

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Issue No. 412
April 2023



Vale Elizabeth Buki

-- by Linda Wake ... a friend for 70 years!



It is with sadness that I advise the readers of Hut News that a stalwart life member of the Conservation Society, Elizabeth Buki, passed away on 22nd December 2022, just a few months before her 103rd birthday.

Elizabeth was the wife of John Buki, who was one of the founding members of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. There is a lovely sandstone memorial to John Buki, in the garden opposite the Conservation Hut. A fitting tribute to a man, and couple, who truly loved

the Australian bush and were very early conservation enthusiasts.

Elizabeth and John arrived in Australia from Austria in the 1950's, and spent several years in Broken Hill, an area which encouraged their huge interest in Australia's deserts and fossicking. Thereafter they moved to Sydney where John resumed his teaching career, and was a teacher in the Blue Mountains, and then Principal of several schools in northern NSW and outback areas, such as Rappville.

The latter was the location where some timber cutters brought them baby feathertail gliders, fallen from a tree, which Elizabeth and John nursed back to health (in matchboxes) and finally transported by train to Taronga Zoo, where they were welcomed with open arms by the Nocturnal House carers ... and it is hoped started a new and vigorous breeding colony.

Elizabeth and John purchased a house in the vicinity of the Conservation Hut in the early 1960s. With other early members of the Society they were instrumental in repairing the dilapidated hut, for the purpose of serving teas, and Elizabeth's delicious Austrian cakes, to bushwalkers. They then began the arduous process of building steps down from the Hut's plateau, using railway sleepers which were donated to them by the local railway yards. It was incredibly hard work, but all done with such enthusiasm for the beauty of the area and the wish to share it with others. As a teenager I remember well helping them with clearing the area.

On John's death, 25 years ago, Elizabeth moved to Gosford. There she lived an active social life, and drove her car until age 95. She was a regular car service for so many of her elderly friends and managed to live alone and remain self-sufficient until 2021, celebrating her 101st birthday (a year late due to Covid) with 70 friends. Unfortunately a stroke that year meant she had to retire to a nursing home where she was visited by many long-time friends, and copies of Hut News were delivered for her enthusiastic response.

Political climes, they are a – changing

1. New South Wales has a new Labor Government assured of confidence and supply in the Lower House. Environmentalists will be pleased that State policy on a number of key issues could change direction. The growth of commercial developments on National Parks land, such as the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, should be examined. Planned environmentally insensitive road and tunnel developments leading to more trucks through the Mountains will be in focus. The enthusiasm for higher dam walls and feral animals like horses left to roam through National Parks may be dimmed. Environmental activists will have much to discuss with the new Ministers. The re-elected Blue Mountains Member Trish Doyle has, for years, shown her understanding of these topics. Negotiations with cross-benchers may, in some instances, lead to improved environmental outcomes.

2. As Hut News goes to press, the progress of Federal legislation to cap emissions and meet a target of 43% reduction by 2030 is receiving much publicity. Those of us most concerned about the environment and many others in Australia will be discussing for quite some time how things will change because of this legislation.

-- Hut News Team

Members!

We want to hear from you. Please contribute content for Hut News. The deadline for May Hut News is 15th April.

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Enquiries: Christine 4787 7246

Blue Mountains Conservation Society NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

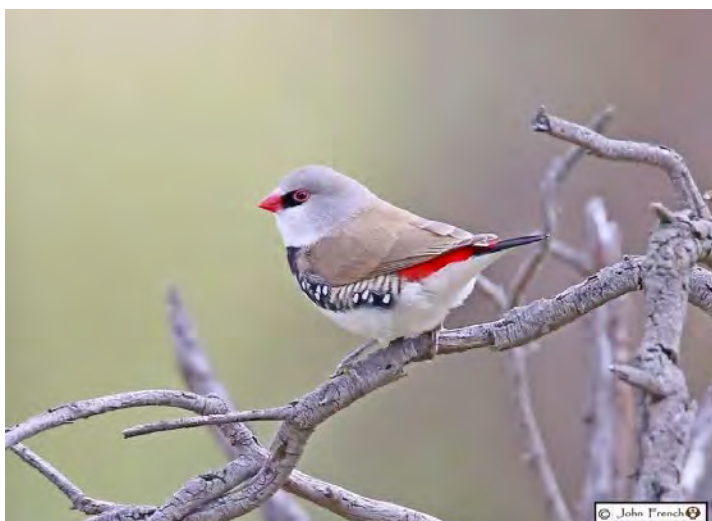
We will be at the Blackheath Growers
Market on **SUNDAY 9 APRIL**

AND on the 2nd Sunday of every month until the winter break.

For enquiries and to place an order, please contact Nursery Manager, Paul Irwin:

plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com

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



Images: Hooded Robin, Diamond Firetail,
Brown Treecreeper.

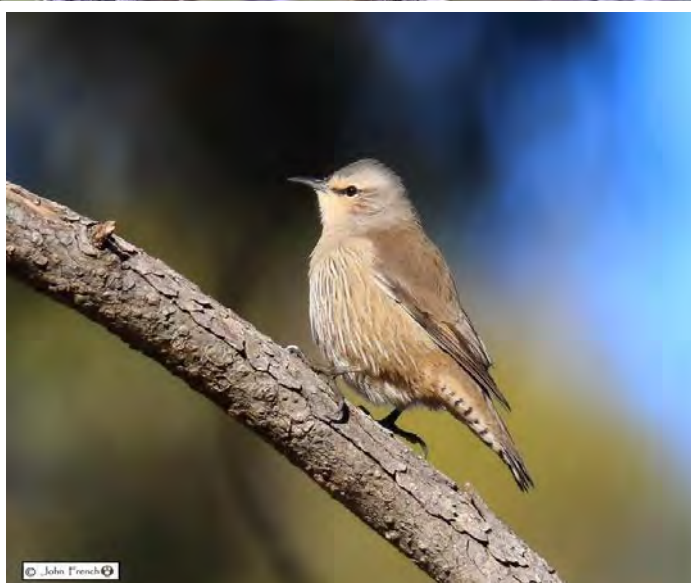
Birdlife Australia Cowra Woodland Birds Program

ConSoc members Fiona Lumsden and John French regularly volunteer with quarterly bird surveys out at Cowra, with the BA Cowra Woodland Bird Program. They thoroughly recommend joining in with the surveys and planting weekends, and the social activities & conservation talks.

The Cowra Woodland Birds Program was begun in mid 2001 by members of BirdLife Australia Southern NSW and local landholders and land managers to address concerns that woodland birds appear to be declining in rural landscapes in the Cowra district. Its activities involve quarterly bird surveys on 90+ sites and monitoring of the gathered data, as well as habitat restoration and conservation projects.

The bird and habitat surveys to date have identified which sites are better for woodland birds and, based on these observations, the team make a number of general recommendations for land managers interested in reversing the decline of local woodland birds.

In the coming months, the CWBP will be conducting its regular quarterly surveys (the next one is 15/16 April) and major revegetation planting weekends will occur on a 50ha site south of Cowra that links in with the Illunie Range (proposed for May/June).



View the view the latest CWBP newsletter: <https://birdlife.org.au/news/cowra-woodland-birds-news-february-2023/>

If you would like any further information regarding upcoming CWBP events, email Sue Proust to be placed on the email contacts register. sueproust@bigpond.com

Text and images by John French

How to contact Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Phone: 0490 419 779 (leave message)

Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au

Website: www.bluemountains.org.au

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram:
addresses can be found on website.

Current office holders: A new management committee was elected at the Society's Annual General Meeting on 31 March 2023. Current office holders and their contact details can be found at: <https://bluemountains.org.au/office-holders.shtml> A full list of office bearers elected will be published in May Hut News.

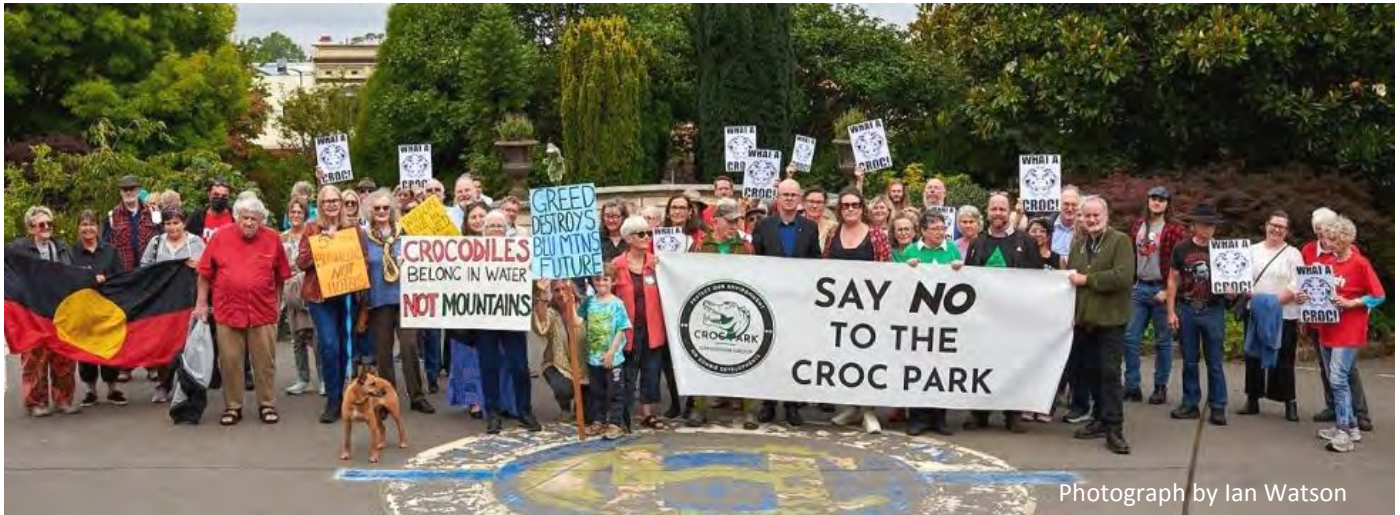
It's Raining

The unfamiliar sound
of rain
woke me last night ...
a welcome gift
to the vegetable seedlings
I planted the day before
and the marigold seeds scattered
to add colour
and confuse the pests

-- Rosemary Lewis

THE DEADLINE FOR MAY HUT NEWS IS 15 APRIL

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
Enquiries: Christine 4787 7246



Wentworth Falls zoo and hotel 'Town Hall Meeting' -- Landuse Subcommittee

Over 100 people turned up at a heated public meeting convened by representatives of the developer at The Carrington Hotel, Katoomba, on February 28th. Spokesperson for the development, Farshad Amirbeaggi, presented an updated concept plan for the Wentworth Falls 'wildlife park' and hotel. Members of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society attended.

While the revised development is similar to that proposed two years ago – a luxury hotel and conference centre, multi-level carpark, restaurants, cafes, vet clinic and indoor and outdoor wildlife exhibits – it appears to be even larger than originally proposed. New features include a suspension bridge, ropes course and zipline in the Environmental Conservation area.

A new entry to the development is proposed further up the hill on the highway where the meshed stone wall starts. The new intersection will require breaching the concrete crash barrier and installing traffic lights. This new traffic arrangement is necessary because the impractical access to the development from Miller St, included in the 2021 plan, has now been dropped.

Although audience members, which included residents abutting the development, asked for more details on the plan, Mr Amirbeaggi was not able to provide them. And responding to a question from the audience, Mr Amirbeaggi said there would be a reptile exhibit and he was not ruling out crocodiles.

The new plans only increase the Society's concerns. In particular the development appears to:

- further encroach into highly sensitive areas, including hanging swamps
- require substantial clearing of the bushland buffer between Bullaburra and Wentworth Falls
- potentially pollute the creek and hanging swamps on the site and the national park downstream
- impact on an established wildlife corridor

Mr Amirbeaggi promised that there would be further public consultations before the Development Application and Environmental Impact Statement are submitted to the Department of Planning by the end of June. There will be opportunity for comment when the plans go on public exhibition.

If you want to receive updates on the development:

- join the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and receive notifications in the weekly e-news
- visit our Wildlife Park website - www.bluemountains.org.au/croc-park.shtml
- go to the NSW government's planning portal <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/blue-mountains-wildlife-and-tourism-development> and sign up to receive notifications on the development

Society submission on Great Western Highway Upgrade tunnel proposal -- Annette Cam

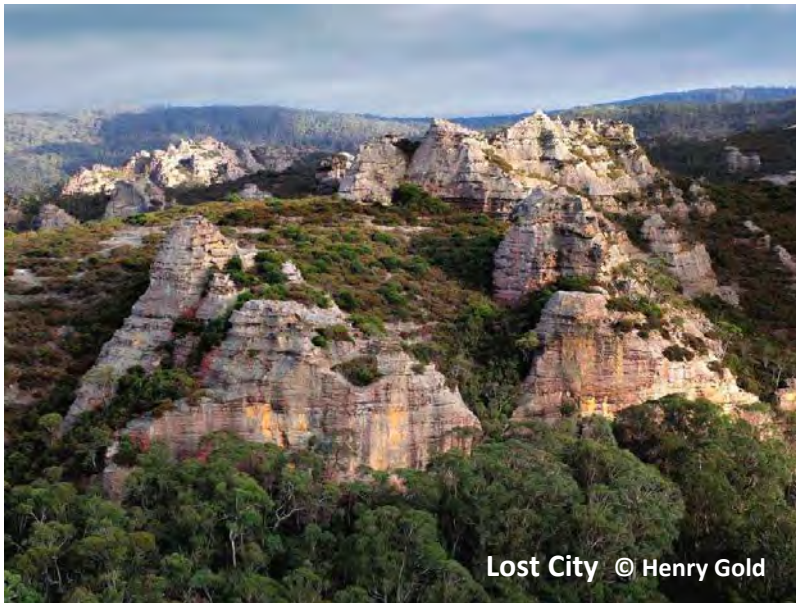
This month your National Parks and World Heritage Subcommittee worked on the completion of a submission on the Great Western Highway Upgrade tunnel proposal from Blackheath to Little Hartley. Transport NSW provided us with a dedicated briefing on Zoom allowing us to ask questions and clarify responses and details in the information provided online.

We are particularly concerned about the environmental impacts that the project might have on the adjacent Blue Mountains National Park, part of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, and the likely detrimental impact on the groundwater, aquifers and swamps in the vicinity of the construction of the tunnel.

Our submission also addresses concerns about stormwater, cross passages, biodiversity, pollution, weeds, vibrations and settlement, tunnel ventilation, emissions and introduction of larger trucks. These larger vehicles are themselves an increased danger to the rest of the highway traffic. Through freight, to or from the Central West, should be on trains not roads.

The plan to introduce larger trucks to the GWH will impact on the residents of Blue Mountains for most of the 60 kilometres of Highway from the Nepean River to Mt Victoria. Public consultations on the government's proposal to increase trucks along the highway should be held.

You can read the full submission at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/submissions-2023.shtml>



Bushwalking NSW Inc engages lawyers to challenge validity of leases in Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area

The fight to prevent inappropriate over-development in Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area (SCA) has stepped up a notch. On 15 February 2023, Bushwalking NSW Inc. sent notice to NSW Environment Minister James Griffin, giving him a deadline of 24 February to confirm that proposed leases would not be granted to Experience Co before serious flaws in the public consultation process were rectified. Shadow NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe shares Bushwalking NSW's concerns, also sending Minister Griffin a letter requesting lease agreements not be signed until after the election.

A March 3 email confirmed the Environment Minister James Griffin has not progressed the leases and the NSW Government is now in caretaker mode.

The battle to gain protection for the Gardens of Stone SCA took 90 years, with conservation status finally granted in May 2022. The agreed vision for Gardens of Stone SCA was of a lower-key version of existing parks like Royal National Park, with basic facilities offering family-friendly, immersive nature experiences. However, the NSW Government wanted more development, proposing an adventure theme park, four resorts and construction of up to 100 kilometres of mountain bike track.

A tiny, inadequate map of the leases for the proposed developments was released for public consultation on 21 December 2022, with the public submission period taking in Christmas and New Year, closing on 18 January. Despite the release appearing to be timed for minimal scrutiny, there were more than 1,100 submissions.

And the details deserve more scrutiny. The four proposed accommodation sites are supposed to be part of a multi-day walk (defined by the yet-to-be-released visitor-use master plan) but are only four kilometres apart - hardly an iconic walk. The adventure theme park planned for Lost City is only partly in the reserve, located next to Marrangaroo Military Base where live ammunition is used - potentially adding a little too much adventure for kids.

According to Keith Muir of Wilderness Australia, 'Our parks are precious and must be protected with all democracy's tools, including legal action.' Muir holds serious concerns about the area's planning. 'The so-called master plan is unenforceable and has yet to be released. I believe the plans and lease notices for the proposed developments do not satisfy the requirements of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.'

This attempt to push through inappropriate over-development

in the Gardens of Stone SCA without clear public oversight is not an isolated occurrence. Rather, it fits into a pattern of secretive and inappropriate commercial development proposals in protected areas across the country, from the accommodation complexes along the Light to Light walk on the NSW south coast, to building luxury huts on Tasmania's wild South Coast Track, to development of commercial accommodation along the proposed Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing in the Victorian Alps.

Kirsten Mayer, Executive Officer of Bushwalking NSW, says, "The NSW Government should be managing our public estate for conservation and public enjoyment rather than private profit. They are public parks, and should be managed for the public."

"The Gardens of Stone is land like no other. It's a spectacular, pagoda-studded landscape of sandstone towers and villages that takes in forested montane sand dunes, high altitude peat swamps, slot canyons, cliffs, caverns, waterfalls, gorges and arches. This wonderland should be managed for nature; it does not need improvement or to be made into an over-developed fun park.

Source: Bushwalking NSW News Release

Editor's Note: At the time of publication, it is not clear whether the change of Minister that will follow the March 25 election result will affect these court proceedings.

I Have Noticed.....

**This land we walk is timeless
I assumed that I was too
But today that hill was steeper
With more stops to view the view.**

**That tree I've passed for forty years -
A landmark by the track -
Is also showing signs of change -
That canopy of green will not grow back.**

**The winding trail, familiar,
Reminds one of the flow of life,
Our moment is this moment now -
Time takes a toll, resist we might.**

© By Ross Bridle, 2023.

House and land occupancy trends – their sweeping environmental and social consequences

-- Don Morison

Introduction:

Since the late 1940s, the average occupancy of an Australian dwelling dropped from five persons per dwelling to about 2.5 persons per dwelling over seven decades. The average floor space area of dwellings built over those decades has been very much larger than the floor space area of dwellings already existing at the beginning of that period.

For much of that period, there has been widening inequality between wealthier and poorer Australians. These changes have serious implications for Australians' attitude to their own private landholdings and their attitude to protecting the natural environment.

Interfaces between built areas and natural areas:

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society has long campaigned for a Local Environment Plan that suits the special needs of the areas already protected or deserving of protection that surround virtually the whole of the built environment in the Blue Mountains Local Government Area. The greatest success of this campaign has been to restrict the density of dwellings that can be constructed within zonings for land with a high impact on nearby natural areas. These zonings do have far-reaching effects on the overall dynamics of land occupancies within the Local Government Area.

Why are there, on any night, a significant number of empty houses?

On many nights, about one out of every ten houses in the Blue Mountains is empty. In other parts of New South Wales, such as the South Coast, that number is much higher. Reasons often highlighted include:

- Our tax system is somewhat generous to people who operate weekenders
- Local councils have limited powers to restrict the growth of holiday lettings, including those let through online apps. Some council powers are increasing.
- The number of dwellings occupied by only one or two persons is above the national average and some of those occupants are frequently away.

The frequent or permanent absence of property owners limits their motivation to control weeds and other issues on their property that can harm the surrounding natural environment.

Hoarding

While the size of dwellings has been growing, so has the national sport of acquiring lots of possessions, driven by a consumerist culture, and never getting rid of them. One of the reasons that people who progress to either senior age or disability keep living in large houses is fear of having to responsibly part with much that they have collected.

The failure of society to offer possession collectors better solutions to this dilemma is helping prevent larger groups of dwelling occupiers from having a chance to occupy a dwelling of their own in an environmentally responsible way.

Political courage needed:

The factors that keep singles or small-numbered



households occupying dwellings on large blocks of land are numerous and complex. It could help reduce the environmental footprint of human beings as well as lessening social conflict and homelessness if Australian people could engage in a mature and respectful debate about these issues.

Blue Mountains Nature - an introduction", by Alan Page Reviewed by Liz van Reyswoud

Did you know? That a cicada has five eyes? That flannel flowers have no petals? If not, grab yourself a copy of the recently released book named "Blue Mountains Nature – an introduction".

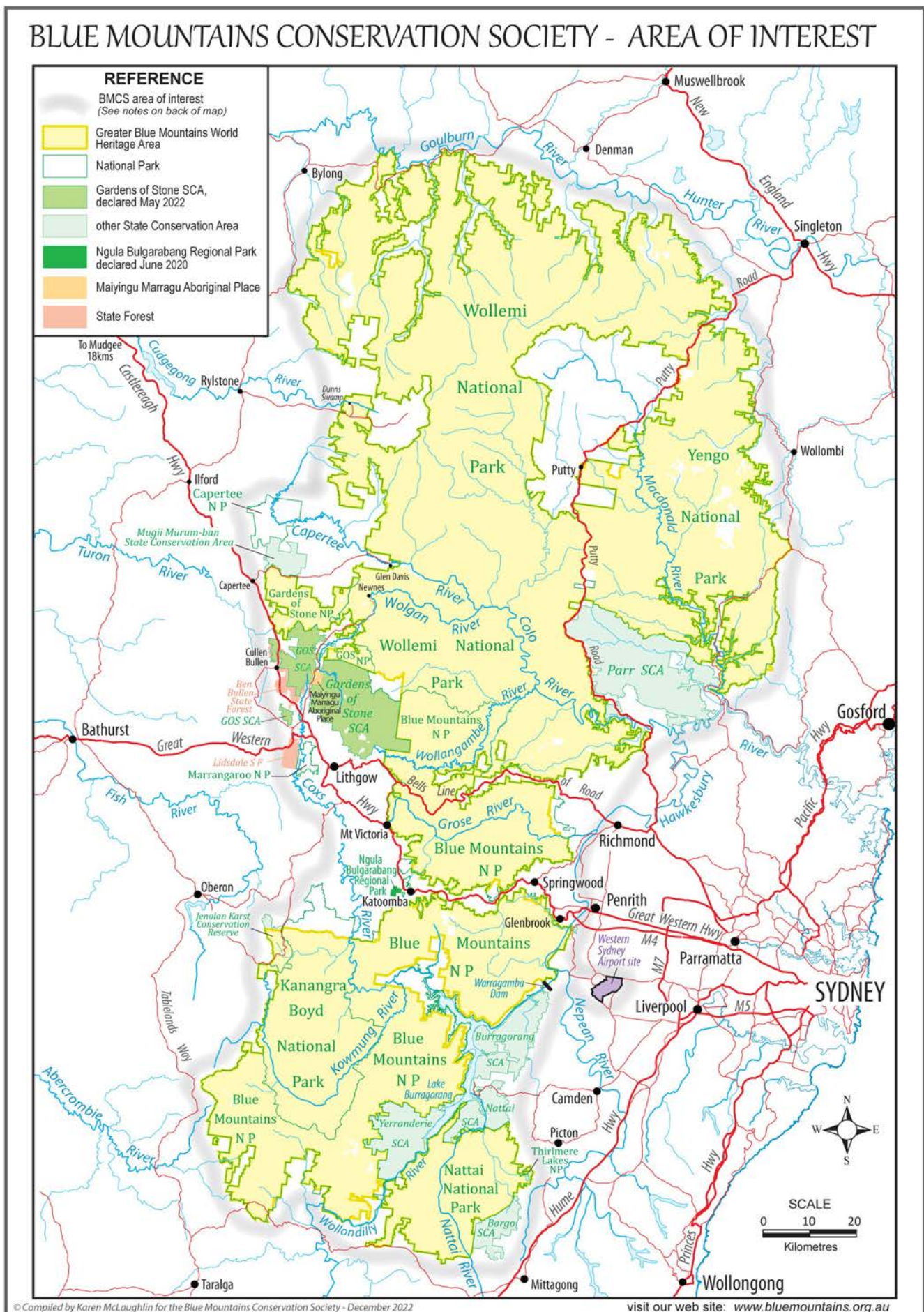
This delightful little book contains hundreds of beautiful photos and drawings of native animals, plants, insects, lizards, flowers, trees and birds which can be found in the Blue Mountains. Written with children in mind, it is certainly informative to adults as well.

He begins by general explanations as to **What is a Species** and follows on with information about the type of vegetation found naturally in the Blue Mountains. Some words which look difficult to pronounce have examples of how to say the word in brackets, eg Sclerophyll (s-clare-o-fill). He also gives children the opportunity to start doing some research and look for the types of, for example, different leaves.

He then moves onto fauna, and asks children to look for these animals. Different types of lizards are also covered. Moving on through birds and some insects we come to reasonably common plants, finishing with a glossary of the terms used in the book.

I would think that this booklet would be of great value to both primary school teachers and parents alike. It is not too hard to read for a young child, or lacking in interest to an adult. Available from Blue Mountains bookshops.

BMCS's Area of Interest map updated: The Society's area of Interest map has been updated to show the two new national park estate additions: Ngula Bulgarabang Regional Park and Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area. www.gardensofstone.org.au



A Visit to the National Herbarium

-- Meredith Brownhill

A bus trip on the 16th February, to the Australian Botanic Gardens at Mt Annan by some BMCS members was a great day out. The tour of the NSW National Herbarium was most enjoyable and a fascinating insight into another world of plants.

With excitement in the air 13 members of Plant Group and Nursery Volunteers set out for Mt Annan Botanic Gardens in the Council Community Bus, driven by a capable volunteer driver. Being Society members with a shared interest in native flora made it a friendly day out.

The National Herbarium was first located in Sydney in 1901. It has samples from 1770 collected by Joseph Banks and other early botanists. Margaret Flockton was the longest serving botanical illustrator and her work was acknowledged with the Margaret Flockton Awards. During 2020/2021 and 2022 the Herbarium was moved out to Mt Annan. You can get a glimpse of it here along with fine botanical illustrations. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7hXRy_d9bo

The Herbarium now stores 1.4million specimens with an estimated 8,000 p.a. plant specimens coming in for identification and possible inclusion in the collection of National Flora. Introduced plants, including weeds are also identified and collected.

Herbarium staff took us on a tour of the newly designed building with sealed rooms for drying plants at 30°C freezing at minus 20°C to sterilise plant specimens, and then a vault for storing specimens in perpetuity. Maps have played a most important role in identifying plant localities. We were fortunate to see volunteers at work preparing a plant for pressing and digital imaging. We learned the most accurate plant identification was done by botanists at the Botanic Gardens. A license is required to collect native flora. Try finding your favourite plant on PlantNET.

Given the threats to biodiversity from land clearing, feral animals and climate change, the scientific research for conservation and restoration of threatened species at the Gardens is essential work. For example, seeds from the threatened species *Marsdenia viridiflora*, *Pultenaea parviflora* and *Pimelea spicata* on the Western Sydney Airport site have been saved for future propagation. <https://www.australianbotanicgarden.com.au/stories/2018/protecting-plants-at-western-sydney-airport>

After the tour we had a nice lunch in the shady Grevillea Gardens and then a walk through the Evolutionary Garden. The extra thrill of the day was finding a turtle in a creek and seeing a flock of Blue Triangle Butterflies.

For more information about the Australian Botanic Garden at Mt Annan:

<https://www.australianbotanicgarden.com.au/>



1.



2.



3.



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Images:

1. BMCS Plant Group & nursery volunteers at the Herbarium

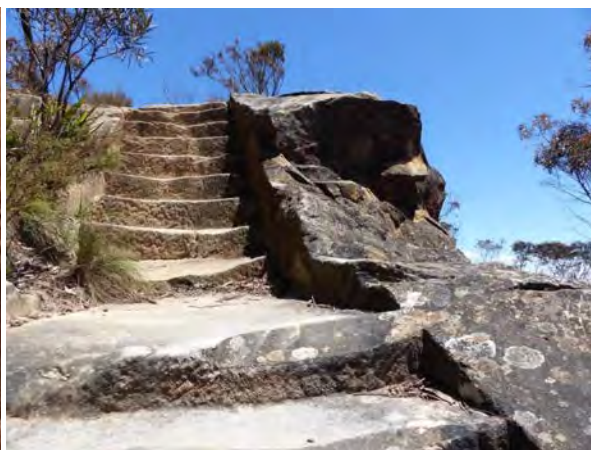
2. Learning about the vault

3. Viewing the maps

4. Plants collected from Fortress Ridge, Blue Mountains National Park

Photographs by Sue Nicol.

Mt Piddington - Where The Sky's The Limit - © Jim Low 2023



Images: An old hand coloured postcard of Mount Piddington Lookout; the steps leading up to the lookout.

Since moving to Mt Victoria the walk to Mt Piddington Lookout has become a favourite one. The lookout provides an extensive view over the Kanimbla Valley and I never tire of seeing it.

A very popular area for rock climbers these days, during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries it was a favourite destination for Blue Mountains' visitors. Artists and photographers wallowed in Kanimbla Valley's vastness from the lookout's wonderful vantage point. Tourists seemed more than happy to walk there from the village. Some were also attracted there by the postcards that attempted to capture the attractive, picturesque qualities of the view from the lookout. The freshness of the air also helped flush the city's toxicity from many a traveller's lungs.

Wondrous distractions abound there, including the hardy, colourful wildflowers that constantly battle the wild winds as well as the variety of wildlife. Bush walks that lure the curious explorer to fascinating places are also plentiful.

'Gentle breezes whispering
In leaf rustling tongue
Air fresh for breathing
Soothing tired lungs.
Greens all in their splendour
Native flowers glow
Their lantern bright colours
Swirl to and fro.'

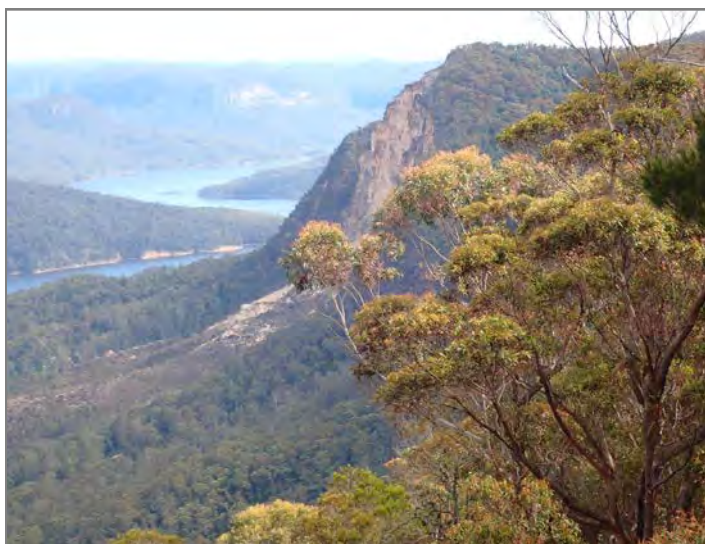
I often find myself fascinated by the intriguing sandstone rock walls that border the way. Time is easily spent imagining what some of these sandstone features could be.

'Indigenous faces
Gesture to talk
A skull's hollowed sockets
The ghost that can walk?
A pilot's old helmet
Young Hinkler below?
More questions than answers
In this gallery's show.'

The final ascent to the lookout is facilitated by a unique set of stone steps which have been cut into the rock face. These twenty four steps climb to the lookout's roughly formed viewing platform. Stopping on the stairway, I often find myself reflecting, as you do when entering an old building, on the many people who once stood in the same place. I wonder if they had similar reactions?

When visiting Mt Piddington, you literally feel as if you were on top of the world, the sky being the only limit up there.

Note: The verses that are included in this article come from a song that I wrote at Mt Piddington entitled ***The Sky's The Limit***.



Robert's Ranges BURRAGORANG LOOKOUT

In late 2022, Lake Burragorang was at capacity and the ranges along the Katoomba to Mittagong walk were showing some recovery from the so-called "Green Wattle Creek" bushfire of 2019. In this view from the Burragorang State Conservation Area, a major 1960s rockslip caused by a nearby coalmine is also visible.

(Photo: Christine Davies)

This series celebrates favourite places of the long-term publisher of bushwalking maps Robert Sloss.

Thought-provoking New Zealand:

In February/March 2023, eight Society members did a private tour of New Zealand, organised by Don Morison.

Aoraki's most popular walk

It's 9.30 in the morning and already dozens of walkers are crowding the walk towards Muller Lookout and the Hooker Valley, on the lower slopes of Aoraki (Mount Cook). Of all the mountains on the major islands of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand, none have achieved the sense of history and danger that this peak has. It is central to the Maori stories about the South Island, the expeditions through which Europeans became aware of New Zealand pursuant to colonisation, the modern New Zealand tourist industry and the experiential confrontation with climate change that all citizens of the planet now need to participate in.



Up a rocky side-track is a tall monument to a dozen or more climbers who perished while trying to attain Aoraki's summit. A couple of kilometres away, in the excellent National Park visitors centre, you meet an effigy of Freda, the first woman to reach the top of Aoraki, and one who did survive her expedition.



At Muller Lookout, half an hour into a slow traverse of the route, interpretive plaques alert you to the significance of the transformation around you. You are looking into a valley that housed the foot of a glacier only a century ago. But now you are gazing down on grey gravel and a churning stream fed from ice melting thousands of metres above you. You have to crane your neck to see the limits of a snow and ice field on the mountainside, presuming the clouds part sufficiently to bring them in view. Three years ago, surrounding snowfields were coloured by smoke and ash that blew across the Tasman from the Australian bushfires.

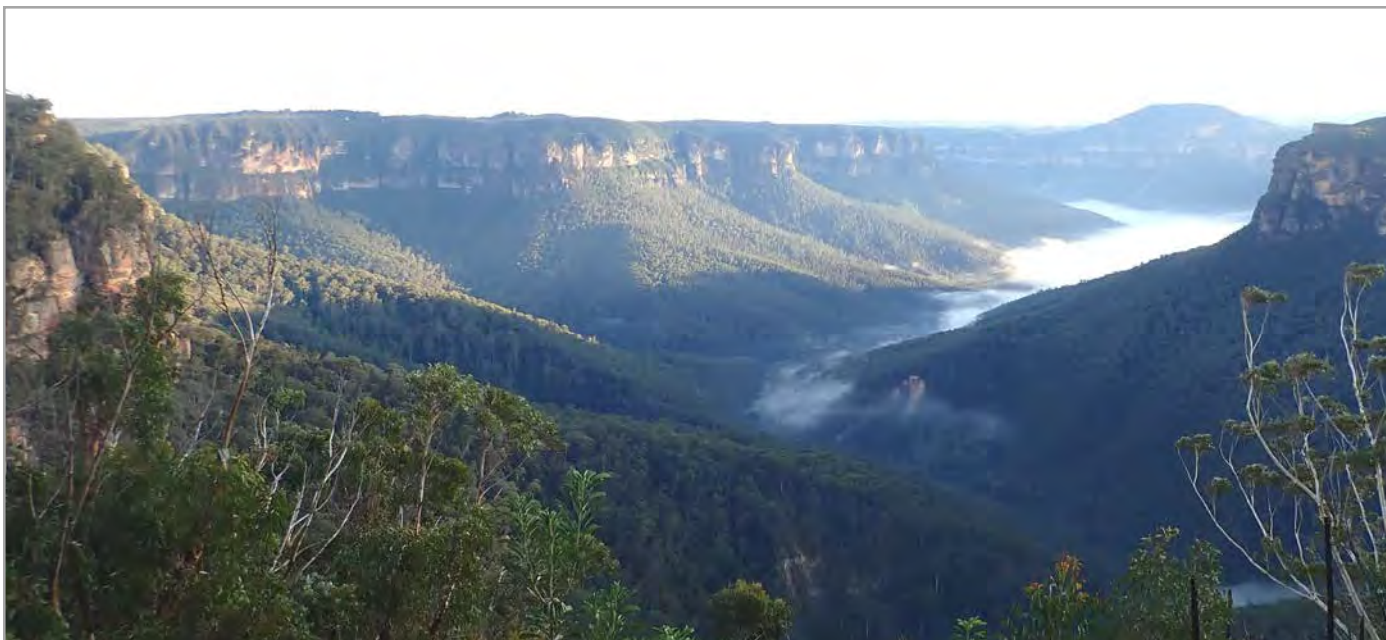
It's educational for the human species that this walk is thronged like no other walk in the Aoraki National Park. If you want to visit it, visit it early in the day.



Text and images by Christine Davies. Images show scenes of the mountainside and swing bridge above and below the Hooker Valley track and text on the NZ National Parks interpretive sign at Mueller Lookout.

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. Join online at www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml or phone 0490 419 779. Membership includes our monthly newsletter, Hut News, by post or e-mail (or both).



Lookouts and escarpment walks Part 7: New Point Pilcher Lookout

-- Opinion by Don Morison

From Medlow Bath, it is possible to drive past the Katoomba airfield (which has still not been incorporated into National Park land) and along a few kilometres of unsealed road to the New Point Pilcher Lookout. While authorities are gradually working to modernise this lookout and it is equipped with an up-to-date toilet, it gives the visitor a sense of remoteness that few other Grose Valley vantage points share.

Its environment is favourable for impressive stands of *Xanthorrhoea* after fire and it is particularly rich in wildflowers in many seasons. Its views of Mount Banks summit, the Banks Wall sandstone and the wide gorge of Govetts Creek make it worth the trip, especially around sunrise or sunset. At these times, be cautious not to disturb the campervan users too abruptly.



Images: Sunrise creeps over the bed of cloud along Govetts Creek, readying itself to illuminate Mount Banks; The glory of red *Lambertia formosa* in bloom with a retinue of lacey white

Poet and activist remembered: The "Pagan Poets" session at the Blue Mountains Music Festival in March 2023 recalled the poet and activist Sue Morrison whose passing in 2016 is still deeply felt by those who care about the Blue Mountains environment.

A Postcard from the Wilderness

Today I awoke with the mountains of Wollemi
 The ancient basalt of Coricudgy, Morundilla, Coriaday
 The broken sediments of an ancient ocean
 the rainforest
 the open forest
 the Apatophyllum and Pultenaea
 the lyrebirds and wombats
 the secretive quolls that lurk in the
 gullies and leave nothing but
 scats
 to mark their passing through
 this wild
 place.
 Who dares to walk this wilderness?
 Who dares to unlock its secrets?
 The rock wallabies sit quietly in their
 hiding places and smile.
 They know their secrets won't be revealed.

Sue Morrison, Gosper's Mountain, October 1992



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

Apr 17 **Popes Glen**- Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre, 9.40 Melanie 0431 214 687

Apr 24 **No Walk**

May 1 **Lost World**- Springwood Westpac Carpark 8.45, Car Pool, Lyn Bevington 0432 352 850

May 8 **Blue Gum Swamp and Grose Head Lookout**, Springwood Station Carpark (Nth Side) 9.10. Carpool, Angela Berry 0427 133 327

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

Apr 11 **Valley of the Waters** (Wentworth Falls) G3/5K, Maurice 0402402783.

Apr 18 **Bundeena to Jibbon Head** G2/5K, Robyn 0409127012.

Apr 25 Anzac Day, no programmed walk.

May 2 **Wetlands at Lime Kiln Bay** (Oatley Park) G2/8K, Peter 47513870.

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

Apr 13 **Walls Cave, Blackheath with morning tea at Tracy's**. Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2

Apr 20 **Terrace Falls, Hazelbrook**. Hazelbrook Stn Car Park, south side 8.45am. Lunch/carpool. Keith 0411 162 345. Gr2

Apr 27 **Wentworth Falls to Rocket Point**. Stockyard Car Park, Wentworth Falls 9.30. Lunch/carpool. Beverley 47572076 Gr2

May 4 **Glenbrook Circuit, Lookouts, Lennox Bridge, Lagoon**. Glenbrook Theatre Carpark 9.30. Take lunch. Ros 0417 261 465. Gr2

May 11 **South Lawson Waterfalls**. Meet top of Honour Ave 8.45am. Lunch/carpool. Keith 0411 162 345. Gr2

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

Apr 8 **Sandham Rd to Wollongambe R Pagodas**. Harold 0409010737, Mt Vic. Stn 8.30. Gr 3. 10km. Map Wollongambe

Apr 15 **Rigby Hill to Walls Lookout**, Alice 0425738766. Mt Vic. Stn. CP. 8.30am. Gr3, 10km. Map Mt Wilson.

Apr 22 **Porters Pass & Colliers Causeway** Harold 0409010737, Blackheath. Stn. CP. 8.30am. Gr3, 8km. Map Katoomba.

Apr 29 **Jinki Ridge**. Harold 0409010737, Mt Vic. Stn. CP. 8.30am. Gr3, 8km. Map Mt Wilson.

May 6 **Blue Gum Forest**. Harold 0409010737, Blackheath. Stn. CP. 8.30am. Gr3, 7km. Map Mt Wilson.

Visit the Saturday walks facebook -

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

During communication with Linda Wake, Linda sent me a copy of an email she had typed for Elizabeth Buki back in 2012. It was addressed to me in response to an article I had written in May 2012 Hut News. Underneath is my original article. I will publish Elizabeth's letter in May Hut News. Christine Davies.

A day at Taronga Zoo

Blue Mountains Conservation Society sponsors an animal at Taronga Zoo—a Feathertail Glider. This choice was made a few years ago because the Feathertail Glider is a native animal which lives in the Blue Mountains and is probably quite common in our neighbouring bushland, but as it is small and nocturnal it is rarely seen and most people are unaware of its existence. It is the smallest gliding animal in the world and feeds on nectar, pollen and insects.

During the recent school holidays I went to Taronga Zoo with my grand-daughter Sylvia. I had not been there for many years. It was an exhausting day—more than five hours train travel, two ferry rides, and walking to see just about every animal an 11 year-old child who has never been to a zoo before wants to see. Fortunately there is a chair lift to take you from the bottom to the top of the zoo, and a little train which we used to backtrack to see the platypus and the nocturnal animals which we had missed on the way down. It was delightful to

actually see a Feathertail Glider in the Nocturnal House. The size of a very small mouse, it was walking on the wall of the enclosure—a vertical pane of glass!

Other highlights were the Seal Show and the Bird Show. The Seal Show was all about education and demonstrating the skills these animals use in the wild, about some of the dangers such as entrapment, and quite a bit of showing off by the stars of the show who seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves.

The QBE Free-flight Bird Show has to be seen to be believed. We were waiting in the amphitheatre, with a stunning view of Sydney Harbour as a backdrop, and a white dove landed on a fence, touched something with its beak and released a sign—the Free-flight Bird Show was on! Birds were swooping over the arena, barely missing our heads. An incredible display of skill and agility, and a great way to learn about some of our native birds. There were birds of prey, an owl, Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, a buzzard which breaks open emu eggs with a rock, and many more.

Sydney Water had a "drink tap water" campaign, with signs saying things like "do elephants drink tap water?". Unfortunately the only place I could find to refill my water bottle was from a tap in a hand basin in a public toilet block. Drinking fountains like those we saw at Manly Beach would have been very welcome. (Christine Davies, Hut News, May 2012)

G

GRASSY WOODLAND



YELLOW-BELLIED GLIDERS

have a flap of skin that connects their front legs to their back legs. This flap is used for gliding. Yellow-bellied gliders can glide up to 114 meters.



A **BEE** produces about 5 grams of honey in her lifetime. Bees fly the equivalent of three times around the world to produce a kilogram of honey.

GIANT STICK INSECTS are long. The biggest stick insect ever recorded was 53 centimeters long.



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Ingrid Hess is a cut-paper artist. Download Ingrid's finished artwork (published in the online version of Hut News) and one to colour (published in the printed version of Hut News).

Collect the pages as they appear in Hut News.

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