

# HUT NEWS

*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"*



## Blue Mountains Conservation Society Monthly Meeting

### 'Water'

Paul Freeman will be the Monthly Speaker in November at the Conservation Hut. Paul is General Manager, Asset Management with Sydney Water after being Manager, Water Treatment, Manager, Wastewater Distribution and General Manager, Distribution. Paul completed a degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Technology with first class honours. He was also awarded the University Medal.

In his current position, Paul is responsible for the planning, operations and maintenance of Sydney Water's \$13 billion of assets.

One of Sydney Water's Programs is Water4Life which involves Dams + Recycling + Desalination + Water Efficiency. Paul will speak about in the context of the NSW Governments 2006 Metropolitan Water Plan which outlines how Sydney, the Illawarra and the Blue Mountains will have enough water now and in the future.

With limited and highly variable rainfall in the catchments, the community can no longer rely on water from the dams. To increase the water supply, Sydney Water is increasing the amount of water recycled to provide up to 12% of Greater Sydney's water needs by 2015. A desalination plant will provide up to 15% of Sydney's water supply this summer and helping the community and business to use water wisely. Water efficiency initiatives are expected to save up 145 billion litres a year by 2015. That is about 24% of the water supply.

## Blue Mountains Conservation Society Monthly Meeting

7:30pm, Friday, October 30, 2009

The Conservation Hut, far western end of  
Fletcher St. Wentworth Falls

VISITORS ARE VERY WELCOME

## From the President

It was lovely to see so many of you at our picnic in October, and great to enjoy the music, cake and sunshine with many members and friends. Many thanks to the Saturday bushwalkers for cancelling their walk and joining us instead!

Another great event for members to get involved in is the **Walk Against Warming** on Saturday 12 December. This will occur mid way through the Global Summit on Climate Change in Copenhagen. We will join thousands of other Australians taking to the streets asking for a stronger government response to climate change. Community events will take place in more than 70 countries, with anything from tens to hundreds of thousands of people participating.

**Join us on the train** departing at 10:am Mt Vic, 10:20 Katoomba, 11am Springwood. **Meet 1pm at Martin Place Sydney.**

Speak to you next month, Tara Cameron.

## HELP NEEDED

Sometimes members can forget to renew their membership. A few months pass and the monthly Hut News fails to arrive in the post. "I'll have to renew my membership, but what did I do with the form? ... I'll do it tomorrow ..." And the Society has lost a valuable member, perhaps forever.

Can you spare an hour (or less) a month to phone and talk to lapsed members to find out if they want to renew their membership? Cost of calls will be reimbursed.

Please contact Lachlan, 4757 1929, email [lachlan@hermes.net.au](mailto:lachlan@hermes.net.au)

## Butterfly Season

Now is the season for butterflies and it is a joy to watch and identify them. For me it has added yet another dimension to observing nature in the Blue Mountains. Watch for a mass migration of Caper White Butterflies, heading north, one day in November.

I recommend **The Complete Field Guide to Butterflies of Australia** by Michael F Braby, published by CSIRO.

Christine Davies.

## Join the Global Day of Action on Climate Change Walk Against Warming 2009, Saturday 12 December

In December 2009, Governments of the world will meet in Copenhagen to decide a new global climate treaty. This Climate Summit is the world's best chance to avoid catastrophic climate change. It requires global and national leaders to take strong and urgent action. On 12 December 2009, mid-way through the Copenhagen meeting, there will be a global day of climate action where people all over the world take to the streets to urge world leaders to cut greenhouse pollution.

In Australia, Walk against Warming will be the national event held on this date in capital cities and many regional towns. Join thousands of other Australians taking to the streets asking for a stronger government response on climate change. Now more than ever, it is important to show our political leaders that people from all walks of life are demanding action for a safe climate future.

Community events will take place in more than 70 countries, with anything from tens to hundreds of thousands of people taking part in countries from Canada to Bangladesh, from Finland to Taiwan.

## Walk Against Warming - Sydney 1pm, Saturday 12 December, Martin Place Sydney to Tarpeian Way Precinct, Botanical Gardens

People from all walks of life will take to the streets asking our government for strong and swift action on climate change. **Wear sky blue shoelaces!** You can get involved by organising local activities or walks, volunteer to help spread the word about Walk Against Warming or bring family and friends along with you on Saturday December 12. The event is organised by the Nature Conservation Council.

**Join other Blue Mountains people on the train which departs at 10am Mt Vic, 10:20 Katoomba, 11am Springwood. Meet 1pm at Martin Place Sydney.**

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#### HUT NEWS EDITORIALS

The deadline for the next issue of Hut News is **21 November 2009**

#### MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Lachlan Garland, phone: 4757 1929  
email: [lachlan@hermes.net.au](mailto:lachlan@hermes.net.au)  
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

#### BUSHCARE GROUP

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

## Nursery News

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager

In this article we are featuring one of the most common and recognizable plants growing in our area. Often referred to as "RTA Grass" because of its extensive use by that organization in roadside plantings, it is *Lomandra longifolia* or Spiny-headed Mat-rush.

This is a widespread species occurring in all states except Western Australia and the Northern Territory. It has glossy, light-green, flat leaves, the tips of which are toothed, making it a good dog or cat repellent if planted as a low hedge to about 1m. It is a very hardy plant, frost tolerant to -7<sup>o</sup>, adapts to a range of soil types, drought tolerant and is rarely affected by pests or disease. I have a row of 30 on my rear nature strip and they are often flattened by a parking car but regrow again within a few months.

Although they are used widely in very exposed situations such as along roadsides, they appear most attractive as understory plants in Eucalyptus woodland illuminated by diffused light. Small, creamy male and female flowers appear in early spring on separate plants ("dioecious" is the botanical term to describe this phenomenon) and the fruits appear about 2 months later. The female flowers, which are slightly larger (4.5mm) than the male flowers (3.5mm), are highly and pleasantly scented and

attract beetles who may be the chief pollinating agents.

Aboriginal people made extensive use of this plant using the leaves to make mats and baskets and ate the edible, starchy base of the leaves, which are described as having a pea-like flavour, and the flowers, taking due care to avoid the spines.

We propagate this versatile plant from freshly collected seed, which resembles grains of rice, and takes up to 2 months to germinate. Taking a cue from hard seeds like wattles and pea plants, we tried to speed up the germination by treating the seeds with boiling water but this only produced a rather uninviting grey porridge which nobody was game to sample. Now we are just patient as the germination rates are usually very high without treatment.

After potting-on many thousands of these for various contracts, the nursery volunteers may have a jaundiced opinion about the virtues of this useful plant but if you don't have any in your garden, be assured that *Lomandra longifolia* will be a lovely and reliable addition.

This species is not the only *Lomandra* in our area and we are planning to raise other species such as *L. glauca*, *gracilis* and *obliqua*. If we are successful, a future article will let you know.

The nursery has gift vouchers (\$10, \$20 and \$50) which will make an ideal Christmas gift for that hard-to-buy-for special person and will continue to give pleasure for years to come.

The vouchers can be purchased at the nurseries (Blackheath on Tuesday mornings, Lawson on Wednesday mornings, or posted on receipt of a cheque. Contact Kevin Bell ([kevinbell@eftel.net.au](mailto:kevinbell@eftel.net.au), phone 4787 6436) for details.

**Get rid of your old second refrigerator, and be paid for it ....**

### Fridge Buyback

Old fridges are one of the biggest energy users in the home, costing residents an average of \$210 a year to operate. Their use also results in a tonne of greenhouse gases being released every year.

**Fridge Buyback** is targeting the big old energy-guzzling fridges in people's garages, laundries and workshops, and is now available to Blue Mountains residents. To participate in the program, they must be working second fridges that have been in regular use, are 250 litres or more in size and at least 10 years old.

**Fridge Buyback** provides residents with free collection by professional removalists and a \$35 rebate if the removal of the fridge involves 6 steps or less. The fridge is collected for free if there are between 7 or 20 steps but no rebate is available. A fee will apply only if the property has more than 20 steps.

More than 11,000 households in metro Sydney and the Illawarra have participated in the Fridge Buyback program, saving residents an estimated \$2.3 million a year on their electricity bills and avoiding more than 90,000 tonnes in future greenhouse gas emissions.

For more information on the Fridge Buyback program, residents should call 1800 708 401 or visit the Fridge Buyback website at [www.fridgebuyback.com.au](http://www.fridgebuyback.com.au)

Fridge Buyback is supported by the NSW Government's Climate Change Fund.

## Update on the Coxs River Case

### Delta appealing the Protective Costs Order

Members will be aware that the Society has instigated legal action against Delta Electricity over alleged pollution (arsenic, copper, salinity, boron, fluoride, aluminium) in a section of the upper Coxs River below Wallerawang Power Station. As previously reported, we were successful in gaining a 'Protective Costs Order' to limit costs to \$20,000 in the Land and Environment Court. This was a precedent for a 'public interest' case in NSW and enabled us to continue with the action.

The legal representatives of Delta Electricity have lodged an appeal against the Court's decision to grant the 'Protective Costs Order'. This will be heard in either November 2009 or more likely in February 2010. Losing the appeal may expose the Society to costs so we are looking into establishing a fighting fund. More information will be forthcoming in the December Hut News. Tara Cameron.

## URGENT! Help us stop urban sprawl into sensitive bushland

Blue Mountains City Council is currently reviewing LEP 1991 and will soon be employing consultants to identify sensitive vegetation communities in the LEP 1991 areas. This is part of a mapping exercise that will determine the new zoning and environmental protection provisions that will apply to these areas. But it seems there will not be time for the consultants to do thorough investigation. Consoc therefore wants to provide BMCC with additional information on sensitive areas that BMCC or their consultants can follow up.

It is important that this information be built into the mapping and zoning NOW, before the draft LEP goes on exhibition sometime next year. This is the best way to ensure environmentally sensitive areas will receive appropriate protection.

The timeframe for this mapping is very short—before the end of the year—so we are urgently appealing to Consoc members to help us identify environmentally sensitive areas in your area or on the fringes of urban areas, particularly those you think may not be correctly mapped, and may be covered by LEP 1991. These environmentally sensitive areas include hanging swamps, creeks, riparian corridors, scheduled vegetation communities. To find out if these areas are correctly identified and mapped, you can view the current LEP 1991 maps and zonings in your area on the BMCC website or, if you need help, you can contact Tara on 4751 1130, or Carolyn on 4758 7895.

Please let us know by email any environmentally sensitive areas you think BMCC should investigate ([domtara@bigpond.com](mailto:domtara@bigpond.com) or [carolynwill@ozemail.com.au](mailto:carolynwill@ozemail.com.au)).

## National Parks Under Attack Tara Cameron

### National Parks rangers and conservationists rally to stop HUNTING in Parks

On Tuesday 27 October, over 150 people rallied outside NSW Parliament to strongly voice their opposition to hunting in National Parks. Members of the Society including Tara Cameron, Wyn Jones and Andy Macqueen joined with National Park rangers, other NPWS staff, environment groups, WIRES and the Greens to call for the State Government to stop negotiations with the Shooters Party. Speakers highlighted the way in which the Government has subsidised recreational hunting in State Forests by funding the Game Council with millions of dollars of taxpayers' money. This has diverted funds away from scientifically designed pest control programs and the results have been extremely poor from a pest management perspective. The attendees expressed their outrage that National Parks could become places for hunting native and feral animals with dogs, guns, bows and arrows.

### Development inside National Parks

Our campaign to promote tourism accommodation in local towns and keep developments such as eco resorts out of National Parks has been ongoing. No new commercial facilities have been allowed inside our parks - yet. Plans to weaken National Parks and Wilderness laws and to increased private facilities of national parks have been curbed, but cultural changes within the NPWS and diversion of NPWS resources from conservation into managing tourism has continued.

On the plus side conservation efforts have been joined by local councils, including the Blue Mountains, Ashfield, Strathfield,

Willoughby, Warringah and Sydney. These councils support moves to protect parks and raised these concerns at the Local Government Conference in October.

### Underfunding of the Blue Mountains region National Parks

The significant budget cuts to the 18 Parks and Reserves that comprise the Blue Mountains region have not been addressed. There may be no spraying of the phytophthora fungus under the **Wollemi Pines** if no additional funding is received. It seems incredible that we promote these trees but don't prioritise caring for them! Other cuts include the loss of up to six staff positions and cuts to remote area weed control programs. The Society has contacted both our local member Mr Phil Koperberg, and the Minister for the Environment about our concerns.

### How You Can Help

Please write, phone, or email the politicians below asking them to **drop plans to allow recreational hunting and commercial facilities in National Parks**. Please ask for **more funding** for conservation works such as weed control in the Blue Mountains region.

Mr Phil Koperberg, Shop 3, 107-109 Macquarie Road, SPRINGWOOD NSW 2777 Ph 02 4751 3298 [bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au)  
Premier Nathan Rees, 1 Farrer Pl, Sydney, NSW, 2000. Ph: 02 9228 5239, [thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au](mailto:thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au)

Environment Minister, John Robertson, Governor Macquarie Tower, Level 35, 1 Farrer Pl, Sydney, NSW, 2000, Ph (02) 9230 2152, [office@robertson.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@robertson.minister.nsw.gov.au)

*Photo: Rally to oppose hunting in National Parks, 27/10/09*





## Oh, what a lovely picnic!

The westerly wind dropped, the sun shone, and it was a perfect day for the Blue Mountains Conservation Society's annual picnic, held at Wilson Park, Wentworth Falls, on Saturday 17 October 2009.

Warwick Mosman brought along a barbeque; David Bowskill, a rope for the tug-a-war. The Gang Gangs brought banjo, guitars, mandolin, cello, bass, and the very rare foot-operated lagerphone.

Parents and grandparents brought along their children, who were eager and energetic participants in the tug-a-war and sack races. Some of the adults joined in too.

We shared a huge birthday cake to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Blue Mountains National Park, met old and new friends. It was a delightful day.

A special thank you to members of the Gang Gang Bush Orchestra - Nick Roberts, Kerry Doherty, Glen Parry, Erst Carmichael, Kent Learned and Patrick Harte - for entertaining with their music and songs. *Christine Davies.*



## Respond to Big Coal's Smoke and Mirrors - Donate Now

No doubt you've seen the slick spin currently being peddled by the coal industry: a huge advertising campaign to convince the public that Big Coal really cares about coal workers and their communities. What absolute nonsense, the coal industry is concerned with only one thing, profits.

Big Coal knows their days are numbered, and want to get every last dollar out while they can. If this means that coal communities are left out on a limb when the climate crunch comes, that's just business for Big Coal.

Coal communities deserve better, far better; they deserve an orderly and just transition to a future based on clean renewable technologies - technologies that can go on forever without destroying our planet.

If you want to help get this positive message out in the Mountains and Lithgow area, then donate now. BMCS in collaboration with other local groups will be running a grass roots advertising campaign to counter Big Coal's self-serving spin. Donate now, and help build this campaign.

Donations to the Society can be made in the following ways:

- Cheque or Money order to PO Box 29 Wentworth Falls 2782
- Direct Deposit to BSB 082656, Acct No 282175764

Please indicate your donation is for the "Just Transition" campaign, and if making a direct deposit also email the details to Tara at [domtara@bigpond.com](mailto:domtara@bigpond.com)

*From time to time I have included in Hut News poetry written by Graham Alcorn. Graham and his brother Wilson worked for Blue Mountains Council as rangers looking after the Blue Mountains walking tracks and lookouts, before the area was included in the Blue Mountains National Park. Here is an extract from Wilson's "Mountain Memories", recently sent to the Society. Christine.*

### Mountain Memories by Wilson Alcorn

I received a DVD from Ivor and Deidre Morton (good friends of my brother) on the National Pass Project involving nine men for five years. A wonderful job involving double handrails and even a bottom rail and a lot of stone work I'd love to see. It brought back memories of when my brother Graham Alcorn, as Head Ranger with a labour force of two or three rangers, kept the pass open for 13 years and we never lost a customer on our watch that I recall.

When Graham took over, the walking tracks, lookouts etc were in bad shape with steps and signs missing and unsafe rails, water on tracks etc, a huge task. We did not sign on at Council Depot in North Katoomba for work as we might have to walk for an hour to a job. There was a ranger for Wentworth Falls, Leura, and I was, for 10 years ranger for the Jameson Valley from the Three Sisters to Narrowneck, the Golden Stairs and to Mt Solitary six miles out. Each worked Monday and Friday in his own area and as a gang the other three days. John Metcalf, the Chief Engineer was a great ally and conservationist and sometimes used us as a flying squad in emergencies. Graham's experience as one of the three

riggers on Sydney Harbour for many years was invaluable. He worked on the giant floating crane The Vulcan based at Cockatoo Island for years and I had a picture of him "riding the steel" above the arch of the Gladesville Bridge.

The Head Ranger reported on proposed works to a Committee of citizens once a month at Carrington Hotel. Council Chief Engineer attended. Of course, if we had a rockfall or similar, we would be perhaps at Woodford instead of Mt Victoria. No mobile phones so rangers were hard to find.

There were few volunteers for the job as we walked everywhere and carried everything on our backs. (Walking down the "Giants Staircase" for instance with a 21 foot length of 1½ inch pipe and a crowbar.) Council bought us some Paddy Pallin backpacks which would hold a mattock, a razor sharp axe and maybe a bush bow saw. I still had mine 25 years later. Chainsaws like the Mobilco were too heavy to carry in those days.

We are all subject to life changing events and when in 1947 my bride-to-be was killed crossing the road, I became a bit of a "loner", camping in a way with no more possessions than would fill two suitcases so I could be gone by nightfall and working in out-of-the-way places like Marble Bar.

However, in the Blue Mountains I found my place: the wonderful scenery, the jobs, the memorable people. My brother, a charismatic figure attracted B P (beautiful people!!) another bonus! We lived together for 25 years after his wife died and he was a great vegetarian cook.

(Next month: restoring the Slack Stairs)

## BOOK REVIEW: EnviroCat ???

by Meredith Brownhill

Who would have imagined that a cat could earn the *Enviro* prefix to its name? Well, there is a book entitled *EnviroCat* that is a practical guide to caring for your cat and protecting native wildlife at the same time.

It will appeal to animal lovers with cats, as it has lots of suggestions for pampering a loved cat – although bathing a cat sounds like a dubious activity!

The book has many ideas for creating walled gardens, enclosed verandahs or balconies, aviaries and suitable boundary fences to contain cats on the owner's property. There are good photos of how to build these extensions in the backyard, so they will look attractive amongst garden plants. It would even be possible to grow native shrubs around some of the cat enclosures, perfect for bird watching!

**An EnviroCat is a cat that is healthy, safe from car accidents and doesn't kill native wildlife.**

*EnviroCat*, 1997, by Robin Stewart, Hyland House \$24.95.

## Christmas gift idea

Most of us will know like-minded environmentally-conscious people who are not yet members of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Here is a chance to help the Society, and the environment. Give a one-year membership to a friend for Christmas.

Annual membership fees are Single \$25 (\$15 concession), Household \$30 (\$20). Bushwalkers pay \$20 extra per walker per annum.

Send the details with your cheque to Membership Secretary, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 and your friends will receive a gift voucher and one year's subscription to Hut News, with the option of becoming full members if they wish.

Enquiries to Lachlan Garland, 4757 1929, email [Lachlan@hermes.net.au](mailto:Lachlan@hermes.net.au)

## Welcome to new members

Matthew Kobryn, Glenbrook

Michael and Bindi Paag, Blackheath

John Choma, Leonay

Jacqueline Allen, Faulconbridge

David McKinstry, Faulconbridge

## 350.com Event - Lithgow Leads the World

On 24 October (23 October Australian time), people in 181 countries came together for the most widespread day of environmental action in the planet's history. At over 145 similar events in Australia, and 5200 events around the world, people gathered to call for strong action and bold leadership on the climate crisis when World leaders meet in Copenhagen in December.

In front of the ruins of the Blast Furnace, Lithgow residents gathered to form the number 350, the upper limit of parts per million of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere at which life on earth can be sustained. The image from 'Lithgow Australia' was among the first to be sent out for this global event.

Thomas Ebersoll, President of the Lithgow Environment Group was the instigator of this event in Lithgow. Congratulations to Thomas and other members of the Group (also the Lithgow Regional Subcommittee, BMCS) for making the event such a success.



### Speech delivered by Dr Richard Stiles at the Lithgow Blast Furnace relics on 23/10/2009 on behalf of the Lithgow Environment Group in support of the 350.org campaign on climate change.

In 1875 James Rutherford and colleagues built this blast furnace and established a successful foundry to produce 'pig-iron'. However by the end of the century iron could be sourced more cheaply from other parts of the English empire and the works folded.

In 1907 William Sandford and then the Hoskins family re-established the blast furnace to produce steel. For the next 20 years this site was the hub of Australian steel production – the backbone of our industry. Again it folded as transportation costs for its raw materials – coking coal, limestone and iron – made the works commercially non-competitive.

These industries folded, but Lithgow remains – with a long and strong industrial heritage.

We have come today from Lithgow and our surrounding regions – but we also come here alongside millions of others who today around the world – as part of the 350.org campaign on climate change – are demanding a fair and reasonable and life sustaining deal on climate change.

The main cause of CO<sub>2</sub> increase in our atmosphere is from burning fossil fuels – oil, gas, and coal. We currently have 390 parts per million of CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere. There is a developing consensus that we need to *reduce* this to 350 ppm if we want to avoid severe climate change.

For us in Australia, severe climate change will mean:

- the worst droughts since humans arrived here perhaps 50 000 years ago – no water – for decades

- it will mean bushfires – and more of the ones that devastated Victoria earlier this year.

- it will be the end of the Great Barrier Reef

- it will reduce our agricultural capacity – our means of sustaining ourselves – especially in the southern half of our continent, to a fraction of what it is today

- it will bring many severe coastal storms – as we have seen in Innisfail

- it will bring new diseases such as malaria and Dengue fever to this country

I have been in Lithgow for the last 10 years – not that long – but as a local doctor I have had the privilege of meeting thousands of local residents. And I have noted a few things about the people around here. They are mostly honest and friendly. They are a down-to-earth, no nonsense people. They call a spade a spade. They are a people many of whom feel quite proud of their town and its heritage; who have heard others call this place, "dirty old Lithgow", but for them it is home, with much to feel good about.

So in like spirit I will try to be honest and kind and call a spade a spade.

We have a problem.

We all have a problem.

If we continue on with 'business as usual', we are going to further warm our atmosphere from increased levels of CO<sub>2</sub> and this will likely cause a massive shift in our earth's climate. To avoid this holocaust we need to *reduce* our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – as fast as we can. This will not be easy. We have become very

dependent on fossil fuels – but it can be done.

The Cubans faced such a problem in the early nineties when their oil supplies dried up with the dissolution of the USSR. This necessitated a massive re-alignment of their society – and they came through it, they continue to come through it. In fact, there is evidence that the health of Cubans is now better than before the oil dried up – less diabetes, less heart disease for example.

So now in Lithgow...we have no more iron. We have no more steel. But we do dig up and burn a lot of coal, one of the main drivers of climate change.

We need a plan - and this will need to be a global plan – to reduce our reliance on coal, especially for electricity production. There are now a number of low carbon technologies that are safe and can replace coal fired power generators: wind, solar, solar-thermal, geo-thermal, biomass, increased efficiency and reducing wasteful consumption. Human ingenuity is considerable when confronted with a challenge.

For Lithgow this will mean another transition: post iron, post steel, post coal.

This does not mean we should immediately close down our coal industry. We need a graduated, though progressive transition of industry. Over the next 20, 30, almost certainly 50 years we will need to move away from coal. Don't believe the hype about 'clean coal'. There has been little progress in carbon capture and storage despite considerable time and effort.

It does not mean we should

Continued on page 11

Leura

Whistling through the hanging swamp  
the west wind whips  
bunches of silver leaves  
like grass skirts  
on slender native girls  
into a dervish dance.

I sit among the banksias,  
roots and trunks knobbly-gnarled,  
bonsaid by time.  
Crusty ancestors, unburied,  
lie at their feet,  
driftwood of the west wind.

Brendan Doyle

## COMMENT

### Of sustainability and elephants

I have just been to a well-attended Monthly Meeting. Speakers gave excellent accounts of ways in which one can take personal responsibility for living sustainably. Making simple life-style changes can concurrently reduce one's energy footprint, and provide health and financial benefits. More than one speaker mentioned that our current levels of consumption are compromising our grandchildren's future. This is most certainly true! Yet, having raised the matter of grandchildren and future needs, no speaker went further; the 'elephant in the room' remained silent.

No matter how much we play around the periphery of personal energy consumption, Australia's population is increasing rapidly. Even in the unlikely event of an Australia-wide per capita energy reduction, the Federally-encouraged population explosion will inevitably and dramatically escalate Australia's energy footprint, both through the increasing need for housing and utilities, and through our gluttony for imported goods and the ever-expanding demands for road, rail and port infrastructure. No speaker faced the reality that population increases drive consumption, in turn driving greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. So, instead of worrying about plundering the grandchildren's heritage, it is surely time to discourage the production of 'children and grandchildren', thereby curtailing the population explosions (nationally and internationally) which carry the hallmarks of destruction.

Elephants are in the title. The second 'elephant in the room' concerns the following. We are supposedly on the way back from the brink in terms of the global financial crisis. Financial institutions in the US are resisting reforms and executive-greed is already increasing (if it ever stopped!) The argument that we can't afford high emissions targets during the global downturn will be replaced with the mindless euphoria of 'business as usual'. 'Economies' are predicated upon population expansion and increasingly conspicuous consumption, so why should we be pleased that recovery is imminent, lessons have not been learnt, and the World is back on

## Don't forget, let Council know you want a GM-free Blue Mountains Craig Linn

As covered in earlier editions of Hut News, precautionary recommendations on genetically modified crops and food are currently on exhibition and public input is sought. This process closes on Friday 27th November.

If you would like to have a GM-Free Blue Mountains then let council know now! All you need to do is send a brief email and say (preferably in your own words) that you:

**“fully support all the precautionary approach recommendations and urge council to adopt them as soon as possible”.**

It's as simple as that.

The email should be sent to [council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au) with a subject line of: "Genetically Modified Food Public Submission".

If you are so inclined you may also like to add some additional comments. Possible comments include:

- Evidence continues to mount that GM crops pose significant risks to human and animal health and to the environment;
- Council has a “duty of care” to the community, particularly its children, and needs to take a very cautious approach;
- GM crops cannot be adequately segregated from natural non-GM crops;
- GM canola crops in Victoria have already contaminated some honey production;
- Labelling in Australia is currently inadequate and needs to be improved to world's best practice which would include full labelling of all products derived from GM sources including animal products (milk, eggs, meat) from animals fed GM crop materials;
- Anything else that concerns you about GM crops and food

The full BMCC report and recommendations can be found at:

<http://www.bangthetable.com/blue-mountains-city-council>

the corporate treadmill? Could it be that a global economic meltdown and **reassessment of values** would have been more beneficial to us and our environment?

Finally, should you believe that the corporate grip on governments and economies precludes anything other than 'business as usual', let us at least recognise the pressing need for improved social and environmental infrastructure (e.g. health and community support systems; renewable energy systems), rather than focusing predominantly on the needs of 'big business'. And most of all, let us prevail upon State and Federal Governments and Oppositions to return combating climate change to the top of the agenda, rather treating it as a political football subordinated to the 'materialistic economy'.

Brian Marshall.



Have you found an  
**INJURED OR ORPHANED NATIVE ANIMAL?**  
Phone Blue Mountains WIRES **4754 2946**

## COAL AND NUCLEAR JUST HOT AIR, THE IMMEDIATE ANSWER IS GAS

*Article by Paul Manning  
in Sydney Morning Herald  
October 17, 2009*

People are looking for a cleaner energy source, one they can believe in, and enough to keep the lights on and power electric cars and desalination plants by 2050, when Australia's population will be 35 million.

Everybody knows clean coal will not cut it, and that is why the only person willing to spend real money on it is the federal Energy Minister, Martin Ferguson.

Massive renewable energy is the plain solution to climate change, but it is still beyond reach. So many sensible people, about half the population, according to a Nielsen poll this week, reach for nuclear.

It is just not necessary. At the risk of stating the obvious, gas is the key to making the essential, rapid transition to a completely renewable energy supply. With reserves offshore in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria, and coal seam gas in Queensland, Australia has gas in abundance.

The Premier of Western Australia, Colin Barnett, made a similar point in a recent interview, noting the most frequent comment he got from the big oil companies developing the state's gas fields, was, "Why are our natural gas resources so undeveloped?"

"Even now, on proven reserves, there is 100 years of gas," Barnett said. "You've really got to think, why doesn't Australia do more with its natural gas?" He decried the "incredibly convoluted" debate we are having about an emissions trading scheme.

"I agree an ETS is part of the solution, but surely it is more logical to take direct measures to reduce greenhouse emissions. The simplest direct measure Australia can take is to use natural gas in power generation.

"Australia on the east coast has got coal," Barnett said. "It's a powerful industry, a powerful lobby, it's a major part of the economy. I recognise that. But we, in a greater long-term global energy sense, are being naive as a country - and probably seen as being naive. We've got this massive resource that everyone wants and we are not thinking strategically."

That's putting it mildly. Many would go further. Our first challenge is to build no

more coal-fired power stations, whether touted as "carbon capture and storage-ready", or not. Like the phrase clean coal, "CCS-ready" is industry doublespeak. CCS is 20 years away at commercial scale, even proponents admit. It is nothing like ready.

Western Australia at least has avoided this path. On Thursday the state's energy retailer Synergy, after tendering for 638 megawatts of generation capacity from 2011, rejected proposals to build new coal-fired power stations including listed the Aviva Corporation's Coolimba coal-fired plant with CCS at Eneabba, between Perth and Geraldton, and Griffin Energy's Bluewaters projects at Collie.

State-owned Verve Energy, which is building two high-efficiency 100MW gas turbines at its Kwinana power station, won the tender instead. Synergy said it was considering wind farm proposals to meet the state's 20 per cent renewable energy target. It has signed agreements with geothermal and wave developers including Carnegie Wave Energy, which will build its first commercial 5MW wave power station at Garden Island, south of Fremantle.

But new coal-fired power stations are still proposed elsewhere. The Queensland Government has backed the Wandoan Power Project to build a new, 400MW integrated gasification combined cycle coal-fired power station, which it is hoped will capture and store 90 per cent of its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions - somewhere, at some stage. Wandoan is one of the projects likely to receive funding under the Federal Government's \$2.4 billion CCS Flagships program, and if it goes ahead construction will be completed in 2015-16.

More substantially the NSW Government, as part of its electricity privatisation, plans two major new baseload power stations to be built at Mount Piper near Lithgow and Bayswater near Muswellbrook. It's still not decided whether these new stations, each of about 2000MW capacity, will be fuelled by gas or coal - if the later, again, supposedly "CCS-ready".

The Business Spectator blogger Keith Orchison called this the largest electricity generation development in the state for almost 20 years and, quoting an unnamed industry source, observed drily a decision to build a new coal-fired power station in NSW would be a "dog fight with a large audience".

Let us pray for sanity and assume these new stations are built with gas turbines, following the pattern of recent years in

which ever-larger projects have been commissioned, such as Origin Energy's 630MW gas-fired power station at Queensland's Darling Downs or its 1100MW power plant at Mortlake, south-western Victoria.

The second challenge is to retire the worst polluting coal-fired power stations, principally the old brown-coal fired power stations in Latrobe Valley, Victoria, such as Hazelwood and Yallourn. In an outrageous request on the public purse, the owners of these power stations, including the foreign giants International Power and China Light and Power, want a "bail-out". They argue that if they get an additional \$6.5 billion or so of taxpayers' money, on top of the \$3.5 billion in free permits they are getting under the proposed emissions trading scheme, they may reinvest some of it in new gas turbines. They should get short shrift; better off building the new plant ourselves and floating it, just like the new broadband network. But given our debased emissions trading negotiations, they will probably get everything they want and repatriate the money quick smart.

There is no doubting the benefits of a switch to gas, as part of a transition to renewables. Mark Wakeham of Environment Victoria says converting Hazelwood to gas could be done in two years and would reduce plant emissions by 75 per cent, from 17 million tonnes to just 4 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year, and greatly reducing water use.

It would cut Victoria's emissions by more than 10 per cent in one fell swoop. The problem is, converting to gas-fired power stations in the Latrobe Valley will employ fewer people because there will be no need to mine brown coal. Hence the State Government's urgent need to pretend something better can be done with the stuff. Turn it to fertiliser? Dry it out and ship it to India? Never mind the environment, hard heads doubt these proposals can ever stack up commercially.

A latent concern is that gas piped from the Gippsland Basin would not suffice to run the state's economy.

As a caller from the valley told Jon Faine, the ABC radio host in Melbourne, this week: "From what I understand, that is quite a limited supply of gas compared to coal and we would extinguish that valuable resource very quickly if it was used for power generation." The gas lobby has a job ahead of it.

[paddy.manning@fairfaxmedia.com.au](mailto:paddy.manning@fairfaxmedia.com.au)



## Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

There's a very special celebrity family living here in the mountains. For the past three years a pair of Square-tailed Kites have nested in a gully just below houses in the lower mountains and during that time they have become possibly the most photographed and talked about birds (by those in the know) in our area. When the nest was discovered in 2007 by members of Blue Mountains Bird Observers, it was the first known record of this species breeding in the Blue Mountains. The nest has now grown to a huge size resembling an eagle's nest, and at the time of writing the birds were still incubating this year's eggs.

The Square-tailed Kite is a thrilling bird to watch. Its appearance is usually preceded by a cacophony of alarm calls from other birds - it seems to elicit a particularly frantic predator response due to its habit of snatching eggs, nestlings and even adult birds from foliage. Long-winged and agile, it is usually seen sailing effortlessly at just above treetop level, frequently changing direction, jinking sideways, its long, sharp-cornered tail twisting as it soars on raised wings.

The species is regarded as rare and is listed as Vulnerable in NSW, its numbers affected by habitat loss and illegal egg-collecting, so local residents should feel justifiably proud and protective of their special neighbour.

Another bird to keep an eye out for at the moment is a visitor from the inland. The Black-tailed Native-hen is most at home in the river systems of the arid interior where it lives on the edges of waterholes and swamps, wherever dense lignum provides cover. It looks like a dark-coloured bantam with its square tail held vertically like a flag, and has a striking green bill and red legs.

On 25th September I saw two at Lake Wallace near Lithgow and amazingly, on the same day Jill Dark told me of one which had turned up at a backyard dam in Hazelbrook, another first for the Blue Mountains! Since then they have been appearing in many places near the coast and mountains, including Mount Annan, Pitt Town, the Capertee Valley and around Botany Bay.

The Black-tailed Native-hen is well known for its irruptions (an "irruption" refers to the sudden appearance of large numbers of a species in places they don't normally occur). This usually follows inland floods which causes them to breed rapidly and build up huge populations, then, as conditions dry out again the birds are forced into more coastal areas. But they can disappear as suddenly as they appeared!

**Carol Proberts** (*origma@westnet.com.au*)

## Membership Application Form

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

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

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

Phone(s) .....

Email .....

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$25 Concession (Senior/Student)\$15  
Household \$30 Concession (Senior/Student)\$20  
Corporate (open to negotiation) \$100

Bushwalkers only: (\$20 per walkers per annum) \$.....

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

TOTAL AMOUNT INCLUDED \$.....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline): Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Web or database management; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Society administration.

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

Please sign if named above.

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

ENQUIRIES: Phone (02 4757 1872

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

Please cut out and forward this form with your cheque or money order to:

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.**  
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls NSW 2782

## Showing the Politicians around Newnes Plateau

Karen McLaughlin

Michael Richardson MP accompanied Karen McLaughlin (BMCS Project Officer), Keith Muir (Colong Foundation) and Tara Cameron, on a tour around Newnes Plateau on 9 October.

The visit was arranged after Michael had received our 'Seeing the Gardens' report which examines the recreation and tourism potential on the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Park Proposal area. (See the report at [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au))

We certainly saw some fabulous highlights such as the Lost City, Mount Horne and lots of wonderful waratahs. The trip also showed why the area needs better management. The afforestation camp has the potential to be a beautiful place for family car camping but was covered with masses of rubbish. Unregistered trail bikers were common.

The site visit highlighted why Newnes Plateau should become a State Conservation Area.



**Photo:** Member for Castle Hill, Michael Richardson, beside vandalised sign on Newnes Plateau which warns motorcyclists that they must be licenced and their vehicles registered.

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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

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

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

### The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

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

Home Based Sustainability was the topic of the October Monthly Meeting. Liz Bastion came along with seeds, magazines and pamphlets about Permaculture and the Alternative Technology Association. Liz made the case that we are now at peak use of everything – oil, water, hydrocarbons and these will now begin to decline. We have to develop renewable sources of energy, use much less water and grow our own food locally as much as possible. We must also retain an indigenous forest cover. Plantations are not forests. We need to re-forest every barren hilltop with indigenous trees.

Liz also spoke about various alternative technologies where community bulk buys have been organised of energy and water saving devices and sold at affordable prices. These items include solar panels, water tanks, insulation, smart meters and solar lamps.

David Bowskill spoke about the advantages of installing a heat pump, hot water heater in his house that operates by taking heat from the outside air. It takes around one hour a day during summer, longer in winter to heat the water and costs around a dollar a week to operate while providing around 270

## The Bathurst Copper Butterfly

Meredith Brownhill

It's the time of year for the Bathurst Copper Butterfly to emerge and reach maturity with spring activity. So, watch out for this beautiful little butterfly if you are in the Bathurst – Lithgow area.

As its name suggests the male butterflies are blue with a copper-green iridescence, especially when sunlight falls on their wings. The female butterflies are dark brown with purple and bronze colours. They have the most amazing black and white antennae, if you are ever fortunate enough to see one close up.

*Paralucia spinifera* is a lovely invertebrate and lives in a very specialized ecosystem. It likes the plant *Bursaria spinosa ssp. lasiophylla* as habitat and has a mutually agreeable relationship with an ant called *Anonychomyra itineras*. This is a species specific relationship and just any ant or any *Bursaria*, is just not good enough! It also likes the cold and lives above 900m altitude.

The female butterfly lives close to the *Bursaria* and lays her eggs on the host plant or close to it. Upon hatching the caterpillars munch the *Bursaria* and give nutritious secretions to the ant, thus receiving protection from predators. The caterpillar and ant become nocturnal and feed at night, with the ants shepherding the caterpillars into their nest for the day. Pupae form in the



ant nest and remain there until the next spring.

The male butterflies fly further from the host plant *Bursaria*, often sitting on the ground or on low grass – they fly up to 1 metre above the ground. This makes them very vulnerable to being trodden on by admirers.

Poachers are common, so collectors are now one of the threats to this Rare & Endangered Specie. If you ever see a poacher with butterfly net in hand, do report them (record car number plate) to Police or NPWS.

Next time you are walking through *Bursaria*, never mind the spines on the plant, just watch out for the Copper Butterfly! The Lithgow Community Nursery has some wonderful photos and paintings.

Photo *Paralucia spinifera*  
by P. Ridgeway.

## Home Based Sustainability

David Hall

litres of hot water to the house with 100% green electricity. David recommended placing the heater in the hottest place, i.e, on the north side of the house.

Peter Green went through a list of lifestyle changes we can all adopt to save money, water, energy and the environment. Peter grouped the suggestions under 'In your house', 'In your Garden', 'Link the House and Garden', 'General Lifestyle' and 'Home Design and Construction'. These will be listed on the Society Website but one, in particular can be mentioned – good house design runs east to west and the Housing Industry needs to understand that warm air does not go side ways but up.

Significant websites and email addresses mentioned are:

BM Permaculture Institute -

[www.bluemountainspermacultureinstitute.com.au](http://www.bluemountainspermacultureinstitute.com.au)

The Alternative Technology Association--

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

Freecycle is a non-profit organisation that aims to keep good stuff out of landfills.

[Freecycle.bluemountains@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Freecycle.bluemountains@yahoogroups.com)

**Speech delivered by Dr Richard Stiles  
at the Lithgow Blast Furnace relics on  
23/10/2009 (continued from page 6)**

immediately close down our existing coal fired power stations – but it does mean we need an extension to the Mt Piper power station like we need a heart attack. This is moving in the opposite direction to where we need to go. We need to vigorously oppose any further expansion of the fossil fuel industries if we want a planet fit to live on.

So where will this leave Lithgow? It will not mean an immediate collapse of local industries, or our local jobs. But it will mean we will need to start thinking and planning for the next stage in what is a beautiful town – post iron, post steel, post coal. This town has done it before. There is no good reason why it can't do it again – hopefully better. Like the industries before it, coal will become unviable – particularly once the full costs of its CO2 emissions are factored in.

This is not something that Lithgow can achieve on its own. It will need to be part of an entire shift in our national and international community – but Lithgow will need to be part of it, and share its portion of responsibility in this shift.

Climate change is real – it is on us.

Climate change is a very difficult problem – and it will require new national and international policies and politics if we are to successfully address it.

On a larger scale this is about how big we really are – whether we are capable, as a species, of living for a long period – sustainably – on this planet.

And it is also hard because we are particularly doing it for our future generations, and not just for our immediate self interests.

How much do we care? What are our capacities to care?

It is a question about our human legacy and the legacy we share with the many other living beings we have the fortune to live with on this earth.

I feel fortunate in having two young children. And I would like for them to grow up in a world still teeming with life, with forests, with coral reefs. These young ones are for me, and for many of you, a living connection with our future – our human dream and legacy.

I think we owe it – to ourselves, to our children and to the many other living beings on this planet– to do all we can to reverse what was originally an inadvertent, and is now an understood mistake that we have made.

350 is the number. I hope we're up to it.

**Down the Wallaby Track — a backward glance, with John Low**

**A MOST STATELY AND REGAL FLOWER**

The waratah was an object of wonder from the early years of settlement, its popular name quickly adopted from the language of Sydney's original inhabitants. It was also the focus of early botanical scholarship and in 1810 the Scots botanist Robert Brown, who had sailed with Matthew Flinders, studied specimens collected in the Blue Mountains and assigned the genus *Telopea*.

When the Western Road was opened in 1815, in a landscape that often seemed dull and monotonous, the attention of spring travellers was drawn instantly to the waratah. Their bright red 'flower heads', blazing on tall stems, were highly visible against the more subdued greens, browns and grays of the bush. Travellers noted, described and enthused about them in journals, letters and diaries.

Passing Springwood on his return from Bathurst in October 1822, judge and writer Barron Field, for example, observed that "the *telopea* was now in even finer bloom than on my outward journey". Thirteen years later, in October 1835 and in the same vicinity, the Quaker missionary James Backhouse commented similarly, but added: "The Blue Mountain Parrot, partly blue, and with a breast of crimson, as brilliant as the flowers, was drinking nectar out of the blossoms of this splendid shrub."

Perhaps, though, the waratah made the deepest impression upon that delightful and forthright commentator on colonial life, Louisa Meredith. A fine naturalist and artist, she described them in October 1839 as "a most stately and regal flower" appearing "like bright flambeaux amidst the dark recesses of these wild forests". At The Weatherboard (Wentworth Falls) she came upon an almost circular "bower" of slender eucalypts "beneath whose leafy canopy dwelt a sisterhood of queens - a group of eight or ten splendid waratahs, straight as arrows - tall, stately, regal flowers, that with their rich and glowing hue seemed like the magic jewels we read of in fairy tales, that light up caverns by their own intrinsic luster." She was so taken with these particular specimens that she could not bring herself to pick any!

The waratah has become a prominent motif in the Australian imagination and has been the official emblem of NSW since 1962. It has featured in the work of artists as diverse as Louisa Meredith, Margaret Preston and Jenny Kee and in our local towns and villages has a bold presence in murals on public walls and bus shelters.



John Low ([johnlow@iprimus.com.au](mailto:johnlow@iprimus.com.au))

**Environmental Notes**

David Hall

-- The aim seems to be to have the world reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% from 1990 levels by 2050. Part of the difficulty with that is that if the Developed World managed to reduce their emissions to zero and all other nations held theirs steady, the target would not be met. Source-US Council on Foreign Relations.

-- The negotiations leading up to Copenhagen have proceeded along five tracks; mitigation, adaption, finance, technology and creating a vision for long-term co-operative action. Mitigation focuses on near term commitments to culling emission; adaption on efforts to deal with unavoidable climate change; finance, on schemes to pay for emissions cuts; technology, on frameworks for advancing and distributing low-carbon technology; and creating a long-term vision, on developing a simple framework that ties all this together. The five tracks could be a way of forcing a more precise accountability from the Rudd Government.

-- Deforestation places Indonesia and Brazil among the biggest sources of greenhouse gases. It accounts for 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Brazil has offered an 80% cut and Indonesia, 26% less deforestation than would happen with 'business as usual' by 2020, if rich countries help pay for it. Source- The Economist.

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) or can be posted on request. For more information call Liz van Reyswoud on 4757 2694, email [bushwalks@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:bushwalks@bluemountains.org.au) or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

**SATURDAY WALKS:** Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Before attending ring the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy 4758 6009 or email [jp34@tpg.com.au](mailto:jp34@tpg.com.au)

Nov 14	<b>Baal Bone Gap area</b> —views from Mt McLean to Wolgan Valley's special features—4WD preferable while not essential.	Sue 4787 8887	8.30 am Blackheath Station CP.	8	3	Cullen Bullen Ben Bullen
Nov 21	<b>Nellies Glen and Devil's Hole.</b> Steep descent/ascent	Ros 4733 3880	8.30 am, Gearins Hotel (Katoomba) CP	8	3	Katoomba
Nov 28	<b>Victory Track to Numantia Falls and Magdala Track to Springwood</b>	Jo & Karen 4758 6009	9am, Faulconbridge Station CP	12	3	Springwood
Dec 5	<b>Browns and Wilderness Ridges, in the tracks of explorer George Caley.</b> Maybe part exploratory, half off-track..	Peter 4751 9637	8am, Springwood Station CP	10	3/4	Kurrajong

**MONDAY LEISURE WALKS:** Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Maurice Kerkham, 4739 4942, email [mauricekerkham@hotmail.com](mailto:mauricekerkham@hotmail.com)

Date	Details	Grade	Contact	Meet
Nov 16	<b>Red Gum Park and Minnatonka Falls,</b> Bullaburra. Magnificent red gum forest.	2	Maurice 4739 4942	9.15am, Bullaburra Rail Station.
Nov 23	<b>Newnes. BUS TRIP.</b> Book and pay Birgitta 4784 3191 (\$10). BBQ lunch. Visit to old pub and mining ruins.	1	Maurice 4739 4942	8.30 am, BMCC depot, South Street, North Katoomba.
Nov 30	<b>Murphy's Glen and Bedford Creek,</b> Woodford. Along the Turpentine Track.	3	Judith 4758 6310	9am Woodford Station, south side.
Dec 7	<b>Kanuka Brook &amp; Crayfish Pool,</b> Glenbrook. Walk to deep pool and waterfall-swim.	2	Ros 4733 3880	9.30 am, Glenbrook Station car park.

**THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS:** Walks of 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Simone Bowskill, 4757 3416, email [simbow@tpg.com.au](mailto:simbow@tpg.com.au)

Nov 12	<b>Mount Wilson Village walk.</b> Visit this picturesque area in spring.	1	Maurice 4739 4942	9.40 am, Mt Victoria Station.
Nov 19	<b>North Hazelbrook Waterfalls.</b> Cool walk with few steps, to three waterfalls.	2	Maurice 4739 4942	9.15 am, rear of Hazelbrook shops.
Nov 26	<b>Old shale works at Hartley Vale.</b> Walk to inspect old shale workings.	2	Marie 4787 1257	9.45 am, Mt Victoria Station.
Dec 3	<b>Pope's Glen, Blackheath.</b> Walk up Glen from Govett's Leap, car shuffle to return.	2	David 4757 3416	9.45 am, Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre.
Dec 10	<b>Christmas Party at Hartley.</b> Pre lunch walk.	1	Simone 4757 3416	11 am, Mt Victoria Station
Dec 17	<b>Morning tea at Hargreaves Lookout.</b> Enjoy a cuppa with a beautiful view.	1	Simone 4757 3416	9.45 am, Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre.

### On Newnes Plateau

On Thursday 29 October we went to Newnes Plateau, on a walk led by Karen McLaughlin, to pagodas above Paddy's Creek and a shrub swamp which feeds Paddy's Creek. We met at Mount Victoria, the cloud was on us, with moisture dripping down. It was cold. People from the lower mountains were not confident when I told them the cloud would rise and the weather would be fine, and maybe become hot.

The cloud soon lifted. We parked our cars beside an illegal trail bike track. Wildflowers along the way have to be seen to be believed – boronias, pea flowers, orchids, drumsticks, the delicate *Hybanthus monopetalum*, *Patersonia*, *Leptospermum macrocarpa*, just to name a few. There were many signs of wombats, fresh scats and scratchings.

And Pagoda Daisies, perched on ironstone ledges on the pagodas. Bob Reyswoud ventured down to Paddy's Creek, deep in the gully beneath the pagodas, working out a longer walk for the Saturday walkers.

It was only a short walk to the pagodas, a long time taken because of the wonderful wildflowers and photo opportunities, with a lot of oooing and aahing along the way, but still too early for lunch. We retraced our steps and turned down to the shrub swamp. Some of the walkers saw a pair of Sacred Kingfishers at their nesting hollow. Hollows are plentiful in the Newnes Plateau woodland.

A shallow pool on the edge of the swamp was deceptive. A stick poked into the mud at the bottom of

the pool reached a depth of one metre. Frogs became used to our presence and resumed their chorus. There were lots of wombat scats beside the pool.

It is such a soul restorer to go to Newnes Plateau. Christine Davies.

*Photo: Some walkers saw a pair of Sacred Kingfishers at their nesting hollow.*

