

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



BLUE GUM FOREST: 75th ANNIVERSARY

At our next monthly meeting, our guest speaker will be Andy Macqueen, society member and author of the popular book *'Back from the Brink: Blue Gum Forest and the Grose Wilderness'*.

On 2 September it will be 75 years since Blue Gum Forest was 'saved from the axe' by a group of bushwalkers. The event gave impetus to the movement to create national parks, and the forest became the spiritual and geographic hub of the Blue Mountains National Park and the whole Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. However, it might be argued that certain much earlier events in the forest were almost as important, and that we should in fact be celebrating the 132nd anniversary.

With the aid of historic photographs, some previously unpublished, Andy will transport us back to two important years in the history of conservation in the Blue Mountains and New South Wales generally—1875 and 1932.

Andy has produced a second edition of his book, which will be released at the Govetts Leap Heritage Centre on the night following this talk. However, pre-release copies will be available at the talk, or direct from Andy at andymacqueen@gmail.com. With three new chapters, the book has expanded to 352 pages. There are 175 pictures and maps, over 30 of which are new to the second edition.

Time: 7.30pm Friday 31st August

Place: Conservation Hut, western end of Fletcher St, Wentworth Falls.

VISITORS MOST WELCOME!



Horsemen Clarrie Hungerford and Bert Pierce follow bushwalkers across the Grose River, in 1931. This is one of a number of photos taken by Alan Rigby and only recently discovered by his family.

Blue Gum Forest Anniversary Events

To celebrate the 75th anniversary, there will be a ceremony in the Forest on Sunday 2 September, together with historical, cultural and ecological tours of the forest area. Because the Grose Valley remains closed due to last year's bushfire, special management arrangements are being made for people to walk to the forest from Perrys Lookdown. Numbers will be limited and pre-registration is essential. Those interested should contact the NPWS Heritage Centre (Blackheath) on 4787 8877 and request a registration form.

The walk to the forest requires a high fitness level. For those not willing or able to make the journey, there will be a photographic exhibition at the Heritage Centre. This will be officially launched, along with the release of Andy Macqueen's book, at 6pm on Saturday 1 September. Pre-registration is required in case numbers need to be limited.

If you have an interesting photograph, artwork or artifact to do with the forest, perhaps you would like to have it included in the exhibition. If so, the Heritage Centre staff would like to hear from you.

THE BIG SWITCH: Peak Environmental Organisations Unite on Climate Change

Peak Australian Environmental organisations including Greenpeace, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Friends of the Earth, and GetUp have united to create a powerful new force to combat climate change. Known as the *The Big Switch*, this new umbrella campaign seeks to pull together the climate change campaigns of large and small groups around Australia. The intention is to be a potent force for change in the upcoming federal election and beyond by providing the impetus and information for individuals, organisations, and government to make *the big switch* to climate friendly behaviours and policies.

While it's great to know this is happening, it is even more important to take part. Please don't just think about it – have a look at the web site, sign-up, take the pledge, and start acting in your local community. To quote Al Gore:

"Unless the issue is on the tips of the constituents' tongues, it will be easy for them [the politicians] to ignore".

The web site is: <http://www.thebigswitch.org.au/>

It is a very comprehensive site and addresses issues right down to the electorate level around Australia.

Craig Linn

ENVIROFEST Korowal Independent School, Leura

**Saturday
22 September
2007**

Korowal is planning an 'EnviroFest' to raise consciousness about sustainable practices within the School and the local community.

If you are interested in speaking/presenting, workshops, demonstrations, info tables, etc. please contact Nancy Oosterhoff (noosterhoff@korowal.nsw.edu.au) or Christine Hill (6355 2933, petecris@pnc.com.au) before 1 September.

Else just go on the day and enjoy!

Hilary Hughes

HUT NEWS

"Hut News" is the newsletter of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782
Phone: 4757 1872 Fax: 4757 1753
Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au

President: Brian Marshall

4784 1148, marabeni@optusnet.com.au

Senior Vice President: Heather Hull

4739 1493, hhull001@bigpond.net.au

Second Vice President/Walks Convenor:

Christine Davies 4787 7246,

davica@bigpond.net.au

Membership Secretary: Ilan Salbe

4759 2372,

membership@bluemountains.org.au

Treasurer: Bart Beech

4739 9947, bbeech@invensys.com.au

Administration Officer: VACANT

Meetings Secretary: VACANT

Meetings Convenor: David Brazil

4784 3496, david@dbrazil.com

Plant Nursery Manager: Kevin Bell

(ph/fax) 4787 6436, khsbell@pnc.com.au

Environmental Education Officer:

Chris Yates 4784 3407,

christopher.yates@education.nsw.gov.au

Land Use Officer: Phillip Morrison

4757 1393, pmorrison26@yahoo.com.au

National Parks Officer:

Karen McLaughlin 6355 2835,

karen.mclaughlin@ozemail.com.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

Lithgow Regional Sub-committee

Coordinator: Chris Jonkers 6355 1179,

cjonkers@ozemail.com.au

Website/Technical Officer: David Bowskill

4757 3416, davidbow@tpg.com.au

Publicity/Publications Officer: VACANT

Project Officers:

Hilary Hughes (Climate Change)

4787 6240, hilary@auzzie.biz

Don & Tara Cameron

4751 1130, dontara@ozemail.com.au

Susan Girard

4782 5810, Pest.asides@bigpond.com.au

Newsletter Editor: Juli Boddy

4759 2372, hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Nursery News **Kevin Bell**

The response to our special \$1 plant offer was outstanding and our thanks to those customers who took advantage of this deal. At the July Magpie Markets we sold 526 plants in just one morning. Together with some contracts, we have sold almost 1200 plants in the last month. In some ways we are victims of our own success as our stocks are almost denuded and we'll have little to offer when we open our Blackheath and Lawson nurseries in August. But don't despair! We have lots of small seedlings from a big variety of species which will be ready from about mid-September - a better time for planting as most of the cold weather

COMMENT

Brian Marshall

Prosperity and the three 'Ps'*

You will be aware of the three bears of 'Goldilocks' fame and the three 'Rs' in basic education, but what do you know of the three 'Ps' in the context of prosperity?

Inputs to economic prosperity (but not to its equitable distribution or environmental sustainability) are **participation, productivity and population**. Increasing any of these should lift GDP (gross domestic product) per person and make us better off, at least in dollar material terms!

Participation, defined as those of working age who are employed or are actively seeking employment, is currently very high. This reflects more women entering the work force, increased part-time work, and deferred retirement, within an environment imposed by 'Work Choices', the China-driven resources boom, and punitive restrictions associated with welfare payments. However, despite low levels of unemployment and the vagaries of paid and un-paid overtime, the trend in average hours per worker is falling due to the large amounts of part-time work. This inevitably means that the *average hours worked per working-age person* is also falling, a trend that is expected to continue as the population ages and work-place flexibility increases. So, although participation is high and could be increased by making the work environment more 'user' friendly, particularly for working mothers and single parents, such a positive outcome is outweighed by the mode of participation adversely impacting on the growth in GDP per person.

Productivity, defined as the amount of goods and services produced over a given period during the average hour worked, is 'not bad'. But there could be significant improvement by, for example, work-place efficiencies including more un-paid overtime, robotics in manufacture, introducing international standard Broadband (not just fibre-to-the-node and/or wireless-based systems), better and more pertinent education and training, and bridging the gap between research and exploitation - why do so many good ideas go overseas to achieve commercial success? So while improvements in productivity are possible, many of our international competitors are also lifting productivity. In effect, we must improve to not decline.

Population, defined as the number of people of *working age* (15 or older in Australia), can be enhanced by immigration (a transfer of selected human resources - the recipient gains at the expense of the provider), political inducements (\$5000 baby bonus as of July 2007), and political exhortation (one for dad, one for mum and one for the country). Of these, selective immigration is the only one that deals with the short-term skills shortage, but in the longer term as immigrants get older their participation decreases or stops, thereby detracting from GDP per person. The only way of counteracting this and building prosperity is to grow immigration exponentially. Does this excite you?

Despite our prosperity, there is much to show that working harder and longer in more congested cities and suburbia have environmental consequences that neither improve happiness nor quality-of-life. Furthermore, if we have a conscience, globalisation ensures that we prosper whilst workforces in third world countries are exploited, have low prosperity and certainly lack an obesity problem. Yet our industrial- and resource-based economy must have workers and consumers to grow, so we conjointly pursue a 'populate-or-perish' doctrine, while financing consumption through a ballooning balance of payments deficit (import costs greatly exceed export returns)! Is this sustainable?

The world is currently experiencing a wake-up call. The environment is so damaged by human activities (whether clearing for more food production, or for biofuels, or for housing space, or for producing and consuming more manufactured goods) that it is faced with climate change. This means we must continue our rush towards miserable prosperity whilst concurrently negating the damaging environmental consequences, or we must acknowledge that 'populate-or-perish' is really a recipe for 'populate-and-perish'.

(Continued on next page...)

will have passed. We look forward to seeing our faithful customers then.

If you want birds in your garden over the cold months, there is no better inducement than a range of Banksias which flower over Autumn and Winter. The rich supply of nectar attracts honey-eaters and insects, and thus insect-eating birds. Later, parrots and cockatoos will come to tear the cones apart in pursuit of the seeds.

Apart from the spectacular flower spikes, Banksias have a pleasing variety of foliage types to enhance any garden. In general, the local Banksias prefer a well-drained soil as they are susceptible to root diseases in wet conditions. Mulching with natural bush litter helps to protect the root

system from temperature fluctuations.

Our nurseries propagate Banksias from mature seed which is released from the cones by fire and smoke. We toss some cones into a wood heater for a few minutes, allow them to cool and a few days later two seeds drop from each follicle together with a wooden spacer. Germination in damp seed-raising mix usually takes 1-2 weeks and we normally record a success rate of over 90%.

We offer six local species: *Banksia penicillata* (featured in the February 2007 *Hut News*); *B. ericifolia* (the Heath Banksia, damp tolerant shrub or small tree to 3-5m with orange cones to 20-30cm); *B. spinulosa* var. *spinulosa* (the Hairpin

(Continued on next page...)

Visit the BMCS website at: www.bluemountains.org.au

Letter of the Month—August 2007

Power to the People

The future of NSW energy and greenhouse gas emissions is back on the agenda with the recently announced Owen Inquiry into the Supply of Electricity in NSW, due to report at the end of August.

The NSW treasurer, Michael Costa, favours building a new coal-fired power plant to meet the state's energy needs. The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, and Member for Blue Mountains, Phil Koperberg, believes that "NSW can build a coal-fired power station without busting its short-term greenhouse gas emissions targets" (Sydney Morning Herald 25.7.07).

NSW has abundant renewable energy and energy efficiency options, but Premier Iemma has already indicated, before the inquiry has even started, that coal is on the agenda.

However, the Climate Institute says, in their submission to the Owen Inquiry, that new modelling shows such a proposal would make it virtually impossible to stabilise the state's short-term greenhouse gas emissions at 2000 levels by 2025. The government has also set a longer-term target of cutting 2000 emissions by 60% by 2050 (SMH 25.7.07).

Greens MLC Dr John Kaye says that Mr Koperberg's optimism is ill-founded because a new coal-fired plant in the next few years would not have the benefits of carbon capture and storage technology. He said "If you build a 1000 megawatt plant, you put 6.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere a year, so you will have to cut 6.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from somewhere else" (SMH 25.7.07).

The Climate Institute submission says that NSW energy needs can be supplied to 2020 by the following means:

- Energy savings through demand management
- Renewable energy
- Gas-fired power stations to meet peak energy demands.

The state's largest power generator, Macquarie Generation, has told the government that a new coal-fired power station in the Hunter is critical to meet NSW increasing energy needs. However, BHP Billiton and AGL have called on the Government to consider gas not coal for a new power station as a more environmentally friendly option.

Send a short message to the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, and Member for Blue Mountains, Phil Koperberg using some or all of the following points:

- Please explain why you are optimistic that NSW can still meet its short-term greenhouse gas targets even with a new coal-fired power station, when technology that captures carbon dioxide from coal-fired power plants will not be available for a new plant before 2025.
- How do you answer claims by the Climate Institute in their submission to the Owen Inquiry that new modelling shows such a proposal would make it virtually impossible to stabilise the state's short-term greenhouse gas emissions at 2000 levels by 2025?
- As Minister for Climate Change and the Environment please bring your influence to bear on the NSW Government to ensure that NSW meets its energy needs and emissions targets by:
 - * Energy savings through demand management
 - * Renewable energy
 - * Gas-fired power stations to meet peak energy demands.

Contact Details:

Post to Parliament House, Macquarie St Sydney 2000, or email office@koperberg.minister.nsw.gov.au

You might like to send a copy to the Premier (thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au) and Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell (LOP@parliament.nsw.gov.au).

Rosemary Lathouris and Robin Mosman

The Voluntary Human Extinction Movement (VHEMT, pronounced vehement) believes that humans are a destructive force behind the world's environmental problems (true!). It is time to focus on population reduction rather than mindless lemming-like growth. VHEMT therefore argues that restoring the world's biosphere and atmosphere requires humans to stop breeding and commit biological hara-kiri. Yes, many 'nutcase' movements exist. And no, I do not advocate its vasectomy-driven and tube-tying solution. Yet many species are self-limiting in that reproduction slows down or stops during bad times such as drought-induced food shortages. Is it too much for *Homo sapiens* to recognise the destructive capacity of inadequately constrained population growth?

The world's population was 6 billion in 2000 and is on track to reach 10 billion by 2050. In the same way that carbon emissions must be wound back (not just stabilised), its principal driver, population growth (or 'emissions') must also be wound back. Zero population growth would be a good start but it is not enough. Instead of our government giving a \$5000 baby bonus, it should perhaps be buying the right to have a child from a third world country. Should we be looking at population 'emissions' trading as a first step to bringing nonsensical population growth under control? If we value quality-of-life and an improved environment over material prosperity and its greed-related consumption and bloated extravagance, this is surely needed.

Extreme views perhaps, but some food for thought is needed before the food runs out and humans involuntarily self-destruct. Malthus (ca 1800) and Ehrlich (1968, 1990) were premature in the timing of their predictions about the 'population bomb', but the environment of their predictions is now encompassed by climate change whilst our collective government head remains firmly in the sands of short-term expediency.

And then perhaps I am worrying unduly. Nuclear Armageddon may solve our need to act sensibly!

** Some thoughts triggered by information in articles by Guy Adams (SMH, May 15, p13) and Ross Gittins (SMH, May 19-20, p45)*



Flower spike of the Hairpin Banksia, *Banksia spinulosa*.

Banksia which has lovely golden-yellow spikes with dark red or bluish-black styles); *B. cunninghamii* (which has similar flowers but is usually a small tree rather than a multi-stemmed shrub and has no lignotuber); *B. marginata* (the Silver Banksia or Honeysuckle -for the richness of the nectar in its small, pretty yellow flower spikes); *B. serrata* (Old Man Banksia or Saw Banksia—the wonderfully gnarled trunk of this common tree and the striking leathery, spiky leaves are a distinctive sight in the bush and were made famous in May

Gibbs' *Bib and Bub* stories. The large flower spikes are initially grey, then cream. They make ideal specimens trees.)

The name of these lovely plants is a just tribute to Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), botanist on Cook's expedition to Australia and a great patron of other botanists. There are about 70 species altogether and all except one are endemic to Australia. The south-west region of Western Australia contains the greatest concentration with about 60 species.

Every garden should have one!

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING GROUP

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. **Cost of insurance and affiliation fees is \$15 per member.** For further information, contact the Walks Convenor, Christine Davies (4787 7246, davica@bigpond.net.au).

BEFORE ATTENDING, PLEASE DISCUSS THE WALK WITH THE LEADER (listed below),

THIS IS ESSENTIAL IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST WALK OR YOU ARE UNSURE OF THE CLASSIFICATION.

Grade 1—Easy, Grade 2—Easy/Medium, Grade 3—Medium, Grade 4—Medium/Hard, Grade 5—Hard

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS

'Short Day' walks of 3-5 hours, for those of average fitness. Bring morning tea, lunch & adequate water. Norm Harris 4784 1554.

- Aug-13 Euroka, Glenbrook (Grade 2)** Meet: 9.30am Glenbrook Station carpark Leader: **Heather 4739 1493**
Walk through tall forest to the Nepean River.
- Aug-20 Abseilers' Track, Tunnel View L/O, Glenbrook (4)** Meet: 9.30am Glenbrook Stn c'park Leader: **Ros 4733 3880**
Steep track with views over Glenbrook Creek.
- Aug-27 Horns Point, Pulpit Rock, Reinitz Pass (3)** Meet: 9.45am Mt Victoria Station Leader: **Phil 4787 5560**
Open forest and heath. Views over Kanimbla Valley.
- Sep-3 North Hazelbrook Waterfalls (2)** Meet: 9am Hazelbrook commuter carpark (S side) Leader: **Ron 4757 1526**
Classic upper mountains waterfalls.
- Sep-10 Squeeze Rock & Coliseum, Medlow Bath (3)** Meet: 9.30am Outside Hydro Majestic Leader: **Phil 4787 5560**
Great rock formations. Views over Kanimbla Valley.
- Sep-17 Lockyers Pass, Mt Victoria (2)** Meet: 9.30am Mt Victoria Station Leader: **Marie 4787 1257**
Early crossing point to the Western Plains.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS

Walks conducted to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, lunch if noted & adequate water. Simone Bowskill 4757 4316.

- Aug-16 Minnehaha Falls, Katoomba (Grade 2)** Meet: 9.30am Gearins Hotel, Katoomba Leader: **Joan c/o 4757 3416**
Walk to see progress of regenerating vegetation after bushfire.
- Aug-23 Mt Piddington/Witches Glen/Pulpit Rock, Mt Victoria (3)** Meet: 10am Mt Victoria Stn Leader: **Phil 4787 5560**
This route excludes section at Horne's Point, but includes spectacular views.
- Aug-30 Sun Valley, Warrimoo (1)** Meet: 10.15am Valley Hts Commuter c'park Leaders: **Graham & Margaret 4754 1447**
Easy walk along fire trails to old volcanic crater with tall forests.
- Sep-6 Historical Walk to Mt Airlie (2)** Meet: 8.50am Mt Victoria Station, to car pool Leader: **Meredith 4782 4823**
Full day visit to Mt Airlie to explore cave dwellings and look at pagodas.
- Sep-13 Evan's Crown (3)** Meet: 9.50am Mt Victoria Station, to car pool Leader: **Marie 4787 1257**
Climb up to the granite summit for spectacular views. Bring your lunch or eat at the Tarana Pub.

WEEKEND WALKS

Usually full day walks—please discuss with the leader or Jim Percy 4758 6009. Bring morning tea, lunch & adequate water.

- Aug-18 Glenbrook Reserves Circuit (3)** Meet: 9.00am Glenbrook Station Leader: **Andy 4758 9770**
Glenbrook Lagoon, Marges & Elizabeth lookouts, Tunnel Gully track, the Bluff via the old construction tramway track.
- Aug-25 Glen Davis to Newnes (3)** Meet: 8am Kat.Council Depot Leader: **Meredith 4782 4823**, Bookings: **Jim 4758 6009**
Walk the Pipeline Track from Glen Davis to Newnes - a bit of our industrial history. Bus to Glen Davis and from Newnes. Booking is essential due to limited seats on the bus (est.cost \$12, deposit required at time of booking).
- Sep-1 Crossing of the Blue Mtns: Day 1 - Emu Plains to Blaxland (3)** 8.30am Emu Plains Stn Leader: **Jim 4758 6009**
*Inspect a bit of history: Knapsack Bridge, Elizabeth & Marges L/Os, Glenbrook Lagoon. (11km, some steep, steps.)
This walk is Day 1 of an Expedition to Cross the Blue Mountains in 7 days, starting and finishing at the same points as the 1813 Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth crossing. The walks are not meant to follow the route of the first crossing but rather to take in scenic, historic and good bushwalking areas to the same destination, using train transport up to the last day when we will use the community bus.*
- Sep-8 Historic remains of Airlie (2)** Meet: 8:30 am Mt Vic Station carpark, to car pool Leader: **Annemarie 4759 2172**
Airlie was built in 1898 by the shale coal miners. Lunch beneath Black Mountain with views over the Capertee Plains .
- Sep-15 Lockleys Pylon, DuFours Head - Wild Flowers (2)** Meet: 8am Leura School Leader: **Bill 4758 8545**
Observe the splendour of the Mid-Mountain's Spring wildflowers along the Pinnacles Track. (8 km, all on track.)

Calling all budding poets...

Crowding together
the successful species
leaves the zoo



This is a senryu, not a haiku. If you would like to know the difference, and learn about haiku, come to my course through BANC ('Journey through Blackheath') on Saturday August 11 at Blackheath, 10 a.m. till 4 p.m.

We will be writing, walking and pausing at the Ivanhoe for refreshments. Phone me on 4751 3935, or email Diana_L@iprimus.com.au.

Diana Levy

and bushwalkers...

The revised and updated edition of John and Lyn Daly's "Take a Walk in the Blue Mountains" has around 50% more walks than the original book, and contains full colour maps and pictures as well as detailed notes on evolution, environment, access and facilities.

There are walks for everyone from families with children to hard-core bushwalkers. The book also features overnight walks and a lot of the old historic passes that are not part of the official graded track system, but are still trafficable if you know where to find the starting point.

BMCS Bushcare

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare group works in the Blue Mountains National Park at Wentworth Falls on the 2nd Saturday of each month.

Tools are provided but bring morning tea, gloves and drinking water. For more information, contact Karen on 4757 1929.

Welcome to our new members

Jean Reynolds,
Faulconbridge
Leah Marshall,
Hazelbrook
Betty Thomas,
Faulconbridge
Leeanne Dwyer &
Alex Burgman,
Katoomba

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Ilan Salbe membership@bluemountains.org.au
4759 2372 PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782