brochure entitled 'Discover Darwin's Walk'. Finally, Council produced a pamphlet on the walk in the Bush Trackers series of "walks for kids by kids". All three of these publications were excellent but only the last one is currently available.

There will undoubtedly be celebrations for the bicentenary of Darwin's visit to the Blue Mountains in 2036. As Wentworth Falls now has five memorials to Darwin (the town entry sign, the Oak tree and its interpretive panel and the signs at each end of Darwin's walk), perhaps Blackheath could play a leading role in that year. The town has an equal claim to be a place 'Where Darwin Walked'. Darwin even suggested that the view at Govetts Leap was better than the one at Wentworth Falls! There has never been a memorial to Darwin's visit at Govetts Leap. His observations on the geological strata seen from there were referred to in an interpretive panel at the lookout. Christine Davies has informed me that his name was scratched off the panel. This vandalism may have been the work of a 'creationist'. The sign has since been replaced.

Bushwalkers in the upper Blue Mountains are often reminded of Charles Darwin when we see our delightful endemic subspecies of *Darwinia* (*D. fascicularis* ssp. *oligantha* and *D. taxifolia* ssp. *taxifolia*). Their flowers are so wonderfully adapted for pollination by Eastern Spinebills. The co-evolution of the narrow floral tubes and the birds' beaks is a perfect example of Darwin's theory.

In 1986 I visited Charles Darwin's former home, 'Down House', in Kent. As I was there just before closing time, and the only person in the house, the curator allowed me



Jim Smith in Charles Darwin's chair in 1986

the special privilege of sitting in the chair in which Charles Darwin wrote his books. He did not use a desk, writing on a board across the arm rests. As I sat where *The Origin of Species* had been written, I hoped that my observations of nature would be as deep as those of the great man who had been there before me.

(Part 1 of this article in November Hut News [http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/archive/1711\\_Hutnews.pdf](http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/archive/1711_Hutnews.pdf))

### DATE FOR YOUR DIARY THURSDAY, 22 FEBRUARY, 7PM Sunset Gathering at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls

Join with members of Blue Mountains Conservation Society to share a glorious sunset view, supper and a guest speaker.

Talk to old and new members and exchange ideas, meet some of the management committee and learn about recent Society activities and find out how you can become involved. If you are not already a member of the Society this is an opportunity to find out more.

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

## Winning the wrong race Clare Power

I thought I should write something uplifting as the end-of-year climate change/sustainability related piece. But I could not get past two recently released reports.

One is the news that Australia is ranked 57<sup>th</sup> on the 2017 Climate Change Performance Index, ahead only of South Korea, Iran and Saudi Arabia. The index ranks nations in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, clean energy, and climate policy. Overall, Australia performed poorly. As a country that likes to produce winners we are leading the pack in the race to have the highest level of climate pollution per person and this, as Kelly O'Shanassy, Australian Conservation Foundation CEO states, 'is a national embarrassment for a wealthy nation with so much at risk from climate change and such abundant sun and wind that could be harvested for clean energy'.

At the same time, more than 15,000 scientists from 184 countries have endorsed an article published in the journal, *Bioscience*, titled "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice". Although they acknowledge positive changes have been made, the authors draw on a large body of data to warn that we are heading down an unsustainable path of "substantial and irreversible harm" to the Earth. The lead author, Professor William Ripple, hopes that the paper will "ignite a wide-spread public debate about the global environment and climate."

So this holiday season, let's celebrate the many exciting sustainability projects happening around the country, but let's also find ways to participate in that debate and draw on all our strength and ingenuity to help propel Australia towards winning the race in tackling climate change.

## Australia's role on UNESCO World Heritage Committee

Australia was recently elected to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. On 21 November 2017, Susan Templeman MP, Federal Member for Macquarie, wrote to the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP and congratulated the Government on this achievement. She drew attention to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and its values, and continued:

"I have previously corresponded with both you and Minister Fletcher regarding the proposed Western Sydney Airport. I am concerned that the preliminary flight plans for the airport will, over time, threaten the World Heritage status of the GBMWAH.

Though I understand that the flight plans are not yet official, the preliminary flight plans have 100% of departures flying over the GBMWAH. The noise of aircraft departures over the GBMWAH may reach 70dBA+. This level of noise adversely affects fauna by changing foraging behaviour and lowering breeding success, threatening the endemic and endangered animal life within the GBMWAH. In 2000, UNESCO noted that any plans for an airport with flights going over the GBMWAH would 'adversely affect the natural quiet' of the Blue Mountains. ...

In your recent joint media release with Foreign Minister Bishop, you note that the role on the UNESCO World Heritage Committee will enhance Australia's ability to 'contribute to the conservation of places recognised for their Outstanding Universal Value'. ...

If the airport is to go ahead, I ask that you consider closely the impacts and ramifications that the preliminary flight paths would have on the GBMWAH, and uphold your stated commitment to the protection and conservation of Australia's world heritage."

You can read the full letter at [http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/airport/Letter\\_to\\_Frydenberg\\_Airport\\_World\\_Heritage.pdf](http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/airport/Letter_to_Frydenberg_Airport_World_Heritage.pdf)

You can read the media release by Ministers Bishop and Frydenberg at [https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2017/jb\\_mr\\_171115.aspx](https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2017/jb_mr_171115.aspx)

## 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)

## BMCS Planning & 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)

## 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".

## THE SOUND OF WATER Jim Low

I can still remember a song I learnt back in primary school. It was about a trout innocently swimming in 'a brooklet bubbling'. A picturesque scene is created ... And then someone with a fishing line appears and goodbye 'merry master trout'.

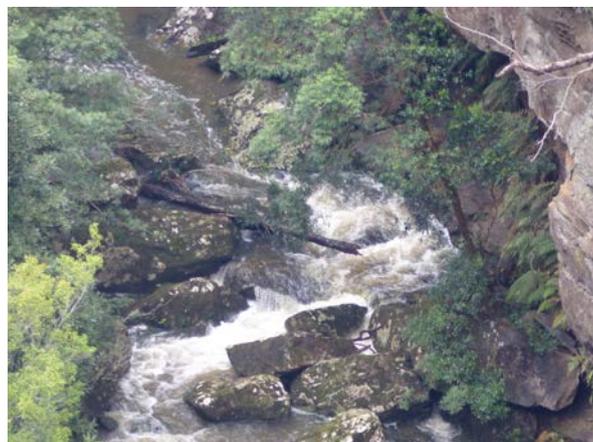
Earlier this year we purchased a new washing machine. You can perhaps imagine my surprise when, at the end of the cycle, the machine began to play the *Schubert* melody to which the old school song had been set.

We are fortunate to have a creek behind our home in the Blue Mountains. After rain, it can be clearly heard rushing along the valley floor to the river. If you follow the nearby fire trail, there are some good views looking down into the creek. There is a large, flat overhang where I often go to view the creek when it is in flood. There are some small rock hurdles that the water noisily has to negotiate.

'The joyous gurgling of a tiny waterfall' is the subject of an essay in a favourite anthology, *The Eloquent Silence*. To the essayist, W.P. Hodgkinson, the water makes 'perpetual music' as it tumbles over all in its way. He believes there is a job waiting for 'waterfall-tuners' after heavy rains. Sticks and leaves need removing to return the fall of water to its old musical gurgle. I often think of these imaginary 'tuners' when following a water course. I also recall the 'brooklet bubbling' in the childhood song.

The sound of water in the natural landscape certainly has a special appeal.

And yes, touch wood, our washing machine continues to please. Secretly, I would have taken it on the strength of that melody alone and all the memories it has revived.



Cripple Creek, Blue Mountains. Jim Low.

### Compost, not landfill (continued from page 3)

these cups and other food service packaging are recyclable, yet most end up in landfill because local Councils do not have the facilities to deal with them. Byron Bay, Brisbane City, all of the ACT, Perth City and Shellharbour are the exceptions.

Richard and Gary suggest we stop talking only about recycling and start talking about compostable food service packaging, including coffee cups. Packaging made from environmentally friendly, rapidly renewable materials goes into specially labelled compost bins and eventually to commercial facilities where it is turned into compost.

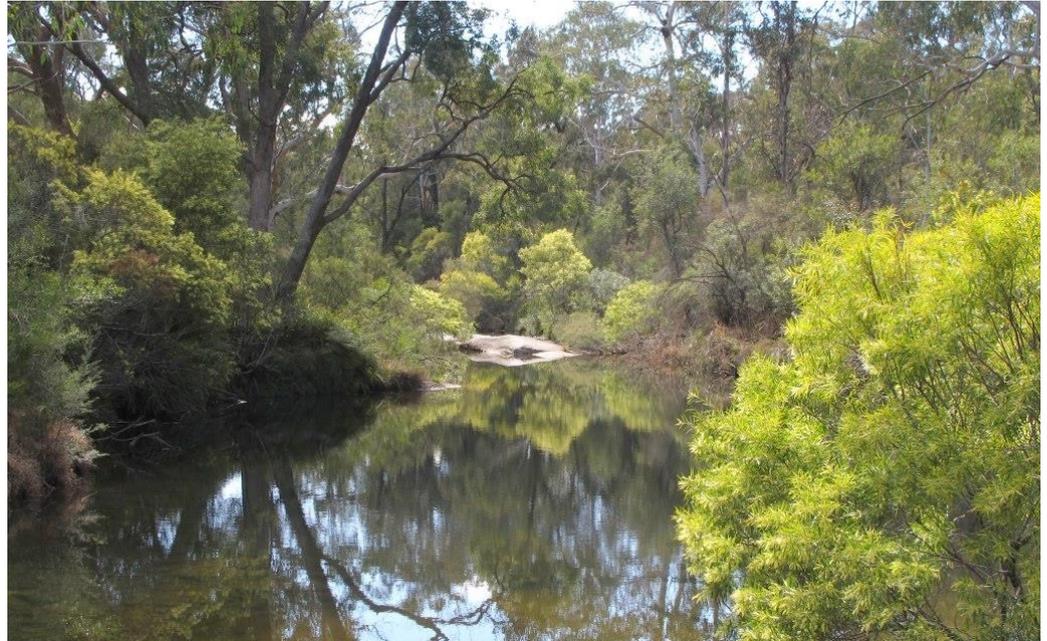
This is already happening in the United States and Europe. In France, all non-compostable food service packaging will be phased out by 2020. And in Germany and the Netherlands there is almost zero waste going to landfill. In Britain, an interim report has found compostable packaging was the only genuine solution to ensure food service packaging was diverted from landfill.

BioPak will soon launch a national program to encourage cafes and other venues to put their compostable cups and packaging into special bins, which will be collected and sent to be turned into compost.

"In a true circular economy, the ultimate objective is zero material going to landfill. We are a long way away from that objective but we are starting on that journey – one compostable coffee cup at a time."



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.



#### **45. OLD FORD RESERVE, central Megalong Creek catchment.**

When the Gundungurra people of the Blue Mountains prepared for the Bunburang Maroodang exhibition at the NPWS Heritage Centre in 2015, Old Ford Reserve was a focus of their research (see Hut News, November 2015 and December 2015 ([http://www.bluemountains.org.au/hutnews\\_archives.htm](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/hutnews_archives.htm))). The creekside reserve where Megalong Road crosses Megalong Creek was the starting or finishing point of many of the walks they undertook to help them tell the story of their people’s centuries of living in the southern Blue Mountains.

In the last 150 years, this picturesque location, close to where the Six Foot Track beats towards the Coxs River, has become a favourite of Blue Mountains visitors from all the corners of the earth. There’s always something in bloom and several species of birds active. There are nearly always campers with time for a chat. I see the children of today swimming in the creek as I did in the 1960s.

When I sit on a granite rock creekside and close my eyes, I can visualise Lord and Lady Carrington with their guide Harry Peckman riding over the hill in 1887 to continue following the bridle path to Jenolan Caves. Jim Smith writes in his book “From Katoomba to Jenolan Caves, The Six Foot Track” that Governor Carrington did not want his horseback odyssey heavily publicised because it would inflame the intense rivalry between Katoomba, Mount Victoria and Tarana to have Jenolan Caves tourists detrain at their station.

Taking my imagination to 1910, I note a sulky conveying a wide-eyed seven year old Bernard O’Reilly on his way from Green Gully to Blackheath. This location is part of “The Grand Tour”, final chapter in author O’Reilly’s delightful Blue Mountains memoir, “Cullenbenbong”. If the magnificent *Angophora floribunda* could speak, what tales they could tell.

Images: *Acacia floribunda* flowers in abundance beside Megalong Creek in August and September; Brodie Davies at Megalong Creek, September 2013. (Photos by Christine Davies)



#### **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.

#### **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/bmcsnsw)

## 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)

Dec 16 **Saturday walkers Christmas party.** Contact: Bob – 0408947325 for details such as time, location, and what to bring.  
Dec 23 and Dec 30 Enjoy the Christmas break. No walks organised.  
Jan 6 and Jan 13 Walkers can meet at Wentworth Falls Carpark, 8.00am and decide on a walk and leader for that day.  
Contact Emanuel 0419773906 or [emanuelanddi@yahoo.com.au](mailto:emanuelanddi@yahoo.com.au) to register interest.  
Jan 20 **Mystery walk.** Leader Mike. - 47573660. Walkers should contact leader to book in and for more details.  
\*Jan 27, Feb 3, Feb 10 Walkers can meet at Wentworth Falls Carpark, 8.00am and decide on a walk and leader for that day.  
Contact Emanuel 0419773906 or [emanuelanddi@yahoo.com.au](mailto:emanuelanddi@yahoo.com.au) to register interest.  
**\*Some suggestions for selecting a walk on hot days:** Grand Canyon, Porters Pass, Edenberry Falls, Valley of the Waters, Horseshoe Falls, Den Fenella, Walls Cave.

**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)

Dec 11 **Katoomba to Wentworth Falls via Scenic Lookouts.** Starts Kat. Station then via Kingsford Smith Pk, Apprenticeship Bridge, Leura Pk, Prince Henry Cliff Walk, Golf Links Lookout, Fairmount Resort, Lilian's Bridge, Edinburgh Castle Rock, Conservation Hut, Darwin's Walk and W'Falls Village. Long day, some steep sections and steps. 12 Km. Meet Katoomba Station commuter car park 8.30 am. Car shuttle fee \$5. Bob Taylor 4784 1060, 0468 398 810. Grade 3.  
Dec 18 **Leura Circuit Walk.** Starts Leura Station then WW1 Memorial Gates, Lyrebird Dell, Pool of Siloam, Lilian's Bridge, Edinburgh Castle Rock, Digger Coopers Reserve and Leura Village. Some steep sections and steps. 10km. Meet Leura Station commuter car park 8.30 am. Bob Taylor 4784 1060. Grade 3.  
Dec 25 and Jan 1 **NO WALK**  
Jan 8 **National Pass, Wentworth Falls.** One of the best. Steep climb in and out of valley. Meet Wentworth Falls car park 8.45 am. Car pool. Meredith 4782 4723. Grade 3.  
Jan 15 **Cronulla to Gunnamatta Bay.** Spectacular coastal walk. Option of swim. Meet Central Station 9.05 am, top of escalators. Leader Maurice 0402 402 783 or 4739 4942. Grade 2.  
Jan 22 **Porters Pass, Colliers Causeway, Centennial Pass and return,** Blackheath. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45 am. Ros King 0417 261 465 or 4733 3880. 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](mailto:denfenella12@bigpond.com)

Dec 14 **Christmas Party in Doreen's Studio.** Ring Doreen on 6355 2371 for details. Please bring either a salad or dessert, whatever you wish to drink and a wrapped gift to the value of \$10 for Naughty Santa. Phone Beverley on 4757 2076 if you need a lift from Mount Victoria Station.  
Dec 21 and 28 **No walk.**  
Jan 4 **Gully Walk, Katoomba.** Known as Garguree by Aborigines, the Gully forms the headwaters of Katoomba Falls. Maybe a swim after in Council Pool. Meet Katoomba Station Car Park 9.00am. Leader Keith 0411 162 345. Car pool. Grade 1  
Jan 11 **Dargan Dams, Clarence.** Historic steam train water supply. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.45am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2  
Jan 18 **Govett's Leap to Pope's Glen, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45am.  
Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2  
Jan 25 **Bundeena.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.10am. Leader Keith 0411 162 345. Bring your cossie and lunch. Grade 1  
Feb 1 **Mystery walk in Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2  
Feb 8 **Katoomba Airfield to Point Pilcher, Medlow Bath.** Meet Medlow Bath Station north side 8.30am. Leaders Tracy 0434 362 611 and Maurice 4739 4942. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Society Bushwalks on facebook:

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

### WILD BLUE MOUNTAINS CALENDAR 2018

Go to <http://ianbrownphotography.com.au/publications/> and feast your eyes on these wonderful nature photographs of the Greater Blue Mountains.

Photography is by Ian Brown. The calendar is limited edition and costs \$35 plus postage.



### Leaf-curling spiders

In the Blue Mountains we usually see leaf-curling spiders (*Phonognatha graeffei*) in February and March. I found this one and others like it in my Blackheath garden in October and November. The leaf seems to be curled differently. Is it a different species of leaf-curling spider?

Christine ([hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au))