



The Message of the Lyrebird

On Wednesday 21 September, at The Edge Cinema in Katoomba, a sell out crowd watched the most amazing multi-award winning documentary film about Australia's magical Lyrebirds.

The film screening, donated as a fundraiser to the Society by Dr Anastasia Dalziel, the leader at the Lyrebirdlab.org, was spellbinding. Dr Dalziel and Carol Proberts, both of whom featured prominently in the film, took questions afterwards.

Due to the high demand the Society is looking to hold another screening, this time in the lower mountains, details to be advised.



©Balangara Films

The Mick Dark Talk for the Future Sunday, 23rd October 2022, 4.30–5.30 pm, Katoomba The Marquee stage, The Carrington Hotel, 15-47 Katoomba St, Katoomba

The Mick Dark Talk for the Future honours the legacy of Mick Dark, a past president of Blue Mountains Conservation Society and patron of Varuna. The talk aims to inspire community discussion of environmental issues of local and global significance.

Speaker, Costa Georgiadis, is a landscape architect, environmental educator and television presenter. He has an all-consuming passion for plants and people.

The event is co-sponsored by Blue Mountains Conservation Society and by Varuna, the National Writers' House. It is supported by Megalong Books, the Blue Mountains Food Co-op and the Blue Mountains Edible Garden Trail.

Tickets on sale <https://bit.ly/MickDark2022>

Blue Mountain Conservation Society NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

We will be at the Blackheath Growers Market on **SUNDAY 9th OCTOBER** and on the 2nd Sunday of every month.

For enquiries or to place an order, please contact: **Nursery Manager, Paul Irwin:**
plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com

Tourism development in protected areas: Are we on the right track?

The NSW government is making an unprecedented investment in our National Parks. "More than 750km of new and upgraded walking tracks, 33 campground upgrades and 61 new and improved picnic areas are set to be delivered, as part of a record investment in community infrastructure in NSW national parks." (NSW Government Media Releases 17 Jan 2021)

Bushwalking NSW, the peak body for bushwalkers in NSW and the ACT, appreciates this investment in our Parks and seeks an outcome that enhances recreation in national parks without diminishing the opportunities for all to enjoy our marvellous park system.

To open up this topic to a range of park managers, users and supporters, Bushwalking NSW Inc. will be hosting a symposium on the topic:

9:30am to 4:30pm, Saturday 19th November, NSW Teachers Federation Conference Centre, 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills, and via video conference.

Bushwalking NSW is seeking a range of perspectives on this topic and inviting people from across the political parties, tourism, recreation, conservation and industry to this exciting event. Join us to hear different viewpoints and help formulate a position statement on this topic in collaboration with other interested parties. Go to <https://www.bushwalkingnsw.org.au/tourism-development-in-protected-areas/> to register.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Darug and Gundungurra people, and pay respect to their elders past, present and emerging.

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Vale native plant lover, Kevin Bell

Kevin Bell, who served as President of our Society from 2003 to 2005 and then for nine years as Nursery Manager, has died at the age of 83. He brought an extensive scientific knowledge and a measured and sympathetic style of leadership to our Society from his career as a Professor of Chemical Engineering at the University of Newcastle.



Kevin Bell (right) with his son, Arne - cruising the Danube in 2007

Kevin was aware that he was building on the work of our first nursery manager, the late Robin Corringham, and of David Coleby who remains active in local conservation work, in bringing the Society's work with native plants to the forefront of our activities.

Writing in the 300th issue of Hut News in 2013, Kevin said: "Tens of thousands of dollars have been poured into the Society's coffers, chiefly through contracts with the RTA, Blue Mountains City Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney Water and others which has enabled the Society to fund important projects and campaigns." He also wrote that our Society's nursery "has provided Blue Mountains residents with a quality, cheap, reliable source of local plants for their gardens".

At the nursery, many of the processes and procedures he initiated are still followed today. It was under Kevin's management that the nursery first propagated and supplied plants for the revegetation of Green Gully in the Megalong Valley. Sue Nicol recalls that the nursery volunteers would have an annual picnic there and admire the progress of the trees. It was one of his proudest achievements as Nursery Manager and the arrangement continues to this day.

Other friends remember that one of Kevin's other loves was classical music - he had an extensive collection and music filled his home.

Kevin Bell never lost interest in the native flora of the Blue Mountains and other areas. He was always enthusiastic about being out-of-doors with nursery volunteers, bushwalkers and fellow conservationists. His contributions to the nursery are part of his legacy.

-- Hut News Team



Nursery volunteers celebrating the opening of the new "David Coleby glasshouse", 2005. Kevin is in the front, second from left.

**THE DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER
HUT NEWS IS 15 OCTOBER**
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
Enquiries: Christine 4787 7246

TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE - Bees of Australia - Part 2

- Chris Whiteman

Last month in this series we looked at the history of bees and questioned the sustainability of life without bees. We also looked at the importance of Australian native bees in their role of pollinating Australian native flora and potential as effective pollinators of many Australian agricultural crops. This month we look at bee species invasive to Australia including the European honey bee which arrived 34 years after European settlement, in 1822. The early colonists had difficulty in growing their European crops and blamed poor soils. It is interesting to note that the lack of bees and pollination were not mentioned in the early chronicles.

Invasive Bee Species

European Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*)

The European honey bee was first brought to Australia in seven hives aboard the convict transport ship "Isabella" that reached Sydney in 1822.



European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*)

They are the common bees often found in our gardens and used by apiarists or backyard beekeepers to produce honey and play a role in the pollination of our agricultural crops. Australia is the fourth largest honey exporting nation after China, Argentina and Mexico. Our honey has some unique flavours derived from native plants such as the Tasmanian Leatherwood, Yellow and White Box Eucalyptus. The Australian honey bee industry biosecurity code of practice requires beekeepers to inspect their hives at least twice a year and to keep accurate records.

At present the bee industry is spared the need for chemicals to protect against Varroa mites, allowing Australian bees wax to be well sought after world wide in the cosmetic industry because it is the purest in the world.

European honey bees are generalists rather than specialist bees that feed on specific plants. They live in large colonies, can out-compete native bee species for food and cause a decline in native bee populations. Research has shown that Varroa mites are host-specific to European and Asian honey bees; thus not spreading onto native bees.

Varroa mites (*Varroa destructor*) are one of the most serious pests of European honey bees. They are tiny red-brown mites that can feed and live on adult honey bees and cause wing damage impacting the bee's ability to fly and gather food. They also mainly feed and

reproduce on larvae and pupae in the developing brood of the hive. A main concern is that they can transmit viruses such as deformed wing virus (DWV). Varroa mites, along with pesticide use on crops, are considered to be the main contributing factors to declining numbers of bees around the world.

The mite has emerged as a parasite of European honey bees, after switching from its original host, the Asian honey bee in the early 1900s. The mites have spread throughout the world with Australia and a few islands remaining the only places free of them. In June 2022 Varroa mites were found on European honey bees in biosecurity surveillance / indicator hives at Newcastle Port. The mites have subsequently been found at Port Stephens, Bulahdelah, the Hunter Valley, Narrabri and Coffs Harbour where hives are being destroyed. What makes eradication so difficult is that we have a very large population of feral European honey bees that live in the bush and are hard to locate, so even if mite infected hives can be detected and destroyed, it is much harder to do the same with feral bush colonies. Varroa mites are difficult to control once established. For example, Varroa mites were detected in New Zealand in 2000 and have since spread throughout the country.

Biosecurity surveillance/indicator hives (sentinel hives) will have to be established near the new Western Sydney Airport to monitor for Varroa mites.

European honey bees resistant to Varroa mite:

Breeding mite-resistant bees is an alternative if Varroa mites get out of control. In recent years queen bees from the Netherlands which have special traits giving them some resistance against Varroa mites have been imported into Australia through a quarantine screening process for viruses and parasites at the Mickleham post entry quarantine facility in VIC.

In the case of bees which have resistance to Varroa mites the worker bees tap their antennae on beehive cells, checking for chemical cues and nibble a hole in the mite-infested cell. Other bees, responsible for cleaning, will remove the larva from the hive, preventing the mite from reproducing. This behaviour, called Varroa sensitive hygiene (VSH), is heritable and can be passed on with queen bees.

References:

<https://beeaware.org.au>

[https://www.agriculture.gov.au/search?](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/search?search_api_fulltext=varroa+mites)

[search_api_fulltext=varroa+mites](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/search?search_api_fulltext=varroa+mites)

<https://blog.csiro.au/expert-commentary-varroa-mite/>

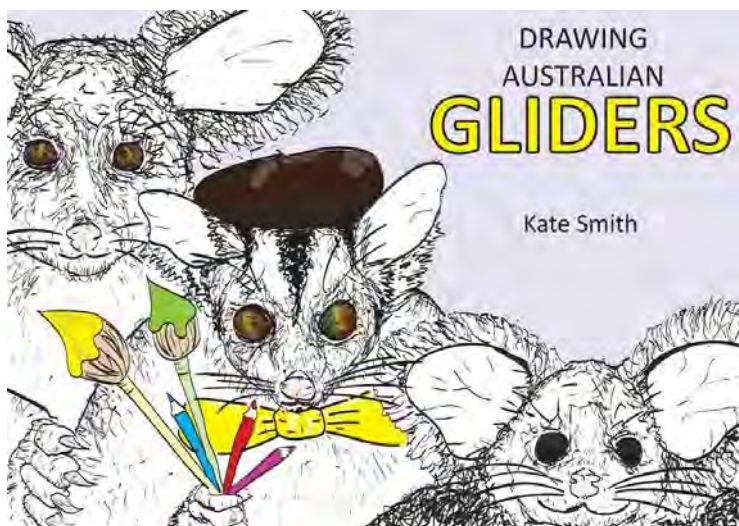
How to Join the Society

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is an incorporated voluntary organisation of more than 900 members. Our goal is to protect, conserve, and advocate for, the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

You can become a member of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Join online at

www.bluemountains.org.au or phone 0490 419 779.

Membership includes our monthly newsletter, Hut News, by post or e-mail. The newsletters are printed on recycled paper.



Drawing Australian Gliders

Drawing Australian Gliders, a new book for children, combines art and natural history to raise awareness of gliders. It provides drawings, photos and information about three Blue Mountains gliders: the tiny Feathertail Glider, the Sugar Glider and the biggest Australian glider, the Greater Glider. It shows how to look closely at gliders with an artist's eye, and then create your own life-like or more fanciful artworks.

Kate Smith provided the ideas and artwork. Kate's ecologist parents, Peter and Judy Smith, contributed accounts of the gliders' life histories. *Drawing Australian Gliders* was launched by ABC gardening guru, Costa Georgiadis, at Taronga Zoo in August. Thanks to zoo staff, Yellow-bellied, Squirrel and Sugar Gliders (all Blue Mountains residents) also made an appearance at the launch. Gliders are out and about only at night, by day they den in hollows, and so often go unnoticed. The book is timely, coinciding with the uplisting of the conservation status of the Greater Glider, from Vulnerable to Endangered at national level.

The book was initiated by the Kanangra-Boyd to Wyangala Conservation Partnership, which is one of the regional partners of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, a major conservation initiative that brings people together to protect, connect and restore healthy landscapes across 3,600 km of eastern Australia. The Blue Mountains are within the Great Eastern Ranges. Preparation of the book was jointly funded by the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife and the NSW Government's *Saving our Species* program. Proceeds from the book will be used to fund further conservation efforts in the Great Eastern Ranges.

Drawing Australian Gliders (30 pages, 6 glider photos, drawings throughout, soft cover, ring-bound, RRP \$15, published by P & J Smith Ecological Consultants) is available from Blue Mountains bookshops, K2W Glideways website (www.k2wglideways.org.au) and from Peter and Judy Smith (email smitheco@ozemail.com.au).

This children's book follows the 2019 book, *Native Fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area*, by Judy, Peter and Kate Smith.

A YouTube video by Richard Snashall about the book and its subjects, the gliders, can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AN8mYbj1uE4>

--The Hut News Team

Feathered Passions: An exhibition at Everglades Gallery by Dr Graham Cam & Steve Tredinnick

Birds inspire us, uplift us, bring us hope. They are exquisite forms of beauty. Their powers of flight amaze us, with their innate control, sense of freedom, and the often extraordinary distances they cover simply to exist.

Graham's stunning photographs capture species from Australia to the Antarctic and on to the jungles of Costa Rica. Steve's evocative watercolours primarily depict the birds of our glorious Blue Mountains.

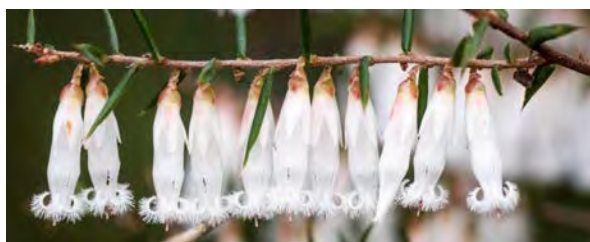
Saturday 1 October – Sunday 23 October, 2022, Everglades House & Gardens, 37 Everglades Avenue, Leura. Gallery opening days vary, 11am to 3pm. Free entry to the Gallery after garden entry. Please call Everglades Gardens on 4784 1938 to confirm weekday openings.



Image: "Phoenix", by Steve Tredinnick, illustrates the enduring force of nature since the most recent, devastating fires of 2019-2020.

Plant Study Group

BMCS Plant Study Group, on its August outing, forayed north from Faulconbridge to inspect a flowering population of *Leucopogon fletcheri* subsp. *fletcheri*. This rather prickly shrub has an Endangered listing in NSW where it is restricted to clayey lateritic soils of northwest Sydney and the Blue Mountains, generally on flat to gently sloping ridges and spurs. On show were the pendent flowers in neat rows along the branches with their "white beards" (Greek *leucos-pogon*) protruding from the flower tubes. A young visitor to the group, Jacquilin Ismay, took this stunning photograph.



More information about the Plant Study Group: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/psg/index.shtml>
Contact Helen Yoxall 0400 192 856.

EMAIL THE PREMIER: DON'T DELAY KOSCI'S FERAL MANAGEMENT

Shocking news: The NSW Government has STOPPED all feral shooting in Kosciuszko National Park at the worst possible time. We need NSW Premier Perrottet to act immediately to ensure feral animal management is back on track ASAP.

Kosciuszko is one of Australia's most important national parks, it contains our highest mountains and protects incredible native wildlife and ecosystems that are found nowhere else on Earth. It is even listed as a national heritage place, so all Australians have a stake in its management.

The government has announced the pause to all feral animal control in the park following allegations made by a radio shock jock that a deer cull in February occurred near park users. But this pause isn't just for deer – ALL control operations of feral animals have been paused.

These allegations, which are more than 6 months old, are being used by some as a trojan horse to slow and disrupt park managers from doing the challenging work of removing feral horses from Kosciuszko.

We have made sending the Premier an email quick and simple – you don't have to be an expert! We know letters and emails are taken seriously – for everyone who takes the time to write an email, the Premier's office knows there are many more people who feel the same way.

Follow the link: bit.ly/kosci-feral for more information and help with your email.

-- Invasive Species Council

Vital Feral Culling Agreement Under Threat

The Invasive Species Council has renewed its call for signatures on a petition to curb the feral animal threat in NSW's largest National Park and also called for more donations to fund its campaigns.

The Tumut and Adelong Times reported on 16/9/22 the shooting deaths of 11 feral horses near Kiandra in Kosciuszko National Park, which it illustrated with gruesome front page photographs, noting that 2GB announcer Ray Hadley was opposing continuation of the long negotiated agreement for reduction of feral horse numbers, at least in the manner in which the National Parks and Wildlife Service appeared to be currently conducting it.

Some State Government sources have defended the conduct of the present agreement which has been in force for several months. Nevertheless, culling programs for all feral mammals in the National Park have been suspended indefinitely following Mr Hadley's objections.

Feral mammals, most definitely including feral horses, have posed a threat to ecosystems along the Great Dividing Range for a very long time. Alternative proposals to immediately killing a percentage of feral mammal populations have been tried in a number of areas. The first "Man from Cox's River" movie depicted feral horses captured by roping in the Warragamba Dam catchment of the Southern Blue Mountains, suffering great distress when about 30 of them were captured for "rehoming" at a cost of more than \$20,000 per animal.

Since capture of Kosciuszko brumbies for rehoming has become popular, a few similar animals have appeared running wild in Newnes State Forest in the northern Blue Mountains. This, of course, might be mere coincidence.

The conservation movement in general and the Invasive Species Council in particular have put a very great deal of energy into countering the severe ecological threats arising from political opposition to feral mammal culling along the Great Dividing Range. Clearly, the Invasive Species Council needs the support of all conservationists now more than ever.

-- The Hut News Team



Image: Warning of a collision hazard for drivers on the B72 Snowy Mountains Highway between Talbingo and Kiandra.

Also read:

<https://invasives.org.au/media-releases/kosci-at-risk-from-feral-control-pause/>

Sign the petition: bit.ly/KOSCIUSZKO

Donate to fund the Invasive Species Council's campaigns: <https://invasives.org.au/donate/>

Blue Mountains Conservation Society 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

The Blue Gum Forest - 90th anniversary celebrations



Weekend Camp

On the first weekend in September, fifty-two enthusiastic souls, young and old, braved the cold damp weather to walk down to Blue Gum Forest to celebrate its 90th anniversary.

The program commenced with an acknowledgement of country and smoking ceremony at Perrys Lookdown, conducted by Uncle Chris Tobin. This was attended by additional people, including Cath Ireland, a fondly-remembered Grose Valley ranger.

The forest ceremony was held on the bank of the Grose River. The crowd was addressed by Jeff Rigby, son of conservationist Alan Rigby, historian Andy Macqueen and ecologist Wyn Jones, all coordinated by MC Polona Hunter, a third-generation "Blue-Gummer". To mark the occasion all participants received a pottery gum leaf made by Liz Macqueen assisted by other volunteers. The ceremony concluded with three cheers for the forest.

Most of the celebrators waded Govetts Creek to camp the night at The Meadow, and later participated in a campfire. There was poetry, singing, and talk about ecology.

In the morning it was found that Govetts Creek had risen from the rain, making the crossing more challenging, but everyone survived. Then there were well-received talks about birds, ecology and geology, by Kalang and Milo Morrison Jones, and Peter Hatherly.

Of course, there was the necessary climb back out of the valley. But everyone made it at their own pace. The weekend was voted a heart-warming success by all, despite (or perhaps because of!) the weather.

Picnic at Perrys Lookdown

On the first day of Spring, two of the Society's bushwalking groups - TING and the Thursday Pleasure Walkers - organised a picnic, joined by the Dillpickle Bush Band and Andy and Liz Macqueen, to celebrate the Forest's anniversary. The weather was perfect. We had this lovely day-use area to ourselves except for some currawongs wanting to share our lunch.

We read classic poems about Australian nature by prominent poets and original contributions from some of those at the picnic and listened to traditional music. It was a short walk to a lookout where we were able to look down on the white trunked trees of the Blue Gum Forest. Some of us had made the journey to the forest in younger days.

A quote from Jenny: "What a wonderful day. Just soooo memorable. The music was the 'icing on the cake'."



The Blue Gum Forest - 90th anniversary celebrations



Images:

Weekend Camp in the Grose Valley. 52 enthusiastic souls braved the weather. The forest ceremony was held on the bank of the Grose River.

1. The celebrators. (Ian Brown)
2. Fourth-generation Blue-Gummer, Tayan Hunter, hands out souvenir "gum leaves". (Vera Hong)
3. At the forest ceremony: Jeff Rigby talks about his parents Alan and Enid. Alan was a key player in the 1931-32 campaign. (Ian Brown)
4. The camp at The Meadow. (David Noble)

Picnic at Perrys Lookdown:

5. We listened to traditional music from the Dillpickle Bush Band. (Christine Davies)



Society meeting at Wentworth Falls

70 Society members and visitors met at Wentworth Falls School of Arts theatre on 9 Sept to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the reservation of the Blue Gum Forest. **Angela Langdon**, BMCS management committee member, did the introductions and welcomed all present.

Andy Macqueen OAM spoke about the long history of human interactions with the forest in the Grose Valley below Blackheath. The Blue Gum Forest was saved from the axe by bushwalkers in 1931 who, after learning it was to be cut down for a walnut farm, raised funds to buy out the lease. This small parcel was the beginning of protection for the now over one million hectare Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Wyn Jones vividly described the anniversary celebrations that had occurred the previous weekend included a campout by hardy souls. Wyn spoke about the spirit of the Blue Gum Forest and of the serious problems arising from too-frequent bushfires and the need for ongoing work to protect this wonderful area and the forests around the Blue Mountains generally.

Glenn Meade (NPWS Manager, Hawkesbury Nattai area) spoke of the ways the National Parks and Wildlife Service is seeking to manage the protected estate to ensure its long term viability, not an easy task.

The talks were accompanied by powerful images on the large screen of the majesty of the forest and light refreshments were served.

Back from the Brink: Blue Gum Forest and the Grose Wilderness, by Andy Macqueen. Available from Blue Mountains bookshops, the NPWS Heritage Centre at Blackheath and (with free delivery) direct from Andy at andymacqueenauthor.com

Everyone has been to the lookouts. Many have been to the Blue Gum Forest, deep in the valley - but few know the remote and hidden recesses of the labyrinth beyond. Here, an hour or two from Sydney, is a very wild place.

The valley became the Cradle of Conservation in New South Wales when it was reserved from sale in 1875 - an event magnificently reinforced in 1931 when a group of bushwalkers were moved to save Blue Gum Forest from the axe.

The environmental repair and conservation work of Dr. Alec Costin (1925-2022)

-- Peter Ardill

Distinguished Australian scientist, Dr. Alec Costin AM, died in August 2022. Costin was a botanist and plant ecologist, and contributed to the campaign to end livestock grazing in the alpine ecosystems of south-east Australia. The swamps of the Blue Mountains, and local bushcarers and ecological restorationists, have also benefited from Costin's work.

From the 1820s the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the high-country alps, the Ngarigo community, were forcibly dispossessed of their homelands by settler squatters. Decades of livestock grazing followed (Illustration 1).

Costin's 1940s research revealed that grazing degraded the evolved alpine vegetation, and this finding contributed to the cancellation of many grazing leases in Kosciuszko State Park. Costin's 1972 report, "The Scientific Evidence for the Removal of Grazing", ensured that all livestock grazing ceased in the new Kosciuszko National Park.

However, grazing had devastated the peat bogs and herbfields of the alpine regions; exposed soils rapidly eroded. Commencing in approximately 1960, the New South Wales Soil Conservation Service, and then the National Parks and Wildlife Service, conducted pioneering ecological restoration projects in the eroded sections of park. Plant ecologist and wetlands researcher, Roger Good (1944-2015), managed the projects. Recovery of ecological functioning within the alpine ecosystems was a primary objective.

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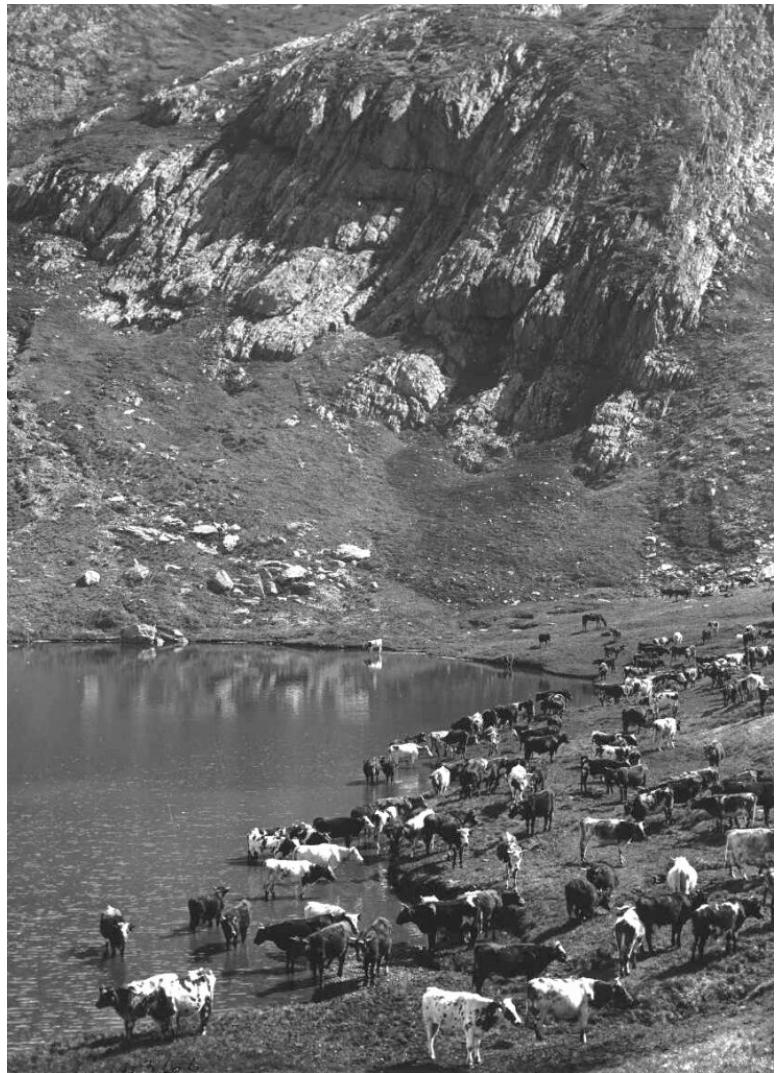


Illustration 1. Cattle on Blue Lake near Kosciuszko 1909 Source: George Bell National Library Australia

The Passing of Mr Glen Day

The long term resident and much loved "mayor" of Newnes village, on the fringe of Wollemi National Park, passed away in August 2022 at the age of 85. Born in Brisbane, Mr Day worked as a school bus driver in the central west and acquired the property at Newnes, which later became his home, in 1974.

Before awareness of feral cat issues reached its present level, Mr Day wanted to be kept company in between visits from his many admirers and acquired a group of cats, which grew in number to as many as 30 at any given time. In 2015, two qualified veterinarians, who were then members of Blue Mountains Conservation Society, offered pro bono assistance to Mr Day which was to include health checks and desexing of his cats. Unfortunately, this offer was declined.

On latest information, all but one of the cats had been trapped for rehoming and Mr Day's ashes were to be interred at Newnes.

The Australian Sunrise

The Morning Star paled slowly, the Cross hung low to the sea,
And down the shadowy reaches the tide came swirling free,
The lustrous purple blackness of the soft Australian night
Waned in the grey awakening that heralded the light;
Still in the dying darkness, still in the forest dim
The pearly dew of the dawning clung to each giant limb,
Till the sun came up from ocean, red with the cold sea mist,
And smote on the limestone ridges, and the shining tree-tops kissed
Then the fiery Scorpion vanished, the magpie's note was heard,
And the wind in the she-oak wavered and the honeysuckles stirred;
The airy golden vapour rose from the river breast,
The kingfisher came darting out of his crannied nest,
And the bullrushes and reed-beds put off their sallow grey
And burnt with cloudy crimson at the dawning of the day.

James Lister Cuthbertson (1851 - 1910)

The environmental repair and conservation work of Dr. Alec Costin (1925-2022)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

Roger Good worked closely with CSIRO researchers Costin and Dane Wimbush (1934-2015), a plant ecologist. Their work contributed to the development of Australian restoration ecology, the science that informs the practice of ecological restoration. Seminal alpine plant surveys, ecological studies and erosion research established that incised, hydrophobic peat bogs could be stabilised and rehydrated, and revegetated with alpine plant species. Undegraded bogs and herbfields served as reference ecosystems, to guide the restoration work.

Blue Mountains swamps have also been subjected to extensive degrading processes. A community "Save Our Swamps" project, that featured swamp restoration projects informed by local scientists and research, commenced in 2006. As Blue Mountains City Council Natural Area manager, Eric Mahony, has commented, the alpine restoration work contributed to the development of restoration techniques applicable to degraded Blue Mountains swamps. In particular, Roger Good taught at a Blue Mountains swamp restoration workshop, in December 2007. Council's volunteer Bushcare and Swampcare programs, and the National Parks and Wildlife Services volunteer Bushcare program, continue vital swamp restoration work today.

As international, Australian and local bushcarers and restorationists engage with the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), it is important to remember the historical origins of environmental destruction, and those pioneer scientists who campaigned to conserve Australia's unique alpine landscapes (Illustration 2). The environmental repair methods that they carefully developed contributed to the recovery of ecological functioning and beauty in many degraded but still precious alpine and swamp ecosystems.

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Good, R. Johnston, S. (2019) "Rehabilitation and revegetation of the Kosciuszko summit area, following the removal of grazing – An historic review" *Ecological Management and Restoration* 20:1 January
SERA (2021) "National Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration in Australia" Edition 2.2. *Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia* www.seraustralasia.com
Sullivan, L. (n.d.) "Conserving Blue Mountains Swamps" Blue Mountains Conservation Society <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/pastcampaigns/swamps.shtml>



Illustration 2. Tall alpine herbfield above Lake Cootapatamba, Kosciuszko National Park NSW, in 2000. Source: CSIRO SciencelImage



Eco Hint of the Month No. 1

NATURAL CLEANING SOLUTION:

For use in kitchens and bathrooms. 500 ml water; 500 ml white vinegar; grated rind of lemon; 2 x sprigs rosemary.

Put all together in an airtight container and leave for 24 hours. Strain the mixture, discarding the solid ingredients, and pop in a spray bottle. Cleans, disinfects and smells nice.

-- Two Elderly Greenies

Lookouts and escarpment walks

Part 2: Environmental challenges of upgrading visitor access

Opinion by Don Morison

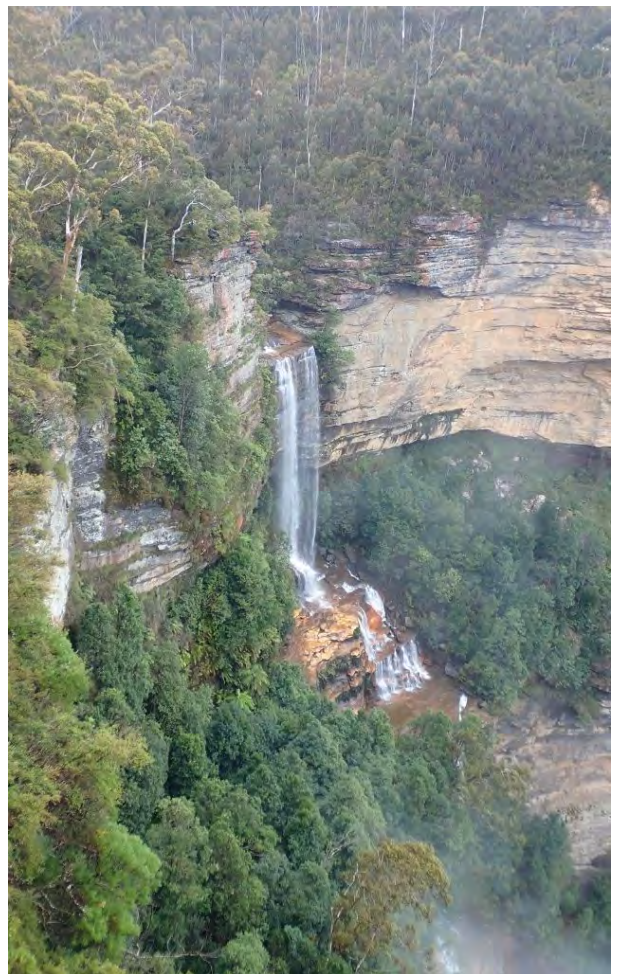
For more than a century, the Blue Mountains area has been a popular destination during economic downturns. It is close to Sydney and other population centres from which visitors valuing its fresh air and scenery have flocked. The locations that Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service are seeking to transform need to be ready to handle regular crowds of walkers, picnickers and sightseers. Council also seems very anxious to give large-scale walking and jogging events access to every metre of the upgraded track surfaces.

A major challenge posed by this is that such a high proportion of areas with improved access will be very close to escarpments and cliff-faces. Small and large cliff-faces are intensively involved in landslips made more frequent by climate change associated events – see Ian Brown's two-part article in August and September 2022 issues of Hut News. Cliff-faces are also the homes of many species of rare and endangered flora in the Blue Mountains. Human activity at the top of cliffs can potentially influence the pattern of runoff and the nature of seeds descending onto the cliff-face flora communities.

The new track surfaces are usually designed to withstand the impacts of people walking or running and, in some cases, operating wheelchairs. Govetts Leap and Evans Lookout at Blackheath are among locations being adapted to modern disabled accessibility standards. All new tracks should withstand multiple heavy rainfall events with minimal maintenance. Where boardwalk sections need to be built, the structures anchoring them need to be particularly resistant to long rainy periods. Discouraging users from straying off the tracks in sensitive areas is a major challenge. Certain forms of railings or fencing might be appropriate in some places. It is also important the appearance of the track surface clearly distinguishes it from places no one is meant to walk, that there are not too many "hairpins" which encourage shortcutting and that there are enough public toilets open during usage hours to minimise bush toileting.

The role of environmental organisations and individuals who want to see environmentally friendly access improvements is to encourage governments to give the NPWS and Council enough funds for these standards of upgrades. It has been too many decades since we have seen track rehabilitation of the standard occurring in the current phase. The present exercise needs to be done thoroughly.

Images: Katoomba Falls from Reids Plateau. The Dwarf Mountain Pine (*Pherosphaera fitzgeraldii*) which only grows in the spray of a few upper mountains waterfalls has made some recovery in numbers in spite of massive intrusion of visitors close to its habitat. The top photo shows the upgrading standard needed where visitors are potentially impinging on the habitats of a number of threatened species which thrive on wet cliff-faces close to Blue Mountains towns. Photographer: Christine Davies.



Eco Hint of the Month No. 2

PLASTIC STICKERS ON FRUIT

Did you know that those annoying little stickers on fresh fruit can be recycled? Simply press them onto a piece of plastic in your soft plastics recycling.

And 'soft plastics' includes more than just bags which say "Return to store".

Check the Recycle Australia website, and take things to Woolworths or Coles.

-- Margaret Fagan



BUSHWALKING:

Enjoy the bush, learn about the Blue Mountains natural environment and find out why bushwalking has been a popular pastime in the Blue Mountains for more than 100 years. Our bushwalking convenor is Doug Nicholls dougnicholls@bigpond.com, phone 0455 850 735.

Walks are graded and generally suitable for walkers of average fitness but may vary in degree of difficulty. Participants need to be aware of their own capabilities and can discuss with the bushwalking convenor, group coordinator or leader.

Underneath is a brief summary of walks and leaders for this month. **Check our website <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/bushwalking.shtml> for a detailed walks program and program changes.**

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short day walks 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator: Keith Dorrian 04111 62345.

keithdor53@hotmail.com

Oct 10 **Starting from Bells line of Road, walking out to Wilkinson Hill** for spectacular Grose Valley views and then explore the area around Jinki Ridge. Some track walking some easy off track. Wayne Read 0429 021 296. Gr3.

Oct 17 **Fitzgerald Creek, Sun Valley.** Gr2, Easy/Medium 6kms. Maurice 0402 402 783.

Oct 24 **Pippa's Pass and Florabella Pass beginning and ending at Blaxland Station.** ~10km. Barbara Crighton 0428 962 460. Gr3.

Oct 31 **Panther Track and Hassans Walls Lookout Lithgow.** 12 Km with some street walking. Gr2. Melanie Lawson 0431 214 687

Nov 7 **Walk to be arranged** – see Website for further details.

TUESDAY FITNESS WALKS: Coordinator: Susan Nicholls (4754 1516 suerosn@bigpond.net.au).

Oct 4 **Batman Park to Perch Ponds (Springwood),** G2/5K, Mike 0401 656848.

Oct 11 **Hassans Walls via Bracey's Lookout (Lithgow),** G3/7K, Judith 0419 780640.

Oct 18 **Ikara Head (Mt Victoria),** G3/7k, Sharon 0404 622515.

Oct 25 **Bundeena to Wedding Cake Rock,** G2/9K, Doug 0455 850753.

Nov 1 **Duckhole to Glenbrook Creek,** G3/6K, Marek 0412 347478.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS are 2-3 hours and are conducted at a leisurely pace. Coordinator: Beverley Thompson (4757 2076 denfenella12@bigpond.com)

Oct 13 **"Deidre's Walk", Bullaburra.** Gr2. Beverley 4757 2076.

Oct 20 **Warrimoo Lookouts, 4.5kms.** Ros 0417 261 465. Gr2.

Oct 27 **Cranebrook Waterways.** Maurice 0402 402 783. Gr2

Nov 3 **South Lawson Waterfalls.** Keith 0411 162 345. Gr2

Nov 10 **Blue Gum Swamp, Winmalee,** 9kms on track with a few minor creek crossings. Angela 0427 133 327. Gr2

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Coordinator Harold Thompson (04090 10736, Harold.thompson@bigpond.com).

Oct 8 **Rainbow Cave & Numantia Falls.** 10km. Map Springwood, Harold 0409010737. Gr3.

Oct 15 **Nobles Canyon,** 8km. Map, Cullen Bullen. Harold 0409010737 Gr3.

Oct 22 **Megalong Ledges** 8km. Map, Katoomba. Diana 0432619305. Gr3.

Oct 29 **Burrakorain Head.** 12km. Map Mt Wilson. Harold 0409010737. Gr3.

Nov 5 **Evans Crown.** 8km Map Tarana. Harold 0409010737. Gr3.

Visit the Saturday walks facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks?fref=nf>

WHEN WILL WE EVER LEARN?

Or indeed, will we ever learn. I am referring to the tourist plans for the Gardens of Stone. Do the powers that be not understand that once an asset is destroyed, it is no longer an asset, in fact it doesn't exist anymore?

Several years ago (14 to be exact) we were privileged to visit the Galapagos Islands. The Islands are part of the country of Ecuador, which is by no means a rich country, but they obviously know how to preserve their assets.

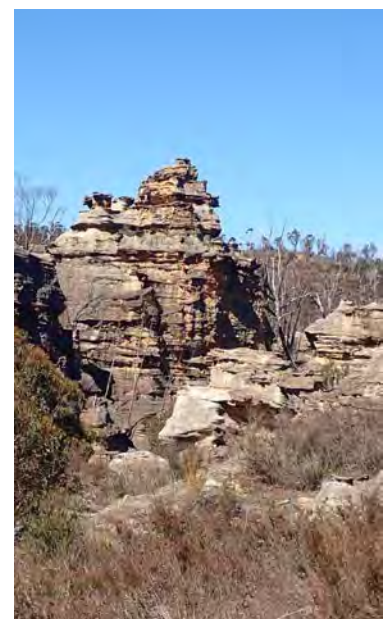
Whilst in the Galapagos, tourists were strictly controlled. The National Park was created to protect the unique endemic wildlife species that live on the islands and in the ocean waters that surround them. Firstly we were forbidden to touch or interfere with the animals in any way. Whilst walking we were kept strictly to the narrow paths, no stepping off to look more closely at something. The paths were natural, no concrete, bitumen or even gravel.

But all the wildlife is up close and personal - we have photos of standing next to a giant tortoise with our hands poised above the shell, but not allowed to touch. As an example, whilst on one beach, we were surrounded by lots of the endemic species of mockingbird and, thinking to help, one of our group put a thimbleful of water from his bottle into the top of it and put it down for the mockingbirds to drink.

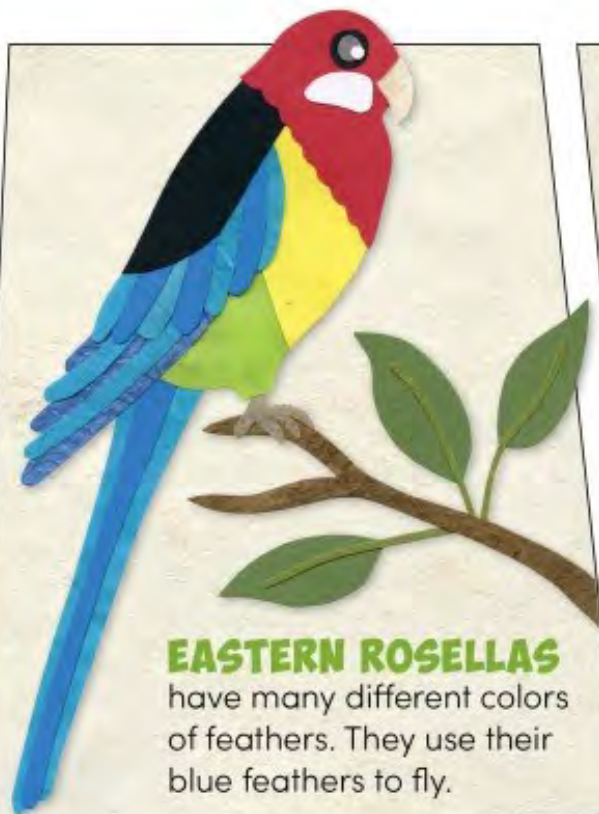
The guide quickly took it away and reprimanded its owner, explaining that the birds needed to remain as if there were no humans around.

Whilst it is imperative that everyone does everything possible to help support and protect these island habitats, so indeed should everyone do everything possible to protect the exceptional Gardens of Stone.

-- Liz van Reyswoud

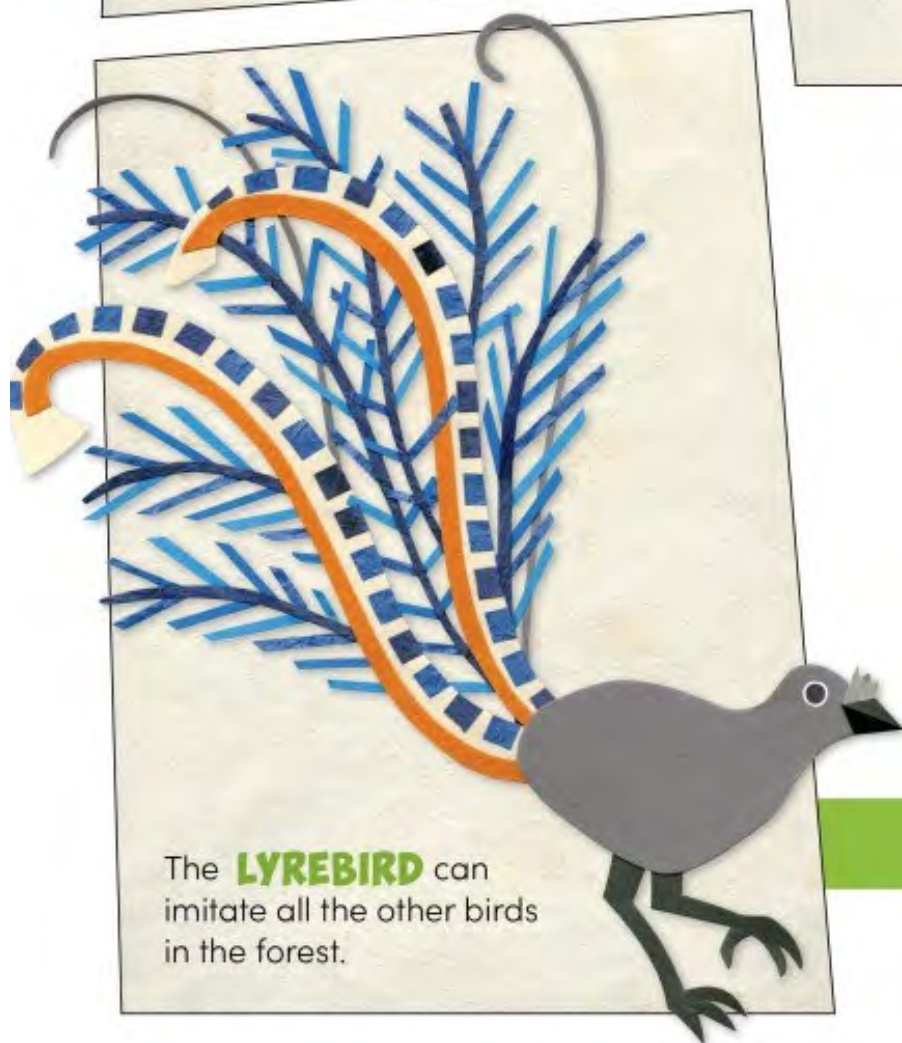


Pagoda at the Lithgow gateway to Gardens of Stone.



EASTERN ROSELLAS have many different colors of feathers. They use their blue feathers to fly.

COCKATOOS have very strong beaks. They can break open hard seeds with their beaks.



The **LYREBIRD** can imitate all the other birds in the forest.

B

BIRD

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Collect the pages as they appear in Hut News.

<https://bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/archive/2210-hutnews-wild-image.pdf>