

# HUT NEWS

*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"*



## Plastic Bags .. Just say NO!

In March 2002, a 15 euro-cent (25c) levy was placed on plastic check-out bags in Ireland. As a result, plastic bag usage plummeted by 90% - a reduction of approximately 1.1 billion plastic bags.

Coles Bay in Tasmania became Australia's first 'Plastic Bag Free' town. Since April 2003, all retail outlets in Coles Bay have banned plastic check-out bags. As alternatives, they are offering a strong reusable paper bag with a handle, for 25c (similar to the Irish levy), or reusable calico bags. The NSW south coast towns of Huskisson, Kangaroo Valley and Mogo have followed the lead of Coles Bay to become 'Plastic Bag Free'. These communities have banned plastic check-out bags from their retail outlets. What has made it easier for these towns is that their supermarkets and retail outlets are all locally owned. As such the decision to ban plastic bags at the check-out has been community driven at the very local level.

Oyster Bay, in Sydney's Sutherland Shire, has also captured a milestone by becoming Australia's first 'Plastic Bag Free City Suburb'. You can find more information on [www.planetark.com/plasticbags](http://www.planetark.com/plasticbags) or ring 9251 3444.

20 million Australians use 6.4 billion plastic check-out bags every year—nearly 1 plastic bag per person per day—and they take between 15 and 1000 years to break down in the environment.

80 million plastic bags end up as litter on our beaches, streets and parks. In the marine environment, plastic bag litter kills at least 100,000 birds, whales, seals and turtles every year. In August 2000 in Cairns, an autopsy on a beached eight metre Bryde's whale found that the whale's stomach was tightly packed with six square metres of plastic, including many plastic check-out bags. If the whale had died at sea it would have decayed, releasing the plastic to kill other marine life for hundreds of years to come.

In our towns and on farms plastic bag litter can block drains, trap birds and kill livestock. And in our National Parks ... ?

How can our City in a World Heritage National Park become Plastic Bag Free? We can all start by saying NO to plastic bags. There are alternatives.

How did people manage before plastic bags? They've only been around for 40 years or so. People carried shopping baskets and string bags for shopping. Shops provided strong brown paper bags. What about the garbage? It was used for compost, fed to the chooks or wrapped in newspaper. You can peel your vegetables on a sheet of newspaper and wrap the scraps to go straight into the compost or rubbish bin. Does Council object to messy garbage bins?

Are biodegradable plastic bags the answer? Planet Ark says 'no'. There is still some doubt that biodegradable plastic bags really do degrade as promised, or if they do the leftover pieces may be just as harmful to wildlife and create litter problems.

Should a levy be imposed on plastic bags as in Ireland? Many shops now offer calico bags. Could stores also offer reusable paper bags for 25c as in Coles Bay (for those who sometimes forget to bring their bags)? What has happened to the empty cardboard boxes we used to be able to pack our groceries in? Can we ask ALL Blue Mountains stores and supermarkets not to offer plastic bags? What ideas do members have?

Please write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 or email [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au) Christine Davies. (ref: Planet Ark [www.planetark.com/plasticbags](http://www.planetark.com/plasticbags))

## Photographing native birds

At our monthly meeting on Friday 26 November Chris Todd will present a Slide Show of Australian Birds. Chris has been photographing native birds for over 30 years and is a successful exhibitor in National and International Exhibitions. Chris has spent many years perfecting ways to photograph Birds in Flight and he will show us many of these images.

The talk and slide show by Chris Todd at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, will start at 7.40 pm. Visitors are welcome.

**Special General Meeting:** At 7.30pm on Friday 26 November, before the monthly meeting, there will be a Special General Meeting to vote on changes to our constitution. The proposed changes are detailed on the sheets enclosed with this newsletter.

## Ecohomes tour. By Jenny Rich

On 23 October Nigel Bell of ECODESIGN Architects took a bus load of interested people to see five houses in the upper Mountains which have been adapted in various ways to make them more ecologically sound.

Jessica and Greg Wellham are inspirational in the detailed way they have altered and added to their 1950s fibro home, including solar cells, air dried local timber, a water wall to store heat, non toxic products eg paints and pipes, taking into consideration the transport costs of building products, even making a cool cupboard to replace a high energy fridge. Bartush Homes have designed and built an MBA award winning home at Wentworth Falls which incorporates some green features such as water tanks, solar cells, some double glazing and super insulation—an example of the greening of mainstream construction.

Don McGregor showed how he makes 'Formblock' earth walls using local materials and we then saw how he and Susie used them for their own house and studio. Nigel's renovated weatherboard house includes many excellent features such as 'Magnetite' acrylic sheeting for thermal and acoustic benefits, and Velux skylights to add natural light. His ecooffice in the backyard won the national TDA timber design award for its environmental commitment. Finally we visited Anne Arndt who has beautifully renovated her small 1950s cottage. Some internal walls were removed to make a more open space, two types of local timber were used to line the inside walls and for the cupboards and some large windows were added to make the most of the magnificent bush views. She is also removing all invasive exotic plants as her house is surrounded by beautiful bushland.

Nigel and the owners discussed the eco features of each house and tour participant were given a CD or a bag of useful pamphlets with information on ways of reducing energy, useful products etc. The tour cost of \$50 goes to Katoomba Primary and Katoomba High School for their WildAware environmental programs.

With global warming one of the major issues facing the world, we all need to be doing everything we can **right now** to reduce our use of fossil fuel energy. We also need to reduce our use of water and generally reduce our ecological imprint as much as we can. What each of us does with our own home is crucial. These bus tours are an excellent way of finding out about things we can do in our own home. I thoroughly recommend the tours so be sure to book early for the next one in April next year which will visit homes in the mid and lower mountains. Nigel Bell will speak at our monthly meeting in January 2005 on 'Ecodesign—how to do more—with less environmental consequence'.

## Pre-Christmas Native Plant Sale

9am-12 noon, Tuesday 30 November, at our Blackheath Nursery

Meet the nursery volunteers and buy some native plants. There will also some cheap advanced plants. Turn left at the roundabout at the end of Govetts Leap Road and follow the signs. Enquiries to Kevin Bell 4787 6436.

"Hut News", the newsletter of  
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#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Special general meeting:** Friday 26 November, 7.30 pm at the Conservation Hut. Members to vote on changes to our constitution.

**Monthly meeting:** Friday 26 November 7.40pm at the Conservation Hut. Chris Todd: 'Photographing native birds'.

**Management meeting:** Saturday 20 November, 9am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson. Members are welcome to attend as observers.

**Bushcare:** Saturday, 13 November. Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets at 9am on the 2nd Saturday of every month. Tools are provided. Bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water. Contact Karen 4757 1929.

**Pre-Christmas Native Plant Sale:** Blackheath nursery, Tuesday 30 November, 9am to 12 noon.

#### MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Elizabeth van Reyswoud  
Phone 4757.2694

Email: [mcreysw@bigpond.net.au](mailto:mcreysw@bigpond.net.au)  
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## GROUNDWATER

### Article 2: Distribution of the watertable. By Brian Marshall

The watertable reflects the interaction between precipitation/ infiltration, the permeability of underlying soils and rocks, and the topography. At any location, if precipitation or infiltration increase, the local watertable rises; if permeability increases, the local watertable falls. In an essentially flat region, the watertable tends to be horizontal; in a hilly or mountainous region the watertable is typically a subdued version of the topography. Why? The answer relates to permeability, infiltration and run-off.

In a saturated permeable material where the watertable is not horizontal, *equilibrium* (i.e. a horizontal watertable) is achieved through lateral flow (Fig. 2.1). The rate of flow, a function of the size of pores and linkage paths, ranges from 10's of metres per day down to 10's metres per year in soils and sedimentary rocks. So, the equilibration process can be very slow, but why is there disequilibrium (a watertable 'topography') in the first place?

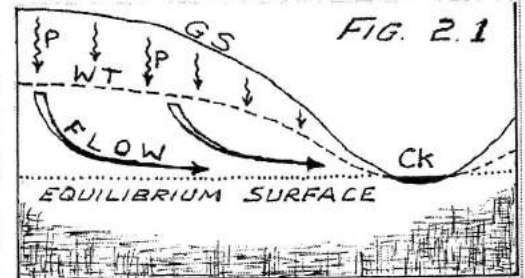


Fig. 2.1 Typical disequilibrium watertable (WT), fed by percolation (P), is a subdued version of the ground-surface (GS); continuous flow beneath the WT tries to establish an equilibrium (horizontal) surface.

Consider heavy rain on a roughly horizontal land-surface above an *equilibrated* (=horizontal) watertable. Because infiltration is slower than precipitation, *surface wash* (=run-off) builds and drainage channels start down cutting (Fig. 2.2a). On slopes flanking the channel, infiltration decreases (run-off increases) and the local watertable falls (Fig. 2.2b). The increased run-off widens and deepens the channel until the watertable is reached (Fig. 2.2c); down cutting stops at this local base level. Meanwhile, lateral flow is trying to *reequilibrate* (=flatten) the watertable (Fig. 2.1) and, given enough time, it would succeed were it not for ongoing precipitation and unequal infiltration (Figs. 2.2b, c). But as things are, the Blue Mountains, an uplifted region with deeply incised gorges, will continue to show the complex interaction between topography and the distribution of the watertable (Fig. 2.3).

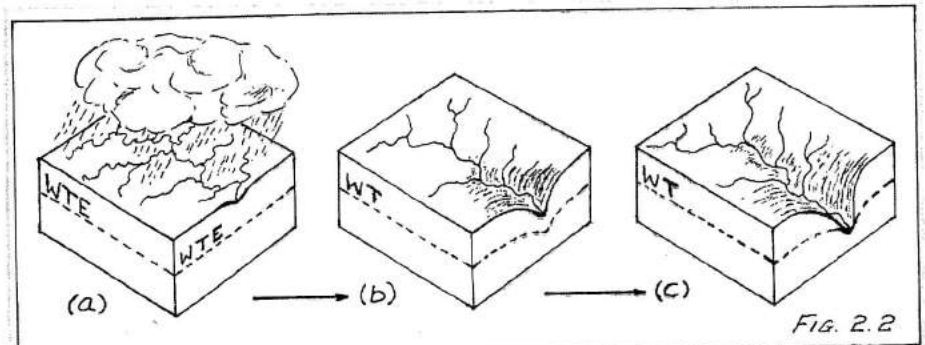
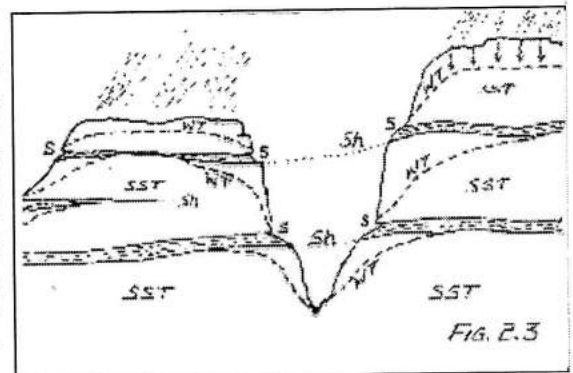


Fig. 2.2 (a) Roughly horizontal land-surface and equilibrated watertable (WTE); surface wash focuses into a channel and starts down-cutting. (b) On the channel slopes, infiltration decreases (run-off increases), the immediately underlying WT falls and disequilibrium results. (c) Steepening channel slopes further increase run-off; down-cutting continues until the disequilibrated WT (the local base level) is reached. Fig. 2.3 Typical interaction between sandstone (SST) and shale (Sh) layers, the watertable (WT) and springs (S) in the Blue Mountains.

Many scenic habitats of the Blue Mountains, such as springs, hanging swamps and portions of creek systems, relate to where the watertable meets the topography. They are particularly sensitive to watertable fluctuations beyond the normal seasonal variation, regardless of whether they are caused by drought or reflect such things as urban run-off and groundwater extraction.





## Capertee Valley camp. By Christine Davies.

On 14 October, nine Thursday interpretive bushwalkers (nicknamed the Thursday 'dawdlers' by one the group) went to the Capertee Valley for bird watching with Carol Proberts and an overnight camp on her property.

It was an unseasonably hot day! After the drive to Capertee and through the beautiful valley we were content to live up to our nickname and even surpass it by extending our leisurely lunch, sitting in the shade beside the dam and watching the birds coming to the surrounding trees or to the dam to drink.

115 bird species had been identified on the property. We observed 48 species, including No. 116, a Chestnut-rumped Heath Wren, added to the list during our visit. Brown Treecreepers climbed the tree trunks or came to the dam to drink. Unlike the White-throated Treecreepers we often see in the Blue Mountains, these treecreepers are also comfortable on the ground. Diamond Firetails (beautiful little birds with diamonds on their sides, white and black on front and fire-engine red on their rumps) were frequently on the mistletoes, sometimes dropping rapidly to drink at the dam. Turtles were in the dam.

Our afternoon walk towards the golden cliffs of Mount Gundangaroo at the rear of the property took us along a fire trail through dry woodland. We saw two rare plants (a wattle and a highly-perfumed prostanthera), scattered Kurrajong trees (kurrajong was an Aboriginal name for the fibre used for string, obtained from this tree and from other sources), smooth sandy patches among the trees which were the beds of kangaroos, scats of a Ringtail Possum, goanna tracks and many birds including a Painted Button-quail. Some of us were suffering in the heat and returned to camp.

Jenny Rich was among those who made it to our destination, a dam surrounded by low tea tree and other native vegetation. She reports that a huge goanna drinking at the dam scuttled away as they

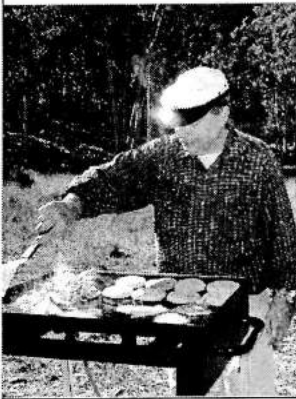
approached and a kangaroo bounded into the bushes. Jenny said "It was really wonderful, so busy, so many beautiful birds, sometimes up to 20 birds zipping and zimming to and fro around the dam. There were four species of honeyeater (Fuscous, Yellow-tufted, Black-chinned and Brown-headed), a Peaceful Dove, Willie Wagtails, Variegated Fairy Wrens and more. Tiny circles in the water were the snouts of Snake-necked Turtles."

Back at camp we put up our tents and waited for the coolness of evening. What a peaceful and beautiful place to be in the fading light! The Capertee Valley is one of the largest enclosed valleys in the world - nearly 30 km across - bounded to the east by rugged sandstone escarpments and to the west by more rounded granite hills.

Cloud cover which had been coming over during the afternoon made the darkness complete, with hordes of flying insects swarming to our candles and torches (none of them biting insects), the silence of the night occasionally broken by the calls of Broad-palmed Frogs.

Rain came during the night, interrupted by bursts of wind which roared through the valley like an approaching train, shook the trees and then vanished. In the early hours a short solid animal bumped into my tent which I presume was the small wombat whose burrow was nearby.

Our little tent city survived intact and dry through the night. The day was cooler and pleasant for our early morning walk and BBQ breakfast. Again, what a peaceful and beautiful place to be in the early morning! Carol guides bird-watchers on her property on a commercial basis. We were very privileged to be invited to visit and share her wonderful knowledge in this beautiful place. (Photos: Bird watching in the shade of a Kurrajong Tree; David cooking breakfast.)



## SCIENCE, STORY AND SONG, by Dr. John Williams, member of the Wentworth Group and former Chief CSIRO Land and Water Scientist.

We've seen plenty of anguish - and thankfully a few runs on the board - in recent times as we've battled to put more water back into river systems and halt the clearing of native vegetation. But the real crusades we must win—the huge culture shifts in how we live in, work with and imagine our country—are still to come.

Believe me, we'll start hearing a lot more in coming years about valuing environmental services - the clean water, air and healthy soils that underpin our lives and our economy - and recognising the ecological footprint created by how we produce our food.

I was born in Tumbarumba in the Snowy country. Dad was a bushman. I spent a lot of time with him on a horse. Riding in the bush, he helped me to understand how the landscape works, to really like it, and to really feel at home in it.

I guess that's where a lot of my core values came from. Dad knew the bush pretty well. He loved the native woodlands and forests and their shrubbery. He was always torn between using the

land and then seeing profound change happen ... it broke his heart to see country cleared, but the thing that really tore him was the super revolution. He was one of the first to spread superphosphate on the Southern Tablelands. There were great hopes that the new system would be terrific. But in the very roots of its success were its problems - you were acidifying the soil profile and clearing country that really was so marginal. Dad sort of knew that, but the bind is that my university education was partly paid for by it.

At Sydney University, I studied agricultural science. I was taught that we were the clever scientists who were going to revolutionise the world. The impacts on the environment weren't considered.

I sense in Australia now people are saying, 'Hey, this is different. We love it, but it's different'. We're still learning how to live with it, to understand it, and nurture it. I'm encouraged to think we are at a cusp, that we are recognising the need for change. I don't think we know what to change to, I've certainly found it extremely difficult to get the resources to actually explore alternatives in a practical sense.

The amount of money that's going

into finding new systems—or solutions that make a dollar and address the environmental problem and its cause—is trivial. We're still fiddling. And we're sentencing all of tropical northern Australia to the environmental gallows by default. Queensland's brigalow, the Gulf Country, part of the Territory's Top End, the Kimberley—magical wild rivers, estuaries, coastlines, groundwaters, all under very real threat

There's some misplaced thinking that by rearranging the furniture in the more settled districts, we'll solve the problem. We will not. Not until we actually build some new furniture that's suited and works in harmony with the way the landscape is. It just will not happen. At the moment there's a reluctance to face up to that.

Science and an understanding of our landscape are only valuable if they become part of our wider culture, if they are intrinsically wound in, so that our knowledge is part of the peoples' idiom, our stories and songs. And then we'll sing, like the Aboriginal people, we'll be able to tell the story of our country because we understand it.

(CONSOC members can purchase tickets for Dr. John Williams, Martin Copley and June Oscar at the special members price of \$10 by booking direct with the Songlines Conversation office (02) 4782 6370.)

## Bicentenary of a botanist

By Don Morison

When George Caley (1770-1829) showed interest in becoming a botanist, his mentor Joseph Banks warned him his work would be poorly rewarded. This relative lack of appreciation remains 200 years after Caley led an expedition from the Hawkesbury River to Mount Banks and return. It was the most penetrative European foray into the Blue Mountains before the 1813 trip by the pastoral and real estate developers, Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth (assisted by four convict servants whose role was left out of most historical records).

Only a few are likely to celebrate those 18 days in November 1804 when Caley found 30 Blue Mountains plant species previously unknown to Europeans. He achieved this in spite of descending cliffs and ravines through features he named 'The Devil's Wilderness' and 'Dismal Dingle', reporting to Banks: 'The roughness of the country I found beyond description. I cannot give you a more expressive idea than travelling over the tops of the houses in a town.'

Perhaps only a wayward mist prevented Caley from noticing the ridge linking Banks with the site of Bell as he achieved his objective of ascending Mount Banks on 15 November 1804. No white crossing of that ridge is recorded until 1823 when 19-year-old Archibald Bell Junior walked from Bilpin to the newly-built Collitt's Inn at Hartley Vale. (Ian Brown has suggested he was assisted by Aborigines who already knew the route.)

Caley is credited with collections that 'did much to spread a knowledge of Australian plants in the early years of the nineteenth century'. His life remains a reminder of the contributions of the Blue Mountains to an understanding of Australian ecosystems.

Two relics remind us of an age when Caley and the 1813 trio were caught up in a mania for remembering explorers for their degree of success in finding a way 'across the Mountains' - Caley's 'Repulse' at Linden and the Marked Tree near Katoomba. Both these have a colourful history but it is almost certain that neither had any link with the explorers whose names tourism promoters ascribed to them. (Prepared with assistance from Ross Coster and articles by John Low and Jim Smith.)

## Multi-day activity

### Summer wildflowers at Perisher Valley

A few places left in a comfortable ski lodge, nights 9-15 January, 2005. Now accepting bookings for 1,2,3,4,5,6 or 7 nights. Send \$15 to PO Box 170, Katoomba 2780; total cost \$11 per person per night, balance payable at activity. A multi-day activity for June 2005 is expected to be advertised in February Hut News. Enquiries Don Morison (02) 8230 2116.

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

Our bushwalking group provides a range of activities. Membership of the bushwalking group is available to members of the Society. For further information contact the Activity Coordinator (listed) or Bushwalks Conveyor Bob van Reyswoud. For membership enquiries contact Membership Secretary Liz van Reyswoud. **Cost of insurance and affiliation fees for bushwalkers of \$15 per member is payable with your membership renewal.**

### Pre-School Walks, for parent/grandparent/carer with children under 6 years:

Short, easy walks, approx 1 hour, 1st Wednesday of every month, starting at 10.30am. Bring a snack and a drink. Contact Liz Riley 4787 6637 for more information or if the weather is doubtful.

**Dec 01 Minni-ha-ha Falls, North Katoomba.** Meet in the picnic area at the end of Minni-ha-ha Road.

**Monday Leisure Walks:** Usually 'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours suitable for walkers of average fitness. Graded Medium, i.e. can include some short rock scrambles or some short section off track. Bring morning tea and lunch, plus carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warmer days.

**Nov 08 Balzer's Lookout, Blackheath.** Magnificent views of Grose Valley. Meet 9.15 Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Contact Bill 4759 1692.

**Nov 15 Boronia Point, Mt Wilson.** Wonderful Mt Wilson wildflowers. Meet 9.15 Mt Victoria Railway Station. BBQ lunch. Contact Norah 4757 4058

**Nov 22 Mt Airlie.** Beautiful sandstone cliffs, shale-mining history. Car pool. Passengers pay \$10 to driver for fuel. Meet 9.15 Mt Victoria Railway Station. Contact Judy 4758 6228.

**Nov 29 Lockley's Pylon.** Wonderful wildflowers, magnificent view over Grose Valley. Meet 9am Leura Railway Station commuter carpark. Contact Laurel 4784 1554.

**Dec 06 Lett River, Hartley Valley.** Alpaca farm and river walk/swim. Meet 9.15 Mt Victoria Railway Station. BBQ. Contact Judy 4758 6228.

**Dec 13 Christmas Party, Lawson Park, near swimming pool.** Walk to nearby falls, swim at Lawson pool, BBQ lunch meat/fish provided, bring salad/sweets to share. Meet 9.30, Lawson Bowling Club car park. Contact Laurel/Norm 4784 1554.

**Thursday Pleasure Walks:** These easy to medium grade walks are conducted to suit the walkers on the day. Times given are approximate. Slower walkers are catered for and on longer walks there is an option of a slower group to complete a section of the walk. Phone the contact for any enquiries about the program, starting times and transport issues. **NOTE: Walks to commence at 9 am unless stated otherwise.**

**Nov 04 Furber Steps to view Katoomba Falls.** Steps down into valley with possible extension along Federal Pass. Return by Scenic Railway or Scenicender, cost \$7 one way. Meet Gearins Hotel, Katoomba, 9am. ☎ Joan 4782 2218.

**Nov 11 Mount Piddington to Horne's Point, Mt Victoria.** Walk along fire trail to spectacular lookout over the Kanimbla Valley. Option of extending walk length. Meet Mt Victoria Station. Contact Phil 4787 5560.

**Nov 18 West Katoomba Lookouts.** Drive and very easy walks to little known lookouts over the Megalong Valley. Meet Gearins Hotel, Katoomba. Contact Joan 4782 2218.

**Nov 25 Water Nymph's Dell, Wentworth Falls.** Steep descent and ascent to cool rainforest gully and waterfall. Car shuffle. Meet Wentworth Falls car park near the clock. Contact Simone 4757 3416.

**Dec 02 Coachwood Glen and Megalong Valley.** Easy walk in cool rainforest and picnic lunch at Megalong Creek. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Contact Joan 4782 2218.

**Dec 09 Euroka Clearing to Nepean River, Glenbrook.** Varied walk with descent to river. Meet car park Glenbrook Station. Contact Bill 4759 1692.

**Dec 16 Christmas Party at Ingar Picnic Area, off Tableland Road, Wentworth Falls.** Meet 11am Wentworth Falls car park near the clock. BYOG and a plate. Contact Simone 4757 3416.

**Weekend Bushwalks:** Always discuss with the contact if the walk you would like to do is medium/hard or hard, before attending. If this is your first walk, or you are in any doubt, discuss with the contact or Bushwalks Convener Bob van Reyswoud, 4757 2694, email [mcreysw@bigpond.net.au](mailto:mcreysw@bigpond.net.au).

**Nov 06 (Sat) Beauchamp falls.** Med/hard (steep climb out). Meet Blackheath Station 8.30am. ☎ 4787 7649.

**Nov 13 (Sat) Mailes Ridge, Mountain Lagoon.** Medium/long. View of Colo River. Meet Mt Victoria Station 8.30am. Car pool to Bilpin. Contact Meredith 4757.2694.

**Nov 20 (Sat) Short walk, easy grade, picnic lunch and farewell to Lloyd Jones.** Saturday walkers only. Bookings Bob 4757 2694.

**Nov 27 (Sat) Cox's Road and Lockyer's Line of Road.** Medium/long walk. Meet Mt Victoria Station 8.30 am. Contact Bob 4757 2694.

**Dec 06 Hanging Rock via Rhodendron Garden.** Medium/easy. Meet Blackheath Station commuter carpark 9.50am. Contact June 4787 7312.

**Dec 11 Christmas Party: St Alban's Bus Trip.** Short, easy walk. Lunch at the Settlers' Arms Hotel. Menu from \$18-\$25. Meet Katoomba depot 8am, plus pickups down the mountains. The bus is full, but car pool to be arranged. Contact Bob 4757 2694.



## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR THE YOUNG

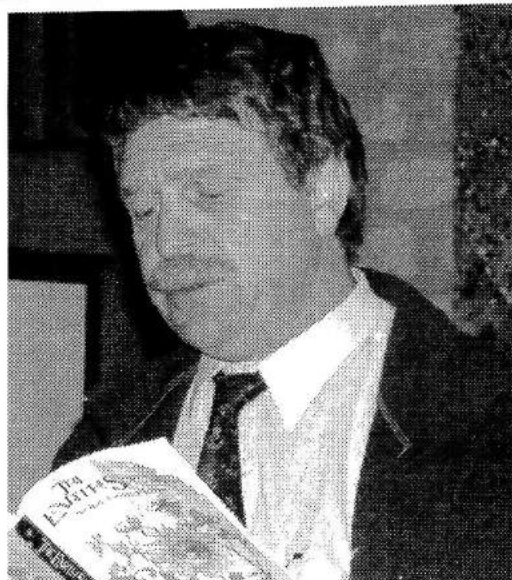
**E**arly in his address, Joe Banffy asked us to raise our hands if we considered that having been exposed to deep immersion in the bushland during early childhood was a key reason for our present involvement in conservation and indeed our presence at the Meeting. Most arms reached for the ceiling, and Joe gave a little smile of recognition.

**Joe Banffy** is the Principal of Warrimoo Public School and a passionate advocate of environmental education for children of primary school age. Now in its second year, and with industry assistance, his Environmental Education project, *Earthkeepers*, has been incorporated into the school curriculum and resulted in a greater awareness among their pupils of how their actions impact on the environment. Areas once overrun by weeds are returning to their natural state. Taps are being turned off, rubbish is being picked up and even clothing is being recycled. On National Tree Day 60 enthusiastic children planted 200 indigenous species. Ten solar panels have been installed and the resulting energy savings are being studied. Environmental education is not a subject, says Joe. It is a perspective to be integrated by sensitive teachers, wherever they can, into their six Key Learning Areas – English, Mathematics, Science & Technology, Human Society & Its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health & Physical Education.

**Richard Zoglmeier**, a classroom teacher from Winmalce Public School, was also in attendance and he took up the theme. Richard in fact acts as a facilitator (he calls himself a lighthouse) in the NSW Pilot Sustainable Schools Program introduced in 2002 and continuing until December 2004. It involves 200 schools that have volunteered to participate. Richard has two days each week to stimulate and organise environmental education across 10 of these schools in the Blue Mountains region.

Specifically he is required to develop with each school a School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) that addresses three focus areas: curriculum, management of resources and management of school grounds. To do this he sets up an Environmental Management Committee of students, staff, parents and friends. Over time this network and the school itself begins to take action on its major environmental priorities, ensuring that curriculum links are achieved and through the implementation of its action plans reaches an acceptable level of sustainability. After assessment and demonstrated success, the school can then become eligible for sponsorship from a range of external organisations. Examples are an energy authority donating timer switches in order to save energy, or the other sorts of benefits reported above by Joe at Warrimoo. Holden Motor Company has donated a Combo vehicle and \$20,000 to be distributed among successful schools.

Richard, Joe and sponsors have all witnessed a positive reaction from the children to the Program. The kids are learning to take personal responsibility for the

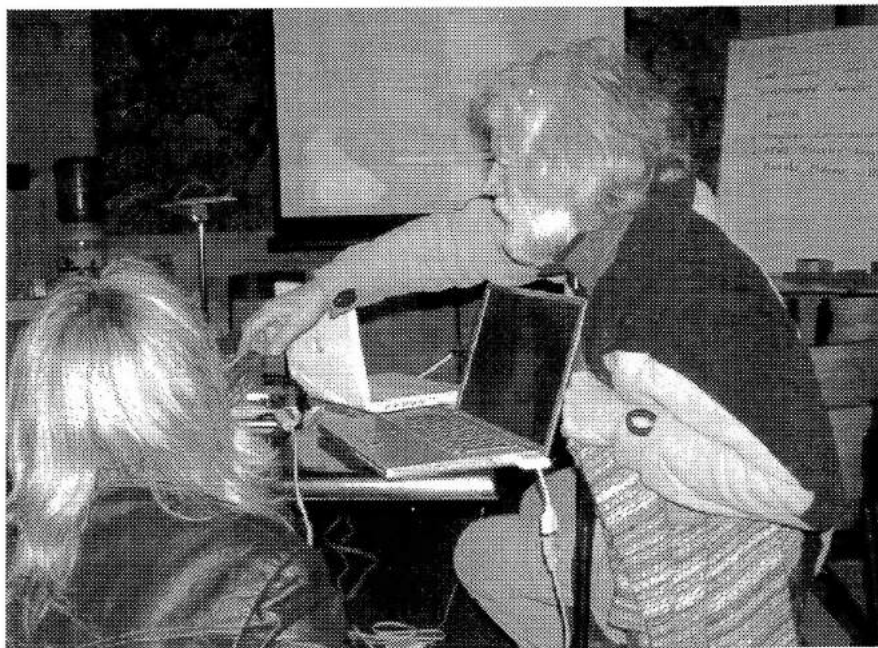


Joe Banffy reading the Rachel (Silent Spring) Carson contribution from *The Earth Speaks*.

environment within their school, their village and beyond. Where the Program has been combined with an intensive bush immersion experience, the effects on the child's attitude is as phenomenal as it is heartwarming. It took only a brief exposure to Richard's visual presentation to demonstrate that to us! Then Joe allowed Rachel Carson, from the book *The Earth Speaks*, have the final words:

*If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength.*

Meursault



Wyn Jones with Bronwen Maxwell. Wyn described their *Walking the Boundaries*, one-day bush immersion experiences for Years 5 and 6 students. Wyn also spoke of threats to the threatened tall shrub *Leionema lachnaeoides*, due to proposed development on Radiata Plateau. Wyn rediscovered the species in 1989, and its largest single habitat is on the Plateau.



Gregg Borschmann was at the Meeting to promote the upcoming *The Songlines Conversations*, an event very much in tune with the educational theme of the evening. Gregg is the Presenter. A program leaflet is enclosed with this issue of *Hut News*.

## CARE FOR A GRAND CLIFF-TOP WALK?

**D**uring October I walked the Lindeman Pass from Leura Falls to Gladstone Pass and in so doing bagged the final stage of my footslogging circumnavigation of the Jamison Valley.

To complete this last leg, it was necessary that I whip down the ladders from Solitary Restaurant, cross Leura Falls at its second drop, skirt behind Gordon Falls, dodge the damp at Walford Falls, round Sublime Point at Copeland Pass caim, battle the lawyer vines in the eastern rain forest, revive at Dash's Cave, and finally slither up the wet stone staircase of Prime Minister Gladstone's 'narrow defile of rare beauty' – to come out at the Fairmont!

It was a wonderful walk, but the entire trip was achieved **BELOW** the escarpment. For did you know that there is **NO** walking track **AT THE CLIFF-TOP** level that traverses the perimeter of Sublime Point to connect Gordon Falls to our 'much-loved' resort?

This is a situation that has not escaped Lauren and Norman Harris, BMCS members and Leura residents for the past 12 years. In September 2003, Lauren and Norman brought to the Society meeting their vision for a **Grand Cliff-Top Walk**, a single walking track from Wentworth Falls to Katoomba – a superb arc from Wentworth Falls train station, across the GWH, down Charles Darwin Walk to the Falls, joining the Overcliff Walk to the Valley of the Waters (tea and muffins at the Hut!), across Lillian's Bridge, past Inspiration Point to the top of Gladstone Pass, **around the edge of Sublime Point to Gordon Falls**, on to Katoomba Falls, up McCreas Paddock and back to Katoomba train station. Simple, except for that missing link!

Norman explained that this link could be forged with few construction problems by joining up existing tracks and thus limiting new work. It is already possible to negotiate a route from Gordon Falls to the western end of West Street. From that point an existing (well-made but secluded) track connects to Sublime Point. (There are three blocks of land at the end of West Street, owned by the Council, but apparently not able to be built on). From Sublime Point to the eastern (unmade) extension of Willoughby Road the track would be situated on Crown Land controlled by the NPWS, or on private land that is appropriately zoned.

**Then comes the major impediment!** It would be necessary to gain access to cross twelve privately-owned blocks to reach Nardin Street before linking up with the top of Gladstone Pass. Most of the land to be traversed is natural bush and unsuitable for development, and Norman and Lauren feel that it would be not unreasonable to request a simple right-of-way or negotiate an easement, rather than press for any rezoning or purchase.

The Harris proposal was endorsed by the Society at its November 2003 Management Committee Meeting, and the Society then joined Lauren and Norman in making written representations to the Council and the NPWS.

These approaches finally gave rise to a meeting on 28 September 2004 involving Norman and Lauren, BMCS President Kevin Bell, BMCC Mayor Jim



*Norman and Lauren Harris, after 13 months of endeavour, at last are seeing some light at the end of the tunnel.*

Angel, NPWS Area Manager Richard Kingswood, and BMCC Environmental Manager, Frank Garofalow. It was agreed that the likely steps would include feasibility study, environmental study, track design, negotiation with property owners for right-of-way, amendments to the LEP, construction and ensured funding for ongoing maintenance. Rough estimates for the project range from two to five million dollars! Money not easily found! The Mayor was nevertheless very supportive of the project in principle and undertook to discuss it with Bob Debus. The NPWS was also supportive, if somewhat concerned about the costs of construction and ongoing maintenance.

Wisely, Lauren and Norman suggested as a first step completion of the short section between Gordon Falls and West Street. A feasibility study for this section would cost \$10-20,000. The Society undertook to initiate a fund-raising campaign drawing on Government, business and the community to allow this work and the actual construction to proceed, all subject of course to NPWS management approval.

All of these parties involved thus far see the Grand Cliff-Top Walk as an enhancement of the tourist potential of the existing Blue Mountains attractions, and of benefit to the business community. The linking of existing tracks provides a better level of monitoring of bushfire management and the prevention of rubbish dumping. A tangible benefit for both city and overseas visitors would be the ability to access and exit the Walk by train. **And of great appeal to the protagonists is the desire to complete the project as a celebration in 2013 of the Bicentenary of the first official European crossing of the Blue Mountains!**

So there it is, a tasty target. Nine years to bring it off. Surely that is a modest aim, achievable with Society and community persistence, resident empathy and dedication of the calibre of that already shown by our members, Norman and Lauren – and it should even be within the parsimonious budgets presently granted to the NPWS.

For me there is another selfish motivation. I want to be able to 'do' Lindeman Pass and then stroll back to my vehicle at Solitary Restaurant around the panoramic cliff-top, avoiding the depressing bitumen bash of Fitzroy, Gladstone, Craigend and Jersey Streets and the traffic on Cliff Drive.

*Meursault*

*Hut News*, No. 208, November 2004

## AT THE LAWSON NURSERY OPEN MORNING



*The onions olfact and sausages sizzle as a crowd begins to gather at the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Lawson Nursery Open Morning on Saturday 30 October. Middle and Lower Mountains folk arrived in numbers to confer with our nursery staff and to purchase natives for spring plantings. Selling at this venue complemented the regular Tuesday morning trading at our Blackheath Nursery.*



# BMCS PROPOSED CONSTITUTION CHANGES – NOVEMBER 2004

The Management Committee has agreed that the following changes to our Constitution be put to members at a Special General Meeting, to be held at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, at 7.30 pm on Friday 26 November 2004. The regular monthly meeting will commence at the conclusion of the Special General Meeting.

CL #	PROPOSED WORDING	EXISTING WORDING	REASON FOR CHANGE
3	<b>3 MEMBERSHIP</b> (a) Membership shall be open to all persons and to Incorporated organisations.	<b>3 MEMBERSHIP</b> (a) Membership shall be open to all persons aged 16 years and over.	Broaden the scope of membership, and remove age discrimination. Excluding younger members also excludes their Public Liability insurance cover.
	(b) Application for membership shall be in writing, signed by the applicant, and shall be in such form and contain such requirements as the Management Committee from time to time prescribe.	(c) Application for membership shall be in writing, signed by the applicant, and shall be in such form and contain such requirements as the Management Committee from time to time prescribe.	Clause renumbering.
	(c) As soon as practicable after the receipt of an application for membership, it shall be considered by the Management Committee who shall thereupon determine upon the admission or rejection of the applicant. In no case shall the Management Committee be required to give any reason for the rejection of an applicant.	(d) As soon as practicable after the receipt of an application for membership, it shall be considered by the Management Committee who shall thereupon determine upon the admission or rejection of the applicant. In no case shall the Management Committee be required to give any reason for the rejection of an applicant.	
	(d) There may be Life Members. The criteria for Life Membership are to be found in Rule 29	(e) There may be honorary Life Members. The criteria for Life Membership are to be found in Rule 29	Tidy up wording.
	(e) A Register of Members shall be kept, in electronic or traditional form. The register shall include, at least, each member's name, address and the date of commencement of membership.	(f) A register of members shall be kept. The register shall include, at least, each member's name, address and the date of commencement of membership.	Allow for computer record keeping, and Privacy requirements.
	(f) The details in the Register of Members shall remain confidential to members of the Management Committee, except as provided in clause 4(c).		
	(g) Members (but not Life Members) shall pay a membership fee. The fee shall be determined at a Special General Meeting or an Annual General Meeting and shall remain in force until varied by a subsequent Special General Meeting or Annual General Meeting.	(g) Members shall pay an annual fee. The fee shall be determined at a Special General Meeting or an Annual General Meeting and shall remain in force until varied by a subsequent Special General Meeting or Annual General Meeting.	Removal of "annual" fee, plus exempt Life Members from fees.
	(h) A member shall cease to be a member upon resignation, death, expulsion or failure to pay their fees within two months of the due date.		Define when a Member ceases to be a member. Needed for Public Liability Insurance reasons.

# BMCS PROPOSED CONSTITUTION CHANGES – NOVEMBER 2004

CL #	PROPOSED WORDING	EXISTING WORDING	REASON FOR CHANGE
4	<p><b>4 MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>(a) The management of the Society shall be vested in a Management Committee consisting of at least nine members.</p> <p>(b) No member of the Management Committee shall be appointed to any salaried office of the Society or any office of the Society paid by fees. No remuneration or other benefit in money or moneys worth shall be given by the Society to any member of the Management Committee, except repayment of out-of-pocket expenses, interest at a rate not exceeding interest at the rate for the time being charged by Bankers in Sydney for money lent to the Society, and reasonable and proper rent for premises let to the Society.</p> <p>(c) The names, telephone numbers and email addresses of members of the Management Committee may be published in the Society's newsletter and website.</p>	<p><b>4 MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>The management of the Society shall be vested in a Management Committee consisting of at least nine members.</p> <p>No member of the Management Committee shall be appointed to any salaried office of the Society or any office of the Society paid by fees. No remuneration or other benefit in money or moneys worth shall be given by the Society to any member of the Management Committee, except repayment of out-of-pocket expenses, interest at a rate not exceeding interest at the rate for the time being charged by Bankers in Sydney for money lent to the Society, and reasonable and proper rent for premises let to the Society.</p>	<p>Subdivide clause for readability purposes.</p> <p>New clauses (a) and (b) are unchanged.</p> <p>Clause (c) provides for restricted publication of membership data.</p>
12(f)	<p><b>12 PROCEEDING AT GENERAL MEETINGS</b></p> <p>(f) Each member (over 16 years of age) present voting at a General Meeting of the Society shall have one vote. In addition, the member can vote on behalf of absent members (over 16 years of age), as set out in Rule 22.</p>	<p><b>12 PROCEEDING AT GENERAL MEETINGS</b></p> <p>(f) Each member present and voting at a general meeting of the Society shall have one vote. In addition, the member can vote on behalf of absent members, as set out in Rule 22.</p>	<p>Clauses 12(a) to 12(e) unchanged.</p> <p>Voting is restricted to members over 16 years of age.</p>
12(g)	<p>(g) Incorporated Organisations shall have no voting rights at General Meetings of the Society.</p>		<p>No voting rights for Incorporated Members</p>
14.2	<p><b>14.2 THE GENERAL FUND</b></p> <p>(a) The Society shall have a General Fund for all activities not covered by Clause 14.1 above.</p> <p>(b) Payments required by Trading Entities owned by the Society may be made out of the proceeds of the Trading Entity provided that such arrangements have been approved in advance by the Management Committee.</p>	<p><b>14.2 THE GENERAL FUND</b></p> <p>(a) The Society shall have a General Fund for all activities not covered by Clause 14.1 above.</p>	<p>Clause (a) is unchanged.</p> <p>The nursery has to buy petrol, and other miscellaneous items without having to get a cheque from the Treasurer.</p>



# BMCS PROPOSED CONSTITUTION CHANGES – NOVEMBER 2004

CL #

## PROPOSED WORDING

## EXISTING WORDING

## REASON FOR CHANGE

14.2(c)

(c) All other payments made by the Society from its General Fund shall be made by cheque signed by any two of the President, Treasurer and a third person (who shall be a member of the Management Committee) appointed by the Management Committee. This latter appointment shall expire at the first meeting of the Management Committee following each Annual General Meeting.

(b) All payments made by the Society from its General Fund shall be made by cheque signed by any two of the President, Secretary and Treasurer.

The third Cheque Signatory needs to be able to be varied by the Management Committee from time to time – eg, when one signatory is overseas for a protracted period.

21

## 21 NOTICE TO MEMBERS

(a) A notice may be given to any member either personally or by sending it by post or email to the member at the member's postal or email address registered with the Society.

(b) Where a notice is sent by post or email, service of the notice shall be deemed to be affected two working days after the notice has been posted or emailed.

## 21 NOTICES TO MEMBERS

A notice may be given to any member either personally or by sending it by post to the member at the member's address registered with the Society or, if the member has no registered address, to the place of abode of the member last known to the Management Committee. Where a notice is sent by post, service of the notice shall be deemed to be affected by properly addressing, prepaying and posting a letter or an envelope containing the notice and to have been effected in the case of the notice of a meeting, on the day after the date of its posting and in any other case the time at which the letter would be delivered in the ordinary course of post.

Simplify wording.  
Provide for electronic communication.

26

## 26 CUSTODY OF BOOKS

The Management Committee shall prepare, and keep up to date, a schedule of the Society's records, their location, and the persons responsible for their custody.

**26 CUSTODY OF BOOKS**  
The Public Officer and Secretary shall have joint responsibility for the safe custody and control of all records, books and other documents relating to the Society.

Recognise the dispersed location and custody of the Society's records.

30

## 30 BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

(a) The Society's bushwalking activities shall take place under the umbrella of the Society's Bushwalking Group, known as the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Bushwalking Group.

(b) Members who participate in the Society's Bushwalking Group may be required to pay an additional membership fee to cover the cost of Public Liability Insurance for the Society's bushwalking activities.

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Break into sub-clauses for clarification

(c) Rules for the conduct of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Bushwalking Group shall be determined by the Society's Management Committee.

Remove uncertainty about management of Bushwalking activities.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Wherever the word "Secretary" appears, replace it with the words "Meetings Secretary".

We have not had a Secretary for some years.