

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



Wild Images

Wilderness photographer Henry Gold will be the guest speaker at our July general meeting on Friday 27 July at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls.

In 1956, the year after he arrived from Europe, Henry Gold joined the Sydney Bushwalkers Club and began to appreciate the Australian landscape. A few years later his skill as a photographer began to open the eyes of Australians to its unique wilderness heritage.

Henry is a true Man of the Mountains and he knows the NSW wilderness that lies beyond the reach of the automobile. He supported the infant environment movement as its honorary photographer and he has continued in that capacity.

In 1967, Henry provided the images for the classic brochure "Quarrying Valuable Scenery", which helped to save the Colong Caves area in the southern Blue Mountains. Countless numbers of Henry Gold photographs have since been used to publicise wilderness protection.

He provided images for the World Heritage Lobby Book which was used to secure World Heritage Listing for the Greater Blue Mountains.

His work has covered the Greater Blue Mountains, Kakadu, the NSW rainforests, the Snowy Mountains and Central Australia, and has been reproduced in the press and many journals (including Habitat and National Parks Journal), books (Australian Natural Heritage), the Battle for the Bush, Blue Mountains World Heritage. His own publications include the Macdonnell Ranges, Colo Wilderness, Wild Places, and for 17 years until 1997 the NSW Wilderness Calendar.

(Many thanks to Keith Muir of the Colong Foundation who provided the above information in an email to the Society and in an article in the May issue of NCC's newsletter, Environment NSW).

Some of Henry's work can be seen on the Henry Gold Wilderness Gallery web site at <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/GoldGallery/default.htm>

The general meeting starts at 7.30 pm. Visitors are very welcome.

Shopping Bags

Our new calico bags are very popular and are selling fast. Each calico bag used helps to reduce the 14 million plastic bags going to landfill in Australia each day. Our birds logo and our name are something to be proud to carry!

The bags are available at monthly Friday meetings for \$5 and at the Conservation Hut Café during the day.

Biodiversity Month

Free Energy Audit

An energy efficient house is the best way to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gases.

John Ross of Integral Energy has made a special offer to residents of the Blue Mountains to do **FREE ENERGY AUDITS** on homes for a limited time this winter. So do accept this offer and get a free audit done on your house, even if you are renting – it will still help save money on your heating bills. **Ring John Ross on 4782.5296**

Save Energy: Save Habitat

An energy efficient house is one way to reduce the amount of wood being burnt. Six million tonnes of firewood are consumed in Australia each year, as much as is exported as woodchips. The equivalent of ten football fields of native forest is felled each day for firewood.

Firewood on sale in the Blue Mountains and Sydney comes from Queensland and woodlands around Oberon, Capertee, Mudgee and Dubbo. Loss of habitat is reducing biodiversity and our wonderful wildlife.

You can stay warm on a winter evening and conserve habitat too.

Further information:

- Get a free copy of the leaflet *Is Your Wood Going up in Smoke?* Ring EPA on 131 555
- Contact Alternative Technology Centre at www.ata.org.au/heating
- When building or renovating contact the Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA) on 02.9319 0022

Earth Alive! Biodiversity Month

2001 is on in September. Biodiversity Month is a national celebration of Australia's rich diversity of life, and what all Australians can do to help conserve wildlife habitat. This month is coordinated by Community Biodiversity Network.

Help promote the conservation of Australia's species and ecosystems, and promote your community's conservation activities.

This year the Community Biodiversity Network and the Threatened Species Network have developed a one-stop-shop National Biodiversity Month/ National Threatened Species Day (7th September) kit. The Kit includes a product order form, which enables groups taking part to access a broad range of free education and promotional materials.

To receive a kit or for more information contact the Community Biodiversity Network. Ph: (02) 9262 4743, Email: earthalive@cbn.org.au or browse 'Earth Alive!' Biodiversity Month <http://www.cbn.org.au/projects/earthalive2001/home.html>

Meeting on

Housing Issues

'Local Housing for Local People' will be the theme of a public meeting on 24 July, 9am – 1pm, at the Santa Maria Centre in Lawson (cnr. Kitchener and Mary Streets).

The purpose of the meeting is to build a better understanding of affordable housing issues in the Mountains and to develop strategies and action steps addressing the problems.

The presence of Society members at the meeting would be highly desirable because of the possible impact of new affordable housing development on the natural ecology, and because of the importance of becoming more aware of the close links between social justice and environmental sustainability — an awareness that we need to integrate more into our own conservation work.

For further information contact Paul Mannings on 4754 4451 or Mary Waterford at the Mountains Community Resource Network on 4759 3599.

World Heritage Funding

Much of the focus following the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Listing has been about the economic benefit to the area.

As a community within a World Heritage Area it is our responsibility to look after the area, to repair the damage already caused and ensure that no further damage is done.

The Federal Government has made a commitment to protect the World Heritage area, and to restore those areas that have become degraded. A major cause of degradation is the presence and introduction of feral species in the National Park.

The Society is asking the Federal Government to create a budget to eliminate feral species in the World Heritage Area.

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Our Home & the Environment Recycling

We have made some major decisions on how to build the house based on the embodied energy of products as discussed last month. Using products which are recyclable has had some similar influences on the process but not necessarily in isolation to embodied energy. This means that we have also assessed the embodied energy of recycled products. We have also tried to use products which will be recyclable in the future.

Second-hand products are re-used with minimal refurbishment and hence the embodied energy only relates to their dismantling, cleaning and transportation to the new site. For instance we will use second-hand bricks for the piers. These are bricks, which have been dismantled from a house in Sydney, placed directly on a truck and transported to our place. It means that we will have to clean them when they arrive which we may have balked at if they weren't a lime mortar, which is easy to clean. Recycled products on the other hand have been re-processed in some way and hence may have a higher embodied energy. We have tried to minimise embodied energy by using second hand rather than recycled products.

We didn't mill all the wood for our house, so had to find some recycled and second-hand alternatives.

Floors - we decided to make a feature of the new lounge, dining and entry hall floors and so looked at options for floorboards from demolition yards. Second-hand floorboards can be found in a number of demolition yards around Sydney and the Mountains. These always have nail holes, which while they may add character to the floor, they may need patching up and cleaning before they are re-usable. There are also yards, which recycle large pieces of timber collected from the demolition of old factories, wharfs, etc. These timbers are re-milled into floorboards. Hence you can buy hardwood floorboards that are seasoned yet look new. One place in Rozelle collects the timbers and transports them to Kandos to mill then transports them back to Rozelle for sale. These floorboards have a

much higher embodied energy level than those produced by a place in Botany, which has the mill on-site, hence reducing the transportation energy. We plan to use second-hand floorboards in the bedrooms. They will have less embodied energy and be cheaper.

Windows - there is an abundance of suppliers of second-hand windows in the Mountains and in Sydney. None however sell double-glazed. "Branches" in Lawson will make double-glazed windows from second-hand hardwood, so we are choosing this option. The issue is that the embodied energy of producing the new windows is much higher than using second-hand windows. The double glazed windows however will save us heating energy during the life of the house thus offsetting the energy used in production.

Our house will be very woody. We have mainly tried to build the house from local exotic trees milled on site. Where we haven't been able to use this type of wood we have used second-hand wood. Where we can't use either of the above we have used recycled wood. In these instances, the energy used in re-processing the wood, has been offset by the energy saved over the operation of the finished house. The one exception is in using recycled floorboards in the lounge. Well nobody is perfect - we wanted to give ourselves a treat.

Wherever possible we have tried to re-use products from the house we have demolished. When not possible we have tried to find someone else who could use them. However despite these intentions it has not been easy trying to dispose of some products. Gyprock, which is recycled in Sydney as an additive to garden fertiliser, cannot be re-used in the Mountains.

The next instalment will be about some other issues to consider when using timber.

Cheers -

Greg Wellham and Jessica Yuille.



Welcome to New Members

Colleen McFadden, Hazelbrook
 Mathiana Seskus, Lawson
 Ronald and Joan Liversidge, Lapstone
 Monica Shephard, Blaxland
 Gail Blamey, Wentworth Falls
 Ursula Heckel and Jennifer Gabbay,
 Wentworth Falls

DP Edwards and DA Brown, Blackheath

Admin/Office Help Needed

Do you have administration and office management skills and a little time to spare on a regular basis? Our overworked Secretary needs somebody to help organise and maintain the office — a half day a week would be great. There are also projects from time to time, which need somebody to "own" and organise the details. Phone Robin Mosman 4757.1354 if you can help.

Water One of the Challenges

From its headwaters high on the western slopes of the Blue Mountains, the Macquarie River snakes its way across the Central West of NSW, through the sea of bird-life that is the Macquarie Marshes and into the Murray Darling river system.

Along its length, the Macquarie is a vital source of drinking water and the lifeblood for an internationally significant wetland, and acts as a massive stormwater drain. It also doubles as one of NSW's major sources of irrigation water, which has a dramatic effect on

natural water flow. The Burrendong Dam above Wellington, for example, retains flows from seasonal rainfall and releases them during the summer months, a time when naturally the river should be dry. This is not only fatal for native fish species but also supports the spread of introduced pests such as Carp.

Salinity problems in the Macquarie catchment and run-off from urban development degrade water quality. It is predicted that Dubbo's drinking water will be unsuitable for consumption within the next 20 years. And the unique Macquarie Marshes, home to thousands of native bird species, have reduced by at least 50 percent over the last 50 years.

Tragically, the Macquarie River is not a unique case. Only an average of six percent of natural flows are retained in NSW's waterways.

Last year, the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales ran an intensive lobbying and public awareness raising campaign to reform water use in NSW. This campaign was successful. The new water legislation has the potential to vastly increase the efficiency

of water use, to restore and protect freshwater ecology by returning environmental flows to rivers and to protect water quality.

Now NCC is working to build community understanding and support, talking to local communities about the actions they can take to restore their waterways and meeting with State Government to ensure that healthy waterways are one of their very top priorities.

The Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales (NCC) is the state's peak environment group. Water is just one of the challenges. NCC work equally hard to protect oceans, native vegetation, the coast and air quality.

The NCC needs public support to continue this vital work for the NSW environment. Donations to the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Level 5, 362 Kent Street, Sydney 2000, are tax deductible.

**THE DEADLINE
 FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
 FRIDAY 20 JULY 2001**

Capertee Tree Planting

During 5-6 May about 200 volunteers converged on a beautiful valley to plant trees and shrubs to assist in the Capertee Valley Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program. Over 7000 trees were planted, an ambitious increase over the 8500 planted during two weekends last year.

It is estimated that about 80% of the world's Regent Honeyeaters visit the Capertee Valley. According to the Readers Digest Complete Book of Birds, they feed on "nectar rifled from various box and ironbark eucalypts and occasional banksias and mistletoes ... but they also take insects, manna, lerps and fruit". The Regent Honeyeater remains a species whose movements and population size are still largely a mystery.

Some experts believe about 21% of Australian bird species are threatened, mostly due to habitat loss. A sad observation on how the unique flora and fauna of this wonderful country are valued.

David Geering did an unbelievable job of organising such a large group to work hard, get wet and muddy, and still wish to return for more plantings. A delicious meal was provided by the locals for almost 150 people packed into the Glen Alice Hall. On Sunday 6th some of our observers were treated to sightings of

the Regents. (Isobel Evans, *Blue Mountains Bird Observers Newsletter*, May 2001)

The next tree plant weekend will be held on 11-12 August. Contact David Geering (Freecall 1800 621056, email david.geering@npws.nsw.gov.au)

On Thursday Bushwalks

With Jill Dark, Woodford Fire Trail:

*A load of drips
she-oaks shakes herself
in the breeze*

With Olive Noble, Hat Hill to Bald Hill:

*"I love walking in heathland — I
don't know what it is — perhaps
its stepping out in space".
(Meredith)*

*Something else
has enjoyed this track
its pile of poo*

*lyrebird mounds
the dancers trilling away
in the valley*

— Diana Levy, 31/5/01 —

Walls Cave, June 1, 2001

The Thursday walkers enjoyed a leisurely walk to Wall's Cave on June 1. Honeyeaters were plentiful in the Banksias, darting across the track, sometimes almost colliding with the walkers. It was a beautiful winter's day, a time and a place to reflect on Nature's wonders.

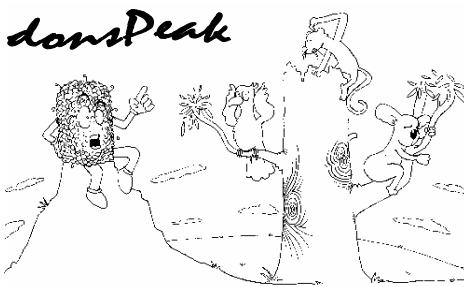
The old Termite's mound near the top of the track brought about some discussion. It was large twelve years ago when I first saw it. It would have been interesting to have measured it then and see how much it has grown. How old is the nest? There was evidence of new work on top of the mound. The termites come out at night to work.

Winter Sunset

Have you viewed the sunset from No 16? for there is no better sight to be seen on a winter's day with its blue yellow gold, rays of light behind black Mount Hay quietly going on its way.

The joy and peace of the sunset is broken by the 5.40 train going noisily on its way, unaware of the beauty of the day.

As I relax and reflect on the day
I know that the sunset will return the very next day.
(Bill Marrow)



Pinch me! — I'm agreeing with the RTA

The RTA has been criticised over its designs for the Soldier's Pinch (Mt Victoria) and Shell Corner (Katoomba) highway upgrades. Some criticism is confused but the suggestion that B-double trucks may eventually be free of present obstacles on the highway between Faulconbridge and Lithgow is well founded.

While we could hope that, in the long term, sanity will prevail and rail will win out over road transport, on present trends it is a colossal gamble to hope that there will never be a B-double route over the Mountains (the Maunsell-McIntyre report explains why). The current absence of such a route provokes 'Super Highway'

proposals. Some of these over the past 10 years have variously threatened the Wollemi National Park, the Blue Labyrinth, and Elphinstone Plateau as well as the Grose, Megalong and Kanimbla Valleys. If truck traffic on the highway does increase, I believe environmentally friendly by-passes of several of the most affected town centres are achievable.

The RTA's current approach west of Katoomba minimises the future potential spread of road construction and traffic impact into the currently less spoiled parts of the World Heritage Area and its surroundings.

'Red-eared Slider' versus 'Snakeneck'

No, this is not about mud wrestling (in the usual sense). The American tortoises which NPWS District Manager Geoff Luscombe drew attention to some months ago may still be muscling in on Glenbrook Lagoon. The American red-eared slider is heavier than the

Membership Enquiries
Contact Elizabeth van Reyswoud
Phone/Fax: 4759.2508 (a.h.)
Email: ereyswoud@hermes.net.au
Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Why do they keep expanding? Does the colony keep growing? What is it like inside?

The creek has cut a beautiful and tortuous path through the tough rocks surrounding Wall's Cave — a mighty loop, a tunnel through the rocks following a landslide, another loop past the cave, then another loop after it passes the cave. The discussion got onto the destination of the water in the creek — winding through the Grand Canyon, bouncing down waterfalls into the Grose Valley, into the Grose River, the Hawkesbury River, to the Pacific Ocean. This would have to be one of the most scenic water courses in the world, the creeks and rivers twisting and turning all the way.

David asked the question: How long does the water take to reach the ocean? He had heard that during dry times, because of poor flow in the river, the waters of the Hawkesbury can take up to five months to reach the ocean, from Windsor.

Ferrous Cave, June 28, 2001

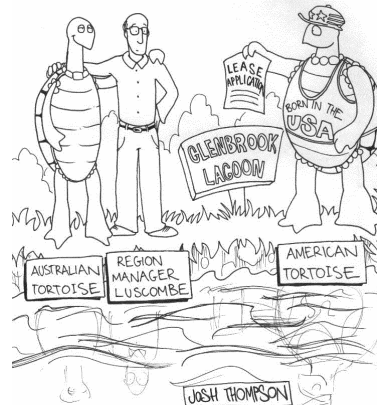
Our final walk for this term was along a disused and eroded track off Mount Piddington to the Ferrous Cave. A set of beautifully carved stone steps is the only indication that it ever was a made walking track. To celebrate the Winter Solstice we had a "literary morning tea" with candles to light the cave, cheese and nibbles prepared by Irene's Deli, a song by the newly formed Ferrous Cave Choir, and original poetry and poetry by Henry Lawson and others.

The next series of Thursday morning Interpretive Bushwalks will commence on July 26. Enquiries to Christine Davies 4787.7246.

Australian snake-necked tortoise with which it competes (up to 1 kg). Red-eared slider also causes disturbances to the ecology in other ways, is an undesirable tenant overall, and should be reported if seen. It can be identified by distinctive red marks on the neck.

National Party Forms Council Jeer Squad

An applauded speech at the recent NSW National Party conference suggested there are too many elderly councillors holding up development on local councils. The thrust of it was that these geriatrics should proceed in lemming-like mass to the cliff edge and jump! I recall some very environmentally responsible voting by councillors with greying hair and wrinkles (attributes which I also possess). Perhaps it's best left to the voters whether some experienced councillors should stay. Don Morison.



Celebrating World Heritage

The Bluegum Pathways project is a series of events to celebrate the experience of living around a World Heritage Area, with the communities of the Greater Blue Mountains. These events will inform, entertain and call attention to our role as custodians of this natural wonder. The project celebrates the environment of which we are a part, giving it the recognition that it deserves in our national and regional psyche.

The Gumtree Songline Walk and Gumnut Campfires, Sept 1 to 22

Walking the LAND. Learning about the World Heritage Values. Appreciation and understanding of the natural ecosystems. Recording the species of gumtrees which gives this area world recognition. Expanding communication between conservationists, bushwalkers and local communities.

The walk is a three week long relay through the heart of the Inscribed Heritage Area. There will be 3 starts to the walk, 2 from the northern boundary and 1 from the southern. Each relay stage will be walked by no more than 6 walkers in each party for 2 to 4 days.

The walk will culminate in a major overnight celebration in Blue Gum Forest. For further information contact Wyn Jones, PO Box 60, Blackheath 2785, email winjones@lisp.com.au

BMCS Six Day Activity

Warm-ups are currently underway for the Society's six-day activity, organised by Don Morison, which will join in the overnight celebration in Blue Gum Forest on 22 September.

If you have made enquiries and not heard back from Bill Graham or Don Morison, or would like to participate, please contact Don on 4759.2128 or PO Box 170 Katoomba 2780.

Walking the Far Side of World Heritage

There is a story of rediscovery starting from the west, at Capertee village and heading southeast. You will discover the truth about mining, pine plantations and conservation.

First stop is Airly mesa, targeted for mining and a very special place, home of 300 craggy sisters (pagodas). See the former oil shale mine works, how close they lived to the earth.

Next stop is south over Baal Bone Gap to examine the damage done to this scenic area. From there, along the Great Divide over Gardiners Gap, to the very headwaters of the Cocks River, a trailers paradise. Walkers will venture into the cliff collapsed ruins of western escarpment of Newnes Plateau. Advance to the headwaters of the Wolgan River where 5ML/day of mine water is pumped each day. We will visit the arboreal desert Newnes pine forest, examining the sights and smells of the sewage sludge application area, then down the Blue Mountains Range to Cables Sands, Clarence Colliery, and the Rockla

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

July 21 (Sat) Management Meeting, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.

July 27 (Fri) General Meeting, at the Conservation Hut, 7.30 pm. (See page 1).

Sept 1-30 Earth Alive! Biodiversity Month

QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 12 and under)

For more information contact Jessica on 4788.1200. For a copy of the Quoll Club Newsletter, contact the Membership Secretary (details on Page 2.)

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

July 13 (Fri) Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group. (2nd Friday of every month) Contact Karen on 4757.1929 for the meeting place. (following Friday if wet).

July 8 (Sun) Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group. (2nd Sunday of every month) Meet 9 am at the Reserve (GWH, West of Sorenson Bridge). Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.

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

Leaders' Meeting, to plan weekend walks. Saturday, 21 July, 9.30 am, at 144 Valley Road, Hazelbrook. Register with Bill Tocher, Ph. 4758.8545.

Monday Leisure Walks: *Usually half day walks, easy/medium, leisurely pace.*

Note: **Bus Trips will be monthly from May. Program/Bookings 4759.1692.**

July 09 Grand Canyon. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9am. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. Medium. BBQ lunch at Govett's Leap.

July 15-17 Port Stephens Bus Trip. Bookings, contact Bill Graham 4759.1692. Leaving from Katoomba depot 8.30 am. Cabin accommodation at Shoal Bay, and more

July 23 Water Board track, QVH. Meet Wentworth Falls Station 9 am. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. Easy half day. Bring lunch.

July 30 Portal Waterhole and Old Oaks Track. Meet Glenbrook Station carpark 9 am. Contact Allan Macaulay 4739.2767. Easy half day. BBQ after.

Aug 06 Valley of the Waters. Meet Wentworth Falls Station 9 am. Contact Bill Graham 4759.1692. Medium half day, coffee or lunch at The Hut.

Wednesday Pleasure Walks: *Usually morning walks, easy/medium.*

July 11 Mount Banks and Grose Valley Lookout. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9 am. Contact Bill Graham 4759.1692. Easy.

July 18 Murphy's Glen Turpentine Walk. Meet Woodford Station (south side) 9 am. Contact Jock McKechnie 4758.6346. BBQ after.

July 25 McMahon's Point Lookout. Meet Wentworth Falls Station 9 am. Car Pool. Contact Jock McKechnie 4758.6346. Easy, BBQ after.

Aug 01 Ferntree Gully Bus Trip. Phone Bill Graham for reservation. Departing Katoomba Depot 8.30 am. Easy. Rylestone Hotel for lunch.

Weekend Bushwalks: *Bushwalkers are requested to phone the leader before 8 pm the day before the walk. The leader may cancel the walk if fewer than 4 walkers register, or if other circumstances make conditions unsafe. These walks are of various grades, full or half day.*

July 08 (Sun) Bonnie Doon, Nellies Glen and the Devil's Hole. Meet Gearins Hotel. Contact Mary and Terry Flynn 4787.6918 for meeting time and advice on climbing as grade is medium with a hard climb out. Bring lunch.

July 14 (Sat) Terrace Falls. Meet Hazelbrook Station carpark 9.30 am. Contact Bill Tocher 4758.8545. Medium day walk.

July 22 (Sun) Megalong Road to Cox's River. Meet Blackheath commuter car park 9.30 am. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. Medium day walk.

July 28 (Sat) Wentworth Falls, Rocket Point, Kings Tableland. Meet Wentworth Falls Station 9.30. Contact Bill Tocher 4758.8545. Medium, day.

Bill Tocher is organising the weekend program for us. Please give him your cooperation on 4758.8545.

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. **If this is your first walk**, or you are in any doubt, contact the leader or Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.

Quarry, stopping off at threatened Gooches Crater. Then off to the Grose Valley via the Invincible Colliery and on to Blue Gum forest by 22 September.

It won't all be ugly by any means but the bad mixes with the good and you see what we have lost and why we are lucky to have saved the Blue Mountains. The walk should take about a week, starting

around 15 or 16 September. There will be an opportunity to join us along the way when we get to the pine forest, and food drops can be arranged..

Those interested in this Blue Gum Mining walk please contact: Keith Muir at the Colong Foundation for Wilderness (phone 9299 7341).