

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



Local Provenance Important

At our general meeting on Friday 30 October, Shelley Bergin will talk about the importance of local provenance in native plants.

Shelley Bergin, who was one of our expert witnesses at the recent Commission of Enquiry into Draft LEP97, is Associate Professor at the Centre for Integrated Catchment Management, University of Western Sydney, and Chair of Greening Australia.

The meeting starts at 7.30 pm.

A Trap for European Wasps

European Wasps reproduce in the spring and summer and the larvae, which take about four weeks to develop from egg to adult, are fed meat. Workers are attracted to food scraps and pet food, carrying pieces of meat to the nest to feed the queen and larvae.

From each nest will emerge 80 or more queens which hibernate during winter. Each will begin a new nest in spring.

Using a simple trap, a nest can be eliminated in 2-3 weeks by starvation.

- Add a squirt of detergent to 10 cm of water in a bucket.
- Suspend some cooked meat tied to wire mesh bent over the lip of the bucket (the mesh stops birds eating the bait).
- Hoist the trap high from a tree or clothes line, luring wasps away from pets and children.
- Wasps take meat and land to adjust their load — and drown.
- At dusk, empty the trap of bodies (a build-up of bodies can be used as landing platforms).

Bonnie Doon Fauna Study Group have organised the production of a bookmark with this information. These are being printed by the Department of Agriculture and will be available in October. Clr. Neall arranged for BMCC to sponsor the printing.

If enough people help, we can eliminate European Wasps from the Mountains.

European
Wasp Trap

Election 98

The optimist might believe that the Australian electorate is no longer tempted by politicians holding out fists full of dollars. There are many crucial environmental issues which are not being adequately addressed by the major parties during this election campaign.

The Australian Democrats' 39-page Statement on the Environment attempts to address many of the environmental problems facing Australia. The Greens suggest a European-style eco-tax.

The Australian Conservation Foundation finds that the environmental policies of both major parties are "weak", although "Labor is a nose ahead". At the time of writing the Australian Conservation Foundation has not endorsed any party and intends to judge the parties against an environmental log of claims dealing with issues as critical as Jabiluka, global warming and native title.

Some of the issues which might be relevant to voters in the Blue Mountains at the October 3 poll are:

Warragamba Dam: Construction of the second spillway has been commenced. Will this be the end of the campaign to raise the dam wall?

Western Railway: Freight and passenger services could benefit from a \$113 million national allocation in Labor's proposed Telstra Reward Fund, and from strong primary votes for the Australian Democrats and Greens — both strong supporters of rail.

Badger's Creek Airport: This is still the Government's preferred option according to Mark Vaile, Liberal Minister for Transport, and Labor is very quiet on the subject, but has not rejected the idea.

Federal Support for Recycling: The Australian Local Government Association is seeking a commitment from Federal candidates to force industry to pay more towards the cost of appropriate disposal of their products. Democrats and Greens have always been very strong on recycling.

Threats to World Heritage: Jabiluka Uranium Mine — the protests continue; **Hinchinbrook** — an environmental disaster.

Federal Environment Powers: Under the Liberal Government important environment protection powers to be transferred from the Commonwealth to the States. The bill has already been tabled.

Global Warming: Australia "won" concessions at the Kyoto, Japan conference. That is, the Liberal Government argued for an increase in Greenhouse Gas production, contrary to world-wide trends.

Members should question the representatives on these important issues.

Bushears Group

The Valley of the Waters Bushears Group meets at the Conservation Hut once a month, starting at 9 am.

The next work days are:

Tuesday 20 October

Monday 16 November

More volunteers are needed.

If you live nearby please come along to see what we are doing. Enquiries to Jessica 4757.2783.

Native Plant Sale

On Saturday 17 October there will be a sale of local native plants at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, from 9 am to noon.

The plants are grown at the Society's nursery, which is open for volunteer work and sales every Tuesday, 9 am to 1 pm. Enquiries David Coleby 4784.1395.

Bird Watching

It was fun. I found some beautiful gum leaves which I drew.

We heard a Lewin's Rail. Not many people have seen this one as it likes to hide in the blackberry patch.

We made a bird whistler by rubbing a piece of wet glass with some styrafoam. We called up white-browed scrub wrens with it. We saw 12 birds.

—Isla Curtis, 7 years old.

(The next Kids' Club activity is on Wednesday 7 October, details on page 4.)

"Hut News", the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

P.O.Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782. Phone 4757 1872. Fax 4757 1753

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

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: bellfin@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

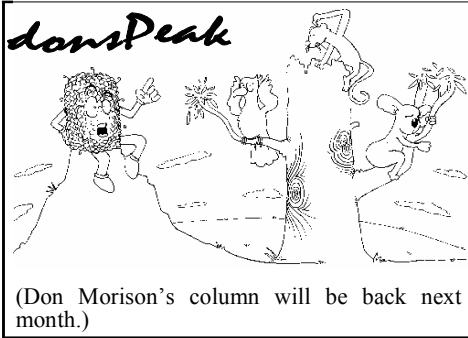
Projects: Philippa Fincher,Ph:4787-6436 Email: bellfin@pnc.com.au; Kathy Gott,Ph:4739-8124

Publicity: Catriona Gillies, Ph:4782-1235; Bushcare: Helga Esamie, Ph. 4787.7690

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

THE DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER



(Don Morison's column will be back next month.)

Last Chance for the Snowy

One of Australia's most famous waterways — the Snowy River — is at the forefront of a national campaign that could help save all Australian rivers suffering from excessive water extraction.

The Snowy River has received less than 1% of its original flow since the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme cut the rest off at Jindabyne Dam in the 1960s. The result is a river that is weed infested, dirty, silted up, salty and dry.

Three years ago a panel of scientific experts warned that the river was dying. They recommended at least 28% of its original flow be returned to save it. The NSW, Victorian and Federal Governments will soon be deciding what flow, if any, the Snowy River will get back prior to the full corporatisation of the Snowy Scheme.

This is the last chance for the Snowy River to recover and it is important the governments get as many (original) letters as possible supporting return of flows. If the Snowy is brought back from the brink, other rivers, suffering as badly, will benefit.

For more information on what to do see the enclosed leaflet or contact Fran Kelly at Total Environment Centre on 02 9247 4714.

Welcome to New Members

Rudi Christen, Glenbrook
 Robyn Collier, Springwood
 Narelle Pfeiffer, Leura
 Joan Darr, Glenbrook
 S & A Champion, Mt Riverview

World Heritage Update

We have now received our own copy of the **Blue Mountains World Heritage Nomination** — a superbly presented 290 page document, which includes many colour photographs and makes a very powerful case supporting the nomination.

The eight areas covered by the nomination are all protected areas in State ownership. There are seven National Parks — Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Yengo, Gardens of Stone, Kanangra-Boyd, Nattai and Thirlmere Lakes — and Jenolan Caves Karst Conservation Reserve. The area covered

is 10,326 square kilometres — 15% the size of Tasmania.

To be inscribed on the World Heritage Register, nominated areas must meet **at least one** of the criteria defined by the World Heritage Convention. For areas nominated for their **Natural** values (as distinct from their **Cultural** values), there are four possible criteria, set out in Clause 44 (a):

(i) The areas must be outstanding examples representing major stages of the earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.

(ii) The areas must be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.

(iii) The areas must contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional beauty and aesthetic importance.

(iv) The areas must contain the most important and significant natural habitats for *in situ* conservation of biological diversity, incl. those containing threatened species of universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The Blue Mountains Nomination is based on clauses 44 (a) (ii) to (iv). There was a good deal of controversy about claiming that the Greater Blue Mountains Area also met the Clause 44 (a) (i). The nomination contains the statement "While this nomination does not at this time rely on criterion 44 (a) (i) to claim inscription of the Greater Blue Mountains on the World Heritage List, such a case may well be mounted in the future, when there is greater resolution of the present debate on aspects of the area's geology."

In addition, the nomination makes a case for acceptance under Clause 24 (a) (vi) a **Cultural** criterion which requires that the area be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

The nomination is now three months into its eighteen month review period. International referees will be appointed to review the nomination document, plus the array of material sent to support the nomination. Referees will also make onsite inspections, and discuss the nomination with experts in Australia, and internationally, leading to the International Committee's review and determination in late 1999.

Six copies of the nomination document were sent to Paris. The society's copy is one of forty that were prepared for distribution to organisations involved in the nomination process, to libraries, local MPs and government. **Our copy is possibly unique**, in that it has been signed by people who

played a major part in the preparation of the document — including Keith Muir from the Colong Foundation (leading proponents of the nomination), Geoff Mosley, who wrote the original book proposing the Blue Mountains for World Heritage and Joan Domicelj, who coordinated the preparation of the nomination document. Representatives from NPWS and Environment Australia, all heavily involved in the process, have also signed our copy. This very special document can be viewed by arrangement with Kevin Bell, phone 4787-6436.

After ten years of agitation from environmentalists, the nomination has now been prepared. The Nomination team have done an excellent job, and are confident of success. Having got this far, another fifteen months does not seem very long to wait for the outcome!

— Les Coyne.

Uranium Mining Madness

This Uranium Mining Madness at Jabiluka must stop.

The political decision to sanction Uranium mining at Jabiluka is a scandalous example of the collusion between corporate greed and official vandalism.

This rare and precious part of our National Heritage belongs, not only to us, but to the whole world. The Uranium effluent which would be discharged from this deplorable operation would pollute and destroy the wetlands and creeks of the whole area and deny the proper use of them to the traditional owners of the land who have fished and hunted there for millenniums of time, the sacred sites that they have venerated in that time would be defiled.

Our politicians and developers are engaged in a criminal folly when no way is known to safely dispose of the tailings of mining operations and the spent fuel rods at the other end of the atomic energy madness.

It is outrageous that politicians of all colours should condone this appalling act of vandalism.

Ultimately it is inevitable that other sources of energy will be found that will not leave a trail of devastation behind them. We demand that all our resources of skill and ingenuity will be directed at finding energy sources which will not leave a legacy of dangerous devastation.

(Signed:)

Tom Bass, AM, Sculptor.

Dr Margo Hoekstra, BSc, BA, MBBS, MPM.
 13th September 1998.

The world will long pay the toll of mining in Jabiluka; Australians do not want it to occur; the indigenous owners of the country deserve not to have it forced on them.

Let's have Jabiluka, pure and simple - its culture intact, its landscape unviolated, its uranium held securely by the ancient spirits of the earth; rather than ripped forth to the peril of present and future generations.

Tom Keneally
 14th September 1998.

Membership Enquiries

Contact Ross Coster

(Phone - Work) 02 4759.1247

(Phone - Home) 02 4759.1837

(Fax) 02 4759.1095

(Email) haytech@pnc.com.au

(Post) PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Looking Back

(From the Society's newsletter No. 6, September 1971)

Walkabout with Graham: Helpers at Thornbill's Nest.

An unusual feature of many Australian Birds is that they have "helpers" to feed the young. Last season, at Minni Ha Ha park, we observed three *Sitellas* feeding the young at the nest. In a nearby tree was the nest of a brown headed Honeyeater, and **five** adults were feeding the **two** young. This season (August) there is a Striated Thornbill's nest at Leura Bath attended by no less than **seven** adults. What is more, they have twice been observed to feed the young in one minute flat.

There are many Currawongs in the picnic park, seeking food scraps. The Thornbills "buzz" them constantly and won't go near their nest while they are present. When the Currawongs leave, the lightning feeding operations take place.

The nest near the top of the next tree is always approached from below and inside the tree, a *Hakea dactyloides*. No more than two birds are in the tree at once, one feeding and one approaching. A remarkable achievement for these small brown birds, to bring up a brood, surrounded by voracious Currawongs! May be a flock succeeds where a pair would fail?

A new use for Paper Hankies

Paper handkerchiefs are an eyesore in the bush and a headache for rangers. But Striated Thornbills find them useful.

These small brown birds decorate (or camouflage?) their nests with an outer covering of spiderweb cocoons. This year they are using scraps of white tissues as a substitute and/or supplement to the webbing. Six nests discovered so far have all used some. No other sort of paper is used. Despite the expensive PR advertising the birds reject the coloured tissues!!

(Graham Alcorn)

In the Bush

I have written about the rough and lonely country of the Wollongambe but one has only to drive about 10 kms along Kings Tableland road leading to McMahons Point, and the same atmosphere may be experienced.

A road of sorts once linked Wentworth Falls to the farms of Burraborang and the lower Cox. Jim Barrett in his interesting book 'Life in the Burraborang' describes how pigs and other produce were driven over it to Wentworth Falls in a three-day journey. On the second night out they were rested and watered at Notts Swamp, now private property.

George Nott selected the site in 1891 probably because of the permanent water and arable land. By 1910 he had raised ten children and one can feel that every opportunity had to be seized to exploit the site and the surrounds.

Council Watch

1st September Council meeting was an interesting event. The Society made a submission supporting Council Officers' recommendations against the re-zoning of a block of residential land in Wentworth Falls to Rural Industry for the purpose of a mineral water bottling and distribution business, and urged Council to be more forceful in requiring the owners to restore and rehabilitate the Environmental Protection area of their property which they had cleared.

We argued that the removal of the native vegetation had most likely led to the dying back of the fern covering and the drying out of the peat to expose the spring in the first place, and that the hanging swamp which was just below the spring and in National Park would suffer as a consequence from weed infestation and drying.

Danny Wotherspoon, speaking on behalf of the owners, argued that removal of water from the hanging swamp system would not have any negative impact. The owners would scientifically monitor the situation and replace the water they removed with tap water which had been subjected to reverse osmosis and was then of comparable quality (one did wonder why they didn't just bottle the treated tap water!).

Cr. Gaul inquired what would happen during water restriction periods to which there was no satisfactory reply. Cr. Clarke asked what would happen to all the hanging swamps if a precedent was set for this case. Cr. Hamilton said it was a preposterous request considering the fragility of our hanging swamps and the flora and fauna that depend on their pristine condition.

The Councillors unanimously rejected the application. — *Philippa Fincher.*

It is too fanciful to conjecture that the numerous traces of old bush tracks along spurs and ridges running off the McMahons Point road were the result of timber getting and wattle bark harvesting.

A recent stroll took me along a rather obscure track along Notts Ridge. The views are not dramatic but there are historic undertones. Signs of old timber loading ramps, numerous unclaimed lengths of sawn logs and stumps notched for the

reception of planks for the axemen may be seen. In one clearing there was a substantial coil of sniggling cable.

One's mind can't help dwelling on the economic

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Above the ashes straight and tall,
Through ferns with moisture dripping,
I climb beneath the sandstone wall,
My feet on mosses slipping.

Like ramparts round the valley's edge
The tinted cliffs are standing,
With many a broken wall and ledge,
And many a rocky landing.

And round about their rugged feet
Deep ferny dells are hidden
In shadowed depths, whence dust and heat
Are banished and forbidden.

The stream that, crooning to itself,
Comes down a tireless rover,
Flows calmly to the rocky shelf,
And there leaps bravely over.

Now pouring down, now lost in spray
When mountain breezes sally,
The water strikes the rock midway,
And leaps into the valley.

Now in the west the colours change,
The blue with crimson blending;
Behind the far Dividing Range,
The sun is fast descending.

And mellowed day comes o'er the place,
And softens ragged edges;
The rising moon's great placid face
Looks gravely o'er the ledges.

Henry Lawson

During 1888 Lawson spent some time at Mount Victoria, working on building jobs with his father and 'the Mountain Push'. It was a happy time for him, with yarns round the fire at night and long walks in the bush. Some of his love of the mountains shows in this and other poems. (Chris Kempster, from his book, "The Songs of Henry Lawson".)

conditions of the day
which would make it
worthwhile to fell,
transport and mill a
hardwood log.
Labour must have
been very very cheap
and muscle highly desirable.

Today a brooding silence hovers over the walker as he sits munching his tasty sandwiches and drinks, confident in the knowledge that a comfortable chariot awaits his return from the forest to give him an easy drive home.

Another nice easy walk on Notts Ridge is along a very unused track to Sally Wattle Water Holes. It leads to a small untouched waterhole at the base of a low cliff and essential for bush workers no doubt.

Along the track were quite a few bushes of the earliest flowering *Boronias* (*ledifolia*) and masses of

**Leaves of
Bossiaea
rhombifolia**

yellow pea flower (perhaps *Bossiaea rhombifolia*). These together with the snowy white masses of *Leucopogon* made a most attractive display (observations made in early September).

— *The Bunyip.*

A Threat to Biodiversity

A recent edition of "New Scientist" published an article by Bob Holmes on "The McDonaldisation of the Natural World".

Conservation biologists and ecologists are becoming aware of the homogenization of the natural world and consider it as big a threat to the planet as global warming, deforestation or desertification. Biologists point out that they find the same flora and fauna regardless of where they go and introduced species are wiping out native species.

Species now found around the world such as sparrows, rats, cats, lantana, and in our own area we can include gorse, blackberry, radiata pine and willows etc, are destroying habitats of local flora and fauna. Once you have lost your native species there is no going back.

Ecologists believe that isolation has been a major force in generating the rich diversity of life on earth. Physical barriers have been paramount in generating biological diversity — man has broken down those barriers. Intentionally or not, we are giving every species of plant and animal a chance to hitch a ride all around the world — whether it be in bilge water of cargo vessels or in the containers themselves. History shows that when isolation breaks down it can lead to extinction.

New Zealand has lost the moa, kiwi and the largest eagle the world has ever known and has gained the sparrow and starling. Nearly 2000 species of introduced plants have become naturalised in Australia.

The article can be found in 27 June '98 issue of New Scientist.—*Philippa Fincher.*

At the Temples of Doom

On a recent bushwalk to the "Temples of Doom", walkers made a list of their impressions.

They saw "fascinating rock formations", "moss-covered pagodas", "mossy rocks, a treat to the eyes", "Epacris reclinata, bright pink and growing upright", "grey-green bush with splashes of yellow", and noticed "cracks in some pagodas from mining underneath".

They enjoyed "good company" and the "wonderful silence" broken by the "calls of the whip bird", and judged it a "magical place" and a "fantastic walk" — "relaxing", "pleasant and interesting" and "worth a trip back".

The new expanded walks program is a huge success. Many thanks to all the members who have volunteered to lead walks.

Big Action for Jabiluka

A recent trip to Jabiluka by seven Mountain people (who drove all the way after the Jabiluka bus was cancelled at short notice) has inspired the organisation of a "Big Action Rally" at Govetts Leap on 29 September.

Many thanks to Sabine Erika for providing a copy of the poem by Tom Keneally and the letter by Tom Bass and Margo Hoekstra to include in our newsletter (on page 2).

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
OCTOBER					3 Bushwalk	
		7 Kids Club			10 Bushwalk	
12 LeisWalk					17 PlantSale	18 Bushwalk
	20 Bushcare	21 MC Meet			24 Bushwalk	
26 LeisWalk		28 Bushwalk		30 Gen Meet		
NOVEMBER						1 Bushcare Bushwalk
2 LeisWalk						8 Bushwalk
9 LeisWalk					14 Bushwalk	
16 Bushcare LeisWalk					21 MC Meet	22 Bushwalk
23 LeisWalk		25 Bushwalk		27 Gen Meet		29 Bushcare Bushwalk
30 LeisWalk						

OCTOBER

- 17 (Sat) **Sale of Local Native Plants.** At the Conservation Hut, 9 am to noon.
- 21 (Wed) **Committee Meeting** 7 pm, Mid Mountains Community Centre.
- 30 (Fri) **General Meeting at The Hut.** 7.30 pm — Shelley Burgin (see page 1).

NOVEMBER

- 21 (Sat) **Committee Meeting,** 9 am,
- 27 (Fri) **General Meeting at The Hut.** 7.30 pm. Guest speaker Jim Smith.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES (Parents are welcome to come along.)

OCTOBER

- 07 (Wed) **Kids' Club — Visit to the Tip.** (What happens to our rubbish? See a car being crushed! How does the weighbridge work?) Meet 10 am, Katoomba Tip entrance. ☎ Jessica 4757.2783 (wear strong footwear).

BUSHCARE (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves. Contact Blue Mountains City Council to find out about other bushcare groups in your area.)

OCTOBER

- 20 (Tue) **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group.** Meet 9 am at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls. Contact Jessica 4757.2783. **IF WET, COME ON THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY.**

NOVEMBER

- 01 (Sun) **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group.** Meet 9 am at the Reserve. Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.
- 16 (Mon) **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group.**
- 29 (Sun) **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group.**

BUSHWALKS (Usually day walks — bring lunch and minimum 1 litre water)

Bushwalks have been graded: 1-3 easy; 4-7 medium; 8-10 hard. People coming by train or in need of transport should contact the leader.

OCTOBER

- 03 (Sat) **Old Linden Sawmill.** Meet Linden Fruit Market 9.30 am. Grade M5. Contact Barbie Wylie 4784.1954. (If fine bring BBQ food.)
- 10 (Sat) **Walls Cave.** Meet Blackheath Station commuter carpark 9.30 am. Contact Philippa Fincher 4787.6436. Grade M4. (Morning Walk — bring morning tea and a drink).
- 18 (Sun) **Radiata (Elphinstone) Plateau.** Meet at the Explorers' Tree at 9.30 am. Contact Jim Wallace 4784.3305. Grade M7.
- 24 (Sat) **Falconbridge Point.** Meet Falconbridge Station at 9 am. Contact Liz Stark 4754.4966. Grade M5.
- 28 (Wed) **Walls Ledge and Porter's Pass.** Meet 10 am Blackheath Commuter Carpark. Contact Christine Davies 47 877 246. Grade M5.

NOVEMBER

- 01 (Sun) **The Hanging Garden.** Meet Wentworth Falls Station carpark (near clock) at 9.30 am. Contact Christine Davies 47 877 246. Grade M5.
- 08 (Sun) **The Wonderland Track and Three Brothers.**
- 14 (Sat) **Fortress Ridge.**
- 22 (Sun) **Woodford Weir/Paradise Pool.**
- 25 (Wed) (To be advised next month)
- 29 (Sun) **Red Ledge Pass.**

LEISURE WALKS (Usually morning walks — bring a drink and morning tea.

Note: During Daylight Saving, leisure walkers meet at 8.30 am)

OCTOBER

- 12 (Mon) **Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens.** Meet 9.30 Blackheath Neigh.Centre. Contact Lee Tredennick 4757.4030. BBQ lunch at the gardens. (BYO).
- 26 (Mon) **Gladstone, Moya Lookouts, Cathedral Rock.** Meet 8.30 Lower Carpark, Fairmont. Contact Jan Cutler 4784.3079. (BBQ lunch after.)

NOVEMBER

- 02 (Mon) **Valhalla Head.** Meet 8.30 Blackheath Neigh.Centre. Contact Gillian Janus 4787.6181. (BYO BBQ afterwards).
- 09 (Mon) **Grose Valley Views.**
- 16 (Mon) **Lockleys Pylon.**
- 23 (Mon) **Mystery Trip.**
- 30 (Mon) **Wall's Ledge.**