



HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

From the President

With the State election looming next year, the Society will be actively working to promote nature conservation in our area. One priority is to ask for increased funding for weed control and pest management in national parks and other areas. Of course, another focus is to gain protection for the beautiful pagoda landscapes found in the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal Area.

To that end, I was pleased to go camping in Ben Bullen State Forest with Catherine Cusack, the Shadow Minister for the Environment, in early September. The visit was one activity co-ordinated by the Nature Conservation Council of NSW for the Year of Biodiversity. It was great to get out and look at the beautiful area we hope to protect.

Talking about nature conservation, it seems hard to believe that it has been ten years since the declaration of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA). This wonderful achievement was due to the hard work of many people including members of the Society. It is now time to celebrate this occasion and to reflect on the beauty, botanical diversity and cultural heritage of the area.

David Brazil, former Management Committee, worked hard to put together a grant application which has resulted in funding from the Federal Government for a special website with 360 degree photos of the GBMWA. A sub-committee, co-ordinated by Alan Page, is now putting this together and many members of the local community are involved. Rather than attempt to conjure up some images in your head, I would encourage all bushwalkers, photographers and nature lovers to come and see it for yourselves at our next monthly meeting.

Thank you to all of those members who attended the picnic. A special thank you to the Gang Gang bush orchestra and to Rob Baigent for his hard work on the Sustainable Living Competition.

Speak to you next month, Tara Cameron

Monthly Meeting at The Hut

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience

On Monday 29th November we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the declaration of the Greater Blue Mountains as a world heritage area. The Greater Blue Mountains consists of eight national parks and reserves, encompassing a combined area of over one million hectares stretching from near Singleton in the Hunter Valley to Mittagong in the Southern Highlands. It must be unique to have such a vast, virtually untouched wilderness preserved so close to one of the world's great cities.

We were intent on marking this milestone event and successfully applied for a grant from the Federal Government under its **Caring For Our Country** initiative. The grant is for the development of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience (GBMWHE), an online project intended to mark the anniversary and reinforce the environmental significance of the declaration. (You can read all about this exciting project on page 3 of this newsletter.)

An initial version of the **Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience** will be demonstrated at the Society's October Monthly Meeting.

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society Monthly Meeting
Conservation Hut, (end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls)
7.30 pm, Friday 29 October, 2010**

Come along and share the excitement. Visitors are very welcome.

Annual Picnic, Saturday 26 September

The weather was perfect, music from the Gang Gangs was great. It was good to meet other members of the Society and share a barbeque lunch.

Activities included a walk down Darwin's walk, announcement of the winner of the Sustainable Living Competition (see page 7). Tara organised the tug-a-war, sack races and three legged races. It was all great fun.



Don't forget: Set Saturday 27 November aside to bring the family and friends to our BUSH DANCE to celebrate 10 years of Blue Mountains World Heritage. Bush dancing is fun for young and old. The Gang Gang Bush Orchestra will make the music and Patrick will call the dances. The Bush Dance will be held at the Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson, starting at 6pm.

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

Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au

Web page: www.bluemountains.org.au

President: Tara Cameron

4751 1130 domtara@bigpond.com

Senior Vice President: Liz van Reyswoud

4751.2694, 0418206899

mcreysw@bigpond.net.au

Second Vice President: John Haydon

0403 797 585

jhaydonmc@optusnet.com.au

Treasurer: Bart Beech (h)4739 9947

(f)9688 1440 (w)9896 9512

bart.beech@invensys.com

Administration Officer: Rob Baigent

4759 3104 robbaigent@iprimus.com.au

CC/Sustainability Officer: Lis Bastion

4787 7533 ebastion@stopleaughing.com.au

Environmental Education Officer:

Chris Yates 4784 3407

christopher.yates@det.nsw.edu.au

Lithgow Regional Subcommittee Coordinator:

Chris Jonkers 6355 1179

chrisandjulie@active8.net.au

Meetings Secretary: Michael Maack

4751 3623 maack@ozemail.com.au

Membership Secretary: Lachlan Garland

4757 1929 lachlan.a.garland@bigpond.com

Monthly Meeting Convenor: VACANT

National Parks Officer: Brian Marshall

4784.1148, briannamar@bigpond.com

Plant Nursery Manager: Kevin Bell

ph/fax 4787.6436 kevinbell@eftel.net.au

Publicity Officer: Peter Green

4751 9474 peter@pwgreen.id.au

Website Officer: Alan Page 4784 1704

webmaster@bluemountains.org.au

Bushcare/Threatened Species Officer:

Clive Heywood Barker 0413 577 160

ozubundu@hotmail.com

Project Officer-Gardens of Stone:

Karen McLaughlin 6355 2835

karen.mclaughlin@aussiebroadband.com.au

Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson

4751.2303, mob 0427 512 303

goodbush@pnc.com.au

Walks Convenor: Maurice Kerkham

4739 4942

mauricekerkham@hotmail.com

Landuse Officer: Ann Cantwell

4751 3215, cantwell@eftel.net.au

Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies

4787 7246 hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

HUT NEWS EDITORIALS

The deadline for the next issue of Hut News
is 20 October 2010

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Lachlan Garland 4757 1929

membership@bluemountains.org.au

PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

BUSHCARE GROUP

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

New members are always welcome.
Phone Karen on 4757 1929.

Nursery News

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager

Markets in October/November: Now that the danger of frost has lessened, although one can never be sure in the Blue Mountains, thoughts start turning to planting and we will offer three good opportunities to buy local plants in October:

- Blackheath Community Markets, at Blackheath Public School from 9am to 1pm, on Sunday 3rd October (and on Sunday 7th November)
- The Garden and Chocolate Lovers Market at Everglades from 10am to 3pm on Sunday the 10th October.
- Lawson Magpie Markets (Lawson Public School from 9am to 2pm) on Sunday 17th October.

As usual, our Lawson nursery will be open on Wednesday mornings but we will suspend our Saturday morning openings (which have been very poorly patronised) during October.

Featured Plant: Our featured plant this month is *Gahnia sieberiana* or the Red-fruited saw sedge, a widespread species along the east coast of Australia and extending into New Guinea and New Caledonia. It is a common plant in the Blue Mountains and is found on damp ground beside swamps or creeks. It is easily recognised by its tufted growth of strap-like leaves which have a sharp edge of deposited silica pointing upwards which can inflict a nasty cut if you run your finger down the leaves the wrong way. It sends up a hollow flower stem up to 2m long with numerous spikelets which are firstly yellow-brown turning to dark brown to black at the fruiting stage. The resulting nuts are a shiny red and quite attractive.

The importance of this plant, apart from being a good stabilizer of damp areas, lies in the fact that it is the host for the larvae of the Sword-grass Brown Butterfly which is considered to be at risk in some areas because of the removal of the Sword-grass. The green eggs are laid individually on the plant and the emerging young caterpillars are green with black heads which turn green at maturity. They congregate hidden with heads downwards at the base of the leaf stems during the day to emerge and feed at night. The chrysalis is also green. You can help to ensure the survival of this beautiful butterfly by planting some of this *Gahnia* in your garden. Although it prefers damp conditions I have one growing in fairly dry soil but near a pond.

The genus, *Gahnia*, honours Dr. Henry Gahn, a Swedish botanist who was a friend of the great naturalist Carolus Linnaeus who established the binomial system of scientific nomenclature. The species name honours the Czech botanist, R.W. Sieber whom we featured in the November 2008 issue of *Hut News*.

Numerous reports state the difficulty of propagating *Gahnia*. We have successfully propagated *G. sieberiana* and *G. aspera* for some years but have had no success with another local and smaller species, *G. microstachya*. We remove most of the red colour from the seeds by abrading between sheets of carborundum paper then plant in a seed-raising mix which is kept constantly damp. Germination is still rather slow (2-3 months) but seedlings survive well after pricking-out. We will have a fresh batch available later in the year. **Kevin Bell.**

Illustration: Postage stamp, Australia Post 1981.



On Monday 29th November we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Greater Blue Mountains being listed as a World Heritage Area.

The Greater Blue Mountains consists of eight national parks and reserves. These being Blue Mountains, Gardens of Stone, Wollemi, Yengo, Kanangra-Boyd, Thirlmere Lakes and Nattai National Parks, and Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve. An area of over one million hectares stretching from Singleton in the Hunter Valley to Mittagong in the Southern Highlands.

World Heritage Areas are listed by UNESCO as places of special cultural or natural significance. The listing endeavours to ensure their protection through national and international recognition.

Together with the Colong Foundation, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society was a major player in gaining the listing.

To be able to do something really special to celebrate the 10th anniversary, we successfully applied for a grant from the Federal Government's Caring For Our Country initiative. David Brazil did much of the work on this application.

The grant is for the development of the **Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience**.

The Project Description reads –

The Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience is an online project developed to mark the 10th Anniversary of the declaration of World Heritage areas in the Blue Mountains.

The site consists of 30-40 interactive images with audio from across the World Heritage area linked via an interactive map.

These stunning immersive experiences are supplemented with stills, video and interpretive information about the unique cultural and environmental features of the World Heritage area and its preservation.

A launch exhibition and event would be held to mark the anniversary.

The primary focus is environmental education, raising awareness of threats, access and engagement using technology to connect a new audience with ancient landscapes.

So if you can image an online map of the GBMWA where you can “click” on highlighted locations and see a 360 degree image taken from that spot with a brief narrative and in some cases a sound recording taken at the location. And then have access to more information - including a description and other images. The description would be of its history, geology, walking tracks, interesting aspects and significance. The images would be of stunning landscapes, flora and fauna.

In addition, most 360 degree images contain “hotspot” links to other locations so you can “jump” there. For example, jumping from lookout to lookout around the Jamison or Grose Valleys.

We have secured the services of an organisation (Panedia) that specialise in taking VR images (360 degree images) and building the website. Aaron Spence, the CEO and Lead Photographer of Panedia, began the “photo shoot” at dawn on Sunday 12th September at Mt. Hay.

National Parks and Wildlife Services is providing access to areas including a shoot inside Jenolan Caves and guiding us around Kedumba Valley.

Significant contributions are being made by Society members and others, including Ian Brown, Wyn Jones, John Low, Gregg Borschmann, Jill Dark and Andy Macqueen.

The GBMWHE has also embraced the "*Shadows in the Bush*", a new enviro-art project for high school students (see page 4) and images from the project will be included on the GBMWHE website.

Taking the initial VR images with Panedia – many of which are truly breathtaking – has revealed the enormous amount of work we need to do to gather and assemble all the other components, and integrate them into the GBMWHE website www.worldheritage.org.au

We are very interested in hearing from Society members who are willing to include some of their photos or stories in the GBMWHE. Full credit will be provided on the website. Anyone interested should email Alan Page at webmaster@bluemountains.org.au - please don't send any images at this stage.

An initial version of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience will be demonstrated at the Society's October Monthly Meeting – Friday 29th October at 7.30 pm at the Conservation Hut.



Sustainable Population and Federal Politics

Peter Green.

Last month's Hut News presented a letter that I had written to the Minister for Population some months prior to the election. During the campaign both sides of politics appeared to recognise a high level of community unease about the extraordinarily high rate of population growth over the past 5 or so years. For both parties this a resilement from previously advocated positions. The attitudinal change exemplified the comment of Phil Koperberg, made at the Katoomba environment summit, to the effect that politicians were followers rather than leaders. Furthermore, the unedifyingly rapid policy shift clearly demonstrated that we have no current statesman in the major parties in federal politics, just political animals.

Two actions encouraged me and then eroded that sense of hope. Firstly, the Minister for Population was renamed the Minister for Sustainable Population. On face value this indicated a true appreciation of the federal government about the impossibility of a constantly expanding population. There was an implied understanding of the finiteness of this planet, its resources and its ability to absorb our wastes. For those of us in Sustainable Population Australia who have been campaigning to educate Australians on this vital subject for a couple of decades, this was truly a watershed moment. Then it crumbled with the Prime Minister's reference to 'sustainable population growth'. A sustainable population, both of Australia and the planet as a whole, is an absolute necessity if we and other species are to continue with a healthy co-existence. Sustainable population growth is an impossibility in a finite system like planet Earth. For the PM to confuse the two phrases and use them interchangeably is to demonstrate an absolute obtuseness on this issue.

It is essential that population be properly handled at a federal level. As Bob Carr found to his frustration, the federal government encourages population growth via its immigration and taxation policies, but the states feel the heat when they are then forced to fund the infrastructure. We should be mindful of the demand that population growth places on infrastructure. Using an illustrative 50 year time frame for infrastructure longevity, a population growth rate of 2% creates a doubling of required expenditure. So, we must double our infrastructure costs for the sake of those not yet here. In other words, a steady state system would enable us to halve our infrastructure expenditure, and allow state governments to catch up the shortfall. So, we should direct our frustration for our inadequate train system, inter alia, on the federal, not state, government. At the same time we should be mindful that there is no aspect of our quality of life that is better with more people, all environmental problems would be eased with fewer people, and the only real winners from continued growth are corporations chasing more customers and a more competitive, desperate workforce.

Peter Green.

Shadows in the Bush

Shadows in the Bush is a new and special enviro-art project being offered to Katoomba High students in 2010 as a pilot.

The project offers a program of a quality-learning three-day bush camp immersion experience within the World Heritage area.

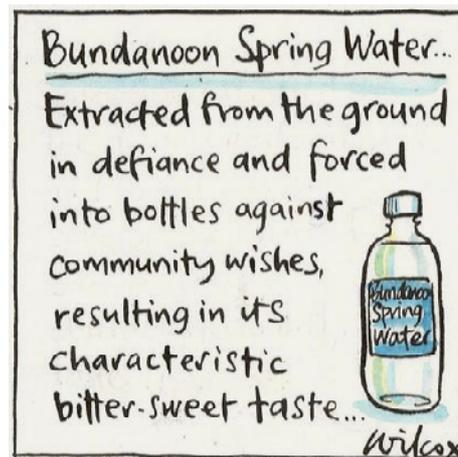
This educational activity engaging in an exploration of a 'Sense of Place' is designed for students in Years 9 -11 who have an interest in both the arts and the environment.

Knowledgeable bush guide presenters will join students in a bush setting. Here students will learn bush skills, the code of conduct of minimal impact and an appreciation of the natural and cultural values of their place. Interpretation of their experiences will be conducted using photography.

The resulting images will be selected and displayed in a public exhibition, to be launched on the 29th November.

Many of these images will also be included as a Photo Gallery on the GBMWHE website.

Bundanoon's bottler of a ban doesn't apply to bores



An article by Ben Cubby, Sydney Morning Herald. 7 Sept 2010. Illustration by Kathy Wilcox.

You can't buy water by the bottle in Bundanoon, but you can export it by the tanker-load.

The first town in the world where the shops

agreed to stop selling bottled water is set to become the site of a boutique water extraction plant, after a long-running court battle.

A Sydney company, Norlex Holdings, was successful in a Land and Environment Court case in which it sought to extract 50 million litres of spring water a year from a bore on the outskirts of the town. The commercial use of the bore, and the potential movement of water tankers along Bundanoon's streets, ignited a community campaign that continued for 15 years. It culminated in the "Bundy on Tap" plan, which led to a vote last year stopping the sale of bottled water from the town's shops on environmental grounds, and the installation of free public bubblers.

But the NSW Land and Environment Court has found the company's approval to extract water, granted in 1995, had not lapsed as surveying and testing work had continued at the site. Justice Rachel Pepper ruled against Wingecarribee Shire Council, which had refused an application for a construction certificate to let the plant go ahead.

Weeding on the edge...

Blue Mountains Region National Parks and Wildlife Service in partnership with Blue Mountains City Council, Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority and the Environmental Trust would like to invite interested bushcarers to take part in Bushcare activities **Weeding on the edge...** from Katoomba through to Wentworth Falls. This comes in an attempt to get more volunteer activities tackling weed problems leading down the catchment into the Jamison Valley, across boundaries. And, to better the look of our beautiful upper Mountains escarpment.

Activities where more help is needed include:

Saturday October 9 come along and help Katoomba Falls Creek Valley Bushcare Group do some work near Katoomba Falls. This will contribute to bettering the Jamison catchment, whilst benefiting habitat for *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii*. 9-1pm

Saturday November 13 catchment protection is occurring at Banksia Park, Katoomba with Banksia Park Bushcare Group. Come and have a closer look and join in for the afternoon. 2-5pm

Saturday/ Sunday November 20 & 21 will be a remote weeding weekend that may include camping overnight. This will be an arduous trip down Jamison Creek into the Valley, looking for weeds and doing some weed control along the creek where possible. It will be a good opportunity for experienced walkers to have a peak down into the catchment, whilst building a team of volunteers interested in other remote weeding work soon to be happening in the Jamison. Limited places.

Sun 5th December is International Volunteers Day. NPWS will be conducting a planting day at Wentworth Falls lookout. Come along and help out – or simply drop by for a quick sausage sanga. A catered lunch will be available for current NPWS volunteers to say thankyou for your contributions. Stop by and say hello. Midday on.

Please RSVP to all of these events. Phone NPWS Volunteer Coordinator Xuela Sledge on 4784 7319 or email: xuela.sledge@environment.nsw.gov.au

Great Grose Weed Walk

The Great Grose Weed Walk is on again. Come and be part of a great group of people tackling Gorse and other weeds. No experience is necessary and there are activities to suit everyone.

Wed 20 October *Weeding with a view* at Govetts Leap, with a special morning tea 9am-1pm

Sunday 24 October Braeside Blitz, Blackheath 9am-3pm

Sat/ Sun 30 & 31 October Acacia Flat remote weeding weekend; Camping involved

Sunday 7 November Katoomba Creek remote weeding; 8.30-4.30

Contact Vanessa Richardson 4787 3112 or email vanessa.richardson@environment.nsw.gov.au

Swampcare

Blue Mountains Swamps are a biologically diverse plant community which provide essential habitat to several Threatened Species and play a vital part in keeping our creeks and waterfalls flowing. Can you help at these swampcare events:

Friday 15 October Swampcare; Connaught Road, Blackheath 9am-2pm

Friday 26 November Swampcare; Maple Grove Swamp, Katoomba 9am-2pm

Contact Michael Hensen mhensen@bmcc.nsw.gov.au (preferred) or phone 4780 5471

NSW take note as Queensland moves to protect it's food production land

The Queensland Government, having identified that the best cropping land, defined as *strategic cropping land*, is a finite resource that must be conserved and managed for the longer term, is introducing new legislation early next year specifically to identify areas of *strategic cropping land* across Queensland as part of the development assessment process. As a general aim, the exercise of planning and approval powers are to be used to protect such land from those developments that lead to its permanent alienation or diminished productivity.

Loss of the highest value agricultural land has the potential to reduce our future capacity to grow crops with associated economic, environmental and social implications. It is high time that the NSW government moved to protect our food production areas – guess we may need to prompt them. Our ability to produce fresh food locally and access to clean drinking water are invaluable! **Kerrie Sebbens**



New bike library a wheely good way of reducing car trips and pollution

Marrickville and City of Sydney councils' Watershed has launched a Bike Library made up of unusual and specialist bikes designed to allow cyclists to carry extra people and cargo.

It encourages the local community to forgo the car and borrow a specialised cargo bicycle or trailer for up to three days instead. Residents and businesses in Marrickville and City of Sydney Councils can join the Bike Library for a one-off fee of \$10 and non-residents can join for \$20. The first three hours of the bicycle hire is free, or \$10 per day and only \$20 for the weekend rate.

Connected Water Symposium Saturday October 30 10-1pm

In a warming world, water will increasingly be in demand. This is likely to result in increased pressure on groundwater resources as people look for alternative sources of water, which in turn will have impacts on groundwater dependant ecosystems such as Blue Mountains Swamps.

The Connected Water Symposium will explore the way groundwater moves in the landscape and connects with surface water (Dr Wendy Timms-UNSW Connected Waters Initiative), how groundwater, swamps and human activities influence surface water quality and how macro-invertebrates can be used as indicators of surface water quality in a range of local and regional settings (Dr Ian Wright-UNSW), how climate change is likely to impact groundwater dependant Blue Mountains Swamps (Dr Dan Ramp-Australian Wetland and Rivers Centre UNSW).

Michael Hensen (BMCC S0S program) and Alan Lane (Streamwatch and groundwater monitoring volunteer) will present some preliminary results of groundwater sampling in Blue Mountains Swamps. Morning tea and lunch will be provided.

To register please contact Michelle by Oct 21 at mhenry@bmcc.nsw.gov.au (preferred) or 4780 5471

Environmental efforts recognised

Katoomba High School science teacher and BMCS environmental education officer Chris Yates has been awarded the 2010 Year of Learning for Sustainability Award of Excellence for Twenty Years of sustainability education.

At Katoomba High School, Chris Yates has installed water tanks to reduce run off and conserve water. He has installed a 6 kilowatt photovoltaic system to reduce our carbon footprint. In the school grounds, regenerating bush land and regenerating eroded sites has been a focus for a considerable number of years. Chris was instrumental in the creation of vegetable gardens for the use of Special Needs students and he has worked with the Parents and Citizens Association to create outdoor learning scapes.

His achievements have not been limited to the school environment but have also been reflected in the strong links he has emphasised with the Science curriculum, particularly in stages 4 - 6 and Stage 6 Environmental Science where students removed introduced species as part of the course work.

Chris and his motivated students actively promoted the use of Sydney Water through the 'Drink Tap Water' program in order to encourage our community to reduce the use of bottled water. (Source: Katoomba High School newsletter 'Katoomba High Flyers', September 2010.)

Hut News was a bit premature in announcing Chris Yates' departure for Asquith Boys High School some months ago. Chris has now left Katoomba High and taken up his teaching duties at Asquith. The Society will be looking for a new Environmental Education Officer.



Photo: BMCC Groundwater Model

World Heritage Advisory Committee

The Australian and NSW Governments are seeking applicants for the community & scientific Advisory Committee for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA).

The Committee's role is to advise on matters relating to the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the GBMWhA, including strategic policies in relation to Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention. The Advisory Committee plays a crucial role in the provision of scientific advice and achieving conservation outcomes by facilitating the development of cooperative, constructive and innovative relationships between the National Parks and Wildlife Service, (part of the NSW Dept of Environment, Climate Change and Water, DECCW); the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust; the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; and the community.

Members of the Committee shall be appointed in their own right and not as representatives of any particular organisation, institution, discipline, interest sector or Aboriginal language group. Appointments are honorary and are for a period of three years. Current members of the Advisory Committee are eligible to submit applications. The Committee meets quarterly in different locations around the GBMWhA. Appointees are entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses. Sitting fees are available for Indigenous members.

Nominations and applications are invited for the Advisory Committee positions and must address the selection criteria. Current members of the Advisory Committee are eligible to re-apply for appointment.

Application forms and information kits are available at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/protectedareas/GreaterBlueMountainsWorldHeritageArea.htm>

and from NPWS offices at Mudgee, Oberon, Blackheath, Katoomba, Picton, Richmond, Gosford, and Bulga.

Enquiries contact Jacqueline Reid on (02) 4784 7326

All nominations and applications must be received by 5pm on Friday 15 October 2010, and should be posted to Jacqueline Reid, World Heritage Executive Officer, NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, PO Box 552, Katoomba NSW 2780, or via email to:

jacqueline.reid@environment.nsw.gov.au

Amazing Competition Results

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society has been running the Sustainable Living Competition for the past year. The aim of the competition was to encourage Blue Mountains residents to reduce their energy and water consumption. A generous prize package valued at about \$6000 was the incentive provided to encourage the necessary change in habits. The prize includes contributions from the Conservation Society, Aussie Solar(Lawson), and Go Enviro Plumbing(Blaxland).

The Competition has come to an end with amazing results from a clear winner. After 12 months of hard work, Maureen Grant from Blackheath has achieved a reduction of 29% in her energy use and an incredible 62% drop in water usage to give her the prize in our competition.

Other competitors achieved greater reductions in energy use – Imogen Mellifont and the Forest family both of Katoomba reduced their energy consumption per person by more than 40%. Both managed to also reduce their water usage, but not by any where near the amount that Maureen has.

The winner's reduced energy use saves her about \$380 per year and the water cost saving is about \$134 per year. For a family of four like the Forests their energy cost saving is a huge \$1250 per year.

Maureen's energy and water savings have come from a dedication to change habits rather than any major expenditure. She says it was hard work initially to remember to not flush the toilet after every use and to recycle water wherever possible. She made more use of her wood fire, using mostly local fallen timber, rather than electric heating and also made sure that things were turned off when not actually needed.

Other contestants did spend money on solar PV



Maureen Grant (centre) accepting her trophy and prize information from Tara Cameron (BMCS President) and Steve Grant (Go Enviro Plumbing)."

systems and more efficient appliances, but also made sure that they changed habits to minimise unnecessary energy and water use.

One family achieved energy consumption per person per year of only about 1200 kWh whereas the average was about 3500kWh. That represents a saving of about \$400 for every member of the family each year. They also had the lowest water consumption at less than 20kL per person (the average was about 45). Unfortunately for them they had been changing there consumption habits well before the competition started so did not have the big reductions in the last 12 month to give them the prize.

From this initial attempt at encouraging people to think and act more conservatively about there energy and water use, it is clear that big changes can be achieved, together with every increasing dollar savings as the price of water and electricity inevitably increases.

Rob Baigent



Prizes in the Sustainable Living Competition were presented at the BMCS Annual Picnic on Sunday 26 September 2010. Photo: Tara Cameron (left) and Steve Grant (right) with finalists Imogen Mellifont, Maureen Grant and the Forest family.



Green Cape: A natural phenomenon

Christine Davies

During September, interpretive bushwalkers and friends stayed for four nights at Green Cape Lighthouse, in Ben Boyd National Park, 40 km south of Eden.

Gwen and I travelled from Blackheath via Oberon to Goulburn. There was little traffic and we enjoyed a marvellous frog chorus at a picnic spot by the Abercrombie River. Along the way there was an unusually large number of road-kill wombats. From Goulburn we drove through Braidwood and down the Clyde Mountain to Bateman's Bay.

Overnight the wind howled and at sunrise there were waves on the bay with foam scudding across them and masts of boats going every-which-way. At the mouth of the bay, the Tollgate Islands stood out of the foam into a salmon-coloured sky. There were branches off trees, shopping trolleys tossed around.

It was a wild wind. There was a power black-out over a large area and many trees had fallen along the Princes Highway. Further south it was calm and we were able to call in at Mystery Bay and drive along the coast road and visit the historic wharf at Tathra.

Our accommodation at Green Cape was in the two adjoining assistant lighthouse-keepers' cottages, very comfortable and affordable. At night, a large wombat left his calling card on the lawn.

Coastal walks were organized, from Green Cape to Bitangabee Bay, and Bitangabee Bay to Saltwater Creek. Wildflowers were beautiful and there was lots of birdlife. Rocks along that part of the coast are very colourful.

At Bitangabee Bay camping area Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos had chewed large chunks of wood out of Eucalyptus tree trunks to find the grubs inside. First they made straight cuts, top and bottom, to peel off the thick, fibrous bark, then bit into the wood. Sure enough, there was an empty grub's hole at the very centre of each rectangular chewed area. The cockatoos must be able to hear them.

At the lighthouse one morning we had the most unforgettable experience. I've seen this on TV nature

programs. And it is an annual and spectacular event in Africa during the "sardine run" when predators like sharks, dolphins, seals, gannets and humans alike gather for a short-lived feeding frenzy as a vast shoal of millions of sardines makes its way along the south-eastern coast.

We witnessed this phenomenon right in front of the lighthouse cottages, maybe not on so grand a scale, but for us an experience of a lifetime.

First we saw the dolphins, perhaps eight in number, circling, crossing back and forth, riding the waves. Gannets came. After a while the dolphins continued on their way, heading north, the gannets diving in their wake.

More and more gannets gathered, 200 or more, plunging into the circle the dolphins had left, plunging at high speed, surfacing, taking off, circling, plunging into the water, again and again and again.

Closer to the rocks, a group of Australian Fur Seals waltzed past in single file, each with one flipper raised.

Further out to sea Hump-backed Whales, two females with calves, frolicked. One of the whales lay on its side and waved a fin.

Another half hour and we would have left for our walk and missed this experience. Over the next two days the sea was calmer. We saw whales far out, travelling southward, but they didn't stop to play. Christine.

Gannets diving: Artwork by John Latimer featured in BBC Wildlife Magazine, October 2007.
<http://www.jonathanlatimer.com/birds.htm>



Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

For anyone willing to get up very early, the spring dawn chorus is an amazing experience. It usually begins about 45 minutes before sunrise when the first glimmer of light appears in the east and the forest trees are still barely visible shapes. The first bird to start calling is typically the Eastern Yellow Robin, with its "*chyop chyop!*...." This is soon followed by the other early risers - the Bassian Thrush, kookaburra and cuckoos - then one by one, all the other species join in to create the effect of a well rehearsed orchestra.

As new birds start up, some of the earlier ones finish and so the melodic theme develops just like a symphony, swelling to a climax with the maximum number of birds adding to the mix, before dropping out and fading away just as the sun comes up.

The most impressive dawn choruses I've heard were in sub-tropical rainforests of northern NSW where you can hear up to 35 species singing during that magical hour, but here in the Blue Mountains you can get a pretty good concert in the richer wet sclerophyll forests and rainforests at this time of year when the migrants have arrived and are establishing territories. Areas such as Murphy's Glen, Blue Gum Swamp and Mount Wilson Cathedral of Ferns have good species richness.

Vocal communication is important to birds, and spring is generally when we hear birds singing the longest, loudest and most elaborately. It's when we hear the *songs*, as opposed to the *calls*. Calls can be for many purposes such as keeping a flock together (contact calls), alerting each other to a predator (alarm calls), juvenile begging calls, etc, while the song is associated with breeding and is usually for the purpose of announcing territory. Whenever we hear the carolling of the Magpies, the mellow, musical phrases of a Grey Shrike-thrush, the persistent "woop woop woop" of the Wonga Pigeon or the laughter of a group of Kookaburras, it's the song we are hearing. It's not necessarily musical or sweet!

When a male bird sings early in the morning, he is announcing: "This is my territory, I am here and any rival males had better keep out!" The still dawn air provides the best conditions for sound transmission and by getting in early he is re-establishing his claim lest any neighbouring birds think he might have perished overnight. It's a far more sensible alternative to physical combat. We can learn a lot from birds.

Carol Proberts origma@westnet.com.au

Membership Application Form

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address:
.....PC

Phone(s)

Email

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$25 Concession (Senior/Student)\$15
Household \$30 Concession (Senior/Student)\$20
Corporate (open to negotiation) \$100

Bushwalkers only.:
(\$20 per walker per annum) \$.....

Donation (tax-deductible) \$.....

TOTAL AMOUNT INCLUDED \$.....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

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; Web or database management; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Society administration.

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.

ENQUIRIES: Phone (02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

Please cut out and forward this form with your cheque or money order to:

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls NSW 2782

States and Territories respond to National Litter Index

Keep Australia Beautiful's most comprehensive litter report released recently shows many Australians are still littering, despite increased awareness about the need to protect our environment.

The National Litter Index is Australia's only national, annual, quantitative measure of litter by type, location and volume, with five years of data for all states and territories. According to the National Chairman of Keep Australia Beautiful, Don Chambers, "The National Litter Index (NLI) helps define the scale and distribution of litter and identifies key problem areas and litter items so that government, industry and community can refine their approaches to litter prevention and resource recovery."

"It also highlights where consumers are not doing the

right thing., At the end of the day it comes down to individual behaviour. Individuals need to take responsibility for the rubbish they produce and where it ends up."

This year for the first time the NLI includes a specific report on packaging and on regional highways. The raw data is published alongside the report so stakeholders with a particular interest in certain litter items such as illegal dumping, cigarette butts or beverage containers can extract the information they need to make informed decisions on how to best address the issue.

"Combined with the Keep Australia Beautiful Branded Litter Study, published in 2008, we now have a rich source of data publicly available to help address litter issues in Australia," Chambers added.

**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.

**Welcome to new
members**

Doreen McGarrigle, Little Hartley
Robert McGarrigle, Little Hartley
Pam Williams, Wentworth Falls
Simone Williams, Wentworth Falls

**Deep Pass 4 day Midweek camp
September 13 to 16 Report by Jim Percy**

Deep Pass is an unusual area – How much longer it can last in this time of access for all is an unknown. I pessimistically feel that it is so close to civilization that it will be auctioned off to private concerns to exploit the natural wonders.

It has survived aboriginal habitation. They have left a few gentle reminders of their presence in the form of hand stencils.

The farmer/grazier settlers created a road in and when this became eroded created a second road, cleared and built and changed the area, but not dramatically. Deep Pass handled this intrusion as the occupants, few in number, while attempting to survive in a remote area, appear to have appreciated its beauty and treated the area with feeling. Apart from the road in and clearing of the farm site (now the camping area) there is little evidence of change.

Next came the bushwalkers with their adventure trips – spikes and ropes help here and do not intrude too much? Let's create a few more tracks, no real bother? Then came the four-wheel drivers and campers – so much erosion and change that something had to be done. NPWS arrive - erect barriers at road ends and a toilet block is obviously a must - these campers can't be relied on to 'go bush and bury'

Despite all these pressures the area continues to provide a quiet, remote, adventurous, relaxing environment.

Enter a group of BMCS mid week campers. Small in number but large in enthusiasm

Four days and four directions to explore.

The walk in, although approximately 800 metres on the map down the eroded track, feels more like a kilometre.

Monday -- Arrive, set up camp, lunch and explore West upstream into the Nayook Creek Canyon.

Entering this exciting canyon for the first time and for me subsequent times, is an impressive experience. Its ageless beauty, awesome grandeur and yet peacefulness are wondrous. The aboriginal art which is reported to exist, eluded me again but this does not detract, in fact is in keeping with this mysterious place.. There are many things still to discover in this majestic canyon.

Tuesday – We set off North up the ridge, through numerous pagodas, to the Mt Cameron Road to walk out as far as the Natural Bridge we find some tracks which are marked off for later exploring and return to camp by a couple of fire-trails and take the opportunity of passing the car to pick up a tarp as rain is threatening. The rain arrived on time, with the evening meal, but cleared by 9pm to a clear briefly moonlit night and a clear sunny day followed. During the afternoon Nayook Creek downstream, East, is explored. This includes the magnificent cliff which leans forward so far, that it provides protection for two late arriving campers, without a tent.

Wednesday – South from the camp site, is the Deep Pass, the way in from the other carpark, which remained to be explored. We decided to climb the ridge to the carpark and descend by the very eroded track, which was possibly the original way in to the farm,

Along the way, further to the South, is a very overgrown track leading to Bungleboorie Creek showing that earlier bushwalkers had explored here. Maybe gone out of fashion? The eroded track leads to Deep Pass and then follows an almost continuous rock overhang, complete with various waterfalls, back to camp.

Thursday – Having achieved the planned walks, after a leisurely breakfast, we decamped. The walk out, this time up the same eroded track, now feels more like 2 kilometres

Down the Wallaby Track — a backward glance, with John Low

THE FRENCH PEDESTRIAN

In September 1899 a remarkable man arrived in Katoomba and presented himself at the office of *The Mountaineer* newspaper. Henri Gilbert, a 34 year-old French journalist, had left Paris in February 1895 and walked over 27,000 miles through France, Spain, Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, India and Java, arriving in Fremantle in August 1897. Carrying a 38 kilogram backpack he then crossed Australia, nearly dying on the Nullarbor and travelling via Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane to Townsville. All the while he kept a rigorous diary of his travels (signed and verified by those he met along the way) and dispatched accounts of his adventures to the French press. If he accomplished 41,500 miles on foot and arrived back in Paris within an approved (but clearly flexible) period of time he stood to collect a handsome wager.

When he surprised our local journalists Monsieur Gilbert had returned to Sydney from Queensland and was chalking up some extra mileage, walking from Sydney to Bathurst to deliver a lecture. Though of small stature and light build, he made a strong impression and was declared "a most intelligent, interesting man ... only too pleased to discourse on his travels". On his way over the Mountains he wanted to see as much of the local scenery as he could and remained here for several days, staying at Leura's Hurlstone guesthouse, the Carrington Hotel and the Imperial Hotel in Mt. Victoria.

Among the 'sights' he visited were those we would expect any tourist today to seek out, the major waterfalls at Wentworth Falls, Katoomba and Govetts Leap and the panorama of the Jamison Valley at Echo Point. He also visited, probably walking down from the Hurlstone, what was possibly the most popular local attraction of the time, the network of 'sights' that make up the Leura Falls complex, including the Meeting of the Waters and the Leura Cascades. At Mt. Victoria the Imperial Hotel treated him to a "pleasure" diversion from his westward tramp – a motor excursion to Jenolan Caves where the



"underground beauties" he discovered fascinated and intrigued him greatly.

Following his Bathurst trip Gilbert returned north and with his pregnant wife in tow, made his way across Queensland and into the Northern Territory. The couple, with a new baby daughter, departed Palmerston (now Darwin) for Hong Kong in October 1901 and as memory of him faded in Australia, evidence of his further progress becomes sparse. Indeed beyond a note in the Northern Territory press reporting difficulties in China, a diversion to Saigon and Hanoi and serious bouts of illness, the trail appears cold.

Some years ago a Gilbert diary was located in the John Oxley Library in Brisbane by academic Dr. Colin Dyer who translated and published it as *A Frenchman's Walk Across the Nullarbor 1897-98* (MUP, 2000). He was, however, unable to answer the question of Gilbert's ultimate success or failure. I would love to know what happened to this determined globetrotter.

John Low <johnlow@iprimus.com.au>

KAY EDWARDS 28.9.1938 ---- 16.9.2010

Our dear friend Kay left us on 16 September and her memory lives on through her legacy of singing and music students. She was also an accomplished painter.

Kay was the eldest of three sisters who were brought up in a musical household and she started learning the piano at eight. Sometime after leaving school at fifteen she attended the Conservatorium of Music for a year. Later she joined the Wayside Chapel in Sydney where she had a 28ft caravan custom made to travel around the city providing meals and support for homeless children. She travelled to the USA where she became ordained as a Methodist Minister. On her return to Australia she taught music and singing in her Paddington home.

On retiring Kay moved up to the Blue Mountains where she was able to pursue her wide range of interests in music, art and the outdoors. She will be greatly missed as someone who was thoughtful, kind and generous. *Simone Bowskill, Thursday Pleasure Walkers.*

ECO Homes Tour Saturday 16 October 2010

Visit some of the most fascinating 'green' homes in the Upper Blue Mountains. Homes of earth, straw, sustainable timber and more!

Look, listen, learn - discover how others have done it. Be inspired!

A fun and informative bus tour led by
ECOdesign Architect Nigel Bell.

Book: <http://www.ecohomestour.com.au>

Enquires: 4782 9560

All proceeds go to Katoomba Public and High Schools environmental programs.

<http://www.ecohomestour.com.au>

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY 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 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. Before attending ring the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy 4758 6009 or email jp34@tpg.com.au

Date	Details	Contact	Meet at	(km)	Grade	Map
Oct 16	Another surprise walk from Hugh - some off track.	Hugh 0423309854	Wentworth Falls car park, 8.30 am	10	3	Katoomba & Mt Wilson
Oct 23	Furber Steps/Landslide/Ruined Castle. One of the classic Blue Mountains walks.	Ros 4733 3880	Katoomba Station carpark 8.15 am	15	3	Katoomba
Oct 30	Medlow Bath historic tracks. Nature Trail to Three Brothers via The Coliseum. Vistas into Megalong Valley.	Liz 4754 4966	Hydro Majestic bus stop, Medlow Bath, 9am	~7	2/3	Katoomba
Nov 6	Carlons to Mt Mouin via Medlow Gap. 7 km along service road with 250m climb.	Bill 4758 8545	Blackheath Station carpark, 8am	16	3	Jamison & Jenolan

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 Judith Dyer, 4758 6310, judithbushwalker@hotmail.com

Date	Details	Grade	Contact	Meet at
Oct 18	Florabella & Pippa's Pass. Wildflower walk - Warimoo to Blaxland.	2	Heather 4739 1493	Warrimoo Station, 9.30am
Oct 25	Dante's Glen & Empire Pass, Lawson. Circuit walk, lovely waterfalls.	2	Ken 4758 6310	Lawson Station, 9.15 am
Nov 1	Lithgow Zig Zag. Forest and open heath.	2	Mary 6351 3135	Zigzag Station. Travel in last carriage 9.15 am
Nov 8	Greenwich Point Circuit. Short harbourside circuit and possible extension.	1	Maurice 4739 4942	Top of escalator, Central Station, 9.30 am.
Nov 15	Popes Glen & Pulpit Rock, Blackheath. Stunning Grose Valley views.	2	Tera 4751 3303	Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre, 9am

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks of 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 Gail Schwedler 4782 1215 platypusprotected@yahoo.com.au

Oct 14	Lawsons Long Alley, Mt Victoria. Rocky firetrail descent to Hartley Vale.	2/3	David 4757 3416	Mt Victoria Station 9.45. Car shuffle.
Oct 21	Water Nymph's Dell, Wentworth Falls. Delightful walk into rainforest gully. Some scrambling. Steps to climb out.	2	David 4757 3416	Stockyard carpark, Wentworth Falls Station, 9.30 am.
Oct 28	Darwin's Walk, Wentworth Falls. Car shuffle to falls Road, gentle incline back to Wilson Park.	2	Marie 4787 1257	Stockyard carpark., Wentworth Falls Station, 9.30 am
Nov 4	Sculptures by the Sea. Meander among the many fantastic artworks from Bindi along the coast. Bring lunch	2	Marie 4787 1257	Top of escalators, Central Station, 9.30 am.
Nov 11	Katoomba Cascades to Three Sisters, Round Trip. Fantastic cliff top walk, lots of steps, returning via park, road and track. Bring lunch for picnic.	2	Gail 4782 1215	Opposite BM Council Chambers car park, 9.30am

November 18 ADVANCE NOTICE: Bus Trip to Warragamba Dam. Contact Simone to book 4757 3416

Grading of Walks: The following is a guide. The distance of the walk and the expected weather conditions need to also be considered by individual walkers. Be aware of your own capabilities.

Grade 1. Fairly flat walk on roads, fire trails and walking tracks.

Grade 2. Fairly flat, but with some rough and/or steep sections, possibly some natural obstacles and some steps.

Grade 3. May include rough/steep sections, many steps, a steep climb and descent, natural obstacles, some off-track walking.

Grade 4. May include more of the above, with a greater degree of difficulty. **Grade 5.** We occasionally arrange a walk considered most suited to experienced and very fit walkers. It is likely to include some or all of the following: rough/steep sections, steep climbs and descents, many steps, natural obstacles, off-track walking.