



## "Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"

### DAMIT or Conserve It?

In an expensive and highly organised campaign, Hawkesbury Council backed group DAMIT predicts a disaster on a scale far eclipsing the combined tragedies of Cyclone Tracy, Ash Wednesday bushfires and Newcastle earthquake if the dam wall is not raised: "Save us all—Raise the Wall". (No mention of possible side-benefits of a flood-free Hawkesbury plain—enormous real estate profits!)

Raising the wall of Warragamba Dam will flood the valleys of two large wilderness areas in the Southern Blue Mountains, including the pristine Kowmung River. Downstream there will be major impacts on the Hawkesbury-Nepean environment.

The Kowmung Committee needs our support.

"The Kowmung Committee's campaign to prevent the raising of Warragamba Dam is only halfway complete. The first part, to convince the Government to abandon the dam raising plan, was successful.

"The next stage is to ensure Government implements this position. Hawkesbury Council sponsored DAMIT is placing increasing pressure to revive the dam raising plans. The lobby group is scaring local floodplain residents and politicians into believing that they need a 23 metre higher dam.

"Until the EIS for the non-dam raising option—a second spillway—is approved, and construction begins, the Kowmung Committee cannot breathe easy.

"The EIS for the second spillway is due for release in August and community education and support is vital to see the proposal adopted."

Members are urged to write letters to the Penrith Press(513 High Street, Penrith), the Hawkesbury Gazette (PO Box 999, North Richmond 2754) and other newspapers (e.g. Sydney Morning Herald, Letters Ed, GPO Box 3771, Sydney 2001). Kowmung Fact Sheets that you could use to help present your argument, prepared to brief politicians last year, can be obtained from either Pip Walsh 02.517.1121 or Keith Muir on 02.241.2702.

Kowmung Committee urgently needs funds to help with the campaign. Send donations to The Kowmung Committee Inc., GPO Box 2090, Sydney 2001. Donations are tax deductible.

### Holly at Pope's Glen

Pope's Glen Bushcare's Alan Lane believes that last month's "Weed of the Month" should be the weed of the month every month. This point of view is understandable—the holly in Pope's Glen is amazing. It suckers under the ground like bamboo and forms clumps of spiky bushes which are a bush regenerator's nightmare—and there are lots of holly bushes in the surrounding gardens to provide a ever-renewable seed source for more holly bushes to spring up in bushland.

Maybe one day we can convince the Department of Agriculture to declare the plant a noxious weed—perhaps we could persuade one of their staff to spend a day weeding in Pope's Glen!

There are, however, (unfortunately), other gardens plants which invade bushland in the Blue Mountains.....

### Weed of the Month

#### HONEYSUCKLE (*Lonicera japonica*)



A scrambling vine which is grown for its sweet-smelling spring flowers. It has thin stalky stems which become woody and thickened with age; leaves are usually lobed or toothed and the strongly scented

flowers are yellow/white with a pink-tinged tube. This vine forms roots at the leaf joints or nodes, and scrambles to entwine with other plants, thus making it difficult to remove.

Honeysuckle invades bushland from adjoining gardens, or is introduced through garden dumpings.

Remove by pulling firmly at each stem until a node is reached, then cutting each cluster of small roots with a small knife. Once you reach the main root system dig it out. Parts of the vine which are thoroughly tangled in other plants and off the ground should be cut and left in place.

Do the National Park a favour and don't grow this plant in your garden. Cut it down...put it in the big bin...take it to the tip. **Who needs to grow a weed!!**

### Kowmung Walk.

Walk the banks of the middle Kowmung River over the October long weekend (5-7 Oct) and hunt out feral willows.

Members of the Kowmung Committee have already poisoned willows on some sections of the river. With the co-operation of the NPWS, further sections of the Kowmung will be tackled. A short but steep day's walk from Kanangra Walls offers access to the river.

For details on joining a team contact Pip Walsh on 02.517.1121.



### The Great Gorse Gorse Walk

The Great Gorse Gorse Walk, organised by the Friends of the Blue Gum Forest, BMCC bushland staff, and NPWS, will be held between August 24 and September 1.

Gorse and broom each produce thousands of seeds and the seeds remain viable in the soil for years. The trick is to find them before they can set seed. Each noxious plant that is removed or killed represents a large number of potential plants that would otherwise flourish and multiply.

Catchment areas needing volunteers for half day and day activities include Minnahaha Reserve, Pope's Glen, Braeside Walk and Govett's Leap. Valley areas involve two and four day overnight walks. There will also be a day activity in the lower Grose River area.

Enquiries to Eric Mahoney (BMCC) 82.0787, or Kath Ireland (NPWS) 87.8877.

### August Guest Speakers.

Guest speakers at the August general meeting on Friday 30 August will be Ian Brown and Dave Noble of NPWS who will talk about recreational management in the Wentworth Falls and Katoomba regions of the Blue Mountains National Park.

Representatives of the University of Western Sydney will address the meeting about their Jamison Creek restoration project. The meeting starts at 7.30 pm at The Conservation Hut end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls. Visitors are welcome.

**"Hut News", the newsletter of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.**  
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782.  
**President: Colin Williams 84-1899**  
**Secretary: Les Coyne 57-3327**  
**Editor: Christine Davies 87-7246**  
**Deadline for September issue is Aug.27**

## Land Use Report

### Sydney's Second Airport:

19 August 1996 is the deadline for submissions on the Federal Environment Protection Authority's enquiry into the site of Sydney's second airport (address to Second Sydney Airport Draft EIS Guidelines, Environment Assessment Branch, Environment Protection Agency, 40 Blackall Street, Barton, ACT, 2600).

Blue Mountains Council is now opposed to a new major airport in the Sydney basin. The Federal EPA's guidelines are still ambivalent about how much attention the new enquiry will pay to the option: **Neither** Badgery's Creek **Nor** Holsworthy.

Both sites could seriously increase air and noise pollution in Lower Mountains/Penrith, and the Badgery's Creek site would create massive development pressures through the entire Mountains.

Both Council and individual residents should write to the EPA, urging more attention to the **Neither/Nor** option.

BMCS secretary is holding a copy of the draft guidelines for the study.

### New BMCS Sub-Committees

- To look at issues concerning planning, subdivision and the new Environment Management Plan (EMP2) within Blue Mountains Council area.
- To look at landcare funding throughout the greater Blue Mountains.

Both committees will liaise with the Blue Mountains and Cox's River Catchment Committees.

Members who are not on the Management Committee are **WELCOME** on these sub-committees, **even if you have only just joined**. Please leave your name and phone number with the Secretary.

### Mount Airley/Mount Genowlan

BMCS is assembling a file on this very important conservation area near Capertee north of Lithgow. Regardless of when proposed underground coal mining commences, management of the area is going to require input from the Conservation movement.

### Subdivision Site Inspections

A BMCS representative joined Council and Catchment Committee officers for site inspections at Springwood and Valley Heights on 16 July. Some very useful ideas emerged about how environment protection could be further improved during construction of future subdivisions.

### Martin's Lookout Access off Farm Road, Springwood

This unsealed access track, currently open to motor traffic, is deteriorating. Any suggestions?

Written submissions to P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782, or FAX 87.6912

—Don Morison

## Visit to Vietnam—Graham Alcorn.

Bunyip's article about China in the May *Hut News* prompts me to write about Vietnam, which I visited for six weeks from the beginning of March 1996.

The problems seem much the same — basically, millions of people....very nice people, I might add, friendly, handsome, healthy, cheerful.

I can speak only of the North—Hanoi, the capital, and various trips into the country, where every inch of cultivatable land is planted in rice and, in some places, vegetables.

I didn't see evidence of smoke pollution in Hanoi, nor an emerging wealthy class. Few cars, thousands of bicycles and two-stroke motor bikes and scooters. Also, I read somewhere that the motor bikes here only appeared in the last five years. Goodness knows what will happen in the next five years. At present there is an attractive air or innocence and equality.

What for me was amazing and disappointing was the absence of birds. Vietnam has more bird species than Australia—over 800. It is said to be the best bird country in South-East Asia. I saw 19 of them. They must be up in the dense jungles of the inland mountains.

Through thousands of acres of soggy rice fields I saw three egrets and one cormorant. A magazine article describing a hill where nine species of egret roost and nest, advanced this as a desirable ecological area to attract tourists. "*Egret eggs and meat, served as a delicacy, would be an added attraction*", the article concluded.

In Harlong Bay a boy offered for sale six or seven swallows in a plastic bag. His companion was shooting them with an airgun when they settled.

Not one seagull anywhere! In a four-hour cruise around this very scenic bay of 3,000 islands we saw one fork-tailed kite. It was quite eerie. At Tra Co, in the extreme North, on the very extensive tidal flats, we saw three doterels.

Vietnam is a long, narrow country of coastal plains backed by jungle clad mountains, covering 14 degrees of latitude and many different environments. There are several national parks.

We visited the first of Vietnam's national parks, Cuc Phuong, of 22,200 hectares, created in 1962. It has a bird list of over 300, 60 mammals, 2,000 plant species. But rain on the clay roads prevented us getting to the centre of the park, as pillion passengers on hired motor bikes. Here there is a walking track through dense jungle, huge 1,000 year old trees.

We stayed in splendid lodgings at the beginning of the Park. I saw eight bird species in all. Two German scientists, financed from Germany, were raising endangered species of monkeys and

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gibbons in large enclosures. These were young animals confiscated from markets. The Hill Tribes people would have shot the mothers to obtain the babies.

The answer, of course, is to provide these people with an alternative and easier way of making a living. One of our splendid Blue Mountains residents, Rosemary Morrow, is doing just that, teaching the Hill Peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, permaculture.

I guess I was just unlucky. The Worldwide Fund for Wildlife has an office in Hanoi. But they had gone to another building and I couldn't trace them. A world bird study organisation also has an official there, but he was away in Laos. I rang and rang in vain a professor who had compiled a bird list.

A magazine article gave glowing accounts of Vietnam's wildlife—a new species of pheasant just discovered, a new mammal as big as a cow, the Saola, was discovered only three or four years ago, and since then a new species of deer. There are over 400 wild elephants still there, and a rare rhinoceros.

I met three Australian botanists in Ba Vi National Park, working with a Vietnamese pharmacologist, collecting and cataloging medicinal plants.

So things are being done and it is the government's policy, like that of China, to achieve population zero by encouraging the limitation of family size.

My visit was primarily a social one. I would recommend that anyone planning to study nature there should go on a guided tour oriented to that purpose.

—Graham Alcorn, June 1996.

## Welcome to New Members

Jess Gleeson, Katoomba; Ms. Hannay, Blackheath; Bronwyn Barnard, Mt. Victoria; Lyn and Merle Thompson, Woodford; Malcolm Gainsford, Katoomba;

Margit Kent, Wentworth Falls; Millie Rogers, Katoomba; Gail Abbott, Balmain; Marie Cherry, Lithgow; Max Krumbeck, Blackheath.

**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.**

## Intelife

On Wednesday, June 5, a group of Society members attended the "special day" at the Intelife Project on the old quarry site in Wentworth Falls. The staff, in their very well presented programme, hoped that we would have "a stimulating, interesting and rewarding day" with them.

Those words barely convey the feelings we all experienced—I for one wanted to rush home, trash my rockery and begin immediately to grow vegetables in just the way they are being grown there. And oh! to have a water garden and spiral pump! This latter was very exciting indeed, a marvel of engineering and a pleasure to the eye.

The young trainees, who had obviously contributed much to their World Environment Day celebrations by way of innovative signs and general preparations for the day, gave us a fresh insight into the hearts and minds of the so-called "X generation". With the guidance of trained staff, they are making great strides in preparing for future employment in a range of ecologically sound activities, demonstrating many of these activities in a charming way.

It was heart-warming to witness the presentation to their leader, Paul Curtis, of a framed print of the Intelife logo; and to hear Paul's moving speech before the BIG

EVENT, the unveiling of the solar system. This latter was a "fun" thing in which we all took part by holding the ropes which held the canvas covering the panels and, on the word "go" pulled on the ropes and revealed the panels in all their shining glory. It being a sunny, windless day, the panels gleamed and performed their function on the north-facing roof of the woodwork building.

I urge members of our Society to contact Kerri Ann Sutherland at the Intelife office at Wentworth Falls on (047) 57-2451 to arrange a visit, following which I feel sure you will agree that this project is thoroughly deserving of the Society's support.—*Judy Ferfoglia, Leura.*

## ULLADULLA

On a headland at Ulladulla  
Margaret and I,  
Below us the blue sea booming,  
The coastal heath knee high.  
The sea breeze drops for some reason.  
In the air hang Hover flies.  
Of a sudden Swifts come zooming  
Out of the sky.  
Sweeping, soaring, circling,  
Wooshing stridently by.  
Swooping across the headland  
To feast on the Hover Flies.  
The coastal heath around us.  
The booming sea below—  
Do you remember, Margaret,  
That afternoon, years ago?

*Graham Alcorn, September 1995*

## Leisure Walks

On a recent leisure walk to Fairy Bower, Mount Victoria, we were impressed at the age differences of the participants, with nearly 90 years between the youngest (9-month old Dylan) and the oldest (unnamed). It was a pleasant walk, and some of us discovered for the first time "The White Lady" which had been hidden under moss and lichens and was uncovered by the drought.—*John Gibbs.*

## In the Bush

The last instalment covered our journey to as far as Oodnadatta. As for that hamlet, few words are needed to describe it. The main street, as in many other outback towns, is of vast width. The local dogs can sleep soundly in the centre of it without fear of traffic. I was told that such width was deliberately planned to allow the camel and bullock teams to do a U-turn with ease.

We headed west for Marla on the Stuart Highway and paused to paint among the Arkaringa Hills. Our most florid results could not outdo what those mesa-like hills can produce.

Marla, then Coober Pedy. A half hour run out from our underground hostel brought us into the Breakaway country. The strength of the earth colours and the

solitude and space sent a tingle up one's spine. Many a day could be spent there.

Space does not permit me dwelling on observations and thoughts seen and felt on the long run south through Woomera and Port Augusta—suffice to say that those who can hammer out happiness in such featureless and arid areas enjoy my deepest respect.

Our next pleasant experience was a two day stay at the old mining site of Silverton. A rustic pub and a few art studios and plenty of ruins and plaques are all that remain of this town, long by-passed by Broken Hill, 24 kilometres to the east. I recommend its 10k nature trail winding through a section of the Barrier Range and giving vast views out over the uninhabited surrounding plains.

And so it was on over a Darling running a banker at Wilcannia and on to Nyngan. Once there, cropping and grazing commenced and no longer could one claim to be "in the bush".

As for the local scene, already odd specimens of *Boronia ledifolia* (Sydney *Boronia*) may be seen and by the time this is published there should be a grand showing. Waratah buds are filling out nicely so we should enjoy a good showing in late September.

—*The Bunyip*

The Bunyip has itchy feet and is keen to take off again, this time to the Flinders Ranges. He said he was very impressed with the tour operator, Bert Bolton's Outback Track Tours, and that prices are very reasonable.

Specialist tours coming up are:

17 August, (for artists and photographers) Flinders Ranges Bushwalking Tour, a series of day-walks. (16 days)

28 September, a Birdwatchers' expedition to Lake Mungo.

September? (for botanists and native plant enthusiasts), Roaming the Ranges and Rainforests (Qld). Enquiries to: Freecall 1800.624700, Fax 043.41.5041.

**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.**

**AUGUST**

- 04 (Sun) **Bushwalk—Valley of the Waters (upper section).** Meet Leura Railway Station commuter carpark at 9 am. Duration 5-6 hours. Grade 5-6. Contact Imre Gahl 84.3286.
- 05 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Dargan’s Creek.** Meet Mount Victoria Station at 9.30. Contact Gillian Janus 87.6181.
- 12 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Pope’s Glen.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre at 9.30. Contact Tessa Knight 87.6543.
- 17 (Sat) **Bushwalk—Greaves Creek Special.** Meet end of Evans Lookout Road, Blackheath at 9 am. Duration 6 hours. Grade 7. Contact Chris Woods 82.3419.
- 19 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Jack Evans Track.** A beautiful wildflower walk to Erskine Creek in the National Park at Glenbrook. Meet at 9.30 at Glenbrook Station. Contact Christine Davies 87-7246.
- 21 (Wed) **Bushwalk—Woodford Dam Ramble.** Meet at Water Board gate, end of Winbourne Road, Hazelbrook at 10 am. Duration 4 hours. Grade 4-5. Contact Allan Macauley 39.2767.
- 26 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Twin Falls and Pulpit Rock.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre at 9.30. Contact Daphne Rawling 87.8567.
- 27 (Tues) **Committee Meeting** at The Hut at 7 pm.
- 30 (Fri) **General Meeting** at The Hut at 7.30 pm. Guest speakers Ian Brown and Dave Noble of NPWS will talk about recreational management in the Wentworth Falls and Katoomba regions of the Blue Mountains National Park.

**SEPTEMBER**

- 01 (Sun) **Bushwalk—Pope’s Glen to Evans Lookout. Put a Spring in your step!** Meet at the War Memorial, opposite Blackheath Railway Station, at 9 am. Duration 5 hours. Grade 5. Contact Chris Woods 82.3419.
- 02 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Red Gum Forest.** Meet at the end of DeQuincy Road, Bullaburra, at 9.30. Contact Lee Tredinnick 57.4030. (Phone Lee if you need transport from the station.)
- 09 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Wall’s Ledge.** Meet at Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre, Gardner’s Crescent, at 9.30. Contact Norah Gaynor 87.6071.
- 16 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Towards Blue Mountain.** Meet Cnr. GWH and Queens Road, Lawson at 9.30. Contact Christine Davies 87.7246.
- 18 (Wed) **Bushwalk—The Grand Canyon. Spring into action!** Meet at the War Memorial, opposite Blackheath Railway Station, at 10 am. Duration about 5 hours. Grade 7. Contact Christine Davies 87.7246.
- 21 (Sat) **Bushwalk—Rocket Point. Spring along the cliff-tops!** Meet at the Conservation Hut at 9.45 a.m. Duration 2-3 hours. Grade 4. Contact Les Coyne 57.3327.
- 23 (Mon) **Leisure Walk—Braeside Walk.** Meet at Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre at 9.30. Contact Daphne Rawling 87.8567.
- 24 (Tues) **Committee Meeting** at The Hut at 7 pm.
- 27 (Fri) **General Meeting** at The Hut at 7.30 pm.

**WHO ARE THE BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY WALK LEADERS?**

They’re a mixed lot. Some are real experts, and know a lot about plants and birds and geology and history and fungi and leeches. Some are only expert at some of the above. Some know a little about a lot of things. Some know nothing about anything.

What they do have in common is a love of the Blue Mountains environment and a desire to share their special places with like-minded people.

If you fit into any of the above categories and you enjoy going on the bushwalks, please consider leading a walk.

Walks can be very easy to moderately hard. They can be short or long (though most people like to get home before dark).

They are always conducted at a pace slow enough to be able to *look and see*. (Other groups “tiger-walk”; Conservation Society walkers appreciate and want to learn more about the beautiful bushland around them.)

**What is required:**

- Try not to get lost. If you are not absolutely sure of the way, get someone who knows the way to help you lead the walk.
- Even if you do know the way, if it is your first time as a leader ask somebody who is experienced to help you.
- Appoint a “Tail-end Charlie” who will stay at the back and make sure nobody is left behind.
- Ensure that the group stays together.
- Walk at the pace of the slowest member.

And a special rule for the Mountains:

- Nobody should stand closer than a body length to the edge of a cliff (children much, much further).

More walk leaders are urgently needed. If you have been on some of the walks and would like to lead a walk, contact Chris Woods on 82.3419.

**WITHOUT WALK LEADERS THERE WILL BE NO WALKS.**

**UP FROM THE EGG**

*The Confessions of a Nuthatch Avoider*

Bird watchers top my honours list.  
 I aimed to be one, but I missed.  
 Since I’m both myopic and astigmatic,  
 My aim turned out to be erratic,  
 And I, bespectacled and binocular,  
 Exposed myself to comment jocular.  
 We don’t need too much bird lore, do we,  
 To tell a flamingo from a towhee;  
 Yet I cannot, and never will,  
 Unless the silly birds stand still.  
 And there’s no enlightenment in a tour  
 Of ornithological literature.  
 Is yon strange creature a common chickadee,  
 Or a migrant *alouette* from Picardy?  
 You rush to consult your Nature guide  
 And inspect the gallery inside,  
 But a bird in the open never looks  
 Like its picture in the birdie books—  
 Or if it once did, it has changed its plumage,  
 And plunges you back into ignorant  
 gloomage.  
 That is why I sit here growing old by inches  
 Watching the clock instead of finches,  
 But I sometimes visualize in my gin  
 The Audubon that I audubin.

Ogden Nash (US)

This issue of *Hut News* has been printed by Brownlee Printing on 100% recycled paper.