



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

**BAT NIGHT 2019—NEW VENUE
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre
KATOOMBA**

**FREE
EVENT**

**Friday 29th March
6.30 pm – 9 pm**



Bats... they are not blind, do not get caught in your hair and do not suck your blood! Bats are a very misunderstood species, yet are crucial to life on earth.

Come and learn more about bats at the Blue Mountains Bat Night. Learn about flying foxes and our fascinating microbats. There will be bat talks and lots of fun batty activities for all. Why not come dressed as a bat! Katoomba library is also going batty, staying open late and having even more batty activities. This is a BAT-FEST!

Enjoy a bat talk with local ecologist Marg Turton and flying fox expert Tim Pearson as well as other bat scientists and aficionados. There will be the popular Bat Cave for kid's activities such as mask-making and more. Also badge making and temporary bat tattoos. Support the local RFS at their sausage sizzle.

This event is proudly supported by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, Blue Mountains City Council, Blue Mountains Library and the Australasian Bat Society.

Friday 29 March, 6.30—9pm

Blue Mountains Cultural Centre

30 Parke St, Katoomba – entry via Coles carpark.

Make Your Vote Count

The NSW State Election uses an Optional Preferential voting system in both lower and upper house elections.

For the lower house ballot paper, you need not number all squares - but if you don't and the candidates you have assigned numbers against are eliminated from the count, then your vote is classed as "exhausted" and is excluded from further counting.

So to make sure your vote counts, number as many squares as you can. Take time to read the instructions on the ballot paper as all elections seem to have different rules these days. And if you make a mistake, ask for a fresh ballot paper.

In the 2015 State Election for the Blue Mountains Electorate, 4,069 votes were "exhausted". That's 8% of the votes counted. The same process occurs in the upper house when voting above and below the line.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, on Thursday 28 March 2019, 6.30 for a 7pm start. (See Notice of AGM on page 2.)

Followed by ...

After the formal part of the meeting is over, we will show a short (30 minute) documentary film on the Society's "Stealth" campaign.

In 2004 the Society successfully campaigned against commercial filming in the Grose Wilderness. The film shows the blockade on Mt Hay road, demonstrations and speeches, the legislation and negotiations with the Minister, the people arrested (including the late Mick Dark) and their court appearances, and interviews with Robin Mosman, then immediate Past President who ran the Stealth campaign for the Society, and others. You will see some familiar faces of society members in the demonstrations (though a bit younger!).

Come along ...

Support those taking responsibility for running the Society. Enjoy the film and meet other members over supper. Visitors are very welcome.

Management Committee

At our AGM on Thursday 28th March we will elect a management committee for the year from 28 March 2019 to 31 March 2020. All positions will fall vacant. Some present committee members will not be standing. With this newsletter, members will receive a page giving details of the duties and responsibilities of all management positions, or it can be downloaded at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/aboutus/agm/bmcs-mc-positions-1920.pdf>

Please contact Madi Maclean, Tara Cameron or Don Morison (contact details on page 2) if you want to discuss any of the positions or wish to be nominated. You can download a nomination form at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/aboutus/agm/bmcs-mc-nomination-form-1920.pdf>

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.

"Hut News", the newsletter of
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The **DEADLINE** for the next issue
of HUT NEWS is
16 MARCH 2019

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Blue Mountains Conservation Society 1 March 2018 Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of the Society to be held at the **Conservation Hut, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls at 7PM on Thursday 28 March 2019**. Business will include receipt of reports, adoption of annual accounts, setting of membership fees, determination of structure of Management Committee, election of President, Management Committee members and other office holders and appointment of auditor.

By order of the Management Committee
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

Responses to our State Election Questionnaire

<https://www.bluemountains.org.au/elections/se19/>

All seven candidates that were sent our environmental questionnaire responded.

Blue Mountains Electorate

Trish Doyle, MP (Labor)
Owen Laffin (Liberal)
Kingsley Liu (Greens)
Greg Keightley (Animal Justice).

Penrith Electorate

Hon. Stuart Ayres, MP (Liberal)
Karen McKeown (Labor)
Nicholas Best (Greens).

A profile of these candidates can be found on our website.

Penrith candidates have been included as that electorate covers parts of the lower Blue Mountains.

Although the questionnaires were sent in early December, the last few responses weren't received until late February. This prevented providing March Hut News readers with an analysis and comments of the responses.

Politicians and candidates are under very close scrutiny these days; every word is weighed and measured. This has resulted in candidates needing to get approval from "head office", or in the case of the Liberal candidates, their response being provided by the Minister for the Environment.

The responses as received are provided on our website. The responses for each question have been extracted and grouped. This provides a view, by issue, from each candidate.

As policy announcement are made throughout an election campaign, we'll endeavour to add minor changes as provided by the candidates. These will have a different colour and be dated. We will also be making comments and observations on the responses.

However, it is up to the reader to consider the responses and determine which candidate is best for the environment.

Warragamba Dam documentary

The one-hour documentary reveals what is at stake if the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall goes ahead. Produced by Give a Dam campaigners from The Colong Foundation for Wilderness, the documentary captures the beauty of the world heritage area under threat.

It is proposed to raise the Warragamba Dam wall by 14 metres to reduce flood risk in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley. The NSW government is developing an environmental impact statement for the dam plan, to be released this year.

The documentary was shown in Springwood and Mount Victoria during February. It will be shown at the Blue Mountains Music Festival and other venues during March. Go to <https://www.giveadam.org.au/events> to find out more and to register.

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION
SOCIETY www.bluemountains.org.au**
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Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Follow us on Twitter: bmcsnsw



Sunset Gathering 14 February 2019 (Ross Coster)

Sunset Gathering

The Society's Sunset Gathering was held on the 14th February. As usual we tried to make it a very informal and enjoyable evening. Supper was keenly taken by everyone who enjoyed tea cake, biscuits and fresh fruit, along with a cup of tea and coffee.

We started the night with an Acknowledgment to Country followed by a smile and say hello to the person next to you. This led into a talk about the Society by Vice President Tara Cameron. We were then treated to some wonderful, sometimes silly and yet sometimes sad poetry reading by Brendan Doyle.

We then, all as a group, went out onto the balcony to watch the changing colours of the sunset. It turned into a relaxed and interesting time as people chatted to each other.

The tinkle of the bell brought the crowd back inside to enjoy the warm and most entertaining singing from Bob and Margaret Fagan. At the end of the evening I think everyone that was there was delighted by the slow and peaceful night that was great way to kick off the year ahead for the Society.

Phoebe Coster

Submission extension to turn tide in quarry conflict?

Lithgow Council is now receiving submissions until **March 20** by post or email regarding the so-called rehabilitation of a sand quarry on the north side of Sandham Road, between Bell and the Clarence colliery.

Approval of this would mean 140,000 tonnes a year of spoil dumping, most of it trucked along the Great Western Highway from Penrith and then along Darling Causeway.

This conflict makes you wonder how many more sites there are or will be, especially in Greater Lithgow or the Western Blue Mountains, waiting to be filled with masses of rubbish created by unsustainable practices in Sydney and other coastal regions.

Make your submission to Lithgow City Council, council@lithgow.nsw.gov.au or PO Box 19, Lithgow 2790. It only has to be a few lines stating the Development Application Number (DA 294/18) and list your main concerns. Individual submissions carry great weight – don't leave Lithgow Council to rely on submissions from organisations.

Read the submission the Conservation Society has already lodged at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/submissions/2019/bs190207-proposed-rehabilitation-of-bell-quarry.pdf>



'Destination Pagoda' BLUE MOUNTAINS LAUNCH

Thursday 11 April, 6.30 pm to 8 pm
Carrington Hotel Ballroom
15-47 Katoomba Street, Katoomba
Register: bluemountains.org.au/destinationpagoda-register-katoomba

Lithgow's main tourism potential lies in its beautiful, internationally significant pagoda landscapes. The Gardens of Stone Alliance (Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation for Wilderness and Lithgow Environment Group) have developed a visitor plan called *Destination Pagoda* that proposes to significantly increase the number of visitors to Lithgow through the creation of new visitor opportunities in a state conservation area reserve in which underground mining is permissible. The area's values can be protected and enjoyed by thousands just through the provision of basic recreation facilities that enable families to get close to nature and then enjoy a nice lunch in Lithgow. It really is that simple.

Tom Zubrycki, award winning documentary maker, will introduce his new work *Destination Pagoda* that tells the story of the Gardens of Stone campaign and how the future of this spectacular region hangs in the balance. Guest speaker Ian Brown, adventurer, climber and respected park management consultant, will then outline the potential of the Gardens of Stone as a world-class tourism and conservation reserve. *Destination Pagoda* (co-authored by Ian and Elizabeth Dudley-Bestow) outlines a program to create an iconic, rewarding, must-see tourist destination.

The event will run for approximately one hour after which there will be time for discussion over refreshments.

SYDNEY LAUNCH

Tuesday, 16th April, 6 pm, Mitchell Theatre, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney (followed by Colong Foundation AGM)

Register: bluemountains.org.au/destinationpagoda-register-sydney

Climate chaos and climate action Clare Power

The year has begun with high temperature records being smashed across Australia while other parts of the country have been ravaged by 'exceptional' fires and floods.

Richard Flanagan articulated the horror of these events in a must-read article in the Guardian (5/2/2019):

"Climate change isn't just happening. It's happening far quicker than has been predicted. Each careful scientific prediction is rapidly overtaken by the horror of profound natural changes that seem to be accelerating, with old predictions routinely outdone by the worsening reality – hotter, colder, wetter, drier, windier, wilder, and ever more destructive." Describing some of the events of the last six weeks he writes: "Power grids collapse, dying rivers vomit huge fish kills, while in the north, in Townsville, there are unprecedented floods and, in the south, heat so extreme it pushes at the very edge of liveability has become everyday". And in relation to the Tasmanian fires he wrote: "What has become clear is that another global treasure in the form of Tasmania's ancient Gondwanaland remnant forest and its woodland alpine heathlands is at profound and immediate risk because of climate change".

The article can be read in full at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/feb/05/tasmania-is-burning-the-climate-disaster-future-has-arrived-while-those-in-power-laugh-at-us>

There are many credible sources to read about these events and those that keep unfolding.

So what do we draw heart from?

Well, one inspiring piece of news was the landmark decision by Chief Judge Brian Preston in the Land and Environment Court who ruled against the Rocky Hill open cut coal mine near Gloucester NSW. He stated that it was "in the wrong place at the wrong time" and "the construction and operation of the mine, and the transportation and combustion of the coal from the mine, will result in the emission of greenhouse gases, which will contribute to climate change" and as such "it was not compatible with Australia's commitments under the Paris agreement".

This judgement has buoyed activists fighting against other new mines such as the massive Bylong coal mine in NSW and the Adani coal mine in Queensland.

Bob Brown is organising a Stop Adani convoy and planning to lead a convoy of vehicles travelling from Hobart to North Queensland. https://www.bobbrown.org.au/stopadaniconvoy_signup

And, meanwhile, the children who have inherited these precarious times are taking to the streets and the podiums and speaking truth to power in ways that cannot be ignored.

Students around the world are participating in school strikes for climate action and we have the opportunity to support the Australian school strikes on March 15th. More details at <https://www.schoolstrike4climate.com/support-us>

As I write, the UK school strike has just occurred.

George Monbiot's reaction is worth reading (The Guardian 15/2/19): He writes under the heading "My generation trashed the planet. So I salute the children striking back". His message to the children begins:

The Youth Strike 4 Climate gives me more hope than I have felt in 30 years of campaigning. ... I thought that climate breakdown and ecological collapse were inevitable. Now, for the first time in years, I think we can turn them around.

and ends:

Together we must demand a different way, a life-giving system that defends the natural world on which we all depend. A system that honours you, our children, and values equally the lives of those who are not born. Together, we will build a movement that must – and will – become irresistible.

Read more: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/15/planet-children-protest-climate-change-speech>

The schools strikes were inspired by the actions of the very brave and wise Greta Thunberg, a 16 year old Swedish climate activist who rose to global prominence when she sat outside the Swedish Parliament with a placard *Skolestrejk för klimatet* (school strike for the climate) during school hours demanding the government take action on climate change. Since then she has addressed many forums including the UN Climate Change CoP24 – see her speech at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFkQSGyeCWg> and the World Economic Forum. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7dVF9xylaw>

Let's be motivated by Greta's words: "You say you love your children above all else – and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes", she told global leaders during the climate summit. "Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather than what is politically possible, there is no hope. We cannot solve a crisis without treating it as a crisis"



Greta Thunberg, 15, told UN summit that students are acting in absence of global leadership <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/04/leaders-like-children-school-strike-founder-greta-thunberg-tells-un-climate-summit>

Huge community support for national parks



Over 140 enthusiastic community members attended a rally to Protect our National Parks at Lawson on Sunday 24 February organised by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. The big turnout clearly showed significant local support for the National Parks and Wildlife Service and demonstrated to candidates in the upcoming State election how much we care about our national parks.

The community heard from a range of speakers including Anne Dickson (President, National Parks Association), Carolyn Pettigrew (Parkwatch), Keith Muir (Colong Foundation), Joan Domicelj (former Chair, Greater Blue Mountains and Australian World Heritage Committees), Madi Maclean (Blue Mountains Conservation Society).

Candidates from all major political parties were invited to the event. Trish Doyle (Labor Member for the Blue Mountains) and Kingsley Liu (Greens candidate) spoke briefly. Greg Keightley (Animal Justice Party candidate) also attended. An apology was received from Owen Laffin (Liberal candidate).

The Blue Mountains National Park is the most visited national park in NSW and probably Australia, with visitation increasing from 3.2 million to 5.1 million in just 4 years to 2016, according to Office of Environment and Heritage surveys. It also forms part of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, internationally recognised for its outstanding biodiversity values. As Joan Domicelj so eloquently described, the World Heritage Area is "a gift from us to the world", and we have a responsibility to look after it on behalf of all.

A key concern expressed by all speakers at the rally was that our national parks need to be sufficiently resourced. However, the Society believe the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which manages our national parks on behalf of the community, has been subject in recent years to funding cuts, restructuring and loss of staff expertise.

Rally attendees signed giant placards stating **"We support protecting our precious national parks ... including more funding, increased staff, and conservation being the primary goal."**

The Society intends to write to the Minister for the Environment, Gabrielle Upton as well as the Shadow Minister Penny Sharpe, on the issues raised at the rally, including increased support and funding for the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Photo by Rob Linigen. Other photos of the event can be found on the State Election webpage <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/elections/se19/se19-events.shtml>

Making magic happen

Events Organiser, Phoebe Coster, wishes to thank everyone who helped to make the "Save our National Parks" event a success. It was a huge effort by all, from working out speakers to organizing tea and coffee.

Madi, Alan and Angela organised the content of the day. Ross helped Phoebe. Paul, Lachlan, Alan and Ross helped set up. Carolyn, Lyndal and Joan helped at the front door and getting signatures on the poster. Peter rang the bell. Tara was a brilliant MC.

Phoebe thanks all the speakers on the day and Chris Tobin for his inspiring welcome to country, the politicians who showed up and listened, everyone who came to participate, and the people who put away over 130 chairs at the end of the day.

And thank you Phoebe for all your work.

"When the Society works together as a group then we make magic happen". The Society has 800 members. If we could all do just a little, imagine how much easier it would be – and how the Blue Mountains natural environment would benefit.

If you want to become more involved in the work of the Society you can consider nominating for a position on the management committee (see page 1), volunteer to help at events like this one, write articles, write submissions, turn up for photo opportunities in campaigns, pass on your hard copy of Hut News to friends and encourage them to join. There are jobs we haven't thought of yet but may come up soon. Please let us know what you can do. You can find contact details for committee members on page 2 of the newsletter.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON TREES Jim Low

I like trees. I am pretty sure I always have. From my earliest childhood memories playing for hours in the shade of a large gum tree in a North Sydney backyard, I have sensed their importance to me. From an early age, I have lamented the loss of trees, like the old Morton Bay Fig that stood in the way of the Warringah Expressway in the 1960s.

I have drawn and painted pictures of trees, photographed them, written songs and poems about them, even given a fair few of them a loving caress.

Each evening as I sit down to tea at Mt Riverview, I gaze out the back window across a valley filled with trees. I have seen many of these trees suffer the consequences of fire. I have also watched in wonder their resilient capacity to regenerate.

With the present drought in mind, I have been remembering past trips through western Victoria in similar times of drought. Many of the places visited had been in drought for over a decade.

Approaching the border I passed close by the Barmah-Millewa forest which is on the floodplain, bordering both sides of the Murray River above Echuca. I thought of Joe Murphy whose concern for many years has been the effects on the river and its surrounds because of the changes that have occurred through people's demands on the river water. Of particular concern is the damage caused to the river red gum forest. These trees require an annual 1200mm of water. In the past this has been achieved through rainfall, plus the annual winter and spring flooding of the river. Weirs and dams, built to control the river's waters and the removal of water for irrigation purposes, have seen the red gum forest start to die. Too much water can drown the red gums; too little water can starve them. This delicate natural balance has been disturbed. Back in 1992 I wrote a song about Joe Murphy and this precious river red gum forest. Part of the lyric says:

*For this forest of our nation
Needs water for regeneration
It's good to know there are people who still care.*

The chorus goes:

*But while there's life
There's always hope
Or so the saying goes
And through the years
It's this hope Joe Murphy knows.*

I cannot remember ever seeing so many dead trees on a 2009 visit south of the border. Just west of the Victorian township of Charlton I passed a property which had funding to try and reduce the saline ground water by growing seaweed in ponds. Around this area I stopped to examine the soil. It was just like powder and much had been blown from the paddocks onto the roadside and far beyond.

On my travels I picked up a modest, little anthology of poems by H. S. Legge entitled *On the Edge of the Bush*. The collection's title attracted me to it straightaway since it described where I live. A first edition published in 1925, Legge obviously valued trees very highly. Of some old gum-trees he playfully wrote:

*They throw out their branches so easy and free
You can strike up a friendship with that sort of tree.*

About half of the poems in Legge's collection are about birds, the "casual callers" on these trees. We are aptly reminded of the "clear rich mellow cheerful notes" of the magpie as it "pipes" in autumn. The magpie for me will always be the voice of morning. In another poem our attention is drawn to the ever active Willie Wagtail, "a dapper little gentleman", whose "tail is always wagging / with an energy unflagging". We meet the kookaburra as he tries his "rusty throat" to produce an initial "discordant laugh, explosive, / demoniacal, corrosive". I was not sure of the suitability of the adjective "demoniacal" until later when I was working in my backyard. I was startled by a rather sinister sound that originated from none other than a kookaburra, practising his laughter in a tree nearby.

Without trees there would be none of these wonderful birds to give us so much pleasure. I hope some worthwhile rain comes soon to the regions still patiently waiting. They surely need it. And so do the trees out there.

IN DROUGHT

Clumps of trees
In pale, parched paddocks,
Leaf and life less
In death.
Their chalk-grey limbs
Like skeletons
Gesturing to the sky,
Beseeching powers on high
As if recalling
Some vague memory of rain.

©Jim Low 2009



Ink drawing by Jim Low

RADIATA WIN: LABOR COMMITS TO SEEK TO PURCHASE

Shadow Minister for the Environment, Penny Sharpe MLC, has announced that, if Labor wins office, they will seek to purchase Radiata Plateau and add it to the National Park estate. Local member Trish Doyle and Penny Sharpe made the announcement on 22 February at Cahills Lookout which overlooks the Plateau (see photo).

This commitment from Labor could permanently secure the Plateau's long-term future. The Society, along with the many local residents and community members who have fought to save the Plateau over the last thirty years, thank our local member, Trish Doyle. Trish has supported the *Leave Radiata Plateau Wild* campaign over many years, and it is through her efforts our dream to have the Plateau permanently conserved may now finally be realised.

This is a critical milestone in the campaign to save Radiata Plateau as it is the first time a major party has committed to purchase the Plateau and add it to the national park.

Radiata Plateau, home to threatened species and rare vegetation communities, is a critical addition to the Blue Mountains National Park. It is the last undeveloped section of the southern escarpment, with outstanding scenic values. The Plateau also has significant cultural values for local Aboriginal communities, being a traditional pathway to and from Megalong Valley. While the Plateau remains in private hands it will be vulnerable to development, which would threaten its important biodiversity, heritage and scenic values.

The Society is hoping that the NSW Liberals will make a similar commitment and ensure conserving the Plateau has bipartisan support. Residents and Blue Mountain Conservation Society representatives recently met with the Liberal Minister for the Environment, Ms Gabrielle Upton, to put the case to have Radiata Plateau purchased by the NSW Government to become part of the Blue Mountains National Park. The Minister met with the community representatives on-site at the Plateau on 13 February 2019 (see photo).

The meeting on-site meant the Minister had the opportunity to experience the Plateau herself. It also allowed the Society and residents to brief the Minister about the significant environmental and Aboriginal heritage values of the Plateau and for her to see this scenic part of the southern escarpment. The Minister also learnt directly from community members about the community campaign to have the area conserved. No commitment to purchase was made by Minister Upton but, as a result of that meeting, Society representatives will shortly be meeting with senior National Parks and Wildlife Service staff to discuss the conservation values of the Plateau.

For more information about the Leave Radiata Plateau Wild Campaign go to the Society website at bluemountains.org.au

Land Use sub-Committee



Local member Trish Doyle and Shadow Minister for the Environment, Penny Sharpe MLC, along with Society representatives, at the Labor announcement to purchase Radiata Plateau. (Photo: Alan Page)



From the left: Liberal Upper House MLC Shayne Mallard, Minister for the Environment Ms Gabrielle Upton, local residents Emil Mandyczewsky and Glenn Humphreys, Liberal candidate Owen Laffin and local resident Rod Mathews discuss options for Radiata Plateau.

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

We offer the home gardener, landscaper or contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

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. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries: Hugh Brougham 0407 955 028

nursery@bluemountains.org.au

Cars, Trucks, Buses and Air Pollution Ross Coster

Cars, trucks, and buses powered by fossil fuels are major contributors to air pollution—transportation emits more than half of nitrogen oxides in our air and is a major source of global warming emissions. Studies have linked pollutants from vehicle exhaust to adverse impacts on nearly every organ system in the body.

This air pollution carries significant risks for human health and the environment.

Cars, trucks and buses produce air pollution throughout their life cycles, including pollution emitted during vehicle operation and fuel production. Additional emissions are associated with refining and distribution of fuels and to a lesser extent, manufacturing and disposal of the vehicle.

Air pollution from cars, trucks and buses is split into primary and secondary pollution. Primary pollution is emitted directly into the atmosphere; secondary pollution results from chemical reactions between pollutants in

the atmosphere. The following are the major pollutants from motor vehicles:

- **Particulate matter (PM).** Fine particles — less than one-tenth the diameter of a human hair — pose a serious threat to human health as they can penetrate deep into the lungs. Diesel exhaust is a major contributor to PM pollution.
- **Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs).** These pollutants react with nitrogen oxides in the presence of sunlight to form ground level ozone, a main ingredient in smog. At ground level this gas irritates the respiratory system, causing coughing, choking and reduced lung capacity. VOCs emitted from cars, trucks and buses — which include the toxic air pollutants benzene, acetaldehyde, and 1,3-butadiene — are linked to different types of cancer.

(continued on page 9)

CONNECTING WITH OUR LOCAL HISTORY FURTHER AFIELD Christine Davies

During February we spent two days driving west via Cowra to Weethalle and south to the Murray at Cobram via Narrandera, on the way to a five day stay at Bright Victoria with the Thursday Interpretive Nature Group. It was sad to see country in extreme drought with frequent dust spouts moving the topsoil, even though a recent heavy downpour had left water in the dams and in channels beside the roadsides and other depressions. I was impressed by a mural on a silo beside a redundant railway line.

We stayed overnight at Narrandera, which is part of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Narrandera has a beautiful park with a huge variety of trees. It was the parish of Father Patrick Hartigan, who wrote poetry under the name of John O'Brien (Around the Boree Log). The Narrandera Fisheries Centre is now the home of Murray Cod rescued from near Menindee recently. They are to be used in a breeding program.

In the small towns of Boree Creek and Urana we came across two familiar concrete horse troughs with the inscription "Donated by Annis and George Bills Australia". The Boree Creek Town Improvement Committee had commissioned Andrew Whitehead, from nearby Urana, to create a sculpture "Swagman and Rusty" to commemorate the 2010 Boree Creek Centenary. At Urana, a horse drinks from the trough while corrugated iron cut-outs of a drover and a flock of sheep stand by.

Identical horse troughs can be found in the Blue Mountains, for instance at Lawson (Honour Avenue) and Glenbrook.

George and Annis Bills had no children, and following the death of George in 1927, a trust fund was set up, one of its purposes to: "construct and erect and pay for horse troughs wherever they may be of the opinion that such horse troughs are desirable for the relief of horses and other dumb animals either in Australasia, in the British Islands or in any other part of the world subject to the consent of the proper authorities being obtained." Around 700 troughs were distributed by the trust in Australia, the majority installed in Victoria and NSW between 1930 and 1939, and 50 in several other countries.

Arriving home a week later, I found a crust of red outback soil had been deposited on my deck table by a recent dust storm.

Photos (from top): Mural on disused silo; Bills horse troughs and sculptures



Cars, Trucks, Buses and Air Pollution (continued from page 8)

- **Nitrogen oxides (NO_x).** These pollutants form ground level ozone and particulate matter (secondary). Also harmful as a primary pollutant, NO_x can cause lung irritation and weaken the body's defences against respiratory infections such as pneumonia and influenza.
- **Carbon monoxide (CO).** This odourless, colourless, and poisonous gas is formed by the combustion of fossil fuels such as gasoline and is emitted primarily from cars and trucks. When inhaled, CO blocks oxygen from the brain, heart, and other vital organs.
- **Sulphur dioxide (SO₂).** Power plants and motor vehicles create this pollutant by burning sulphur-containing fuels, especially diesel and coal. Sulphur dioxide can react in the atmosphere to form fine particles and, as other air pollutants, poses the largest health risk to young children and asthmatics.
- **Greenhouse gases.** Motor vehicles also emit pollutants, predominantly carbon dioxide, that contribute to global climate change.

The good news

Just as electric cars are helping to reduce pollution from passenger vehicles, with new technological developments, like electric trucks and buses, we have a unique opportunity to eliminate vehicle exhaust pollution entirely and increase the development of clean, renewable electricity and hydrogen.

In addition to emitting no harmful exhaust pollution, electric trucks and buses have significantly lower global warming emissions than vehicles powered by fossil fuels.

Battery-electric buses and trucks, recharging from renewable energy, are an extremely low carbon transport option that is available now and that we should be adopting as soon as possible.

Of course, electric trains are also very low carbon, if the electricity used is sourced from renewable generators, they don't clog our highways and can move huge numbers of people and mass tonnages of freight at far lower energy cost than trucks or buses. Ross Coster.



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

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

Welcome to new members

Janine Kitson

Linda Groom

Danielle Hinwood

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.

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".

Wild Life in Blackheath Christine Davies

Last month I wrote about cuckoos, in particular a juvenile Channel-billed Cuckoo being raised by Pied Currawongs. I also mentioned the resident Koel and its persistent call and the fact that the Koel sometimes lays its egg in the nest of a Red Wattlebird.

It turned out that the chick in the Red Wattlebirds' nest in the scribbly gum in my garden was a Koel. It had a soft but repetitious call—cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep but kept hidden in the branches. But on Feb 5, I was at first mystified by the identity of the clumsiest bird I have seen. It landed on the table on the deck, fell off, flapped to the glass door, flew to land clumsily in a Callistemon and then onto the gutter. Its "parents" were watching nearby. I could have imagined that they wore very worried expressions.



BLUE MOUNTAINS FAUNA PROJECT

- Get involved in the Blue Mountains Fauna Project
- Help us collect fauna observations
- Help us create an online database of local fauna
- Join us for a workshop about local fauna
- Find us online

www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/faunaproject
www.facebook.com/BMFaunaProject

The Blue Mountains Fauna Project is an initiative of the Blue Mountains Bushcare Network, supported by Blue Mountains City Council's Bushcare program and Greater Local Land Services through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare program.

Get involved by sharing your knowledge of local fauna. The project is interested in collecting old and new records and any images you are happy to share, particularly in and around the villages and Council managed reserves. Contact bmfaunaproject@gmail.com or find the project online at www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/faunaproject and www.facebook.com/BMFaunaProject. The project has collected approximately 1500 new records so far and will be collecting records up until the end of April.

When the project is finalised the results will be available via the Blue Mountains City Council website.

56. LADY AND AN ODD COUPLE. Mount Victoria

When I find names marked on sundry roads and passes
Then I know the world possesses Human asses,
And then I know that God has sent his creatures tools
Which are oft misused in shaping names of fools
Vain poor mortal he who thus inscribes his name
And, without brains, presumes to hack his way to fame.

Harry Peckman c1895

(As reproduced in *The Prince of Whips*, John Low and Jim Smith, Den Fenella Press, Wentworth Falls 1993.)

Since the days of Katoomba poet Harry Peckman, bush graffitists have received their come-uppance from many directions. But two non indigenous rock face art works, each a short distance south of Mount Victoria's Fairy Bower picnic area, have aroused interest since they were installed prior to World War 1 on the now Blue Mountains Council-controlled track.

The first is the "White Lady", now almost faded away. The Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine Bushwalking Group mention in their December 2014 report that her image engraved on the natural sandstone is very similar to a 1906 photograph of Emily Hutchinson-Cooper whose parents owned the Mount Victoria building now known as The Manor House. They speculate that HW Cotton, an artist who stayed at that building in 1907 may have produced a sketch or actually executed the engraving. The representation is of a statuesque, slender and elegant woman. Emily was a celebrated soprano and pianist.

The inspiration for "the Odd Couple", comprising two male head and shoulders silhouettes is more obscure. It is dated 1st December 1912.

Whatever their origins, lichen, moss, other vegetation and very gradual crumbling of the rock surface have substantially reduced the contrast between these images and their backgrounds during the past 100 years. As you walk along this particularly beautiful bush trail, the remnants of the representations add to your impression that you are in a dream world.

Sections of the Blue Trail featuring the western Blue Mountains can be found in past issues of Hut News: www.bluemountains.org.au/hutnews.shtml
The full Blue Trail is being added at 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.



Hidden behind mosses and ferns for many years until uncovered and exposed to the elements during a dry spell, the "white lady" is fading away. (Photo: Don Morison)



The history of the "Odd Couple" is more obscure.

(Photo: Chris Osborne)

<https://chrisosborneadventures.wordpress.com/2018/12/05/difficult-hike-dunns-leap-mount-victoria/>



The Manor House at Mount Victoria changed hands in 2015. This photograph is by Ray White Real Estate.

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)

REMEMBER TO KEEP COOL AND STAY HYDRATED.

Mar 9 **Mystery Walk.** Leader, the ever popular, **Bob 0408947325.** Ring Bob closer to the day for details.

Mar 16 **Berghofers Pass and Chert Quarry on Victoria Pass.** Leader **Emanuel 0419773906.** 7km, Map Hartley. Gr3.
Contact leader to book in.

Mar 23 **Lockleys Pylon & nearby Cave Walk.** Leader **Mike 47573660.** Meet Wentworth Falls Stn CP 8.30am, 8k, Gr 2, Map Katoomba.

Mar 30 **Narrowneck to fire tower and Clear Hill.** Leader **Eddie 47842691.** Meet Katoomba Stn CP for car pool 8.30am, 19k. Gr 3. Map Katoomba

Apr 6 **Thor and Asgard Heads** plus a Mine and a Cave. Leader **Alice 4739 3086 or 0425738766.** Meet Wentworth Falls Stn CP 8.30am. 9.5k. Gr 3. Map Mt Wilson

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

Mar 11 **Radiata Plateau Katoomba** Great views into Megalong Valley. Katoomba Station Car Park 8-30am. Car Pool Fare \$2. Maurice 47394942. Grade 2.

Mar 18 **Ruined Castle, Katoomba.** Majestic rock formation in the Jamison Valley. Car pool to Golden Stairs then onto Castle. Meet Katoomba Station car park. Car pool fare \$5. Mary Read 0429 021 296. Grade 3.

Mar 25 **Lockleys Pylon, Leura.** Best Grose Valley views. Meet Leura Station car park 8.30 am. Car pool out Mount May Road. Fare \$5. Mike Honey 4757 3660. Grade 3.

Apr 1 **Porters Pass, Centennial Glen and Walls Ledge, Blackheath.** Follow above and below the cliff line for lovely views of the Kanimbla Valley. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.40 am. Car pool. Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2.

Apr 8 **Hartley Vale up Lockyer Track to head of Lawsons Long Alley.** Visit Berghofers Pass, back down to Hartley Vale via Long Alley. Approx 11 km. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.50 am. Car pool, fare \$5. Eddie 4784 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, denfenella12@bigpond.com

Mar 14 **Blue Gum Swamp.** Meet Springwood Station, north side 9.15am. Leader Bernie 0428 364 438. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2.

Mar 21 **Braeside Walk, Blackheath. Waterfalls, creeks and Grose Valley view.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Mar 28 **Fairfax Track, Blackheath.** Easy level walk. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Car pool. Grade 1

Apr 4 **Katoomba Cascades and Falls. Lookouts, fungi and rainforest.** Meet Katoomba Station Car Park 9.30am. Leader Amanda 4751 5061. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Mar 11 **Walls Cave, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Society bushwalks on facebook: Visit <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks/>

Oystercatcher?

You don't have to catch an oyster.
Oysters can't run away.
They won't go scampering faster
And faster across the bay.

They're not like a crab or a scallop,
Free to lollop around at will.
They're more like a limpet or polyp,
Stuck to the rocks and still.

Yet there's this bird, Oystercatcher.
None of the books explain
The logic of this nomenclature,
Though I search them again and again.

Graham Alcorn
"The Bird Baths of Umbigumbi"

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

For information about Plant Study Group and Thursday Interpretive Nature Group

Go to our website www.bluemountains.org.au and click on "Activities"