



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Greater Gliders in the Blue Mountains

In April 2015 Hut News we published an article from Judy and Peter Smith "Arboreal mammals in the Blue Mountains – how are they faring and where are the Greater Gliders". You can find back issues of Hut News on www.bluemountains.org.au / Activities / Hut News archive.

Judy Smith and Peter Smith are interested to know of Greater Glider sightings in the Blue Mountains, either recently or in the past. You can contact Judy and Peter on smitheco@ozemail.com.au

The Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans*) is the largest of the glider species in Australia and is found down the east coast in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Like the koala, it has adapted to be able to feed almost exclusively on eucalypt leaves. Its preferred habitat contains specific species of eucalypts in older forests with a large number of hollows. Large scratches on trees from landing are a sign to look for.

The Greater Glider is nocturnal, spending the nights foraging in the higher parts of the forest canopy. It regularly glides between high trees, up to 100 metres in distance, and is able to use the tail to assist in steering.

Greater Gliders are variable in colour, ranging from a light grey almost white colour to a very dark sooty grey. In the Blue Mountains, it seems that the darker colours are more common, but observations of "white" animals have been reported.

This photograph was taken by wildlife photographer, Bruce Thompson. You can find more of Bruce Thompson's nature photography on his website <http://www.auswildlife.com/>

Winsome Gregory

We learned only recently of the passing of Winsome Gregory. Winsome was made a life member of the Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society (UBMCS) in July 1987. She passed away on 6th June 2012, aged 90.

This is an extract from the Aug/Sept 2012 issue of Hobby's Outreach: "Winsome was a nurse at Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital before retiring to Wentworth Falls, where she devoted herself to nurturing her native garden. From this garden, in 1975, the Royal Botanic Gardens identified the fourth known collection of a rare orchid."

From Jill Dark – "The orchid created quite a stir. It was *Rhizanthella slateri*, the eastern underground orchid. It's one of those plants that all orchid lovers would like to see but as it grows underground and the flower just appears in the leaf litter it is not seen often."

Winsome's involvement with the Conservation Society including being its Land Preservation Officer.

In the 70's and 80's the Society raised money to acquire land and pass it to either the Council or National Parks. This land was valuable environmental land – such as land on or adjacent to creeks and hanging swamps that needed to be preserved.

In April 1987 the Society purchased Lot 39 Taylor Ave, Wentworth Falls for \$6,000 from its Land Preservation Fund. The land became Council Community Land.

The July 87 edition of the Conservation Society's Newsletter describes the lot as "the only remaining block bearing thick undisturbed natural vegetation in an area that was once an extensive swamp above the Water Nymph's Dell rainforest".

As a footnote, in 1994 the Society's Land Preservation Fund provided \$41,000 for NPWS to acquire *Budthingeroo* - a 23ha inholding near Kanangra Walls. This was half the purchase price. The acquired land was added to the Kanangra-Boyd National Park. Alan Page.

**"Hut News", the newsletter of
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.**
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782
Phone 4757 1872 (leave message)
Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au
Web page: www.bluemountains.org.au
Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation
Society Twitter: [bmcsnsw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)
President: Don Morison 8230 2116
president@bluemountains.org.au
Senior Vice President: Tara Cameron
04198 24974 taracameron4@gmail.com
Second Vice President: Marilyn Kraus
04025 51809 marilynkraus@hotmail.com
Treasurer: Bart Beech 4739 9947
bart.beech@schneider-electric.com
Administration Officer: Jeanette Robertson
sao@bluemountains.org.au
Bushcare Officer: Paul Vale
4787 8080 04290 14454
bushcare@bluemountains.org.au
Environmental Education Officer:
Jasmine Payget
jasmine.marcia@gmail.com
Landuse Officer: Lachlan Garland
04153 17078
lachlan.a.garland@bigpond.com
Meetings Secretary: Heather Hull
4739 1493 hhull001@bigpond.net.au
Membership Secretary: Ross Coster
4739 2987 04184 62576
membership@bluemountains.org.au
National Parks/World Heritage Officer:
Brian Marshall 4784.1148
briannamar@bigpond.com
Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies
4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
Plant Nursery Manager: Sue Nicol
4787.8887 nursery@bluemountains.org.au
Publicity Officer: Mellissa Opie
Melissa.opie1@bigpond.com
Sustainable Population and Climate
Change Officer: Peter Green 4751 9474
peter@pwgreen.id.au
Threatened Species Officer: Nakiya Belmer
04143 44741 bayern11@tpg.com.au
Website Manager: Alan Page 4784 1704
webmaster@bluemountains.org.au
Walks Convenor: Maurice Kerkham
4739 4942
mauricekerkham@hotmail.com
Project Officer-Events: Rob Baigent
4759 3104 rob.baigent@bigpond.com
Project Officer—Gardens of Stone:
Madi Maclean
mlhmaclean@bigpond.com
Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson
4751.2303, mob 04275 12303
fmatter@bigpond.net.au

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
16 MAY 2015**

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Ross Coster
02 4739 2987 0418 462 576
membership@bluemountains.org.au
or write to
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Nursery News

There are just a few weeks to go before we wind down for the winter. So get your plants now before the cold weather hits.

Some of our customers have been doing just that. It was great to see a large part of the NPWS order for Shaw's Paddock in Blackheath being planted at the end of March. They were very well looked after, each with a tree guard and a little weed mat. The wet weather since planting should give them a great start before winter.

Our nurseries will be closed, except for minimal maintenance, from the end of May until the end of July, mainly because it's too cold for the volunteers, and of course plant growth slows down in the colder months and no one feels like gardening. We will reopen in August.

During May, our Native Plant Nursery at Lawson will be open for sales on Wednesday and Saturday mornings (9am to noon) and we will be at the Magpie Market at Lawson Public School on Sunday 17th May (9am to 2pm).

If you are visiting the Lawson nursery look out for new stocks of *Indigophera australis*. This is a beautiful shrub with abundant mauve-pink pea flowers in spring.

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



Indigophera australis

Australian National Botanic
Gardens
[http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/
gnp1/indigophera-australis.html](http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/gnp1/indigophera-australis.html)

BMCS NATIVE PLANT NURSERY 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 - see map on our website www.bluemountains.org.au.

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

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm.

Tube stock \$3. Larger pots available.

Discounts for bulk orders and large contracts.

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

I am a big fan of the CSIRO.

The Federally-funded research body that helped to develop our rural industries many years ago has gone on to produce amazing research in a wide variety of areas.

In the areas that interest us as environmentalists, the CSIRO has projects underway to produce *all* of our transport fuels from biological sources; to power rural towns from small-scale, waterless solar thermal power; to reduce the cost of solar thermal electricity to make it competitive with fossil fuels; to achieve solar cooling of buildings.

The biofuels program in particular is very exciting to me.

Imagine growing a crop of tea tree, using little water, on land that is degraded or salt-scalded, harvesting it, crushing it, cracking the oil to petrol to run our transport fleet, pyrolysing the crushed tea tree to produce biochar for agriculture, all while employing hundreds of thousands of people in rural areas, using a process that *removes* carbon from the atmosphere.

Reduced oil imports, \$Billions kept here in Australia, no more at-sea oil spills, restoring degraded lands, huge reductions in emissions, injecting money into rural towns.

This type of research could change our country for the better in so many ways!

An article was sent to me recently describing a process for using waste slag from steelmaking as a building product.

Global steelmaking produces 300 million tonnes of waste slag every year, all of it currently dumped in hot heaps to cool and solidify.

The CSIRO process uses a centrifuge to achieve Dry Slag Granulation (DSG).

DSG technology has the potential to save 60 billion litres of water, 800 petajoules of heat energy and 60 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year globally.

The heat in the slag is recovered for industrial use, no water is needed for quenching, and the slag is converted into a base for cement manufacture.

A process that eliminates 300 million tonnes of waste per annum sounds good to me!

A recent report from Australia's Chief Scientist puts the economic contribution of science to our economy at \$145 billion, or about 11% of GDP, and employment at about 760,000 people.

When the flow-on effect of science is included in the numbers, these figures double!

Australia *is* the clever country, and we need to continue to be clever, through adequate funding of pure and applied science, and through education.

We can't just be a people that dig up resources, export them as commodities, then use the money to buy imported cars, oil, TV's, computers and mobile phones.

We need to value-add, to actually *make* things, for ourselves and for export.

Scientific research generates new ideas and products that will underpin our future economy.

I fully understand that during a 'budget crisis' (real or imagined) we need to rein in Government spending (or raise some more tax!), but cutting funding to Science and Education is foolish behaviour if we want a clean, green, prosperous country for our progeny to live in.

Do you know of Bruce's Walk?

Bruce's Walk is an historic Blue Mountains walking track built by NSW Railway Department in 1931 between Blackheath and Lawson. You will find more information about this walk on page 8.

Recently, NSW Trade & Investment was considering the closure and sale of unnecessary Crown roads.

At a market stall in March 2015, an anonymous resident handed one of our nursery volunteers a letter. It was about the proposed closure and sale of a Crown road at Bullaburra and had been sent to adjoining landholders. Comments were invited by 25 March 2015.

We found on the map that, although the road had been advertised as an extension of Kent Street, it was in fact an extension of Booth Road.

This road ends at the edge of the Blue Mountains National Park. Did it give public access to Bruce's Walk?

I phoned Jim Smith. Yes, Booth Road does give public access to Bruce's Walk.

Jim told me that he had already put in a submission objecting to the closure of the road. He had requested that the proposed sale be readvertised because it had not been advertised correctly. He suggested that I contact the Crown Lands and comment. This I did, by email.

To make the National Park truly valued by the township community, there have to be plenty of access points to the National Park within mountain towns.

The management committee of Blue Mountains Conservation Society discussed the letter and the advice from Jim Smith at its monthly meeting on 21 March. Paul Vale, our Bushcare Officer, volunteered to write a submission on behalf of BMCS and also wrote one for himself. The letter from the Society was signed by our then President, Alan Page.

Imagine our surprise when an acknowledgement came from Crown Lands which included the words: *As you are the president of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc, your submission is seen as being on behalf of all your membership. The reference period will not be extended as Crown Lands has received sufficient feedback and evidence upon which to make a determination of the application.* This was looking good!

On 21 April, a letter from Crown Lands arrived in the mail. Quote: "I am pleased to advise that after assessment of all submissions received, the Minister's delegate has upheld your objection and the road at Bullaburra, extension of Booth Road will be retained as crown road."

This public access to Bruce's Walk at Bullaburra will remain open. Christine Davies.

A Trifecta of Worrying Environmental Policies Robin Mosman

For anyone concerned about the potential impacts of climate change on our environment and on future generations of Australians, three policy papers published in the last few months will be deeply worrying.

- the **Intergenerational Report**,
- the **Issues Paper on Australia's Post 2020 Emissions Reductions Targets**, and
- the **Energy White Paper**.

Climate change is the greatest intergenerational issue of the 21st century, yet the Abbott government's **Intergenerational Report**, released last month, devoted only three and a half pages out of 170 to the issue.

Commenting on the report, John Connor, CEO of the Climate Institute said:

"While the report mentions a number of minor short-term policies, it fails to grapple with the need to manage the costs and maximise the benefits of a transition to a net zero emissions economy later this century.

"If you don't have a plan for climate change, you don't have a plan for the future. A sensible plan will lay out how we can help to avoid 2 degrees C warming, and include a decarbonisation pathway to phase down our greenhouse gas emissions to zero by mid-century".

He stated that the World Bank and OECD have highlighted the enormous economic and social costs of warming beyond 2 degrees C and have called for a zero emissions global economy, and that Australia's failure to plan thoroughly for the climate trends of coming decades would be an act not just of intergenerational theft but of intergenerational recklessness.

An **Issues Paper on Australia's post 2020 emissions reductions targets**, which will be set before global climate talks in Paris in December, was also published by the government last month. It has been criticised for using a global energy scenario that would put the world on track for nearly 4 degrees of warming, which scientists warn would cause catastrophic climate change.

In Australia, global warming of this magnitude is projected to produce the following consequences: significant loss of species (including the Great Barrier Reef), dangerous water shortages, severe damage to coastal infrastructure and settlements, large areas of agricultural land taken out of production, strains on the capacity to meet food demand, and major risks to human life from extreme climate events.

Next to come was the Abbott government's **Energy White Paper**, released in early April. Described by the Climate Institute as "wilfully deluded", incredibly it mentions climate change *only once*.

The Sydney Morning Herald editorial on 13.4.15 was scathing of the Paper, stating that:

"The omission renders the document deeply flawed", and that "Australia's White Paper is a highly political document.

"The burning of fossil fuels is the world's single most important contributor to greenhouse gases and therefore to climate change. Yet the White Paper virtually ignores this link which is central to its subject.

"The White Paper's approach is that of the classic free-marketeer: governments should not intervene to modify energy consumers' behaviour".

The Paper argues that no single energy source should be prioritised over another, and such decisions should be left for the market to determine.

It also stands by the government's efforts to slash the Renewable Energy Target by 40 per cent, which have caused the loss of over 2000 clean energy jobs in the past two years, and its intention to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency.

The Climate Institute described the White Paper as "a wilfully deluded document, whose recommendations side-step the challenges and opportunities facing our energy sector in a world of cleaner, smarter energy systems".

Tarkine in Motion at Head On Photo Festival

Tarkine in Motion brings together wilderness photographers who were involved in a collaborative art project designed to capture the wild and scenic landscapes of the threatened and remote region of the Tarkine in North West Tasmania.

In April 2015, 70 artists spent three days in the wild with one goal: capture the Tarkine and spread a message to the world to protect the threatened wilderness. Participants included videographers, writers, musicians, painters, print-makers and photographers.

The *Tarkine in Motion* exhibition is part of Sydney's *Head On* photo festival. At the Tarkine in Motion Exhibition you will witness a selection of what was captured by photographers involved in the project. It is an entrée to what will be a great body of work to come.

Bob Brown Foundation is campaigning to have 450,000 hectares of the Tarkine declared a national park and World Heritage Area.

WHEN: April 28, 2015 at 10am - May 24, 2015.

WHERE: Salerno Gallery, 70 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe.

Find out more: <http://www.bobbrown.org.au/>

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.

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.

A Newnes Retreat

Ten of the Thursday Interpretive Bushwalkers recently spent four days and three nights at Newnes. We met and left Mount Victoria in pouring rain and, while the rain continued unabated in Sydney, we had only some light showers which did not hamper our activities. Our cabins were warm and comfortable, with all the comforts of home — except for computers, television and mobile phones, and it was good to be away from these for a while.

The Wolgan River was flooded and there were some nice short and longer walks on our side of the river. Grazing around the cabins were lots of Red-necked Wallabies. The moods of the Mystery Mountain were fascinating to watch – its cliffs shrouded in morning mist or reflecting golden in the late afternoon sunshine.

The friendly chooks ranged over a large area. They ate our food scraps and we collected some of their eggs for our breakfast. Jenny, whose cabin had a balcony overlooking the chook-house, was amused to watch the ungainly looking White-winged Choughs fighting to get in after leftover food.

There were many birds in the area, including finches, honeyeaters, rosellas, King Parrots, Jacky Winters, Wonga Pigeon and Brown Cuckoo-dove. Red-necked Wallabies seemed to be as plentiful as the Eastern Grey Kangaroos. They appeared to be individuals or pairs as opposed to mobs of kangaroos. We also saw a pair of Wallaroos.

Thomas Ebersoll led some of us on his 'Philosopher's Walk' where we scrambled past huge boulders covered in felt ferns and rock orchids. The wet weather had produced a great variety of fungi which kept the photographers busy. Returning in the late afternoon we came upon a wombat pretending to be a rock. He didn't move a muscle while we photographed him.

In the Newnes Hotel we watched a video about the hotel being moved to save it from tumbling into the Wolgan River, when it became a "Pub With No Beer".

Thank you Thomas for your hospitality and all the useful information about the history and environment of Newnes and the Wolgan Valley.

Christine Davies, Sue Nicol and Jenny Miller.



Photos: A wombat philosopher. (Jenny Miller). The old Newnes Hotel houses a museum. A friendly but shy Red-necked Wallaby. A "chook house" with a lovely view (Christine Davies).

COMMENT: What is wrong with 'us'? Brian Marshall¹

In clarification, 'us' includes a significant majority of voting Australians at the last Federal election.

So what is my gripe?

The Renewable Energy Target (RET) remains unresolved (as of 21 April). Before the Federal election, there was bi-partisan agreement on renewable energy comprising at least 20% of the anticipated 2020-demand, and thereby equating to 41,000 gigawatt-hours (GWh²). On gaining power, the new government sidelined the 2012 advice of the Climate Change Authority (CCA) that the Large-scale RET (LRET) should be kept at 41,000 GWh, and commissioned the 'Warburton' review. The latter obligingly suggested ways of reducing the 41,000 GWh variously to 26,000 and even 16,000 GWh. This was despite the CCA **re-emphasising** (2014) that the LRET should remain unchanged.

Minister Macfarlane commenced negotiating with Labor and the 'cross benches' using 26,000 GWh as a starting point. The current status after almost a year of uncertainty is that Labor has **regrettably** (my view) endorsed the Clean Energy Council's (CEC) **compromise** LRET-proposal of 33,500 GWh; Minister Macfarlane adamantly refuses to go above 32,000 GWh. What a stupid mess!

The CEC, representing the clean energy sector, fundamentally favours 41,000 GWh. But the CEC also wants certainty, so the **compromise** is set at the minimum level consistent with the sector's survival. Despite this, I strongly believe that the original 41,000 GWh should be maintained, Labor and the 'cross benches' should not blink, and the Coalition should honour its pre-election commitment. Why? Because climate change is the biggest threat facing the world as we know it; reducing any positive action to contain greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) is self-destruction verging on insanity; and the notion that 20th-century growth (economic and population) can continue *ad infinitum* in a finite world is beyond stupidity.

Is anyone listening? Population growth + economic growth = global catastrophe through accelerating climate change in response to global warming. Yet most elected governments (not just Australia's) are charged with promoting economic growth, and yet do nothing to curb population growth. In fact, the taxation systems and much of what governments are expected to provide in terms of day-care, preschools, baby bonuses and the like at one end, and improved life expectancy and rejection of euthanasia at the other end, encourage population increases!

Is there another solution? By reducing GGE (becoming a 'low-carbon' society) we may be able to keep global warming below 2°C, although I see this as little more than wishful thinking! **But let's be optimistic, because (regardless of 2°C or more) transitioning to a low-carbon economy is essential.** Coal and unconventional gas must stay in the ground, renewables must be prioritised, and this means that Australians promoting or agreeing to an LRET reduction are at best delusional.

So what is wrong with 'us'? Australians like to think they punch above their weight, but when it comes to curtailing

GGE and modifying their fossil-fuel dependency, they are flat on their backs, KO'd in the corner. They consistently refuse to embrace an economy powered by fossil fuel, and happily export their responsibility for resource-based carbon to China, India and other Southeast Asian countries. They have compounded the issue by electing a denialist government which has removed the carbon tax, crippled the renewables industry, and has no sensible policy to meet its GGE targets. So while Australians are back-peddalling, many countries are embracing a renewables-based future. **They are punching above their weights because they know that they are part of a world which must limit global warming before it is too late!**

I leave you with three things to consider:

The Prime Minister said greed and fear drive our attitude to China³. Greed has certainly dominated our headlong rush to export coal and iron ore; rip it out, ship it and hang the consequences. Could fear relate to the gravy train ending?

Some governments hope to achieve low emissions through nuclear power, but it is worth emphasising that no-one has made nuclear bombs from solar power!

Does the bumper bar sticker (Don't blame me, I voted xxxxx!) apply? Or are you in the 'us' camp?

¹ This only has essential references – the fully referenced article is available from the Editor or the author.

² The RET was set in 2009. It required at least 20% of Australia's electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020; the 20% equated to 45,000 GWh. Since January 2011, the RET scheme has had two parts, the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES) and the Large-scale Renewable Energy Target (LRET). The LRET was set at 41,000 GWh. <http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/renewable-energy-target-scheme>

³ <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/fear-and-greed-drive-australias-china-policy-tony-abbott-tells-angela-merkel-20150416-1mmdty.html>

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



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.

A BLUE TRAIL: Natural and cultural experiences in the western Blue Mountains.

3. Viaduct view, Oakey Park.

John Whitton, chief engineer of New South Wales railways from 1856 to 1889, left at least three monuments to his career in spectacular natural locations. The piers beside the current Hawkesbury River rail bridge at Brooklyn and the Knapsack viaduct at Lapstone are notable. But it is possibly the series of viaducts on the Great Zigzag at Oakey Park near Lithgow (completed in 1869) that most impress today's tourists.

Viaducts of the "middle road" of the Great Zigzag are visible above the existing western railway. They enabled Sydney bound trains to ascend the side of a canyon carved by a small tributary of Farmers Creek. The landscape of sandstone cliffs and pagodas is a striking

backdrop to Whitton's world-stunning engineering feats. The revegetation from the 2013 "State Mine Gully fire" makes the scene even more impressive as one looks at Eucalypts astride the ridgetops and spurs with epicormic leaf growth making sleeves along their trunks and branches.

Since the suspension of tourist trains on the Great Zigzag, it is more challenging for visitors to view these viaducts but the photograph shows it is still possible.

Much of the native vegetation in this area would have been cleared during rail construction and nearby development of the coal mining industry. A rich mixture of natives and exotics now adorns the Zigzag formation and the base of the adjacent canyon. Mistletoe surmounts the canopy of the Eucalypts descending to the creek. Don Morison.

Do you know of Bruce's Walk?

Bruce's Walk originally began as a maintenance track in 1931. The Railway Department had agreed to supply electricity to the Blue Mountains Shire Council from the power station at Lithgow and a transmission line was put through from Blackheath to Lawson, with a track to provide maintenance access. The line went south from Blackheath, passed a little west of the Grand Canyon, through the bush east of Medlow Bath, across the ridges north of Katoomba, Leura and Wentworth Falls, across the gullies on the fringes of Bullaburra and into Lawson.

The authorities then decided to promote the maintenance track as a walking trail, which was duly opened on 21 November 1931. The surveyor who planned the track was A. Bruce, as a result of which the track eventually became known as Bruce's Walk. A pamphlet was published to publicise the walk, which passed through a variety of scenery, including glens and ridges.

However from World War II onwards the track was forgotten and neglected until a local walker named Dick Rushton found a copy of the 1931 pamphlet and set out to clear and mark the track, and in 1983 he created a written guide to the track. In 1986, Jim Smith and Wilf Hilder organised a group of volunteers to clear the track between Bullaburra and Wentworth Falls. In the process, they found many artefacts and features, including signs, shelter caves, seats and picnic tables. (Source: Wikipedia)

You can access Bruce's Walk from Booth Road at Bullaburra. (see story on page 3)

Welcome to new members

Martine Clement, Katoomba
 Alan Crooks, Springwood
 Annie Sharkey, Springwood
 Denise Brajkovic, Wentworth Falls
 Matthew Brajkovic, Wentworth Falls
 Cohen Brajkovic, Wentworth Falls
 Patricia Fairleigh, Lithgow

Three Blackheath haikus

The white cloud's rising.
 I'm in it, like it or not.
 Then all disappears.

Tree bones stick out black
 through the pearly skin of mist
 begging for spring shoots.

A thousand green swords
 catch droplets along each blade
 from a passing cloud.

Brendan Doyle.

Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

Early in April I was walking in the Jamison Valley near Leura Forest when something unexpected caught my eye. Standing on the rainforest floor beside a small creek in an area where I usually see lyrebirds, was the distinctive red-headed, black turkey-like form of an Australian Brush-turkey. Over the past few years I've been hearing many rumours and reports of brush-turkeys moving up the mountains, but this was the first one I'd actually seen in the area.

It seemed unconcerned by my presence and just stood there looking at me as I pulled my phone camera out of my pocket to record the moment. Before long, it started wandering up the track. As the afternoon was getting late and I had to be at the top, I headed in the same direction, expecting it to veer off the track and disappear into the forest. But it didn't. It kept walking up the track, up every one of the Fern Bower stairs (roughly 1000 of them), all the way to the top! If it was trying to get away from me there were many opportunities for it to move away from the track, but this bird wasn't stressed. It obviously knew the track well and knew where it was going, only leaving the track briefly to shortcut a zigzag. I eventually lost sight of it when it crossed Cliff Drive and disappeared into the bush near Solitary restaurant.

Brush-turkeys are Megapodes, a group of birds which build a huge mound of earth and leaf litter in which they lay their eggs, making use of the heat generated by the composting process. This allows them to lay more eggs than they'd be able to if they had to incubate them with their body heat. The chicks, being precocial like ducks or quail, are able to dig themselves out, run around and feed independently shortly after they hatch. This frees the adults from any parental duties - apart from the male's endless task of digging the mound to maintain the perfect temperature, humidity and aeration.

Back in the 1980s I remember seeing an old mound near Mountain Lagoon. It was a source of wonder to me because, as far as I knew, there were no brush-turkeys anywhere else in the Blue Mountains (though they were in the Wolgan Valley, and have always been common in rainforests up the coast). Since the 90s they have been regularly reported from Mounts Wilson and Irvine, more recently turning up in places from Mount Tomah to Blaxland, Katoomba, Blackheath and as far west as Ben Bullen State Forest. Last year a chick was found at Lawson, which meant there must be a mound nearby. Their expansion in the suburbs of Sydney is well documented.

Why are they spreading? One suggestion is that climate change may allow a favourable soil temperature for the eggs at higher latitudes and altitudes, where it would previously have been too cold. Gardeners beware! It seems the Australian Brush-turkey might be here to stay!

Carol Proberts. origma@westnet.com.au [Twitter: @carolproberts](https://twitter.com/@carolproberts)



*Australian Brush-turkey
crossing Cliff Drive,
Katoomba.
Photographed by
Carol Proberts,
April 2015.*

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

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

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

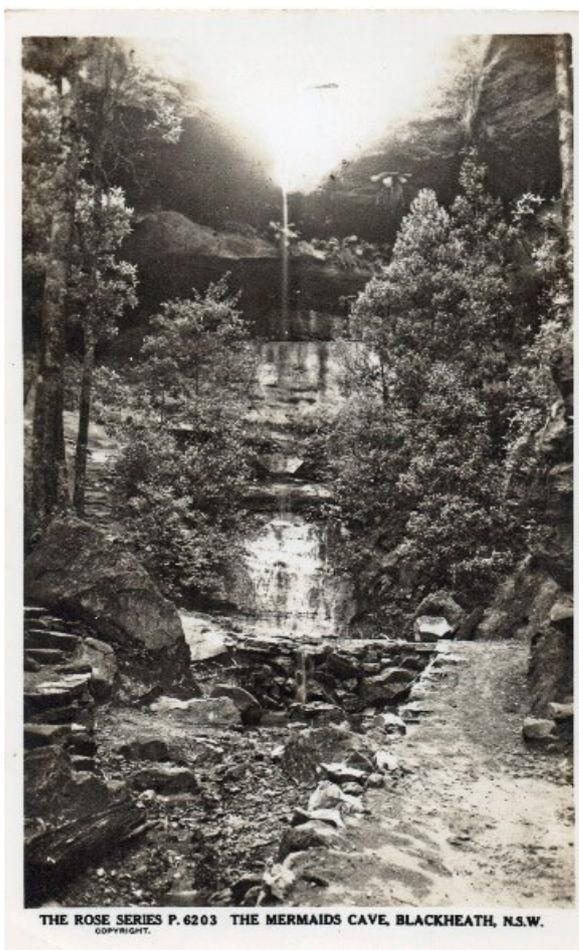
The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.

A BEQUEST

Please remember us in your Will.

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



THE ROSE SERIES P. 6203 THE MERMAIDS CAVE, BLACKHEATH, N.S.W.
COPYRIGHT.

The Crack in the Earth ... Jim Smith

John Low's article, in April Hut News, about 'The Crack in the Earth' brought back memories of the time when Mel Gibson, a crew of 140 and a cast of 70 stayed in Blackheath in September 1984, filming scenes from 'Mad Max 3' at Mermaid's Glen. Cast and crew worked 80 hour weeks, six days a week, beginning at 6am daily.

The cast included 52 "feral" children, some of whom were students at the Megalong Valley Public School. Director Dr George Miller was quoted as saying he would never film in the Blue Mountains in winter again.

The peaceful scene in the 1920s postcard contrasts with the grim atmosphere of 'the crack in the earth' scenes. Jim Smith



Horse riding free-for-all proposed in the Blue Mountains Keith Muir

In 2012 the NPWS adopted 'Strategic Directions for Horse Riding' that has established eight horse riding working groups that have specified 165 specific management actions. One of the working groups operates in Blue Mountains and in 2013 it developed an action plan. The first management action of the group is to permit horse riding on all management trails in the Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd National Parks, subject to the adoption of the DRAFT plan of management, with the exception of roads and trails in the Glenbrook precinct and the Woodford Oaks trail.

Horse riders apparently could not wait. Bridle trails have been constructed on the east side of the Nepean Gorge near Rileys Mountain leading from certain adjoining property gates. These trails actually duplicate existing fire roads and mountain bike trails for the benefit of a few horse riders.

In 1992, 1,600 submissions were received on the Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness Assessment Report that was on display for six months. Of the 1,600 submissions, just 7 supported the continuation of horse riding within the identified wilderness. Twenty three years later horse riders want to ride on Boyd Plateau where there has been no horse riding for at least forty years. Horse riding on the Boyd will bring weeds, Cryptosporidium and Giardia in with horse manure into the Kowmung River catchment.

Horses visiting this remote park will require overnight accommodation, and it is likely that the former inholding, Budthingeroo, will be used for recreational horse agistment, preventing further revegetation. Budthingeroo is of special significance to Blue Mountains Conservation Society. The Society donated half the purchase price —money raised by volunteers—so that this inholding could be incorporated into the Kanangra-Boyd National Park.

More feral horses can be expected to emerge on the plateau.

This proposed open slather horse riding has had very limited public consultation. Just think, every reserve could become as fly infested as Kosciuszko National Park. It's an appalling prospect.

The eight horse riding work plans will dictate visitor use in plans of management. In effect, the new NPWS Customer Experience Division (CED) that oversees these Working Groups is now dictating visitor management, despite having very little experience in park management.

The Colong Foundation opposes delegation and deregulation of visitor management to processes outside the direct governance of the plan of management and its review processes, including these Work Plans and the various Memoranda of Understanding with park stakeholder groups.

Visitor use that adversely impacts on park heritage values, increases maintenance costs, establishes capital works programs for sectional interests or spoils the enjoyment of other users should not be tolerated.

The solution is simple. Visitor use proposals that fail to uphold existing park laws should be rejected. User groups who do not support legislated park management objectives should be tossed off park advisory groups. Stakeholder MOUs that turn visitor management into self-serving programs for sectional interests should be torn up.

Keith Muir, Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

A new Epacris for the Blue Mountains

Well, not new, just recently discovered! It is called *Epacris browniae* and honours the name of Dr Elizabeth Brown (1956–2013) an *Epacris* expert, and formerly the Scientific Editor of *Telopea*, who worked for nearly 24 years at the National Herbarium of New South Wales.

I discovered this plant in 2009 in south Leura while researching *Blandfordia cunninghamii*, and a team of Parks and ConSoc volunteers helped me find more of these *Epacris* over the next two years.

Epacris browniae joins a list of 28 other *Epacris* species (and varieties) in NSW, but whereas many are widespread, *Epacris browniae* is currently confined to the upper Blue Mountains, in treeless situations above 800 m and where rainfall exceeds 1300 mm a year.

The easiest time and place to see this new species in flower is at Sunset Rock, Kedumba Road, on Kings Tableland, Wentworth Falls any time in November, where it grows alongside another epacrid, the shorter *Epacris rigida*, on the rocky steps down to the lookout.

Its distinguishing features are that it is a woody robust shrub, the branchlets are not hairy, and the broad leaves are thick, shiny dark green with a blunt apex (unlike its close relative *E microphylla* var *microphylla*). In sheltered places along Kedumba Walls south of Rocket Point it can reach 2 metres. In full flower its canopy can be 1.5 m in diameter!

Ordinarily *E browniae* is 70–120 cm high, and flowers in November. North of the GWH on the Mt Hay Plateau it grows on Flat Top and, in profusion, from the end of the Mt Hay Road out to Butterbox Point and Mt Hay. Plants in these areas tend to be shorter, thinner, less woody and more wiry than elsewhere.

David Coleby (davidcoleby@bigpond.com)



Photos: *Epacris browniae*, with close-ups of flowers and leaf, supplied by David Coleby.

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)

- May 16 **Pagoda Country** - see why the pagodas of the Gardens of stone are worth protecting - a new Garden on each trip. You won't be disappointed. Get in early for your place - party limit of 8 as wilderness area. Leader Hugh -Ring on 0423 309 854 for details.
- May 16 **Redledge Pass.** Newly rebuilt Narrow Neck Road then descent by the Pass to remnants of the Cable Tramway, with the spectacular Devils Hole to finish. Leader Warren 4787 5403. Meet at Katoomba Rail Station Carpark, 8.00am. 8Km. Gr 3/4. Map Katoomba
- May 23 **Firetrail No6 - Sunnyside Ridge.** Don't be put off by this bland introduction - there are pagodas and canyon views for you to enjoy. Leader Bob 4757 2694. Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockade carpark 7.30am. 5Km. Gr3. Map Cullen Bullen
- May 30 **Pagoda Country**—see why the pagodas of the Gardens of stone are worth protecting - A new Garden on each trip. You won't be disappointed. Get in early for your place - party limit of 8 as wilderness area. Leader Hugh -Ring on 0423 309 854 for details. Grade 3
- May 30 **Pagoda Country** - see why the pagodas of the Gardens of Stone are worth protecting - This Garden trip although in the same area as that above, with common sections, will be the more strenuous of the two walks. Get in early for your place - party limit of 8 as wilderness area—Leader Emanuel - Ring on 4757 1090 or 0419 773 906 for details- grade 3/4
- June 6 **Queens Birthday LWE - Victory Track Circuit,** originally Clarinda Falls, Track built 1878-9. It was renamed in 1919. Leader Eddie 4784 2691. Meet at Faulconbridge Station Carpark -8.30am-10Km-Gr 2/3—Map Springwood
- June 13 **Pagoda Country** - see why the pagodas of the Gardens of stone are worth protecting - a new Garden on each trip, you won't be disappointed. 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

- May 11 **Bus trip to Illawarra Fly, Robertson.** Treetop walk. Lunch at Robertson pie shop. Bus fare \$12. Book and pay Tony 9625 3985. Entrance fee also. Meet Springwood car park, behind Westpac, 7.45am. Maurice 4739 4942 04022 02783. Grade 1.
- May 18 **Taronga Zoo to Neutral Bay.** New walk with great water views and chance to visit a secret garden. Meet Central Station, top of escalators, platform 11 at 9.30 am. Judith 4758 6310. Grade 2.
- May 25 **Iron Pot Hill, Megalong Valley.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45 am. Car Pool. Fare \$5. Liz Stark 4754 4966. Grade 2.
- Jun 1 **Florabella and Pippa's Pass,** Warrimoo to Blaxland. Meet Warrimoo Station south side, 8.45 am. Robin Hine 4739 3923. Grade 2.
- Jun 8 **Empire Pass and Dante's Glen,** North Lawson. Meet Lawson Station 8.40 am. Ken 0424 450 200
- Jun 15 **Duck Hole, Glenbrook.** Large pool on Glenbrook Creek. Meet Glenbrook Station car park, 9.30 am. Walk from station. Liz Stark 4754 4966.

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

- May 14 **Nepean River Walk Emu Plains.** Easy 7k walk along the river with lunch at O'Donoghue's Pub. Meet Emu Plains Station south side 9.30am. Leader Chris 4721 4309. Grade 1.
- May 21 **Aeroplane Hills Wentworth Falls.** Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard Carpark 9.30am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2
- May 28 **Braeside Walk to Evans Lookout Blackheath.** Waterfalls, creeks and Grose Valley views. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Jun 4 **Rushcutters Bay to Circular Quay.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Rose 9420 2103. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Jun 11 **Bell Perimeter Trail.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Jun 18 **Great North Road Wisemans Ferry.** Bus trip. Book and pay Amanda \$12 4751 5061. Meet Springwood Carpark behind Westpac Bank 8.30am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Take lunch. Grade 2

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.

**BLUE MOUNTAINS
CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc**
'Like' us on Facebook:
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Follow us on Twitter: [bmcsnsw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)