

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



Guest Speaker

The guest speaker at the Society's general meeting on Friday 31 July will be Gaye Spies, a leader and a pioneer in the bush regeneration movement.

Gaye will talk about the Sugarloaf Creek bush regeneration project, an unusual and difficult task which was started in 1985. At Castlecrag, it covers the whole sub-catchment and different ecosystems including rainforest and waterfalls.

The meeting at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, starts at 7.30 pm. Visitors are welcome.

Bushcare Group on Tuesday

Here is your chance, leisure walkers and others busy on Mondays, to come and see what the Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group is doing, and to give a hand. In July we are going to try out a Tuesday instead of our usual Monday morning working day.

Bring morning tea and gloves. Tools are provided. There will be a variety of weeds to pull and dig out, and while we work we will enjoy the bush, the company, and the birds. Meet 9 am on Tuesday 21 July at The Conservation Hut. More info: Jessica 4757.2783.

Kids' Club — Bird Walk

The next Kids' Club activity will be an early morning bird walk with Carol Proberts, on Sunday 19 July, at Catelina Park, Katoomba.

Meet at the car-park off Gates Avenue opposite the swimming pool at 8 am. Bring morning tea, drink, and if you have them, binoculars and a field guide. More info: Jessica 4757.2783.

Skyway Hype

Described by a BMCC planner as one of the largest Development Applications in the City's recent history, the Scenic Skyway-Railway proposal will be controversial.

BMCS has objected on many grounds including the lack of a geo-technical report despite the area being prone to cliff collapses, non-conformity of the proposal to planning instruments, and the intrusion of the proposed 'Steepto' gondola ropeway and a 600-metre boardwalk into sensitive rainforest in Kedumba Valley.

There is potential loss of passive recreation values of the Blue Mountains National Park tracks near Katoomba Falls due to screams and vibrations from the proposed Orphan Rocker operation.

A Blue Mountains Gazette article that treated the proposals as a 'fait accompli' suggests that this is going to be yet another knock down — drag out struggle with the same old faces supporting the 'Develop at Any Cost'

World Heritage Nomination

Great news!! The World Heritage submission for the Greater Blue Mountains has been completed and sent to UNESCO in Paris for assessment.

The Greater Blue Mountains nomination covers an area of over one million hectares, that is about the size of Belgium or half the size of Ireland. The area is made up of Nattai, Kanangra-Boyd, Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Gardens of Stone and Yengo National Parks and the Thirlmere Lakes.

The significant features of the area includes its geological features — the escarpments, and its biodiversity including its large variety of eucalypts.

There are 4 criteria for natural heritage and 3 for cultural heritage. The Greater Blue Mountains area, we believe, satisfies 6 out of 7 criteria. We are hopeful of a successful outcome at the meeting of the World Heritage Committee in December.

There are already 11 World Heritage sites around Australia including the Tasmanian Wilderness, Uluru, Kakadu, Frazer Island, and Great Barrier Reef. What makes this area significantly different from the other sites is its proximity to a major capital city.

A successful nomination will be a great draw card for tourism and will lead to a greater appreciation of the very special values of the local area and cultivate local pride. We can also expect to benefit from improved planning and management of the region along with the availability of additional State and/or Federal funding.

option.

BMCC should call a public meeting early about this proposal if there is to be any hope of a compromise. Meanwhile, BMCS members need to talk to the more receptive among our Ward Councillors about the dangers of the development.

Battle Lines for the Kowmung

A meeting of Society representatives with Liberal Macquarie MP Kerry Bartlett, brought the unfortunate news that Kerry supports the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall. The support by several prominent Liberals, including NSW leader Peter Collins, for the raising of the dam wall, is one of the saddest chapters in Liberal Party History.

The raising of the wall would do irreparable damage to the unique Kowmung River Valley, home to the Camden White Gum and other exquisite

species. The whole campaign to raise the wall is based on fear and lies about the real effects of the wall-raising option and the spillway option which has been adopted by the State Labor Government.

The Carr Government's decision in February to construct a side spillway for Warragamba Dam is the right decision. Progress towards construction must be made this year, well before next year's State election.

A huge amount of public money will be wasted if the dam wall is raised. Regrettably, it appears more of our resources may have to be applied to combat the campaign of misinformation with which the Kowmung wilderness is being attacked.

Blue Mountains First

It appears that Councillors will be under more pressure to vote in an environmentally responsible way from now on.

Councillors Henson and Gaul spoke at a highly successful launch of the new Blue Mountains First group on Saturday 27 June. Over 250 concerned residents at the launch showed that they are ready to work to get many more councillors of that quality elected if existing pro-development councillors do not lift their game.

There was rousing applause for State Independent MP and Manly Councillor Peter McDonald who told the meeting how he and his companions had worked for more than 12 years to bring about a "Green" Manly.

"Hut News", the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. P.O.Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782. Phone 4757 1872. Fax 4757 1753

Email bmcspnc.com.au Web page: <http://www.pnc.com.au/~bmcspnc>

President: Imre Gahl, Ph:4784-3286 First Vice President: Don Morison, Ph:4759.2471

Second Vice President: Heather Coster {Ph:Work 4759-1247, Home 4759.1837,

Membership Secretary: Ross Coster {Fax 4759-1095, Email haytech@pnc.com.au

Correspondence Secretary: Mary Shaw, Ph:4757-4133; Treasurer: Ivica Buc

Meetings Secretary: Kevin Bell, Ph:4787-6436 Email: belfin@pnc.com.au

Land Use: Jim Warburton, Phone 4759-1312; Bushwalks: Jim Wallace, Ph:4784-3305

Plant Nursery Manager: David Coleby, Ph/Fax:4784-1395 Projects:Marion Hawley Ph:4784-1933

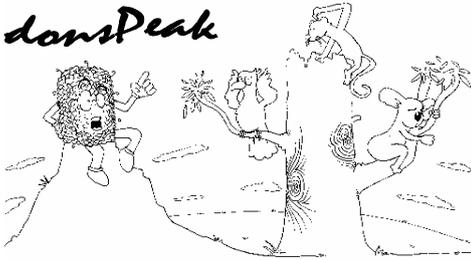
Projects: Philippa Fincher,Ph:4787-6436 Email: belfin@pnc.com.au; Kathy Gott,Ph:4739-8124

Publicity: Catriona Gillies, Ph:4782-1235; Bushcare: Helga Esamie, Ph:Mobile 0418-397-117

Education: Jacqueline Reid, Ph: 4739-8485; Bushfire Rep: Hugh Paterson, Phone 4751-2303

Newsletter: Christine Davies, Phone 4787-7246 Fax 4787-7777 Email: hutnews@pnc.com.au

donPeak



Space Piracy

In 1996 there were 3,430,000 dwellings in Australia with three bedrooms, and 1,460,000 with four bedrooms or more, so the Australian Bureau of Statistics tell us. For 17 million people, that's a lot of bedrooms, especially when you throw in an extra 2,060,000 one or two bedroom dwellings.

Economist Ross Gittins has stated that the size of the average Australian home grew by 25% between the 1960s and the 1990s. Why do we need so much indoor space? Partly, no doubt, it's to house some of the energy-hungry commodities that more people own in the 1990s. Could it be also that the amount of space each of us can occupy has become crucial to our social status and sense of self worth? If so, where will it end?

The competition between humans and the natural environment for space is at its most critical in a place like the Blue Mountains. Developers trying to create 'prestige' housing are forever seeking to carve up beautiful — at times rugged — bushland. In some streets of Glenbrook, blocks have been sold with caveats, intended to force land-owners to keep up the 'tone' of the neighbourhood by building huge houses!

Every square metre, taken for an unnecessarily large house, is a square metre lost to the native plants and animals of the Blue Mountains. The loss from the natural environment is not confined to the actual floor space of houses. The amount of space demanded for driveways, carports and other sealed outdoor areas has also grown over the years. All of these things affect the ability of water to seep through the soil and rock underneath, the way water runs over the surface downslope, the pattern of erosion and so on. Many building and paving materials also release chemicals into the environment.

Some will say that humans are part of the natural environment. I would not argue that we have to return to living in caves to be considered as much part of the natural environment as we once were. However, most humans in the Blue Mountains do need to be more concerned about the amount of space and other resources our lifestyles consume. — *Don Morison*.

Sludge Trucked to Lithgow

Sydney Water have recently been claiming that all of the sewage sludge extracted from Sydney's sewage is being "re-used in agriculture".

One of the projects for re-use is spraying the sludge from Cronulla Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) onto the pine plantation at Newnes Plateau. We have written to Sydney Water and State Forests objecting to this process, but have been reassured by both authorities that sludge is environmentally safe and that water quality is being monitored and has not suffered.

Another recently approved re-use is dumping of 30,000 tonnes of sludge per year from the North Head STP into an abandoned quarry at Capertee, north of Lithgow. The site is in the catchment of the (relatively pristine) Turon River.

We are writing to Sydney Water and Lithgow Council objecting to this dumping on several grounds: 30,000 tonnes per year equates to 2,000+ truck movements in each direction, just for the North Head sludge; Neither the Great Western Highway nor Bells Line of Road needs this additional truck traffic; Dumping in a quarry is not really agricultural re-use

If the dumping must go ahead, we will ask Sydney Water to conduct water quality testing of the Turon river before and during dumping to measure downstream affects.

I believe that Sydney's sewage sludge should be transported by rail to agricultural areas west of the Blue Mountains and used to rehabilitate degraded farming land. Spraying onto pine plantations and dumping in abandoned quarries is not acceptable, and nor is the resulting truck traffic. — *Ross Coster*.

Badgery's Creek Airport

While recent statements by both major parties have indicated that no final decision on the airport will be made prior to the upcoming Federal Election, the latest Federal Budget allocated \$500,000 for the Government to promote the Badgery's Creek option.

A letter from the office of Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Development, Hon. Mark Vaile MP, to one of our members, has stated that "The Government is committed to building a second major airport in the Sydney basin, subject to a rigorous and transparent Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. Badgery's Creek...remains this Government's preferred site." "The Minister released a draft EIS on 21 December 1997. Overall, the findings of the Draft EIS are encouraging as they suggest that careful design and management can reduce many of the environmental impacts."

According to Mr. Vaile's office, employment and major infrastructure improvements are some of the key reasons why "the proposal has been supported by groups such as Greater Western Sydney Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Western Sydney Council of the Australian Business Chamber, Greater Western Sydney Business Connection and Liverpool City Council."

Maggie Deahm, Labor Candidate

Membership Enquiries: The Society is keen to have new members who are concerned about the welfare of the Blue Mountains natural environment. Contact membership secretary, Ross Coster: Work (02)4759.1247, Home 4759.1837, Fax 4759.1095, Email haytech@pnc.com.au, or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

for Macquarie informs us that "The official position of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party is that it supports a second airport for Sydney, but has not determined whether it will support or oppose Badgery's Creek as the desired site until the finalisation of the EIS process."

"You may be aware that the Australian Labor Party at its National Conference in Hobart in January this year changed its platform on transport issues to delete Badgery's Creek as the favoured site for a second airport. This move was made after strong protests by Party members in Western Sydney who feel very strongly that Badgery's Creek is now not a suitable site for the airport. The Party is also deeply concerned about the process and findings of the EIS that appear to be seriously flawed. The audit undertaken by Smec has pointed out a great number of failings in the EIS, and both reports need to be carefully examined."

Blue Mountains City Council remains steadfast in its opposition to the establishment of any airport in the Sydney basin (as do all Western Sydney Councils except Liverpool.)

The Shortest Day

In Australia, by now the shortest day of the year has passed, winter solstice, the traditional start of winter. In contrast, in the most northern part of the northern hemisphere the sun never sets on June 21 as people celebrate summer solstice and the beginning of summer.

Here in the Blue Mountains, most of us appreciate the change of seasons. Nature does not sleep in winter even if it sometimes might look like that on a cold dark day — it prepares for a spring with light and sunshine.

It never fails to amaze that, as the leaves fall off the deciduous, mostly introduced trees, new buds emerge.

A walk through the bush in July will confirm that many Australian native plants have set flower buds or bear flowers. Depending on the area, different plants are prominent. Here in the Upper Blue Mountains, wattle time has started. The first flowers appeared on the appropriately named Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*), closely followed by Prickly Moses (*A. ulicifolia*) with the Sydney Golden Wattle (*A. longifolia*) coming into bud. In abundance are the nectar-rich Banksia flowers (*B. spinulosa*, *B. ericifolia*, *B. marginata*), and spot flowering of the Mountain Devil (*Lambertia formosia*).

There is of course one member of our family who has not noticed any of this. Until the middle of July, for him, World Cup Soccer rules! — *Helga*.

BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES AND BATS

Wildlife and the Native Garden

A seminar arranged by Australian Plants Society (Blue Mountains Group)

On Sunday, 2 August 1998; 10 am to 3.30 pm
At Blaxland Community Centre, Hope St, Blaxland

Speakers and panel discussions on: the interrelationship between flora & fauna in the garden; birds & mammals; frogs & reptiles; butterflies, bees & insects.

The Broken Waratahs

In that gentle mountain valley, just below the tree-lined crest,
Fairy wren and golden finch, mid banksia hides a nest.
Fern clad creeks are falling, through stands of stringy bark,
And the morning light seems filtered, by the fading of the dark.
And the bush is slowly waking to its melody of sound,
With joy, the blood red waratahs mark this as hallowed ground.

Magpies warble morning prayers, their song so sweet and true,
The currawongs and butcherbirds ring morning praises too.
Cicadas sound the rhythms, as morning floods this place,
And I glimpse, just for a moment, the smile of nature's grace.
And the bush is softly stirring, in a symphony of sound,
As here, the blood red waratahs mark this as hallowed ground.

Yet in this gentle bushland, the hand of man is found
And he is full of lusting for that wealth within the ground —
Be it gold and zinc, sand or tin, woodchips from her trees,
Do you hear the diesel screaming as it comes to tear them free.
And the bush in fear is waking to an avalanche of sound,
But still, the blood red waratahs mark this as hallowed ground.

Now the stringy bark has fallen, the banksia crushed and burned,
The creek enslaved in piping, its freedom now is turned,
Through dam and pump and nozzle to tear away the land
To flush away God's handy work and leave us, concrete sand.
And the bush is broken, dying, in a sacrifice of sound,
And yet, one blood red waratah marks this as hallowed ground.

"How can it be?", you ask me, "Why has our land been slain,
Has its beauty now been ravished for the sake of fiscal gain?"
"To improve our company spreadsheet, increase its dividend,
To pay the owners overseas big bonuses my friend."
But the bush is slowly dying, in a litany of sound,
And now, the blood red waratah, lies broken on the ground.

(Ken Dean)

In The Bush

With a walking party Bunyip revisited an area he had not seen for 50 years — Bundeena. In those days it was no more than a few ramshackle huts and houses facing the Port Hacking River and only accessible via rutted dirt road to Audley. Now there is a well laid out village of classy homes with good bitumen and guttered roads and paths running wherever needed.

The jackets, jumpers and gloves worn to face the early morning trip from the mountains were soon discarded once the wharf was left. Bougainvilleas, hibiscus and soft bodied shrubs and trees were standard fixtures in houses gardens and we felt that we were many miles north of Sydney.

Once the Cliff Track was reached at the town's outskirts we were into typical Sydney sandstone heath which stretched southward as far as the eye could see. Despite the last fires, ground cover seemed complete though immature and flowering shrubs were scarce. The sandy nature of the soil and very heavy usage have led to tracks become very deep gullies, in some places 4 to 5 feet deep. NPWS has laid down many iron meshed lengths of keep walkers off the ground level plants. This mechanised material among the natural bush is a bit of an eye sore but so are eroded gullies. The lofty cliff line, the rock platforms and the crashing breakers give the walk a special character especially to mountain dwellers.

went on, past Marley, Wattamolla, Eagle Rock and on to the YHA hut behind Garie Beach where we had made a booking. It was equipped with gas burners, bunks and blankets and cooking utensils (\$7 a night) and so we were spared much weight carrying. Next day there was only a 10K walk on to Otford Station and a comfortable train to Central.

I recommend the walk. It's a bit tatty but so different to the mountain walks. Pamphlets and map are available from NPWS but YHA hostel accommodation has to be booked and in this case a key issued.—*The Bunyip*.

Welcome to New Members

Aileen and Val Solomon, Blackheath
Aileen and Daniel Beaver, Bullaburra
Judith Aggett, Faulconbridge
Belinda Pursey, Wentworth Falls
Katherine Crawford, Faulconbridge
Andrew Kennedy, Double Bay
Janice Adams, Glenbrook
Pearl F Adams, Wentworth Falls

History of Our Walking Tracks

Part 5. (Extracts from Jim Smith's Draft Historical Report for the Walking Track Heritage Study.)

Towns Vied for Tourism

The main attraction of the Blue Mountains tourist industry up until the late 1930s was the natural scenery. Access to this environment was facilitated by bushwalking tracks. Each town's tourism industry operated independently and in competition with the other towns.

As the main tourism resource was the bushwalking tracks, each town's trustees tried to develop the local track system as much as possible. This led to a proliferation of tracks that is unique in Australian history.

Bundanoon developed in a similar way to the Blue Mountains towns, with guesthouse accommodation on a high altitude plateau that was cooler than Sydney in summer. The main attraction for the guests were the bushwalks. These walks were developed by trustees in a similar way to those of the Blue Mountains, accessing escarpment lookouts and the valleys and the bases of waterfalls by way of stone steps. But, at Bundanoon, only a few kilometres of track was developed.

In the Blue Mountains there were a dozen "Bundanoons" in close proximity vying against each other to attract tourists. Over a period of about 50 years (1885 to 1935) each town tried to get an edge over the others by extending the walking tracks to "new sights". This process of proliferation reached its highest degree in and around the Jamison Valley.

The independently developed track systems of Wentworth Falls, Leura and Katoomba began to merge. There was a continuous set of passes (Wentworth, Roberts, Lindeman and Federal) at the base of the escarpments and an almost continuous set of tracks at the top of the cliffs. A virtual labyrinth of tracks developed around the "nodes" of the system, Wentworth Falls, Valley of the Waters, Gordon Falls, Leura Falls and Katoomba Falls.

(Next Month: What is the connection between the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Blue Mountains walking tracks?)

The rock colours and their formations were a good compensation for the absence of flowers.

And so we

Join the Jabiluka Blockade

The blockade at Jabiluka grows stronger every day as more and more people join in. Plans are to maintain the blockade until the Wet season sets in at Kakadu, so there is a big need for people to reinforce those already up there.

Bus transport is available from capital cities. You will need to have basic camping gear and be in reasonable health. For details, call the ACF Jabiluka Bus Hotline on 03 9926 6738.

Winter "Discovery"

A few of the activities in the NPWS Winter "Discovery" Program:

- ◆ "Creatures of the Night", guided night walks at Blackheath and Glenbrook.
- ◆ "Aboriginal Art and Engravings"
- ◆ "Historic Glenbrook"
- ◆ "Little Lyrebirds" for the 6-8 year olds.

Call in at NPWS Heritage Centre, Blackheath, or phone 4787.8877.

The Wedgetailed Eagle

Master of the thermals rising,
Effort and display despising,
Prince of crags, by rock face gliding,
Lord of all the bushland places
Ruler of less noble races,
Eyes that see, and brain that traces,
All who enter his domain.

Master of the ridge and valleys
Wings the air as forth he sallies,
Prince and keeper of life's tallies.
Hard of eye, proud, uncaring,
Sharp of talon, lordly bearing,
Life and death are his for sharing,
With all who enter his domain.

(Ken Dean)

Saving the Bush from Us

Part 8: Health in Bushland—Keeping Water

Plants of all types bind soil and allow time for rain water to infiltrate the soil and become part of the soil water bank. It stays there for the plants to use when the dry seasons come. Water is stored in small spaces and adheres to clays and organic matter. The plant roots actively seek out water. Animals too can find a drink from the forked branches of a tree or from the cupped petals of a flower.

But this land, our land, has undergone a process of drying out. When the vegetation is lost, water runs off very fast and carries mainly the best clays and organic matter. If washed to the ocean these are lost to the land for almost infinity. If forming the beds of deep rivers and estuaries, then they contribute to the silt bed and the higher flood levels. Both ways, it is the water table and the aquifers which suffer. The water table is depleted and some plants give up the effort of trying to find deeper water.

Every time it rains in the mountains, the clearing of trees, especially shrubs, and the paved surfaces contribute to enormously fast water loss. The water has not time to be cleaned by the macrophytes, or infiltrate and replenish the aquifers. It leaves dirty.

What We Can Do: Of course, we can plant and plant densely at first. Some plants can later be culled for mulch or firewood.

First, start planting uphill. Whether it is water or soil, it gathers speed and erosive power as it moves down the slope. By starting at the top, the water and soil particles are slowed down. Make simple drains along the contours to slow down water movement. And this will also catch water for the new seedlings as they grow. The general rule is the steeper the slope, the closer the drains. Planting on the top of hills and ridges is very efficient in replenishing ground water.

Make saucers around the new seedlings and mulch them with local leaf litter to keep the soil weedfree, and evaporation low. If there is heavy rain and the saucers fill up, the run-off from one plant should flow to another below it on the slope. Keep the soil covered with mulch which is most effective in prohibiting the famous splash effect of raindrops.

New planting can be designed as windbreaks to stop dessication of the soil and plants at the height of summer. I use Acacias and then interplant longterm species when there is good protection. Remember that a windbreak protects its height by twenty times along the ground, so be careful in a backyard block not to plant trees which will grow to be enormous. And a windbreak species should have leaves to the ground to ensure the wind actually rises and is also deflected. (A row of Eucalypts is not a windbreak.)

So, we have slowed the water flow to let it infiltrate the soil. Now, we also add to the amount of run-off from garden hoses, and perhaps washing machines and household water. In this case, we are also responsible for cleaning it before it leaves out boundaries. This is quite a challenge.

JULY

19 (Sun)
21 (Tues)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Kids' Club — Early morning Bird Walk (details on page 1).
Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group, 9-12. Meet at The Hut at 9 am. Contact Jessica Yuille 4757.2783.

23 (Thu)
31 (Fri)

Committee Meeting. Mid Mountains Community Centre, 7 pm.
General Meeting at The Hut, 7.30 pm. — Guest Speaker: Gaye Spies, "Sugarloaf Creek" (more information on page 1)

Leisure Walks

06 (Mon) **Rachel's Track/Clifftop/Braeside.** Meet 9.30 Blackheath Neighbourhood

Centre. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958.
13 (Mon) **The Pheasant's Cave, Mount Wilson.** Meet 9.30 Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Contact Jan Cutler 4784.3079.

20 (Mon) **Mount Boyce.** Meet 9.30 Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Contact Gillian Janus 4787.6181.

27 (Mon) **Mystery Walk.** Meet 9.30 Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Contact Jan Cutler 4784.3079

Bushwalks (Weekends)

05 (Sun) **The Tessalated Pavement, Mount Irvine.** Meet 9.30 Mount Victoria Station. Contact Christine Davies 4787.7246. (previously rained out)

18 (Sat) **Blue Gum Swamp to Grose Lookout.** Meet Cnr. Hawkesbury and White Cross Roads, Winnalee, at 9.30. Contact Ron Wheeler 4757.1526. (See how Blue Gum Swamp has regenerated after bushfire.)

AUGUST

20 (Thu) **Committee Meeting.** Mid Mountains Community Centre, 7 pm.
28 (Fri) **General Meeting** at The Hut, 7.30 pm.

Leisure Walks

03 (Mon) **Terrace Falls.** Meet 9.30 War Memorial, Honour Avenue, Lawson. Contact Kees Putting 4759.1958. (Some rough patches)

10 (Mon) **Mystery Walk.** Meet 9.30 Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre. Contact Rose Hodgson 4787.7121.

17 (Mon) **The Nature Trail.**

24 (Mon) **McMahon's Lookout.**

Bushwalks (Weekends)

02 (Sun) **Glastonbell** — a lovely walk at Glastonbell, Bell. Meet at Mount Victoria Station at 9.30. Contact Christine Davies 47 877 246.

Dirty, soapy type water can be used to water exotic vegetables and fruit trees, when the action of mulch, organic matter, and high use of nutrients by exotic plants, act as a filter before the water reaches the water table or flows into bushland.

Macrophytes, plants which usually look like reeds, will actively take up some toxins and nutrient excess. You will see this in hanging swamps and at the headwaters of rivers and creeks where there is an amphitheatre type landscape. Wetlands can be thought of as giant water filters. You can make your own. I have a good design.

Another type of filter is the use of bush plants which can tolerate nutrient enriched water. Typically, this would be the tea tree. These can be designed as a barrier between disturbed land and the local indigenous bush. Often they can be harvested for firewood or household building purposes.

Enough water falls from the sky to meet all our needs. Usually we say 'it is too soon, too late, too much, or too little'. In fact, it is up to us to catch it and store it to stretch out seasons we think are not favourable.

There are a few rules about ethical use of water which are challenging to apply: The first is, that all the water coming to your place should be stored there — in plants, in animals and in the ground. The second is, that any water leaving your place should leave it clean. This means designing plant and soil systems in a mimicry of nature to let this happen.

The personally creative and satisfying process is finding the techniques to do this for your land and garden. — *Ro Morrow.* (Next Time: Garden Filters)

The Magic Road

On a wet Saturday we journeyed along

Bernard O'Reilly's "Magic Road" to school, a short walk across paddocks and alongside Long Swamp Creek which was a magic road to a little boy whose wonderful imagination and love of nature led to the writing of "Cullenbenbong".

Never mind the rain and the mud and the cocktail of grass seeds which attached themselves to our shoes and sox, thanks to Jim Smith's contagious enthusiasm and his unique way of teaching, it was a magic road for us too!

At a little church hall where we stopped for lunch to escape the rain Jim read to us Bernard's descriptions of the home near Long Swamp Creek and of his journeys to school. Then we went to the old O'Reilly property and met Mrs Hadley, then 82 years old, who had lived there since a child.

The original slab house which was the O'Reilly family's main living room is still standing. As described by Bernard O'Reilly, strips of iron cover the gaps between the slabs, and there are remnants of the newspapers which lined the walls, with special pages from colour magazines which had received pride of place. Nobody minded that the slabs were not "two feet wide" (perhaps too the swimming holes in Long Swamp were not quite as deep as a five year old remembers).

Then along the magic road, on the way feasting on sweet blackberries and finding the landmarks which had been given names by the O'Reilly children.

As we sat in the ruins of the tiny red schoolhouse, under the gigantic pine tree which had been planted when the school was opened, Jim read for us Bernard's descriptions of his school and schooldays and boyhood friends. It was a magic day!

— *Christine Davies.*