



Nursery sales

Nursery volunteers will be selling plants at Blackheath and Lawson markets in December and again in February, but there will be no markets in January. A new automatic watering system, with remote control, has been installed in the shadehouse and will help volunteers look after the plants through the holiday period.

A sustainable Christmas and a recommended read

It's timely to share some ideas about celebrating Christmas as sustainably as possible. Firstly though, I know that the book industry is not the most sustainable one, but in terms of an **important** and stimulating read, I highly recommend **Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World** by Tyson Yunkaporta of the Apalech Clan in far north Queensland. In Tyson's words: "The book outlines Indigenous ways of thinking and producing new knowledge through respectful dialogue based on reciprocity rather than competition. It imparts an impression of the pattern of creation and how we might follow that pattern in our lives and systems ... I hope readers will see their sacred role as custodians of creation, and that each will find their unique way of contributing to the diversity and true sustainability of the complex systems they inhabit."

A few sustainability tips: branches of radiata pines make good Christmas trees; wrap presents in newspapers, magazines, fabric, or 'who gives a crap' toilet roll wrapping, use solar or LED lights for house and Christmas tree lighting if that's your thing. In terms of presents there are so many options that don't require plastic or exploitation of the planet – make and bake gifts, give a service or an experience or a charity donation, re-gift unused or good quality items that others might love, shop locally and plan ahead so you don't have to compromise when buying last minute gifts. Search for '**sustainable Christmas**' in your preferred web browser for many more ideas.

Clare Power

Our Admin Officer is looking for a replacement at the March AGM—Can you help?

The Society's administration officer will not be continuing in that position after the March AGM. As this is a fairly pivotal role, it would be ideal to have a replacement ready to take over immediately following the AGM. It is a voluntary position.

To learn about what is involved and to have an opportunity to visit the Hut office, please contact Jeanette Robertson on either 0414 956 060 or sao@bluemountains.org.au

The Mick Dark Talk for the Future 2019

Dr Joelle Gergis's talk, delivered on 15th November, was relevant and chilling but also inspiring. With brilliant use of graphics, we were taken from the earliest signs of human induced climate change to the life and death challenge of our current era. There was a great sense of objectivity when Dr Gergis talked about the loss of 50% of the Great Barrier Reef already and the possible future inundation of Australian coastal communities.

At the same time, Dr Gergis was by no means an entirely detached scientist. She was unafraid of articulating emotion at such times as when she spoke of the poet Dorothea McKellar who gave Australians words to express our relationship to climate extremes and when she responded to a question from Blue Mountains Councillor Brent Hoare about a brilliant article she wrote in The Monthly.

Gundungurra man Dave King set the mood in his Welcome to Country when he described how the need to respond to changes in the environment had been expressed in Aboriginal rock art. Amy Sambrooke and our former president Madi Maclean gave a balanced presentation of the values of Varuna and Blue Mountains Conservation Society respectively, which had brought the two organisations to honour the late Mick Dark. Local Federal Member Susan Templeman gave an uplifting introduction. Jill Dark and other family members of Mick were looking on.

Thirsty? Imagine how our feathered and furry friends feel in these very dry times. Yes, parched. We have a bird bath that I now clean-and top up most days. It's placed in the shade under a bushy tree which allows nervous little birds to access it without too many worries. While not always hearing or seeing birds using it, I do notice splashes around the rim.. And at night? Skinny-dipping possums perhaps.
Alan Page.



Kool Kookaburra—photographed by Mary.

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Grandparents for Climate Action NOW

At a gathering of 100 concerned grandparents at Wentworth Falls on 24 November, speakers were Dr Roy Tasker of Planet Ark, Blue Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill (photographed), the convenor of Grandparents for Climate Action Now (Grandparents CAN) Robin Mosman and, to speak for the grandchildren, Tom Lodewyke.

Our Federal and State Governments are failing us. Leadership in climate action has to be from the bottom up, with local councils and with us.

Help put pressure on the Australian Government for them to declare a Climate Emergency and introduce major policies to reduce carbon emissions. Go to <https://grandparentscan.org/> and register. Each week you will receive information about an easy action you can take from home.



New Children's Picture Book: *The Magical Blue Forest*

The Magical Blue Forest is about a secret forest in the Blue Mountains that comes alive at night.



Have you seen fireflies dancing under moonlight? Did you know fireflies symbolise friendship and waterfalls sing songs to enchant you? In some cultures, people carry jam jars of fireflies as gifts of friendship.

In parts of Australia and New Guinea, organisms like fireflies and trees symbolise human emotions. These ideas come naturally to many people but Western society so often forgets our deep emotional and physical need for trees and rivers and rockpools.

Have you seen the bio-luminescent insects and Owl, Possum and Quoll who live in your Magical Blue Mountains too? If not, you may

need a little person to help you see them!

We are a tiny publisher in Springwood called Spotted Quoll Books and we have worked in the media, including the BBC, The Age, Nature, New Scientist, Deutsche Welle etc.

The Magical Blue Forest children's picture book (soft cover, full colour) is available from the Springwood Book Lounge opposite the station, telephone: 4751 8010 (address: 2/252 Macquarie Rd Springwood) or online at: www.etsy.com/shop/spottedquollbooks or by emailing Georgina Kenyon at Spotted Quoll Books: georgiekenyon@gmail.com

Welcome to new members

Kay Freedman
Kathi Downs
Karin Schianetz
Christine Flynn

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, 1st Sunday of the month, Blackheath Public School 9am to 1pm. No market in January.

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am—2pm. No market in January. Tube stock \$3.50. Discounts for bulk orders.

nursery@bluemountains.org.au

Ferals finally noticed

Federal Minister Bridget Mackenzie made a major announcement on federal contributions for feral pig control on 8 November 2019. Disease spread by feral pigs is a massive credible threat to the Australian pork industry.

Now for politicians to get serious about feral goats, feral horses, feral dogs, feral cats, feral deer and the whole menagerie of introduced species that can undermine both Australia's economy and Australia's ecosystems.

Radiata celebrated

This gentleman retrieving a core flute from a tree on November 22 was one of a group of activists, locals and representatives of both Liberal and Labor parties who came to celebrate with Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Thanks once more to everyone who contributed to the 30 year campaign that persuaded the current NSW Government to purchase Radiata Plateau for the public.



Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

The Visitors Map is full of suggested walks and trips. It is 60 by 85 cm in size, in full colour, 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

It's time to update the Timeline, by Jim Smith

Back in the days when Blue Mountains Conservation Society had monthly meetings in the 'Hut' a speaker gave a presentation at each meeting. I learned an enormous amount from these talks and contributed by giving one myself each year for 19 years. One of these talks was my attempt to create a 'Timeline' for seasonal environmental events during the year in the upper Blue Mountains. It was intended to cover the area between 900m and 1200m on the upper Blue Mountains plateau, roughly between Wentworth Falls and Hassans Walls, Lithgow. I had a lot of assistance from other observers including Carol Proberts, Peter Staton, Danny Wotherspoon, Jill Dark and Christine Davies. I supplied the information in the talk to Christine who formatted it into a double-sided A3 poster which was distributed from the Hut. A version of it is still available for viewing on the Society's website.



Summer: Old Man Banksia
(Photo by Alan Page)

This Timeline was only ever intended to be a draft, and I invited people to contribute their own observations. The result was disappointing, with only about four people getting in touch over the years. My Timeline was divided into the conventional four seasons recognised by Europeans. Nowadays there are a number of Aboriginal seasonal calendars available and many of these divide the year into six seasons.

Christine has suggested to me that this Timeline published in November 2002 could now serve as a basis for comparison with what is happening today due to climatic change. Christine Davies wrote: "I have not seen the Grey Currawong for some years, Gang Gangs are rare, I haven't seen a Caper White Butterfly migration pass through here since there was a bushfire in their path a few years ago."

This type of data is 'pure gold' for biologists assessing the impacts of climate change on the lives of animals and plants. I am sure that members of our Society would be able to contribute many observations. Ideally they would be based on diary entries rather than just memory.

When I was teaching the Outdoor Guides certificate at Katoomba TAFE, all the students had to keep a diary of what they saw during their bushwalks. Some of my former pupils have told me that their diaries are still very useful sources of information for them. If you haven't started keeping a nature diary on your bushwalks, I highly recommend that you start on your next walk. As the years go by, you will treasure this record more and more.

A good source of nature observations are the early newsletters of our Society. Most of the bushwalks done by our members were written up, with lists of plants in flower and birds seen. As these go back over 40 years, they provide an important baseline of information. Society bushwalkers today could do the same, with walk descriptions and observations gathered on the society's website.

Equally valuable are records of natural events in your own backyard. One of the best ways to observe seasonal change is to do the same short walk every day, or at least several times a week, and write down what you see and hear each time.

I would be very interested if any members, after looking at the 2002 Timeline, were to contribute any thoughts they have about how the timing of any of the events listed has changed over the last 17 years.

It's time to create a new Timeline for the upper Blue Mountains and do new ones for the lower Blue Mountains, Blue Mountains valleys and the plains west of the mountains.

The 2002 timeline can be found among Resources on the Society website, <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/timeline/>

“We are facing the greatest intergenerational ethical challenge in history”, according to Joelle Gergis, award winning climate scientist, who presented the stirring Mick Dark Talk for the Future in November. And yet, the feeling of dissonance is so strong in Australia as, instead of heeding the urgent call to action on climate change, we see reactive anti-protest laws re-emerging, threats to prevent secondary boycotting by activists and a move to stop planning authorities from considering greenhouse gas emissions when making decisions about mining.

“We need to care about the impact of climate change on a visceral level; to connect the head and the heart”, said Joelle Gergis, lead author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report. Yet politicians in Tasmania and Queensland are introducing harsh anti-protest laws to punish those people who are actively caring about climate change and taking this to the streets, to the forests, and to sites of new coal mines and coal seam gas mining.

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter”, read a quote by Martin Luther King on a slide shown by Joelle Gergis, a member of the Climate Council, Australia's leading independent body providing expert advice to the Australian public on climate change and policy. One of those things that matters is that Australia is the most vulnerable country in the developed world to climate change and an example of this is that the world heritage, exceptional and unique Great

A review of the Revue

Blackheath is under siege! The brilliant and delightful 2019 Blackheath Rhodo Revue made light-hearted fun of highway widening and hardships in a bleak future (such as living in a tunnel underneath a 12 lane highway), unwanted changes to our railway station, helicopters and the airstrip, poverty of our young people on Newstart, the martyrdom of a single mother trying to study to improve her life, and more. The catchphrase was “Let’s form an action group!”

We had to laugh and we did, and we thoroughly enjoyed the annual revue. Or should we cry?

Christine Davies.



Barrier Reef is 50% dead. At the same time, eschewing our moral responsibility, the NSW Government is pushing for legislation that would exclude the requirement for decision-makers to consider downstream greenhouse gas emissions when making determinations on coal or gas developments and that would prevent the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) from considering this in their decision making process.

“It’s time to act in alignment with our ethics”, stated Joelle Gergis, author of **Sunburnt Country: The future and history of climate change in Australia**. However the Prime Minister in a speech to the Queensland Resources Council has promised to prevent secondary boycotts of resources companies, claiming **“We are working to identify mechanisms that can successfully outlaw these indulgent and selfish practices that threaten the livelihoods of fellow Australians.”**

And we are told not to discuss climate change while, at the time of writing, fires have devastated more than a million hectares on Australia's east coast, lives have been lost, homes destroyed and damaged, and there has been untold loss and suffering of wildlife, forests and ecosystems. However, many bushfire victims are saying that, actually, **now is precisely the right time to talk about climate change.**

And amidst all of this, there remains hope that somehow we can harness our hearts, our heads, our hands, our ethical stances and our voices and hasten the sustainability revolution which, according to a quote on a slide by Joelle Gergis, a very wise and impressive human being, **has the magnitude of the industrial revolution but the speed of the digital revolution** (Al Gore, 2017). Bring it on!!

Cartoon used with permission from Mark David Cartoons.

‘Implicity’ - Blue Mountains' fine art nature photographer, **Ian Brown**, returns to **Blue Mountains Botanic Gardens, Mount Tomah**, with his latest collection of artworks. **(Until 15 January 2020)** ‘Implicity’ is an exhibition that blends the bold and subtle, to the simplicity of nature with a touch of mystery. Closely observed in the making, the photographs reward contemplation.

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

The Classroom in the Landscape Julie Humphreys, Blue Mountains Steiner School

At the Blue Mountains Steiner School, nestled in the beautiful bushland of Hazelbrook, where wallabies bound, Brown Cuckoo Doves sit silently on branches and water skinks rest, the children of class 1/2 have been celebrating the complexity of our national identity. We have been sharing stories which include a history of the Australian landscape and its inhabitants. We begin with a poem written by class 1/2 in honour of the elusive Night Parrot (not from these parts), and within our poem we share insights on how the introduction of non-indigenous plants and animals has affected our land and its wildlife:

The Night Parrot by Class 1/2 BMSS

The Night parrot flies,
Through the night skies
Searching for seeds
Low down
On the ground
It does not like carrots
Although it's a parrot
It would rather eat seeds,
Than European weeds

This poem was part of a unit of work on threatened and endangered species and habitats. As part of our studies, the children went on a day trip to the Charles Darwin

walk in Wentworth Falls. They searched for one of the rarest trees in the world, *Eucalyptus copulans*. We came to a Hanging Swamp, which was cool, wet and full of life, despite being threatened. We saw a Tiger Snake resting in the sun along the track and paddled in one of the Jamison Creek rock pools.

Our lessons occur both in the classroom and in the bush. We approach all units of work using an integrated curriculum; where patterns in nature are found in our times tables (or perhaps it's the other way around!?), where scientific facts about habitats, ecosystems and animals are expressed through poetry and discovered through stories. The children experience abstract ideas through tangible experiences.

The children heard stories told by their teacher, combining

the history of Australia through the eyes of European settlers and through the eyes of the Aboriginals. These stories were influenced by the work of Bruce Pascoe in his book, *Young Dark Emu-A Truer History* and from the work of Wiradjiri elder, Minmia, *Under the Quandong Tree*. Pascoe shows how indigenous people had been growing crops for generations without causing the catastrophic degradation that cattle and other introduced species and crops has caused. Minmia brings to life the spirit of indigenous stories through allowing the reader to understand the nature or essence of the grevillea, or the casuarina, and its relationship to the land, the people and the animals.

Each child made a project about an endangered animal or habitat of their choice. The subjects ranged from Hanging Swamps to Wrinklewort button grass, Grey Nurse Sharks to Bilbies. Such an array of subjects chosen, with solutions as to how to protect them - build smaller houses, chop down fewer trees, don't buy so many things from the shops. Wise words from our wise children.



In keeping to our integrated curriculum, the class had recently learnt about our Australian currency via stories set in a market place from long ago where people were mostly self-sufficient. To bring these lessons to life, the class made newspaper pots and grew seedlings which were sold at a school stall. The money raised will be donated to helping the koalas injured in the recent fires near Newcastle.

Some of the children's projects can be found on the Society's website at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/archive/1912-hutnews-supp.pdf> A drawing from one of the projects is reproduced above.

More info: <http://bluemountainssteiner.nsw.edu.au>

Native bees in our gardens

During November, the Society donated plants grown by volunteers in our nursery to support Australian Pollinator Week celebrations at the Springwood Presbyterian Church. Australian Pollinator Week is an annual event which acknowledges our important and unique insect pollinators during our southern Spring. It was founded by Dr Megan Halcroft of Bees Business following a community project called "Bee Aware of Your Native Bees"

There are 1,660 described species of native bee in Australia, many common to different regions. www.beesbusiness.com.au/ can help you identify native bees in your garden and tell you how to create habitat to make them feel welcome.

For information about our PLANT STUDY GROUP and TING (Thursday Interpretive Nature Group) Go to our website www.bluemountains.org.au and click on "Activities"

Mel Ward, by Jim Smith

My new book is about one of the most passionate and charismatic people ever to live in the Blue Mountains. Melbourne ('Mel') Ward, after an early theatrical career, followed by scientific research on the Great Barrier Reef, came to the Blue Mountains and opened the 'Gallery of Natural History and Native Art' in the grounds of the Hydro Majestic hotel at Medlow Bath in 1943. He later started up a branch Museum at Echo Point called 'Pyala' (the Dharug Aboriginal word for 'talking'). These museums contained many thousands of artefacts created by indigenous people, particularly Australian Aboriginals and Pacific Islanders. In addition, there were many stuffed and pickled specimens of fauna, and items related to early Australian colonial history. After Mel Ward's death in 1966 his wife Halley kept the Echo Point museum going until 1972 when his vast collection was donated to the Australian Museum.

Mel Ward was also one of the earliest ecotourism guides in the Blue Mountains, as, several times a week, he took groups of guests from the Hydro Majestic along the old Sun Bath track, identifying the flora and fauna and telling Aboriginal legends.

The new book, entitled *The Curiosity of Melbourne Ward and his Great Barrier Reef and Blue Mountains Museums*, costs \$25 and is available from the Mt Victoria Historical Society Museum and selected upper Blue Mountains bookshops. It can also be obtained, post free, directly from me by writing to 65 Fletcher Street Wentworth Falls 2782.

Buy from the bush: In publications such as “The Land” and on social media, a “buy from the bush” or “buy regional” campaign has been gathering momentum in recent months. The campaign reminds people from around NSW that inland towns affected by drought and bushfire are still producing items that are useful and interesting.

Those of us who celebrate the diversity of our state and love spending leisure time without going interstate or overseas also find inland NSW towns full of scenic interest and information we can absorb to benefit our own approaches to the environment and lifestyle. Following is a list of inland locations some TING members have visited in recent years and some brief notes as to why they are interesting. (If travelling in the hot season, check ahead for accommodation and research which parks and reserves will be open when you arrive.)

1. Ghosts of Ages Past

The OBERON District includes the timeless sandstone of Kanangra Walls and the limestone of Jenolan Caves. It also features an excellent privately owned collection of cool climate plants, Mayfield Garden. A choice of sealed routes or unsealed backways takes you to COWRA, with a very short side trip to the almost ghost town of CARCOAR.

In COWRA, numerous sites evoke the “Cowra Breakout” by Japanese Prisoners of War in 1944. These include the Visitors Centre Hologram, the re-created Prison Camp site, the Japanese Garden, the war cemeteries and the “Peace Bell” in the town centre.

The next ancient reminders are the fossils of marine creatures in the “Age of Fishes” Museum at CANOWINDRA. Near EUGOWRA are the “Escort Rock” memorial to Ben Hall’s most famous heist, numerous River Red Gums and the macropods, orchids and soaring wedge-tailed eagles of NANGAR NATIONAL PARK.

Past CUDAL, it’s easy to enter the small caverns of BORENORE CAVES. On approach to MOLONG, along the Mitchell Highway, is a short side road to the graveside tree-carvings honouring the indigenous guide, Yuranigh. MOLONG itself has an interesting RSL club. At LARRAS LEE is a collection of old Melbourne train carriages. A back way to WELLINGTON takes you past CUMNOCK with its hangover of animal cyclists in themes from an old “Mulga Bill Bicycle” festival, YEOVIL and a side trip to beautiful Mount Arthur Nature Reserve.

2. Circling The Rivers

The back-routes between the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers are fascinating, especially in a tour starting at GUNDAGAI. The town has a new indigenous interpretive site, a reinstated “Dog on the Tuckerbox” statue and its historic road and rail bridges crossing the floodplain. From its hilltop lookouts, you can imagine the 19th century gold miners fleeing along the gullies when the now usually peaceful Murrumbidgee flooded.

If you fall in with the Olympic Highway, the geological formation of THE ROCK and the majestic pub at CULCAIRN are both worth a close look. At COROWA, we found an enthusiastic museum volunteer who encouraged us to look at the extensive collection including records of the 1893 pre-federation meeting. Corellas perched by the Murray serenaded us and we strolled in the handsome urban park created around the relics of the old rail yards.

Sleepy hamlets dot the road northward from the Murray with quirky metal sculptures at URANA and BOREE CREEK. NARRANDERA is a hub of fisheries research. The trees in its parks and private gardens near the town centre are varied and impressive. Even now the rail branch to Jerilderie is disused, its river crossing viaduct is imposing. In a reserve just east of the town is an especially beautiful natural stretch of the Murrumbidgee.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)



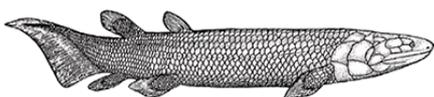
A Blue Trail Special: Buy from the Bush (continued from page 6)

3. Following the Divide North

It's a short drive north from the Blue Mountains to CAPERTEE, jumping off point for the fascinating sandstone mesas of Mount Airlie, Mount Genowlan and Pantoneys Crown as well as the old shale town of GLEN DAVIS and the Chinese gold relics of TURON GATES. A possible next stop is the KANDOS/RYLSTONE district with pubs, cafes and the side trip to the pagodas of the beautiful Indigenous site on a weir astride the Cudgegong River known by the understated name of **Dunns Swamp**.

Threading your way further north, there's a feast of short nature walks on the back roads – Fern Tree Gully and Munghorn Gap. The Drip, in Goulburn River National Park, hides a fake Indigenous rock engraving by Brett Whiteley. Past the hospitable town of COOLAH is the wonderfully diverse **Coolah Tops** National Park.

Numerous alternative routes lead on to GLEN INNES with its Celtic standing stones, granite boulders and a further choice of national parks including Washpool, Gibraltar Range and Kings Plains. The zenith of the granite country is probably TENTERFIELD whose geological marvels include Bald Rock and Girraween National Park, just over the Queensland border. Tenterfield also commemorates a Federation speech by Sir Henry Parkes and has a business dedicated to George Woolnough, grandfather of the town's most famous musician Peter Allen who wrote the Tenterfield Saddler song for him.



Images:

Ghosts of Ages Past

Page 6, from top

- Kanangra Walls, by David Noble ¹
- A dreamtime legend beautifully represented at Eugowra School
- A cavern to wriggle through, Borenore Caves, photo source National Parks website ¹

Page 7, above

- Ancient fish - symbol of Canowindra ³



Circling The Rivers

Page 6, from left

- Leadlight at Culcairn pub
- Old steam locomotive turntable in modern park landscaping, Corowa
- Urana—Annis and George Bills were Australia's favourite horse trough distributors. The tin sheep have to wait their turn.

• Narrandera—bliss on the Murrumbidgee

Page 7, bottom left

- The Narrandera to Jerilderie rail branch

Following the Divide North

Page 7, from top, clockwise

- Delight for Jemima—a paddle on the pagoda studded Dunns Swamp in Wollemi National Park (Sue Nicol photographer)
- The Drip Gorge is a highlight of Goulburn River N.P. on the road from Ulan to Cassilis
- Coolah Tops N.P.—unusual Xanthorrhoea trees
- The Standing Stones symbolise the Celtic heritage of Glen Innes. Photo by C Goodwin ⁴

Photographs not otherwise credited are by Christine Davies.

¹ David Noble Blog, 2016 SUBW – PBT – October Long Weekend.

² Borenore Karst Conservation Reserve, nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

³ Photo source: Age of Fishes Museum

⁴ Cgoodwin - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4166700>

The Art of Threatened Species: Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo, until 2 February 2020

Recently I was fortunate to attend the opening at Dubbo's Western Plains Cultural Centre of an important exhibition, *The Art of Threatened Species*. The whole experience reminded me of T.S. Eliot's observation: *I am in the landscape and the landscape is inside me*.

Driving there from Katoomba made me increasingly aware that the people of the inland are much closer to the impact of climate change than most of us who live clinging to the coast. Everywhere the impact of drought was obvious – vast paddocks turning to dust, empty of stock or crops. As we drove further west we were engulfed in swirling dust storms, now a common occurrence in western NSW. As the National MP for Dubbo, Dugald Saunders, said when he launched the exhibition: *another day, another dust storm*.

The exhibition is a reminder of the immediacy of climate change and how all of us are co-dependent on all other forms of life and the land we inhabit. The art on display covered the huge range of NSW: from the north near Narrabri, the Mt Kaputar Giant Pink Slug; to the south, in Albury/Corowa, the tiny Sloanes Froglet; from the west near Broken Hill, the Barrier Range Dragon; to the south coast at Barren Grounds, the Eastern Bristlebird; and the Beach Nesting Shorebirds at Jervis Bay.

The exhibition is also unique in its collaboration between artists, scientists and species. The logic of this was described by Dr David Bain as the scientist *being moved to an emotional place* by the artist. An example was the collaboration between the artist, Rebecca Selleck, and Bain, the Threatened Species Officer/Biodiversity and

Conservation Division. They collaborated in a work on the Bristlebird, which to Rebecca is an *impossibly shy, seemingly unremarkable little brown bird (which) has just a few geographically separate areas of habitat along the east coast left*.

They both describe the impact of colonisation, symbolised by the fox, which is one of the major threats to the Bristlebird, and is itself a part of the cycle of displacement and death. Their image of the little figure of the Bristlebird, claws curled in death, laid on the green plush velvet of a colonial sofa, moved me as no other artwork in this exhibition.

The Blue Mountains is represented in the exhibition by Tallulah Cunningham in *Fragile Ground*, a representation of the unique and threatened swamps in this area by the Giant Dragonfly and the Blue Mountains Water Skink in two delicate panels of introduced and native species in The Gully in Katoomba.

I was also fortunate to attend a workshop where the artists and scientists presented and explored their art. I never fail to be impressed by the Western Plains Cultural Centre and its permanent and current exhibitions which have the knack of tapping into authentic contemporary and historical representations of both indigenous and non-indigenous representations of the way we are and what has shaped us.

This exhibition will tour other areas around the state in 2020 and we should all see it if we can. Kent Buchanan, the curator of Western Plains Cultural Centre where he has worked for more than 20 years, summed up its importance: *Art has the power to shift our thinking and generate change*.

Cathy Cavanagh, Environmental Education Officer

Vale Barb Carfrae and Morag Ryder

The Society bids farewell to two former members who passed away in recent weeks.

Barb Carfrae will be sadly missed by her bushwalking friends. Hugh Speirs wrote of Barb as a remarkable lady who took great joy in off-track exploration in the Bungleboori, the Gardens of Stone, and the north side of the Grose Valley. In her late seventies and mid-eighties (not that she'd ever admit to that!) she coped with bushwalking situations which many much younger walkers would find too challenging. Barb will be remembered for her courage, for her determination, and for her unfailing generosity to her walking companions.

Morag Ryder was active in bushcare and other environmental causes. In 2016 she received a Seniors Week Recognition Award which stated: "Morag has been a Bushcare volunteer for many years, working with the Water Nymphs Dell, Braeside, Gibbergunyah (Gloria Park), Coates Park and Horseshoe Falls Bushcare Groups. Over the years Morag has been involved in many Bushcare events doing weed control and planting. She has created some beautiful and artistic banners and bunting for Bushcare Groups and the Bushcare Picnic. Morag often provides surprise gifts to people." Jim Percy and Jo van Sommers knew Morag from Sydney Bushwalkers with whom she had been very active in the 60's and into the 90's.

Gang-gangs a happy sight at Woodford Jo Carroll

An early walk down into Wilsons Glen on 12 November brought a welcome viewing of two pairs of Gang-gang Cockatoos.

Entering the Glen from Railway Parade – because on this track, at this time of year, the Boronia on the side of the gully perfumes the air as you descend to Gypsy Pool, I was surprised by the familiar 'creaking' sound of these lovely parrots. They seemed to be feeding in the Acacias by the road and then moved further into the forest as I walked by. It has been quite a while – years maybe – since I saw some of these birds in Woodford and it was a happy sight.

Image: Gang-gang feeding on *Petrophile* fruits on the Fairfax Track at Blackheath in 2012, photographed by Anne Ashford.



Women and men of the past built the foundations of modern-day Blue Mountains environmentalism. Their stories can inspire us.

It's our turn now! Christine Davies

4. Graham Alcorn (1914-1998)

Graham Nixon Alcorn was born in New Zealand. With his brother, Robert Hugh Wilson Alcorn (known as Wilson) he moved across the Tasman, spending several years in Western Australia and getting involved there in union and left-wing politics. In 1970, he took up employment with the Blue Mountains City Council as a ranger and was joined by Wilson in 1971. For the next decade they maintained the parks, reserves and walking tracks of the region.

In the Blue Mountains the brothers settled at Medlow Bath and became members of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society (then Katoomba & District Wildlife Conservation Society). During the 1970s and early 1980s, both served terms as President and Newsletter Editor.

Graham's contributions to the newsletter, both poems and nature observations, continued until the time of his death. His knowledge of birds was extensive and he was highly sought after and respected as a guide and mentor. Graham had two books of his poetry published and his poems have been published in Hut News in recent years.

On the 10th anniversary of Graham's death, John Low, Jill Dark and Carol Proberts, with the help and encouragement of many of Graham's friends, published "Sipping the Nectar" which is a collection of Graham's bird notes and poetry which John Low had extracted from the Conservation Society and Ornithologists Club newsletters 1970-1999. These biographical notes, and quotes from Carol Proberts and Jill Dark, are taken from that book.

Carol Proberts wrote: Like all the best bird observers Graham had a never-ending curiosity. He knew that you never stop learning and he personified the idea of the observant field naturalist contributing to scientific knowledge. He had a particular passion and skill for finding nests and studying nesting behaviour. His meticulous detailed notes were always transcribed and sent in to the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union's Nest Record Scheme where they remain part of an important body of information available to researchers.

Jill Dark wrote: "Graham, there's got to be a poem in this". We were sitting on the dunes of Roebuck Bay, passing the 'scope backwards and forwards and trying not to spook the waders on the beach. It was a brilliant sunny day and there were so many new and exciting birds to identify. He did write the poem and *The Waders of Roebuck Bay* brings back many memories.

Jim Smith spoke about Graham and Wilson's achievements as Head Rangers for Blue Mountains Council, maintaining the walking tracks with few resources other than their knowledge, skill and dedication. In 1978 they had a small grant from the State Government and, with the help of perhaps four other workers, repaired the walking track down the Valley of Waters to Vera Falls, reopened Wentworth Pass and rebuilt Slack Stairs, joining this pass to the National Pass.

Ivor Morton wrote: It was a pleasure to meet Graham on a bird walk. He came from New Zealand, had worked on the land in Western Australia during the depression, had been involved in the union movement. After the loss of the love of his life, he cried for a year and then went walking in Europe with his backpack and an adventurous spirit for another year. Returning, he threw himself into the conservation movement in the Blue Mountains, enjoyed jazz, social life, the odd beer and bird watching. Graham became associated with our group, joined us in a trip to the Kimberleys, to the Western Plains, to tree planting in the Capertee Valley. He wrote many a poem about these events, was never a cross patch, always a story of encouragement. A man's man with male company, but ever the ladies man at the jazz parties and social events. I was fortunate to be given the task of running his funeral, a sad happy occasion.

You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

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

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address:
.....PC

Phone(s)

Email

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

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.
2.
3.

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$35 Concession (Senior/Student) \$25
Household \$40 Household Concession \$30
Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

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

TOTAL AMOUNT \$

Send my copy of Hut News by
Please tick box mail internet only

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

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

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au



Graham Alcorn

**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.**

Yaama Ngunna Baaka Corroboree Tour 2019 by Julie Brett

The Murray-Darling River system is in trouble. Not only is the area experiencing severe drought and the effects of climate change, but is also struggling under poor water management of the river system. I met the Yaama Ngunna Baaka Corroboree Bus Tour at Katoomba Station on the morning of October 28th. Yaama Ngunna Baaka means “Welcome, Everyone (to the) Rivers”. It was a tour to increase awareness about the water troubles of the river towns and also to share Aboriginal knowledge of the land through corroboree.

The convoy would come to number hundreds of people. We travelled to the towns where the river had dried up and ceased to run: Walgett, Brewarrina (aka Bre), Bourke, Wilcannia, and the Menindee Lakes. We were introduced to local environmental issues and taught about the Aboriginal lore of the land through storytelling, song and dance at the nightly corroborees. Dancers from near and far joined in the spectacular show as everyone was welcomed to hear stories about the rivers, the animals and important landmarks. The wisdom of the tradition was shared and strengthened. The enthusiasm of everyone attending brought us together in solidarity for this important cause.

The tour was led by Bruce Shillingsworth who appeared on the Drought episode of Q & A, talking about the plight of the First Nations people in these areas, and the damage done by greed and seeking only profit over the health of the land and people. The tour was supported by the Water For Rivers organisation, Extinction Rebellion and other communities. There were speakers from environmental organisations and political parties, movie showings, museum visits and many opportunities to learn and make connections. The strengthening of community ties brought together people from many different areas of interest who care for the health of the land, the river and the people.

Drought and climate change, but more importantly, corporate greed and mismanagement at a government level have created a dire situation for these beautiful communities. They are without clean drinking water. Their land and people are becoming sick. They are feeling abandoned by their government. This event was an opportunity to show that people do care, that things do need to change. Right now, we need more people and especially those in power, to listen to the knowledge about the land that the Aboriginal people have to share. They have lived in the river lands for thousands of years. The stories and songs of the corroboree speak of that deep knowledge of the land.

The traditional owners welcomed us to their country and the knowledge of how to live sustainably in the land was shared. This wisdom cannot be ignored any longer. For the sake of the land, the waters and all the people, we all need to learn to listen.



Water For Rivers – Blue Mountains can be found on Facebook for more information about local events for this issue, or text Julie 0433051137.

Image: Corroboree in Wilcannia. Photo credit: Mark Merritt, c/o Earthling Studios P/L

The end of Rainbow Creek, by Jim Low

I grew up in North Sydney, a suburb which was uncomfortably accommodating post-war change. New, high-rise offices and apartments jostled for position in a crowding landscape. The most significant change came when the Warringah Expressway cruelly sliced through our suburb.

When walking around North Sydney today, it is hard to imagine the area as it was when Europeans first arrived. Back then, it was covered by thick native bushland that extended to the harbour waters.

Travel over vast, unforgiving oceans had brought The First Fleet to this country. Sea travel remained the sole way back to England. The repair and maintenance of vessels was therefore crucial for the colony's survival and progress in this unfamiliar landscape.

A convenient place to carry out such repairs was soon found on the northern side of the harbour. This narrow inlet quickly became known to the new intruders as Careening Cove. No one imagined that it already had a name. The Cammeraygal, the Aboriginal people in whose country this cove was situated, had already called it Weye Weye.

My childhood home overlooked the cove and its margins were a favourite area of play. When I played there in the 1950s, a stone seawall stretched across the cove and the tidal flats behind had been filled in to make Milson Park. Rainbow Creek, a fresh water creek that flowed into Careening Cove, had also disappeared. This colourful name came from the *HMS Rainbow* which was careened at the cove in the 1820s.

Writing in the early 1930s, Livingstone Mann remembered drinking from the creek around 1870: 'Many a time on a hot day have I quenched my thirst from the clear stream called Rainbow Creek'. Mann was the grandson of Sir Thomas Mitchell and son of explorer and surveyor John Frederick Mann who accompanied Leichhardt on his second expedition.

The creek's source is believed to be near the present day site of the MLC building, on the corner of Mount and Miller Streets. This once delightful and pristine little waterway babbled and bubbled its way down to Careening Cove. And, of course, it had done so for many years prior to the coming of The First Fleet.

As far as I am aware, no map or historic marker reminds us that Rainbow Creek ever existed. The only evidence that I can recall of this creek was the concrete stormwater drainage canal that bounded one side of Milson Park, emptying into Careening Cove.

There was also a wild space that ran behind some of the houses in my street. We usually accessed this unofficial play area from friends' backyards. The gully in this space, often used by the local council to dump road fill, now appears to be where the creek originally flowed.

Rainbow Creek had obviously been a valuable part of the natural environment. The Aboriginal people who first lived there had respected and cared for its survival. With the coming of Europeans, it was a convenient water supply for the sailors who repaired their ships in the cove and the colonial farmers and orchardists who began transforming the bushland.



Rainbow Creek now a stormwater channel



Cripple Creek below Mount Riverview

Imagine, during its lifetime, the countless number of birds and other wild life that visited it. Then consider those first, small changes that rapidly grew and destroyed it, until today it is no longer remembered. It's as if the creek never really existed for all those years.

I think of the now aptly named Cripple Creek which flows in the valley behind my home in the Blue Mountains. I think also of other local water ways, perhaps flowing to a similar fate as that of Rainbow Creek. The English writer Roger Deakin once described the source of a river as 'the tear duct of the earth'. This now seems sadly appropriate when remembering the fate of our forgotten water ways.

New Year's Day Blue Mountains

Returning to my garden on the first day of the year, the Weeping Bottlebrush is a blood-red fountain. *Melaleuca hypericifolia's* orange-scarlet flames flicker through silken green. Honeyeaters peel a summons to the feast of nectar. I fetch water for the empty bird bath.

Graham Alcorn.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

Dec 14 **Christmas Party.** Private room at the Lawson Bowling Club has been organised, so come along and have a ball. Meet 11.30 for Noon. RSVP to Mike Honey 47573660 to help the club with numbers. Sat 21st walk will be decided on this day.

Dec 21 **Walk as organised at the Christmas party**, so contact Harold 0409010737 or Alice 47393086 or 0425738766 to check time & venue.

Dec 28 to Feb 8 **Walkers usually meet at Wentworth Falls Carpark, 8.00am.** The Walk and Leader are decided the previous Saturday. Contact: Harold 0409010737 or Alice 47393086 or 0425738766 to check time & venue.

Remember to keep cool and stay hydrated.

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

Dec 16 **Birdwood Gully & Madeline Glen.** Springwood commuter car park (north side) 9am. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.

Dec 23 **Christmas Picnic at Gordon falls reserve, Leura.** Bring dish to share. Easy walk in the general area—Lyrebird Dell, Pool of Siloam. Please come for lunch even if you don't walk. Meet Gordon Falls Reserve, cnr Olympian Pde & Lone Pine Ave Leura. If coming by train 8-30 at Leura Station Car Park. Maree Giddins 4784 2034 or 0427 390645. Grade 2.

Dec 30 **No walk**

Jan 6 **Empire Pass Lawson.** Walk to Frederica Falls and then along creek to Dante's Glen, Fairy Falls, Echo Bluff and return to Lawson Station. Approx 8Km. Lawson Bowling Club car park 8.40 am. Lyn Bevington 0432 352 850. Grade 3.

Jan 13 **Bus Trip, Dargan dams.** Book and pay Maurice. Fare \$12. Car park rear of Westpac Springwood 8.30 or pick up along the way. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.

Jan 20 **No set walk - meet at Wentworth Falls Stockyard Car Park** at 8-30am and make a collective decision on where

Feb 3) walk on the day. Wentworth Falls Station at 8-30am. (No walk on Jan 27, Australia Day holiday)

Feb 10 **Red Gum Park, Bullaburra.** Bullaburra Station (south side) 10am. Maurice 4739 4942. 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

Dec 12 **Christmas Party in Dorren'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 19 and 26 **No walk.**

Jan 2 **Hyde Park, Hartley.** Bring your cossie for a swim in River Lett. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.50am.

Leader Keith 0411 162 345. Carpool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 1

Jan 9 **Paradise Pool, Linden.** Maybe a swim or paddle in the pool. Meet Linden Station north side 9.00am.

Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Carpool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Jan 16 **South Lawson Waterfalls.** Meet Lawson Station southside 8.40am. Keith 0411 162 345. Carpool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Jan 23 **Willoughby Road to Sublime Point, Leura.** Meet cnr The Mall and Megalong Street, Leura 9.00am. Leader

Beverley 4757 2076. Carpool. Grade 1

Jan 30 **Old Ford Reserve, Megalong Valley.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45 am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611.

Carpool \$4. Take lunch. Grade 1

Feb 6 **Bullaburra Walk.** Short walk in pristine bush. Meet cnr Boronia Rd and Great Western Hwy, Bullaburra 8.45. Leader

Beverley 4757 2076. Carpool. Grade 1

Feb 13 **Cronulla Walk.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Take lunch. Grade 1

Society bushwalks on facebook: Visit <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks/>

Bushwalks in Wollemi

Wollemi National Park: Day Walks from Newnes - Part 2. (Michael Keats, Brian Fox and Yuri Bolotin.)

"It contains an abridged social history of Newnes and two sections of exciting bushwalks - spectacular Cliffs and Rock Formations, and astonishing Slots and Passes."

This is part of a series of books about the Blue Mountains and in particular the Gardens of Stone. Find out more at www.bushexplorers.com.au

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am - noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME

Phone Karen 4757 1929

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 Blue Mountains Conservation Society".