



HUT NEWS

Issue No. 375
November 2019

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Society Doings ...

Radiata Plateau has been saved! We will be celebrating this victory at a community street party on Friday 22nd November. Your invitation is on page 3. Thank you to everybody who helped in any way during this campaign—every letter, every signature on a petition, helped.

As we celebrate, we are reminded daily that there's much more to do.

Clare Power and **Robin Mosman** demand action on climate change and Robin invites grandparents to a Gathering on Sunday 24 November (see pages 6 and 7).

Ian Brown, author and photographer and a former hands-on National Park Ranger, has deep concerns about the present state of environmental politics. On pages 8-9, Ian discusses the heady days of environmental activism in the 1970s and asks, "Where have we gone wrong?"

Next year we will celebrate 20 years of World Heritage status for the Greater Blue Mountains. An important new book, "**Native Fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area**" by **Judy Smith**, **Peter Smith** and **Kate Smith**, documents the diverse native fauna of the World Heritage Area. Read more on Page 5.

The Society welcomes **Adam Curry** as National Parks/World Heritage Officer on our management committee. Adam is a long-time member of the Society and for the past year has worked on our National Parks/World Heritage sub-committee.

It is springtime in the Blue Mountains—a time to rejoice in Nature. Look for young birds being fed and spectacular displays of wildflowers in our bushland.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

www.bluemountains.org.au

'Like' us on Facebook:

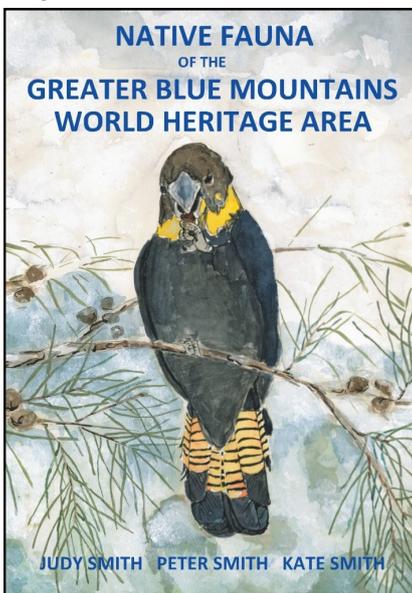
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

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

Radiata Plateau saved for future generations



Great News! On 8th October 2019, NSW Environment Minister, Matt Kean, announced that the State Government had purchased Radiata Plateau for incorporation into the national park system. See pages 2, 3 and 4. (Photo: Rally at Cahills Lookout)



Mick Dark Talk for the Future Friday 15 November 6.30pm Wentworth Falls School of Arts

The 2019 Mick Dark Talk for the Future is your chance to get the facts, with a presentation from internationally recognised expert on climate variability and change, Dr Joëlle Gergis. Dr Gergis is the author of *Sunburnt Country: The future and history of climate change in Australia*, and a councillor of the Climate Council.

The Mick Dark Talk for the Future is co-presented by Varuna the National Writers' House and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. For more information and how to book go to <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/events/2019/mick-dark-2019.shtml>

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 \$3.50. Discounts for bulk orders.

nursery@bluemountains.org.au

"Hut News", the newsletter of
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782
Phone 4757 1872 (leave message)
Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au
Web page: www.bluemountains.org.au
Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation
Society Twitter: bmcsnsw

President: Tara Cameron 0419 824 974
president@bluemountains.org.au
Senior Vice President: (President)
Second Vice President:
Don Morison 8230 2116
donmorison@bluemountains.org.au
Treasurer: Elizabeth Howard 0414 090251
eh_mistover@bigpond.com
Administration Officer: Jeanette Robertson
sao@bluemountains.org.au
Bushcare Officer: Paul Vale
4787 8080 0429 014 454
bushcare@bluemountains.org.au
Climate Change and Sustainability Officer:
Clare Power
sustain@bluemountains.org.au
Environmental Education Officer:
Cathy Cavanagh 0431 692 394
education@bluemountains.org.au
Events Coordinator: VACANT
Gardens of Stone Officer
Madi Maclean 0412 428 202
gos@bluemountains.org.au
Landuse Officer:
Angela Langdon 0417 004 722
landuse@bluemountains.org.au
Meetings Secretary: Heather Hull
4739 1493 hhull001@bigpond.net.au
Membership Secretary: Ross Coster
0418 462 576
membership@bluemountains.org.au
National Parks/World Heritage Officer:
Adam Curry 0425 326 842
adsycur@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor:
Christine Davies 4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
Nursery Manager: Paul Irwin
nursery@bluemountains.org.au
Publicity Officer: VACANT
Threatened Species Officer:
Judy Smith smitheco@ozemail.com.au
Website Manager: Alan Page
leuralan@hotmail.com
Walks Convenor:
Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942
mauricekerkham@hotmail.com
Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson
4751.2303, mob 0427 512 303
fmatter@bigpond.net.au
Project Officer—Katoomba Airfield
Di Shanks msdshanks@gmail.com

The **DEADLINE** for the next issue of
HUT NEWS is
16 NOVEMBER 2019
Christine Davies, 4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES
Ross Coster 0418 462 576
membership@bluemountains.org.au
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Printed on Australian-made 100% Recycled Paper

Radiata Plateau saved for future generations

On 8 October 2019, NSW Environment Minister, Matt Kean, announced that the State Government had purchased Radiata Plateau for incorporation into the national park system. The Plateau's future is now secured, to be enjoyed and treasured by the Blue Mountains and wider community.

This landmark decision is a major win for the environment, and could not have been achieved without the strong community and environmental support that has maintained the pressure on the NSW

Government for over thirty years (see the *Long fight to Leave Radiata Plateau Wild*). The photo shows Pulpit Hill resident Glenn Humphreys, one of the original campaigners.

Coverage of the announcement included the Sydney Morning Herald, Blue Mountains Gazette, ABC radio and regional newspapers nationally.



Why the Plateau deserves to be part of the NSW national park system

The community and the Society have long fought for the conservation of the Plateau due to its unique and outstanding environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage values. The Plateau is significant because:

- it is the last remaining parcel of undeveloped southern escarpment land in the Upper Blue Mountains;
- it has spectacular and stunning clifflines and crags, which can be seen from popular tourists stops such as Cahills Lookout;
- it has significant Aboriginal heritage, including the Plateau being used as a traditional pathway down into the Megalong Valley via the state heritage listed "Blacks Ladder";
- of the presence of outstanding biodiversity values, including rare Blue Mountain Swamps, a threatened ecological community in NSW;
- it provides habitat for many endangered animals, including the Spotted Tailed Quoll and Greater Gliders;
- it is home to two threatened plants, including one of only ten places where the highly-endangered Dwarf Mountain Pine and the shrub *Leionema lachnaeoides* grow;
- it has an extensive network of walking tracks used by local residents, bushwalkers and birdwatchers;
- there are internationally recognised rock-climbing crags and walls; and
- it is an invaluable bushland and fauna corridor between Medlow Bath and Katoomba

What now

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service will manage the Plateau, will decide on the most appropriate reservation category for the area and will develop a management plan. The Society is urging the NPWS to consult with the community on its future plans, including the reserve category.

Thank you to the community

While it is impossible to name all but a few key people who have been involved in this wonderful achievement, a short roll of honour is provided on page 4.

Radiata Plateau saved for future generations



The long fight to *Leave Radiata Plateau Wild*

1979 Transcendental Meditation (TM) Group (later called the Maharishi Foundation) acquire Radiata Plateau.

1990 A 415-bed conference centre and resort is proposed on the site by TM. Considerable community opposition against the development results in 278 submissions being lodged against the development and a 2,500 signature petition. Intense lobbying and campaigning by the community begins including rallies and meetings, extensive media coverage in the Blue Mountains Gazette, lobbying of politicians and Councillors, street stalls and information nights and on-site surveys and monitoring. However, despite this, Stage One of the conference centre and resort development is approved by the Blue Mountains City Council.

1992 TM fails to commence the approved resort development and so the development approval lapses and no development can proceed unless a new development application is lodged. The site lays dormant for eight years.

2004 The Plateau is put up for sale by TM. The Conservation Society and other local groups urge acquisition of the Plateau for inclusion in the Blue Mountains National Park. Blue Mountains City Council publicly supports the campaign but the NSW Government deem the Plateau not an acquisition priority. The Plateau is not sold and remains in the ownership of TM. However, no new development application is lodged and the Plateau remains free from development.

2013 The development of the Blue Mountains Local Environment Plan 2015 commences. TM seeks changes in the zoning on the Plateau to allow increased development and publicly expresses future plans for a resort and conference facility.

2015 and 2016 Two development applications are lodged by TM for three new buildings on the Plateau. TM takes their proposal to the Land and Environment Court in order to get approval. Residents and the Society make comprehensive submissions and appear at on-site Court hearings, objecting to the development proposals.

March 2017 The Court refuses two out of the three proposed buildings, largely on the basis of the arguments put forward by residents and the Society.

June 2017 The Blue Mountains Conservation Society *Leave Radiata Plateau Wild* campaign is launched at Winter Magic, with the aim of having the Plateau purchased by the State or Commonwealth Government and included in the Blue Mountains National Park.

Let's celebrate!

The Society is hosting a community event to celebrate the conservation of Radiata Plateau. The event is a street party at the entrance to the newly acquired land.

When: Friday, 22 November 5-7pm.

Where: Radiata Plateau, end of Pulpit Hill Road, Katoomba

What to bring: BYO chair and drinks and a glass or cup.

Light supper and finger food supplied

Parking is limited. Consider car sharing or parking at the Bonnie Doon car park

ALL WELCOME!

More details to come – see the Society's website, facebook page, and e-newsletters.



Photos: Trish Doyle MP accepting letters in support of the purchase of Radiata from former Society President Madi Maclean and Society campaigner Bridget Jackson.; Pulpit Hill Road residents meet with the then NSW Environment Minister Gabrielle Upton, local Liberal MLC Shayne Mallard and liberal party candidate Owen Laffin.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4.

Radiata Plateau saved for future generations

The long fight to *Leave Radiata Plateau Wild* (continued from page 3)

July 2017 Initial campaign rally at Cahills Lookout occurs, including a banner drop by rock climbers off the cliffs of Radiata. First campaign video launch along with the campaign website and social media sites. Campaign launch attracted local and Sydney based media exposure.

2017/2018 Intense lobbying of local state and federal politicians begins as part of the campaign. A letter writing drive by community members to state and federal Environment Ministers is also launched. Information and community awareness raising is achieved through campaign videos, social media and articles in the Society newsletter *Hut News*. Late in 2018, TM expresses interest with Council in lodging a new development application to subdivide part of the Plateau and lodge new development applications.

December 2018 A full page Open Letter to Gabrielle Upton, the (then) NSW Minister for the Environment, is published in the *Blue Mountains Gazette*, asking her to purchase the Plateau for inclusion in the national park system. The ad is paid for by the Society and is signed by over thirty Aboriginal, environmental and heritage community organisations and groups, as well as a wide range of community leaders.

February 2019 The then NSW Environment Minister Gabrielle Upton, along with local MLC Shayne Mallard, visits the Plateau and meets with residents and Society representatives. Labor Opposition Deputy Leader and local MP Trish Doyle subsequently announce that if Labor is elected they will purchase the Plateau for inclusion in the reserve system.

June 2019 The Plateau is put up for sale by TM with an asking price of \$2.8million. Lobbying by the Society of state politicians and National Parks and Wildlife Service intensifies.

July 2019 NSW Minister for the Environment Matt Kean visits the Blue Mountains and states “the NSW Government is having a close look at buying Radiata”.

August 2019 The Society pays for a half page advertisement in the *Blue Mountains Gazette* asking the NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean to buy Radiata Plateau and “make a landmark decision for conservation and the community”. The Society launches a letter writing campaign urging residents and the community to write to Minister Kean requesting purchase.

October 2019 NSW Government purchases the Plateau for inclusion in the national park system.

There are many people to thank for this wonderful achievement (too many to name) but there have been some key people who should be recognised for their considerable contributions over the years. So a big and heart felt thank you to ...

◆ The community members who started the campaign to save the Plateau in the 1990s, especially Pulpit Hill resident Glenn Humphreys and botanist Wyn Jones, who have been fighting to save the Plateau for over 30 years. These original campaigners were instrumental in getting the values of the Plateau recognised and fighting early development plans, and included members of the Save the Radiata Plateau Group, Coalition of Residents for the Environment and Upper Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

◆ Past and present members of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Management Committee for their continued support, especially in the last five years during the Society’s *Leave Radiata Plateau Wild* campaign.

◆ Bridget Jackson, the Society’s *Leave Radiata Plateau Wild* community campaigner, for always going above and beyond, for her professionalism and for her commitment to the campaign.

◆ The Society’s Land Use sub-committee for their support and encouragement, including Carolyn Williams, Paul Vale, Heather Hull, Alan Page, Lachlan Garland, Kerry Horne, Lyndal Sullivan, Ann and Bob Cantwell, with special thanks to Marg Baker for her outstanding work on documenting the natural and cultural values of the Plateau. Special mention to the Society’s past and present webmasters Valda Low and Alan Page for all their work on the campaign website.

◆ The Pulpit Hill Road residents who have been instrumental in the *Leave Radiata Plateau Wild* campaign, especially Rod Mathews and Emil Mandyczewsky.

◆ The Blue Mountain rock climbing community who have supported the campaign, especially the climbers who dropped the banner on the cliff line at the campaign rally in 2017.

◆ All the groups and individuals who signed the Open Letter to the Minister for the Environment printed in the *Blue Mountains Gazette* in December 2018, including local Aboriginal, environmental and heritage groups as well as community members.

◆ Peak environmental organisations who have supported the campaign over the last thirty years, including the Colong Foundation, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, National Parks Association, and NSW Bushwalkers. Special shout out to Environmental Defenders NSW who provided legal advice and assistance with submissions during the 2016 court case.

◆ Local businesses who supported the campaign by providing discounted or pro bono services including Kamil Sustiak Adventure Photography (photography), Lotza Signs (banners and placards), Nathan James Productions (campaign videos and drone footage) and Jules Booth (campaign logo).

◆ *Blue Mountains Gazette* for consistently reporting on the campaign and keeping the community informed.

◆ *Blue Mountains City Councillors* past and present who have supported the Plateau becoming part of the national park since 2004, especially Mayor Mark Greenhill.

◆ Local members Trish Doyle and Susan Templeman for their unwavering support for the Plateau, especially Trish for her strong advocacy.

◆ Upper House MLC Shayne Mallard whose support and advocacy ensured the Plateau came to the attention of Environment Ministers Upton and Kean and Councillor Schreiber for his support.

◆ Environment Minister Matt Kean for purchasing the Plateau for inclusion in the national park system, thereby ensuring the natural and cultural conservation values of the Plateau are protected forever.

◆ Board members of Maharishi Foundation Australia for recognising the importance of the Plateau to the community, and agreeing to sell to the NSW Government.

◆ And finally, to everyone in the Blue Mountains community who wrote letters, attended rallies, came to meetings, gave donations, posted on social media, lodged submissions and lobbied consistently for thirty years to save this beautiful and special place.

New Book: *Native Fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.* J. Smith, P. Smith and K. Smith.

In 2015, Judy and Peter Smith received an Australian Government Community Heritage and Icons grant to document the native fauna of the World Heritage Area. This fauna is an important part of the outstanding biodiversity which is recognised by the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage listing. The project has now evolved, with daughter Kate's assistance, into a book *Native Fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area*.

The new book describes the World Heritage Area's environment and fauna habitats. The status, local distribution and ecology of each of the 432 native fauna species recorded in the area since European settlement are detailed. This remarkable fauna includes 68 mammal, 254 bird, 74 reptile and 36 frog species. A checklist summarises the local distribution of each species.

Native Fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area contains over 200 colour photographs taken by Peter. A map and a satellite image depict the vastness of the World



Heritage Area, which covers roughly one third the area of Belgium and encompasses Blue Mountains, Gardens of Stone, Kanangra-Boyd, Nattai, Thirlmere Lakes, Wollemi and Yengo National Parks and Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve. Kate has provided over 20 illustrations of selected animals.

Native Fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area has been made possible because many local naturalists, both amateur and professional, have generously shared their fauna observations. Field surveys undertaken over many years by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, on-ground managers of the World Heritage Area, have also provided invaluable information. A few animals are now gone from the Greater Blue Mountains and are known only from the writings of early explorers and travellers or from traces left in skeletal remains. A growing number of local fauna species, at last count 73 species, are considered to be threatened. As the 20th anniversary of the World Heritage Area listing approaches next year, Judy, Peter and Kate believe that it is timely that we all take stock of our local fauna, whose diversity, scientific value and conservation importance are significant at international level.

The book provides the first comprehensive account of the native vertebrate fauna of the World Heritage Area. It aims to encourage a deeper understanding of our fauna and a will to conserve it. The authors hope that, like them, future generations will also have the opportunity to know and be inspired by this magnificent fauna. It is really quite extraordinary that it is possible to feel very remote in this area, be surrounded by a stunning natural landscape and such diverse wildlife, and yet be within cooee of Sydney and its five million residents.

The book (172 pages, 18 x 26 cm, soft cover) has a RRP of \$35 and is available from the authors (email smitheco@ozemail.com.au) or from bookshops throughout the Blue Mountains.

Images: *Wonga Pigeon* (photo by Peter Smith), *Green Tree Frog* (sketch by Kate Smith)

Radiata Plateau saved for future generations



In these Radiata campaign photos, rock climbers hang a sign to "Leave Radiata Plateau Wild, and Blue Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill addresses a rally.

Sorry for the inconvenience, but our planet has a problem....Clare Power

I am haunted by one image: the moment my children are old enough to understand the gravity of the climate crisis and they look me in the eye and ask, "but what did you do Mummy?" So wrote Chloe Adams in an ABC Opinion piece on 8 Oct 2019 titled "I'm an Extinction Rebellion protester and I'll be disrupting your work commute. Here's why".

These sentiments are echoed by many Extinction Rebellion (XR) members; for example one Grandparent's placard read "I am a rebel so that I can look my grandchildren in the eye". XR participants represent a broad spectrum of ages. At the Sydney XR protest on 7th October four teenage girls were among over 30 protestors arrested and the ABC reported on three young girls from the Blue Mountains who attended the protest.

The sense that non-violent civil disobedience is the only way left to catalyse meaningful action on climate change has driven many 'ordinary' people to participate in Extinction Rebellion actions across the world during the October 'Spring rebellion'. People do not choose lightly to participate in XR actions; for many it is the last ditch attempt after years of activism while for others it is their first foray into activism. Whatever people's reasoning, XR is certainly a galvanising and exponentially growing force for change.

The extent, creativity and persistence of the protests and actions saw it covered by major media outlets, often headlining TV news and receiving substantial print coverage. Of course the intentional disruption caused by many of the protests provokes criticism. A Sydney Morning Herald journalist described XR protestors as

"The bane of climate-change deniers and frazzled commuters" and there were many far more vitriolic attacks.

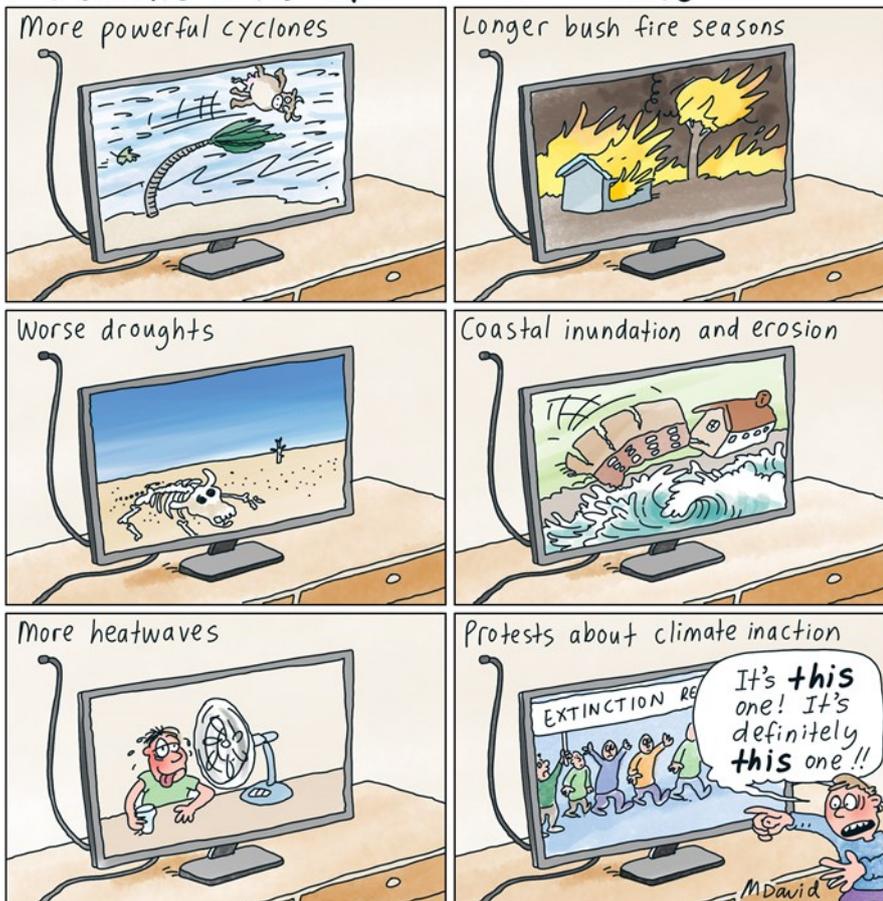
XR participants often move among the traffic, apologising for the inconvenience caused by their disruptions and explaining their reasoning for protesting. XR argue: "*The Extinction Rebellion is a necessity. Our political establishment has failed to protect its people from pollution, prevent further mass extinction of species on earth and prevent the possibility of human extinction in the near future. Therefore we must rebel to protect the livelihood of citizens and our natural world, or risk losing everything we cherish.*"

I'm a member of XR Blue Mountains but unfortunately I wasn't in Sydney during the Spring rebellion. I'd booked months ago to walk the Three Capes track in Tasmania (an incredible experience), so I was in Hobart for part of this week.

My daughter and I visited the XR precinct set up outside the Tasmanian Parliament and joined an XR contingent visiting a Senator's office and walking around the city at peak hour handing out flyers about XR and upcoming actions and singing songs such as: 'We're on a planet; That has a problem, We need to solve it, get involved, And do it now!now!now! We need to build a better future, and we need to start right now.' For a rousing rendition of this song see the superb Blue Mountains XR choir in a flash mob at Central Station:

www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/story/6433934/blue-mountains-flash-mob-singers-wake-up-commuters-at-central-station-video/

The climate crisis: spot the inconvenience



Cartoon used with permission from Mark David Cartoons.

Fire Ready

The saplings' russet leaves,
geebung fruit, waratahs
and banksias in full bloom
crushed beneath
a tractor's scoop and blade.

Home to native bees
and nectar seeking birds,
the undergrowth is cleared,
a fire break, ready for
the danger summer brings.

A scent of eucalypts
hanging in the air
long after trees have gone.

by Michele Fermanis-Winward
(from her collection *The Eucalypt
Distillery*, Ginninderra Press)

Grandparents Gathering for Climate Action Robin Mosman

Night after night the ABC news shows heart-rending scenes of drought-ravaged farms, dry river beds and raging bushfires. Media commentators speak of rising energy prices caused by the total lack of an energy plan by Federal government since the failure of the National Energy Guarantee. There is no long-term drought strategy, and country towns are running out of drinking water. Our governments, Federal and State, while denying climate change and approving new coal mines, have totally failed to even plan for measures to mitigate the consequences of which scientists have given us ample warning.

What can we appalled citizens do as we watch our country facing this destruction? The courageous front-line fighters of the Extinction Rebellion are showing us one response. However, not all of us are in a position to join them. Aged in my late seventies, I certainly know my limitations. So I decided to find a way by which older folks could contribute to climate action. And I came up with the idea of a website called grandparentscan.wordpress.com (Grandparents for Climate Action Now). By simply entering your email address onto this website, you can access a whole smorgasbord of actions you can choose from, in order to take action in the fight against climate change.

One is as simple as signing an online petition demanding that Parliament declare a Climate Emergency, another shows how to check on whether your bank is funding fossil fuel projects and if so, easy instructions for how to change your bank. One action I especially like and which is surprisingly effective is just talking to people about climate change - there is a page on the website of "Conversation Points" which you might find very helpful in doing this.

Every week we will send you an email with another possible action for you to consider. It's up to you which ones you decide to act on.

Grandparents Gathering
Sunday 24 November
from 2-4 pm

19 Falls Road, Wentworth Falls
RSVP 4757 1354

To help inform and hopefully inspire you we are holding a Grandparents Gathering on Sunday 24 November from 2-4 pm in the pleasant large old garden at my home, at 19 Falls Rd, Wentworth Falls.

There will be a talk by Dr Roy Tasker, the Chief Environment Scientist at Planet Ark, and Blue Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill will speak to us about measures the BMCC is taking, having been one of the first councils to declare a Climate Emergency.

You will be able to have your questions answered and meet some of the other grandparents who, like us, are so concerned about the state of the world our grandchildren will inherit. And there will be a lovely afternoon tea!

Please accept this as a personal invitation. It is essential to RSVP at 4757 1354 so we have an idea of numbers for catering.

Robin Mosman.

'Where Song Began' concert, Lithgow, October 2019 Review by Cathy Cavanagh

This must be one of the most beautiful and original tributes to Australian birds in recent times. How appropriate that this concert was held in the Gang Gang Gallery in Lithgow where, despite the town's long industrial history, birdsong is close and ever present. Inspired by the book, 'Where Song Began', by Tim Low, artists were Simone Slattery (violin) and Anthony Albrecht (cello).

In a 50 minute show Simone and Anthony accompanied images of roaming bands of black cockatoos, inquisitive fairy wrens, flights of budgerigars, the dedicated bower-building satin bower bird and other species, on their 300 year old instruments. The music they chose to accompany the striking images and film varied from Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending* to contemporary Australian compositions by Chris Williams and Ross Edwards. Simone and Anthony were very generous performers treating us to a Q and A session after the show. A CD of the performance is available through the performers' website and is well worth purchasing.

I had a feeling that the voice shifting lyre birds were a favourite with these two South Australians as they described camping near King's Tableland at Wentworth Falls and being woken early in the morning by those musical tricksters.

Human song introduced and ended the show. Simone's earthy, close to throat singing explored the influence of bird song on the development of human speech and

song and she concluded the concert with the beautiful Yorta Yorta hymn of defiance and hope, *Ngarra Burra Ferra*, an adaptation of an African American spiritual.

This is a timely musical exploration of Australia's songbirds, and not solely for aesthetic reasons. In his book Tim Low emphasises the importance of honeyeaters and parrots as outstanding pollinators, *Australia is a land where bird-plant interactions are especially strong*.

In this era of environmental carnage it seems to me that it is through the arts that the strongest, most enduring and meaningful conservation messages can be conveyed.

Listen to <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/offtrack/where-song-began/9811914> presented by Ann Jones, Offtrack.

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 WELCOME

Phone Karen 4757 1929

Where have we gone wrong? by Ian Brown

BMCS members know that many environmental problems are at crisis point. From the climate disaster to our rivers, species extinctions, oceans and invasive plants and animals, we stand at a critical point in history. And yet ...we are not dealing adequately with any of them! Why is it so? Have environmentalists and scientists failed to educate and alert the broader community?

On Radio National recently, historian Tim Bonyhady pointed out that although it was the Whitlam Labor government that conducted a public enquiry into sand-mining on Fraser Island, it was Malcolm Fraser's Coalition that refused the export permits, squashing the proposal and saving the island. This 1970s scenario is today unimaginable, on almost every level. But who would now say that World Heritage Fraser Island should have been strip-mined? And what of other great wins of that era? A limestone quarry in the Kanangra Wilderness? The Boyd Plateau covered in pine trees? The Border Ranges and Wet Tropics logged? The Wollemi Wilderness industrialised with dams, quarries, power stations and pipelines? The Franklin River dammed? Oil wells on the Great Barrier Reef?

All these things nearly happened. Surely history has vindicated those protective outcomes, but those days now seem like nirvana for environmentalism. We were on a roll, one that would keep snowballing to save all our wild places and other beings while we steadily worked out how to live benignly on our home planet.

Today, this dream is fading into nightmare. A backlash was always coming, but those of us who have spent lifetimes working on environmental causes have been dismayed by the ferocity and success of the counter-attack. Despite huge environmental problems and overwhelming evidence, we can barely take a trick for conservation.

The enemy is winning. Even apparently positive moves are quickly perverted, like the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, and the dastardly 'offsets' scheme for threatened

species. Aboriginal heritage is 'protected' but routinely trashed. The youth climate movement is belittled by old men as naïve and misled. Andrew Bolt, playing the woman not the issue, called Greta Thunberg a 'cult' and 'deeply disturbed'¹. Meanwhile so-called conservative 'heroes' like Bolt, Tony Abbott and Donald Trump still think the climate crisis is some kind of fake conspiracy (I know a pot calling a kettle black when I see one. And self-delusion too).

What's happened? How are the 1970s-80s different from today? Why are we on the back foot when the need to act is ever more critical? I don't have any answers, only theories. They are all connected.

Politics: NSW ICAC is looking into political lobbying. Counsel assisting Nicholas Chen SC said in his opening remarks: "A criticism is that it intersects with 'big business' and other powerful interest groups, and such entities covertly persuade government to the detriment of the broader public interest, and is thus undemocratic."² I reckon he nailed it.

Politics was simpler in the 1970s, and since then radical capitalism has grown, spread and gained acceptance across the globe. Business is bigger, more powerful, wilier and more sophisticated. Large, cashed-up corporations that peddle sugar, carbon, irrigation and gambling are strenuously lobbying governments behind closed doors while community groups are locked out, running cake stalls, writing submissions and fighting laws designed to shut them up.

The "follow the money" principle applies, and so does "people like us". Greenpeace has exposed the close ties between the current federal government and coal-mining interests³. Elizabeth Farrelly wrote about the Barangaroo casino and demolition of the Allianz Stadium: "They're all just blinded by a big, glinting pile of cash"⁴. The *Sydney Morning Herald* questioned their 'Reader's Panel' on "Do you believe that there are individual federal politicians who are corrupt?" A staggering 90% said "Yes", with just 3% for "No". Yet the polities continue to resist a federal ICAC with real teeth.

Other opinion polls have repeatedly shown that a majority wants stronger action on climate change and environmental protection⁵, yet we seem to keep electing governments that are either just not interested or actively opposed. Have progressive parties failed to offer a coherent alternative?

Affluence: Meanwhile, wealth has grown to the point where Australians enjoy perhaps the richest society in history. Affluence breeds complacency and rich

(Continued on page 9)

The Boyd Plateau could have been cleared, but was added to Kanangra-Boyd National Park instead. Photo by Ian Brown.



Where have we gone wrong?

(Continued from page 8)

people feel they are more able to protect themselves from threatening global trends. They will fight to retain that advantage, while it's the poor that suffer most – in Australia and globally. But is money the sole root of all this evil? No.

Media: Money interacts with our Australian complacency, a lot of ignorance and the damaging power of some media forces. ABCTV's *Media Watch* has often exposed the breathtaking bias of News Limited outlets: against the idea of global warming, in furious support of ultra-conservative voices and in lockstep with their preferred governments. Just watch how new 'lines' (lies) are instantly taken up by their unified commentariat – like "we need the Adani coal mine so that poor Indians don't have to burn cow dung for energy" and "climate kids are just being misled and used by shady forces".

Human nature: People in crowds are irrational, tribal, selfish, competitive and skittish. They are easily seduced by ideas that protect their beliefs and benefits. They can also be kind, generous, compassionate, logical and altruistic. But big business, advertising and consumerism thrive on the negatives, and many politicians exploit them rather than encourage our "better angels". Powerful liars (see Media, above) give ordinary people an excuse to ignore the real problems and fall back on wishful thinking and 'beautiful lies'. We are force-fed bread and circuses and fantasies because we are hard-wired to love them. It's no wonder many people dismiss the climate crisis, or seem incapable of taking action on it - because it's world-shakingly disruptive.

Terrorism: With so much attention on 9-11 and subsequent attacks and wars, we've taken our eyes off other balls. This has been convenient for certain interests. Have they coldly exploited our fear? (see Politics and Media, above).

So what to do? Resist! Rage, with guts and gusto. Use cold, hard anger as a motivator. Believe that human beings are capable of pursuing the greater good. Believe the dinosaur politicians and media toadies will become irrelevant. Call out the lies. Don't shut up. Use the best skills you have. Join with others. Co-operate, dream, love, talk, persuade. See goodness, do good and never give up the fight.

Our generation has much to answer for, and many of us are lost to reason. So I put my faith in youth. They are more informed about the environment than any generation before them. They have energy, concern and passion. Youth are our best chance and we must encourage and support them. The bold must inherit the Earth.

"You're on this planet to fight for the light or to fight for the dark...you choose a side in the world and if your side is for communication and healing and for goodness, then you just have to do it and not question it."

- Glen Hansard, musician (speaking at the Sydney Opera House during the Sydney Festival, 2009)

"The Climate Crisis disrupts the beliefs and values of contemporary societies, sparking potential for radical changes in culture and consciousness."

- Dr Sally Gillespie, climate psychologist and author of *Climate Crisis and Consciousness; Re-Imagining our world and ourselves* (Routledge, in press)

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

Endnotes:

¹ Andrew Bolt, "The disturbing secret to the cult of Greta Thunberg", *Herald Sun*, 1 August, 2019

² "Regulation of lobbying in NSW 'well below standard'", *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 6, 2019

³ <https://www.greenpeace.org.au/news/greenpeace-exposes-murky-influence-network-that-entrenches-coals-power-over-liberal-and-national-parties/>

⁴ "The bad decisions of those blinded by cash", *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 3-4, 2019

⁵ eg. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-09-10/climate-of-nation-australia-attitudes/11484690> and <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/may/08/australians-overwhelmingly-agree-climate-emergency-is-the-nations-number-one-threat>

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.

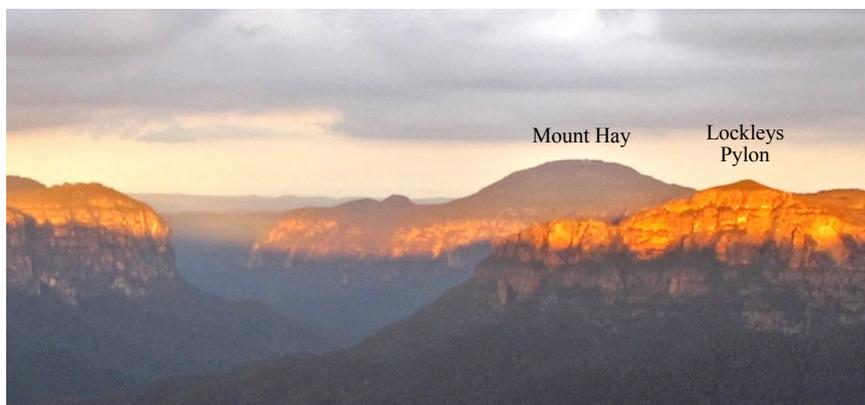
The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

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.

***Hilltopping** is a mate-location behaviour seen in many insects including butterflies, dragonflies, bumblebees, wasps, beetles and flies. Males of many butterfly species may be found flying up to and staying on a hilltop - for days on end if necessary. Females, desirous of mating, fly up the hill. Males dash around the top, competing for the best part of the area - usually the very top; as the male with the best territory at the top of the hill would have the best chance of mating. Studies have shown that even slight elevation differences on flat terrain can trigger hilltopping behaviour, and flowering or tall trees may substitute. The concentrating effect of hilltopping on butterfly populations makes such locations of special conservation significance. (Wikipedia)

** **Common Brown Butterflies.** These butterflies are in fact orange, with brown markings. According to the Australian Museum website, they mate during October and November and the males die soon after. Females live several months. They wait for the heat of summer to pass and the grass to grow before laying their eggs, in early March, onto several species of native and introduced grasses. This ensures an immediate food supply when the larvae emerge .



A hilltop rendezvous Christine Davies

Over the years, a very special walk has stuck in my mind. The walk was on 13 November 2008. During the drive along Mount Hay Road, large numbers of Common Brown Butterflies** were flying close to the ground.

We walked along a narrow track - past the Pinnacles, through a forested area of stunted trees, then very low heath where nothing is allowed to grow more than 20 centimetres high - a huge variety of wildflowers, glimpses of mountains and cliffs and the Grose Valley. We saw a kestrel hover and dive.

The top of the little pointed hill, Lockleys Pylon, was bustling with insects. Large flies darted around, little blue butterflies were hardly ever still, large brown insects flew and landed briefly, swordgrass butterflies fluttered majestically by.



A little Mountain Dragon was on the cairn, completely immobile and ignoring our presence. Then suddenly it leapt for a fly, landed on another rock on the cairn and was still until another fly flew within reach.

It was a hot day and an occasional breeze from the valley was welcome. It was cool in the cave behind Lockleys Pylon, with a view over the heath to Fortress Ridge. A solitary Imperial White Butterfly fluttered by. Then there was a hot walk back to the cars in the heat of the day, bush flies attracted to our sweat.

When I first wrote this description I realised that the various insects were **hilltopping*** (see explanation on left). I may have observed this insect behaviour before then and not realised what it was. But, with so much activity in the one place, this had to be a very special natural event.

In the springtime, when I visit Govetts Leap and look over at Lockleys Pylon on the other side of the Grose Valley, I am reminded of the walk and feel privileged that we were able to witness this event. The little pointed hill is a special place.

Images: This sunset view from Govetts Leap was taken by me in October 2017. The Mountain Dragon was photographed by Peter Smith at Pisgah Rock at Glenbrook.

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 Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

Women and men of the past built the foundations of modern-day Blue Mountains environmentalism. Their stories can inspire us.

It's our turn now!

Christine Davies

3. Isobel Kendal Bowden (1908-1986)

A flower child raised in a Blue Mountains forest ... an avid botanist ... an enthusiastic teacher and career woman ... a long term member of the Liberal Party ... a mentor to numerous conservationists and Blue Mountains enthusiasts ... a most skilful artist ... a sufferer from personal insecurity who showed the courage to bounce back from a state of despair and depression ... it is impossible to pigeonhole Isobel Kendall Bowden.



The forest cabin was at Murphys Glen, near Woodford. Although her parents suffered debt and other troubles, Isobel grew up secure in a peaceful relationship between humans and nature. From early on, she loved keeping diaries and doing drawings of plants. She left behind a vast collection of pictures of mountain flora. She began her painting activity while living at Woodford Academy. Of her career in teaching, she once said:

"The only hope is to train children ... teach them to love their natural heritage and understand what its real value is. I don't think any place in the earth has more lovely flowers than our own lovely large Christmas Bells." (1946)

From 1952, she was planting seven acres of land at Woodford with fire retardant plants, indicative of her firm belief that we must all learn to live with bushfire and its consequences. Although she had a breakdown in 1961 and destroyed some of her accumulated work, by 1963 she was active in the antecedent organisation to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. The Nature Trail from the Conservation Hut to Bate Street at Wentworth Falls was Isobel's idea and she promoted it and provided it with interpretive notes.

Society member Jill Dark once talked about Isobel's favourite haunts. Determined to make up for work she had earlier destroyed, in the late 1960s Isobel produced a massive number of botanical images including from scattered areas like Tarana, Bell, Mount Wilson, Blue Gum Forest and Mount Hay.

By the mid-1980s, Isobel had contributed 371 plant specimens to herbariums throughout NSW. An orchid *Prasophyllum bowdenae* Rupp and a perennial herb, *Euphrasia bowdeniae* had been named after her. In the days when it became clear that cancer would soon claim her, Blue Mountains enthusiasts gathered round her including author Jim Smith and former councillor David Lawton. She had become an Officer of the British Empire in 1985. Eventually Isobel Bowden Ridge at Leura and Isobel Creek near Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls would both bear her name.

While poetry was no more than a sideline, this poem evokes her mood:

Did you see the orchids flowering
On the green?
Where the happy creek is flowing
Swift and clean.
Just like little beads of coral
They appear
And they hide amongst the sorrel
In their fear
For the wicked brownies kiss them
As they pass
And they look so pink! – don't miss them
In the grass.

Thank you author and historian Ken Goodlet for giving permission to use information and photos for this article which was first published on the Blue Mountains Nature website - <https://bmnature.info/flora-fauna-home.shtml>

Photos:

Ye Humpy with older brother Tom & Isobel, 1911;

Isobel Bowden 1981



Welcome to new members

Lyn Willis
Lady Lynne Hamilton-Bennett
Marion Walker
Lindsay Pearce
Mary Marlow
Sue Ling Wan
Mark Peter Weber

The BLUE TRAIL series will continue in December Hut News

For information about PLANT STUDY GROUP and TING (Thursday Interpretive Nature Group) Go to our website www.bluemountains.org.au and click on "Activities"

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)

- Nov 9 **Kanangra Walls.** Contact leader Hugh 0423 309 854 or huespe47@gmail.com. Sealed roads all the way. Not a long or difficult walk - to one of the most spectacular of regions. Map, Kanangra.
- Nov 16 **Mount Hay & Boorong Crags,** Great views with some off track. Leader Eddie 47842691. Meet Leura School roundabout, 8.30am. 9k, Gr3. Maps, Katoomba & Mt Wilson.
- Nov 23 **Jinki Ridge and Pagodas.** Mainly off track Leader Alice 47393086 or 0425738766. Meet Wentworth Falls Station car park 8.00am. 7k,GR 3. Map Mt Wilson
- Nov. 30 **Donkey Mountain.** Leader Harold 0409010737. Meet Mount Vic stn CP. 8.00am. 6k GR 3/4, Map, Ben Bullen.
- Dec.7 **Gouchs Crater,** Bob's old favourite revisited. Some off track. Leader Emanuel 0419773906 Contact leader for details. 11k, Gr3, Maps, Wollangambe/Lithgow

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

- Nov 11 **Grand Canyon, Blackheath.** Magnificent canyon walk. Many steps. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45. Car pool. Mave Roberts 4784 2691. Grade 3.
- Nov 18 **Leura to Wentworth Falls.** Leura WW1 Memorial to Lyrebird Dell, Golf Links LO, Fairmont Resort, Lillian's Bridge, Conservation Hut and then to Wentworth Falls Village Via Darwin's Walk. 10km Some worn steps and tracks. **Return to Leura by train.** Leura Station Commuter Car Park (Outside Baptist Church) 9-30am. Bob Taylor 4784-1060. Grade 3.
- Nov 25 **Hazelbrook South Side.** Adams Lookout, Victor Falls, Terrace Falls, Bedford Pool and Lester Pool. 8km, 250 m ascent and descent. Hazelbrook Station Southern Car park 8-40am Short Carpool. Gordon Watson 0413 991 524. Grade 3.
- Dec 2 **Radiata Plateau Katoomba** Great views into Megalong Valley. Katoomba Station Car Park 8-30am Car Pool. Keith 0411 162 345. Grade 2.
- Dec 9 **Leura Forest to Furber Steps Katoomba.** 7km Approx. Steps down and up. Car pool, cars at each end. Map Katoomba. Katoomba Station Car Park 8-30am, Car shuffle. 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

- Nov 14 **Blair Athol Coal Mine and Cemetery, Mount Victoria.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Carpool. Take lunch. Grade 1.
- Nov 21 **Yellow Rock to Nepean River and Fitzgerald Creek.** Meet rear Westpac Bank Springwood 9am, car pool \$4. Contact Maurice 4739 4942. Take lunch. Grade 2.
- Nov 28 **City walk – Cremorne Point.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30 am. Contact Tracy 0434 362 611. Take lunch. Grade 1.
- Dec 5 **Bundeena.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.10 am. Keith 0411 162 345. Bring your cossie and lunch. Grade 2.
- Dec 12 **Christmas Party in Dorren's studio.** Ring Doreen on 6355 2371 for details. Please bring either a salad or dessert, whatever you wish to drink and a wrapped gift to the value of \$10 for Naughty Santa. Phone Beverley on 4757 2076 if you need a lift from Mount Victoria Station.

Dec 19 and 26 No walk.

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

FUNDRAISER FOR GARDENS OF STONE CAMPAIGN

Destination Pagoda BUSH DANCE

Live music— Lithgow bush band and guest musicians

Saturday 23 November, 3pm-10pm

Lithgow State Mine Heritage Park (3A State Mine Gully Road)

Entry: Single \$25 Concession \$20 Family \$50

Coach transport from Lithgow Station to State Mine (\$10) includes short visit to see padogas at Dobbs Drift Lookout

Food available for sale at State Mine (BYO alcohol)

Bookings <https://www.ticketebo.com.au/lithgow-environment-group/state-mine-bush-dance.html>

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

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