



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



NATIONAL PARKS RECEIVE GRASSROOTS SUPPORT

A well-attended community gathering took place at Marrickville on 25/6/18 to support the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. It was a joint venture of Marrickville Central and Dulwich Hill Labor Party branches.

Blue Mountains identities, including Wyn Jones, attended as well as the National Parks Association's Roger Lembit. Opposition spokesperson Penny Sharpe called national parks our most precious asset and warned of multiple threats. She called for tourism without crass commercialism. This was an excellent grassroots discussion of crucial policy differences between the major parties at state level.

THREATENED SPECIES DAY, 2018

The first Threatened Species Day in Australia was declared on 7th September 1996 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the death of the last remaining Tasmanian Tiger. This last Tiger, or thylacine, known as 'Benjamin', was captured in 1933 and died in 1936 in the Beaumaris Zoo in Hobart. Apparently Benjamin died a heartbreakingly sad death, having been left out of his sheltered sleeping quarters and subsequently dying of cold in the night. The few remaining film clips of Benjamin in his enclosure are precious but bleak beyond words.

Thinking positively, Blue Mountains Conservation Society is planning to mark Threatened Species Day 2018 on

SATURDAY 8th SEPTEMBER at the WENTWORTH FALLS SCHOOL OF ARTS

The theme of the day will be *Threatened Species in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area – what do they mean to me?*

The broad aims of the day are to increase community knowledge of our local threatened species, and to raise awareness of their value and their management needs. Full details and how to register will be provided in the August Newsletter.

Judy Smith, Threatened Species Officer

Photo: Spotted-tailed Quoll, a threatened species, taken by Peter Smith. Almost half (28 species) of the mammal species that have been recorded in the World Heritage Area since European settlement are now considered to be threatened.

HAVE YOUR SAY ...

Blue Mountains City Council is seeking feedback from the community on where footpaths, shared paths, bike routes, and accessibility options can be improved to support and promote walking and cycling as a transport choice. <https://www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/ActiveTransportReview>

HENRY GOLD: "WILD LIGHT"

Society bushwalkers thoroughly enjoyed a visit to the Henry Gold exhibition, "Wild Light" at the Bondi Beach Pavilion on 7th June where we encountered the veteran photographer from the Colong Foundation for Wilderness who did so much to boost the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage nomination and other wilderness campaigns throughout Australia.

In the exhibition we recognised numerous inspiring places we had visited over decades and saw them in a new light, thanks to Henry's genius. The Greater Blue Mountains dominated but all of New South Wales foremost wilderness areas and a few from the Northern Territory and Victoria were represented. Henry himself supplemented the informative captions with his helpful comments and deep knowledge of the Gardens of Stone, "Don't Raise the Dam", and other ongoing campaigns.

If you missed Wild Light, you will find a selection of stunning Henry Gold photographs at Colong Foundation's Wilderness Gallery - <https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/galleries>

NURSERY NEWS

With nursery work slowing down as winter approached, volunteers decided to hold a stall at the June Magpie Markets to make room for the new spring stock. This proved to be very successful with lots of people eager to buy plants despite the cold windy weather.

We are now closed until August. During the winter break our volunteers are having a well-earned rest with our nursery requiring only occasional maintenance. We have new seedlings and cuttings keeping warm in the glasshouse. Some of these will be ready for the spring markets – Lawson Magpie Market on the 3rd Sunday in August and Blackheath Market on the 1st Sunday in September.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped during the year and to our customers for your support.

Sue Nicol, Nursery Volunteer (0457 140 905)

HORSES IN NATIONAL PARKS

Question: Which animals are part of Australia's heritage in Kosciusko National Park – native animals which evolved and adapted to the area over millions of years and whose existence is threatened, or feral horses which were first introduced to Australia less than 250 years ago and are part of the threatening process?

The NSW Government has voted in favour of the horse. The Coalition's "brumby bill" was supported by the Christian Democrats and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and was passed in the NSW Parliament in June 2018.

This means that previous plans to drastically reduce the population of feral horses are on hold, and a community advisory panel, with no scientific experts, will advise the Minister on how to manage the horse population in the fragile alpine ecosystem.

Most people will agree that horses are beautiful animals. However, they do not belong in our National Parks. Fortunately pigs and goats and many other ferals do not share the same kudos.

The bill was criticised by major scientific bodies and is at odds with Victoria's recently launched Feral Horse Strategic Action Plan which aims to protect native species and ecosystems in national parks by removing or controlling feral horses. The NSW Labor Party did not support the bill and has pledged to repeal the legislation if elected next March.

In recent years, feral horses have been released on Newnes Plateau. The photograph shows two of four horses seen in 2016 in a degraded part of the plateau. Like our unique alpine regions, Newnes Plateau, with its wonderful pagodas and canyons and diverse flora and fauna, deserves to be preserved, not turned into trampled, weed-infested, horse paddocks.

Christine Davies



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The **DEADLINE** for the next issue
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21 JULY 2018

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Photo by Henry Gold

Don't flood our Blue Mountains World Heritage

If Warragamba Dam wall is raised by 14 metres, the dam will hold the equivalent of two additional Sydney Harbours. 4,700 hectares of World Heritage listed National Parks and 1,800 hectares of declared Wilderness Areas will be forever scarred from sedimentation, erosion and invasion of exotic plants.

Read more:

www.wildrivers.org.au/

Governing body for World Heritage urged to intervene

A coalition of conservationists, traditional owners and flood policy experts are seeking international intervention to halt the NSW Government's plan to raise the Warragamba dam wall, which they say poses an "unprecedented threat to Australia's World Heritage".

In a joint letter, authored by former NSW Environment Minister Bob Debus, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee has been urged to request a comprehensive report from the Australian Government on the impacts of the dam raising and a moratorium on any State Government approval processes until the threat to the World Heritage Listed Blue Mountains has been assessed.

The document is co-signed by the principal author of the nomination that successfully saw the Blue Mountains granted World Heritage status, Joan Domicelj, along with traditional owners, ecologists, academics, national environment groups, and leading conservationists including Bob Brown, Professor Brendan Mackey and Christine Milne.

The letter outlines a range of serious impacts on critical ecosystems in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, more than 1000 hectares of which will be inundated under the plan. 65 kilometres of wild rivers will be flooded; hundreds of indigenous cultural sites will be submerged.

(left) The Camden White Gum - some of the last remaining populations will be destroyed by raising the dam.



"Let's not raise the dam so that we can have more people in Sydney, let's actually not have more people in Sydney" – Dick Smith, May 2018

The prospectus release by Infrastructure NSW on the dam wall raising states that they plan to add over 130,000 people to western Sydney floodplains by 2047 if the dam wall is raised - this is ludicrous. Are we so desperate to overpopulate Sydney that we now want to build houses on low-lying floodplains? There has been extensive research done on flood management in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley which doesn't involve raising Warragamba dam wall.

Dick Smith spoke to the campaign with veteran environmentalist Bob Brown on a helicopter flight over the southern Blue Mountains wilderness that would be flooded by raising the dam wall. "The people pushing for the dam raising say it's a safety issue, and you can use safety to just about justify anything in life, sometimes dishonestly. The problem with raising the dam is, when will enough be enough?"



The lower Nattai Valley is home to one of Sydney's refuge koala populations. The valley will be inundated by the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall.

Photo: Bear Hunt Photography.

34 REASONS NOT TO OVERPOPULATE THE CUMBERLAND PLAIN

Opinion piece by Don Morison

Some technocrats want to turn Greater Sydney into a triple city, delineated by “self-contained” precincts based on the CBD, Parramatta and Badgerys Creek. This writer, during the past 30 years, has worked or dwelt in Blacktown, Rooty Hill, Mount Druitt, Penrith, Mulgoa and the Upper Blue Mountains. I see the Cumberland Plain and Blue Mountains regions as valued by future generations if they are not sacrificed to a growth ethic.

REASONS

1. BREATHING The basin-like topography traps vehicle emissions, industrial pollutants and fire hazard reduction smoke – mass respiratory illness is happening.

2. WORLD HERITAGE Multiple facets of population growth threaten Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage. Stresses of urban living are fanning an anti-nature conservation and anti-United Nations attitude.

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SORTING Already, along with those who greatly value living in Western Sydney, live many residents who cannot find affordable closer locations to their work, study, family connections and so on. Sydney has none of the ingredients for three “self-contained cities” that some spruik. The income-poor/mobility-poor scourge of Cumberland Plain suburbs is set to worsen

4. FOOD Arthur Phillip, Australia’s first non-indigenous leader, realised the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment is tremendously fertile. Why alienate this food bowl for urban uses?

5. PASSENGER PLANES Most airline customers may never live anywhere near Badgerys Creek. A 24-hour airport and viable suburbs don’t mix, even with mega-costly taxpayer funded soundproofing of buildings.

6. EMPLOYMENT QUALITY Industries attracted to Sydney’s west will be highly exposed to casualisation, robotisation and exploitation. It will be more time-consuming and costly to commute to a quality job.

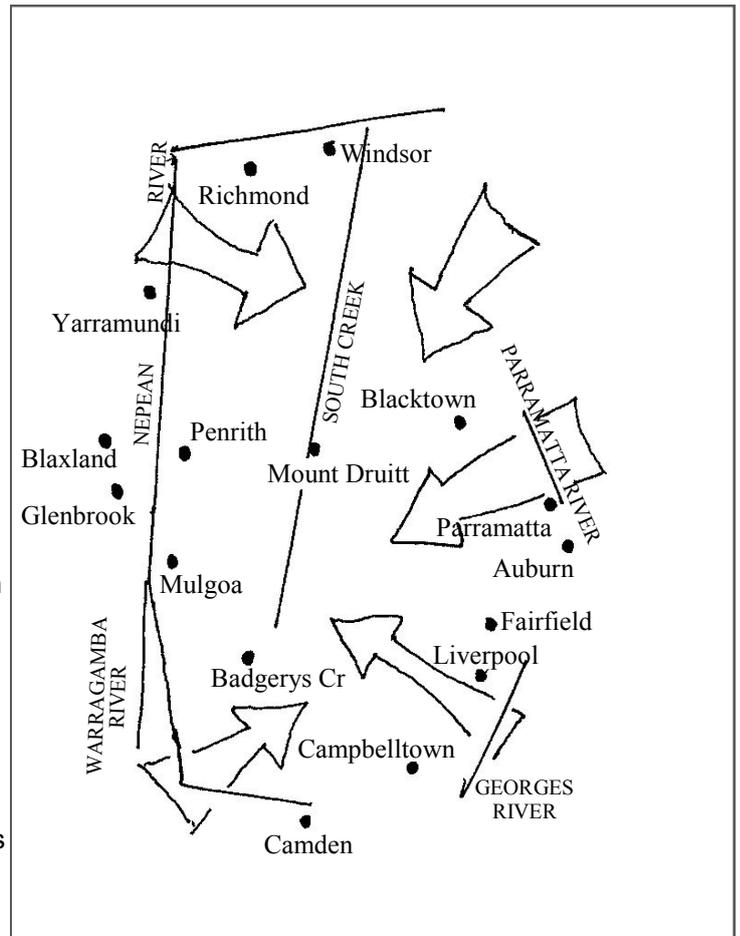
7. INDIGENOUS HERITAGE Only superficial attention to indigenous sites has occurred with the airport and other developments. The Nepean Valley has been occupied more than 40,000 years.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE Maximum temperatures and diurnal ranges on the Cumberland Plain already exceed those elsewhere in Sydney. Heatwaves where there are people with limited access to air conditioning could become major tragedies.

9. TOURISM Greater Western Sydney/Blue Mountains tourism is about natural features, built heritage and individuality of communities – growth stresses threaten all of them.

10. SPRAWL More suburbia than ever from Mountains to Ocean is psychologically depressing, causes transport to take longer and makes open space and nature the losers.

11. FIRE Climate change, drying out bush and grasslands in an urban area ringed by rugged ridge country is a deadly mix. Western Sydney is decades behind where it needs to be in preparing strategies and buildings.



12. FLOODS The food bowl flood patterns thwart real estate developers’ plans. Preventing floods may be impossible but the profit-hungry will savage the World Heritage Area trying.

13. WATER STORAGE Flood prevention and water supply stability from Warragamba are incompatible objectives for the area’s waterways.

14. HEALTH SERVICES Western Sydney people are second class health system users. Glamour centres are at Darlinghurst and Camperdown. Western hospitals on cramped sites or expensive land are not catching up.

15. SCHOOL BUILDINGS Land shortages and high building costs mean new school accommodation and building repairs don’t meet demand.

16. TRAINS Most Western Sydney rail passengers wanting to travel to jobs, study, etc will be funnelled into the already under-capacity Parramatta-City corridor. Installing passenger trains to Badgerys Creek will distort and cripple the region’s passenger transport.

17. CARS The area’s entrenched car culture will frustrate any economically acceptable solution to other problems. Desired destinations will be in all directions but transport to them will be prohibitively slow.

18. TOLLS The intricate web of transport desire lines will remain skewed towards the eastern half of the metropolis. There will never be a toll system that avoids discrimination against Greater Western Sydney.

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34 reasons not to overpopulate the Cumberland Plain (continued from page 4)

19. ACTIVE TRANSPORT CONSTRAINTS Walking and cycling will be very difficult to encourage. Dispersed suburban centres, very long transport desire lines and Sydney's tradition of disrespect for eco-friendly transport make it easier to develop walking and cycling compatible cities elsewhere in NSW.

20. BATS AND BIRDS Bats and birds are good examples of fauna species under threat from excessive growth in Western Sydney. Big footprint developments like Badgerys Creek are hostile to biodiversity.

21. RARE PLANTS The Camden White Gum is an example of a species imperilled by knock-on effects of Cumberland Plain overpopulation. Its habitat could be drowned by dam raising at the behest of developers.

22. FERAL ANIMALS Foxes, deer and other ferals abound on the Cumberland Plain. Their habitats are inextricably tied to the network of native species corridors in and around the World Heritage Area. Eradication efforts to benefit development will have disastrous side effects.

23. ABSENTEE ADMINISTRATION Most of the politicians, bureaucrats and business czars who favour Western growth refuse to live on the Cumberland Plain themselves. With surface transport ossifying, Western Sydney could literally see all its decisions made by a fly-in-fly-out elite.



24. INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS Much of the existing infrastructure in Western Sydney is the opposite of what a sustainable city requires. New subdivisions in the outskirts of other NSW cities would cost less.

25. SUSTAINABLE WASTE DISPOSAL Western Sydney is already under great pressure from dumps, proposed incinerators etc. High quality bushland around it including the World Heritage area will become a target

for legal and illegal dumping.

26. "ETHNIC" CONFLICT Greater Sydney has a surplus of demagogues, shock jocks and bandwagoners who look for ethnic causes in stressed and conflict-laden reactions to urban problems. With intensifying wealth inequality, badly planned services and growth for growth's sake, how convenient to exaggerate fracturing of Western Sydney's population along ethnic, racial or religious lines!

27. THE DEAD The NSW Government is already wasting over \$40 million to stop a tastefully screened cemetery at Mulgoa. Religious groups who wish to bury deceased are encouraged yet there is no viable future plan for honouring of human remains.

28. EMPOWERMENT OF THOSE WHO CARE Numerous Cumberland Plain communities have populations with long-standing attachments to the land, its people, scenery, flora, fauna and traditional industries. The growth ethos is displacing and dispersing these valuable relationships.

29 to 34. COFFS HARBOUR REGION, UPPER HUNTER, NEWCASTLE REGION, GREATER CANBERRA, ILLAWARRA REGION, SHOALHAVEN REGION, ETC.

Growth advocates spruik mega-cities. Yet the vast majority of the world's populations do not live in megacities. If public money is to be spent interfering with the market forces in urban growth, why not create better opportunities for NSW's expanding population to live in modest size urban communities. How, for example, does it add to people's well-being to do a massively costly shift of one museum over a distance of 14 km when it will still really be in the same city whose identity problems might be better addressed by halting the collapse of its transport system?

Stop the ruination of the Cumberland Plain and Greater Blue Mountains by those who will never live here.

IN THE DAYS BEFORE PLASTIC DEPENDENCY

Single use plastic shopping bags are no longer available from major supermarkets in NSW and they have been banned in every state and territory of Australia except New South Wales. The light-weight shopping bags have been particularly targeted because so many of them end up in our waterways and oceans. But what about all the other plastic wrapping which ends up in our bins or the environment?

Some of us are old enough to remember the "DAYS B.P." Others might wonder, "however did we manage?" The grocer had biscuits in tins, sold loose in paper bags. We would buy a bag of broken biscuits to take to the zoo to feed the animals ... definitely a no-no nowadays.

What about the butcher? Today my meat is weighed in plastic bags and the bags of meat put in an environmentally friendly paper bag. Remember butchers' paper? There was sawdust on the floor. The various cuts of meat were placed directly on the scale to be weighed and wrapped all together in several layers of butchers paper, to be taken home and put in a meat tray in the refrigerator.

Some people are complaining that they need the plastic shopping bags to line their bins. Does the Council garbage service require that all rubbish be neatly wrapped in plastic parcels? Newspaper wrapping is useful.

No single-use plastic shopping bags is a start. How else can we reduce the amount of plastic which goes in our bins? Christine Davies

Welcome to new members

Mary Travers
Michael Heffernan
John Martyn
Elizabeth Filmer
David Filmer
Daniel Filmer
Elise Filmer
Emily Filmer
Jessica Alexander
Caroline Goosen
Gideon Goosen
Renee Doyle
Geoffrey Samson
Janice Samson
Malcolm Read
Myles Harris-Ayling
Thais Turner
Lindy Edwards
Mary Waterford
Jude Finch

Community working to rebuild resilience by Clare Power

The articles I write each month are under the broad banner of sustainability. I find the concept of resilience to be very useful and meaningful when considering sustainability and the social and ecological challenges we face. Building resilience in a community can be understood as a way of not only withstanding external shocks that impact on a community, but also maintaining people's livelihoods and improving their living conditions while living within the planet's ecological means. I was thinking about this when talking with Fiona Luckhurst who is a coordinator with Dunedoo Coolah Landcare, and whose knowledge and experiences inform this article. Our neighbours in this region of the Central West have had a number of major issues to deal with in the last few years, and it is instructive to consider how they have been addressing them.

One of the main issues of recent times in the Dunedoo region is the Cobborah mine debacle. In 2009/10 the NSW government's Cobborah Holding Company bought well over 100 properties around Dunedoo for a coal mine slated to provide cheap coal for domestic power generation. After the land had been acquired and the controversial proposal had fractured the community, the plan was scrapped in 2013 when the Coalition government decided the mine was not economically viable. By this time the population had dropped by at least 200 which had a hugely detrimental impact on a small community. In 2016 it was determined that the land would be resold for agricultural purposes and rebundled as rural lifestyle properties and agricultural properties. A small number of families who were bought out re-purchased their properties.

The second issue confronting this community arose from the Sir Ivan fire which, in February 2017, burned about 55,000 hectares of land near Dunedoo, Cassilis and Coolah. 35 homes were destroyed and over 6,000 head of livestock were killed. The fire had a huge social and environmental impact as well as costing the region millions of dollars in damages. Following the fire, over 2000 volunteers came to the area over a six month period as part of Blaze Aid which assists predominantly with rebuilding fences. Local volunteers from the local communities provided the Blaze Aid volunteers with breakfast and evening meals six days per week for the

six month period, as well as managing delivery storage and distribution of donated hay for stock. Most farms now have boundary fencing intact, but their internal fencing is incomplete which creates stock and pasture issues.

The third issue is the ongoing drought, with last season experiencing record high temperatures and low rainfall. The effects of the drought impose immense strain on farmers and this is compounded for those affected by the bushfire who are largely still in survival and recovery mode. Additionally, despite growing recognition of the value of a regenerative approach to agriculture, farmers under stress are less likely to have the capacity to adopt new farming practices.

Dunedoo Coolah Landcare has contributed to and developed a number of initiatives that are helping to rebuild their communities' resilience. For example, the group initiated and runs the Made n Grown Produce and Artisan monthly markets which are held in Dunedoo on the second Saturday of the month. Produce is locally grown and seasonal and therefore impacted by both acute and long term weather events. As well as seasonal fruit, nuts and vegetables including olives, citrus products and pistachios, stall holders sell duck, turkey and chicken eggs, homemade jams, pickles and preserves, seedlings and propagated plants, craft items and woodwork. The swap and sell stall encourages home gardeners to bring in their extra produce and is an incentive to grow more food for this purpose. Additionally, workshops are held on topics such as plant propagation, bees, native birds and bats.

The markets are contributing to social and cultural change as they connect the community, boost the local economy and support micro-business. A survey of shopkeepers found that rather than losing business on market day they have increased trade with more locals and tourists stopping by.

Dunedoo Coolah Landcare is also involved in an exciting partnership between the local school and the new Three Rivers retirement village. This project has received funding to link young people and seniors around propagating plants, growing food and collecting life

(Continued on page 7)



Community working to rebuild resilience (continued from page 6)

stories. The school's agricultural plot is being moved next to the retirement village where a community garden and environmental education centre will be constructed.

Large renewable energy projects are also coming to the region with a massive wind farm being constructed between Coolah and Cassilis and a solar farm planned for Dunedoo. The Landcare group is lobbying for an electric car charging station to be located locally

Another significant aspect of Dunedoo Coolah Landcare's work is in relation to the Grassy Box Woodland which used to dominate the Central West but is listed as an endangered ecological community in Australia Under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. Less than 1% of the original Box-gum Woodlands land remains with over 5 million acres destroyed. The Dunedoo Woodland learning centre, which includes interpretive signage, is home to remnant endangered Grassy Box Woodland which is a diverse mix of species dominated by White Box, Yellow Box and/or Blakely's Red Gum trees and a ground layer usually dominated by perennial grass tussocks. The Grassy Box remains are now widely scattered, often small and on multiple land tenures and subject to threats from ongoing clearing, weed invasion, fire, soil disturbance, increased nutrients, and loss of connectivity with other grassy woodlands. The animals that live and rely on the grassy woodlands face extinction from loss of necessary habitats, predation from feral animals (such as cats and foxes) and human interference. Another threat is the approach of the current NSW government to easing land clearing legislation.

Landcare is a critical organisation in Australia who take a community-based approach to enabling farmers, landowners and conservationists to work together locally. Their goals are to create more productive and sustainable farms, conserve our environment and build more cohesive and resilient communities.

(Photo: Made n Grow markets)

The Resilient Hoya by Jim Low

After the Boxing Day bushfires of 2001 visited our Blue Mountains bushland property, the extent of the damage done to the flora was clearly evident. You felt like you had landed on the moon.

Many plants, taken for granted over the years, were now valued either because of their complete obliteration or their irreparable damage. One such plant was our hoya. Given to us by my mother-in-law, this potted, tropical, evergreen plant mostly took care of itself. It hung from a branch with its vines dangling from the pot. These vines were covered with green and yellow leaves. They easily caught any breeze, swaying the hoya back and forth as if it danced to a choice melody that only it could hear.

Now our hoya was gone ... scorched by the intensity of the bushfire's heat. Like most of the neighbouring pots that displayed our orchids each year, the pot where our hoya had nested now seemed empty except for its dirt. Some of the pots had even partly melted.

During the cleanup the hoya pot was put aside and occasionally watered, without any real expectation of regrowth. But that is exactly what occurred and the hoya began growing back to its original self. Its resurrection was an encouraging sign of things to come.

When the hoya's leafy vines started to wander from the pot, the plant was repotted and hung from another tree. Over the intervening years since the bushfires this tree never fully recovered. Earlier this year it toppled to the ground, crushing the hoya. I repotted the plant and this time brought it closer to the house. Again the hoya quickly bounced back to a healthy state. As if to advertise the fact, it blossomed for the first time in its life. The beautiful, semi-spherical flower it produced comprised a cluster of small, delicate, star-shaped flowers, splashed in pink with a dab of darker pink at their centres.

Working on the regeneration of our bushland garden, despite subsequent bushfires and the time and effort expended, has been very satisfying and rewarding. The resilience shown by plants like our hoya, our orchids and the many native plants that cover our property definitely raises one's spirit.



Photos of the burnt bushland and the resilient hoya by Jim Low.

The Scribbly Gum Moth By Graham Alcorn

Ogmograptis scribula

The bush graffiti artist,
Of the order *Lepidoptera*,
Family *Yponomeutidae*,
Long ago has found a way
To avoid the strife
Of graffitists' life,
For it lives in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree.

It is easy to see where Ogmo went,
Chewing and chomping and scribbling away,
Long after Ogmo's days are spent,
Off to the left for a week or two,
Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do,
Then to the right for a similar time,
Gourmandising along the line,
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree.

Eucalyptus sclerophylla,
Racemosa, rossii,
Haemastoma and *signata*,
Pauciflora, dendromorpha
and *dalrympleana* -

Here comes the Ogmos, doing fine.
Chewing the left right, right left line,
Delicate calligraphy,
Ogmograptis graffiti,
On all these species of gum tree.

Some chew up and some chew down,
This the philosophers might explain,
But the thing that causes me to frown,
The thing I'd dearly love to learn
Is what makes every Ogmo turn?
Off to the left, then to the right,
Another about turn, very tight,
Chomping a track,
Forward and back,
On various species of gum tree.

Very young ogmos tend to wander
Skittish, no doubt, as young folks are,
Filled with the spirit of adventure.
Suddenly they get much fatter.
Adventurings no longer matter.
But what I yearn and yearn to learn
Is how they now know just when to turn
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree?



At last there comes that glorious day
When this gyrating artistic grub
Turns into a moth a flies away.
No more chewing and scribbling and shoving
Now is the time for dancing and loving.
Having thus drained life's cup to the dregs,
Before it dies it lays its eggs
Into the dark
Beneath the bark
Of its chosen species of gum tree.

Although the new Ogmos can't be seen,
Next year when the gum tree sheds its bark
It becomes quite obvious where they've been.
Off to the left for a week or two,
Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do,
Then to the right for a similar time,
Gourmandising along the line,
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum trees.

Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

The Visitors Map is full of suggested walks and trips. It is in full colour, 60 by 85 cm in size, and covers the entire Gardens of Stone region at a 1:100,000 scale, making it ideal for planning your next trip to the area. You can buy a map on the society's website at www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS_VisitorsMap.htm

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Inquiry to scrutinise Blue Mountains Council

NSW Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton has ordered an independent enquiry into Blue Mountains City Council's handling of asbestos and employment processes. The hearing is a response to conflict of interest claims made by 2GB radio host Ray Hadley.

Mayor Mark Greenhill said there had been no adverse findings against the council from the initial investigation and it would fully cooperate with the public enquiry. (Source: SMH 29/6/18)

The following letter was published in Blue Mountains Gazette on 20th June 2018.

QUALITY OF LIFE THREAT

Recently council completed its regular community survey. A few hundred people from across the Mountains are engaged about a range of issues. It is qualitative work. It involves a big sample, detailed questions and is quite accurate. We use it as we plan for the city.

Among the big issues were bushfire protection, overdevelopment and the Western Sydney Airport.

The latter two go to one issue, in my view. Quality of life.

The "Big Australia", which the nation has never really been engaged about, is happening all around us. The consequences can be seen on a train ride to the city. The familiar Sydney we knew is disappearing. The houses are now increasingly high rises. The places we grew up in are unrecognisable. The trains are becoming clogged. So are our roads.

Sydney is growing and I cannot stop that. But, as your mayor, I can keep advocating for a city that is different from the rest of Sydney because it is a city within a national park. In so doing, maybe there is a chance to maintain our local quality of life.

The pressure on us to relent and increase housing density and heights is constant. If we ease back on our stance what we lose cannot be recovered. Increased traffic, loss of residential character and amenity, packed trains, medical centres and classrooms. You cannot "give these things a go".

My promise is to fight for what we have. To not stop. To preserve our tourist economy by preserving our world heritage status. To keep caring about the community you want your kids to grow up in. To stand up to those who want to take these things away from us for the sake of their dollars over our quality of life.

The monied interests outside the Mountains may not like it. There may be those looking for any excuse to get rid of the council so that we are out of the way. However, the majority of the councillors on the local government I lead are up for the task. I doubt an administrator, appointed by the very government that is attacking our quality of life, would do the same. The consequences would be irreversible.

Mark Greenhill, Blue Mountains mayor.

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am - noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.

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 \$35 Concession (Senior/Student) \$25

Household \$40 Household Concession \$30

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

BMCS Planning & 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

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.

Retired unionists seek dialogue on Gardens of Stone

By Phoebe Moloney, Lithgow Mercury, June 15 2018

Retired union members, including unionists who were involved in Sydney's Green Bans, visited the pagoda rock formations in Newnes on Wednesday to try to start a dialogue between unionists and environmentalists.

The Combined Retired Union Members Association has announced its support of the 'Garden of Stones' proposal, put forward by an alliance of environmental groups, which outlines the reservation of 39,000 hectares of unprotected forest as State Conservation Area on the Newnes Plateau

The association supports underground mining and exploration but opposes open-cut mining in the area, including the re-opening and extension of Invincible Mine.

CRUMA member John Koch said the sandstone pagodas made Lithgow "one of the most special places on earth".

"I first saw the Gardens of Stone in November and found it was so stunning, I was not bothered at all by threats of being tarred and feathered for galvanising my comrades to come and visit and see for themselves."

At a meeting held at the Lithgow Workmen's Club CRUMA members voted to invite Unions NSW, CFMEU (mining and energy division) and Garden of Stone Alliance representatives, as well as Mayor Stephen Lesslie for a site visit to begin "discussions of a State Conservation Area".

Invincible Mine, which has received approval to be re-opened as an open-cut coal mine, falls within the proposed area.

Mr Koch, who supported the BLF's green bans in Sydney as a labourer, said the split between unionists and environmentalists, as was seen in debates surrounding the re-opening of the Invincible Mine by Manildra Group, was one he had witnessed repeatedly.

"That was no different to the late 1960s and early 70s," he said.

He said there was dissent to supporting the Gardens of Stone proposal in the retired CFMEU association, of which he is also a member.

"It's very seductive for people to think this is jobs for our kids and only jobs matter, short-term jobs.

"Whereas the position of the green ban was rejecting money to preserve heritage," he said.

<https://www.lithgowmercury.com.au/story/5470061/dads-army-of-unionists-seeks-protection-of-lithgows-pagoda-forest/>

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".



Pagoda formations at Dobbs Drift, State Mine Gully, Lithgow. Photo by Christine Davies, previously published Blue Trail No 19, Hut News, June 2016, .

50. Oberon Dam, built in two stages between 1943 and 1959 across the waterway now known as the Fish River, is 232 metres long and 35 metres high. The surface area of the water it holds when full is 410 hectares. It was originally built to supply water to the Glen Davis shale oil refinery and industries around Lithgow as well as the supporting population. It now feeds water into areas served by the Sydney Catchment Authority, largely through a pipeline which conveys water to the base of the geological formation known as First Narrowneck, a short distance south of Katoomba township. A short bushwalk off the Narrowneck fire trail allows you to hear the pumps working to lift the water from the floor of the Megalong Valley up into a system that lets it serve reservoirs in the upper mountains towns. Until a few years ago, maintenance ladders known as “Dixons Ladders” paralleled the pipe rising against the cliff at Narrowneck. Excessive adventurousness by some bushwalkers convinced the NPWS to remove the ladders.

A brief but pleasant drive takes the visitor from the Oberon Tourist Information Centre to the picnic area below the dam wall. In autumn, the deciduous trees along the route offer a colourful display and there is a small patch of moderately disturbed natural bushland along the entry road. You can walk along the dam wall but there is only limited access to the lake foreshores on either side. This is one of several access points to the catchment lake which features in the popularity of the Oberon district for fishing.

Images: The sparse native tree cover and the structures of Oberon dam are reflected in the captured waters of the Fish River; The colours of deciduous exotics face a patch of Eucalypts on an autumn drive to Oberon dam. (Don Morison).

Sections of the Blue Trail featuring the western Blue Mountains can be found in past issues of Hut News: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/hutnews.shtml>
The full Blue Trail is being added at <http://www.simplyaustralia.com.au/category/blue-trail/>



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.

Three Blackheath haikus

The white cloud’s rising.
I’m in it, like it or not.
Then all disappears.

Tree bones stick out black
through the pearly skin of mist
begging for spring shoots.

A thousand green swords
catch droplets along each blade
from a passing cloud.

Brendan Doyle

Wild Life in Blackheath

Thank you Valda Low for taking on the task of producing Hut News while I was recovering from surgery. I look forward to my new knee helping me to revisit many of the wonderful places in the Blue Mountains.

Three of my grandchildren came to visit and at Govetts Leap I pointed out Lockleys Pylon and told them about walks to this favourite spot.

October/November is the best time to admire the spring wildflowers blooming in the heath. On this day at Lockleys Pylon there were many insects—butterflies, beetles and flies—displaying great activity. I realised they were “hill-topping” - gathering at a high point in the landscape in order to find a mate. A dragon lizard on the cairn fed on insects which landed near it.

Another time, when a thunder storm approached, we shared shelter in a cave with a raptor.

Christine Davies.



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 Harold Thompson harold.thompson@bigpond.com 6355 1762 or mobile 0409 010 737

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)

- Jul 14 **Lambs Creek to Kangaroo Creek**, Leader **Harold 0409010737**. Meet Mt Vic Stn car park 8am. 9km, Gr3/4 map, Cullen Bullen. Contact leader to book in.
- Jul 21 **Tessellated Pavement**. Leader **Harold 0409010737**, meet Mt Vic Stn car park, 8.30am, 7km, GR3, Map, Mt Wilson
- Jul 28 **Stargate & the Field of Shards**. Leader **Emanuel 0419773906**, 6.5km, GR3, Map Cullen Bullen. Contact leader to book in.
- Aug 4 **Asgard Track to Ikara Head**. Leader, **Alice 47393086**. 8.5km, Gr3/4 Map, Mt Wilson. Contact leader to book in.
- Aug 11 **Empire Pass and Echo Point**. Leader **Jane Boyd 0403470101**. Meet Lawson Stn. Car Park North side 8.30am 8km, Gr3, Map, Katoomba

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, 04111 62345, keithdor53@hotmail.com

- Jul 9 **Grand Canyon Walk from Medlow Bath**. Walk commences from the Rd after Katoomba Airstrip and down to the Canyon and along to Evans lookout. Medlow Bath Station Nth Side 8-35am Car Shuttle. Tracy 0434 362 611 Grade 3.
- Jul 16 **Elizabeth Lookout Circuit, Glenbrook**. Historic walk. Approx. 6km. Glenbrook Station (East) Car Park 9.30am. Ros 0417 261 465. Grade 2.
- Jul 23 **Turpentine Track to Murphy's Glen, Woodford** Then afterwards to Bedford Creek passing through some wonderful forest as well as striking rock formations and a small waterfall. Woodford Station South Side 8-55AM Car Pool 4WD preferred. Mike Honey 4757 3660. Grade 2.
- Jul 30 **Yellow Rock to Nepean River & Fitzgerald Creek**. Approximately 6Km. Valley Heights Station car park 8.45 am. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.
- Aug 6 **Walls Cave, Blackheath**. Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.40 am. Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2.
- Aug 13 **Fitzgerald Creek, Sun Valley, Valley Heights**. Follow creek with gumtree forest. Valley Heights Station car park 8.45 am. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.

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, denfenella12@bigpond.com

- Jul 19 **Empress Falls, Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls**. Meet Stockyard Car Park, Wentworth Falls 9.30am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Jul 26 **Christmas in July, Mountain Blue Café, 7 Great Western Highway, Springwood**. Ham and roast pork \$17 or order from menu. Dessert extra. Book with Beverley and let her know if you need a lift from Springwood Station. Meet at noon for 12.30pm
- Aug 2 **Lapstone to Emu Plains**. Meet Lapstone Station east side 9.30am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Lunch at O'Donoghue's. Grade 2
- Aug 9 **Transit of Venus from Mount View Ave, Hazelbrook**. Meet Hazelbrook Shopping Centre Car Park 8.45am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

THURSDAY INTERPRETIVE NATURE GROUP

The next series of walks for this group will commence after the school holidays, on 26th July.

These walks cater for people who are not in a desperate hurry to get from A to B and like to enjoy the journey as well as the company of like-minded people. There is time to look and learn about our birds and plants and other wonders of the native bushland.

Participants are members of Blue Mountains Conservation Society, subscribe to the Society's bushwalking insurance and adhere to the guidelines in the Society's Bushwalking Guide.

Please contact Christine if you are interested in finding out more. 4787 7246 or hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Society bushwalks on facebook:

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks/>

Other BMCS environmental activities:

Go to www.bluemountains.org.au—Activities

Plant Study Group

Thursday Interpretive Nature Group