

HUT NEWS

Issue No. 330
October 2015



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



© Dilshara Hill

Photos: Welcome Swallow and Kookaburra, by Dilshara Hill.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society **THREATENED AUSTRALIAN BIRDS**

When was the last time you heard a Kookaburra laugh or saw a Willie Wagtail wagging its tail in your neighbourhood?

Did you know the recent State of Australian Birds report released by Birdlife Australia has found declines in even the common birds well known to all Australians?

Come along and hear about the report's findings and what you, as a member of the community, can do to help stop this decline, including Citizen Science & Birds in Schools

Saturday 17 October, 2pm
Wentworth Falls School of Arts
Corner of Great Western Hwy and Adele Street, Wentworth Falls

Speaker: **Dr Holly Parsons**, Birdlife Australia and Project Manager of "Birds in the Backyard". Winner of the 2008 Eureka Prize for Environmental Education. **Carol Proberts** will join Holly for a Q&A at the end of the presentation.

ALL WELCOME
Gold Coin Donation

"No Western Sydney Airport" Bumper Stickers

The Society has produced two "No Western Sydney Airport" bumper stickers (see them at www.bluemountains.org.au/campaign-airport.htm). They are weatherproof and colour-fast and can safely be attached to your car. Copies have been distributed by post to members who receive a hard copy of Hut News. We would love you to join us in opposing the Western Sydney airport by proudly displaying one or both stickers. Please contact Ross Coster membership@bluemountains.org.au and they will be posted to you

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

www.bluemountains.org.au

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Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Follow us on Twitter: [bmcnsnw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)

Gardens of Stone campaigners organised an overnight camping trip with Member for Blue Mountains Trish Doyle and Shadow Minister for the Environment Penny Sharpe. Brian Marshall's story and more photos are on page 4.

Intrepid explorers heading towards Wolgan Falls. Photo by Penny Sharpe.



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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
 ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
 17 OCTOBER 2015**

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**Skinks, dragonflies, koalas, dingos and a dog named Badger
 Report by Christine Davies**

Our Threatened Species Month event held on 5 September was a great success. The speakers were Sarsha Gorissen (Blue Mountains Water Skink), Ian Baird (Giant Dragonfly), Kellie Leigh (Koalas) and Brad Purcell (Dingos). The speakers each brought their unique style of presenting their research which is deeply linked to our Greater Blue Mountains environment. All had a passion for their subjects which was contagious.

The Blue Mountains Water Skink is found only within the endangered highland swamps of the Blue Mountains and Newnes Plateau. Sarsha's project focuses on the impacts of fire and groundwater loss on urban and bush populations of the lizard, the effects of which are unknown.

The Giant Dragonfly has a wider range than the skink, extending along the coast and ranges of NSW. Ian's talk focussed on its habitats in the Blue Mountains, where its range overlaps with that of the Blue Mountains Water Skink. The Giant Dragonfly comes from a prehistoric line, sharing characteristics with fossils 190 million years ago.

Populations of koalas in the Blue Mountains are low density and finding them in rugged terrain is challenging. Kellie told us about Citizen Science where bushwalkers and other members of the public can learn how to spot koala signs and introduced Badger the detection dog who charmed the audience and stole the show.

Brad Purcell is studying dingo populations in the remote southern Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. He told us that true dingos are recognised by their behaviour, not their appearance. As an apex predator, dingos control populations of feral predators such as cats and foxes. Brad's 40 minute documentary had some incredible footage of the life of dingos in the Burratorang catchment.

A lively Q&A followed with good questions from the audience. Photo: Sarsha Gorissen, Brad Purcell, Don Morison (MC), Ian Baird, Kellie Leigh and Badger.



BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

Our nursery offers the home gardener, landscaper or large contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

Lawson Nursery, Wednesday and Saturday mornings, 9am to noon.

The nursery is located in the Lawson Industrial Area on the corner of Park and Cascade Streets - see map on our website
www.bluemountains.org.au.

Blackheath Community Market, 1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm.

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm.

Tube stock \$3. Larger pots available.

Discounts for bulk orders and large contracts.

Enquiries Sue Nicol 4787 8887, nursery@bluemountains.org.au

DIRTY JET TRAVEL Ross Coster

Jet travel is the most carbon-intensive way to move people and freight around the world.

While, for a trip overseas, Australians will continue to use aircraft as the primary vehicle (although cruise ships are fun!), travelling in planes *inside* Australia *must* be reduced over time if we are to achieve carbon emission reductions.

In 2012, 689 million tonnes of carbon dioxide were emitted from planes worldwide – representing 2% of all human carbon emissions.

If air travel continues to grow at the predicted rate, it could contribute a considerably higher proportion by 2050.

Alternative fuels for planes are possible, including biofuels (that displace food crops), and hydrogen (that would require a completely new fleet of planes and massive infrastructure to make, transport and store liquid hydrogen), but until these fuels are developed, aircraft will continue to burn irreplaceable dinosaur juice (oil).

Like all exponential curves, the growth in air travel cannot continue forever. The graph below (shamelessly stolen from the BCC at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z2h66sg>) shows growth to now and predicted in the future.

We, as a Nation, *must* do what we can to flatten and eventually reduce this growth.

The Australian Government tells us that Sydney needs a 'second' airport to handle growth in passenger numbers. This is simply not true, as growth in passenger numbers at Mascot has been handled for many years by bigger planes.

We are also told that all this growth is good for us, because it is all about international tourism. This is also not true, as 70% of the passengers in and out of Mascot are travelling to and from *domestic* destinations.

If we were to build the East Coast High Speed Rail (my

favourite potential infrastructure project), we could reduce passenger numbers at Mascot by 50% and eliminate the need for a 'second' airport in Sydney forever.

Whenever the Australian Government, or any State Government, is looking at a new project sold to them by spruikers, they need to include carbon emissions in their evaluation of the project.

Building another airport, locking us all into flying everywhere forever, is thinking from the 1970's, not from the 21st Century.

The infrastructure being planned now for Badgerys Creek Airport includes:

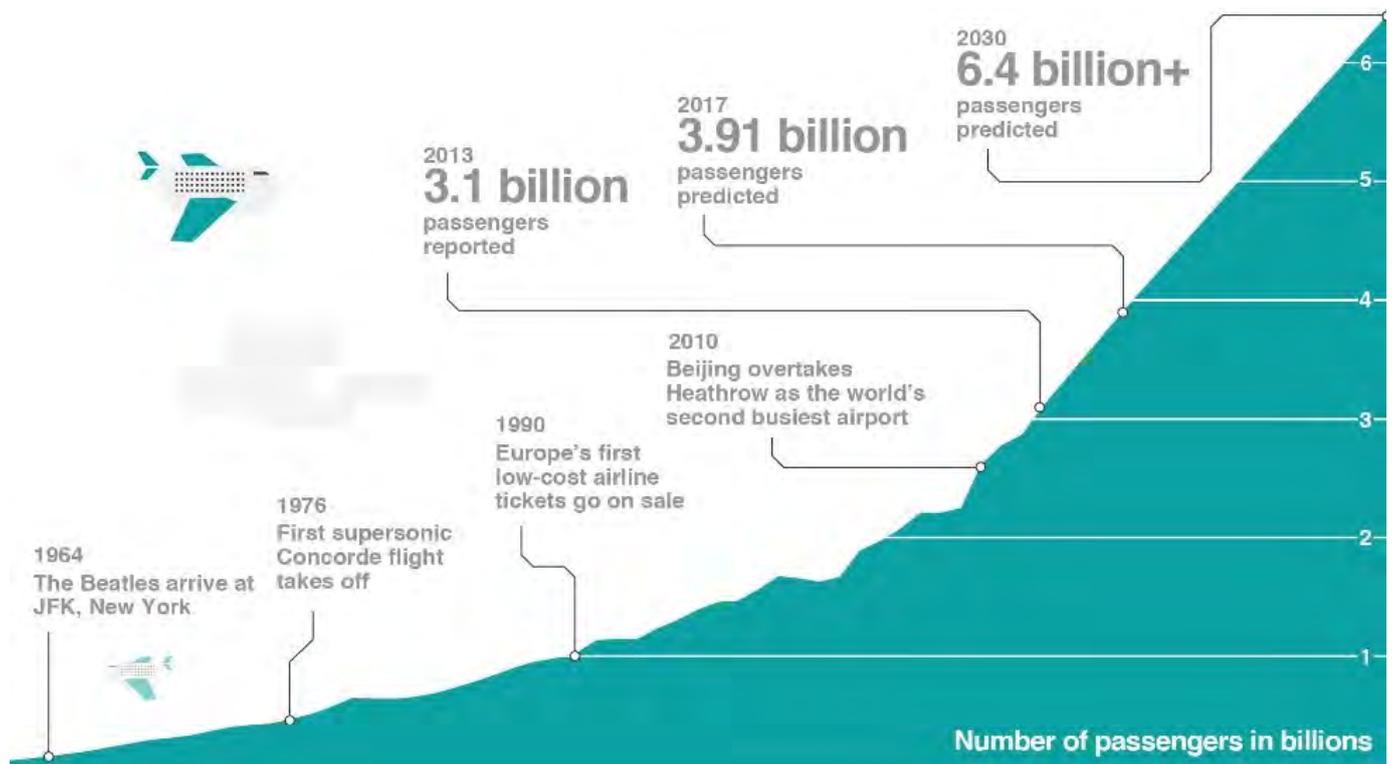
- Widening the Northern Road from Penrith to Narellan to 6 lanes
- Building a new Motorway (the M12) from the Northern Road to the M7 parallel to Elizabeth Drive
- Relocating the Northern Road *around* Luddenham to make way for the runways
- Building huge 'clover leaf' interchanges to link the M12 to the M7 and the Northern Road
- NO railway line to the new Airport, just an easement for one in case it is ever needed!

All of this is intended to assist packing another 500,000 people into Western Sydney, building massive industrial areas and new suburbs around the Airport, moving everything and everybody by truck and car, all in the chase for economic growth and jobs.

When will our Politicians and Planners accept that endless growth is not possible in a finite world?

When will we stop building projects that assume endless supplies of oil and coal, when we all know these are finite resources that we should not be burning?

When will we start building *sustainable* alternatives to all this silliness? Ross Coster



Show and tell in the Gardens of Stone Brian Marshall

Trish Doyle (our local member) and Penny Sharpe (Shadow Minister for the Environment) visited selected localities in the Gardens of Stone in the company of Keith Muir, Brian Marshall, Karen McLaughlin and Letitia Kemister. The overnight camping trip on 11-12 September was blessed with perfect weather. Some slept under the stars, others in tents; dew was no problem.

The visit was to examine aspects related to the potential impact of Springvale Mine's Extension on Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamps, and the spill from Clarence Colliery's mine-waste dump into the headwaters of the Wollangambe River (a declared wild river).

We firstly went to the recently undermined Sunnyside East Swamp to examine a subsided ('slumped') section some 200 m long, 3-4 m wide and 1.5 m deep within the broader swamp. This damage was initially attributed to undermining, but as a pre-mining report alludes to a similar feature as an expression of 'natural piping', it may have only been exacerbated by undermining; it remains contentious. However, there is nothing contentious about the dead coral fern and the lack of any surface flow despite relatively recent heavy rain. Prior to undermining, photos record a healthy swamp with running surface water. The lowering of the watertable and loss of surface flows as the swamp dries out and progressively dies is supported by the company's piezometric data.

For comparison, we then visited Sunnyside Swamp which the company mined around but not beneath most of it. The swamp is green, lacked patches of dying coral fern, and comprised a healthy ecosystem with frogs croaking and leeches searching for a feed! Yet, on walking upstream into the portion of the swamp which was undermined, the tea tree shrubs were dead and there was no obvious coral fern. There may be more than one explanation for the dead portion of the swamp, but the healthy swamp shows that avoidance (not undermining the swamp) worked in this instance.

Finally, on the Friday, to contrast with swamp-based scenery, we went to view Wolgan Falls and the superb platy pagodas which flank it. The sun was in the right place for a photographic record, followed by a walk back to the vehicles and setting up camp for the night.



Brian Marshall, Trish Doyle and Penny Sharpe at Wolgan Falls. Photo by Keith Muir.

On Saturday, we headed via Lithgow to the head of one of the access-tracks into the upper part of the Wollangambe River. The aim was to see how the clean-up of Clarence Colliery's coal-fines waste was progressing. When part of the waste dump collapsed, the waste flowed via a minor tributary into and progressively down the Wollangambe River. The black 'goo' which coats the river bed and is concentrated in suitable traps extends down-river for at least 12 km from the point of entry. We descended to the river at about 2.3 km from the point of entry. The signs of a manual clean-up were present, but the black goo was still coating everything. The costly clean-up process, which apparently removed 48.6 wet-tonnes of coal fines from the first 1.9 km, still has a very long way to go. (see photo at bottom of the page)

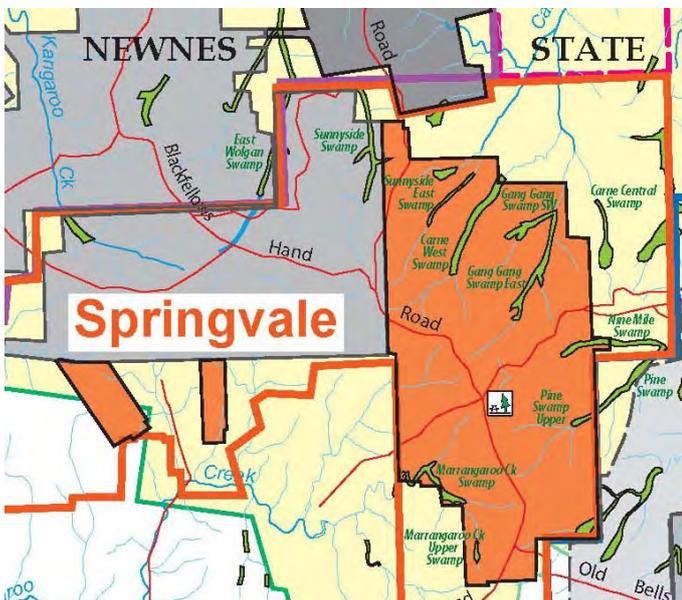
According to the company, the cause of the collapse is not known! Nevertheless, it seems possible that the over saturated dump was already leaking and that, when the 'wall' of the dump gave way, the waste behaved thixotropically and flowed down-creek into the river.

The Aberfan disaster (1966) near Merthyr Tydfil in South Wales killed 144 people. The Clarence collapse is potentially killing the ecosystem of the Wollangambe wild river which flows through the World Heritage Area.

Coal fines goo—perfect for hands, swimming not recommended. Photo by Brian Marshall.



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LEP campaign gains momentum

A coalition of 39 community organisations and community leaders from across the Blue Mountains, representing environmental, heritage and business groups, have signed an Open Letter to the Minister for Planning asking him to immediately approve the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP), without any further changes.

The Open Letter was co-ordinated by the Society and was published on Saturday 12 September as a full page advertisement in *The Saturday Paper*, a quality weekly broadsheet with a circulation of 50,000. The number of signatories to the Open Letter, and the diverse interests they represent, clearly demonstrates the huge support for the LEP in the local community. To see a copy of the Open Letter and a full list of signatories go to the LEP campaign page on the Society's website at www.bluemountains.org.au.

What could happen next?

- The Minister for Planning approves the LEP with no changes - break open the champagne!
- The Minister makes a number of significant changes to the LEP and the altered sections of the LEP are re-exhibited for public comment. We believe that any significant changes to the LEP would require a public re-exhibition process. This has been confirmed by legal advice from the NSW Environmental Defenders Office.
- The Minister makes a number of significant changes to the LEP and approves it without further public comment. If this occurs the Society would seek legal advice and, based on the advice, consider a court challenge.

As can be seen from the above, the role of Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning is critical. We need everyone to continue to send emails and letters asking the Minister to urgently approve the LEP unamended. Go to the Society's website for further information. Angela Langdon.

Opposition grows to a second airport

Blue Mountains City Council has reaffirmed its opposition to Badgerys Creek airport, boycotting an information day in Springwood on Thursday 20 September conducted by consultants for the federal government.

Mayor Mark Greenhill said the council had consistently opposed the development over fears the flight path would threaten the quality of life of Mountains residents, particularly those below Warrimoo.

"I can't believe we're even having a discussion about it ahead of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). I can't believe the government approved it, even before we know the impact of an EIS. We haven't done an EIS and we don't know the flight path, it seems crazy," the mayor said.

The Council is also investigating Aboriginal heritage in the area and has reaffirmed concerns of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee regarding the potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage of the proposed airport.

Blue Mountains Greens are calling on the federal government to compare the impacts and benefits of an airport with high speed rail. "A second airport in Sydney basin is bad development", said Greens spokesman for the Lower Mountains, Joel MacRae.

"The state and federal governments are presenting this

Society meets Minister Stokes

Representatives of Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory Committee met on 25 September 2015 with the Minister for Planning Rob Stokes to discuss the finalisation of the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP). Trish Doyle MP arranged and also attended the meeting.

Prof Richard Mackay, Chair of the Advisory Committee, explained the important role of the State Government in ensuring that local planning instruments provide for the conservation of World Heritage values.

Tara Cameron (BMCS Vice President) and Carolyn Williams (Land Use) explained to the Minister why the key environmental provisions we are fighting for, such as the strict requirements in terms of stormwater management and ensuring significant native vegetation is protected, are so critical for the World Heritage Area. The importance of the new R6 character residential zone, developed especially for the Blue Mountains, was also discussed.

Minister Stokes recognised the significance of the World Heritage Area to the Blue Mountains and acknowledged the Society's position that the LEP needs to include special provisions that reflect the extraordinary circumstances of the City of Blue Mountains and its World Heritage Area setting.

The Society emphasised the years of community effort invested in developing an environmentally-sound LEP and the wide community support for the current LEP. The Minister was aware of the recently published Open Letter in support of the LEP.

We are pleased to have had the opportunity to make direct and timely representations to the Minister about these important issues. Tara Cameron.

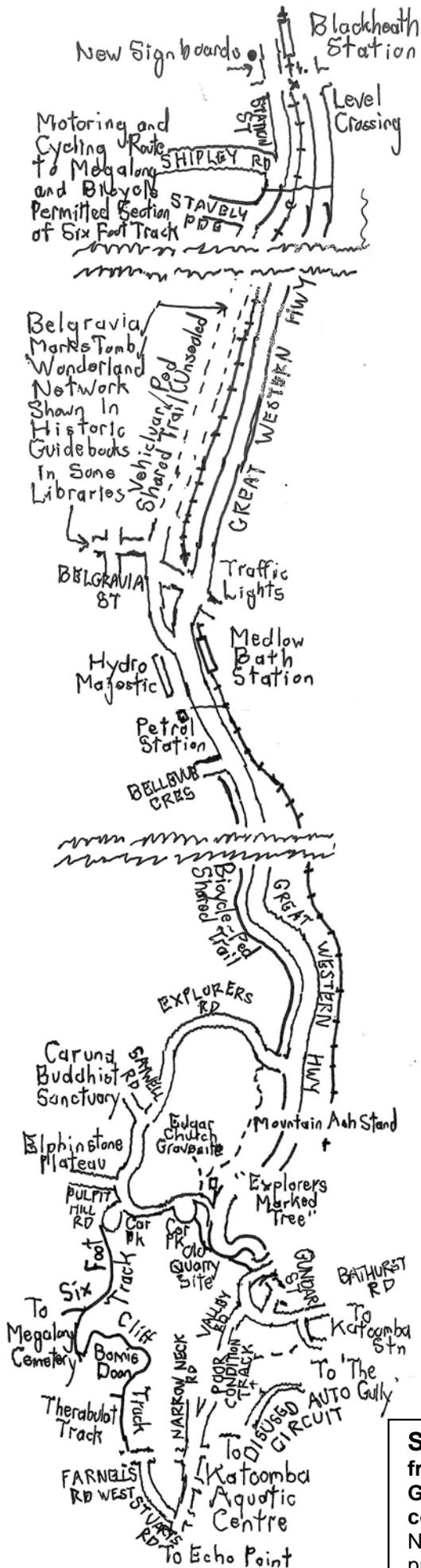
Source: Blue Mountains Gazette, 16/9/2015

airport as done and dusted. It is not. Today we have visited a room full of consultants and exhibits with sweeping statements about passenger numbers and jobs, but no Airport Plan or Environmental Impact Statement."



"Is Badgerys Creek a Done Deal - No Deal!" Activists from Blue Mountains Conservation Society, The Greens, and No Badgerys Creek Airport Inc held their own community consultation outside the venue.

Blackheath to Katoomba—signed and partly sealed
Don Morison



The Australian Government, NSW Government and Blue Mountains City Council have all been involved in bringing a major stage of the “Grand Clifftop Walk” to signposting stage. A major part of it is shared with pedal cyclists under the label “The Great Blue Mountains Trail”.

This action fits with the “Blue Trail” concept in that it allows people with a wide range of ages and abilities to leave their motor vehicles or public transport and travel longer or shorter distances on a network that allows experience of the scientific and scenic wonders of our bushland without impinging on core wilderness areas.

Opportunities to link this system with the existing Prince Henry Cliff Walk to Leura may soon be taken.

Between Pulpit Hill, Katoomba, and Katoomba proper, the highway and Bathurst Road footpaths give an option for pedestrians but so does the Six Foot Track—cliff track alternative. The cliff track was developed prior to 1988 by unemployed youth under the supervision of Blue Mountains Council officer Phil Roux (Jim Smith’s Katoomba TAFE lectures, “local history” 1991). This track has been very useful for people conducting research and other work in the Bonnie Doon natural area.

The ridge of the Blue Mountains range is crucial to minimising effort for those wanting to walk between Blue Mountains towns. It is exposed to highway and railway noise and there needs to be some promotion of the quieter but more effort intensive options within the network.

It is to be hoped that the Conservation Society will soon make further input to Council and other appropriate authorities about using this developing network as an environmental education resource.

Photos: (top) Lady and dog on Grand Clifftop Walk near Stavely Parade, Blackheath; (page 5) Oreades forest on Pulpit Hill near Nellies Glen Road Katoomba.. Photos by Christine Davies. Artwork by Don Morison.

SIGNPOSTED “GRAND CLIFFTOP WALK”
from Blackheath Station West (Station Street) to
Great Western Highway (near Old Quarry Site) and
connections, September 2015.

Note: This is a diagrammatic representation for discussion purposes—it is NOT INTENDED FOR USE IN NAVIGATION.

The Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

\$7.50 plus \$1.50 postage.

Buy the map online (www.bluemountains.org.au)
or write to BMCS, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782
with your cheque or money order.

Thank you to our nursery volunteers!

Congratulations to Sue Nicol and the nursery team for an outstanding retail performance in recent weeks, with sales for the month of \$2,948.

The Society has native plant nurseries at Blackheath and Lawson. The Blackheath nursery is used mostly for propagation. When the plants are ready they are transferred to the Lawson nursery where they are grown on, ready for sale.

Plants are sold at Lawson nursery on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, at Blackheath Community Market on the 1st Sunday of the month, and at Lawson Magpie Market on the 3rd Sunday of the month. (More details in the box on page 2.)

All nursery work is done by volunteers, including the Nursery Manager Sue Nicol. As well as the satisfaction of seeing the native plants thrive, there are other benefits. Sue, a keen birdwatcher, reports that a pair of Flame Robins has taken up residence near the Blackheath nursery and one of them was recently seen bathing in the drain from the glass house. She is looking forward to the flutter of little wings.

The nursery is the main source of income for the Society. The success of our campaigns depends on support from our members and the work of other volunteers but without the income from the nursery we would not be able to do many of the things we do.

Find out more about the nursery at
www.bluemountains.org.au/nursery.shtml



Changing times, natural science and inexact science Don Morison.

If I say something is “absolutely proven”, philosophers might quibble. But natural scientists have established with emphatic reliability the world is threatened by human-caused climate change. Nevertheless, the political right runs an argument that those who disagree deserve respect. Sorry, NO! No more respect than flat-earthers, witch burners or poker machine addicts. We all face the consequences when such people make unsustainable predictions.

Economic propositions have been in the news lately. Australia has had low economic growth and low population growth. One public servant was quoted in the Financial Review, apparently afraid that Australians are too happy or too complacent and apparently daring to enjoy our lives when GDP growth and babies and immigration are hardly happening.

Economics has been called “inexact science”, “social science”, “the dismal science” and also by some adjectives never seen in Hut News. The usefulness of high economic and population growth is not in a similar scientific domain to the climate change debate. It is **perfectly respectable** to believe we can be happy without constant growth.

Dare we hope, in the early days of a new Prime Minister, that scientific literacy will, once again, be valued in Government?

Poets' Corner

STONE STEPS AND STEEL LADDERS.

Stone steps and steel ladders wending downwards
To that winding trail.
A wild wonderland, deep down below.
Moss covered boulders - sentinels standing by.
Coachwood canopy and spotted Sassafras
Enclose, as if within a womb.
A lyrebird with silent steps strolls a ferny glen,
Unafraid of my presence,
As if we share the secret of this timeless, ancient place.
Yet, so many souls have trod this track,
Of generations long since past,
Sharing such precious moments,
Leaving no trace,
Taking but a memory that will last a lifetime.
Blissful stillness.
Where time has no place.

Ross Bridle.

Readers of Hut News are invited to send a poem inspired by the Blue Mountains, maximum of 20 lines. Each month, one or two will be published in Poets' Corner. Poems can be emailed to brendan049@gmail.com or even posted to Poets' Corner at 5 Lurline Street, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Talk for the Future resonates

The inaugural Mick Dark Talk for the Future on September 19 did not disappoint. A sell-out crowd of environmentally minded people from Blue Mountains, Lithgow and further afield, in the presence of Jill Dark and other members of Mick's family, gathered at Wentworth Falls School of Arts.

Guest speaker Professor Tim Flannery thanked the members of the public who had kept the Climate Council of Australia operating after the Abbott Government unsuccessfully tried to sack Tim and disband the organisation.

Under the title, "When Mice Turn on Giants", Tim explained the role of individual efforts in ameliorating the effects of climate change. Outlining several different "ways" of responding to global warming, Tim sounded a loud caution about technological solutions that may appear to let carbon emitters off the hook.

Welcoming the gathering to country, Auntie Carol Cooper reflected on the role of Blue Mountains Conservation Society in having a Leura reserve named after her father, "Digger Cooper". She urged us to put our faith in the ability of new generations to understand and respond to environmental challenges.

Former parliamentary representative Bob Debus noted we are at a major turning point in the history of Varuna Writers Centre and the Eleanor Dark Foundation. He praised the Late Mick Dark, while Blue Mountains Conservation Society President Don Morison observed that we are going to need the Mick Darks of the twenty-first century.

Mick Dark, by Jim Smith

When I first moved to the Blue Mountains in late 1974, the big environmental issues being debated were what is now called 'medium density housing' (building of blocks of flats) and escarpment protection. Mick Dark, then a resident of Glenbrook, was one of the leaders of these debates. Although a reluctant public speaker and writer, preferring to work behind the scenes, he did write letters to the Gazette and get up to speak at public meetings. One of his letters, "Hope for the Escarpment", published on 5 November 1975 generated responses over the following weeks. The campaign to prevent blocks of flats being built at Glenbrook was successful and, in a rare departure from normal naming policy, the bushland was named after a living person: 'Dark's Common'. We met on the commuter train down to Sydney on a few occasions, when we both worked in TAFE, and discussed the problems of protecting the environment. These conversations contributed to my developing interest in conservation.

Mick Dark was normally a very placid person. The only time I remember him getting extremely excited was after he was given a helicopter ride by the NPWS, allowing him to see from the air the places where he had walked so often. He was particularly thrilled to see the area around Darks Cave, where he had spent so many happy days of his childhood.

We all have reason to be grateful for Mick Dark's passion for the Blue Mountains. In particular I would like to thank him for Dark's Common and Varuna.

Dr Eric Dark and Mick Dark at the swimming pool that Mick helped to build at Jerrikellimi c1930s. Photo from Blue Mountains City Council Local Studies Collection.





The Blue Mountains bush is teeming with life

Our Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, most of it bushland, extends over more than 10,000 square kilometres. We can begin to appreciate its richness and complexity if we stop, look, listen and observe all the living things around us.

We might see a native bee hovering over a flower, a line of ants climbing a tree, a bird landing on a branch, a track made by a triangle slug grazing on the algae, a leaf which has been chewed by a caterpillar, an ant-lion trap in the sand ... We might hear bird songs, insects buzzing, a lizard scurrying through the undergrowth, frogs calling ... (We don't usually see or hear the mammals because most of them are nocturnal). The longer we wait, the more we will notice. And this is just in the little area immediately around us.

Then look further. The pattern of life which we are observing is repeated over and over again as far as we can see. The Blue Mountains bush is teeming with life!

At Woodford recently the Interpretive Bushwalkers came across a couple of spiders which are very familiar to most of us. (See the photo at the top of this page.) The Huntsman Spider does not build a web. The web in the photo is that of *Badumna insignis*, which we know as the Black House Spider. This *Badumna* was gone or hiding. The Huntsman (probably she) was darting out for food, and retreating into the hollow. She was the largest Huntsman I have ever seen.

During the previous week there had been hazard reduction burns further along the Oaks Fire Trail towards Glenbrook. On this day, not far away, we could see smoke from a huge hazard reduction burn, south of Bullaburra. I thought about the millions of little animals that we sacrifice in fires to protect our homes. Some species might disappear without our ever knowing they are there. Christine Davies.

LEND A HAND ...

Thank you to all those who came to help at the Mick Dark Talk for the Future. Many hands made light work. Thank you Dilshara Hill for creating a lovely poster for our "Threatened Australian Birds" event and supplying photos for Hut News (see page 1).

There are lots of ways that more of our 800 members can help the Society on a regular or irregular basis—there were some suggestions in September Hut News. Any time you can give is appreciated.

We do need a volunteer to take the position of General Meetings Convenor. This involves coordinating irregular events such as the Threatened Australian Birds talk on 17 October. Other positions listed as vacant on page 2 are Land Use Officer and Sustainable Population and Climate Change Officer.

Contact Ross Coster membership@bluemountains.org.au

You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

- Post this Application Form with your cheque or money order to: Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782, OR
- Join online at: www.bluemountains.org.au

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address:
.....PC

Phone(s)

Email

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.

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$30 Concession (Senior/Student) \$20
Household \$35 Household Concession \$25
Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add
\$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$

Send my copy of Hut News by
Please tick box mail internet only

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; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

A BEQUEST: Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: "I bequeath the sum of \$... to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

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.

JOIN Blue Mountains Conservation Society,
or renew your membership online.
www.bluemountains.org.au

Life membership conferred Alan Page

Six members of the Society were given Life Membership at a Special General Meeting at the Conservation Hut on 2 September. They are: Kevin Bell, Joan Gahl, Lyndal Sullivan, Christine Davies, Robin Mosman, Brian Marshall.

Life Membership is conferred upon Society members who have made a meritorious contribution to the work of the Society and to the conservation cause.

Kevin Bell was President of the Society for two years and Nursery Manager for nine. The revenue from the sale of native plants has allowed the Society to fulfil its mission.

Joan Gahl has worked tirelessly as a nursery volunteer for many years and represents the many unsung heroes and heroines of the Society.

Lyndal Sullivan has been a member of the Society for nearly 30 years and has been heavily involved in bushcare and local environment plans.

Christine Davies joined the Society in 1989 and has been editor of Hut News for 17 years.

Robin Mosman was Society President for three years and led our Stealth campaign. She is a perennial campaigner – especially on climate change and destructive coal mines.

Brian Marshall was Society President for three years and has written over fifty submissions primarily on coal mining threats and specifically relating to protecting the western Blue Mountains escarpment.

Each of the nominees were presented in turn to the meeting with an outline of their background, Society involvement and contribution to the environment. A motion that Life Membership be granted was moved and all were passed. The Society's President, Don Morison, then presented a framed certificate to the new Life Member.

A highlight of the evening was the time set aside after the formalities to chat and catch up with old-time friends and colleagues.



Left to right: Kevin Bell, Joan Gahl, Christine Davies, Brian Marshall, Robin Mosman, Lyndal Sullivan. Photo by Paul Vale.

Urban Geochemical Contamination of High Conservation Value Upland Swamps, Blue Mountains Australia

Nakia Belmer & Ian A Wright and Carl Tippler. Published September 2015.

Abstract: Upland swamps of the Blue Mountains are unique and legislatively protected peat swamp communities. This study investigated water chemistry of surface waters from seven Blue Mountains Upland Swamps (BMUS), four within urbanised catchments and three from naturally vegetated catchments. The purpose of the study was to investigate any ionic contamination from urban development. Water chemistry of non-urban BMUS was acidic (mean pH 4.7) and dilute (mean EC 26.6 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) and dominated by sodium and chloride ions with most other major ions at low concentrations, often below detection limits. In contrast, urban BMUS had higher pH (mean 6.6) and salinity (mean 153.9 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) and were dominated by calcium and bicarbonate ions. The results of this study support the hypothesis that urban concrete contamination is modifying the geochemistry of urban BMUS. Further research is required to investigate ecological implications of the contamination and also to explore measures to protect such sensitive wetlands of high conservation value from urban development.

Read the full study here: www.bluemountains.org.au ➔ resources ➔ research ➔ documents and articles.

8. "The Lovers' Walk", Medlow Bath

Between 1902 and 1904, retail tycoon Mark Foy was preparing for a resort opening which history marks as the inception of the Hydro Majestic. Foy had inherited from the previous owners, of part of his new holding, a skilled Scottish landscape gardener called Murdo McLennan. According to Jim Smith's lectures (local history of the Blue Mountains, Katoomba TAFE, 1990) Foy gave detailed instructions for the improvement of the walking track network in the new resort's extensive grounds.

In the far extremities of the 1904 holding (which has since contracted) was the track known as the Lovers' Walk. Its specification was that a gentleman and a lady in evening dress must be able to walk along it arm in arm without the lady's ankle-length garment being soiled. In 2015 the route of the Lovers' Walk is very overgrown but it is still possible to locate and revisit it.

The ambience of this location remains highly romantic (at least to someone who appreciates the Blue Mountains bush). It is on the border of open forest and heath vegetation communities. There are multiple species of *Banksia* with *B. ericaefolia* and *B. marginata* particularly prominent. *Acacia* and *Leptospermum* species abound.

In the new incarnation of the Hydro Majestic, there is an understandable focus on the heritage buildings and the hospitality. But reflection in the quieter extremes of Mark Foy's original extensive domain remains inspiring.



Hydro Majestic, Medlow Bath—History Highway Inns. Drawing by Juliette Palmer-Frederick 1998 (<http://www.bluemts.com.au/historyhighway/hotels/hydro.htm>); As in Mark Foy's day, this walk has beautiful scenery ready for those who love each other. *Banksia ericaefolia* flowers on the Lovers Walk. Photo by Don Morison.

Costumes of any era will do when two adventurous spirits are ready for the opportunities of the Lovers' Walk. Interpretive bushwalkers Sandra Jaroslav and Jenny Miller dress in costumes borrowed from the Blackheath Rhodo Review, with a parasol from Glenbrook Players. Photo by John Turner.

This "Blue Trail" is a collective description for sites in the western Blue Mountains that arouse natural or cultural interest or both. Most are only a short walk from roads or vehicular tracks. One day, a high quality walking path may link them.

Sign Petition calling for No New Coal Mines

The Australia Institute, the country's most influential progressive think tank, recently launched a **petition to the President of France asking him to put coal exports on the agenda for the Paris climate change talks in December, and to request a global moratorium on new coal mines.**

Richard Denniss, chief economist of The Australia Institute, says "There is no room for more coal mines in a world economy that is tackling climate change. **If Australia succeeds in its coal export ambitions, the world will fail in its efforts to tackle global warming**".

He says "Our research shows that the coal industry doesn't employ many people, doesn't pay much tax, but does receive billions of dollars in taxpayer-funded subsidies from state and federal governments. Our research also shows preventing new mines from going ahead would be beneficial to the economy".

To support TAI's petition go to www.nonewcoalmines.org.au

This information has come to you via Grandparents for Generational Equity www.genequity.net

BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly?

Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?

Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit

www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am till noon.

Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

New members are welcome.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: 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 or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942, mobile 04024 02783, email mauricekerkham@hotmail.com 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. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy— phone 4758 6009, email jp34@tpg.com.au Check www.bluemountains.org.au for updates.

Saturday Walks driver reimbursement: *In an effort to ensure that car drivers are adequately compensated for the use of their vehicles a driver reimbursement policy applies* (Check www.bluemountains.org.au Saturday Walks page for details)

- Oct 17 **Cox's River** - Megalong Crossing to (Bowtells) Swing Bridge and return. 100 metres ascent/descent. Leader **Warren** 4787 5403. Meet at Blackheath Stn Carpark 8.00am –14Km- Gr3. Map **Hampton**
- Oct 24 **The Falls walk** - Conservation Hut, Valley of the Waters, **Vera Falls, Hippocrene Falls**, Wentworth Pass back to Conservation Hut. 500 metres descent/ascent. (lots of steps and hopefully no leeches) Leader **Warren** 4787 5403 - Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockade Carpark 8.00 am - 10Km - Gr3 - Map **Katoomba**
- Oct 31 **North of the Grose** - Dalpura Ridge, Birrabang Brook, Yileen Spur. Leader **Harold** 9600 8005 or M 0409 010737 - Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockade Carpark-8.00am-8Km-Gr3 - Map **Mt Wilson**
- Nov 7 **Kanangra** Waterfalls, the magnificent Kanangra Walls, historic Dancefloor Cave among other wonders. Leader **Bob** 4757 2694 -Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockade Carpark-7,30-6Km – Gr 2/3. Map **Kanangra**
- Nov 14 **Newnes Ruins** - view our industrial history and wonder at the might of nature taking back its own. Leader **Meredith** 4782 4823 -Meet at Blackheath Stn Carpark 8.15am – 6 Km -Gr2 Map **Ben Bullen** and local sketch map.

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 Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, keithdor53@hotmail.com

- Oct 12 **Manly Dam.** Meet Central Station 9.30, top of escalators, opposite platform 11. Judith 4758 6310. Grade 2.
- Oct 19 **Valley of the Waters, Overcliff Track and Inspiration Point.** Meet Wentworth Falls car park 8.45 am. Meredith 4782 4823. Grade 2.
- Oct 26 **Battleship Rock to McMahons Point Lookout,** Wentworth Falls. Meet Wentworth Falls car park 8.45 am. Liz Stark 4754 4966. Grade 2.
- Nov 2 **Florabella and Pippa's Pass, Warrimoo to Blaxland.** Meet Warrimoo Station south side 8.45 am. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.
- Nov 9 **Ingar Picnic Grounds to Bedford Creek and Mount Bedford.** Meet Wentworth Falls Station car park 8.45 am. Car pool, fare \$5. Eddie 3484 2691. Grade 3.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks 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 Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, denfenella@optusnet.com.au

- Oct 15 **Bonnie Doon Katoomba.** Clifftop walk with views. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Katoomba Station Car Park 9.30am. Grade 2
- Oct 22 **Sculptures by the Sea.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Chris 4721 4309. Take lunch. Grade 1.
- Oct 29 **Whale Rock and Devlins Creek Cheltenham.** Meet at indicators Strathfield Station 9.15am. Leader Maurice 0402 402 783. Take lunch. Grade 2.
- Nov 5 **Euroka to the Nepean River Glenbrook.** Four kilometres return. Meet Glenbrook Station Car Park 9.30am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Nov 12 **Numantia Falls Faulconbridge.** Rainforest and waterfall walk. Leaders Helen 4751 7704 and Lindsay 4751 6640. Take lunch. Meet Faulconbridge Station Car Park south side 9.00am. Grade 3

Welcome to new members

Vera Hong, Leura
Craig Bender, Leura
Simon Hanly, Springwood
Marian Beeson, Springwood
Tania De Bortoli, Katoomba
Joshua Dodson, Katoomba
Tara Lilburne, Katoomba
Boudi Maasen, Wentworth Falls
Lynn Daniel, Woodford
Leanne Davidson, Katoomba
Remo Lanci, Darlinghurst
Mary Moody, Blackheath
Ethan Hannay, Blackheath
Lynne Chillemi, Blackheath
Louise Bennett, Leura

Al fresco dining at Leura: "Flat white and cake for two"

Photo by Jana Mader, August 2015

