



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"

This Month at The Hut

Members of the BMCS management committee attended a planning day which was organised so that members of the new committee could get together and share their hopes and aspirations for the society, participate in an overall plan for the forthcoming year's activities, and get to know each other more rapidly than would otherwise have occurred.

The day was superbly organised and mediated by BMCS members Gary Werskey and Hilary Hughes and held on their property in a bushland setting on Shipley Plateau.

We were all thrilled to find a strong common purpose and identified achievable projects we all felt should go ahead, as well as long-term "dreams" for the society.

A few of these were: world heritage status for BM; protection of aboriginal sites; input/monitoring on subdivisions; nursery expansion; 1000 members by 2/97; *Hut News* to be "a voice of the Blue Mountains environment"; help school's environmental projects; bushcare project at The Hut; local cultural policy for sustainable development and ecotourism (distinct from Sydney); prominent "gateways" to the National Park at all mountain entrances.

A common theme throughout the day was the need for greater membership involvement in the Society's work. Without help from the general membership the management committee cannot be effective—there is just too much to do!

We should continually remind ourselves and others that **it is a privilege to live in the Blue Mountains**. We are not a part of Sydney. We must let residents and visitors know that they are in a National Park.

Feathertail Glider T-Shirts

High quality T-shirts and sloppy-joes are being printed by Mountain King Designs and will be launched for sale at our World Environment Day stall on 9 June.

The design features a beautiful drawing of three Feathertails by Yarramundi artist Ester Kasapuu. The slogan is "Your home is our home too". (Thanks to those who sent in other suggestions.) Cost of T-shirts will be adults \$15, children \$12, sloppy-joes adults \$30 children \$20.

May General Meeting

Paul Curtis, project co-ordinator of the Intelife project gave an interesting talk about the project at the May Meeting.

"Caring for people—caring for the environment." The Intelife project is being carried out by the Sydney City Mission on a degraded quarry site at Wentworth Falls to help unemployed people to gain employment and living skills and to create an environment centre using energy efficient and passive solar buildings and renewal energy power systems—solar, wind, and water—which will be able to demonstrate ecologically sustainable technologies and living skills to large numbers of people.

For those who missed the meeting, this project is too important to be summarised in a short paragraph, and will be better explained in a future issue of "Hut News".

Guest Speaker for June

Guest speaker at the June meeting will be Lyndal Sullivan. Lyndal will update the society on the progress of the Minna Ha Ha Land Care Group which was formed five years ago with help from UBMCS. Lyndal will also discuss a local environment plan.

From the Mailbag Warragamba Dam

Last year the Carr Government announced that a second spillway would be constructed at Warragamba Dam instead of raising the dam wall 23 metres.

Kowmung Committee has drawn our attention to an active campaign by a group called DAMIT to have the Dam wall raised.

The Government needs our support to maintain its positive environmental stand on this issue. BMCS will write to confirm our support of the second spillway option and request the Government for information on progress made towards implementation.

Save Our Forests

Major environmental organisations are banding together to save our forests.

"Over the last year, the Carr Government has been examining the remaining native forest along the eastern seaboard. For the first time, locations of old growth forest, wilderness areas, rainforests and endangered species have been mapped. The information gives new insights into what is needed for a world-class reserve system, with comprehensive, adequate and representative parks to protect our forests."

Big Forest Meetings:

- Lawson Community Hall, 13 June, 7.30 pm.
- Sydney Town Hall, 20 June, 7 pm.

"Please come and help us protect our native forests from further destruction. It's our best chance this decade to save what is left".

Say NO to export woodchipping.

New Pet Laws

Following the last *Hut News*, the long awaited "green paper" on this important subject has been released for public comment. We have until 5 July 1996 to formulate and submit our comments, as a concerned Conservation Society.

We will, after reading this 61-page document, formulate our own submission. We appeal to our members to obtain a copy of the Green Paper from the Department of Local Government (02.251.8498) or your local council and to write to us so that we may, under the Society's banner, make an informed decision on this proposed legislation. Remember the saying, "You've got to be in it to win it"—please send your comments to us at PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.—*Chris Hannocks*

World Environment Day

Celebrations for World Environment Day in the Blue Mountains are to be held at Katoomba Town Centre (near the library) on Sunday 9 June.

BMCS is having a display based on the theme of "Habitat—you can do it". We will be featuring our adopted animal, the Feathertail Glider, and suggesting ways to improve the habitat values in people's own gardens. We need volunteers to help out on the stall for any part of the day, talking to people and promoting the society. If you can help contact Linda on 82-1291. The more the merrier.

There will be live entertainment throughout the day, starting at 10 am. Those who came to our Australia Day Bush Dance will not want to miss Denis Kevans with Vinegar Hill Bush Band at 2 pm.

**"Hut News", the newsletter of the
Upper Blue Mountains
Conservation Society Inc.**

P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782.

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Deadline for the July issue is June 25

Road Worth the Wait

As many of you know, road subsidences on the Great Western Highway, Katoomba in 1990 and 1992 were causing turbidity and siltation in the Bonnie Doon creeks. These slips caused tonnes of fill, which had been previously placed in batters in the gully by the RTA, to create serious sedimentation problems. This threatened the rare plants that inhabit the rock shelves in and around the waterfall.

RTA's initial response to the continual subsidence of the highway was to import yet more fill and construct more batters further down the gully. Blue Mountains City Council staff and Bonnie Doon Fauna Study negotiated with RTA staff for 15 months with a view to forming an environmentally acceptable alternate plan.

We are pleased to report that a gabion wall construction is now in place as well as extensive sediment controls. During construction Bonnie Doon Fauna Study was always made welcome at the site by RTA management and the local construction staff. Several progress meetings were held and BDFS and BMCC had considerable input to the various stages. A friendly working relationship was established between all parties and wildlife/habitat information exchanged.

The alternate plan was developed at considerable expense to the RTA. Additionally, this authority has accepted full responsibility for previous damage to the gully and are financing bush regeneration at a cost of \$70,000 to be spent over three years. They are further financing revegetation and maintenance on RTA land.

If you would like any further information about the site or would like to visit the area, please contact Bonnie Doon Fauna Study, 82-2218.

Lost in the Maze

Two members of BMCS, who prefer to remain anonymous, went to inspect the bulldozing work done at North Katoomba by the Department of Water Resources, and walked around the maze of firetrails which have been established there.

We were at a disadvantage not knowing what the area had been like before the bulldozing but it seemed that there had been even more roads which had been dug up so that they could regenerate. There are still an excessive number of firetrails, running parallel and criss-crossing one another, which had been widened, with humps constructed to reduce erosion.

On returning to our car and leaving we took a wrong turn and by the time we passed the old quarry for the third time realised that we were completely lost. It was only through superb map-reading skills and powers of deduction, spurred on by the imagined embarrassing headlines in the Gazette: "Conservationists missing in North Katoomba...last seen driving along

Second Avenue..." that we found our way out of the maze.

What is the future of this pretty bushland? Why were so many firetrails left open? *Anon.*

Nellies Glen

Bulldozing was also done to widen the Nellies Glen firetrail. Congratulations to BMCC's bush regenerators for excellent work done in placing brush-matting and other erosion control strategies along the sides of the road. However this road is too steep and there are already erosion gullies after recent rains. Do we need this road? Could it be replaced by a walking track?

Green Bans—25 years on

It is 25 years since the Builders Labourers' Federation (BLF) imposed the first (in the world) Green Bans to support the Battlers for Kelly's Bush, a committee formed by three local women to save three hectares of the last patch of native bushland on the Parramatta River. Thousands of people throughout Australia joined in a campaign in support of the Battlers and the BLF. Kylie Tennant summed up the significance of the struggle:

"Kelly's Bush is a symbol of our lost land. Take away Kelly's Bush and you take away more assurance that in man is left a possibility for the future. The unborn Australian will ask for his birthright and be handed a piece of concrete."

(The words of Denis Kevans' song, Green Ban Fusiliers, are on Page 4)

Book Review

The Mammals of Australia, Australian Museum/Reed Books, published 1995

This book surveys the rich and varied heritage of Australia's mammals, from the well-known platypus and koala; to the lesser-known pygmy-possums and gliders, bats and carnivorous marsupials; the seals and sea-lions, and introduced mammals such as the rabbit and camel—in fact every species of native mammal known to have existed in Australia since European settlement and every introduced species now living in a wild state.

The result of many years of intensive research, it is a magnificent photographic record with text by more than 150 authors, all acknowledged experts who have worked in the field with the species they describe. Each species account summarises behaviour, habitat, diet, reproduction, growth, and factors that lead to death — everything that is known of an animal's current biology and survival status.

All Australian mammals have been affected by European settlement. A few large grazing kangaroos and some native rodents may have benefited and increased in numbers, but most species appear to have decreased in range and numbers, some to the point of extinction, and are increasingly

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threatened as development encroaches on natural habitats and introduced predators take their toll.

Dotted through the book are illustrations and descriptions of mammals which have not made it through the first two hundred years of European occupation, e.g. the Lesser Bilby who couldn't compete with the rabbit, and the beautiful Toolache Wallaby which was hunted to extinction.

This book will aid in fostering appreciation of the fragility and uniqueness of Australian mammals. At \$75 it's not cheap, but it is a priceless addition for any home or school library. **Highly recommended.**

A Mountain Moment

(At Minna Ha Ha, May 20, 1996.)

We could hear the song of seemingly hundreds of birds. They were in the heath, bursting out of the foliage, pairs chasing across the top with a short song, and diving back into the banksias. Or dashing across the creek in a group, individuals rising from the shrubs, perching momentarily on a branch to sing and then diving down again.

They were having a wonderful party, playing and singing in flight, oblivious to the spectators, intoxicated by the beauty of the autumn day, by sweet nectar from the dripping banksias, or by love—slender birds with a flash of yellow on the wing.

We saw scores of birds, impossible to count, and every bird we saw was a New Holland Honeyeater.—(CD)

(We are privileged to live in the Blue Mountains. There are so many beautiful places to visit and so often there is the unexpected and unforgettable thrill as The Blue Mountains reveals itself to us. Share your Mountain Moments—send a few short sentences for publication in Hut News.)

Members Enquiries

If members have information or want advice or assistance from the Society on environmental matters don't wait until you "bump into someone". Write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782 and your letter will be passed to the right person.

This newsletter is photocopied courtesy of

**BLACKHEATH AREA
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ELIXOR

High up the gnarled old River Gum bole
Two Little Lorikeets examine a nest hole—
The birds so green, the trunk so white,
The sky so blue, the sun so bright
Turning the riverbed sands to gold.
Young, young I feel, though you'd judge me old.
—Graham Alcorn.

Magpie Interlude

One of the magpies in my garden was already very tame when he/she first appeared as a youngster two or three years ago, and has remained so. I do not encourage magpies, because I have so many small birds, but I do not actively discourage them either. In fact, there is not much point in trying to discourage this tame one. When I have tried to, I have had to walk right up to him where he sits on the balcony rail, scold him, and then stretch out my hand to touch him before he will move at all. Then he merely shuffles sideways a couple of feet. He looks at threatening gestures with total disbelief.

The other day I had begun to walk down the drive, which is 50m long, when I

saw him at the bottom, walking up. When he saw me, he accelerated towards me. We both stopped when we were about 2m apart, and he stood looking at me hopefully. So I said "You know I don't feed magpies". In response, he opened his beak and warbled at me. When he finished, I warbled back (less melodiously, but I think it was not too bad for a first attempt). He was really intrigued! When I stopped, he warbled again, and then we took it in turns to warble. At one stage he gave me a really searching look; it was even straight in the eye for a second or two.

After we had exchanged about six warbles each, finishing with me, he nodded, as though to say "That's enough", or to indicate that his curiosity was satisfied. Then he walked straight past me and went about his business.

I hope he enjoyed the exchange as much as I did. —Rachel Makinson.

New Members

Welcome to new members:

Lyn Mitchell, Leura
Marie McInnes, Leura
John and Ellen Crump, Blackheath

BMCS Nursery

Open for sales of native plants Tuesday mornings 9-12. Volunteers are welcome. Enquiries to David Coleby (84-1395).

Thank You

At the April meeting we raffled a beautiful pink Darling Lily (*Crinum flaccidum*) in full flower, and raised almost \$70 for the Society.

The Darling Lily (which grows on the Darling flood plain) is normally white. Jill Dark thought this pink one very unusual, and bought several tickets to try to win it!

Thanks to Rachel Makinson of Mount Victoria, who donated several Darling Lily bulbs to the Society. This, the biggest one of the lot, has flourished at the Blackheath Nursery for about a year, even surviving last winter's frosts.—David Coleby.

Membership Enquiries

The Society is keen to have new members who are concerned about the welfare of the Blue Mountains natural environment. Contact the membership secretary, Ross Coster, telephone (047) 59.1247, FAX 59.1095, or write to P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

In the Bush

Bunyip had barely surfaced from his China water-hole before he seized an opportunity to join a painting group journeying to Oodnadatta and the Everard Ranges, so he hurriedly posted off his comments on the current State of the Environment Report which he had prepared earlier in the year at the request of the management committee.

The contents of the SoE report are very relevant to "In the Bush" for they reveal on a grand scale the affect the "City" is having and will have on the surrounding bush.

The report is divided into twelve sections. Each section is then described in some detail e.g. Section 5: Physical environment and social/economic profile of the city. Section 4: Land—

description of landforms, Geology, Soils—pressures on the land, population, major land uses, development, livestock, soil erosion, land slips. And so the Report works its way through the environment of our city—Water, Air, Biodiversity, Waste, Noise, Heritage, Open space.

In conclusion, under the heading of Response, council explains its land zoning objectives and its planning strategy, erosion and sedimentation control policy, its work restoration and rehabilitation

projects and finally lists community based environmental groups (we get a mention).

Here are some points of interest I jotted down while reading the report.

The City in 1991 had a population of 69,402 persons distributed across 26 towns and villages.

The Blue Mountains National Park comprises 72% of the city area. The population capacity of the City has been estimated to be in the vicinity of 95,000 to 100,000 (based on current land use zoning and land available for residential development). The current infrastructure, however, is considered to be incapable of supporting this population without major upgrading.

161 species of birds were counted between Katoomba and Wentworth Falls. Other counts for different areas are given.

It was discovered that one species of Eucalypt (*E. copulans*) endemic to central Wentworth Falls now survives as a single individual after being presumed extinct.

Council has spent \$90,000 and NPWS \$150,000 on rehabilitation and reconstruction works on sections of the Black Line, established during the 1994 bushfires.

Noises from barking dogs in residential areas is a concern to the community and is the most common type of noise complaint to Council. As at June 1995 some 7,946

dogs were registered in the city.

There are numerous tables of interest, e.g. lists of native vegetation found in different areas, distribution of Geology types in the City, distribution of Soil types.

I felt the authors showed a keen awareness and understanding of all sections covered in the Report and were most open in their recognition of what should be done.

The cost of implementing and solving the problems raised is not mentioned. The most brilliant awareness of what is and what should be done is only as good as what the electorate will support.

Perhaps the Society could play a major role in seeing the State of the Environment report is widely publicised and discussed and so ensure there will be a walk "in the bush" for our descendants. **The Bunyip**

(P.S. *Bunyip invites contributions to the column—any bush observations or comments of general interest would be most welcome and acknowledged if used.*)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Walks have been graded: 1-3 easy, 4-7 medium, 8-10 harder.
If in doubt contact the leader. **Walkers must carry 1 litre of water.**

JUNE

- 02 (Sun) **Bushwalk—Porter's Pass.** A wonderful walk through heath and rainforest. Meet at Blackheath Station commuter carpark at 10 am. Duration about 4-5 hours. Grade 5. Contact John Gibbs 82.6509.
- 03 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Den Fenella.** Meet at The Hut at 9.30. Contact Lee Tredinnick 57.4030.
- 15 (Sat) **Bushwalk—Lockley's Pylon.** Magnificent views. Meet at Leura Station carpark 9 am. Duration about 5 hours including drive to track head. Grade 4. Contact Chris Woods 82.3419.
- 17 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Cliff-top: Leura Cascades to Echo Point.** Meet Leura Cascades picnic area at 9.30. Contact Norah Gaynor 87.6071. Grade 4.
- 19 (Wed) **Bushwalk—Valhalla Head.** An easy walk on the plateau. Meet Mt. Victoria Station 9 am. Duration about 5 hours. Grade 4. Contact Imre Gahl 84.3286.
- 24 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Old Point Pilcher.** Meet northern side of Medlow Bath Station at 9.30. Contact Christine Davies 87.7246. Grade 4.
- 25 (Tues) **Committee Meeting** at The Hut at 7 pm.
- 28 (Fri) **General Meeting at The Hut** at 7.30 pm. Guest speaker Lyndal Sullivan—Minna Ha Ha Land Care Group.

JULY

- 01 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Bonnie Doon.** Meet at the Explorers Tree at 9.30. Contact John Gibbs 82.6509. Grade 4.
- 07 (Sun) **Bushwalk—Bruce's Walk (second half).** Across the north of Leura/Katoomba. Meet at Leura School, cnr. Great Western Highway and Mount Hay Road, at 9am. Duration 6-7 hours. Grade 6—need to be reasonably fit. Contact Lloyd Jones 57.2270.
- 08 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Wilson's Glen.** Meet on southern side of Woodford Station at 9.30. Grade 4. Contact Christine Davies 87.7246.
- 15 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Mount York.** Meet Mount Victoria Station at 9.30. Contact Tessa Knight 87.6543.
- 17 (Wed) **Bushwalk—Overcliff and Undercliff Tracks,** with views over Jamison Valley. Meet at The Hut, end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, at 9.45. Duration 3 hours. Grade 5. Contact Les Coyne 57.3327.
- 20 (Sat) **Bushwalk—Tessolite Hill, Mount Irvine.** Duration about 6 hours, include drive to Mount Irvine. Meet at Mount Victoria Station at 8.30 am. Grade 5. Contact Olive Noble 87.8342.
- 22 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Fairy Bower.** Meet Mount Victoria Station at 9.30. Contact Daphne Rawling 87.8567.
- 23 (Tues) **Committee Meeting** at The Hut at 7 pm.
- 26 (Fri) **General Meeting** at The Hut at 7.30 pm.
- 29 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Inspiration Point.** Meet Carpark, bottom of Leura Golf Club, below Fairmont Resort, at 9.30. Contact Lee Tredinnick 57.4030.

GREEN BAN FUSILIERS

Up Broadway, to the MBA, come the green ban fusiliers,
They stole the street, with their marching feet, placards
high above their ears,
In Sydney town, they would not lie down, they gave
Martin's scabs some cheer,
And it's up Broadway, to the MBA, come the green ban
fusiliers.

Half-smart thieves, with their Gucci sleeves, and
carparks on the brain,
Told the usual lie, the trees've got to die, the figtrees in
Sydney Domain,
And some said: "Joe, we orta let'em go, it's only bloody
timber to be cleared",
Ah, but listen to the trees, as they whisper to the breeze,
and the green ban fusiliers.

Bulldozer blades made a lightning raid, coming in with a
great big rush,
Moving in for the kill, at Hunter's Hill, at beautiful Kelly's
bush,
But the local women lay down in the bulldozer's way, to
the bucken' and the shudderen' of the gears,
When their hands were raised, then the ones they
praised, were the green ban fusiliers.

Up Broadway, to the MBA, come the green ban fusiliers,
They stole the street, with their marching feet, placards
high above their ears,
In Sydney town, they would not lie down, they gave
Martin's scabs some cheer,
And it's up Broadway, to the MBA, come the green ban
fusiliers.

fusiliers.

They made a stand, for our sunny land, at the Rocks
and Woolloomooloo,
On chimney tops, they danced with the cops, to save a
bit of Sydney for you,
And the finance fleas, who made refugees, of families
who had been pioneers,
Finished on their arse, and they did their brass, with the
green ban fusiliers.

Through the years, those old fusiliers, I can see'em
marching again,
From the dizzy heights, and the concrete sites, in
sunshine and in rain,
That patch of green's getting a lovely old sheen, no
matter how many flow the years,
And it's up Broadway to the MBA come the green ban
fusiliers.

Up Broadway, to the MBA, come the green ban
fusiliers,
They stole the street, with their marching feet, placards
high above their ears,
In Sydney town, they would not lie down, they gave
Martin's scabs some cheer,
And it's up Broadway, to the MBA, come the green ban
fusiliers.

(MBA: Master Builders Association)

—Denis Kevans.