

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



Ethical Investment - Who Cares?

When you put money into the bank or contribute toward your longer term financial independence via super-annuation, do you ever give a thought as to how that money might be used? Could it be supporting uranium mining, human rights abuse or tobacco production just as easily as waste management, alternative energy or nature conservation.

Our Society's management committee have recently invested our reserve funds in three Managed Ethical Funds, which are expected, over time, to give a better return than was being received from Bank Term Deposits.

At our general meeting on Friday 27 April, James Thier, an Executive Director of Australian Ethical Investment Ltd, will discuss ethical investments and their benefits, both financial and environmental. Through being aware of environmental and social concerns in investment decisions, investors have the power to shun harmful activities and to change the attitudes of companies that might otherwise have a negative impact on the environment. By doing this we can make positive changes to our economic and social system.

The meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut, end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, on Friday 27 April, starting at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

Nursery Success

A Bumper Year and Big Contracts

Our nurseries at Blackheath and Lawson have just completed their best financial year ever. It was an eventful time when we not only extended the Lawson Nursery to a capacity of 30,000 plants, but we also bought a Toyota truck and had it fitted out for nursery use.

From our plant sales we received \$32,620 for the year ended 28 Feb 2001.

The truck was bought for \$14,375, NRMA insurance cost us about \$512, additions and modifications cost another \$544, a total of about \$15,431. Other outgoings were \$10,105, which included the running costs of the two nurseries, petrol, and the \$4,625 investment in the new nursery facilities at Lawson. Total outgoings were therefore \$25,536.

The difference between what we received, \$32,620, and what we spent, \$25,536, is therefore \$7,084. Of course, our Treasurer and the auditors do not view our business in this simple way. By law, their calculations spread some of the

THE DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
FRIDAY 20 APRIL 2001

Fighting for Our Wetlands

Blue Mountains swamps are a wonderfully diverse community of flora of fauna.

Blue Mountains swamps soak up the rain and keep our magnificent waterfalls flowing, even in the driest seasons. Without them the water from the rainfall would simply run over the cliffs and our creeks and waterfalls would dry up between showers.

BUT, Blue Mountains wetlands are not protected. There is no legal protection for these superb communities. Some individual flora and fauna are recognised but the communities in which they live are not.

This has to be remedied. Blue Mountains Conservation Society has already started the complicated and expensive process of enabling swamps to be listed in State and Federal legislation. A fighting fund is needed to support this process and to continue the vital education of the human community about our precious wetlands.

Come to our Swamp Dance on Saturday 21 April at Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson, from 6.30 pm to 9.30 pm. There will be dancing, displays and prizes. Contribute to our fund, our fun and our wisdom!

And come on a Bush Walk on Sunday 22 April, 10 am to 12 noon. **Jill Dark** will lead a walk along the Overcliff Walk and describe the habitats and vegetation, including swampland, along the way.

costs over a longer period than last financial year. The audited accounts were presented at our March Annual General Meeting.

One of the reasons for the expansion of the Lawson nursery was mentioned in Hut News for February 2001, our contract with the RTA for supply of 25,000 native plants of local provenance for Shell Corner in Katoomba.

We are pleased to announce that since then we have gained another RTA contract, this time to supply 22,500 plants for revegetation of the landscape when the RTA has completed the road improvements at Soldiers Pinch, between Mount Boyce (just west of Blackheath) and Browntown Oval at Mount Victoria.

These two contracts alone will certainly keep the nursery volunteers busy over the next two years.

Nursery work, (in spite of the poor pay!!!), is a very rewarding activity: the joy of seeing plants grow is something very near to the heart of all gardeners, and what makes it so special is the knowledge that those plants also contribute to a sustainable environment. And of course we shouldn't forget the enormous contribution that the nursery volunteers' work makes to the Society's cash flow.

Congratulations are the order of the day! **David Coleby**, Nursery Manager, Phone/Fax 4784.1395.

Library Donation

The Society has donated \$1000 worth of new books to Katoomba Reference Library.

There are books on Australian Soils, Mammals, Sustainability and Australia's Greenhouse future, and the wonderful *Flora of NSW* by Gwen Harden which is a four-volume reference book about plants.

Also included are books with practical ideas on how to have a Bushfire Safe Home, attract frogs and birds to your garden and how to design a eco-friendly house. Some other titles are *From Care to Action - making a sustainable world* by M Goldgate, and *Wildlife & Woodchips: Leadbeater's Possum*, a test case for sustainable forestry. *Green Space Green Time - the way of science - Copernicus* by C Barlow is a good narrative about science with a spiritual perspective. The NCC Conference Papers *On the Brink: Is the Threatened Species Act Working?* are also included in the donation.

Swamp Dance

**BUSH DANCE
with the
GANG GANGS**

Saturday, 21 April

6.30 pm to 9.30 pm

**Mid Mountains Community Centre
Lawson**

Adults \$7 Children Free

**Displays prepared by
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Door Prizes Floor Prizes
Food and Drink Available**

Enquiries: Ruth Ley 4782.1635

BUSHWALK with JILL DARK

Sunday, 22 April

10 am to 12 noon

**Meet at the Conservation Hut
(No Charge)**

"Hut News", the newsletter of
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Native Plant Sale

The autumn sale of BMCS native plants will take place at the Conservation Hut, end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, between 9 am and 1 pm on Saturday 7 April. A wide selection will be available at either \$2 or \$4 each. *David Coleby, Nursery Manager* 4784.1395.

New Management Committee

The Society now has a new management committee, with officers elected at the Annual General Meeting on 30 March.

Congratulations to the outgoing committee for a busy and successful year 2000/2001. Welcome back to returning members, and welcome to new members Elizabeth Van Reyswoud (Membership Secretary), Bart Beech (Treasurer), Margaret Sleath (Publicity), David Patfield (National Parks), Ian Baird (Projects).

Contact details are in the box at the top of this page.

Membership Growth

I retired as Membership Secretary (at the AGM) after five years of service. My replacement, Elizabeth Van Reyswoud, is a very capable and likeable lady who will no doubt do an exemplary job.

During my five years we have seen a steady growth in Membership from 350 to 867, an increase of 148%.

Thank you to you all for my time with the Society. It has been most rewarding and satisfying. *Ross Coster.*

Wilderness 2000 Exhibition

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness will be presenting an exhibition of

spectacular photographs by Henry Gold as part of the Wilderness 2000 Campaign. It will take place at the Bondi Pavilion from Monday 14 May to Sunday 27 May daily from 10am to 5pm.

Henry Gold has provided images for the Foundation's campaigns, as well as those of the NPA since the 1960's. Henry's images are powerful persuaders. They have converted many members of the public to become wilderness supporters. His work has been used to lobby Governments and has been presented in many books and magazines. The exhibition features some of Henry's more recent work from the last decade which have not been displayed before.

Part of the proceeds from the sale of photographs will go towards the Wilderness 2000 campaign being conducted by a coalition of environment groups, including NPA and Colong. The campaign seeks to protect about 1.5 million hectares of wilderness in 51 new areas and additions. The official launch will take place on Tuesday 15 May at 6pm. Everyone is welcome.

Tree Planting Weekend

5-6 May, 2001

The Capertee Valley Regent Honeyeater Recovery Group plans to plant 7,000 trees and shrubs in May 2001, an ambitious target which can only be achieved with the continued assistance of our volunteer workforce.

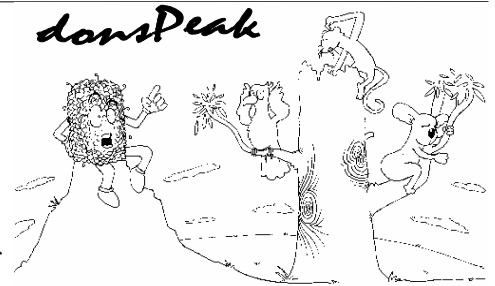
New recruits are most welcome, so if you have not yet taken part in one of our planting weekends, why not join us on the weekend of 5-6 May. While previous experience is an advantage, don't let lack of experience deter you as "on the spot" training is provided.

The Group was established in 1993 to help conserve the Regent Honeyeater in the Capertee Valley (the most important of the key breeding areas remaining for this endangered species). Since 1994 over 20,000 trees and shrubs have been planted at various strategic sites throughout the valley. The 8,500 trees and shrubs planted in 2000 using funds from Natural Heritage Trust are thriving thanks to the efforts of our volunteer planters and an excellent growing season.

If you would like to join us in May contact David Geering (Freecall 1800 621056, email david.geering@npws.nsw.gov.au). You will be advised of accommodation arrangements, costs, what to bring, and other information closer to the planting weekend.

Milk Cartons Wanted

Recycled one litre milk cartons are used to grow our seedlings and we get an eight cent discount for every carton we provide. Our nurseryman is having real problems sourcing these with the advent of plastic bottles. I would like to encourage everyone to go back to the cartons and recycle them in this manner. People can either bring them on the planting weekend or leave with Carol Proberts, 21 Wells Street, Katoomba. (It is best not to flatten the cartons, just open at the top and wash.) *David Geering, Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program.*



Internal Migration Is Helpful

At a recent Braidwood Council meeting, a councillor said that a lot of 'professional protestors' had moved into his area. He went on that if they had been there earlier, they would have stopped the Snowy scheme and be sitting there 'in the dark with candles and matches'.

One plus produced by changes to technology and career structures is that not so many Australians have to live nearly all our creative years in capital cities. By moving into non-urban areas we can boost local communities with our consumer spending or perhaps even set up new economically and environmentally sustainable industries. People who won't accept this, and parrot the 'Greens Cost Jobs' slogan should be ignored.

Let's Not be Cynical

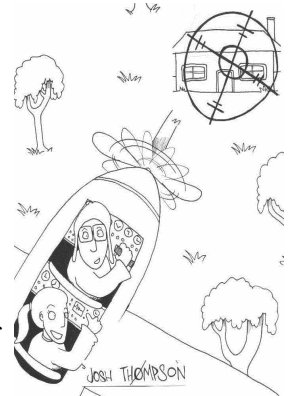
TV personality Don Burke has given his time free of charge for the advertisements promoting the Howard Government's concern about greenhouse gas issues. I know this is a case of the world's slowest-to-be-greenhouse-aware government partnering one of the greatest champions of consumerism. But let us allow them both to be 'born again' and let us not be cynical.

Acceptable Figures

Between February 2000 and February 2001, Cityrail ticket sales rose one and a half per cent. Over the same period, cars using the M2, M4 and M5 tollways fell by an average of ten per cent. Someone must be doing something right.

Are You Sure That Illegal Development is Unoccupied?

Local MP Bob Debus is totally opposed to plans to offer joyrides across the Mountains in a vintage fighter aircraft. We should all support Mr Debus on this. However, if anyone does happen to be buzzing our townships in a fighter, they might find a few things it would be environmentally acceptable to fire upon. *Don Morison.*



Membership Enquiries
 Contact Elizabeth Van Reyswoud
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 Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Katoomba's "Primal Charm"

"Go out into the bush, even on the duller day, and you will discover beauty on every hand. Watch the mists curling in the valleys, and the trees hung with jewels of vapor. It is not inanimate beauty; it is alive with mystery and soul. And when the sun shines from a clear sky the very cliffs speak their messages to those who care to listen."

Myra Knott was a nature lover, a dreamer and a capable business woman who earned her livelihood as an estate agent. She loved Katoomba and wanted its "primal charm" to be preserved. These quotes are from an interview by Frank Walford for "The Echo" in June 1925.

"What made Katoomba in the first place? ... Simply that she was herself! She offered something which could not be found elsewhere; not roads, and sewerage, and pathways, but nature undefiled. We must be careful that we do not engraft the methods of other towns on our natural gifts. Katoomba always has given life to the body, and life to the soul. While she continues to do that, she never will look back, for the whole world is crying for life spiritual and life physical. One of our greatest disabilities is the fact that people come here for a short period to take up business, and are ignorant of what made Katoomba: they don't understand her, or her ways."

"How are we going to retain all this: how preserve the native soul of the place? The answer is, that Nature did it before; let Nature do it once again. We must camouflage our development into a city. The business quarters must be: there is no escape. But the outer portions of the town could be kept as near to nature as possible. Encourage householders to grow hedges, preferably of native trees. Urge them to leave as many trees standing as is possible. Outlying roads need not be straight; a few curves and bends add to their charm. Narrow footpaths suffice in all but the busiest sections, and clumps of bushes and trees could be encouraged on them to simulate Nature. In every street the Council should resume suitable blocks for picnic grounds, with trees and shrubs on them, and perhaps a rustic table. The gutters in the outer portions of the town could be planted with ferns and shrubs, and converted into creeks."

"Gum trees, and ferns, and native shrubs, may be commonplace to us; but they are the things which visitors come here to see. The younger people can go down into the gorges, and out on the ridges, and see these things; but we must consider the older people. It is only by giving them what they desire in the heart of the town

Our Home & the Environment Passive Solar Design

The essence of passive solar design is to let the sun and wind do the work to heat and cool the house. This is better than using electricity, gas or wood, which are polluting and produce greenhouse gases. The main issue in the mountains is heating.

Thankfully now new houses in the mountains are required to have a 3½ star energy efficiency rating before they will be approved. While some Councils require a 5 star rating Blue Mountains accepts 3½ stars. This is not too difficult to get if you add the five features of passive solar design to your house. These are orientation, thermal mass, insulation, glazing and ventilation. In fact our house overshot the highest 5 star score of 71 to 80 points, scoring 142.

This month we'll discuss the first two features, orientation and thermal mass.

Orientation: Everyone's house has a north facing side. The aim should be to have the main living areas on that side. You need to avoid overshadowing by other buildings or evergreen trees though. Our place faces 18° east of north. Any angle up to 30° east and 20° west of north is apparently acceptable. Our new design has a long northern side, and short eastern and western sides, which is handy because the mother-in-law will be at one end and we'll be at the other. It also allows maximum sun penetration. We've also gone for a two-storey house as it allows more rooms to have a northern aspect. We will have north facing bedrooms upstairs with the access corridor on the south side. The added advantage is that warm air from the lower areas will rise to warm the upper areas if we choose to open some doors or ceiling vents.

The eaves on the northern side should extend just enough to block out the high, hot summer sun, but allow in the winter sun, which sits lower on the horizon.

that we can please them. We must never forget that what are commonplaces to us are treasures to them."

Thursday Bushwalks

March 1: Usually, somehow, the rain stops, the clouds part and the sun shines on our Thursday morning bushwalks. On March 1, however, after a few hot and humid days, it was nice to awaken to a cool mountain mist and dripping rain.

We met at the Explorer's Tree. The walk was to be part of "Bottleneck Pass", but it was too wet and slushy for that. Just a short walk, we thought, then off to the pub for lunch.

First, down part of the original Cox's Road — wonderful stands of Banksias there — then through the old brickworks. Tadpoles were swimming in shallow streams of water flowing across the floor of the quarry. Then a leisurely stroll along the walking track through the beautiful Bonnie Doon catchment. Everything glistened in the rain; diamonds of water clung to every leaf tip; long strips of bark hung from Mountain Ash and decorated the bushland.

Along the way, we stopped for a while beside a little valley, where green of ferns and shrubs cascaded down the slope between straight and tall Mountain Ash. It was magic! Nobody felt inclined to talk as

Thermal mass: Once you have the sun penetrating into your house in winter, you need to capture and store the warmth. This can be done by thermal mass, a solid and dense structure, such as a tiled concrete floor or internal brick wall.



The mass should be placed so that it will receive direct sunlight in winter, but none in summer. During winter it will then heat up during the day and release the warmth back into the room as it cools down during the evening. Not wanting the hardness of concrete under our feet we decided to use water as our thermal mass. Water is a better thermal mass than concrete or bricks. Rather than putting a swimming pool in the lounge room Architect Nigel Bell helped us design a water wall under the northern window. It will also double as a window seat. The water wall comprises a cavity built into the wall filled with about 15 black plastic 25 litre water containers full of water. The wall will be glass fronted on the outside to let the sun heat the water in the containers. Inside the house there will be vents to allow the warmth from the containers to filter into the room. In summer the vents can be closed to prevent overheating in the room.

So what do you do if you have a beautiful view to the south? There are solutions. For example high clerestory windows on the north side can still bring sunlight into a south facing room. Other ideas can be found in "Warm House Cool House" by Nick Hollo.

Next instalment will be about the other features of passive solar design; insulation, glazing and ventilation. Cheers -

Greg Wellham and Jessica Yuille.

we sat on some rocks and listened to a gentle melody of raindrops and birdsong.

Eventually we dined at the Gardner's Inn, wet, bedraggled, and in good cheer.

March 8: Autumn rains continued. Too wet and leechy to go to Terrace Falls, so Jill Dark took us along the Woodford fire trail. The vegetation is very different to the upper mountains, and the vegetation changes very noticeable, beautifully described by Jill along the way (how does she remember all the names!). Red Bloodwoods were flowering, with lots of flowers on the ground, pruned by the rosellas. Passing some Casuarinas, we disturbed some glossy black cockatoos, a rare sight — lovely to see them flying with the red tails flashing. There was a juvenile with them. They didn't go far, just sat in a Eucalypt waiting for us to go away.

March 15: From Hat Hill to Bald Hill, trying to keep up with Olive Noble's "Woody Pears" (did someone comment, "some of them seem to be a fair age?") Wonderful views of the Grose Valley and its many tributaries; a perfumed garden of Eriostemon, tea tree, Platysace; a pretty bright blue mushroom; Bullants!

The next series of Thursday Interpretive Bushwalks will commence on Thursday May 12. Contact Christine 4787.7246 for more information.

Who are the Gang Gangs?

(Feathered variety) Cockatoos, dark grey, males with a red crest. Voice, a wheezy creaking in flight and low growling when feeding. Presently flocks can be seen in the Upper Mountains, eating seeds of Sydney Peppermint.

(Unfeathered variety) Bush band which had its beginnings when a few bushcare workers started playing together at the annual Bushcare Picnic, and evolved with music sessions in the Hydro Road Bar. Voices pretty good when playing (maybe a low growl when feeding). A great bush band with a good line-up of talented local musicians. Can be seen and heard at the Swamp Dance on Saturday April 21.

Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group

Welcome to Karen Hising who has offered to help Jessica run the Society's Bushcare group at Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls. Karen is studying bush regeneration at Tafe is a member of two other bushcare groups.

Work days will now be every second Friday of the month from 9 to 12. Any time members can spare, even for just an hour every so often, would help make a difference to the beautiful bush. There are various ways to help such as weeding, photographing our work, letter boxing or writing an article.

The group now has a management strategy for the site which will help guide the work and be used to apply for grants to tackle the larger patches of weeds.

For more information call Karen on 4757 1929.

Welcome to New Members

Christine Perrers, Leura
Valerie and John Huston, Blackheath
Rosie Meharry, Bullaburra
Peter Ardill, Lawson
Paul Herzog, Katoomba
Gai Taylor, Katoomba
Hugh Houston, Warrimoo
Lousa Groos, Royal Exchange
John Hargreaves, Blaxland
Toula Anastas & Greg Fitzgerald,
Wentworth Falls

Jennifer Noble, Springwood
Christine Cornish, Lindfield
Lee Middleton, Wentworth Falls
Ann Fox, Hazelbrook
Yvonne Downie Maybaum, Bullaburra
Karen Hising, Wentworth Falls
John and Olwyn Whitehouse, Winmalee
Mark Lutherborrow, Winmalee
Gillian Appleton, Leura
Beatrice Ferguson, Blaxland

Walking in the Rain

Last month's Hut News had an article about bushwalking on rainy days. I like walking in the rain too, but we have to be careful to choose where we walk so as to reduce our impact on the bush.

Walking in the rain, or after rainy periods, can cause a lot of damage to tracks. Those who have walked in Tasmania know all too well the damage caused by bushwalkers trying to avoid walking through muddy puddles.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Apl 07 (Sat)** Native Plant Sale, Conservation Hut, 9 am to 1 pm.
Apl 21 (Sat) Management Meeting, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
Apl 21 (Sat) Swamp Dance. (Details are on page 1.)
Apl 22 (Sat) Swamp Dance Bushwalk with Jill Dark. (See page 1.)
Apl 27 (Fri) General Meeting, at the Conservation Hut, 7.30 pm. **Ethical Investment - Who Cares?** James Thier will discuss ethical investments and their benefits. (See page 1).

QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 12 and under)

For more information contact Jessica on 4757.2783. For a copy of the Quoll Club Newsletter, phone Ross Coster 4759.1247.

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

- Apl 08 (Sun)** Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group. (2nd Sunday of every month) Meet 9 am at the Reserve (GWH, West of Sorenson Bridge). Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.
Apl 13 (Fri) Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group. (2nd Friday of every month) Contact Karen on 4757.1929 for the meeting place. (following Friday if wet).

BUSHWALKS: Carry drinking water (minimum 1 litre), bring morning tea, and lunch for day walks. Wear shoes with a good tread.

- Monday Leisure Walkers:** Usually half day walks, easy/medium, leisurely pace.
Note: Bus Trips will be monthly from May. Program/Bookings 4759.1692.
Apl 09 Leura Cascades to Katoomba Falls. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. Meet at Leura Carpark, cnr GWH, 9am. Easy, half day, BBQ after.
Apl 16 Easter Monday — No walk.
Apl 23 Porter's Pass. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. Meet at Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Medium, half day, BBQ.
Apl 30 Walls Lookout. Contact Alan Macaulay 4739.2767. Meet Mt Victoria Station 9 am. Easy, half day, BBQ after.
May 07 King's Cave to Paradise Pool. Meet at Bulls Camp, Woodford, 9 am. Easy, half day, BBQ after.

Bushwalks: Bushwalkers — You are requested to phone the leader before 8 pm the day before the walk to advise that you are walking. The leader may cancel the walk if fewer than 4 walkers register, or if other circumstances make conditions unsafe. These walks are of various grades, full or half day.

- Apl 07 (Sat)** Blair Athol mine and Ikara Head. Contact Judy Dervin 4787.1191. Meet at Mount Victoria Station 9.30. Medium, day, bring lunch.
Apl 14/15 Easter — No walk planned.
Apl 22 (Sun) Darwins Walk and Kings Tableland. Contact Mary & Terry Flynn 4787.7212. Meet Wentworth Falls Station 9.30 am. Medium, day.
Apl 28 (Sat) Wonderland Track. Contact June Baxter 4787.7312. Meet at Medlow Bath, opposite Hydro. Medium, half day.
May 05 (Sat) Engineer's Track. Contact Judy Dervin 4787.1191. Meet Mt Vic Station 9.30 am. Medium, day, take lunch.

Walks are generally Easy to Medium Grade, unless otherwise noted. Easy: Mostly good surfaces, but some rough or steep sections. Suited to people of average fitness. **Medium:** Includes rough or steep sections, some of which may require clambering over natural obstacles. Discuss with leader if in doubt. **If this is your first walk, or you are in any doubt, contact the leader or Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.**

Sandy soil can cope with more feet than clay soils in wet conditions. Well constructed and well drained walking tracks can cope with walkers in wet conditions best.

Next month's Hut News will come with a Minimal Impact Bushwalking Code of Practice developed by the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs. This has some useful tips about how to "tread softly". Watch out for it. *Lyndal.*

BM Environment Centre

Blue Mountains Environment Centre is the focal centre of the green groups in the Mountains. It gives our Society all the space it can to promote us.

Sadly, it is always closed on Sundays and Mondays because there are not enough volunteers.

If you want a delightful job telling people about our area, then this work is for you. Ring Mische any Wednesday or

Thursday on 4782.9711.

Walking the Federal Pass The First 100 years 1900-2000

Jim Smith has spent the last twenty five years collecting stories and photographs of the Jamison Valley and its inhabitants.

This latest book tells the story of the Federal Pass, a history of the walking track and the people whose names are connected with it, with accounts by people who walked there. The book is well illustrated with historic photographs and postcards from Jim's collection.

A limited number of copies have been printed, available from Jim Smith, 65 Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls 2782. Cost of \$25 includes postage.

The book is a valuable addition to our collection of Blue Mountains literature, and I highly recommend it to anybody who is interested in the Blue Mountains and its history. *Christine Davies.*