



## Winter Magic Festival, Katoomba, June 2015.

Thank you to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society members and friends who helped at Winter Magic. Our stall and Rubbish Room\* were well looked after, and we had a good contingent in the parade. It all added to a very successful day. There was a lot of interest in our campaigns for DLEP2013 and the Gardens of Stone and against Badgerys Creek Airport, and people were keen to see the BMCC water-cycle model in use.

Carolyn Williams and other Land Use members put in a tremendous effort and collected a large number of signatures on a petition to the Minister for Planning. The petition requests that the Minister approve the new LEP in the form endorsed by the community and Council, or re-exhibit it if there are major changes made.

BMCS walked in the Winter Magic Parade with Stop CSG Blue Mountains, Climate Action Blue Mountains and BM Renewable Energy Co-op. In the photo, Spider Man, aka Ben (our youngest activist), leads the group. (\*About the Rubbish Room, see page 3.)



## WORLD HERITAGE—not Badgerys Airport!

Blue Mountains Conservation Society **opposes** Badgerys Creek Airport because of the negative impacts it may have on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and its national parks and ecosystems, on World Heritage Listing, on our drinking water catchments, on wilderness areas, on Blue Mountains tourism and Blue Mountains communities.

There are alternatives. We **don't need it** and we **don't want it!** Read Ross's Coster's article on page 5. Join our subcommittee, write letters. The battle has only just begun.

The City of Blue Mountains is in danger of losing the environmental protections in our current Local Environment Plans

### COME TO A RALLY

Bring your friends and family

Saturday, 18 July, 2 pm

AT CIVIC PLACE, KATOOMBA

**NOTE: The location has been changed**

**(READ MORE ON PAGE 3)**



**"Hut News", the newsletter of**  
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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT  
 ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS  
 18 JULY 2015**

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## Cliefden Caves ... Precious and worth fighting for

Ancient caves with pristine formations, habitats for endangered bat species, over 100 species of fossils found no where else in the world, and a rare thermal spring. These are just a few of the many natural treasures found at Cliefden Caves.

The NSW government is currently planning to build a dam on the Belubula River near Canowindra NSW, which would flood and destroy the Cliefden Caves. Because of this, the Save Cliefden Caves Association has been established to protect Cliefden Caves from these rushed and ill-considered dam proposals, for future generations.

### What can you do to help?

A pamphlet is inserted with this edition of Hut News, and you can also find it on the Society's website. It has detailed information about the caves with an overview of the natural treasures found at Cliefden.

You will also see a donation form on the flipside of the pamphlet. Please consider a donation to this noble fight. Your donation will help fund vital scientific research being done by The University of Sydney on the caves to further understand their unique value and significance.

Visit [www.savecliefdencaves.org.au](http://www.savecliefdencaves.org.au) for more information and to see some fantastic pictures of the caves.



Photo by Kevin Moore.

### Roundtable discussions at Lawson

BMCS representatives Carolyn Williams, Don Morison, and Paul Vale (in his capacity representing Bushcare Network) attended an environmental roundtable at Lawson with Trish Doyle MP, Penny Sharpe, MLC, and Mayor Mark Greenhill as well as other community representatives, on 18/6/15. The saving of the Draft Local Environment Plan 2013, prepared by Council, was a focus of discussion.



Paul Vale

Don Morison

Carolyn Williams

Trish Doyle Penny Sharpe Mark Greenhill

## **Megastatements and motives: how green are the developed world's leaders? Don Morison**

The Pope brands better climate stewardship as a matter of justice for the world's poor. The G7 nations meet and emphasise the importance of reduced carbon emissions.

As we approach the December climate talks in Paris (which BMCS is urging Australia's Prime Minister to attend), there is much for climate activists to focus on and plenty with local implications for the Greater Blue Mountains region in the intensifying debate.

In this issue of Hut News, Dr Brian Marshall gives a poor (but deserved) report card on our Federal Government's efforts so far. He highlights the uncertain future for coal mining in the mountains and the lack of planning for the economic future in areas such as Lithgow.

Roderick Campbell, writing in the Sydney Morning Herald 16/6/15, points out that New South Wales has a Department of Planning which is doing no planning for a coal-less future in the State's regions. He uses Lithgow as his prime example.

Can Australia afford to insulate itself from the momentum created by the G7, the Pope, etc.? You'd think so from the constant announcements of new coal mines, new motor ways, and a new Western Sydney airport.

Ross Coster, in his article on page 5, gives a detailed list of arguments against the new airport, headlined by the impacts on the natural environment.

BMCS will be encouraging everyone to write to their parliamentarians, urging Australia to get back in step with a climate-conscious future.

## **Rubbish Rooms at Winter Magic**

The Winter Magic Festival Sustainability Team started this initiative at the 2014 Winter Magic Festival. As a result of their efforts, the event generated 2 tonnes less waste than the previous year's festival and almost a quarter of the total waste generated was able to be recycled. It was observed that the event seemed much cleaner during the day as well.

This year there were eight "Rubbish Rooms", staffed by volunteers. BMCS volunteers managed one of these. Each Rubbish Room contained 6 bins – 2 sets each of Green (for organic waste), Yellow (for recycling) and Red (for general waste). The Rubbish Rooms were continually staffed by volunteers, assisting festival patrons as to the right bin to use. Street bins were covered and not in use for the day.

JOIN Blue Mountains Conservation Society,  
or renew your membership online.  
[www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

## **Save our LEP!**

### **RALLY**

**2-3pm Saturday 18th July**

**Civic Place, Katoomba (new location)**

**(in front of the Council Chambers)**

The NSW Government is threatening to force a 'one size fits all' Local Environmental Plan onto the Blue Mountains.

The Blue Mountains community have worked hard to develop our new LEP. The NSW Government is now no longer supporting key elements of the LEP aimed at protecting our unique environment, the World Heritage Area and the character of our villages.

**Come along and support our LEP and demand that the NSW Minister for Planning approves our LEP unchanged.**

**BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY!**

Watch for more information at [dlep13.info](http://dlep13.info)

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.  
[www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

## **Sports fields in National Parks? No!**

Berowra Valley National Park was established to protect special areas that have long been in need of protection. These include places some of us will be familiar with - Old Man Valley, Galston Gorge, Crosslands and Berowra Waters. Some BMCS bushwalkers may have done part of the Great North Walk in this National Park.

The announcement of the creation of the Berowra Valley National Park in May 2012 marked a major achievement for many members of environmental groups in the area. Visit <http://www.friendsberowravalleys.org.au/> for more information.

Hornsby Council has passed a motion supporting sporting fields at Stringybark Ridge, which is 400 metres inside the Berowra Valley National Park. This would mean sports fields with flood lights, kiosk, enlarged parking area and other facilities. The mountain bikers are also lobbying to have a track built over a much greater area extending almost down to The Jungo on the Great North Walk. If these go ahead, it will set a worrying precedent for all NSW National Parks.

Some of you received an email from the Society about this issue and may have written a submission or signed an on-line petition before submissions closed on 6 July. You could still write to the NSW Minister for the Environment Mark Speakman (Parliament House, Sydney 2000, [office@speakman.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@speakman.minister.nsw.gov.au)).

You could remind Mr Speakman that **Our National Parks are for the conservation of Nature**, not to be split up for the benefit of special interest groups.

## **The Gardens of Stone Visitors Map**

\$7.50 plus \$1.50 postage.

Buy the map online ([www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au))  
or write to BMCS, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782  
with your cheque or money order.



## A BLUE TRAIL: Natural and cultural experiences in the western Blue Mountains. Don Morison.



This "Blue Trail" is a collective description for sites in the western Blue Mountains that arouse natural or cultural interest or both. Most are only a short walk from roads or vehicular tracks. One day, a high quality walking path may link them.

### 5. Pagodas above the upper Wolgan, Western Newnes Plateau

Along "Fire Trail No 5", via Sunnyside Ridge Road, is a beautiful landscape caught in the tug-of-war between motorised recreation and conservation.

Like many parts of the Gardens of Stone area, it has a series of majestically shaped and intricately varied pagodas, the profiles of their protuberances and "gargoyles" standing out against the sky. Plants special to this region include the yellow Pagoda Daisies (*Leucochrysum graminifolium*).

A visit during June 2015 was greeted with a chorus of male lyrebirds assembled at various points around the slopes, each vying with the others and choosing a different sound to imitate than his competitors.

Open forest with stands of several Eucalypt species rolls down to a twisting pagoda-lined waterway, flanked with

fern overhangs.

Unfortunately, four-wheel drive vehicles have carved far too wide a route through this wonderland. A gate meant to restrict access to vehicles has been breached. An article in the Bush Club's books on the Gardens of Stone\* suggested things were much the same in 2007.

This remains a site that proves the Gardens of Stone are worth protecting.

**Photos:** There are just a very few plants which are so specialised that they live only on the rocky crags (known as "Pagodas") in the far western edge of the Blue Mountains: Pagoda Daisies (*Leucochrysum graminifolium*), by Neil McGlashan; Profile of an intriguing protuberance near the end of Firetrail No. 5, Christine Davies.

\* The Gardens of Stone National Park and Beyond, Michael Keats and Brian Fox, Book 6.

### An encounter with a Lyrebird

On our way back from Echo Point on a bush walk, my friend Lucinda and I could hear a powerful sequence of bird calls that defied categorizing. "It must be a Lyrebird" I ventured without any real conviction.

Sure enough, another five minutes along the track, we came upon a young European man gazing into the scrub beside the track with a faraway look of wonder on his face. For about twenty minutes the three of us stood there and watched and listened in awe as this extraordinary bird went through its array of vocalizations and dance.

Unfortunately my phone was a bit inadequate to capture the image but the audio recording is quite good. In the first part of the video you can see the bird from the rear with its tail fanned out over its head, and hear the Kookaburra, the Whipbird, the Currawong, and the Black Cockatoo, with many others following.

Neither of us had ever witnessed the Lyrebird doing its song and dance before.... and it is not easily forgotten.

Michael Norton. June 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBF3PcQZt-M&feature=youtu.be>

### A Lyrebird Confrontation

On a recent trip to the Snowy Mountains, rounding a corner on the very steep road above Tumut 2 Power Station, I disturbed a confrontation between two male lyre birds.

They faced each other about a metre apart, their long tails bolt upright – an arresting sight. Their tails were not expanded and spread over their heads as in the courtship display, but narrow, closed and straight upright, the magnificent lyre-shaped outside feathers outlining striking replicas of that instrument. As June is the beginning of the lyrebird's breeding season, I assume this was a male territorial challenge, leading up to physical combat if one bird did not give way.

Graham Alcorn.

June, 1986.



## Why do I oppose Badgerys Creek Airport? Ross Coster, convenor of Blue Mountains Conservation Society No Badgerys Creek Airport Subcommittee.

### ◆ Impact on World Heritage.

The Blue Mountains National Parks were declared as World Heritage in 2000, primarily for their eucalypt biodiversity.

What will be the impact on this biodiversity of a 24-hour, no curfew airport only 17 km away? Burned avgas, fine particulates, noise, potential fuel dumping, all raining down on the eucalypt forests we all know and love.

The whole point of World Heritage Listing is to commit all levels of Government to preserving the area for the whole world to enjoy.

The listing process stalled in the late 1990's as UNESCO were worried about the impact of a Western Sydney Airport. An Airport at Badgerys Creek risks World Heritage status for the Blue Mountains.

### ◆ Impact on Drinking Water Catchments.

Much of the Southern Blue Mountains forms the catchments for Lake Burragorang, which supplies 80% of Sydney's drinking water.

Once the Airport is operational, flights to the West will have to fly over either the Blue Mountains townships (political poison), or the drinking water catchments. The by-products of aircraft will rain down in the catchments and end up in Sydney's drinking water.

The 'Special Areas' are there to exclude humans, to provide a buffer around the lake, to ensure water quality. Flying large numbers of huge, noisy, polluting aircraft over the catchments is dangerous and risky.

### ◆ Wilderness Areas

The Blue Mountains includes several declared Wilderness Areas. In a declared Wilderness area you must be self-reliant, so no machines are allowed, no mountain bikes, no cars, and no helicopters. The Badgerys Creek Airport threatens all of this.

How can we on a Wilderness walk, or the animals that live in these pristine areas, enjoy the quiet and fresh air with a steady stream of aircraft flying overhead, belching out particulates and noise?

How is it we can't take even the most simple machine into Wilderness, but our most complex machines are able to fly over it?

### ◆ Tourism

Tourists come to the Blue Mountains to enjoy the views, the hospitality, the bushwalks, and the rides at Scenic World.

What will happen to the tourism industry when tourists report back to their friends that their quiet enjoyment of the bush was ruined by an aircraft flying overhead? Will the view south from Echo Point be the same with a huge aircraft in the eye line?

### ◆ Our Communities

Everybody who lives in the Blue Mountains came here for a different reason, but we are all united in loving the Community we live in.

Cafes, street markets, the Winter Magic parade, leafy streets, hundreds of easy and hard bushwalks, lookouts, Aboriginal and European culture, art, theatre, we have it all. After 30 years here, I cannot imagine living

somewhere else.

We put up with a lot us Mountain folk, from endless Highway upgrades, to poor train services, hours commuting to far-away jobs, and bushfires threatening our homes. But we love the place, and do not want it ruined by 24-hour aircraft noise.

### ◆ Hasty Process

The Abbott Government announced Badgerys Creek Airport as a fait accompli, to be built, not discussed, as they want to be seen as 'getting on with it'.

Part of his hasty process was to initially claim that an Environmental Impact Statement was not necessary, as one was done in 1997! They relented on this, and an EIS is currently being prepared.

When it is released, we will have just 20 days to respond, to a potentially massive and complex study.

We want a longer comment period of at least 60 days, and have written to the Environment Minister asking for this.

### ◆ Not Needed

Kingsford Smith Airport at Mascot runs at about 60% of capacity. It has handled the same number of flights per hour (80) for many years, with growth in passenger numbers catered for by bigger planes, not more flights.

Half of all passenger movements through Mascot are to and from East-coast destinations, including Melbourne (24%), Brisbane (13%) Gold Coast (7%), Canberra (3%) as well as Albury, Coffs Harbour and Newcastle.

The proposed High Speed Rail network would have stations at all of these places, potentially removing *half* of the current passengers from Mascot.

### ◆ Not in anyone's back yard

My answer to people who claim that our opposition to Badgerys Creek is just NIMBY (not in my back yard) is simple, NIABY (not in *anyone's* back yard).

We need to build transport infrastructure that *reduces* flights at Mascot, for the benefit of the millions affected by aircraft noise and pollution, not increase the flights at a second Airport, and go on to affect millions more.

We need transport infrastructure that can run on renewable energy, not burn irreplaceable oil-based fuels that pollute the Global atmosphere.

We need integrated transport planning that looks at the effects on people and the environment of each option, not just 'getting on with it' to appear decisive and strong.

### ◆ What can we do?

We have formed a No Badgerys Creek Airport Subcommittee (needs a new name!) to run a campaign against the Airport. If you want to get involved, contact me and come to a meeting to see what we are doing.

You can write to the Environment Minister, Greg Hunt (PO Box 6022 Canberra ACT 2600) asking him to extend the EIS comment period. (A sample letter is on page 6.)

You can write to Politicians of all Parties insisting that we don't need or want an Airport in Western Sydney.

**Ross Coster**, 4739 2987, 04184 62576,  
[membership@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)

## The Battle to Save Bulga: Will Coal Trump Our Courts? Robin Mosman

In 2013, the village of Bulga in the Upper Hunter Valley twice stopped a proposal to extend the massive open-cut Warkworth coal mine to within 2.6 kilometres of the town, first in the Land and Environment Court and then in the NSW Supreme Court.

The courts found that the economic benefits of the coal mine did not outweigh the significant impacts on Bulga residents and the destruction of the rare Warkworth Sands Woodlands with its endangered plant and animal species. The woodland is unique to the area and only 13 per cent of the original forest remains. Rio Tinto has admitted that 15.5 percent of this remaining forest would be destroyed by the expansion. In 2003 it had promised to permanently protect this area, under an agreement with the NSW government, as part of its original 2003 mine consent.

After the courts' decision, the then Minister for Resources Chris Hartcher promptly altered the mining State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) to make economic benefits the most important consideration in planning decisions, outweighing social and environmental impacts.

In fact, the Court had previously found Rio Tinto's economic modeling deficient in many ways, including its methodology that over-estimated the benefits of the mine.

After the SEPP alteration, the mining company reapplied, and now the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC), a group of 3 people whose decisions cannot be appealed, has recommended that it be given approval, and the town moved. The NSW Environmental Defenders Office has recently lodged an official complaint with the NSW Ombudsman about two members of the PAC, alleging their connections and earnings from the coal industry constitute unacceptable conflicts of interest.

A recent visit to Bulga by Premier Mike Baird and Planning Minister Rob Stokes has alerted them to the fact that the expansion of coal mining in the Hunter Valley is now one of the most contentious issues in the state.



Photo: The people of Bulga in the Hunter fight a mine extension that could see the village destroyed (ABC news) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-11/bulga-mining-fight/6302138>

Soon after his visit, Stokes indicated that he might put out a draft mining SEPP as soon as possible and he would expect the PAC to take it into account when it came to deciding the fate of Bulga.

The decision is due in July.

Please write to Rob Stokes and strongly request that he immediately re-instate the pre 2013 mining SEPP, which gives equal weight to economic, environmental and social impacts, and that he demand that the PAC abide by it when deciding the fate of Bulga.

The Hon Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW 2000

Dear Mr Stokes,

I strongly request that you re-instate immediately the pre 2013 mining SEPP with its equal weight to economic, environmental and social impacts, and that you demand the PAC abide by it when deciding the fate of Bulga.

*Include anything else you wish to say about the issue.*

Yours sincerely,  
(Name/Address/other contact details)

### WORLD HERITAGE – NOT Badgerys Creek Airport

**PLEASE WRITE** to Minister for the Environment Greg Hunt to ask for more time to respond to the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Western Sydney Airport. (The Hon Greg Hunt, Minister for the Environment, PO Box 6022, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600. Email: [Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au))

#### (SAMPLE LETTER)

*Dear Minister Hunt,*

*I am writing to you to request an extension of the consultation period to respond to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Western Sydney Airport.*

*Under the EPBC Act, Section 103, we note that you have the discretion to extend the consultation period for the Environmental*

*Impact Statement (EIS), which may be as short as 20 days. Given this is a controversial project which will have impacts on millions of Sydney residents and on the environment of the Cumberland Plains and the Greater Blue Mountains, it is really important we have enough time to read and understand the EIS and make informed comments. We therefore request the consultation period be extended to at least 60 days.*

*We believe that the public will be disadvantaged if they are not allowed a reasonable time to read and respond to the Environmental Impact Statement for this major project.*

*Yours sincerely, (signed, your name, address, contact details)*



## Coal and Lithgow are stranded assets! <sup>1</sup> Brian Marshall

As the Group of Seven commits to 40-70% reductions of 2010 greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) by 2020, and as China and India foreshadow less dependence on sea-borne coal imports, the Australian government vacillates in relation to GGE, the role of renewable energy sources, and even to the significance of human-induced climate change. Minister Hunt says that Australia will meet its woefully inadequate GGE-target for 2020, but he fails to disclose Australia's target beyond 2020. He blithely says that Australia is likely to achieve zero-GGE **energy** by century-end, but he disregards the GGE from Australia's massive coal exports and the outrageous prospect of the Commonwealth subsidising development of the sub-economic Galilee Basin. Concurrently, Australia's Prime Minister irresponsibly rejects wind farms<sup>2</sup> and is seemingly proud of damaging the renewables industry by reneging on a pre-election commitment and cutting the renewable energy target.

Overall, it would seem that, as coal 'winds down' and wind and other renewables 'wind up' for many major economies, Australia's government holds fast to an obsolescent carbon-based 'future'. Australia's policies are effectively promoting global warming well in excess of the 2°C limit above which climate change is deemed to be irreversible. As such, Australia will attract widespread opprobrium and could well find that a future based on a 'stranded asset' is extremely hollow.

A 'stranded asset' eventuates, for example, when coal and its mining-dependent communities become sub-economic and socially destructive due to the market experiencing inadequately foreseen changes. In effect, a company and community are caught with their pants down; mines must operate at a loss, or be placed on 'care and maintenance', or be permanently closed, all to the detriment of the local community. The Lithgow coalmines and their coal-dependent community potentially exemplify the 'stranded asset' concept. Lithgow's 'future' could well become a microcosm of what Australia will face should it continue to favour coal ahead of the 'renewables' power sector.

So, what is happening in the Lithgow region's coalfield? To what extent is Lithgow facing reality by clinging to coal mining?

In a previous Hut News (February 2015), I emphasised that, following rejection of the Coalpac 'modifications' proposal by the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC), Coalpac was placed in Liquidation with the aim of realising the assets and implementing formal deregistration. This process is ongoing.

As part of realising assets, the Liquidator required Coalpac to seek approval from the Commonwealth's Department of the Environment (DoE) to open-cut the remaining 6 hectares of Cullen Valley mine's **existing approval under State legislation**. Despite this being within Ben Bullen State Forest (BBSF) and partly destroying a population of a threatened plant species, the DoE sanctioned the action. Nevertheless, unless the findings of the PAC are totally disregarded and the State government moves the goalposts (a not unprecedented occurrence), **the action should be the end of open-cut mining in the BBSF.**

In late 2014, Centennial Coal placed Angus Place mine on 'care and maintenance'; it became a stranded asset. Centennial opted to concentrate its Newnes Plateau longwall-mining operations within Springvale mine and its proposed extension. Despite numerous adverse submissions, the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) recommended conditional approval in its Preliminary Assessment Report (April 2015). This went to a PAC which held a public hearing in Lithgow on 27 May. The PAC's review report will be sent to the DPE for consideration on 24 June 2015. After this, the DPE's Final Assessment Report will be sent to a separate PAC for determination.

The Society strongly believes that this extension project should be rejected **in its present form**, even if this means that much of the coal remains in the ground as a stranded asset. Yet, even if approved with stringent conditions, thereby potentially extending the mine-life for 13 years, **there is no certainty!** The international push to reduce GGE could further depress export-coal prices, thereby making Springvale sub-economic. Then, as the Lithgow community's breathing space rapidly diminishes, the direct and indirect outcomes for miners, their families and the overall community could eventuate. Now is surely the time for Lithgow to direct its energies into diversifying its economy, including better development of a sustainable future based on the region's scenic values.

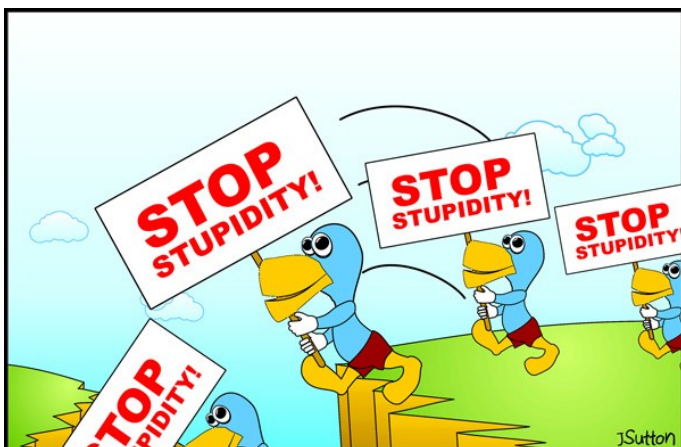
**Mines close and communities die when it is judged to be in the company's 'commercial interests'. A 'future' based on costly underground coal mines in a declining market defies reality. There is no future in gambling on a stranded asset!**

<sup>1</sup> The fully referenced article is available from the Editor or the Author.

<sup>2</sup> The government will seemingly appoint a wind-farm commissioner to investigate complaints and will establish **another** scientific committee to investigate the health impacts of wind turbines. <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/abbott-government-vows-to-appoint-a-wind-farm-commissioner-in-crossbench-talks-over-renewable-energy-target-20150618-ghrau0.html>

*'This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. 'I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me; it is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.'*

George Bernard Shaw.



## Degrees of stupidity Christine Davies

As a 14 year old, I once flushed some leftover antibiotics down the toilet. It was a stupid thing to do. I didn't know that the antibiotics would kill the bacteria that made the septic tank work. I remember the plumber, who was also my father, digging it out. He was not happy.

Baby Wipes are useful – for wiping babies. But Sydney Water is having problems, with “500 tonnes of flushed wet wipes being removed from our sewers each year”. People have found multiple uses for this product, including using them **instead of toilet paper**. Now, that's really stupid! In UK, where there is a similar problem, the estimated cost of removing the blockages is around \$24 million a year. How much is it costing us? Some of the manufacturers claim that their product is flushable – that's not true.

Some of my friends have 4WD vehicles which are useful for getting to bushwalks in remote areas of the Blue Mountains, properly driven on suitable roads. But, on Newnes Plateau there is a big problem with some 4WD vehicles – large machines controlled by pea sized brains. In beautiful pagoda country, swamps are destroyed, roads are eroded into a series of humps and ditches, rock formations broken and roadside vegetation covered in mud where these morons splash through the puddles at high speed. Criminal stupidity! Most of the TV advertisements for four-wheel drive vehicles appear to promote this behaviour.

Some of us, or people like us, have been “cleaning up Australia” annually since 1989 – 26 years! But still people rubbish their/our environment.

And there are people who carry a picnic to a beautiful place and leave behind all the empty containers. Why? There is no logical answer.

It can all be discouraging at times. Maybe someone can suggest a way to approach the problem - apart from offering free lobotomies to brain-dead adults? Please send any ideas to Hut News.

### VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am till noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat. New members are welcome.  
Phone Karen 4757 1929.

## Megalong Valley

Young she-oaks sift  
the river's rush and flow  
as cows chew paddocks  
baked in winter sun.

The wind gusts  
out of season warm,  
tears conversations,  
throws them to the hills.

Riding high on my shoulders,  
you sing and shriek.  
Your laughter  
makes my feet light;  
heart's chaff flies to blue.

I don't want to return  
to the windowed room,  
the roofed sky,  
where I will not know  
when morning's raindrops  
shake free from the leaves,  
that everything is perfect,  
even weeds in tussock grass.

**Vanessa Kirkpatrick**

(From her collection *To Catch The Light*)

*Readers of Hut News are invited to send a poem inspired by the Blue Mountains, maximum of 20 lines. Each month, one or two will be published in Poets' Corner. Poems can be emailed to [brendan049@gmail.com.au](mailto:brendan049@gmail.com.au) or even posted to Poets' Corner at 5 Lurline Street, Wentworth Falls 2782. Brendan Doyle.*

## Looking back: Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society Newsletter, July 1987.

Land Purchase – Success at Last

In April after lengthy negotiations, the Society secured environmental protection of Lot 39 Taylor Avenue, Wentworth Falls, the only remaining block bearing thick undisturbed natural vegetation in an area that was once an extensive swamp, above the Water Nymph's Dell rainforest. Under the guidance of our solicitor, Hal Gingis, the Society bought the land with \$6000 from the Land Preservation Fund for Open Space under a new 'Environmental' zone which Blue Mountains City Council has undertaken to create for protection of publicly owned environmentally sensitive land.

Members will recall that in 1982 Len Symes generously offered to donate part of his property if the Lands Department would add it and the adjoining crown land to the Water Nymph's Dell reserve. The Society submitted the proposition to the Crown Lands Dept. which was most co-operative. The Department, with Blue Mountains Council's consent, had the land gazetted as Reserve 97599 in November 1984.

In the meantime we wrote to the owners of undisturbed swamp, Lots 38 and 39, asking if they would consider selling. Now, four years later, Lot 38 is a sad sight, but Lot 39 is saved.



## Loose Feathers, with Carol Probets

The first time I ever visited Bourke I found myself sheepishly asking a question which I knew would sound strange at the tourist information centre. "Can you tell me how to get to the sewage treatment works please?" The woman behind the desk didn't bat an eyelid and I breathed a sigh of relief as she replied: "Oh, you must be a birdwatcher!" and proceeded to give me detailed directions.

Sewage treatment ponds are keenly sought and revered by birders around the world. The open ponds or lagoons used for aerobic treatment processes not only provide a reliable, permanent body of water but are especially high in nutrients, supporting large numbers of aquatic insects and other small invertebrates. In addition, colonisation by native macrophytes is often encouraged. All this of course makes them attractive to ducks and other wetland-loving birds as drought refuges and feeding areas, especially valuable along migration or dispersal routes in a dry country.

We have a great example close to home. The Lithgow sewage ponds are well known as a haven for ducks and during a drought it's not uncommon to see hundreds of ducks, grebes and other waterfowl of up to 15 species on the three ponds. Many of these are nomads from inland floodwaters and temporary lakes, like the remarkable Pink-eared Duck, sometimes found here in large numbers. Pink-eared Ducks are fascinating to watch as they feed in pairs or trios, swimming around in circles to create a vortex in which their tiny prey is concentrated. They feed by filtering the water out through lamellae at the sides of their bill. And in case you're wondering about the name, they have a small patch of pink on each side of the head, not visible unless you're close. Their striking pattern of stripes is a much more obvious feature.

A couple of rarer species are regularly seen on the ponds. One of these is the Blue-billed Duck, so named because of the bright blue bill of the male. Regulation and drainage of natural wetlands combined with vegetation loss has resulted in the Blue-billed Duck being listed as threatened in NSW and Victoria. Thanks to the sewage ponds, Lithgow is probably the closest to Sydney they can regularly be seen.

The other is Australia's rarest native duck, the Freckled Duck. Small numbers of these have been present at Lithgow on and off over the past 2-3 years. Densely vegetated inland creeks and ephemeral swamps are their favoured breeding habitat where they nest in lignum, dispersing large distances to more coastal waters during drought. Interestingly, we saw a female with 3 young at nearby Lake Wallace in April this year, suggesting they had bred there.

Finally, in case you're tempted, please note that public access isn't allowed into most sewage treatment works so it's usually a case of scouting around the perimeter fence for a vantage point if you wish to observe the birdlife. Which is probably a good thing given the likely composition of the water!

Carol Probets. [origma@westnet.com.au](mailto:origma@westnet.com.au) Twitter: @carolprobets



Freckled Duck, recognisable by its distinctive peaked head and scooped bill. Photographed at Lithgow sewage ponds by Carol Probets.

## You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

- **Post** this Application Form with your cheque or money order to: Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782, **OR**
- **Join online** at: [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....

Address: .....  
.....PC .....

Phone(s) .....

Email .....

**I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:**

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....

**MEMBERSHIP FEES** (please circle one item)

Single \$30 Concession (Senior/Student) \$20

Household \$35 Household Concession \$25

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$ .....

Donation (tax deductible) \$ .....

Bushwalkers: please add

\$20 per walker per annum. \$ .....

**TOTAL AMOUNT** \$ .....

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box ☐ mail ☐ internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline):

Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

**ENQUIRIES:** Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: [membership@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)

## Welcome to new members

Kerry Horne, Springwood  
Alix Goodwin, Lapstone  
Kevin Tuffin, Lapstone  
Georgina Jennison, Lawson  
Cameron Lownds, Blaxland  
Christine Low, Blaxland  
Kartika Low-Lownds, Blaxland  
Akira Low-Lownds, Blaxland  
Vicki Land, Wentworth Falls  
Gwen Warren, Springwood  
Michael Warren, Springwood

## **BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.

## **WEBMASTER STEPPING DOWN**

After five years as Webmaster, one of those doubling up as the Society's President, Alan Page has decided to step down and let somebody else have a go.

Alan said he will still be involved in some Society projects and sub-committees, but wishes to spend more time bushwalking, photographing Blue Mountains native flowers, working in the garden and enjoying being with his family—especially his grandchildren.

Besides setting up and maintaining a high-quality website for the Society, Alan has taken on many projects and has helped the Society in many other ways.

These include:

- Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience
- migrated website hosting from 100MB limit to unlimited storage
- online membership applications
- Payments through PayPal
- online purchasing of GoS Visitors Maps and GBMWHE DVDs
- capturing and placing online over 220 editions of Hut News
- establishing Mail Chimp e-blasts with two databases
- migrating the website to current HTML/CSS standards and making it mobile friendly
- several Election Campaigns – most especially the 2012 Council Election and 2015 State Election
- establishing processes whereby the Admin Officer doesn't need to visit The Hut several times a week
- supporting Management Committee members who struggle technically

As one of the technologically-challenged Management Committee members, I know that even this last one has been time-consuming for Alan, and I appreciate all the help he has given me. The amount of work that has been involved in the others, I cannot comprehend.

Alan's personal website <http://www.waratahsoftware.com.au/> has some wonderful photos of Australian flora and fauna. Alan said he is upgrading it and intends to concentrate on wildflowers, give prominence to the Blue Mountains, and make it mobile friendly so bushwalkers can identify wildflowers on their bushwalks.

Christine Davies.



### **A BEQUEST: Please remember us in your Will.**

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: "I bequeath the sum of \$ ... to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

### **BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY NATIVE PLANT NURSERY**

**WE ARE CLOSED DURING JUNE AND JULY.** Plant sales will resume in August.

We will have quality local native plants ready for sale at our Lawson nursery (from 8th August), Magpie Markets (16th August) and Blackheath Community Markets (6th September).

Tubes are only \$3 and we offer discounts for bulk orders and large contracts.

Enquiries: Sue Nicol 4787 8887,  
[nursery@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:nursery@bluemountains.org.au)



## Down the Wallaby Track: a backward glance, with John Low

### SKETCHING IN THE GROSE

Eighteen year-old Jimmy Crummer, grandson of a Peninsula and Waterloo veteran, was clearly an adventurous lad. In the accompanying photograph, taken in 1875, he sits confidently among his older, bearded companions, enlisted by his uncle Eccleston du Faur to assist in the establishment of an artists' retreat in the Grose Valley. It was an exciting opportunity that saw him take to the wilderness experience with relish and share time with an influential slice of Sydney's arts community, including the recently arrived Tasmanian-born landscape painter William Piquenit.

I still remember the excitement I felt sitting in the State Library leafing through a collection of Piquenit's original watercolours painted during his month-long stay in the valley. Few Europeans had yet ventured into the Grose and his sketches (many later worked into more ambitious oils), casting their view upwards, offered a new perspective. He had, wrote du Faur, "the first opportunity of illustrating our mountain scenery ... from the bottom of its gorges, instead of the summit of its ranges".

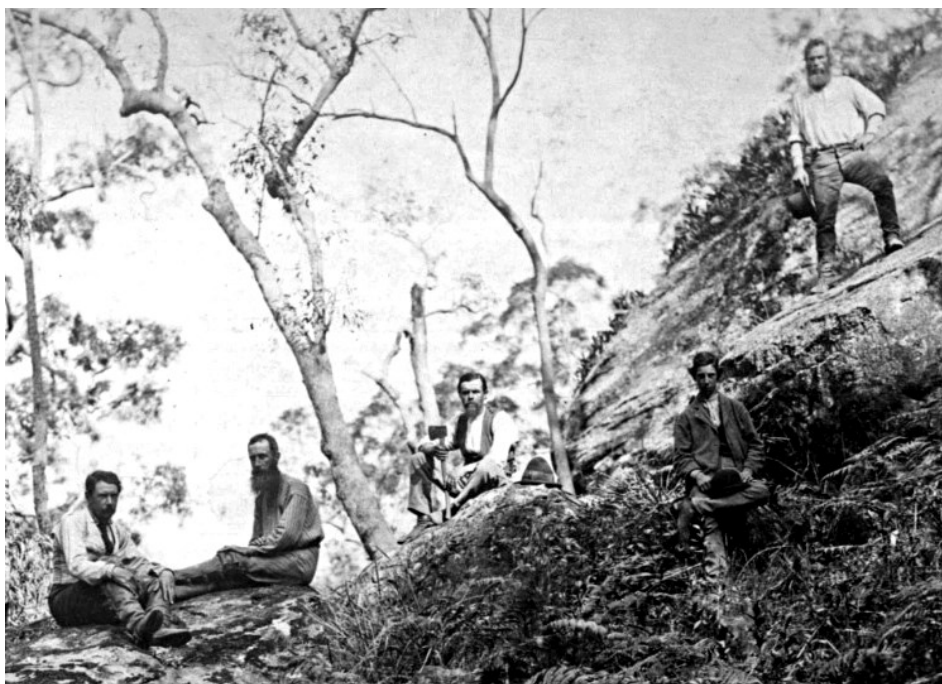
By 1875 Piquenit had resigned his job as a draftsman in Tasmania and moved to Sydney to further his artistic career. Exhibiting with the NSW Academy of Arts he encountered the visionary enthusiasm of Eccleston du Faur and by mid September was humping his swag and painting equipment into the Grose Valley via a rough 16 km track from the Hartley Vale railway siding. Wilderness suited his robust, solitary nature. Only recently he'd returned from a painting trip into the wilds of western

Tasmania and was not averse to serious walking in search of sketching sites.

Settled in camp, his reticence and focus on work inclined him to shun the company of other 'campers', on one occasion retreating to bed early with a headache to avoid the camp fire camaraderie of sixteen new arrivals. Nonetheless, despite his reserve, he appears to have taken a liking to young Crummer who accompanied him on a number of excursions (including a three-day camp at Trinity Falls) and remained in the valley to assist him after most of the others had gone, breaking camp only when rain set in and the river threatened to flood. An intriguing friendship is hinted at though, sadly, one that can never be fully recovered.

Leaving the valley on 13 October and interrupting his homeward journey to sketch the traditional view—from the top—at Govetts Leap, Piquenit went on to establish a reputation as one of the finest of Australia's early landscape artists. While settled permanently in Sydney he continued to travel, explore and paint the landscape and in 1901 was awarded the Wynne prize. He died, aged 78, in 1914. James Crummer, his young assistant, embarked upon a career in the Lands Department. He maintained his interest in the arts and had only recently been re-elected librarian of the Sydney Amateur Orchestral Society when he died tragically of food poisoning in November 1908. Married with a young family, he was just nudging his half century.

John Low ([grizzlybear3au@yahoo.com](mailto:grizzlybear3au@yahoo.com))



**Note:** For an account of the Grose Valley artists' camps and Piquenit's visit see Chapter 14 of Andy Macqueen's *Back from the Brink*, while Piquenit's watercolours can be viewed via the NSW State Library's on-line catalogue (Manuscripts & Pictures).

**Photo:** L to R - William Piquenit, Eccleston du Faur, Lewis Thompson (camp keeper), James Crummer and possibly McPhee (2<sup>nd</sup> camp keeper).

Photo courtesy Blue Mountains Historical Society.

(The photo has been cropped for use in this newsletter. You will find the original photo reproduced in Andy Macqueen's book.)

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

[www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

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Blue Mountains Conservation Society

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#### Grandparents for Generational Equity

[www.genequity.net](http://www.genequity.net)

Go the website ... keep informed ... write letters ...tell your friends. Let's take some real action to help leave a world our grandchildren can survive in.

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942, mobile 04024 02783, email [mauricekerkham@hotmail.com](mailto:mauricekerkham@hotmail.com) or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

**SATURDAY WALKS:** Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy—phone 4758 6009, email [jp34@tpg.com.au](mailto:jp34@tpg.com.au) Check [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) for updates.

**Saturday Walks driver reimbursement:** *In an effort to ensure that car drivers are adequately compensated for the use of their vehicles a driver reimbursement policy applies* (Check [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) Saturday Walks page for details)

- Jul 11 **Florabella Pass - Warrimoo to Blaxland via Pippas Pass.** Leader Karen 4751 9695. Meet at Warrimoo Post Office Shop 9.15am. 6Km. Grade 2/3. Map Springwood.
- Jul 18 **Gooches Crater.** We may well get the chance to see this often swampy enclosed area as a lake surrounded by towering sandstone cliffs. Leader **Bob** 4757 2684. Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockade Carpark 8.30am. 8 Km. Gr-2/3. Map **Wollangambe.**
- Jul 25 **Pagoda Country** see why the pagodas of the Gardens of stone are worth protecting – **With a new Garden on each trip you won't be disappointed** get in early for your place. Party limit of 8 as wilderness area. Leader **Hugh-Ring** on 04233 09854 for details.
- Jul 25 **Evans Crown.** Explore granite rocks and views along the ridge. New track, plus Wallaby tracks/off track. Leader **Meredith** 4782 4823. Meet at Blackheath Station carpark 8.30am. 6Km. Gr3. Map **Tarana.**
- Aug 1 **Kings Tableland area.** Andersons Firetrail to Sally Wattle waterhole, then on down 2/3rds of Anderson's, views over the Blue Labyrinth. Some exploratory. Leader **Diana** 04326 19305. Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockade Carpark 8.30am. 8 Km. Gr 2/3. Map **Jamison.**
- Aug 8. **Donkey Mountain.** "An amazing island of rock, soaring out of the valley, ringed by towering cliffs, dotted with distinctive pagodas". Leader **Harold** 9600 8005. Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockade Carpark 7.30am. 6Km. Gr 3/4. Map **Ben Bullen.**

**MONDAY LEISURE WALKS:** Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, [keithdor53@hotmail.com](mailto:keithdor53@hotmail.com)

- Jul 13 **Numantia Falls & Victory Track, Faulconbridge.** Meet Faulconbridge Station, south carpark, 8.50 am. Ken 04234 50200. Grade 3.
- Jul 20 **Wiggins Track & Magdala Creek Loop, Springwood.** Meet Springwood Westpac car park 9 am. Francoise 04385 12301. Grade 3.
- Jul 27 **Darks Cave Circuit, Leura,** 6 km. Meet Leura Station car park 8.25. Car pool fare \$5. Eddie 4784 3218. Grade 3.
- Aug 3 **Braeside to Govetts Leap to Popes Glen, Blackheath,** 9 km. Meet Blackheath Victoria Theatre car park, Govetts Leap Road, 8.45 am. Bob Taylor 4784 1060. Grade 3.
- Aug 10 **South Lawson Waterfalls.** Meet Start of Honour Avenue, Lawson, 8.35 am. Keith 4736 1010. Grade 2.

**THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS:** Walks 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, [denfenella@optusnet.com.au](mailto:denfenella@optusnet.com.au)

- Jul 16 **Euroka to the Nepean River, Glenbrook.** Four kilometres return. Meet Glenbrook Station Car Park 9.30am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2.
- Jul 23 **Christmas in July, Alexandra Hotel, Leura. \$48.** Meet at the hotel 12.30pm. Book and pay Beverley 4757 2076.
- Jul 30 **Mystery Walk.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Tracy 0434362611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2.
- Aug 6 **Darwin's Walk, Wentworth Falls.** Meet Stockyard Car Park, Wentworth Falls, 9.30am. Leader Christine 4752 2864. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2.
- Aug 13 **Horseshoe Falls, Hazelbrook.** Meet Hazelbrook Shopping Centre Car Park, 8.45am. Leader Chris 4721 4309. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2.

### Vale - Douglas Bateman

It is with much sadness that I report the passing of Douglas Bateman.

"Such a lovely, friendly man who was looking forward to his retirement years. He was really generous and caring, I was privileged to get to know him better at Warwick's Snowy Mountains walks in January. We shall really miss him." words of Alice Terry.

Douglas was a walker, cyclist and bird watcher among other pursuits and will be missed by all.

I have passed on my condolences to Sharyn and she hopes to join us on walks in the future.

Jim Percy.