

# HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



## Welcome to New Committee

Our AGM was well attended and a full management committee elected for the coming year 1999/2000. A list of names and contact details is at the bottom of this page.

Welcome to new committee members, Meredith Brownhill, Anne Merton, Les Coyne, and Mike Purtell, and many thanks to Mary Shaw, Don Morison, Jim Warburton and Jacqueline Reid for their contribution to the work of the Society during the past year.

For those who did not nominate for a management position, members are needed to serve on sub-committees and perform many other tasks during the year. Please let us know if you would like to help.

With a keen management committee and a membership of over 600 people we look forward to another very successful year for the Society.

## "The People's Forest"

"The People's Forest" is built upon the oral history interviews of 88 Australian men and women whose very different life stories were recorded between 1992 and 1997 for the first national oral history of Australia's forests and woodlands.

At our general meeting on Friday 30 April, Gregg Borschmann, will talk about "The People's Forest". The project comprises an environmentally friendly book, an ABC radio series, a nationally touring exhibition, concerts, a series of musical CDs, and a video which document the social history of the Australian bush.

The meeting at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, starts at 7.30. Visitors are welcome.

## On Public Exhibition

### Grose Identified Wilderness Area

The Grose Wilderness proposal covers parts of Blue Mountains National Park and adjacent areas. An area of 50,200ha has been identified as wilderness with 36,500ha recommended for wilderness declaration in accordance with the Wilderness Act 1987.

Information sheets, submission forms and a display including the wilderness assessment report are now available for information and comment at NPWS Blackheath, Richmond, Parramatta and Hurstville offices, Blue Mountains City Council, Katoomba, and

## Last Chance to Say NO to Badgery's Creek Airport

The Badgerys Creek EIS, says Transport Minister John Anderson, will be wrapped up by the end of May. The Minister also says he's given himself a deadline of June 30 to reach a decision. It is therefore crunch time for this issue.

This is your last chance to say **NO** to the world of noise sharing, fuel dumping, LTOP, curfew (*what curfew?*) violations, ANEF, airport expansion, PRM, flightpaths, decibels, 3rd, 4th and who-knows-how-many runways, aircraft emissions, and Transport Ministers who tell you to go and live in the bush (*thought we were!*) if you don't like it.

Mountains Against Badgerys Creek Airport (MABCA) calls upon all members of Blue Mountains Conservation Society, their families and friends, to take the time to write — the same letter will do just fine — to the Prime Minister, the Transport Minister and the Environment Minister (all at Parliament House, Canberra). A copy to Kerry Bartlett, MP, 186 Macquarie Street, Springwood 2777 would also be a good idea.

Tell them the only thunder, the only echo you want, is natural. Tell them you want blue skies, not brown haze, and pH neutral, not acid rain.

**And do it NOW!**

Colin Anderson, Co-ordinator, MABCA.

Springwood, Blaxland and Katoomba libraries.

The wilderness assessment report (\$10) can be obtained from NPWS offices or by contacting the Grose Wilderness Information Line (02) 9294.0843.

**Submissions should be sent no later than 11 June 1999.**

## Double-Banger Reservation

The NSW Government is to be congratulated on two important reservations gazetted on 5 March 1999.

Firstly, the Wollemi Wilderness has been declared, covering most of Wollemi National Park and some of Blue Mountains National Park. Its 361,000 hectares exceeds the area previously 'identified' in the public exhibition as a

result of extensions up to the northern extremity of Wollemi National Park and eastwards to the Putty Road. The extras were incorporated in response to the argument by environment groups that, for no sound reason, large parts of the original nomination had not been included in the 'identified' area.

The second notice concerns a much smaller area but is no less significant in terms of values that lie behind it: some 900 hectares of the Canyon Colliery mining lease has been returned to the Blue Mountains National Park. The portion not yet returned — 100 hectares or so — contains the mine's headworks and other facilities. Hopefully this will be returned to the park when rehabilitation is complete.

Regardless of what one thinks of Earth Sanctuaries' operations elsewhere and, indeed, regardless of what one might think of the proposed Grose Wilderness (now on public exhibition), the Grose is not a place to be carved up with fences, or handed over to private interests.

Andy Macqueen.

## Native Plants Sale

The Society's nursery will hold a native plant sale at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, on **Saturday 10 April 1999, between 9 am and 12 noon**. Treepots (tube stock) \$2; 125mm pots \$4. Tell your friends. All welcome.

### "Hut News", the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

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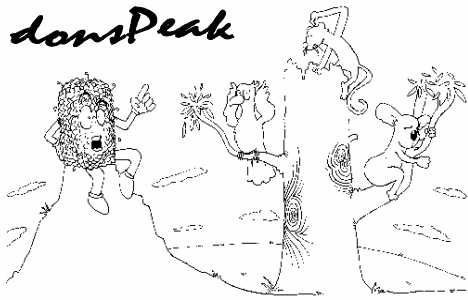
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THE DEADLINE  
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS  
WEDNESDAY 21 APRIL



**Five Days of Fun in Some Energy-Intensive Buildings**

Jacqueline Reid and myself attended the Australian Association for Environmental Education Conference of UNSW in January, along with over 400 delegates from 25 nations. Keynote speaker John Ralston Saul, of Canada, urged delegates to reject ideology and use a rationalist, humanist style when advocating for the environment.

In discussion, a delegate protested that he had joined an environment group after 38 years in a fundamentalist Christian community and noticed little difference.

Afro-ethnic academic Dr Julian Ageyman, of Pennsylvania, prophesied 'No Environmental Quality Without Human Equality'. He insisted that we focus on injustices to the disadvantaged simultaneously with threats to the environment, a theme echoed later in the month in the Australia Day address by Phoebe Fraser of Care Australia.

Robyn Eckersley, of Monash University, presented what she admitted was a new idealistic model of democracy that would require participants to advocate for the public interest, not self interest.

Dr Mark Diesendorf advised 'Be kind to nature: be kind to humans; be generous in your kindness' meaning that it is better to err on the side of being excessively kind to nature and to humans.

Prof. Dexter Dunphy, of UNSW, called for environmentalists to engage with the corporate world. Ministers Senator Robert Hill and Pam Allen spent much of their speech time trying to exchange Commonwealth and State controlled lighthouses, much as teenagers swap 'Star Trek' cards.

This was followed by a personal attack on Senator Hill over Jabiluka Uranium mine from UTS under-graduate Fleur Chapman, which rose to dizzy heights of poetry and oratory. An unruffled Senator Hill was later sighted feeding ABC reporters in the corridor.

In the final session, David Engwicht, a Brisbane transport activist, credited with stopping the 'Route 20' freeway and pioneering traffic calming, rose from the floor. He opposed the adoption of conference resolutions, preferring action.

The session chair ignored him and played midwife to a set of resolutions which embodied profound sentiments and a common spirit but bound no-one to highly specific actions.

We made many worthwhile contacts but I do dream of the day when we can hold an international environmental meeting in a venue with natural light and

ventilation. From March the conference papers and resolutions will be on <http://www.education.uts.edu.au.eeconf>.

— Don Morison.

**National Survey of Grey-headed flying fox**

It is difficult to assess the population size of Grey-headed flying fox. The species has an extensive range through eastern Queensland, NSW and Victoria and patterns of abundance within that range are fluid and highly variable due to irregular migration patterns. In order to estimate population size, it is necessary to conduct a synchronised count of animals throughout their range. The logistics of such an undertaking have in the past proven prohibitive.

According to information on broad-scale patterns of habitat use by Grey-headed flying fox there are key months when the population is concentrated in coastal areas, making synchronised counts more practicable. For example, in July 1998 the animals were located in the Sydney area and in pockets along the coast from Wingham, NSW into south-east Queensland. A synchronised count of the NSW population was made at that time. The count was coordinated by members of the Australasian Bat Society (ABS) and involved over 100 volunteers. A second count was conducted in September 1998.

A state-wide count will be conducted on April 17/18, 1999. The NSW count will coincide with equivalent counts in Queensland and Victoria. The proposal is for two training counts and two official counts to be conducted at each roost site. The overall number of people involved is expected to be approximately 200.

If you are interested in participating, or would like more information contact Greg Wellham, NPWS, 4787.8877.

**Welcome to New Members**

- W Graham, Bullaburra
- Alethea Young, Campsie
- Julian Crawford, Wentworth Falls
- Keith Muir, Newtown
- Eve Taylor, Blackheath
- Marie Standen, Faulconbridge
- Ian Lacey, Wentworth Falls
- Michael Franklin, Lawson
- The Kaldor Family, Hazelbrook
- Jennifer Tobin, Glenbrook
- Trish Ryan, Blackheath

**Katoomba and Echo Point**

Do you live around Katoomba? Would you like a say in how Katoomba is redeveloped? Do you wonder about the future of Katoomba? How about the

**Green Tip:**

Do you have Cotoneaster trees/bushes in your garden? They have red berries on them now, which birds eat and spread into the bush by their droppings.

Cotoneaster is a weed in the bush, so its best to remove it from your garden (at least cut the berries off).

You could plant other bird food such as Hakeas, Banksias, Geebung or Tea Trees.

**Membership Enquiries**

Contact Ross Coster

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(Fax) 02 4759.1095

(Email) [haytech@pnc.com.au](mailto:haytech@pnc.com.au)

(Post) PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

concept of Echo Point?

**You may be just the person to make a difference.** Someone is needed to join Don Morison as a representative of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society on the Katoomba-Echo Point Advisory Committee. Contact Don on 4759.2471.

**More About Currawongs**

I am late writing this note because I was away when the February issue of *Hut News* arrived.

Yes, I have heard another report of Currawongs attacking small animals, and Lyrebirds as well. A resident of Mount Victoria who has a large, partly natural block of land approached me a few years ago in considerable distress because she had repeatedly seen Currawongs attacking her possums (I forget which kind) and her Lyrebirds as well. She was trying to get permission to have the Currawongs culled by any appropriate authority.

This is still a very controversial issue, and, as far as I know, the NPWS and other bodies are still opposed to it. The issue was in the papers a year or two ago because of similar problems in the north Sydney area. *Rachel Makinson.*

**And About Silvereyes**

"From time to time silvereyes become a pest in vineyards where they feed on the grapes. Research showed that silvereyes preferred eating nectar and small native fruits and only resorted to the vineyards when the marri Eucalyptus calophylla failed to bloom. With this knowledge the vineyards can predict in advance when silvereyes will be a serious pest and take action to protect their grapes. It also suggests the importance of protecting marri forests and trees in the regions near the vineyards." ref: *A Natural Legacy Ecology in Australia. Ed. by Harry F. Recher, Daniel Lurney & Irina Dunn.*

"Subspecies familiaris is a common breeding migrant, absent or rare in the Upper Mountains over winter but common all year in the Lower Mountains, where at least part of the breeding population probably migrates north but is replaced by non-breeding migrants from further south.

Subspecies migrants from Tasmania recorded April to October in both Upper and Lower Mountains. Large numbers of these subspecies pass northwards through the region in Autumn and southwards in Spring.

Occurs in most habitats including farmland and towns, but favours wet sclerophyll forests for nesting. Feeds on foliage insects, nectar and soft fruits. Nest a cup of grass, rootlets and cobweb, suspended amongst shrub foliage. Eggs August-January."

ref: *Fauna of the Blue Mountains by Peter and Judy Smith.*

## Looking Back ...

(From Newsletter No 16, March 1974)

### Mixed Flocks of Birds

With the main breeding season over, it is not unusual from now on through to Autumn to see mixed flocks of small, insect-eating birds. Do they join forces for an hour or two, or for a long period?

On three occasions over a three-week period last May and early June, my backyard was visited by a flock of Buff-tailed Thornbills, accompanied each time by one male Scarlet Robin, one Yellow Robin and some Striated Thornbills. So it seems this interesting assemblage knocks around together. On the last visit they were joined by a female Scarlet Robin and two Brown Thornbills.

The first three species get the bulk of their food on the ground and my open grainy shrubbery and weed-filled vegetable garden would suit them well. Unusual, however, to see a Yellow Robin out in the open country like this as they generally keep to the thickly timbered slopes and gullies.

As the feeding habits of each species in these mixed flocks are different, it would seem that they do not compete for the available insects and may even help one another, one species in the course of its feeding, stirring up insects the other wants: Anyhow their cheerful visits are a delight, and an added pleasure is the knowledge of the great number of insects they are demolishing in my garden. \*Graham Alcorn\*

### In the Bush

Flower scan for Feb-March, generally fairly quiet. Epacris pulchella about in patches, Platysace coming to the fore and Woosia waiting in the wings. Lambertia, always a flower or two. Heard a koel on March 5, could well be the last hearing.

The first of the ridges running south after joining the Bell Line of Road is Koombanda — Koombanda Brook its west side drainage and Kamarah Gully its eastern side drainage.

There is no spectacular scenery but in late December it was swathed in Flannel Flowers which made the stroll well worth while. The view from the end

## Annual Camp at Dunns Swamp

Dunns Swamp is a dammed canyon, to supply water for the Kandos cement works much earlier in the century. It is a lake in the Cudgegong River, in the north-western side of the Wollemi National Park. Reeds along the sides give refuge to a great variety of water birds and platypus which you might see if you are lucky enough to be in the right spot at the right time, and there are many wonderful pagodas and rock faces.

As a group we did several walks, looking at rocks and trying to discover the presence of Aboriginals. The park is called Ganguddy which is the Aboriginal name for the area.

Last century and in past centuries there was strong Aboriginal presence and this can still be found by artifacts and rock paintings. Before the damming, the river was a series of deep pools and reedy swamp and must have been a fertile food supply for those that lived there.

Saturday night was very pleasant, sitting around the campfire while songs and poetry were delivered to a happy audience, glass of wine in hand, the shimmering light of the fire and torch whose batteries were diminishing. A storm arrived at about bedtime, very convenient, but during the night it went on its way to harass those further off, and we were left to

looks down a long slope into Koombanda Brook and nothing is seen of the colliery below.

Koombanda, Kamarah both mean 'sleep' according to Myles Dunphy as listed in 'Back

from the Brink'.

In early January I did a stroll out to Liversidge Hill. A Mount Wilson a:25000 sheet map is essential for any of these jaunts and some care has to be taken when ridges change direction otherwise a wrong spur could be followed.

As Liversidge is a European name its origin is well documented and of interest. I quote, "Named after Archibald Liversidge MA, LL.D, FRS, Professor of Chemistry & Mineralogy in University of Sydney, Author of Minerals of NSW", also papers; important investigator of coal, kerosine shale and other minerals. Founded Australian Association for Advancement of Science. 'Back

wonder at the stars.

On waking, the morning mist swirled her skirts around the tents and two kangaroos made their way back into the scrub through the campsite.

We all agreed that the camp was a success and we hope to repeat it next year. Certainly a canoe would be great fun. As it was, we had to put up with frequent swims.

On Saturday afternoon, there was a wedding at the campsite around the corner, the bride and groom arriving and leaving the ceremony in a decorated canoe, just a bit different to a shiny black car or horse and carriage. It seemed very romantic. *Mary Jane Shaw.*

### Opera in the Park

The bushwalkers stand and survey the scene  
Everywhere concrete, no-where green  
The noisy traffic ebbs and flows  
The stench of pollution assails the nose  
They think of the quiet bush they've left behind  
This city is to nature so unkind  
In the distance some trees they spy  
A park - bequeathed in days gone bye  
The City Fathers' gift of a haven green  
By the milling throngs goes largely unseen  
But tonight the park will take centre stage  
Momentarily its impoverishment to assuage  
As the music and voices soar majestically  
The crowd sits in awe, peace descends finally  
Then as the moon appears from behind a cloud  
Nature seems to call out, strong and loud  
'The worst you can do is not enough  
I'm still here, I've called your bluff'  
Then high in the trees  
small shapes emerge from the dark  
The Possums have come to 'Opera in the Park'.

*Yvonne Bowles.*

from the Brink' adds ... "colleague of Rev. WB Clarke".

With our lightweight gear, choice of tasty foods and bitumen roads we can't but help admire the efforts of these public servants of the 1880's as they went about their investigatory work.

Magnificent views of Balzer Lookout and Bald Head located over the opposite side of the Grose are the reward for the walk. *The Bunyip.*

## Kids' Club Newsletter

A copy of the first issue of the Kids' Club newsletter is enclosed with this newsletter.

If you don't have a child or grandchild living in the Blue Mountains, please pass it on to a friend or neighbour.

## The Conservation Hut

The Conservation Hut in the Valley of the Waters Reserve at Wentworth Falls was originally a small weatherboard structure, built in 1903 as a kiosk to cater for passing bushwalkers.

In 1963 the Katoomba and District Wildlife Conservation Society (KDWCS) started the renovation of the old tea room as an environmental education centre and meeting place. (The KDWCS later became Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society, eventually Blue Mountains Conservation Society.)

Many of the older members have fond memories of the old Conservation Hut, which was staffed at weekends by volunteers from the Society. There were environmental displays, refreshments for bushwalkers, and information for visitors about the bushwalks, the plants and animals, and the Blue Mountains environment.

Termites eventually caused the demise of the old Conservation Hut, which was demolished by NPWS in 1992.

The building which replaced it, the "Conservation Hut", still provides many of the functions of the old Hut — refreshments for bushwalkers, information for visitors about the bushwalks and the Blue Mountains environment, and is the meeting place of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

## Autumn in the Mountains

Autumn is a very busy time for the birds and animals of the Blue Mountains as they prepare for winter.

### With the Birds:

- There is lots of movement:
- Juveniles are dispersing, leaving their parents' territories, some of the small ones travelling around in mixed flocks, many different species together.
- Some species of Honeyeaters migrate north, arriving to stay here for the winter, or small groups flying over during the day.
- Silvereyes are migrating north, huge flocks flying over at night. (See page 2 for more information on Silvereyes).
- Glossy Black Cockatoos are nesting.

### Animals:

- Some animals, for example some of the smaller possums, store up fat in the base of their tails to help get them through the winter, when they go into torpor or semi-torpor (torpor means, like a deep sleep).
- Brushtail possums and Wombats — young may be born.
- Greater Gliders, usually solitary except during the mating season.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
APRIL		7 Kids Club				4 Bushcare 11 Bushwalk
12 LeisWalk					17 Bushwalk	
19 LeisWalk	20 Bushcare				24 MCMMeet	25 Bushwalk
				30 GenMeet		
MAY						2 Bushcare 2 Bushwalk
3 LeisWalk					8 Bushwalk	9 KidsClub
10 LeisWalk						16 Bushwalk
17 LeisWalk	18 Bushcare				22 MCMMeet	23 Excursion
24 LeisWalk				28 GenMeet		30 Bushwalk

### APRIL

22 (Sat) **Management Committee Meeting.** At Mid Mountains Community Centre, 9 am.

28 (Fri) **General Meeting at the Conservation Hut,** Wentworth Falls, 7.30 pm. Guest Speaker: Gregg Borschmann, "The People's Forest". (See page 1)

### MAY

22 (Sat) **Management Committee Meeting**

28 (Fri) **General Meeting at the Conservation Hut.**

**KIDS' CLUB** (Parents are welcome to come along.)

### APRIL

07 (Wed) **Looking at Bats.** Starting at 6 pm, (in the school holidays). A video, followed by Bat Watching at Echo Point. Meet at 8 Cliff Drive (opposite the Echo Point car park) at 6pm. Contact Jessica 4757.2783.

### MAY

09 (Sun) **Making a safe Bird Bath and Frog Pond, using recycled materials.** Meet 10 am, 55 Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls. Bring morning tea. Contact Jessica 4757.2783.

**BUSHCARE** (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves.)

### APRIL

04 (Sun) **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group.** Meet 9 am at the Reserve. Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.

20 (Tue) **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group.** Meet 9 am Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. Contact Jessica 4757.2783. (following Tuesday if wet)

### MAY

02 (Sun) **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group.** (Details as above)

**BUSHWALKS** (Usually day walks — bring lunch and **minimum 1 litre water.**) Walks have been graded: E-easy; M-medium; H-hard. If coming by train or in need of transport, contact the leader. If you would like to lead a walk or organise an excursion, contact Jim Wallace 4784.3305.

### APRIL

11 (Sun) **Fairy Bower/Mount Piddington.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.30. Contact Mary and Terry Flynn 4787.6918. Grade M.

17 (Sat) **Horsetrack.** Meet Blackheath Railway Station carpark 9.30. John Muir 02.9427.4570 or weekends 4757.2041. Grade M/H.

25 (Sun) **Florabella Pass.** Meet Warrimoo Railway Station 9.30. Contact Jim Wallace. Grade M.

### MAY

02 (Sun) **Leura Forest.** Meet Leura Railway carpark 9.30. George Georgiou 4784.1721. Grade M. (up the railway).

08 (Sat) **Bruce's Walk.** Meet at Gearins Hotel, Katoomba 9.30. Rebekah Somerville 4782.4294. Grade M/H. (car shuttle needed).

16 (Sun) **Euroka Clearing, Glenbrook.**

23 (Sun) **Excursion/Bushwalk/Picnic — "Budthingeroo", Kanangra.** More details next month)

30 (Sun) **Crayfish Pool, Glenbrook.**

**LEISURE WALKS** (Usually morning walks — bring a drink and morning tea.)

APRIL (With daylight saving ended, leisure walks start at 9.30 am)

12 (Mon) **Rylstone Bus Trip.**

19 (Mon) **Bonnie Doon.** Meet at the Gearins Hotel 9.30. Corrye Brook 47574574.

### MAY

03 (Mon) **Fort Rock.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.30. Contact Norah Gaynor 4757.4058.

10 (Mon) **Terrace Falls.** Meet Hazelbrook Station carpark, southern side of station, 9.30. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958.

17 (Mon) **Gordon Falls, Pool of Salome.** Meet Gordon Falls Reserve 9.30. Contact Jan Cutler 84.3079.

Young are born late Autumn/early Winter.

### Plants

- Banksias beginning to flower. They provide food for Honeyeaters, Silvereyes, tiny possums and others. Sometimes you can see the nectar dripping from the flowers.
- Look for little buds forming on some

of the plants getting ready to flower in the Spring.

### Fungi

- Autumn, especially around Easter, is a great time to look for mushrooms and toadstools. There are hundreds of different types, all shapes and colours. Many of them are poisonous to humans, but not all animals.