

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

### January Bush Dance

There will be no January general meeting. Instead the Society will be holding a bush dance, at the Conservation Hut on Friday 31 January, starting at 7.30 pm. Last year's bush dance was a huge success. It's a great venue, with Australia's best traditional dance band. Mark the date on your calendar!! (The restaurant will be closed, so bring your own refreshments.)

### Tax Deductibility

Donations to Blue Mountains Conservation Society are now tax deductible under item 6.1.1 of table 6 in subsection 78(4) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936.

### Local Environment Plan

Mountain residents groups do not accept that Environment Management Plan 2 cannot be displayed as a draft Local Environment Plan until October 1997.

The process needs to be speeded up, with a moratorium placed on all development applications where EMP2 recommendations would affect decisions, until the new LEP is implemented and the 1991 LEP is amended.

You can help by writing to Council (see article on Page 2).

### Tree Preservation Order

Council has produced a draft Tree Preservation Order which will be available for public comment during January. When you get your copy from the Council Chambers, you might like to consider these issues and make comment to Council (and send a copy to BMCS too).

- All native vegetation should be protected, not just trees.
- Environmental weeds should be exempted from the protection of the Tree Preservation Order.

**Friday 31 January**  
**BLUE MOUNTAINS**  
**CONSERVATION SOCIETY'S**  
**BUSH DANCE**

**at The Conservation Hut,**  
**Wentworth Falls, with**  
**VINEGAR HILL BUSH BAND**

**\$10 Adults 7.30 start**  
**(b.y.o. refreshments)**

- Council commitment to enforcing the Tree Preservation Order should be more serious in the future. If you wish to discuss this ring Jessica on 57.2783 or Hugh on 51.2303.

### Weed of the Month

#### Cotoneaster glaucophyllus

Currawongs and Satin Bower Birds are responsible for spreading this plant into the bush.

Grown for its lovely red berries or as a hedge, Cotoneaster is one of the Blue Mountains' weeds. Besides being spread into the bush where it displaces our native plants, it is a food source for Indian Mynahs who displace our native birds.



Small Cotoneaster can be dug out. If they are too big to dig out cut the trunk(s) to ground level, apply Roundup. The cut should be horizontal so that the Roundup doesn't run off. For larger trees only the outer rim (growth area) of the stem needs to be painted. A hot day is the best time to do it. If plants re-shoot, repeat the method.

For more information contact your local bushcare group or phone Jessica (57.2783).

#### Who needs to grow a weed!!!

### Common Mynah Survey

Enclosed with this newsletter is a survey form. This survey will require 20 minutes of your time once a week for four weeks, preferably the 2nd, 3rd, 4th week in January and the first week in February.

The aim is to record the number of Common Mynahs you see at the same site during these times.

**If you don't see any Mynahs, this is very important information too, so please record it on the form.**

On the back of the survey form there is space to note your observations of Common Mynahs and other feral birds and their interaction with the environment and with other species.

The information collected in this survey will be used in conjunction with Blue Mountains City Council to develop strategies to deal with the feral bird problem.

Forms should be returned to Bonnie Doon Fauna Study Group, 72 Cascade Street, Katoomba 2780.

### Common Mynahs

Common Mynahs, Indian Mynahs, "Flying Cane Toads", "Rats with Wings", our worst feral bird! They aggressively compete with native birds for food and

nesting hollows, driving them away from the area.

They were introduced from Southeast Asia into Melbourne in 1862, and into the Queensland cane fields in 1883. (Some of our ancestors can plead ignorance for some of the stupid things they did.)

Common Mynahs do seem to be increasing their numbers in the Blue Mountains, with new sightings reported in areas of Blackheath, Mt Victoria and Leura.

A few weeks ago a group of Indian Mynahs moved into Victoria Street, Mount Victoria, making a lot of noise and fighting for territory with the Red Wattle Birds. Apparently the Mynahs won the battle as they were still there a few days later.

### NP Advisory Committee

Members were pleased to learn that society member Malcolm Hughes has been appointed to the Blue Mountains National Parks Advisory Committee. Malcolm was to be congratulated upon this appointment.

It was agreed that Malcolm be kept well informed of society activities, by sending him copies of Management Committee business papers for the duration of his appointment. This would enable him to be aware of society activities when he is fulfilling his Advisory Committee responsibilities.

Maintenance of close links with NPWS is an important policy of the Society, and working closely with Malcolm was seen as an important step in developing the relationship with NPWS.

### Darwin's Walk

Many thanks to Blue Mountains City Council for their recent work in repairing a bridge on the Charles Darwin Walk, Wentworth Falls.

It is good to see Council looking after our walking tracks.

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

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

President:	Colin Williams	84-1899
Vice-:	Marion Hawley	84.1933
Presidents:	Chris Hannocks	82.3164
Secretary:	Les Coyne	57-3327
Nursery:	David Coleby	84.1395
Membership:	Ross Coster	59.1247
Publicity:	Linda Thomas	82.1291
Education:	Joan Williams	57.3040
Bushwalks:	Chris Woods	82.3419
Land Use:	Don Morison	87-6912
Bushcare:	Jessica Yuille	57.2783
Editor:	Christine Davies	87-7246

## Local Environment Plan

Over the last year a number of subdivisions have been approved and in some cases commenced. If you are concerned about the damage caused by this clearing of bushland, you can help by writing one letter to the Council.

Here are some of the points you may like to include:

- Clearing of bushland on the ridgetop damages the National Park below, and in some cases the sensitive vegetation within the City area.
- Many of these damaging subdivisions are occurring in Residential Bushland Conservation Zones; the 1991 Local Environment Plan needs to be strengthened to prevent this.
- The principles of Environmentally Sustainable Development outlined in the Environmental Management Plan study are good and should be given some legal status **SOON** (by being exhibited as a draft LEP).
- I/we call for a moratorium on all development applications where EMP2 recommendations would affect decisions, until the new LEP is implemented and the 1991 LEP is amended.

Address your letter: Councillor Neall, Mayor, BMCC, PO Box 189, Katoomba 2782 and mark it "copy to Bob Debus, Member for Blue Mountains" at the end.

Please send it to us and we'll pass it on to Council and Bob Debus. Post to BMCS, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782, bring it to the January bush dance, or ring 82.1635 and we'll give you a local drop-off point.

If you have any questions about the issue or want to discuss it, please ring Les on 57.3327 or Lyndal 82.1635. Your letter as a resident will ensure that the Society's submissions on this will have more impact!!

## Amendment rejected

At its 12 November 1996 meeting, Council resolved to ask the General Manager to prepare a detailed work plan for EMP2 public exhibition, and to review the plan with a view to bringing the project completion date forward.

At the 19 December Council meeting, Marion Hawley spoke on behalf of the Society to point out that in Council staff's recommendations for the meeting there does not appear to be:

- a) any attempt to review the project completion date with a view to bringing the date forward, or
- b) any detailed project plan supplied for Councillors to study and hopefully establishing conditions enabling the completion date to be brought forward.

Without a detailed project plan no assessment of the timetable for the project is possible by Councillors or the community.

Council was asked to place a moratorium on all development applications where EMP2 would affect decisions and that this remain until the new LEP is gazetted, and that the workshops planned to be held by council between February and June should be open to the community as these matters vitally affect the local communities.

Business papers should be made available as should minutes. Any further workshops before the exhibition should likewise be open to the community.

Cr. Terri Hamilton brought an amendment including the four above points. The amendment was lost.

Those who voted in favour of the amendment were Councillors Hamilton, Gaul, Angel, Derum and Henson. Those who voted against were Councillors Neill, Williams, Harris, Egan, Kime and Clarke.

**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: Work (047)59.1247, Home 59.1837 FAX 59.1095, or write to P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

## Feeding Native Birds

Is feeding native birds really that detrimental? How about some positive aspects on the matter. Apart from obviously getting a great deal of pleasure in watching birds on their feeders and bird-tables, people become more aware of the society of birds, the pecking order of species, how the same species interact. They learn to recognise and identify familiar breeds and so are quick to spot the unusual visitor, note the migration patterns and breeding habits.

This inevitably leads to concern about the environment and how we humans with our domestic animals and land clearing activities are interfering with their habitat and destroying the natural balance.

Anyone who loves the birds will be aware how necessary legislation for cat owners to confine their cats to their property, preferably in cat runs, should be.

It is debatable whether birds become diseased by feeding from seed trays. Viral and bacterial diseases do occur in aviaries, in other words where birds are kept in a confined space. If disease was rife amongst wild birds, we would not be seeing the flocks of parrots, gang gangs, galahs, not to mention currawongs and magpies, that we see around our yards. Diseases such as Chlamydia are usually triggered by stress, e.g. colliding with a window, escaping from an animal attack.

Of course, precautions should be taken by anyone who feeds the birds; try to keep the ground free of seed if there are cats around during the day; chase away Common Mynahs and other feral birds which might be attracted; clear seed trays after rain to prevent fermentation and fungal infections; do not put out fatty meat or hard, dry food for the meat-eating birds.

It is worth remembering that your block of land, the roads and sewer lines around it took away vital food and housing resources from our wildlife. Perhaps by giving a few handouts, especially in wintertime, we can redress this a little.—  
*Gillian Janus.*

## An Aussie Christmas Tree

This Christmas the foyer of The Hut has been decorated with a wonderful Aussie Christmas tree carrying greetings from the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Many, many thanks to those responsible: Christina Jones designed and decorated the tree; Yvonne Tatsikas of South Coojee supplied Christmas angels and koalas; Michelle Folkes made ceramic koala and kangaroo decorations; Jan Cutler did the signwriting; and last but not least, Graham Alcorn played santa with his little red car and chauffeured Christina and all the goodies to The Conservation Hut.

## Death of a Possum

A sugar glider was attacked and killed by a neighbour's cat in a garden at Mount Victoria. The owner of the house said that sugar gliders are frequent visitors to her garden at this time of year, beautiful little creatures who come at night to eat the nectar of the Banksia serrata.

## Welcome Swallows

Does anybody know what happened to the Swallows that used to build their nests above the shops in Govett's Leap Road, Blackheath?

Reg Baumgarten tells us that it was a sure indication that Spring had arrived when the swallows were seen swooping for insects over Govett's Leap Road and the Highway and over the railway. He hasn't seen them for years.

Feral pigeons now roost above the shops.

## Thank you, Summit Gear

We will no longer be carrying advertising in "Hut News", so would like to thank Dave and Trish Murphy and Summit Gear for their support over the years.

Summit Gear is a genuine home-grown business which manufactures quality products for bushwalkers, bike riders and climbers in their workshop at the rear of 88 Katoomba Street.

## SUMMIT GEAR

NSW's Leading Manufacturers  
and Distributors of  
RUCKSACKS

**BICYCLE ACCESSORIES &  
CLIMBING HARNESSES**

REAR OF 88 KATOOMBA STREET  
KATOOMBA 2780 (PHONE 047.823467)  
OPEN 9-5 MON-FRI, 9-12 SAT.

## When Possum Comes Home

A gentle snore, a gurgle of the tummy — Possum is asleep, in the chimney, above the old fuel stove.

A pair of ears, a pair of eyes, a face, a possum emerges from the chimney, stays there awhile to survey his domain, then thump, thump on the tin roof and onto the paling fence — Possum is off on his nightly adventures.

There are dangers for possums in the town; cats and dogs can kill and injure. I hear dogs barking in the street, chasing a rabbit I hope.

Nobody hears Possum come home. He comes silently, before the dawn.

A gentle snore, a contented digestive gurgle, Possum is home, safe, asleep in the chimney, above the old fuel stove.

—Christine Davies 20/12/96.

## Macro Invertebrates Day

Megalong Creek is alive and well!

Over 20 people attended the Macro Invertebrates Day on 14 December which was co-ordinated by Di Shanks on behalf of Catchment Management Committee.

Led by Ian Wright of CSIRO Canberra, the group found damsel fly, may fly, caddis fly, water boatmen, water striders, dragon flies, fresh water prawns, water bugs, mites, blood worms, the ever-present mosquito larvae, a freshwater mussel, and yabbies (including a minute baby yabbie barely away from its mother).

All this indicates that the water is good.

It was a fascinating day for all concerned, to have the opportunity to discover and examine these small, diverse and beautiful creatures which inhabit our waterways.

A water test disclosed that the dissolved oxygen in the water was good, again proving the creek was in good condition.

Field sheets to help people to identify macro invertebrates of the Blue Mountains are being prepared by the Catchment Management Trust and will be available around March/April next year.

The Catchment Management Trust will also be holding other field days for the community next year. Enquiries to Di Shanks 22.2555.

## A Recent Migrant

Recently seen in Hartley Vale, and Kurrajong, the Dollarbird spends the winter in northern New Guinea and on adjacent islands and migrates to northern and eastern Australia in the spring and summer to breed.

On migration, it travels by night as well as day, reaching heights of 2500 metres.

Dollarbirds commonly perch conspicuously on the topmost bare branches of tall trees beside clearings. They do not walk or hop, but simply sit motionless, their toes

## PASSING MIST

Parched orchids smile to the passing mist  
Mist that's the memory of a vanished ocean,  
Mist that's tears that have often fallen,  
Gleaming on the rock  
Gleaming on the rock  
That is the face you cannot remember  
Who is walking in the mist with their sandals in their hand?  
Who is crouching to see the orchid smile,  
Who pauses to hear the bracelet of notes  
Thrown by the harmonica bird at the covered sun?  
Whose voices are under the waterfall,  
Whose voices are muffled by the mist?  
Whose voices drift with the white mist  
Passing, like the ghosts of ocean waves?  
—Denis Kevans

partly fused for grasping, not perambulation. Their silhouette is characteristic — broad-headed, short-necked and stumpy-tailed. All food — flying beetles, bugs, moths, mantids, cicadas — is taken on the wing by the heavy orange bill and eaten there or taken back to a perch and battered and softened before swallowing. Breeding Dollarbirds are noisy, chattering harshly to one another during the day. Their name comes from a large round patch of blue-white exposed in each wing in flight.

(Readers' Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds)

## In the Bush

In my last article I was having a rave about the profuse display of Waratah blooms we enjoyed this year. In delving for further information about them I found material which may be of general interest.

Dr. John White, the surgeon general who came out with the First Fleet in 1788, sent a specimen of waratah to England in 1791. The botanist who bestowed the name must have had a bit of a poet in him. How apt is the name. *Teloepa* — from Greek 'tele' meaning 'far' and 'opsis' meaning 'view' 'appearance', i.e. easily seen from a distance. 'speciosissima' is equally appropriate — Latin for 'most beautiful'.

Here are some snippets of interest I have lifted from Paul Nixon's book "The Waratah" (Kangaroo Press). He informs us that a close relation of the Waratah is practically identical with an *Oreacallis* growing along the Chilean coast. This gives further evidence to the reality of Gondwanaland which once linked Australia with South America, 60,000,000 years ago.

The reason for this year's profusion of blooms may be explained by Nixon's

account of the plant's ability to recover from fire — it is worth quoting in full. "Hot summer months predispose the eucalypt bushland to fires. From time to time bushfire will burn all shrubs down to the ground and also severely damage trees. The ability of the waratah to recover after such a setback is remarkable and has to be seen to be appreciated.

"Fire destroys pests and diseases and reduces the number of plants and

the overhead canopy of leaves that regulate the amount of light received by the waratah. Under these more favourable conditions the waratah shoots readily from the underground basal swollen stem. This swollen stem is known as a lignotuber and is a plant food store with the ability to mobilise these reserves when necessary. After fire multiple shoots may be stimulated to grow from dominant buds on the lignotuber. These develop rapidly due to the lack of competition. Waratahs will be at their best two years after fires and for a short period of time will be

the dominant understorey plant in the area." (The last fires we had were in early '94).

"The shoots of banksias and wattles will develop more slowly because these plants lack lignotubers. Their regeneration from seed will also be slower. Only much later will these plants become dominant at the expense of the waratahs. Plants such as the waratah could be described as fire-dependent for their persistence in bushland."

The June 1996 issue of the Society for Growing Australian Native Plants has many hints for home growers of waratahs. I'm no gardener. I just buy them from anywhere if the price is right. I plant them anywhere there is room and invariably they take. Admittedly I have sandy soil and it is very well drained. The bushes are a bit straggly as I lack the courage to cut them back after flowering and also I don't like losing the opportunity of collecting all the seed pods.

Now for the flower of the month (some love'm, some loath'm) the *Coreopsis*. Their massed effect enlivens our roadsides. Along the roadside of Sinclair Crescent other flowers of the month grow in happy harmony with these exotics, namely the rough-barked *Leptospermum* and *Conespermum* — a striking splash!

—The Bunyip.

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY NATIVE PLANT NURSERY**  
**OPEN TUESDAY MORNINGS 9 am to 12 noon**  
**PLANT SALES VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME TO HELP**  
**CONTACT DAVID COLEBY 84.1395**

**JANUARY**

(Note that January and

**February Leisure Walks will start at 8.30 a.m.)**

- 13 (Mon) **Earlybird Leisure Walk — Den Fenella.** Meet at Wentworth Falls Station car-park (nearest GWH) at 8.30. Contact Lee Tredinnick 57.4030.
- 15 (Wed) **Bushwalk — Lyrebird Dell.** Meet Leura Railway Station car-park at 10 am. Duration 4 hours. Grade 4. Contact Heather Hastie 84.1297.
- 18 (Sat) **Bushwalk — Terrace Falls.** Meet at Hazelbrook Station car park (south side) at 9.30 am. Contact Carol Butcher 57.3830. Grade 5.
- 20 (Mon) **Nature Track Bushcare Group, 9-12.** Meet at The Hut at 9 am. Bring your own gloves and morning tea. Tools are provided, but extra secateurs could be handy. Contact Jessica 57.2783.
- 20 (Mon) **Earlybird Leisure Walk — Echo Point to Leura Cascades.** Meet at Katoomba Station (northside, near Gearin’s Hotel) at 8.30. Contact Heather Hastie 84.1297.
- 28 (Tues) **Committee Meeting** at The Hut at 7 pm.
- 31 (Fri) **Bush Dance with Vinegar Hill Bush Band at The Hut at 7.30.** (See Page 1.)

**FEBRUARY**

- 02 (Sun) **Victoria Falls, Burra-Korain Flat.** (Good swimming holes in the creek if it is a hot day.) Meet at Mount Victoria Station at 9.30 am. Contact June Baxter 87.7312. Grade 5.
- 03 (Mon) **Earlybird Leisure Walk — Coachwood Glen.** Meet Blackheath Commuter car park at 8.30 am. Contact John Gibbs 82.6509.
- 10 (Mon) **Earlybird Leisure Walk — Olympian Rock/Tarpean Rock/Leura Cascades.** Meet Leura Station carpark at 8.30 am. Contact Christina Jones 84.1101.
- 15 (Sat) **Bushwalk.**
- 17 (Mon) **Nature Track Bushcare Group, 9-12.**
- 17 (Mon) **Earlybird Leisure Walk — Fairy Bower.** Meet Mount Victoria Station at 8.30. Contact Daphne Rawling 87.8567.
- 19 (Wed) **Bushwalk.**
- 24 (Mon) **Earlybird Leisure Walk — Little Zigzag.** Meet at Mount Victoria Station at 8.30 am. Contact Mervyn Bird 87.7959.
- 25 (Tues) **Committee Meeting** at The Hut at 7 pm.
- 28 (Fri) **General Meeting** at The Hut at 7.30 pm.

**Note:** Bushwalks have been graded:- 1-3 easy, 4-7 medium, 8-10 harder. Most walks in the mountains contain some uphill sections. If walkers are in any doubt about their ability to participate in a particular walk they should contact the leader. Bush walks are usually “day” walks and walkers bring their lunch.

Leisure walks are generally easy to medium grade and conducted at a slow pace. They are usually “morning” walks, lasting about 3 to 3½ hours. Bring morning tea.

ALL walkers are required to carry drinking water, especially in the summer months — 1 litre minimum.



**Hut News would like to hear from children with poems, stories or essays about the Blue Mountains.**

**The McDonalds Rally**

About 600 to 800 people attended the rally for Mountains Against McDonalds on December 7.

There were people from all sections of the community, people who care both for the Blue Mountains natural environment and the unique cultural environment of the Blue Mountains townships.

There were many speakers, some of them children. There were singers and poets, and a wonderful atmosphere.

The people at the rally clearly demonstrated that the City of the Blue

Mountains is not like any other place — it is The Inaugural City of the Arts, a special place whose cultural heritage is worth preserving.

The McDonalds debate is not really about whether McDonalds has dreadful food or whether Blue Mountains children have nowhere to eat. The much broader issue of long term planning of the highway area and of the Blue Mountains generally seems to become lost within the McDonalds debate. This issue is the one which needs to be addressed. What do we want the Blue Mountains to become?

The Blue Mountains is not only a City

within a national park, but is also privileged to be the first City of the Arts. It is uniquely placed to develop as a centre and a leader for both cultural and environmental tourism — a place where development happens within the framework of a unique natural environment and a special cultural heritage.

This will not be achieved by allowing either McDonalds or other inappropriate developments along our highway.

A decision on the McDonalds application has been deferred by Council until February 1997.

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