

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Recycling and waste management – THE WORKS!!

From April 2003, all retail outlets in Coles Bay, Tasmania, including both supermarkets, have banned plastic check-out shopping bags. In the first twelve months, they stopped the use of 350,000 plastic check-out bags. Planet Ark worked for some months in partnership with Coles Bay retailers who were led in this endeavour by Ben Kearney, the owner of the local bakery. 'Australia's First Plastic Bag Free Town' has inspired people right across Australia (including the Blue Mountains!) and around the world.

This is just one of the many superb environmental campaigns and initiatives carried out by Planet Ark. Others include National Tree Day, Milk Carton Recycling, Aluminium Can Recycling, Cartridge Recycling, Green Shopping, Product Awareness, Schools Kits and Jackgreen (non-coal) energy supply.

Our next Monthly Meeting at 7.30pm on Friday 30 September 2005 will be a Forum on Recycling and Waste Management. And one of our keynote speakers will be the **Founder and MD of Planet Ark, Jon Dee!**

Supporting Jon in the discussion will be **Brett Hickey, Manager of the Blue Mountains Recycling Centre**, who of course is responsible for your kerbside recycling and knows where you live and what you don't put in your tub! Brett has issues relating to growing space restrictions at his Centre in Katoomba and is looking at options for relocating.

Frank Garofalo, in charge of Environmental Management Department, will represent the BMCC. Council Officers and their consultants have just completed a **Draft Strategic Waste Action Plan** in consultation with stakeholders (including Brett Hickey and your Society) and which is being presented to Council. Somewhat oddly, Council had earlier given the green light to extensions to Blaxland Tip. We can expect Frank to cope boldly with this paradox, while imparting the good news arising from the adoption of the new Strategic Plan.

So here is your chance to delve more deeply into your bin of questions and viewpoints: small containers or large, additional recycling recovery services, alternative waste treatment to landfill, education campaigns to reduce waste, more drop off locations, garbage levies, composting and worm farms ... all in the company of experts in their field. Visitors are very welcome, and supper is guaranteed not to contain recycled teabags!



Nursery news

It's on again!

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Native Plant Nursery's
SPRING SALE**
at the **CONSERVATION HUT**
end of Fletcher St., Wentworth falls
Saturday 10th September
9 am to noon.

It's a little earlier than usual but we have such a good variety (over 80 species) and stock of plants that we didn't want to make you wait any longer. All tube stock is just \$2.50 each but there are assorted \$1 specials, including small Grasstrees.

Our stall at the Magpie Markets in Lawson on Sunday 21st August, staffed by volunteers Bill Tocher, Joamy Smith, Joan Gahl, Imre Gahl and Esther McFarlane (who brought a beautiful bunch of native flowers as a lure to customers) attracted much interest and grossed \$285.

Refurbishment of our Blackheath nursery is progressing and we will be open for sales from September as usual each Tuesday morning from 9 am to 12 noon, supplementing sales at our Lawson nursery (in Cataract Street, off Liverstone Street and behind Mt Hay Technology) on Wednesday mornings, 9 am to 12 noon.

New volunteers, with or without plant propagation experience, are always welcome and we have plenty for you to do. It's fun and provides an essential source of income for the Society's projects.

Enquiries to Kevin Bell, 4787 6436 or khbelle@pnc.com.au



Great Grose Weed Walk – Spring 2005

It's that time of year again when the weather's warming up and it's time to get out there and stop the spread of the weeds that keep on marching into our reserves.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service and Blue Mountains City Council welcome everyone along to participate in the Great Grose Weed Walk during the Spring. The program starts on Monday 12 September with the Braeside Blitz (in the only catchment left in the Blue Mountains NP that still has Gorse growing in it!!) and ends with the Combined Bushwalking Clubs day at Katoomba Creek on Saturday 5th November. (Bushwalkers, put this date in your diary!) The program includes activities to suit everyone from easy half day activities to a two night camp in a remote area of the Grose Valley.

If you are interested in further details about the program please call Vanessa Richardson on 4787 3112 and leave you details. (Photo: Volunteers working during a previous Great Grose Weed Walk.)

"Hut News", the newsletter of
 Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
 P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782
 Phone 4757 1872 Fax 4757 1753
 Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au
 Web page: www.bluemountains.org.au
 President: Brian Marshall 4784.1148,
Brian.Marshall@uts.edu.au
 Senior Vice President: Heather Hull
 4739.1493, heatherhull40@hotmail.com
 Second Vice President: Elizabeth van
 Reyswoud 4757.2694, 0418206899
mcreysw@bigpond.net.au
 Treasurer: Bart Beech
 4739.9947, bbeech@invensys.com.au
 Administration Officer: David Bowskill
 4757 3416, davidbow@tpg.com.au
 Membership Secretary: Elizabeth van
 Reyswoud 4757.2694, 0418206899
mcreysw@bigpond.net.au
 Meetings Secretary: Rosemary Lathouris
 4757.2511, lathouris@bigpond.com
 Meetings Convenor: Jim Wallace
 4784.3305, ozblu@optusnet.com.au
 Plant Nursery Manager: Kevin Bell
 4787.6436 (ph/fx), khbell@pnc.com.au
 Environmental Education Officer:
 Craig Linn 4751 4934,
craiglinbm@optusnet.com.au
 Land Use Officer: Lyndal Sullivan
 4782.1635 (ah), lsullivan@eftel.net.au
 National Parks Officer: Brian Marshall
 4784.1148, Brian.Marshall@uts.edu.au
 Threatened Species/Bushcare Officer:
 Clive Heywood-Barker 4782.3345,
ozbundu@hotmail.com
 World Heritage Officer: John Haydon
 0421.479.146,
jhaydonmc@optusnet.com.au
 Bushfire Officer: Hugh Paterson
 4751.2303, goodbush@pnc.com.au
 Walks Convenor: Bob van Reyswoud
 4757.2694 (ph/fx)
mcreysw@bigpond.net.au
 Publications Officer: Ron Withington
 4757.3984, ronwit@ozemail.com.au
 Web Site Manager: Margaret Sleath
 4759.3350, msleath@ozemail.com.au
 Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies
 4787.7246, hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Bushcare

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets at 9 am on the 2nd Saturday of every month. Tools are provided. Bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water.

Contact Karen 4757 1929 for meeting place and more information.

Welcome to new members

Alice Terry, Glenbrook
 Maxine & Keith McDonough, Katoomba
 Gregory Borrowman, Church Point
 Jenny Hall, Katoomba
 John Czekanowicz, Wentworth Falls.

Management meeting

The next Management Committee meeting will be held at Lawson at 9am on Saturday 17 September. If you are a member of the Society and are interested in coming along as a spectator, or would like to find out about joining one of our subcommittees, please contact a committee member (details above).



Farewell to our Poet Lorikeet by Christine Davies

Singer, songwriter, poet, political and environmental activist and friend Denis Kevans has died.

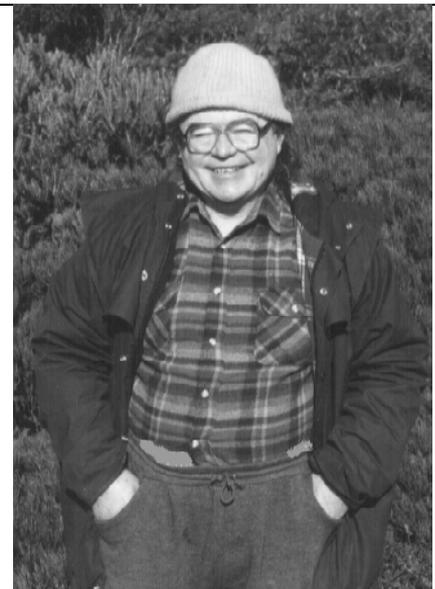
Denis, who was born in 1939, died in Westmead Hospital in the early hours of Tuesday 23 August 2005 from complications related to heart surgery.

Denis wrote poems which celebrated working-class culture and barracked for environmental protection. He was also known for his anti-war sentiments. He has written thousands of poems and songs, won numerous literary awards, produced four books of his poetry and several cassettes and CDs.

He came to live in Wentworth Falls in 1982. His love of the Blue Mountains and especially the Valley of the Waters is reflected in many of his songs and poems. He was a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Denis walked with us on some of our Thursday morning interpretive bushwalks and thrilled and inspired the walkers with his poetry recitals and songs in the beautiful places we visited.

He has been a strong supporter of



Blackheath Folk club over the past twelve and a half years, coming to perform every month and generously encouraging new talent.

Denis was greatly saddened by the recent death of his brother Jacko who was a brilliant musician and singer and reciter of bush ballads and poetry. Denis is survived by his daughter Sophie. At his request his ashes will be scattered in the Valley of the Waters.

Our Blue Mountains has lost a champion and we have lost a friend. Denis will be sadly missed by a large number of people.

(Photos of happier days: Denis and Jacko Kevans at Hargraves Lookout, Denis Kevans at Narrowneck; 1995.)

MOSS'S GENTLE FINGERS Words and music by Denis Kevans, c. 1984

Where the moss's gentle fingers paint the sleeping boulders green,
 I'll walk, in all my wisdom, where no mortal's ever been,
 And where immortal trees stretch up their fingers to the sky,
 The moss will cool the water for the lyre-bird and I,
 the lyre-bird and I.

Sing out, happy lyre-bird, your song for everyone,
 The parrot in the treetop, the quail that likes to run,
 The whistler in the canopy, the honey-eater's call,
 Sing out, happy lyre-bird, beside the waterfall,
 beside the waterfall.

Like octopus's tentacles, the roots of trees have grown,
 With steel embrace, they vainly try to crush the hearts of stone,
 And stone from stone, and tree from stone, or is it stone from tree?
 They wrestle, in the half-light, for the lyre-bird and me,
 the lyre-bird and me.

I see the pythons writhing, and the Titans fighting, too,
 And a sudden shaft of sunlight trying Cinderella's shoe,
 And, where the half-light weakens, and the roots are tangled wild,
 I seem to see a carving of Madonna and her child,
 Madonna and her child.

But the lyre-bird has found me, and he's trying out my air,
 He sends his voice out mocking me, from here, and over there,
 So I'll bluey up my blankets, where no mortal's ever been,
 And the moss's gentle fingers paint the sleeping boulders green,
 the sleeping boulders green.

Newnes Plateau: new park proposal (Extract of an article by Keith Muir, the Colong Bulletin.)

A new park proposal covering Newnes Plateau and the other remaining unprotected parts of the Gardens of Stone region is being prepared. It is proposed that the Plateau should be reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, possibly as a State Conservation Area.

Newnes Plateau is a living laboratory for the study of natural science and cultural heritage. By any measure the Newnes Plateau is popular, perhaps too popular for continued unregulated recreation. The recreation potential of this area ranges from family outings, picnicking, car camping and day walks to multi day bushwalks, rock climbing, abseiling, bird watching, photography and gazing on its scenic splendour. Many of these potential recreation opportunities are spoilt by a predominance of anti-social off road vehicle behaviour that tends to drive away the broader community that would enjoy this wonderful area.

The area's natural values include numerous nationally endangered upland swamps that contain distinctive communities of rare locally endemic shrubs and some species of snow grass. They do not occur within the adjoining Blue Mountains or Wollemi National Parks and such upland swamps with snow grasses are mostly restricted to the Newnes Plateau. Rare plants occurring within and adjacent to the swamps include *Dillwynia stipulifera*, *Olearia guercifolia*, *Boronia deanei* and *Erisostemon obovalis*. Fringing these swamps are stands of the Wolgan Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus gregsoniana*). All remaining swamp communities should be protected due to their poor conservation status and scientific importance. Preservation of such areas intact is also necessary for scientific research into past environmental changes. So too should the ancient old wind blown sand dunes scattered across the Plateau be preserved. These relict dunes from 30,000 years ago remind us just how arid our continent was during the last great ice age.

The Plateau's scenic treasures range from grand vistas and massed pagoda rock formations to passive enjoyment of extensive areas of grassy open forest. All these values make



up Newnes Plateau. They cannot be dismembered and reduced to isolated values, and protected piecemeal in a sand mining province. The new Gardens of Stone proposal will seek to protect all the natural values of the Plateau as best it can, while recognizing the realities of existing coal mining.

Newnes Plateau is unique. It is the only high sandstone plateau in the Blue Mountains that supports a grassy woodland landscape, which, along with its outstanding scenery, is a key reason for its popularity. It deserves better protection.

(Photo: Twisted branches and sandstone walls— beside a bubbling creek pouring through a slot canyon into a crystal pool, magnificent views, pagoda rock formations, leafy gullies, three species of Banksia in flower, myriad Waratahs in bud ... Just one of many beautiful places on the Newnes Plateau. — Christine Davies)

Our right to protest is under threat

Katoomba public meeting, 7 pm, Monday 19 September to discuss the issues of 'the Gunns 20' case

Tasmanian based timber company Gunns Ltd is currently taking legal action against 20 individuals and organisations to the sum of 6.35 million dollars.

The individuals and organizations named in the action have become known as 'the Gunns 20'. They have all been protesting in various ways about Gunns' actions relating to the destruction of Tasmania's high conservation value forests. They include the Wilderness Society and Greens Leader Bob Brown. All face huge costs if the litigation is successful.

Determined not to be silenced, some of the dedicated forest campaigners are taking the issues raised by this law suit to the rest of Australia and overseas. A national tour will begin in late August in southern Queensland, then move on to NSW in September and proceed on to the other states in October and November.

Forums and public meetings in many cities and regional centres will address the issues raised by this case, also provide information on how to continue campaigning while staying

safe from legal action, how to support the defendants in this case and strengthen the campaigns to protect both our forests and our civil liberties.

Freedom of speech, democratic process and the right to peacefully protest are some of the very important issues raised by 'the Gunns 20' case.

Louise Morris ('Gunns 20' defendant number 8), Luke Chamberlain and Ian Cohen (Greens NSW MLC) are coming to speak at a public meeting in Katoomba on Monday 19 September.

Come along to Katoomba Public School hall in Merriwa Street from 7 pm to meet the speakers and talk about the issues. Tea and coffee will be available and the speakers will start at 7.30 pm.

Coming out on a cold Monday night may be a bit daunting so it would be great if you would offer a lift to friends so that as many people as possible can come along to this important meeting.

For further information see www.treedomfighters.org.au or phone local contact Jenny Rich 4787 6243.

Potoroos matter

The Long-footed Potoroo's habitat is limited to the highlands and will be reduced by global warming. In his book *Living in the Hothouse*, Professor Ian Lowe writes:

"We now know that this animal brings us significant economic benefits. A recent study shows that the small creature likes one kind of truffle, the fruiting body of a fungus found in eucalypt forests in south-eastern Australia. The fungus attaches itself to the root system of trees and so plays a role in the trees extracting water and minerals from the soil.

"The potoroo eats the truffles, then excretes the spores of the fungus, making it available to other trees. So it is vital link in the ecological chain of the forest.

"Even if you see the forest only in basic economic terms as a source of timber, you should be concerned about the survival of the Long-footed Potoroo."

(Source: The Colong Bulletin)

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Elizabeth van Reyswoud

Phone 4757.2694

Email: mcreysw@bigpond.net.au

Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

A letter received by Jim Smith

Dear Mr Smith and all the contributors to 'A Timeline for the Upper Blue Mountains'.

I have visited, and walked, in the Blue Mountains all my adult life. My dearest wish is to move there from the Sydney bitumen before too long. In the waiting-time I am learning more about the wildlife of the Mountains. Most reference books of any real detail are Australia-wide.

Some time ago, I picked up 'A Timeline' at the Conservation Hut at Wentworth Falls. I just wanted to thank each of you for sharing your knowledge, compiling and freely disseminating it. The 'Timeline' has provided me with an absolutely invaluable source, a wonderful starting-point from which to refer to books, and pictures, and to which to refer my own "observations" - the pleasure and delight of getting to know more about the wonderful creatures and plants of a relatively untouched and so precious place. With my heartfelt thanks. Ruth. (15 August 2005)

Along the Timeline

Christine Davies

So what is happening in Nature this month in the upper mountains?

In September, the bushland of the lower mountains is bursting with wildflowers. Spring comes later to the upper mountains, but the signs are many.

In September many lizards become active and the first snakes emerge—the Copperhead and the Red-Bellied Black. After the equinox (22 September) Perons Tree Frogs call at night. Their call is a long pneumatic chuckling, increasing in loudness as it progresses.

Some of the migrant birds return during September—Rufous Whistlers from Queensland, Sacred Kingfishers from Queensland and New Guinea. The southwards honeyeater migration which started in August peaks during September. Satin Bowerbirds display, mate, and lay eggs. Rose Robins, which spend the winter in open forest areas and are then often seen on our lawns and ovals, return to the cool gullies. Kookaburra calls increase. Channel-billed Cuckoos migrate from New Guinea and Indonesia. They are the largest parasitic cuckoos in the world and lay their eggs in the nests of hosts such as Crows, Ravens, Pied Currawongs, Magpies and the White Winged Chough.

Magpies have built their nests and laid their eggs. My magpie neighbours had their nest fall in a recent snow storm but they quickly rebuilt, reusing materials from the old nest. Sometimes an over-protective male magpie will chase and bomb perceived predators – September can be a bad time of year for postmen!

Early spring flowers in the upper mountains include the *Leucopogon* whose flowers perfume the air from Sep/Oct and the pretty Sun Orchids. A

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

Our bushwalking group provides a range of activities. Membership of the bushwalking group is available to members of the Society. For further information contact the Activity Coordinator (listed) or Bushwalks Conveyor Bob van Reyswoud.. **Cost of insurance and affiliation fees for bushwalkers is \$15 per member.**

Monday Leisure Walks: Usually 'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours suitable for walkers of average fitness. Graded Medium, i.e. can include some short rock scrambles or some short section off track. Bring morning tea and lunch, plus carry at least 1 litre of WATER, 2 litres on warmer days.

Sep 12 Chowder Bay, Mosman. Foreshore walk around Sydney Harbour to Taronga. Meet 9.30 am top of escalator, Central Station. Norm 4784 1554.

Sep 19 Euroka Clearing, Glenbrook. Walk to Nepean River. Abundant wildlife. BBQ. Meet 9.15 Glenbrook railway station. Bob 4758 7882.

Sep 26 Bus Trip to West Head, Kuring-gai NP. Fare \$10, pay when booking. Possible walk to Mackerel Beach. Meet 8.30am Katoomba Council Depot, South Street, Katoomba. Mary 4758 7882.

Oct 3 Bellbird Hill, Megalong Valley. Spectacular views over Wild Dog Mountains. Meet 9.15 Blackheath station commuter car park. Jock 4758 6346.

Oct 10 McMahon's Lookout. Walking on Kings' Tableland. Meet 9.30 am Stockyard car park, Wentworth Falls railway station. Marie 4787 1257.

Thursday Pleasure Walks: *These easy to medium grade walks are conducted to suit the walkers on the day. Times given are approximate. Slower walkers are catered for and on longer walks there is an option of a slower group to complete a section of the walk. Phone the contact for any enquiries about the program.*

Sep 8 Hat Hill to Bald Head Ridge, Blackheath. Walk up Hat Hill on easy track to view at Fletchers Lookout. Option to descend Bald Head for views of Grose Valley. Meet 10am Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Phil 4787 5560. This walk was cancelled last month due to ice and snow.

Sep 15 Witches Leap to Katoomba Cascades. Walk through rainforest to see waterfalls. Some steps but easier options available if required. Meet 10am Gearins Hotel, Katoomba. Joan 4782 2218.

Sep 22 Gooch's Crater, Newnes Plateau. Drive on dirt road and walk 2.5 km on gentle downhill track to reach Crater. Choice of walk available at venue depending on ability. Full day, bring lunch, etc. Meet 9am Mt Victoria Station. David 4757 3416.

Sep 29 October Creek near Mt Wilson. Walk to creek from track off Mt Wilson road. Easy grade. Can be extended to view pagodas in creek area. Meet Mt Victoria Station. Marie 4787 1257.

Oct 6 Woodford to Linden and back. Train from Woodford to Linden. Walk back (approx 4km) via Kings Cave, Caley's Repulse and other historic features. Meet 9.30 Woodford Station. John 4757 1558.

ADVANCE NOTICE: Bus trip to Noble Canyon, November 10. Bookings open. Simone 4757 3416.

Weekend Bushwalks: Always discuss with the contact if the walk you would like to do is medium/hard or hard, before attending. If this is your first walk, or you are in any doubt, discuss with the contact or Bushwalks Convener Bob van Reyswoud, 4757 2694, email mcreysw@bigpond.net.au

Sep 10 (Sat) Six Foot Track, Megalong cemetery to Cox's River. Meet Blackheath Station 9.30 am. Medium. Ron 4757 1526.

Sep 17 (Sat) Lawson Ridge, Urella Lookdown, Jim's Creek. Meet Lawson Station carpark 8.30am. Medium/hard. Jim 4758 6009.

Sep 24 (Sat) Grand Canyon. Meet Blackheath Station carpark 9.30am. Medium. Ron 4757 1526.

Oct 1 (Sat) Bruce's Walk. Meet Stockyard carpark, Wentworth Falls station, 9.30am. Medium/hard. Bob 4757 2694.

Oct 8 (Sat) Bus Trip to Newnes. Pipeline track or walk around ruins. \$10 each. Bookings essential. Medium/hard or Easy. Meet at Katoomba bus depot 8am. Pickups at Blackheath, Mt Victoria 8.30 am. Meredith 4782 4823.

prominent early spring flower is the *Pomaderris* whose small creamy flowers are born in conspicuous clusters at the tops of the stems. In the rainforests the Coachwood and Sassafras flower.

Many bush rats are born; female Antechinuses are with young (all the mature males have died off by the end of August, the end of the mating season).

Echidnas wander. The mammal book says July/August is their mating season. Is it later in the upper mountains? I was fascinated to read about "Echidna Trains" where lovelorn male echidnas queue up and follow a female, nose to tail, forming long trains, up to ten echidnas long. These trains are the first

part of the strange echidna courtship.

About two weeks after copulation the female lays a single soft-shelled egg into the pouch. The egg hatches after 10 days. The baby echidna, or puggle, looks like a translucent, squirming blob of protoplasm and weighs only about a fifth of a gram, but its front legs and claws are well developed for gripping the hairs in its mother's pouch so that it can suck up milk exuded from the numerous pores of the mammary glands.

You can get a copy of the 'Timeline' by contacting the Society and add your own observations. (Reference: 'A Timeline for the Upper Blue Mountains' compiled by Jim Smith.)