



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

THREATENED SPECIES DAY 2018



Speakers, all experts in their field, will include:
Margaret Baker: Silver-leaved Mountain Gum
Doug Benson: Deane's Boronia
Jim Low: Thylacine and Wollemi Pine songs
Akos Lumnitzer: Photography and threatened owls
Kalang Morrison-Jones: Threatened gliders
Carol Proberts: Regent Honeyeater
Kate Smith: Art and threatened species
Haydn Washington: Poetry and Mt Vincent Mint-bush
Vera Wong & Michaela Jones: NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service 'Save Our Species' perspective
Wyn Jones: Where to now?

Date: Saturday 8 September 2018

Time: 9.30am registration (tea/coffee), talks to start at 10 am, finish 3pm

Venue: Wentworth Falls School of Arts, cnr GWH and Adele Street (opposite Falls Road)

More information: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/tsd-2018.shtml>

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is marking Threatened Species Day 2018 with a day of talks, songs, poetry and discussion with some of our renowned and highly respected local conservationists. Our theme for the day is

Threatened Species in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area – what do they mean to me?

The day will focus on our own backyard, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. This vast area, one third the size of Belgium, is blessed with natural values that are outstanding at international level. The many threatened species (around 70 animals and over 100 plants) in the area are an integral part of these natural values. Speakers for the day will tell us about selected plants and animals and what threatened species mean to them.

The number of threatened species in the World Heritage Area is steadily increasing. This is not something to boast about. How do we reverse this trend which, unfortunately, is in keeping with the current Australia-wide pattern of species decline? Some species, such as the White-footed Rabbit-rat, Smoky Mouse and bettongs,

have long gone from the area. But, thirty years ago, who would have thought that the iconic Gang-gang Cockatoo and Greater Glider would be disappearing on our watch? Is there, as asked by one of our speakers, Haydn Washington, an 'extinction of caring'?

We hope that you will join us for Threatened Species Day, learn a little about our local threatened species, and think about what threatened species mean to you.

A simple morning tea and lunch will be provided.

This is a free event but we would appreciate attendees registering their interest. Go to <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/tsd-2018.shtml> and click on **EventBrite**. Judy Smith, Threatened Species Officer

Images: Sooty Owl—drawing by Kate Smith: Regent Honeyeater and Wollemi Pine—photos by Peter Smith



"Hut News", the newsletter of
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782
Phone 4757 1872 (leave message)
Email: bmcns@bluemountains.org.au
Web page: www.bluemountains.org.au
Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation
Society Twitter: bmcnsnw

President: Madi Maclean 0412 428 202
president@bluemountains.org.au
Senior Vice President: Tara Cameron
0419 824 974 taracameron4@gmail.com
Second Vice President:
Don Morison 8230 2116
donmorison@bluemountains.org.au
Treasurer: Elizabeth Howard 0414 090251
eh.mistover@bigpond.com
Administration Officer: Jeanette Robertson
sao@bluemountains.org.au
Bushcare Officer: Paul Vale
4787 8080 0429 014 454
bushcare@bluemountains.org.au
Environmental Education Officer:
Valda Low
valda@mountaintracks.com.au
Events Coordinator:
Phoebe Coster 0408 223 843
Phoebe@coster.com.au
Landuse Officer:
Angela Langdon 0417 004 722
landuse@bluemountains.org.au
Meetings Secretary: Heather Hull
4739 1493 hhull001@bigpond.net.au
Membership Secretary: Ross Coster
4739 2987 0418 462 576
membership@bluemountains.org.au
National Parks/World Heritage Officer:
Lachlan Garland 0415 317 078
npwho@bluemountains.org.au
Newsletter Editor:
Christine Davies 4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
Nursery Manager: Hugh Brougham
0407 955 028
nursery@bluemountains.org.au
Publicity Officer: Annette Coulter
contact details to be advised
Sustainability Officer: Clare Power
sustain@bluemountains.org.au
Threatened Species Officer:
Judy Smith smitheco@ozemail.com.au
Website Manager: Alan Page
leuralan@hotmail.com
Walks Convenor:
Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942
mauricekerkham@hotmail.com
Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson
4751.2303, mob 0427 512 303
fmatter@bigpond.net.au

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Threatened Species Day Event Saturday the 8th September 2018 Wentworth Falls School of Arts **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Please email me at Phoebe@coster.com.au to register and talk about how you may be part of this exciting event or call me on 0408 223 843.
Phoebe (Heather) Coster



Celebrating the Plateau in verse

The splendour of Radiata (Elphinstone) Plateau will be celebrated this month with the launch of a new video featuring local poet and botanist Wyn Jones reciting *Elphinstone - Leave Alone*, his poignant poem about the history of the Plateau. Wyn's reading is accompanied by dramatic aerial footage of the Plateau.

As we continue to campaign and seek protection of this important place, Wyn celebrates the majesty and solitude of the Plateau whilst pondering the "unnamed feet" that have passed over it and wondering why we can't "feel and meditate" in "places clean, unclad, uncluttered".

Written when the first large development was proposed on the Plateau back in the 1990s, the poem talks of the "ephemeral wayfarers" and their failed ventures on the Plateau.

The Society remains committed to seeing the Plateau protected. We are continuing our campaign with the local community, including liaising with local politicians, government and the Plateau's owners to ensure this is conserved.

For more information about the campaign and to see the new video, please visit <https://bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplateauwild>

The **DEADLINE** for the next issue of HUT NEWS is
18 AUGUST 2018

Christine Davies, 4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Ross Coster
02 4739 2987 0418 462 576
membership@bluemountains.org.au

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

We offer the home gardener, landscaper or contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

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. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries: Hugh Brougham 0407 955 028 or Sue Nicol 0457 140 905
nursery@bluemountains.org.au

Bushland Protection Workshop

Over 40 people braved the cold to attend the Blue Mountains Conservation Society's July workshop on Bushland Protection laws and codes. Participants were capably informed on the topic by environmental solicitor, Jemilah Hallinan (photographed below), from the Environmental Defenders Office.



It was explained that there is now a highly complex set of laws and codes relating to, but not necessarily regulating, land clearing in New South Wales [*Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, the *Local Land Services Amendment Act 2016* and the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Vegetation in Non-Rural Areas) 2017*]. It is evident that decisions about biodiversity survival are being made without the completion of important

supporting structures such as accurate maps detailing what can and can't be cleared, and assessment personnel and panels. Of concern is the apparent secrecy that has been built into the legislation; it is aimed to protect the privacy of those wanting to clear land and to provide little information to other landowners and affected parties even to the point of not allowing them to comment on planned works or to appeal about land clearing decisions. Of great concern is the knowledge that threatened species and communities, apart from those that are critically endangered, now have no protection under the new legislation. Their possible destruction will now be assessed by the Development Application process.

It is now very difficult for most people to work out exactly what is legal and which government agency should be doing something to stop or prosecute developers and property owners who may be carrying out unlawful activities such as cutting down trees in residential areas or removing large areas of native communities. However it is still worth reporting any activity that may potentially be unlawful to the Blue Mountains City Council and also to the Office of Environment and Heritage, particularly if threatened species or communities appear to be involved.

The basic message for those wishing to take action when you see suspicious bushland removal, whether it is a single tree or broad acreage clearing, is to:

1. **Document** what you see especially the date, time and location; include photographs of the activity (though don't trespass on the property). Photos of workers and trade names on vehicles can be useful.
2. **Report** the incident immediately whatever the day or time to both the local council – Blue Mountains City Council (4723 5000 from the lower mountains or 4780 5000 from the upper mountains; or email council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au) – and to the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage's Environment Line (131 555) or at info@environment.nsw.gov.au. Get a reference number for your reported incident.



3. **Follow up** your phone call with a written statement, quote the reference number and request that you be informed of any action being taken or reasons for a decision not to act. Then mail or email your statement. Remember to ring back to check on any action.

A detailed step by step guide to incident reporting and other actions that you can take will be available on the BMCS website (in the 'Planning and Development Resource Kit') in a few weeks. In the meantime fact sheets are available on the Environmental Defenders Office website (www.edonsw.org.au) and there is a copy of the EDO's workshop presentation on the BMCS website: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/meetings/edo-bushland-protection-presentation-14jul18.pdf>

The meeting also learned about a court challenge to the legislation by the EDO and a campaign being spearheaded by the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (www.nature.org.au) to strengthen the state laws to protect native vegetation, and repeal the codes that make it very easy to legally destroy biodiversity. More details are available on their respective websites where you will also find the links to assist in fundraising for these challenges and campaigns.

Thank you to Lyndal Sullivan for her excellent organisation of this workshop and to members of the Society who assisted in various ways on the day.

New volunteers welcome BMCS native plant nursery

Our Blackheath nursery is back in action after the winter break, with volunteers returning to work and our first markets at Blackheath on 5 August and Lawson Magpie Market on 19 August. There is plenty to do—potting new seedlings and cuttings, planting seeds, helping at the markets, repairing and maintaining the shadehouse and glasshouse.

With the start of a new season, now would be a good time to join us as a volunteer. If you are interested in native plants, would like to learn more, and have a morning to spare, then come along. We would love to see you.

Phone Sue Nicol, 0457 140 905

Greater Blue Mountains can star in Rail Route Renaissance

An opinion piece by Don Morison

“Rail trails are an innovative use of disused rail lines that can generate substantial economic and social benefits for local communities, helping to unlock their potential, including through stimulating tourism and improving the physical and mental health of users.” Andrew Constance, NSW Transport Minister.

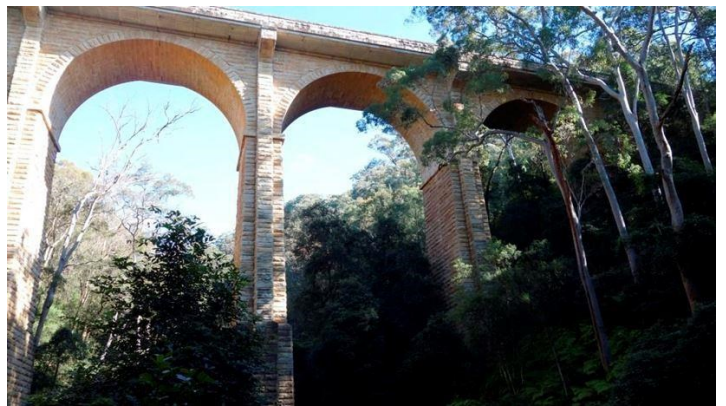
This is valuable support for a Victoria and New Zealand innovation of recent decades. Routes have been mentioned in NSW, including in the Monaro region, from Goulburn to Crookwell and the substantial Casino to Murwillumbah rail corridor. Rail land that has become surplus due to reduced or discontinued rail traffic has the potential for recreational and environmentally educational trail establishment, for eradication of weed sources and planting of native vegetation, for establishment of wildlife corridors and nesting boxes, etc.

The 22 km Rosewood to Tumbarumba route “will become NSW’s first rail trail”. That’s a great achievement, but let’s not ignore the long established Oberon and Hazelgrove route. This provides a cycling and walking route parallel to the retained railway tracks where a tourist train could operate compatibly with the rail trail in the future. A network extension through the scenic bushland around Hazelgrove would be welcome.

The Blue Trail concept described in Hut News would be boosted by better public access to the old railway corridor between Blackheath and Mount Victoria, while both that section and the emerging opportunities between Glenbrook and Penrith are relevant to the Great Western Trail concept promoted by Wyn Jones and David Goldney.

Walking or cycling along various sections of a gentle slope between Glenbrook and Penrith is an ecofriendly idea, especially with the “Active Transport” bridge opening this year. This is a totally different notion to the environmentally unfriendly downhill use of mountain bikes. The use of bicycles on already sealed surfaces for commuting or recreation is responsible.

Knapsack Viaduct, which has borne both the railway and the highway during periods since its construction in the 1860s, is an architecturally beautiful item well fitted to attract more pedestrians and cyclists. If enough funds



(continued on page 5)



Greater Blue Mountains can star in rail route renaissance (continued from page 4)

are provided to clean out the 1892-1913 Glenbrook railway tunnel, future access for pedestrians and cyclists is conceivable.

The outskirts of Lithgow are rich in their varied ecosystems, pagoda geology and historic structures. Weed-free off-road trails have the potential to enhance visitors' appreciation of this area. Under-utilised rail corridors such as the State Mine Gully route (pictured) could be important to this.

The Newnes Junction to Newnes shale tramway was never built as a permanent installation. Crudely constructed in 1908, its last rails were levered up during World War 2. Restoration of it would necessitate major erosion control works at numerous locations where soil embankments were constructed with no culverts. The section from the southern tunnel (near the northern end of the Glow-worm Tunnel Road) through the main Glow-worm Tunnel to Newnes "ghost town" is already attracting many visitors and has future tourism potential.

With cooperation between all of the community groups and levels of government involved, the Greater Blue Mountains is very well placed to have a major role in the railway route renaissance dawning in NSW.

IMAGES (clockwise on pages from top)

Eastern portal of the 1892 railway tunnel between modern-day Lapstone and Glenbrook. *Courtesy Glenbrook Historical Society from Trish Doyle's office 2016.*

Engineer John Whitton's majestic 1860s Knapsack Viaduct first carried the railway, then the Great Western Highway, and could have an expanded role for cyclists and pedestrians. *Denis Bainbridge, Glenbrook Historical Society.*

A stand of tree ferns in Tunnel Creek Canyon viewed from inside the northern portal of the main (north) Glow Worm Tunnel. From this point to old Newnes Village is a potentially outstanding rail trail. *Sardaka 2015, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:\(1\)Glowworm_Tunnel-7.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:(1)Glowworm_Tunnel-7.jpg)*

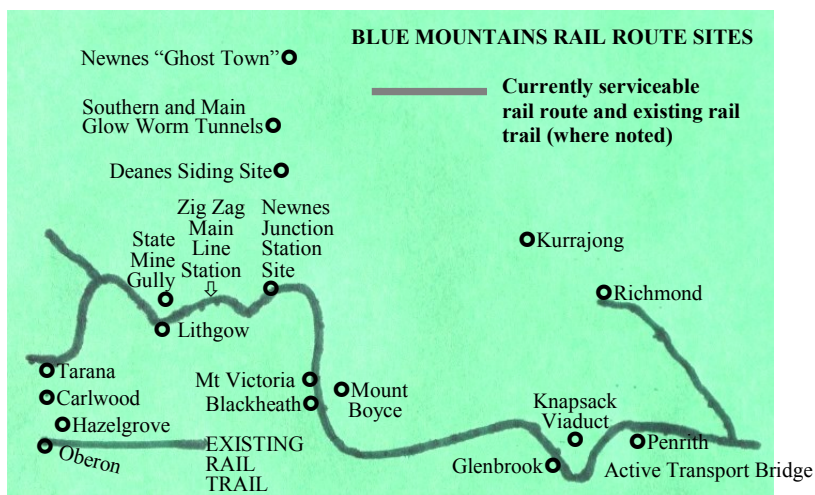
The Nepean River "Active Transport Bridge" is set to open to cyclists and pedestrians this year and could operate as part of the "Great Western Walk" and as a boost to the rail trail culture. *Denis Bainbridge, Glenbrook Historical Society.*

An earlier railway cutting seen to the right of the existing rail route, north of Mount Boyce. *Don Morison.*

Pagoda and old rail infrastructure on the outskirts of Lithgow (State Mine Gully line). *Christine Davies.*

Sketch map by Don Morison.

"A long wait for a train at Jincumbilly Station". These donkeys reside between Cooma and Bombala and support the recycling of under-utilised rail infrastructure. *Christine Davies*



Threats to World Heritage—IUCN on the case Ross Coster

On the evening of 19th June 2018 I had a Skype video meeting with a staffer from the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). He had contacted me after anti-airport groups (BMCS, RAWSA and NoBCA) had sent a barrage of e-mail (generated by a Web Form) to IUCN asking them to take a stand against the proposed Western Sydney Airport. The meeting was friendly, courteous and informative.

The IUCN staffer outlined what IUCN does:

- They advise the World Heritage Committee when a new property is proposed for World Heritage Listing on *Natural* grounds
- They have a mandate to *reactively monitor* all World Heritage properties to ensure that *Natural* values are not being compromised
- All World Heritage properties are listed based on their 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV) which means they must meet at least one of ten criteria (four of which are natural criteria), as well as conditions of integrity, and they need to have adequate protection and management in place
- The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA) is listed based on the OUV of 'Eucalypt Biodiversity' under criterion (x) – habitat for endangered species, that is we have an outstanding diversity of Eucalypt species, some of them unique to the GBMWhA
- In addition the GBMWhA is listed under criterion (ix) – ecological processes – so wider ecosystem values also come into play (this may be important in terms of indirect edge effects associated to the developments outside the property, such as the airport)
- If IUCN believes that the OUV of a World Heritage property is threatened, they will:

- Consult with the relevant government to try and resolve the issue
- Advise the World Heritage Committee if action is required

To get IUCN and/or the World Heritage Committee to intervene, we need to prove a link between the proposed airport and potential damage to Eucalypt biodiversity or wider ecological processes

The obvious links we can make are as follows:

- Overflight noise will impact birds, probably reduce their numbers and alter their movement patterns, therefore effecting Eucalypt pollination
- Fuel residues, particulate pollution, air pollution, fuel dumping and plane crashes all pose unknown threats to Eucalypt Biodiversity
- An airport 10km from the edge of the GBMWhA increases the risk of diseases, pathogens and pests escaping from the Airport and invading the GBMWhA

We recognize that these links are tenuous. I was asked to provide papers establishing these links.

The Howard government abandoned plans to build an airport at Badgerys Creek in March 2000. In the same year, the Greater Blue Mountains was inscribed on the World Heritage list. This piece of text from IUCN in the section on integrity in the GBMWhA Statement of

Outstanding Universal Value (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/917>) is of particular interest:

Additional regulatory mechanisms, such as the statutory wilderness designation of 65% of the property, the closed and protected catchment for the Warragamba Dam and additions to the conservation reserves that comprise the area further protect the integrity of the GBMA. Since listing, proposals for a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek, adjacent to the GBMA, have been abandoned.

This passage is significant as it clearly indicates that both Warragamba Dam and Badgerys Creek Airport could represent concerns for the conditions of integrity of the property.

I have sent him our submission to the Western Sydney Airport Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and he has asked me for additional information in several items in that document.

I have since sent him:

- The Biosecurity Impact on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area from constructing Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek by Chris Whiteman
 - Negative Impacts of Traffic Noise on Avian Reproductive Success by Wouter Halfwerk, Leonard J. M. Holleman, C(Kate). M. Lessells and Hans Slabbekoorn
 - The Effect Of Noise On Wildlife: A Literature Review by Autumn Lyn Radle
 - Noise Pollution Alters Ecological Services: Enhanced Pollination And Disrupted Seed Dispersal by Clinton D. Francis, Nathan J. Kleist, Catherine P. Ortega and Alexander Cruz
- We also discussed several other threats to Biodiversity in general, not related to Eucalypt Biodiversity, including:
- Impacts in listed Wilderness areas, which are not supposed to suffer impacts from machines
 - Potential culling and relocating of birds and bats to avoid impact with aircraft
 - Noise impacts on communities
 - Unknown flight paths making it difficult to assess impacts

We also discussed the campaign by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness against the raising of Warragamba Dam. Colong has since sent Bob Debus and Harry Burkitt to present to the World Heritage Committee meeting in Bahrain.

So after years of letters to them, the IUCN and the World Heritage Committee are finally interested in Warragamba Dam and Western Sydney Airport.

I will be presenting to the Blue Mountains World Heritage Advisory board at Penrith in August along similar lines.

I will advise you all in due course of any progress made.

Ross Coster

Convenor – No Western Sydney Airport Sub-Committee
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Going out on a limb by Clare Power

I'm writing this piece knowing that wood heating raises a number of environmental and health concerns and at this time of year wood heaters contribute to fine particle pollution and subsequent adverse health impacts. I realise that this is a very fraught and complex topic characterised by many different perspectives, and many people choose not to have wood heating in their homes.

Nevertheless many people in the Blue Mountains use some form of wood based heating and, as one of these people, I am concerned that the wood I am burning this year comes all the way from Queensland. A representative of one of the firewood companies in the mountains told me that their wood comes from farms in western Queensland. Once wood is totally removed from the land it is then used for grazing. The wood is transported well over 1000 kilometres to the Blue Mountains. As well as transport issues and contributions to carbon emissions, the removal of firewood decreases habitat and biodiversity. Much firewood in Australia comes from private land. Another alternative is for individuals is to get permits to collect their own fallen wood from State forests.

As part of the heating energy mix it seems incumbent on communities to take responsibility for their own provision of firewood rather than scouring wood from other communities hundreds of miles away. I've wondered for some time about the viability of community firewood plantations and have found it difficult to find much information about this in the Australian context. Within permaculture design, farms and communities grow their own woodlot. I wonder whether this is a viable option for the Blue Mountains.

An example of a community forest can be seen in Violet Town in north eastern Victoria. Community volunteers have planted an 8.3 ha mixed species forest since 2006 to provide firewood and other wood products in the future. According to the information on the Violet Town website, 'This forest has been planned as a mixed species productive forest to grow firewood, posts, poles and sawlogs for the community, and to be a forage resource for beekeepers in the town. The better formed trees will be kept to grow on as sawlogs. The forest will never be clear-felled, just selectively harvested and always with the long term continual improvement of the forest in mind'. The forest also includes many local understorey species and is designed to eventually mimic the structure and functions of a natural forest. Food for thought for the mountains perhaps? And of course I'm not suggesting the national park is encroached on in any way.



Images:

Preparing for planting; Part of the Shadforth Reserve. DJP Aug 2005, <https://www.violettown.org.au/environment/community-forest>

Despite all the attractions which urge us to make our homes in the Blue Mountains, it is cold in the winter. Until energy for heating can be obtained from wind or solar or other sustainable sources, we need to choose between freezing, going north for the winter, or using electricity, gas and firewood to heat our homes. If we use firewood, we want the source of the wood we burn to be sustainable and to choose quality firewood which will burn cleanly to cause less pollution. The following article might also be of interest to Hut News readers. Editor.

Organic Gardener Magazine

Sustainable firewood

By: [Justin Russell](#) | July 18, 2013

Like most of my neighbours I heat my home with wood. We have a slow combustion heater that does a decent job of keeping us warm on sub-zero nights, and we do our best to keep the fire burning as efficiently as possible. But I have to admit, getting quality fuel for the heater is an ongoing concern.

It's not that there's a shortage of fallen trees around the place. There's plenty to go around and still leave some for wildlife habitat. The problem is that none of them are on my block, and I'm reluctant to spend \$120 a pop every few weeks on a smallish load of poorly seasoned firewood. Thankfully, a couple of newcomers to the district have offered to help us out. The only issue now is gathering the right kind of timber, and seasoning properly. These two elements are the key to efficient wood heating, which when done properly, can be greenhouse neutral.

We generally burn either eucalypt or wattle. The latter is pretty good, and ironbark is probably the pick of the former. It burns hot and long when properly seasoned, which in my books, means storage as spilt wood, in a dry place for a least a year before burning. Wattle is handy because it's a "live fast die young tree" that in my parts is annoyingly weedy.

But neither wattle nor ironbark is a match for the exotic ash tree, *Fraxinus*. An old saying goes something like this: "Seer or green ash is fit for a queen". I thought it was a bit of a joke, the idea that you could burn ash timber either seasoned (seer) or green, so I did a test. I cut some limbs from an evergreen ash (*Fraxinus griffithii*) growing in the garden and threw the timber on a hot fire. Lo and behold, the unseasoned ash burned beautifully, producing plenty of heat and wonderful coals. I now regularly cut pieces from the tree to use as kindling, but my long term firewood plan is to plant an ash woodland comprising a mix of species such as Claret Ash (*Fraxinus anugustifolia*), English Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Desert Ash (*Fraxinus oxycarpa*). I'll use the fallen leaves on my compost, and will coppice the trees on a rotational basis.

My woodland will yield an endless supply of timber for poles and other fencing, but most importantly a source of clean burning, highly sustainable heating fuel. I just need to find a supplier of seedling ash trees, and a spare acre or two on which to plant them (hence the reason it's a long term plan). I may not be a queen, but ash is well and truly fit for my purposes.

AH, BROTHER, HAVE YOU ANY SACRED SITES? by Denis Kevans

Ah, brother, I am searching for the sites, sacred to you,
Where you walk, in silent worship, and you whisper poems, too,
Where you tread, like me, in wonder, and your eyes are filled with
tears,
And you see the tracks you've travelled down your fifty thousand
years.

I am searching round Australia, I am searching, night and day,
For a site, to you so sacred that you won't give it away
For a bit of coloured paper, say a Church you're knocking down,
Or the Rocks, your nation's birthplace, by the Bridge, in Sydney Town.

Your cathedrals I have entered, I have seen the empty aisles
Where a few knelt down in sorrow, where were all the children's
smiles?

Big cathedrals, full of beauty, opal glass, and gleaming gold,
And an old man, in an overcoat, who had crept in from the cold.

Your schools, I drifted through them, heard the sound of swishing
canes,
Heard the yell of angry teachers crushing flowers in their brains,
Heard the bark up on the rostrum where the powers had their say,
Wouldn't children's hearts be sacred, though they're made, like mine,
of clay?

Where's your wonder? Where's your worship? Where's your sense
of holy awe?
When I see those little children torn apart by fear of war,
What is sacred to you, brother, what is sacred to your clan?
Are your totems rainbow-feathered? Is there dreaming in you, man?

Sacred ... sacred ... sacred ... gee you chuck that word about,
And when echoes answer sacred ... sacred louder still you shout,
And the echoes come in patterns, and then, louder, every one
Till they meet, like waves together, and go bang! just like a gun.

Sacred ... hesitating ... now, a film is reeling through
My brain, and through my memory, of our sacred rendez-vous,
Of our meeting, of our parting, of my tears, as sweet as ice,
Of my numb incomprehension of a shattered paradise.

Sacred, oh so sacred, was our sacred rendez-vous,
And your ferocious anger when you found we weren't like you,
But if I should make an act of faith, in a voice, both firm and clear,
That there's something sacred to me, you start drowning in your beer.

What is sacred to you, brother, what is sacred to your heart?
Is Australia just a quarry for the bauxite belts to start?
Where the forests are forgotten, and the tinkling of the bell
Of the bell-bird in the mountains, is just something more to sell?

Ah, brother, I am searching for the sites, sacred to you,
But the rivers, clear as crystal, smell like sewerfulls of spew
From the pipe and pump polluters, and the nukes that fleck the foam,
Would you let a man, with dirty boots, go walking through your home?

Sacred means that ... sacred ... it's a place where spirits rise,
With the rainbow wings of sunset, on the edge of paradise,
Sacred ... that's my father, that's my mother, that's my son,
Sacred ... where the dreaming whispers hope for everyone.

In the silence of the grottoes of Australia's mighty land,
Stand together with the kooris, stand together, hand in hand,
Open eyes to endless beauty, and to spirits, far and near,
For Australia is my country, it is sacred to me here.

Ah, brother, I am searching for the sites, sacred to you,
Where you walk, in silent worship, and you whisper poems, too,
Where you tread, like me, in wonder, and your eyes are filled with
tears,
And you see the tracks you've travelled down your fifty thousand
years.

(Originally published as "Ah, White Man ...", Denis later changed
the title to "Ah, Brother ...")

A walk with Denis Kevans

In August 1997 Denis Kevans walked with us to Walls
Cave. Bushwalkers were delighted. I can picture him
standing on the little wooden bridge along the way,
reciting poetry which he composed on the spot.

Here is my written description of the walk at that time:

*Such a lovely month, August 1997, with a succession
of frosty nights followed by balmy days with clear blue
skies. Near the beginning of the month, I led a walk to
Walls Cave, a delightful walk with bright golden
Sunshine Wattle scattered through the woodland,
banksias dripping nectar, and birds, hundreds of them!*

*On a sandy beach near Walls Cave, Denis Kevans
recited his poem "Ah, White Man, Have You Any
Sacred Sites", and, as he spoke, his voice echoed in
the cave, coming back to us, like murmurs of
agreement from the Ancients.*

Christine Davies.

PARRAMATTA RIVER

The Councillor spoke with conviction,
Like a preacher from a Hollywood missionate,
"The Parramatta River isn't dirty,
The problem is all these dead fish in it."

THE TRUTH

The truth is our greatest weapon,
Believe lies, and your brains will decay,
Try to find the truth, try to find the reason,
Try to find the truth everyday.

SOME FOOL SPEAKS

We had many quotes from Old Charlie,
But one had us laughing for weeks.
He says to the whole school assembly,
"Every time I open my mouth some fool speaks."

(Just a few of Denis Kevans' "300 Funny Little
Poems", published 1998)

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION
SOCIETY www.bluemountains.org.au**

'Like' us on Facebook:

Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Follow us on Twitter: [bmcnsnw](https://twitter.com/bmcnsnw)

Stand Against Extinction Rally

Monday, 10 September 2018

Lawns of Parliament House, Canberra

Australia is facing a national extinction crisis and our environment laws are broken. But it doesn't have to be this way... With stronger laws to protect species and their habitat and more resources to invest in recovery and restoration, we can bring our threatened species and ecosystems back from the brink.

We need to send a powerful message to our politicians...Join us in Canberra on 10th September 2018 and take a stand against extinction.

Go to <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/places-you-love-8945130650> for more information and to register your interest in attending this free event.

Organised by the 'Places You Love Alliance' which represents the biggest collaboration of 42 peak and local groups across Australia and over 1.5 million Australians with a shared vision to build a powerful voice of people to ensure the protection of the places and people we love!



Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

The Visitors Map is full of suggested walks and trips. It is in full colour, 60 by 85 cm in size, and covers the entire Gardens of Stone region at a 1:100,000 scale, making it ideal for planning your next trip to the area. You can buy a map on the society's website at www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS_VisitorsMap.htm

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 \$35 Concession (Senior/Student)\$25

Household \$40 Household Concession \$30

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add
\$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$.....

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box ☐ mail ☐ internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline):

Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

BMCS Planning & Development Resource Kit

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

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

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

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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

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

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

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

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

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".

A walk in the Gardens Christine Davies



Recently I had my first "bushwalk" in several months, at Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens. There is a lot of work being done in preparation for spring. First things first! We celebrated a friend's 80th birthday with cake and champagne and were joined by a brush turkey and a raven who were eager to participate in the celebration. A dispute between them saw the raven threatening with wings spread and the turkey escaping in a blur of feathers.

We were interested to see that a group of small Wollemi Pines near the formal gardens had roundish female cones on the upper branches and some also narrow male cones on the lower branches.

Bushwalkers stopped twice to watch Bassian Thrushes, sometimes referred to as the Ground Thrush, scratching for insects—the first accompanied by a White-throated Scrubwren which darted in to snatch smaller insects which the thrush had unearthed, the other accompanied by a Yellow-throated Scrubwren doing the same. Numerous blue (and jenny) wrens were among other birds seen.

We met Blue Mountains artist Glenice Ware whose exhibition "Landlines and Ancient Wanderers" was on display in the Tomah visitors centre. Glenice told us that her work had been inspired by time spent in Broken Hill and pointed out how she had used some of the outback's earth to colour her paintings. The exhibition has finished now, but do watch out for Glenice's work in other locations.



The raven is the victor!

Help Fix NSW Transport City Lantern Walk

Saturday, 11th August 2018

5.30 pm—7.30 pm at Sydney Town Hall

(<https://www.facebook.com/events/184634588836161/>)

51. COLLITTS INN, Hartley Vale

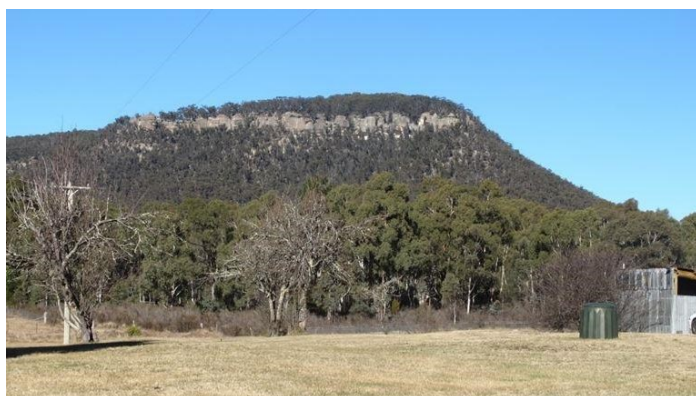
Collitts Inn, built in 1823, just two years after the departure of Lachlan Macquarie, is the oldest non-indigenous Australian structure west of the Blue Mountains. It serviced the road from Emu Ford on the Nepean River to the Bathurst Plains which descended from the location now known as Mount York lookout via the Coss Road and then turned in a westward direction towards the location now known as Hartley Historic Village.

In the same year it was built, 19 year old Archibald Bell Jnr was assisting his father to farm land near Bilpin and the young man befriended local indigenous people. Using his new friends' guidance, young Archibald was able to follow a route past Mount Tomah to modern-day Bell, turn southward onto the ridge now known as Darling Causeway, and find the westward sloping gully that took him to Collitts Inn. Thus, he became the first non-indigenous person to prove that the Blue Mountains could be crossed by the route to be named "Bells Line of Road".

Pierce and Mary Collitts had been married in England in 1795 but in 1800 Pierce was convicted of receiving stolen goods and transported to New South Wales for 14 years, a sentence carried out with Pierce's family accompanying him. He was to be effectively released in 1811. The family established themselves as respectable landholders in the Penrith, Prospect and Castlereagh areas before moving inland and building Collitts Inn. It was first known as the Golden Fleece, then the Royal Garter.

Pierce and Mary had nine children. The most high profile was Amelia, subject of the musical play, "Collitts Inn", written in the 1930s. This play chronicles the events that led to Amelia's marriage to John Skeen. Amelia and John are the ancestors of numerous people who reside in the Blue Mountains today. William Collitts was regarded by Pierce as an "idiot son". The tragic death of William's young wife Caroline on the road near Mount Victoria was referred to in Blue Trail number 46.

Pierce, Mary and John Skeen are all buried in Hartley Vale cemetery, accessed off Fields Road, around the corner from the inn. Today, Collitts Inn is a wedding and function venue.



Images (from top of page):

Some of the earliest colonial structures in NSW may never be surpassed for their aesthetics.

An outbuilding of Collitts Inn is overshadowed by the sandstone promontory of Mount York.

A modern day custodian of Collitts Inn is proud to be safeguarding a piece of history.

Photographs by Christine Davies

Sections of the Blue Trail featuring the western Blue Mountains can be found in past issues of Hut News:

<https://www.bluemountains.org.au/hutnews.shtml>

The full Blue Trail is being added at <http://www.simplyaustralia.com.au/category/blue-trail/>



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.

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am - noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.

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 Harold Thompson harold.thompson@bigpond.com 6355 1762 or mobile 0409 010 737

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)

- Aug 11 **Empire Pass and Echo Point.** Leader Jane Boyd 0403470101. Meet Lawson Stn. Car Park North side 8.30am 8km, Gr3, Map, Katoomba
- Aug 18 **Bungleboorie Ridges,** Leader Hugh 0423309854. if unanswered leave text msg. Map, Wollangambe. Contact leader for starting details.
- Aug 25 **Boorong Crag and Mt Hay.** Leader, Eddie 47842691, meet Near Leura School, 8.00am, 8km, GR3, Map, Katoomba, Mt Wilson
- Sep 1 **Victoria Falls to Pierces Pass.** Leader Mike 47573660, meet Mt Vic Station Car Park, 8.30am 11km, GR3, Map Mt Wilson
- Sep 8 **Rock Island.** Leader, Harold 0409010737. meet Mt Vic Stn Carpark, 8.00am, 8km, Gr3/4 Contact leader to book in.
- Sep 15 **Govett's Leap up Perry's Lookdown via Acacia Flat, Blue Gum Forest.** Leader Alice 47393086. Steep descent and later ascent so several rests. Meet Blackheath Stn. Car Park, 8.00am, Car shuffle organised 10km, Gr4, Map, Katoomba+Mt Wilson

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, 04111 62345, keithdor53@hotmail.com

- Aug 13 **Popes Glen to Pulpit Rock Blackheath, Meet** Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8-40. Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 3.
- Aug 20 **Fitzgerald Creek Sun Valley, Valley Heights.** Follow creek with gumtree forest. Valley Heights Station Car Park 8-45am Car Pool. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.
- Aug 27 **"Two Valley Trail" (Canterbury to Bexley North)** Distance: 11kms. Central 9-25am Top of escalators. Train to Canterbury Plat 22 at 9-42. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.
- Sep 3 **Kedumba Pass Gate (abt 1 Km past QV Hospital) Wentworth Falls** to Sublime Point turn off and return, abt 6Km. Bird and plant-spotting opportunities. Return very steep. Wentworth Falls Station Car Park Car 8-45am. Car Pool 4WD preferred. Dave and Barby Ph 0416 109 141. Grade 2.
- Sep 10 **Down Nellies Glen and then climb up Devil's Hole Katoomba.** Katoomba Station Car Park 8-30am. Wayne and Mary Read Ph 0429 021 296. Grade 3.

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, denfenella12@bigpond.com

- Aug 9 **Transit of Venus from Mount View Ave, Hazelbrook.** Meet Hazelbrook Shopping Centre Car Park 8.45am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Aug 16 **Govett's Leap to Pope's Glen, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre, 9.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Aug 23 **Paradise Pool, Linden.** Meet Linden Station, north side 9.00am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Aug 30 **Terrace Falls, Hazelbrook.** Meet Hazelbrook Station Car Park, south side 8.45am. Leader Keith 0411 162 345. Car pool. Take lunch Grade 2
- Sep 6 **Hidden Valley, Hartley Vale, relics and ruins.** Meet Mount Victoria Station, 9.50am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Sep 13 **Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens.** Meet Mount Victoria Station, 9.50am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 1

Save The Drip Event at Gulgong

Saturday 25 August: Concert at Prince of Wales Opera House, Gulgong, 6pm with Blue Mountains band Witches Leap, poet Luke O'Shea & Others

Sunday 26 August Walk at "The Drip"

The Drip and Corner gorges of the Goulburn River form part of an ancient, visually dramatic landscape. Many visit this iconic and culturally significant place to experience its natural beauty and extensive Aboriginal heritage, walking along the Goulburn River or picnicking under soaring sandstone cliffs. Clear spring water drips and seeps through sculptural rock formations laden with ferns, bottle brushes and weeping grasses. Environmental impacts from open cut and underground mining threaten the long term health, resilience and viability of this river system.

Mudgee District Environment Group
<http://mdeg.org.au/focus/save-the-drip/>

Society bushwalks on facebook: Visit
<https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks/>

Plant Study Group Thursday Interpretive Nature Group

For information, go to our website
www.bluemountains.org.au and click on "Activities"