

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



Green Business Awards

"What drives your passion in your business?" This is the question which will be put to each of the guests at our October general meeting, winners in the Blue Mountains City Council Business Awards for Environmental Care 2000.

Aimed at recognising businesses involved in activities that sustain and maintain the health of the natural environment, the inaugural award categories included waste minimisation, clean production, environmental products, and planning for future improvements to environmental performance.

Businesses revealed that it often does not take much to turn passion into profit to save not only money but the environment as well. Overall winner was Nigel Bell ECoDesign Architects. Winners - Environmental Management were Kanimbla View Environmental Retreat, Springwood Veterinary Clinic, Sustainable Ingenuity Australia and Mountain Millers.

The meeting will be held on Friday, 27 October, at the Conservation Hut, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, starting at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

WildAware "A Sense of Place"

Environmental Expo

Friday 13th October — a day for students — Displays and Exhibits of students work, plus combined activities held at Katoomba High School and Katoomba Public School, including bush regeneration and Earth Education.

Friday Evening — WildAware Trivia night. Hosted by Gary Humble. At Katoomba RSL, 7pm, tickets available from KHS 47822622, or from Frances Lawson-Cohen 47829194. Cost of Tickets \$8.00 each or \$60.00 per table.

Saturday 14th October. Community Expo Day, at Katoomba Public School, from 9.30 onwards. Speakers include Rob Henderson, City Farm Manager, Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project, Roger Minder, Energy Conservation in the Home, and Nigel Bell, Architect, on Sustainable Design. There will be a range of exhibits and practicals including Solar cooking, compost making and potting of seedlings.

Sunday 15th October Community Gardens Open Day, at Victoria Street, North Katoomba, starting at 10 am.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society workshop:

Dealing with the Media

Date: Saturday, 11 November, 10am to 4pm

Venue: Mid Mountains Centre, Lawson

In this one-day workshop in November you can learn:

- How to write a press release.
- How to crystallise your idea.
- How to turn that idea into a story.
- What happens to your story once it hits the media.
- How to improve your chances of getting your story in.
- Other ways of getting your message across. And
- Ways to help your story survive the sub-editor's pen or mouse.

Michael Burlace will be running the workshop and sharing his journalism skills and experience with us. Michael has edited and published several magazines, was former editor of Weekend Australian magazine, and currently writes for the Internet.

This is a fun day which will stretch your mind and give you new skills. We work on your ideas, we rough out press releases, we look at what media suit it best. We play games, we brainstorm ideas, we look at new ways of learning and creating and generally have a lot of fun.

Bring your story ideas, your half-written stories and any questions you have. Bring pencils, pens, a pad of paper, your diary, your address book, and examples of the media (newspapers, magazines, newsletters and more) which you typically read. And don't forget to bring an open mind and a contribution to a shared lunch.

Bookings are essential — maximum of 30 people. To get more information and to make bookings, please ring Michael Burlace on 4758 9285 or email michael@burlace.com.au

More info on WildAware website (www.bluemts.com.au/wildaware) or Frances Lawson-Cohen, fax 47826079, email elsherana@hermes.net.au

Gorse and Broom

Gorse and Broom are flowering now and will soon set seed. It is essential to act NOW to remove them from your property.

Gorse and Broom are extremely invasive and produce huge numbers of seeds. Seed can set twice a year and

between 10,000 and 30,000 seeds per square metre can be dropped, with seeds lasting up to 35 years in the soil. They are noxious weeds, which means that they must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed. The longer they are left, the more difficult they are to remove.

The Gorse Education Project is an initiative being run in conjunction with this year's Great Gorse Gorse Walk. It is sponsored by the Blue Mountains City Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and funded by State Government Urban Runoff Control Program.

Gorse education officers are available to visit private landholders who have gorse or broom infestations on their properties. They are offering free demonstrations of the easiest and most effective methods of removal, and advice on how to prevent serious infestations.

If you have gorse or broom on your property, contact Meredith Brainwood and Sarah Michell on 4780.5741 or 0419.989.993 for more information as soon as possible.

Spring Plant Sale

Saturday 7 October, outside the Conservation Hut, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, 9 am to 1 pm.

Native plants in tubes \$2 each, 125mm pots \$4 each. Contact David Coleby, Nursery Manager (4784.1395)

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

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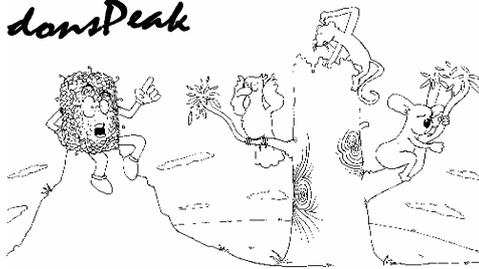
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THE DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER 2000



Mountains Re-railed

The Olympics have seen two trains every hour between Penrith and Katoomba with the frequency to Mount Victoria increased to one per hour. If the State Government provided such a service all the time it would reduce air pollution, fuel consumption and congestion.

Councillors Off Track

On 5/9/00, Blue Mountains Council voted 6-5 in favour of a grab-bag of expensive road proposals recommended by Council staff. These included a Major road through National Park land near Bells Line of Road, although the State Government's Maunsell McIntyre Report had ruled out the idea. Councillors Angel, Greenhill, Hamilton, Kime, Van der Kley and Egan voted in favour. The five Councillors who opposed the proposals were Councillors Burrige, Gaul, Henson, Kozelj and Myles, with Councillor Searle absent. *Don Morison.*

Land Use Report

Development Threat to Crown Land Behind Leura Primary School

The proposed construction of a sewer pipe is to allow future development of this land for housing purposes by Landcom (a division of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning). The Draft Assessment Report does not evaluate the merits or details of these proposals; it just assesses the land to allow the most appropriate use of the land in the future.

The Crown Land area consists of sandstone plateau forest and sedge swamp. The area supports a great diversity of plants and animals including many species of ferns, orchids (white caledenia), epacris, leucopogon. Nearby residents have reported sightings of swamp wallabies, red bellied black snakes and tiger quolls.

The draft report found that the Crown land provided water catchment protection to the headwaters of Wentworth Creek. The report's assessment of suitable uses for the land found that it had "very low urban development capability; very high catchment natural resource protection and nature conservation significance" and that zoning (for urban development) was not appropriate. However, for mapping area 3, which runs along the eastern edge of Mount Hay Road, the report does not comment on the capability of urban development or say that zoning is inappropriate (4.5.3, page 38). The report does suggest that the Crown land should be designated for Environmental Protection and Recreation (natural) which is consistent with the

recommendations of Council. Recreational use of the reserve also needs to be reviewed due to the environmental sensitivity of the area.

The Crown land has some minor weed problems around the edges, but most of the area is in pristine condition and is much too precious to have any kind of development on it.

You can help to halt any development on this land: Read the Draft Assessment (available from Department of Land and Water Conservation, Parramatta, or the offices of Blue Mountains City Council, Katoomba) and make a submission by 10 October outlining your objections to any future development of the Crown Land. Submissions to Land Assessment Officer, Dept of Land and Water Conservation, Sydney Metropolitan Office, PO Box 3935, Parramatta 2124.

Contact Andrew Moody (4784.1572) or Lyndal Sullivan (4782.1635) for more information.

Australian Birds Declining at Alarming Rate

In the wake of a recent report by biologists Stephen Garnett and Gabriel Crowley that shows one in five of Australia's native birds is now under threat, national bird conservation organisation Birds Australia is reporting dramatic declines in many of the nation's species.

Figures emerging from the Bird Atlas, a comparative study of distribution and abundance produced by Birds Australia and now in its third year, show that Wedged-tailed Eagles, Brolgas, Superb Lyrebirds and Scarlet Robins all have declined by up to 20%.

Similar statistics are emerging of other bird species and Birds Australia says we have reached a state of emergency. "The current situation is akin to the wholesale destruction of one fifth of our bird species in many cases", says Birds Australia Councillor and ANU Professor Henry Nix.

"These declines are rapid and could spiral out of control unless we address it immediately. The loss of habitat is the most significant factor in all of the declines but there are things we can all do to turn the situation around", says Professor Nix.

"As a result of Birds Australia's on-the-ground projects, numbers of the Orange-bellied Parrot and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, whose numbers dropped perilously in previous decades, are now holding steady. Other projects have seen the numbers of Kangaroo Island's Glossy Black-Cockatoo increase by 39% to 250 in the past five years", said Professor Nix.

Birds Australia which was founded in 1901, aims to protect native birds and their habitats through community education and involvement, research and on the ground recovery actions. The organisation has 10,000 volunteers working in the field and at the research centres, a contribution that is worth over \$10 million per annum.

In an effort to raise both awareness of the issue and funds for its work in the

area of endangered species Birds Australia is launching the Endangered Species Appeal during Bird Week, which runs from October 23-29th.

Funds raised will go to Birds Australia's on-the-ground recovery projects, community education and conservation programs.

During the appeal a family of Peregrine Falcons nesting on the 33rd floor of the Optus Building in Collins Street, Melbourne and a family of elusive Tawny Frogmouths at Griffith University in Brisbane will be the subject of a gripping six week live Internet broadcast and will provide compulsory 24 hour viewing. The use of hidden cameras and streaming technology will bring the viewer right into the nest where site visitors can view the chicks up close in real time. Enthusiasts can observe the chicks as they hatch and battle through the first few weeks of life, when they face many dangers and obstacles, and if they beat the odds, see them finally fledge, around six to eight weeks later all at www.birdsaustralia.com.au.

Campaign Coordinator Susie Grant says the live broadcast is central to the campaign. "One in five nest sites fail on average and one in five of our native species is under threat. Watching and willing these adorable chicks through the first weeks of their lives will give the viewer a very real understanding of just how fragile our native species are".

Ms Grant said The purpose of the Appeal and of the broadcast is to get this message on the state of the country's native birds out to the Australian and international community and to raise funds for Birds Australia's work with native species.

On line visitors can view the live broadcast and donate to the Birds Australia Endangered Species Appeal on line by visiting the site at www.birdsaustralia.com.au.

Welcome to New Members

Michael Benson, Manly
Judith Dyer, Werrington
Julius Timmerman and Felicity Grover, Lawson

Marie O'Connor, Croydon Park
Andrew Moody, Leura
Christine and Jeremy Townend, Leura
Robert and Naomi Hadfield, Warrimoo
Esther McFarlane, Woodford
John D Holman, Neutral Bay
Joan McRuvie, Leura

Leaflets Enclosed with this Newsletter ...

- 5th Wild Spaces Environmental Festival, 3-4 November, Gearin Hotel, Katoomba.
- Birds Australia, Endangered Species Appeal (see story on this page).

Membership Enquiries
 Contact Ross Coster
 (Phone - Work) 02 4759.1247
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 (Email) haytech@pnc.com.au
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MOUNTAIN WILD FLOWERS

To The Editor Blue Mountain Echo
(Echo 21/5/1910)

Sir, — In your issue of the 7th you published an extremely interesting letter from Mr. H. Hicks dealing with the aims of the B.M. Horticultural Society. In that letter he says that "wild flowers are scarce here". Perhaps as Katoomba now-a-days is concerned, such a statement is true, but a few years ago it was not so; the very opposite was the case. The place, in spring, was like a garden. In the bush, or on cleared land, the flowers spread themselves in profusion, all sorts and colors. Starting always, in June, with the lovely wattle, following with masses of white heather — one sort after another bloomed till, as summer approached, flowerland sank to rest, leaving only a few steady plants as a reminder that again in the next season would the joy of spring flowers return. Waratah plants were common in October and November and the bush was gay with them, but they were dug up by the grubber who thinks that to clear land it is necessary to only leave sand and rock; or the blossoms picked till the poor plant, which can only throw out new blooms through the heart of the old ones, gives up the hopeless struggle and dies.

I shall never forget how Ada Street looked when I struck it first. Down by Mr Bogus's cottage many flowers were out — whites, blues and heliotropes — but the mass was of Mountain rose, and other pretty specie of boronias. The ground was thick with them all shades of pink, from mauve to the deepest rose pink, and over all the coloured haze glowed. Our Mountain flowers, both wild and cultivated, if grown in masses, seem to throw out an atmosphere of colored brilliancy that I have not noticed elsewhere. It seems to surround them, and is a beautiful thing. One of the hills in the locality of my house is clothed with wattle, down two of its sides each year; and the radiant light that shimmers over it is as the light from Paradise. I have seen it everywhere about our flowers,

Rest

Sun-warmed rocks brocaded with lichen,
wonderful place to wander and dream.
Mintbush and teatree perfuming the hollows
And in the cracks the yellow buds gleam.

Walk with care, don't trample old branches
Worn out, and fallen after a storm.
They dream of birdsong and wind in the treetops,
Memories captured in each sculptured form.

Pale grey things scribbling the shining rock,
Fragile as ash, destroyed by a breath.
Silvery, quiet, ghosts of the trees and shrubs
Resting so gently, and lovely in death.

So, dear God, after my labouring
When I am weary, grant me your grace.
In everlasting arms carry my spirit home,
Let me live on in the light of your face.

(A poem by Grace Bayley, written after a "Pagoda Walk"
with Olive and John Noble, in about 1990.)

and it makes one hold one's breath. If anyone has ever stood amongst the clematis-covered trees and rocks beneath the Orphan Rock, when they are covered in snowy blossoms, or stood on the slope of some hillside down towards Goyder's Grove when the afternoon sun is striking through the bronzy-yellow flowers of the native peas, they will carry with them always — even when winter is at its blackest — the memory of the radiance that lay over all. It's the same in the bush, too. But I had better cease writing, for the subject has no end. I could tell of banks of flowers, since spoiled by little picking fingers, or of massed heliotrope-colored blooms, at which strangers would exclaim, "These cannot be wild." Or of swamp gutters — now drained — filled with thousands of long-stemmed royal blue star flowers; or of masses of the pretty vanilla that lasts so long in water, and lots of others, but space forbids. Could the Horticultural Society take to itself the care of our wild flowers I wonder? If so, again in the little bits of unused land along our streets; in the near bush, and, perhaps, even in our bare gardens and back yards, the dear old bush flowers would once more rear their heads.

Yours truly, BUSHWOMAN, Katoomba
11/5/10

Ozone Hole Growing

The hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica is growing at an unprecedented rate and could reach a record depth this year, United Nations meteorologists said on 22 September.

The findings of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) come two weeks after the U.S. space agency NASA said the largest hole ever seen had opened up over Antarctica, a sign that greenhouse gases are taking their toll on the earth's protective layer.

"The rapid and early development of the ozone hole ... continues, as sunlight reached the South Pole after the total darkness of winter," the Geneva-based WMO said. "If the losses persist as is now expected, we will have the deepest ozone hole on record," it added.

Meteorological conditions in the stratosphere will significantly affect the size of the hole, its depth and persistence, according to the WMO. "It is as strong as we've ever seen one," Dr. Michael Proffitt, the agency's senior scientific officer, told Reuters. "I've been looking at all previous history of the ozone hole and we've never seen one any more intense at its peak. Historically, we would expect two or three more weeks of intensive ozone loss," he added.

For more than a decade, the annual hole in the earth's protective layer has appeared in late August or early September, with the phenomenon peaking in the first week or two of

Greenhouse Corner Ethanol or Diesel?

I recently wrote to Kerry Bartlett, Federal Member for Macquarie, criticising the Federal Government decision to subsidise diesel, and asking that in future such concessions be given to ethanol. Mr Bartlett referred the letter to Federal Environment Minister, Senator Robert Hill, who replied with some interesting facts I was not aware of. Below are some excerpts from the letter from Senator Hill.

"The blending of ethanol with petrol is very significant in NSW. Approximately 200 service stations in regional NSW sell a 10% blend of ethanol and petrol. These sales are expected to comprise 7% of annual petrol usage in NSW/ACT by the end of 2000."

"The Commonwealth Government continues to support wider application of ethanol and other alternative transport fuels by: A \$1mil grant to assist with development of ethanol from starch technology; A \$2million grant to build a pilot plant for ethanol from wood technology; A fuel grant of 20.009 cents per litres for ethanol"

While I still believe these measures are too small, they are a very good start.

I think the future of all vehicle fuels lies with ethanol (and perhaps methanol), and anything the Federal Government does to promote this is a good thing.

Sustainable Energy Policy.

I have written a draft Sustainable Energy Policy and published it on the Society's Web Site (<http://www.pnc.com.au/~bmcs>) under Policies.

I expect the document to be updated based on feedback from interested members, workshopped later in the year (perhaps November), and ratified by the Management Committee in December 2000.

Anyone who is interested in the first draft and does not have Web access, please let me know and I will send you a paper copy.

Ross Caster



October.

During the past two weeks, all 12 monitoring stations around the rim of the Antarctic have reported measurements of ozone that are 50-70 percent below the norms in the years 1964-1976, before the ozone hole was detected, the WMO said. "For some of the stations, these represent the lowest measured values in their records," it said. Since last Monday, the edge of the hole has been over the Argentinian town of Ushuaia, the WMO said.

An image released by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) on September 8 showed a hole appearing as a giant blue blob, totally covering Antarctica and stretching to the southern tip of South America. NASA said at the time that the hole spread over 11 million square miles (28.3 million square km), an area three times larger than the land mass of the United States. (Story by Stephanie Nebehay, Reuters News Service.)

Arabunna

Arabunna, the people and arabunna arabunna, the plant we call Sturt's desert pea.

I've just enjoyed a week with Arabunna elders and youngers — seeing the country, experiencing Aboriginal culture, hearing Arabunna language and stories, and learning more than I can record here.

Ill-health has prevented me from bushwalking, so the Community Aid Abroad Aboriginal Cultural Tour sounded like a good alternative. The cynic who asked "What is CAA doing having tours inside Australia?" is answered by the statistics on Aboriginal health, housing etc etc. However, what I saw at Marree is a community holding on to the best of the past and building a future.

Tour highlights include: Beautiful country, mound springs, Ghan railway remnants; Lake Eyre — water in the south, but better still is the unexpected beauty of the salt crystals; Floating in Lake Eyre south without any movement — it's saltier than the dead sea; Fossils in desert stones; Birds that are different to any here, like the black breasted kite, little eagle and red-backed kingfisher; New plants, many flowering; Lizards! Emus with chicks; Eating damper (2 kinds!) and kangaroo rissoles (Thank you Garth); Blanche moving silently among the sleeping swags to light the morning fires while the eastern horizon just starts turning red; More stars, and more shooting stars, than I've ever seen before; Reg and Ronnie told stories of their country and their lives that are profoundly moving (they need to be heard first hand).

Anyone interested in hearing more about the trip is welcome to contact me. I'd enjoy talking about this holiday.

Karen Taylor 4759-3656.

Jackson Park Bushcare Group

Jackson Park is a special place. It is part of the old estate of Henry Parkes, and his developments did not destroy the unique biodiversity of this area. A short walk will reveal a myriad of native plants, orchids and many birds. The track leaves from Wigram Road and winds its way around to Macquarie Parade. It only takes about 25 minutes but will show you an example of some wonderful lower mountains bushland.

Jackson Park Bushcare Group is the one and only group in Faulconbridge. In front of them was metres and metres of Wandering Jew when they first started working about two years ago. They have been a fine example of patience and persistence, and the site is now reaping the rewards. The Wandering Jew has been excluded to a thin strip along the edge, and they have their sights set on this to replace it with indigenous species. The planting the group has already done is performing marvellously, and will form a good barrier on the edge of the

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Oct 07 (Sat) **Native Plant Sale**, Conservation Hut, 9 am to 1 pm.
- Oct 21 (Sat) **Management Committee Meeting**. 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
- Oct 27 (Fri) **General Meeting**. 7.30 pm, Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. Winners of the Blue Mountains City Council Business Awards for Environmental Care 2000 will be asked the question "What drives your passion in your business". (See page 1.)
- Nov 11 **Workshop: "Dealing with the Media"**. (See page 1)
- Nov 18 **Management Committee Meeting**.
- Nov 24 **General Meeting**. Guest speaker will be Jim Smith, "World Heritage: Blue Mountains and Solomon Islands — Indigenous Perspectives".

QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 12 and under)

For more information contact Jessica on 4757.2783. For a copy of the Quoll Club Newsletter, phone Ross Coster 4759.1247.

BUSHCARE (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves.)

- Oct 08 (Sun) **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group**. Meet 9 am at the Reserve (GWH, West of Sorenson Bridge). Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.
- Oct 10 (Tues) **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group**. Contact Jessica 4757.2783 for the meeting place. (following Tuesday if wet).

BUSHWALKS: Carry drinking water (minimum 1 litre), bring morning tea, and lunch for day walks. Wear shoes with a good tread.

- Monday Leisure Walks: Usually half day walks, easy/medium, leisurely pace.**
- Oct 09 **Point Pilcher**. Meet Medlow Bath, opposite Hydro, 9 am. Contact Jock McKechnie 4758.6346. BBQ afterwards.
- Oct 16 **Mount Wilson**. Jan's Mystery Walk. Meet at Mount Victoria Station at 9 am. Contact Jan Cutler 4784.3079. BBQ afterwards.
- Oct 23 **Glastonbell (at Bell)**. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.30 am. Contact Alan Macaulay 4739.2767. BBQ afterwards.
- Oct 30 **The Spit to Manly Harbourside Walk**. Day excursion on public transport. Meet at Lawson at 8.30 am or be on the 8.01 from Mount Victoria. Contact Bill Graham 4759.1692. Lunch at Manly. 3½ hr walk. Easy/medium.
- Nov 06 **The Nature Trail**. Meet at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, 9am. If a lift from the Station is needed call Bill Graham 4759.1692 on weekend to arrange. BBQ afterwards.

Bushwalks: Walks of various grades, full or half day.

(Note: we have a Wednesday and a Sunday excursion this month!)

- Oct 07 (Sat) **Burgess Falls**. Meet Hazelbrook Station carpark 9.30 am. Contact Kate McManus 4758.7936. Half day.
- Oct 14 (Sat) **Sawmill Site and Emu Carvings**. Meet Bull's Camp on GWH near Linden 9am. Contact Allan Macaulay 4739.2767. Half day.
- Oct 21 (Sat) **Lockley's Pylon**. Meet Leura carpark 9.30 am. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. Day walk.
- Oct 25 (Wed) **Blue Gum Forest via Du Faur Buttress**. Meet at Leura Station carpark at 8.30 am. Contact Ross Coster 4759.1837 AH. All day. **Hard and Fast**.
- Oct 29 (Sun) **Zig Zag Inspection Walk**. Arrive at the Zig Zag Station by train at 8.39 am. (7.38 from Lawson). Must be in the last carriage. Take lunch. Leave on 3.44 pm train. Contact Ron Wheeler 4757.1526 or Bill Graham 4759.1692.
- Nov 04 (Sat) **Dante's Glen**. Meet Lawson Bowling Club carpark 9.30 am. Contact Kate McManus 4758.7936. Half Day.

Walks are generally Easy to Medium Grade, unless otherwise noted. **Easy:** Mostly good surfaces, but some rough or steep sections. Suited to people of average fitness. **Medium:** Includes rough or steep sections, some of which may require clambering over natural obstacles. Discuss with leader if in doubt. **Hard:** Strenuous walks, suited to fit and experienced walkers. **If this is your first walk**, or you are in any doubt, contact the leader or Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.

Future Monday Bus Trips, BOOK NOW. Call Bill Graham 4759.1692 for seat allocation.

- Nov 27 **Dunn's Swamp**, always a delightful trip.
- Jan 22 **Mystery Destination near Sydney Coast**.

Welcome to Matthew Martin who has taken up the organising position to arrange Weekend bushwalks. Thank you Matthew. His number is 4782.4218. Please call him soon to book your walk.

reserve against future weed invasion.

The group is now looking to expand into the rehabilitation of a degraded creekline that flows through the reserve. This will be the hardest task yet for this small group, so your help would be greatly appreciated.

Please come along to a workday on the third Sunday of each month at 2pm. We meet at Wigram Road carpark. Chris Dewhurst, BMCC Bushcare Coordinator..