

HUT NEWS

Issue No. 323
March 2015



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Photograph from "An Arctic Sojourn", by Ian Brown.

Help the Blue Mountains environment!

At our AGM on Thursday 26 March we will elect a management committee for the year from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. All positions will fall vacant. We have nominations for some positions, but more volunteers are needed. And there are lots of other jobs to be done, on sub committees, helping with administration, campaigns, events and special projects. No experience is necessary, just a willingness to help the Blue Mountains environment.

This year is the 54th anniversary of the Society and we have a membership of around 800. We are probably the largest regional environmental group in NSW and we enjoy respect from the community and from the agencies with which we deal.

Details of the duties and responsibilities of all management committee positions can be found on our website, and enclosed with this newsletter for members. Whilst our constitution allows for nominations to be received on the night of the AGM, we really need to be organised beforehand to ensure that there will be at least one nomination for each position.

You can contact the President or any other member of this year's committee (contact details on page 2) for more information and you can come along as an observer to the management committee meeting on Saturday 21 March, 9.15 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 20 March: BAT NIGHT. Bat talks and walks ... visit the Bat Cave ... fun activities for the kids. 6.30 pm, NPWS Heritage Centre, Blackheath, and it's FREE. A popular annual event! More info on page 3.

Thursday 26 March: BMCS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 7.30pm, Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, followed by "An Arctic Sojourn", a slideshow presented by Ian Brown. All welcome.

Saturday 28 March: NSW STATE ELECTION
VOTE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT www.bluemountains.org.au

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut on Thursday 26 March 2015, starting at 7.30 pm
(See notice on page 5)

THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY
(at approx. 8.15 pm)

General Meeting and Slideshow
An Arctic Sojourn
presented by Ian Brown

In the northern summer of 2014, Tom Williams and Ian Brown spent a month sea kayaking and climbing in Ofjord, East Greenland, part of the largest fiord system in the world. See this dramatic arctic wilderness of icebergs, mountains, wildflowers and wildlife at 71 degrees north through the eyes of a photographer.

Come along and support those taking the responsibility for running the Society. Perhaps you have questions for them, or comments about the progress of our various campaigns. Then be entertained by a slide show from Ian Brown and meet other members over supper.

Visitors will be very welcome.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Native Plant Nursery
Blackheath

OPEN MORNINGS
Every Tuesday in March
10 am to 11 am

Come and see behind the scenes. Meet the volunteers and have a chat over morning tea.

Bookings essential.

Read more in Nursery News on page 2.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc
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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
18 MARCH 2015**

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Nursery News

Volunteers needed. Yes-again. Volunteers come and volunteers go and as most of us are retirees who can blame them when world travel and long holidays beckon. But the work at the nursery continues and we need many hands to help.

Anyone who has an interest in native plants and their propagation or anyone who just wants to help raise funds for the Society and has a spare Tuesday or Wednesday morning we would love you to join us. We are particularly in need of help at Blackheath where most of the propagation happens.

To raise awareness and show off some of our work we are planning a series of open mornings at Blackheath Nursery.

Nursery Open Mornings
Every Tuesday in March, 10am to 11am
at Blackheath Nursery
(not normally open to the public)

Anyone interested in or curious about the work of the Nursery, come and see behind the scenes. See propagation techniques, the glasshouse, shadehouse and potting shed, meet the volunteers, have a chat over morning tea.

Numbers limited so book in with me, Sue Nicol 4787 8887.
Directions explained at time of booking.

Sue Nicol, Nursery Manager (nursery@bluemountains.org.au
4787 8887)

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

Our nursery offers the home gardener, landscaper or large contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

Lawson Nursery, Wednesday and Saturday mornings, 9am to noon.

The nursery is located in the Lawson Industrial Area on the corner of Park and Cascade Streets, opposite Federation Building Materials - see map on our website www.bluemountains.org.au.

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

Tube stock \$3. Larger pots available.

Discounts for bulk orders and large contracts.

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

Vale Gary Humble

Shortly before publication, we received news of the passing of Gary Humble. Gary, the former Environmental Education Officer of the Society, passed away in hospital following a diagnosis of cancer. The Society extends our condolences to Annette and Gary's other family and friends. Gary's contributions to the Society were much appreciated.

Optional Preferential: Beware – your vote may not count! Alan Page

In NSW State Elections, an Optional Preferential voting system applies. That is, you only need to put the number “1” in one square – numbering more squares is optional. This is for voting in the Lower House and voting above the line in the Upper House.

So if you have not included preferences, your ballot paper may be put aside when the count gets down to the last few candidates. Such ballot papers are termed “exhausted”.

Lower House (Blue Mountains Electorate)

The ballot papers of 7,346 voters in the last state election were not involved in determining whether Roza Sage or Trish Doyle would be our local member. When the counting of votes got down to these last two candidates, 7,346 ballot papers were found to not preference either candidate and were thus “exhausted”.

Upper House (the whole state)

98% voted above the line at the 2011 NSW State Election, yet 84% of these voters did not include preferences. That is, they only put “1” in one square.

In a Federal Senate Election, political parties lodge preferences. So when you vote above the line you automatically use their lodged preferences.

This does not occur in a State Upper House Election.

If you don't allocate preferences, then if and when the group you voted for is eliminated from the count, your ballot paper is “exhausted”.

What to do.

1. Always read your ballot paper carefully as voting differs in Federal, State and Council elections, and in Upper and Lower Houses.
2. Number most, if not all squares in the Lower House – there were five candidates for the Blue Mountains Electorate in 2011.
3. If voting above the line in the Upper House, number most, if not all squares - there were sixteen groups in 2011.

Make your vote count!

(Source of figures: Antony Green's blog and the Electoral Commission of NSW)

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS: GRANDEUR & INTIMACY AN EXHIBITION BY IAN BROWN

7 MARCH TO 27 APRIL, 2015
9.30 AM TO 5 PM DAILY

Visitor Centre
The Blue Mountains BOTANIC GARDEN
Bells Line of Road, Mount Tomah

This is Ian Brown's first major solo exhibition. He has put together a selection of 30 diverse works from the Blue Mountains, two-thirds of which have never been exhibited before. All exhibited works will be for sale, along with smaller prints too.

Nepean Micro-climate: a bad fit for airport and road expansion Don Morison

How often have you looked east from a vantage point in the Blue Mountains and observed a dirty brown cloud hanging in the Sydney Basin, especially over the catchment of the Nepean River? Of the nasties which might be hanging in such clouds (including photochemical smog, ozone and diesel emissions), there are some which are

visible to the naked eye and others which are not. Most of them have the potential to harm native plants and animals, the quality of drinking water stored in Lake Burrangorang and, of course, human health.

As the present State Government is supporting rapid establishment of Badgerys Creek Airport and unprecedented upgrades that will increase road traffic in Greater Sydney, it is time to question the air quality repercussions. Relevant factors include the total numbers of land-based vehicles and aircraft, the total time each vehicle will spend in the Sydney Basin, the success or otherwise of innovations to decrease each vehicle's emissions and less localised changes to average temperatures and atmospheric conditions associated with global climate change.

It is obvious that scientific modelling of these effects will be complex and imprecise. Common sense would always dictate caution about making such major changes when they threaten a large World Heritage Area as well as a substantial and growing urban population. The research associated with various Second Sydney Airport studies over a number of years has failed to reach convincing conclusions.

A particular contributor to the micro-climate of the Nepean catchment should make us especially concerned. The lower lying areas, both in the World Heritage Area and in the urbanised locations within the catchment are subject to temperature inversions. These inversions can come about from a variety of factors relating to the warming and cooling of the land and the atmosphere. They create delays to the dispersal of harmful atmospheric pollutants. In recent decades, these delays have been more serious during the winter months.

The worst effects have probably occurred in the lowest lying localities. Vulnerable ecosystems along the Wollondilly and Coxs Rivers, as well as the surface of the Burrangorang drinking water storage could be more at risk if the total volume of emissions increases. How confident can we be that technological solutions will keep pace with the huge increase in the numbers of pollution sources and their westward shift towards the Nepean?

(Cartoon from Kim Robson, <http://green-mom.com>)



Wind Farm Syndrome Ross Coster

There have been some press reports lately about the health effects on people living near a wind farm. An article in The Australian on 21 Jan 2015 suggests that "people living near wind farms face a greater risk of suffering health complaints caused by the low-frequency noise generated by turbines". An article in The Sydney Morning Herald on 14 Feb 2015 however suggests that "the total available evidence (parallel and direct) suggests little health risk."

The theory goes that living near a wind farm exposes people to sub-sonic noise that causes stress and therefore various health effects.

Findings of February 2015 National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Report: 'Wind farms and human health', state that.

- The NHMRC final paper has found there is no direct evidence that exposure to wind farm noise affects physical or mental health. The report finds that wind farms would be unlikely to cause health effects at distances of more than 500m.
- However, NHMRC considers that further, higher quality, research is warranted. NHMRC will issue a Targeted Call for Research into wind farms and human health to encourage Australia's best researchers to undertake independent, high quality research investigating possible health effects and their causes, particularly within 1,500 m from a wind farm.

My view of this is fairly simple. There are people who do not want a wind farm near their home, they don't want to see it, they don't want to hear it, they object to their construction, and when they are ignored and have a wind farm imposed on them they are stressed and become unwell.

As a keen enthusiast of renewable energy, I have visited many wind farms over the years, in NSW, Victoria, South

Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. The photo I have supplied is of a wind farm under construction in the Snowy Mountains, east of Jindabyne, at Boco Rock.



So tell me this: How would you feel about one of these towers being built within 1500m of *your* home?

I once had a conversation with a woman in a pub at Robe, in South Australia. She has had a wind turbine (part of a massive array) built, without her consent, less than 500m from her home, on the backside of a hill she lived near. She could not see the Turbine, but she knew when it was generating because she could 'feel' it. I saw little reason to doubt what she told me, as we are talking about a very large object, moving quite fast, and both audible and sub-sonic noise makes sense to my understanding of engineering.

So tell me this: If you had moved to the middle of nowhere to achieve solitude, a 'tree change' if you like, how would you feel about having a machine you could 'feel' being installed next door?

The current Federal Government plans to build a 24-hour Airport 17km from my home in Glenbrook, and I am distraught. I have great sympathy for people who bought themselves some peace-and-quiet, only to have noisy or unsightly industrial infrastructure imposed on them.

As a renewable energy enthusiast, I want to see wind farms built at every suitable site. They produce enormous amounts of clean, non-polluting, renewable energy. However, surely we have to consider the locals in each case, and either accept their objections and look for another site, or buy them out so they can move somewhere else!

A conundrum for the renewable energy age.

Defend Tasmania's wilderness

Write a submission opposing the 2015 draft Management Plan for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/form/defend-tasmanias-wilderness>

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is one of most intact natural areas remaining on Earth, one that inspires us with its scenic beauty. But the 2015 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area draft Management Plan proposes to remove explicit wilderness protection and open the World Heritage Area to logging, commercial lodges, aircraft landing sites and noise. The word wilderness is even proposed to be removed from the name of the World Heritage Area.

The intrinsic value of this wilderness includes its broad range of irreplaceable habitats for the many native plants and animals found nowhere else.

Wilderness is in peril: if this plan is approved, then the fate of Tasmania's national parks and World Heritage Areas will have been rewritten for the benefit of commercial interests. Please, don't sit by and let that happen! If it can happen in Tasmania it can happen in the Blue Mountains.

The submission period ends 5pm, 22 March 2015

sky

this still grey mountain
silence
augurs something
not to be found
in the weather forecast
something more fundamental
troubling
closer to heart and bone
a vision perhaps
of a self more perfect
something
now quietly weeping
from the sky
like grief
like a blessing

Brendan Doyle

BLUE MOUNTAINS BAT NIGHT



IT'S A BAT FEST!!

Bat cave for the kids

Bat talks

Bat DVD's

Bat walks (bring torches)

Come and
meet a
Flying Fox!

FREE
EVENT !!

Friday 20 March, 6.30 pm onwards
NPWS Heritage Centre, Govetts Leap Road,
Blackheath (Enquiries: 4787 8877)

Sausage sizzle by Blackheath/Mt Vic RFS Brigade

This event is supported by:

Blue Mountains City Council Environment Levy
Australasian Bat Society Inc.
National Parks and Wildlife Service
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Annual General Meeting 7.30pm Wednesday on 26th March 2015 The Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls

Business will include:

- receipt of reports,
- adoption of annual accounts,
- determination of structure of Management Committee,
- election of President, Management Committee members and other office holders, and
- appointment of auditor

There will also be a proposal for changes to the constitution to satisfy the requirements of the Registrar of Environmental Organisations in order for the Society to retain its deductible gift recipient status. If this proposal is passed, there will be a second proposal that an updated constitution is adopted incorporating all changes since the last time an updated constitution was adopted. Both of these proposals have been approved by the Management Committee.

Full details were included in formal notice of meeting in February Hut News. These details may also be found on our website <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/>

The State Election Environmental Questionnaire to Candidates: Some Observations

In mid February all Society members were sent a printed copy of the Society's State Election Environmental Questionnaire along with the responses of all election candidates as at 30th January 2015. We hope you have been able to find time to read and consider it at length. But if not we offer this very brief assessment, not so much a score card as some general observations.

The Pluses

- ✓ All three candidates, Roza Sage (Liberal), Trish Doyle (Labor) and Alandra Tasire (The Greens) responded—a good result.
- ✓ All three candidates gave detailed answers about the demonstrable actions they have taken to minimise their household's environmental footprint
- ✓ Both Trish Doyle (Labor) and Alandra Tasire (The Greens) give clear cut unequivocal answers in nearly all cases.
- ✓ A careful reading of the candidates' answers provides real insight into their policies and positions.
- ✓ Answers from Trish Doyle and Alandra Tasire on CSG issues are both clear and very positive. The comment from Trish Doyle on Labor's past mistakes with CSG is refreshingly honest.
- ✓ Both Trish Doyle and Alandra Tasire commit to restoring adequate funding and staffing for our National Parks.
- ✓ and much more, but best read it yourself.

The Negatives

- ✗ Personal Question 3 (on continual growth in a world of finite resources) is admittedly a minefield for any candidate to speak about in a society obsessed with the mantra of growth. None the less, given the parlous state our world is in, it was a little disappointing that not one candidate was prepared to *explicitly* state the urgent need to attain steady-state economies and populations.
- ✗ In two answers Roza Sage makes statements that we feel necessitate Commentary Notes. See Local Question 7 (CSG & PEL2) and State-Wide Question 3 (NPWS funding).
- ✗ The level of explicit answer avoidance by the incumbent, Local Member Roza Sage, is troubling. For example:
 - ◇ Local Question 1 (Blue Mountains Local Environment Plan)
 - ◇ State Question 3 (funding and staffing levels for NSW National Parks)
 - ◇ State Question 5 (Hunting in National Parks).

We hope the above will stimulate your interest and that you will want to do your own assessment.

The full and most up to date Questionnaire with all candidates' responses can be found on our website www.bluemountains.org.au

BMCS Vote for the Environment Campaign Team



‘The Day of the Eagle’ Hugh Speirs

Four of us Bushrangers set out on that warm February day which would come to be remembered as ‘The Day of the Eagle’.

We were climbing a grand outcrop of pagodas separated by a succession of intricate bends, arches, slots, and sheltered ‘courtyards’ - a maze that continued to open up into a way forward. Nearing the end of a ridge we settled down for a water stop.

Above us, a Wedge-tailed Eagle was espied circling majestically, giving us the once-over.

Upborne with indefatigable wings, Over the vast abrupt ... (as Milton might have put it).

A pause - then someone shouted, ‘Look out!!’, and the unforgettable sight of the giant bird coming at us horizontally was followed instantly by the indescribable sound of its great wings as it rose at the last moment to miss us by perhaps a metre. We huddled together; the wing span covered the four of us. I took refuge by crouching down behind Barb. It took us by such surprise there was no chance to get cameras out. Such speed!! Bob estimated it near 100kph. Hardly had we recovered but that eagle was now coming at us from above - out of the sun as the fighter pilots had emulated so effectively in WWII.

A pause of several minutes and then again someone (it may have been myself!) shouted “Look out!” and again the bird was coming horizontally, straight at us, from the end of his ridge. It was time to hasten from our own perch!

With little success I’ve tried to describe the size of that bird. Pizzey & Knight give the wingspan of the female, usually the larger of the pair, as being up to 2.8m. A walk we’ll never forget!

Photo: Wedge-tailed Eagle, by Steve Tredinnick. Steve is a wildlife artist and photographer who specializes in the spectacular birdlife of the Blue Mountains. He has told Hut News that the Wedge-tailed Eagle behaviour described in this story is highly unusual, as they are normally very wary of humans. You can find more of Steve’s wonderful photos of Wedge-tailed Eagles at <http://www.worldheritage.org.au/galleries/steve-tredinnick/>

UNDER THE SCENIC HILL

Under the Scenic Hill
Where the ancient forests lie,
The seams of fossil-carbon
Once knew a tropic sky.
Under the Valley floor
Like books all careless thrown
Lie the laminated shores
Of lakes still locked in stone.
Under the Scenic Hill
The lush black forests lie

In humid dawns they flourished,
In their dreaming did not heed
The melting ice that nourished
The land usurping seas.
Their sands, relentless, shifting,
Turned the steamy sky to stone,
And stilled the green fronds lifting,
In the west wind gently blown.
Under the Scenic Hill
Ten fathoms down they lie.

A poem by Clive R Roebuck.

The Absentee at "Meet the Candidates"

By the time you read this, the Society's *Meet the Candidates* event will have been and gone. If you attended we hope you enjoyed it. At the time of writing this article we had been officially informed that Mrs Sage would not be attending. This decision, made just over a fortnight before the event, is a profound disappointment to all concerned - the organisers, the attendees, and those expecting to watch Mrs Sage's video and Q&A on the Society's web site. This decision denies members of the Blue Mountains community an opportunity to hear about and question Mrs Sage's environmental policies. To the best of our knowledge Mrs Sage is the first Member for the Seat of Blue Mountains to decline such an invitation.

For those interested, we tried our very best (in fact we bent over backwards) to accommodate Mrs Sage. In October 2014 we offered Mrs Sage, as incumbent, a choice of possible dates for the event. She declined to choose and said she would take no bookings till the new year. As venue availability was shrinking we needed to book the hall, and the March 1st date was chosen. All candidates were informed. Labor and the Greens responded promptly accepting the date. Neither Mrs Sage nor her office staff responded. Over the coming months we tried repeatedly (email, phone, personal visit, letter) to get a definite response. Finally, just two weeks before the event, one of Mrs Sage's staff members informed us that "*she has a previous engagement on and will be unable to attend*". We asked her to please reconsider but she had not responded to our request at the time of writing this article.

On a far more positive note you can find the videos of the candidates who did participate, Trish Doyle (Labor) and Alandra Tasire (The Greens), at our web site. Just go to bluemountains.org.au and follow the links. We expect the videos to be available from around the 11th March.

***** Caveat: For Hut News printing reasons this article had to be written prior to the Meet the Candidates event. If Mrs Sage did have a last minute change of heart and did choose to attend you will find out at our website. *****

BMCS Vote for the Environment Campaign Team

Recent research has found that the dingo may play a role in protecting small native mammals from predation by feral cats and foxes. The following is an extract from a report in Australian Geographic <http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/news/2015/02/endangered-dusky-mouse-protected-by-dingoes>

Endangered dusky mouse protected by dingoes

by Grant Lubyckij, February 6, 2015



Higher numbers of the dusky hopping mouse have been recorded in Central Australia's Strzelecki Desert, which has a healthy population of dingoes, compared to other areas the native mouse inhabits. An apex predator, the dingo seems to be offering indirect protection to the dusky hopping mouse by hunting on its predator: feral cats.

"There is a two-way effect between dingoes and cats. The dingoes suppress cat abundance by outcompeting for food resources; cats also provide a food resource for them" says lead author of the study, Christopher Gordon, from the University of Western Sydney.

The numbers of dingoes, cats and hopping mice were detected using nocturnal spotlight and sand plot techniques, over 47 sites.

The dingoes' presence also encouraged behavioural changes in dusky hopping mice, says Christopher. With fewer feral cats around, the dusky hopping mice were less fearful of coming out to forage for food. Christopher tested this concept by placing small feeding trays in open areas where either feral cat or dingo numbers were high. Feeding trays containing 40 hophbush seeds were filled each night before dusk, and counted the following morning. Significantly more seeds were consumed at the sites where dingoes rule.

Introducing the dingo as a guardian. The study provides evidence that 'size-dependant predation' occurs when dingoes are absent or in low-density, says Christopher. This is where smaller predators, such as feral cats and foxes, whittle down populations of prey species like the dusky hopping mouse, which are too small to be hunted by apex predators.

The study suggests dingoes could be introduced to areas with small mammals that are hit hardest by feral cats, which hunt more than 400 of Australia's animal species.

"Dingoes as conservation tools... It's a really good idea, a cost effective and natural way of managing our landscapes" Christopher says. However, he adds that more research is required to investigate the wider impacts of such strategies, and an even greater effort is required to convince Australian pastoralists.

The study was published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*. <http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/282/1802/20142870>

A dusky hopping mouse IMAGE CREDIT: Ben Moore/Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment



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. That would offer a trekking alternative to the long walking routes, suitable only for super-fit "adventure" tourists, that are unsustainable without new infrastructure and maintenance forays into wilderness areas.

Living with Wildlife

When my friend Lester was cutting some branches in my garden recently, he discovered a Ringtail Possum's drey in the upper branches of a dense *Banksia spinulosa*. He checked that there was nobody at home before cutting the branch.

The Common Ringtail Possum's drey is round, about the size of a soccer ball, and can be made of grass, bark and sticks woven together. This one was constructed mostly of twigs pruned from the surrounding shrubs and trees. The entrance hole is at the top. Ringtail possums build a number of dreys within a home range. There is another in the *Hakea* behind the house.

I seldom see the Ringtails, but a few months ago I found a juvenile Ringtail Possum in the garden, in the morning and on the ground. It had obviously lost its parent during the night. It was fully furred – a perfect miniature possum and very beautiful! After advice from WIRES that its parent probably would not find it, I took it to the Katoomba Vet to be collected by a WIRES volunteer.

Visiting Northbridge last year, I discovered that there is a good population of Ringtails in the city. During an evening walk we saw several, keeping off the ground by using the wires as passageways.

According to Australian Museum, the Common Ringtail Possum eats a variety of leaves of both native and introduced plants, as well as flowers and fruit. When the mother is feeding, the male carries the young on his back and cares for them. The Common Ringtail is the only species of possum currently known in which the male helps to care for the young.

Christine Davies.

A BLUE TRAIL: Mayinygu Marragu Aboriginal Place and nearby pagodas, Lidsdale.

A visitors' book and a small warning sign mark the entrance to the long sandstone overhang which is the main "hand stencil" site in this Aboriginal place. It is reached by a steep informal path from a clearing studded with "brown-barrel" Eucalypts and orchids. Down a groove in a tall pagoda next to the overhang flows a trickle of water nurturing mosses and other dark green vegetation.

The hand stencils were made by indigenous people of past centuries who blew a mix of locally obtained materials onto the rock surface after laying their hand and forearm in front of them. In contrast to some nearby sites, these hands and forearms seem to have belonged exclusively to adults.



This locality evokes a timeless and spiritual sensation in the visitor. By walking up the four-wheel drive trail away from the brown-barrel clearing towards Bungleboori you experience a great variety of pagoda shapes and pagoda-dependent vegetation, especially as there is a humid microclimate here. Mosses, foliose lichens and other lichens cascade down the surfaces and small ferns nestle in the crevices.

There are a few locations where soil has infilled the clefts between the pagodas and you can see at close quarters how thin and quirkily patterned are many of the rock protuberances near the top. Some of the most fragile formations seem to be guarded by bull ants' nests. Opportunities to gain an overview of the grand circle of these stone wonders are rare but it is worth carefully attaining one of the vantage points.

Sadly, not all visitors are respectful, particularly some with off-road vehicles. Implementation of a plan of management is overdue. Thank you to Jim Smith for introducing me to this place. Don Morison.

(Photos: Pagoda formation, Christine Davies; Hand stencil, Marilyn Kraus)

The Gardens of Stone Visitors Map
 \$7.50 plus \$1.50 postage.
 Buy the map online (www.bluemountains.org.au)
 or write to BMCS, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782
 with your cheque or money order.

Loose Feathers, with Carol Probets

The Kanangra-Boyd plateau in the southern Blue Mountains encompasses some of the highest country in our region. Reaching more than 1300 metres elevation, it's a stronghold for a couple of bird species which favour cool climate or high altitude places and which can be difficult to find in other parts of our region.

The first bird that comes to mind when thinking of that magnificent area is the Flame Robin. This cheery altitudinal migrant has already disappeared from much of the Blue Mountains where it was common less than 30 years ago. It can only be found now with difficulty around Blackheath and Mt Victoria in the spring-summer breeding season. So I was pleased to encounter several along the road to Kanangra Walls during a visit there last week. Let's hope that area continues to be a haven for them.

The Flame Robin can be distinguished from the other Australian red-breasted robins by the bright orange-red breast of the male extending from the bill almost to the legs, without the black throat or large white forehead patch of the Scarlet Robin. I'd be interested to hear of other summer sightings.

The other bird preferring higher altitudes and relatively common on the Boyd Plateau is the Satin Flycatcher. To see a male Satin Flycatcher close-up in the sunshine is an unforgettable sight. The black head and back reflect the light in a breathtaking purple-blue and greenish iridescence. Like the other flycatchers in the genus *Myiagra*, it never stays still, constantly quivering its tail, raising its slight crest, calling and sallying after insects in the eucalyptus canopy.

Lower down the mountains (below about Katoomba) you'll more often find the similar Leaden Flycatcher. Instead of iridescent black upperparts, the male Leaden is an attractive leaden blue-grey. The females of both species have a reddish throat and greyer back and despite what the books say, are almost impossible to tell apart. The typical calls of both species include a frog-like, zipping "zzhirp!" and a range of whistled notes.

The Satin and Leaden Flycatchers are among the few species that will sing from the nest, a neat little cup made of cobweb, lichen and fine plant material built on a horizontal branch. For this they usually choose a small dead branch immediately below a larger branch high in a tree.

On a recent visit to the Snowy Mountains I was very lucky to watch three Satin Flycatcher nestlings on their first venture outside the nest. For more than an hour they inched along the branch exercising their wings, while the parents tried to encourage them away with food. But after all that excitement the chicks climbed back into the nest and went to sleep. The next morning they flew! Within the next two months these youngsters will embark on a migration all the way to north Queensland or New Guinea, returning to the NSW high country next spring.

Carol Probets, origma@westnet.com.au Twitter: @carolprobets



Male Satin Flycatcher, photographed at Blackheath by Carol Probets.

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 \$30 Concession (Senior/Student) \$20
Household \$35 Household Concession \$25
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

BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit

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

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

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

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.

JOIN Blue Mountains Conservation Society,
or renew your membership online.
www.bluemountains.org.au

A BEQUEST

Please remember us in your Will.

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

Climate Council Report:

Extreme heat events linked to climate change

Link: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/quantifying-extreme-heat>

It seems every time there's another record-breaking heatwave we first must endure the swelter; then the "debate" over whether it has anything to do with climate change ('Australia! It's always been hot!') ... and if climate change is influencing individual weather events, by how much? Well, new ground-breaking research is changing this conversation, to be more decisive and well-informed.

Scientists can now pinpoint exactly how much climate change is contributing to individual extreme heat events, and it won't surprise you to learn that, yes: hot days are happening more often while heatwaves are becoming hotter, longer and more frequent thanks to greenhouse gas emissions.

The research reveals that:

- Our **record hot year of 2013 in Australia was virtually impossible** without climate change.
- Climate change **tripled the odds that the heat waves** of the 2012/2013 Australian summer would occur as frequently as they did.
- Climate change **doubled the odds that the 2012/2013 heat waves** would be as intense as they were.

We were pleased with the media coverage the report received. **Five TV channels ran the story on their national bulletin**, while newspapers gave us colourful headlines like the Courier-Mail's, "It's hot...damn hot", and it was picked up internationally in the US, Canada and the UK.

We've been focused for the last year on getting out as much information as possible on the link between extreme weather and climate change. **Extreme weather helps us explain that climate change is not just a future problem affecting polar bears, but a tangible issue affecting Australians today.**

It's working. Public opinion polling by Essential Media Communications in November showed that 76% of people thought that climate change and extreme weather were linked, compared to 52% in January 2014. Now journalists say to me, 'of course Tim, don't we already know this?' 18 months ago it was a very different conversation.

You can read a copy of the report for yourself at <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/quantifying-extreme-heat> **[Even better, email a copy to your Federal MP with a polite but not altogether unalarmed note urging them to act.]**

Tim Flannery, Climate Council.

Whose crisis is it?

The Australian Financial Review published a front-page story on 18 February suggesting that, during coming years, Australian suppliers of Liquefied Natural Gas will have great difficulty filling contracts they have signed with overseas customers. For a long time, captains of the fossil fuel industries have been able to act as if it were a national responsibility to rescue fossil fuel companies from every problem they encounter. But, now the future of fossil fuel is being questioned, perhaps they will become more like other industries who have had to do their own planning for the peaks and troughs of supply and demand. Don Morison.

28.11.1916

Mountain Trails Club Outfit List for one man

(Essentials only)

ALL ARTICLES LISTED HERE
WILL NOT EXCEED 35 pounds
WEIGHT

Presented to Johan de Mol

To wear (when leaving Sydney)

Boots 1 pair old comfortable boots resoled - no hob-nail

**MOUNTAIN TRAILS CLUB
OUTFIT LIST, 28.11.1916**

This list was discovered among the papers that Adrian Walsh had from his grandfather who walked with Myles Dunphy.

Bushwalkers might enjoy reading the full list ...

To wear (when leaving Sydney).

Boots. 1 pair old comfortable boots resoled - no hob nail

Socks. 1 pair heavyweight woollen

Undershirt. 1 medium weight woollen (not flannelette)

Shirt. 1 light, coloured or otherwise

Coat. Any old coat with well padded shoulders

Hat. Felt, old. One that can be knocked about

Trousers. Must be strong, long trousers and not likely to split

Belt or braces

Leggings. Leather

In pockets

Large handkerchief, coloured or otherwise for neck wear

Handkerchief ordinary

Penknife

Matches (1 box wax) Put into small corked bottle

Safety Pins (about 3)

String. A few lengths

Purse and Money (a bag made of cloth and tied with a string will do)

Fare 6.6
Food 12.0
Extra 5.0
Fare 2
23.8

Fare 6.6 x
Food 12.0 x
Extra 5.0
Fare 2

23.8
25/-

Swag (or pack)

The "swag" consists of two articles or bundles. One is termed the "swag" and the other the "Gunny Bag"

The Swag

1 piece of American Cloth (waterproof) 7 feet long and not less than 4 feet wide.

1 4lb blanket ¾ bed size or 2 - 2lb blankets ¾ bed size
Double bed blankets or ¾ size blanket are right but single bed blankets are useless.

1 Leather Strap 5 feet long. Not less than ¾ inch wide
1 Leather Strap 3 feet long. Not less than ¾ inch wide
1 pair medium or light trousers, 1 warm woollen gurnsey,
3 pair heavy socks, 1 handkerchief, 1 singlet, light weight
(these become a complete change if others become wet by rain. Also sleep in them at night.

1 pair rubber soled boots, canvas uppers

1 small packet mirror or piece of mirror

1 small comb. No brush required

1 towel. Must be fairly long. (Do not wrap up in swag. Leave it outside tied to straps.)

Tooth brush

1 pair woollen underpants. Not to be worn during day, but will be slept in at night

The Gunny Bag

1 Sugar bag (can be procured at any grocers. All the undermentioned articles go into the gunny bag.

1 extra piece of light-weight waterproof American cloth ½ yard long, about 1 yard wide.

1 plate tin

1 mug tin

1 knife

1 fork

1 spoon (middle size)

1 piece of soap, in a small tobacco tin

1 piece of clean cloth, for wiping dishes and cutlery

Spare pair of bootlaces, Spare buttons (about 3),

Needle and few yards strong thread (put into a fold of cloth and keep in Gunny bag)

2 candles

1 piece medium thickness sash cord, 3 feet long to tie up Gunny bag with.

½ Butter in Tin. Lunch for Saturday.

You may be asked to supply a "billy can" later. Others will supply the tents, frypans, ropes, axes and other things.

All food will be bought at Blackheath, the place from which we start. You will be notified of any alteration to this arrangement.

Do not bring. Vest, collar, tie, pyjamas, overcoat,

Johannes Clement Charles Marie de Mol was born in Holland on 30 October 1900 and emigrated to Australia at age 12. He met Myles Dunphy at Sydney Technical College studying architecture. He lived most of his life in Campsie and died on 21/12/1966. This list, and other documents, will be sent to the Mitchell Library. Thank you to Keith Muir for sending a copy to Hut News.

Johannes de Mol was just 16 when Myles Dunphy gave him this list. Myles Dunphy (1891-1985) was 25. Myles was exempted from military service in World War I as a consequence of childhood illness. Dunphy, with his friends Roy Rudder and Bert Gallop, formed the Mountain Trails Club in 1914. According to different sources found on Google, the walks were for men only and membership was by invitation and required a stiff initiation ritual of a twenty mile (32 km) walk.

The Swag

1 piece of American cloth (wool) and not less than 4 ft
1 4lb. blanket, ¾ bed size
Double bed blankets or ¾
right but single bed
1 Leather strap 5 feet long.
1 " " 3 " "
1 pair medium or light trousers
1 warm woollen gurnsey,
3 pair heavy socks

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 Jim Percy—phone 4758 6009, email jp34@tpg.com.au 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)

Mar 14- **Lindemans Pass – Leura Falls to Roberts Pass.** An historic (1911) track which is spectacular but not maintained. Although only 10 km there are several difficult sections where landslips have to be negotiated so this walk is graded 4 and requires a high level of fitness. Please call leader in advance.-Leader **Bart** 4739 9947. Meet at Leura station 8 am. 10Km. Grade 4. Map **Katoomba**.

Mar 21 Dalpura Ridge - **Birrabang Brook** and into **Birrabang** Canyon. Expect wet feet at least. Leader **Harold** 9600 8005. Meet at Wentworth Falls Carpark 8.00am. 6Km. Gr4. Map **Mt Wilson**.

Mar 28 Green Gully, Carlons Creek, Breakfast Creek to explore the **Lower Jenolan Gorge**.

Leader **Warwick** 4757 1354. Meet at Blackheath Stn car park 8.00am. 20Km. Gr3. Map **Jenolan**

Apr 4 **Easter LWE. Govetts Creek Classic.** Braeside Walk to Evans LO, Horsetrack to Govetts Creek then side trip to Blackwall Gully and Edenberry and Hilary Falls, then to Rodrequez Track and return to Braeside walk. Leader **Warren** 4787 5403. Meet at Blackheath Stn Carpark 8.00am. 13Km. Gr ¾. Map **Katoomba**

Apr 11 **Pagoda Country** - see why the pagodas of the Gardens of stone are worth protecting. Get in early for your place - party limit of 8 as wilderness area. Leader **Hugh**. Ring on 0423 309 854 for details.

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, keithdor53@hotmail.com

Mar 16 **Bus trip to Thirlmere Lakes.** Fare \$12. Book and pay Tony 9625 3985. Meet Springwood car park, behind Westpac, 7.30 am. Maurice 4739 4942, 04024 02783. Grade 2.

Mar 23 **Glenbrook Zig Zag.** Walk from station. Meet Glenbrook Station car park 9.10 am. Ken 04234 50200. Grade 2

Mar 3 **Bantry Bay to Middle Harbour.** Magnificent Middle Harbour walk. Meet Central Station, top of escalators, 9.30 am. Ros 4733 3880. Grade 2.

Apr 6 **Mt Blackheath walk.** Easy walk along ridgetop, with views. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45 am. Car pool. Maurice 4739 4942, 04024 02783.

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, denfenella@optusnet.com.au

Mar 12 **Anvil Rock and Wind Eroded Cave.** Short walk to classic view point. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Carpool \$2. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.

Mar 19 **Sun Valley and Fitzgerald Creek Valley Heights.** Fire trail walk. Meet Valley Heights Station Carpark 8.45am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.

Mar 26 **Dantes Glen Lawson.** Steep descent into cool valley past waterfalls and rain forest. Car pool. Meet Lawson Bowling Club Carpark 9.45am. Lunch at Lawson Pub \$12. Leaders Jeanette and Alan 4757 3750. Grade 2.

Apr 2 **Castle Head Katoomba.** Walk along Narrow Neck then through heath to lookout. Meet Katoomba Station Carpark 9.30am. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.

Apr 9 **Victoria Falls, Mount Victoria.** Spectacular scenery. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.45am. Car pool. Take lunch. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 3.

Welcome to new members

Hunter W Lee, Katoomba
Patrick Benson, Glenbrook
Therese Lakke, Glenbrook
William Lakke Davies, Glenbrook
Jaime Lakke Benson, Glenbrook
Kierley Lakke Benson, Glenbrook
Margo Beasley, Cremorne
Malcolm McPherson, Katoomba
Jane Boyd, Northbridge
Janene Theol, Mount Victoria
Ron Anderson, Wentworth Falls
Andrew Jakeman, Wentworth Falls
Pauline Cookson, Wentworth Falls
Stephen Cookson, Wentworth Falls
Kerry Brown, Wentworth Falls
Graeme Cole, Wentworth Falls

Grandparents for Generational Equity

www.genequity.net

Go the website ... keep informed ... write letters ...tell your friends. Let's take some real action to help leave a world our grandchildren can survive in.

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am till noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat. New members are welcome.
Phone Karen 4757 1929.