



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

From the President

Last month I wished the Society a happy birthday. We had a wonderful celebration on the actual day. During the afternoon, two of our longest standing members Mick and Jill Dark planted a tree in the John Buki Garden, which will hopefully grow and symbolise this important anniversary. In the evening 60 members, both old and new came together for a dinner at the Conservation Hut. An enjoyable evening was had, with short speeches from Tara Cameron and myself, some light entertainment plus good food and good cheer.

We now need to look to our next 50 years, but let us do it in more sizable chunks. As with all volunteer groups, the number of members we have is extremely important. We currently stand at 850, but the impact of saying to a politician in any level of government that we have 1,000 or more members is so much more effective. We need to strive to increase our membership as a short term priority. With an increased membership we should have more people willing to lend a hand when issues of importance arise. Who knows what campaigns we may need to launch in the near future.

I will finish by acknowledging that we have had a busy year, with a great win in the Delta case and I would sincerely like to thank all those on the management committee. Without their dedication so much less would have been achieved.

Have an enjoyable festive season and I look forward to meeting up with some of you during the next year.

Lachlan Garland.

Monthly meetings

Welcome to our new Monthly Meetings Convenor, Brendan Doyle. Brendan's contact details are on page 2.

Regular Monthly meetings in 2012 will be held at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls, on the last **THURSDAY** of each month, starting at 7.30 pm.

We will also organise an occasional Saturday morning special event, held mid-month.

MONTHLY MEETING

7.30 pm, **THURSDAY 26th January 2012**
at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls

From Bushwalk to Bushcare
Presenter: *Lyndal Sullivan*



What better way to spend Australia Day than to celebrate the good things happening here in the Blue Mountains !

Bushland in the mountains has lots of friends, and needs them. Whether it be in the National Park, on private property or in a public Reserve, our bushland is constantly under threat. Lyndal will outline the wide range of skills and passions that contribute to the protection of bushland in the mountains.

Bushcare is just one part of this community's efforts to protect the Blue Mountains. If you are a bushcare volunteer, this talk will give you a picture of how Bushcare fits into Council's overall environmental strategy to protect and restore natural areas. Also how Council and NPWS work together. Or if you have ever wondered what Bushcare is all about, here's your chance to find out and ask questions. You'll discover that Bushcare is more than just pulling out weeds or planting.

About the presenter: *Lyndal has been coordinating the Bushcare program at Blue Mountains City Council since 2008, and currently shares this position with Erin Hall. Prior to this she has been an active member of the Land Use Sub Committee and the Management Committee of Consoc.*

Note that this meeting will be held on **THURSDAY 26 January**.
Visitors are very welcome.

**"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: Lachlan Garland: 0415 317 078
lachlan.a.garland@bigpond.com**

**Senior Vice President: Tara Cameron
0419 824 974 taracameron4@gmail.com**

**Second Vice President: Don Morison
8230 2116 2vp@bluemountains.org.au**

**Treasurer: Bart Beech (h)4739 9947
(f)9688 1440 (w)9896 9512
bart.beech@invensys.com**

**Administration Officer: Rob Baigent
4759 3104 rob.baigent@bigpond.com**

**Bushcare/Threatened Species Officer:
Clive Heywood Barker 0413 577 160
ozbundu@hotmail.com**

**CC/Sustainability Officer: Lis Bastian
4787 7533 ebastian@stoplaughing.com.au**

**Environmental Education Officer:
Gary Humble 4784 1648 0427 841 078
gaz.humble@gmail.com**

**Gardens of Stone Officer:
Karen McLaughlin 6355 2835
karen.mclaughlin@aussiebroadband.com.au**

**Landuse Officer: Ann Cantwell
4751 3215, cantwell@eftel.net.au**

**Lithgow Regional Subcommittee Coordinator:
Chris Jonkers 6355 1179
chrisandjulie@activ8.net.au**

**Meetings Secretary: Michael Maack
4751 3623 maack@ozemail.com.au**

Membership Secretary: VACANT

**Monthly Meeting Convenor: Brendon Doyle
4757 2197 brendon049@gmail.com**

**National Parks/World Heritage Officer:
Brian Marshall 4784.1148
briannamar@bigpond.com**

**Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies
4787 7246 hutnews@bluemountains.org.au**

**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**

**Walks Convenor: Maurice Kerkham
4739 4942
mauricekerkham@hotmail.com**

**Project Officer-Food and Environment
Craig Linn craig.csmc@exemail.com.au**

**Project Officer-Meetings Heather Hull
4739 1493 hhull001@bigpond.net.au**

**Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson
4751.2303, mob 0427 512 303**

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Lachlan Garland
0415 317 078
membership@bluemountains.org.au
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

HUT NEWS EDITORIALS

The deadline for the next
issue of Hut News is

21 January 2012

Nursery News

Our nursery closes for the holiday season on Saturday 10 December. We will re-open for sales at Lawson on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from 11 January 2012. Sales at Blackheath Community markets and Lawson Magpie Markets will resume in February (first and third Sundays of the month respectively). We will have the usual good range of tubestock and small (65mm) pots including ferns for just \$2.50 and some advanced plants in 125mm pots for \$4.

Contracts: Recently, the RTA took another batch of almost 1,000 plants for along the Great Western Highway at Wentworth Falls and we are currently preparing another large batch in conjunction with Wildplant Rescue for delivery in March/April next year. We have also supplied 1,000 plants to the NPWS for re-vegetation of the recently purchased Shaw's Paddock near the western start of the Braeside Walk at Blackheath as well as more plants for them at Green Gully in the Megalong Valley. We get a steady stream of orders from Council Bush-care Officers for re-vegetation works in reserves all over the Mountains using seed supplied by them.

As our city stretches in a 70 km line mostly along the ridge-line as well as across to Mt. Wilson, collecting seed over such a large area is very time consuming so any donations of seeds or even of cones from Banksias, nuts from Hakeas or pods from pea-plants or wattles would be very welcome. We maintain an extensive seed-bank but there are gaps and when we get requests to grow plants for a particular area we need that local seed. Seeds from native bushland can be collected only on private land, just note the location and date and either drop them into one of our nurseries or at the markets.

Finally our thanks to all our customers with whom we have enjoyed chatting and seeing their pleasure when they purchase plants or tell us about how well previous purchases are growing. We enjoy such rewarding feed-back. and wish you all a happy and safe holiday period.

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager.

Shop early for Christmas

Give BMCS membership to a friend

Most of us will know like-minded environmentally-conscious people who are not yet members of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Here is a chance to help the Society, and the environment. Give a one-year membership to a friend **or relative** for Christmas.

Annual membership fees are Single \$30 (**\$20 concession – senior/student**), Household \$35 (**\$25**).

Bushwalkers pay \$20 extra per walker per annum.

Send the details with your cheque to Membership Secretary, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 **or email bmcs@bluemountains.org.au and make the membership payment by EFT or PayPal through our web site <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml>. Your friend or relative will receive a gift voucher and one year's subscription to Hut News.**

Enquiries to Lachlan Garland, 0415 317 078, email lachlan.a.garland@bigpond.com.

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.

Western Sydney Conservation Alliance and EDO fight to protect the Cumberland Plain Woodlands

The new suburb of Jordan Springs in Penrith, on the former ADI site, is outside the Blue Mountains Council and World Heritage Area, but geographically it is only a few kilometres on the other side of the Nepean River. Nature doesn't recognise our boundaries. For instance, birds that visit lower Blue Mountains gardens or migrate further afield may rely on this remnant bushland for habitat.

The WSCA has been joined by the Environmental Defenders Office in a David v Goliath legal battle against two companies in the Lend Lease group and Penrith Council to limit destruction of the endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland. They are in need of funds for the legal challenge and new members (numbers = political power) so we encourage you to support them as you can. Details follow.

The Environmental Defenders Office has initiated proceedings on behalf of the Western Sydney Conservation Alliance Incorporated (WSCA) against Penrith City Council (the Council), Maryland Development Company Pty Ltd and St Marys Land Limited, the latter two companies being subsidiaries of Lend Lease.

WSCA is challenging the validity of the decision by the Council to approve a number of development applications for the subdivision of land for residential development at the former Australian Defence Industries site now known as Jordan Springs, in Penrith. The land proposed to be developed is adjacent to the Wianamatta Regional Park and contains a number of endangered and vulnerable ecological communities and species including Cumberland Woodland Plain. The proposed development would result in the clearing of 59 hectares of Cumberland Plain Woodland, which is a critically endangered ecological community. It also fails to provide for adequate buffer zones between the Regional Park and residential lots.

These judicial review proceedings have been bought on the basis that the Council failed to take into account a number of mandatory relevant considerations required under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (NSW), in particular the Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan. WSCA argues that this failure infected the Council's decision to approve the development such that it is contrary to law and is thus invalid.

You can find out more from Western Sydney Conservation Alliance website www.wsca.org.au You will also find details on how to join WSCA.

Donate to help fund the legal action

WSCA needs to fund raise in order to cover the costs of the legal challenge. This is a very important legal challenge which may result in the conservation of not just more of the ADI Site but bushland elsewhere within the areas covered by the Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan

Send your cheques or money orders made out to the: Western Sydney Conservation Alliance and post to PO Box 4134, Werrington, NSW, 2747

The Cumberland Plain Woodlands

The Cumberland Plain Woodlands is the name for the distinct groupings of plants that occur on the clay soils derived from shale on the undulating Cumberland Plain in central New South Wales. The most commonly found trees in the woodland are Grey Box Eucalypts *Eucalyptus moluccana*, Forest Red Gums *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, Narrow-Leaved Ironbarks *Eucalyptus crebra* and Spotted Gum *Eucalyptus maculata*. A variety of other lesser-known eucalypts as well as shrubs, grasses and herbs are also found. It is the dominance of Grey Box and Forest Red Gum that makes the community distinctive.

Where is it found? In 1877 Cumberland Plain Woodlands covered 107,000 hectares occupying approximately 30 per cent of the Sydney Basin. This community type was once widespread in the Plains but has been reduced to a few fragmented stands by human use for farming, industry and housing. Today less than six per cent remains in small fragments scattered across the western suburbs of Sydney, totalling only 6400 hectares. The remaining fragments occur in areas subject to intense pressure from urban development.

Although some areas occur within conservation reserves, this is in itself not sufficient to ensure the long-term survival of the community unless the factors threatening the integrity and survival of the community are eliminated.

What are the threats? The remaining stands of this ecological community are threatened by the spread of the Sydney suburban areas. Threats include clearance for agriculture, grazing, hobby and poultry farming, housing and other developments, invasion by exotic plants and increased nutrient loads due to fertiliser run-off from gardens and farmland, dumped refuse or sewer discharge.

What's happening? Both New South Wales and the Commonwealth have listed the Cumberland Plains Woodland as an endangered ecological community under their respective Legislation. A Recovery Plan for this Woodland is being prepared by the NSW Government. Environment Australia, under the Natural Heritage Trust, is supporting a number of projects restoring and rehabilitating these woodlands through Landcare and Bushcare programs and through community groups

(Source: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/cumberland.html>)

Or you can electronically transfer funds directly to WSCA bank account

BSB 814 282, Account no 30976911

Email WSCA to let them know you have deposited money into their account - info@wsca.org.au

Coal-fired injustices must be set straight

Health trumps profit, write Nick Higginbotham and Ben Ewald.

(Published: Newcastle Herald, 5 October 2011)

The Medical Journal of Australia article on the health impacts of coal mining and burning raises two unresolved questions: what are the local health costs of pollution from these industries, and how can affected residents be protected?

Dust particles less than 10 microns in size (PM10) are linked to respiratory symptoms and increased hospital admissions. Especially affected are the elderly, children and people with asthma or heart disease. Even more dangerous are the smaller particles (PM2.5) which can penetrate deep into the lungs, increasing the risk of lung cancer.

Burning coal to generate electricity produces a host of other harmful substances, including sulphur dioxide (SO₂), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), and toxic metals (like arsenic, chromium, lead, mercury).

Until recently, Upper Hunter residents has little access to air-quality information, apart from their own senses, which told them that dust often covered everything, the sky has an unnatural orange tint, and the kids seemed to have asthma.

The National Pollutant Inventory gives sobering results; estimates of PM10 emissions from coalmining and power generation in the Upper Hunter rose from 37,200 tonnes in 2003 to 50,000 tonnes for 2010 - about 58 per cent of such emissions for NSW.

Similarly, PM2.5 were calculated at 2242 tonnes in 2010, 42 per cent of the state total, while the area's power stations released 112,000 tonnes of SO₂ and 62,600 tonnes of NO_x in 2010.

The environmental injustice of this burden of pollution speaks for itself.

What about community concern for the toxic orange plumes that can rise from mine sites after blasting? These contain a variable amount of nitrogen oxides, depending on the quality control of the blasting.

The toxicity of these plumes was highlighted by mishaps at two Queensland open cut coalmines last March; 24 mine workers were taken to hospital after exposure to plume gases despite being 4.2 kilometres from the blast zone.



Protect your outdoor lifestyle

STOP COALPAC'S CONSOLIDATION PROJECT

www.bluemountains.org.au

Help keep our billboard up on the Great Western Highway!

In November, we launched an advertising campaign in response to the community concerns and growing opposition to the controversial 'Coalpac Consolidation Project' proposal. The messages within call for it to be stopped in its tracks!

Coalpac seeks to lock every one of us out from bushwalking and camping in a huge part of the Ben Bullen State Forest. Our campaign encourages people to play their part in protecting their healthy outdoor lifestyle and say 'NO!' to open-cut mining. One component of this campaign is a billboard which is located right in the heart of the proposal area on the Great Western Highway, Marrangaroo.

By donating to the Society, you can help us keep this billboard up and visible! All donations over \$2 are tax deductible. Make a gift that will make a difference this Christmas.

I would like to make a donation to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society for \$15 / \$25 / \$50 / \$100 / \$_____.

I would like to make my payment by cheque / electronic funds transfer / credit card or Paypal. Please mail this form to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782 if paying by cheque/money order:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Post code _____

Cheque or money order: Please send cheques or money orders payable to Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls NSW 2782.

Electronic funds transfer: Please indicate your name when making a transfer to BSB: 082 656 Account No: 282175764 Name: Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

Credit Card or Paypal: To make your donation by credit card or Paypal please go to our website www.bluemountains.org.au and select 'Make a Donation'.

If you're making your payment electronically, please email your name and address details to bmcs@bluemountains.org.au so we can send an official receipt.

The April 2010 *ABC Four Corners* documentary, *A Dirty Business*, capped a decade-long campaign to get the state government to take action. The network of real-time air quality monitors was activated, a five-year record of air monitoring by industry (68 sites) was posted, and public health officials analysed

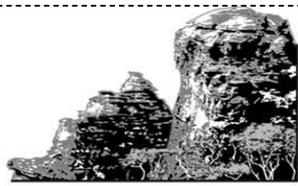
records linked to air pollution.

The state's chief medical officer appointed an independent expert advisory committee on air quality to review these actions, meet with the Singleton Health Environment Group, and design a health study. (Continued on page 5)



Protect the Gardens of Stone

"Say NO to open cut mining!"



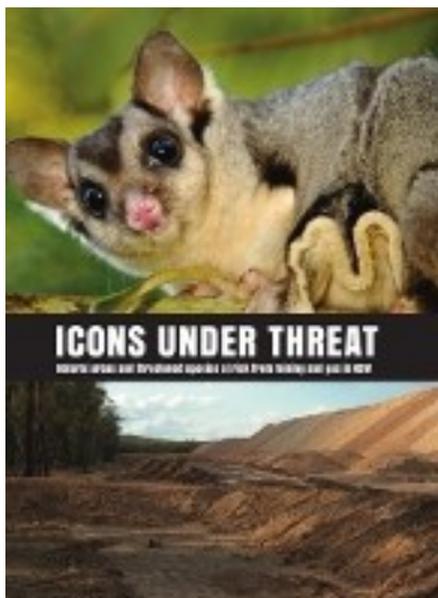
"Report calls for protection of iconic Gardens of Stone"

On Tuesday 22nd November 2011, environment groups had a very successful launch of the *'Icons under threat: Natural areas and threatened species at risk from mining and gas in NSW'* report at NSW Parliament House.

The report calls for protection of seven natural areas of NSW, including the Gardens of Stone. This was well received by the media with an exclusive feature appearing in the Sydney Morning Herald and later The Age and The Financial Review.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Hunter Community Environment Centre and the Wilderness Society worked with other groups, including the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, to formulate the report.

"This important report brings to life the beauty and significance of the Gardens of Stone area located in the western Blue Mountains, and looks closely at the threat from the 'Coalpac Consolidation Project' proposal" says Justin McKee, Blue Mountains Conservation Society.



The Society has been campaigning to see 40,000 hectares identified in the 'Gardens of Stone Stage 2' proposal is protected within the state's conserva-

Coal-fired injustices must be set straight (Continued from page 4.)

It's a relief that these respected scientists have assumed responsibility, set a broad agenda, and work closely with state official and the Singleton Healthy Environment Group.

Monitoring has begun for PM1 and PM2.5 to identify sources and make-up of particles; blasting hazards were reviewed with an eye toward stricter guidelines.

However, a study awaits more air moni-

toring data to ensure the study design can produce a clear result about the effects of pollution.

The landscape has changed since April 2010, but momentum must not be lost. Upper Hunter residents live in real-time, going about their daily lives in potentially hazardous air, unprecedented in NSW.

Nick Higginbotham is an associate professor and Ben Ewald is a senior lecturer at the School of Medicine and Public Health at Newcastle University.



Photo: Keith Muir, Pepe Clarke, Bev Smiles, Kathy Merchant, Naomi Hogan, Kathy McKenzie and Justin McKee.

tion reserve system.

"The beautiful landscape is home to literally, hundreds of native plants and animals - it is a biodiversity hotspot. In May 2011, a scientific paper reported the 'platy' pagodas within the Gardens of Stone proposal area are of international significance," commented Mr McKee.

"*Icons Under Threat* echoes our call to protect this area of outstanding natural values from further damage from coal mining and other high impact activities."

The NSW Coalition government's Strategic Regional Land Use Policy states they "*believe that agricultural land and other sensitive areas exist in NSW where mining and coal seam gas extraction should not occur*".

"We do have to make serious choices about better protecting our state's natural assets. Our work to protect the Gardens of Stone promotes that both responsible, underground mining and recreational tourism can co-exist quite successfully while conserving nature," says Justin.

Welcome to New Members

Janene Robinson, Mt Riverview
Laurence Robinson, Mt Riverview
Keiron Sames, Katoomba
Jess Torrens, Katoomba
Graham Blackwell, Wentworth Falls
Gwen Blackwell, Wentworth Falls
Tom Coley, Wentworth Falls
Margaret Sadana, Katoomba
Susan Crick, Leura.

TOO MUCH GAS, by Don Morison.

I have been asked to explain why my lifestyle creates more greenhouse gases than it should. Since I am not good at describing recipes for spicy food dishes, I will discuss my experiences with City Rail.

During over 55 years of travelling on NSW trains I have come to love this mode of travel. But some aspects of the current service tempt me to use the highway.

At unattended stations, one first encounters the ticket machine – or more usually the projecting backside of the unsuspecting tourist or occasional user who is bending over trying to understand the thing. Why will it only accept \$50 notes for certain fares? Is this machine a closet monarchist that punishes those who crinkle the Queen's face?

If one knows the ropes of City Rail, one will not take either a dog or a full bladder onto the train. But that would be easier if the platform toilets were more frequently unlocked or not replaced by an inadequate supply of portaloos. As the trains are not usually early, a quick dash to the pub before scheduled departure time could ensure relief. But woe betide those who look for a loo before pub opening times. Blue Mountains Council never seems to signpost the way to the dunny, even in much touristed towns like Katoomba.

One last pre-boarding hazard is the little boys who ride pushbikes, scooters and skateboards along the yellow lines near the platform edge just as the train is pulling in, especially at Lawson. As these boys are obviously orphaned, would some deserving family please adopt them? I believe Western Australia provides an ideal environment for child rearing.

Once aboard, I am ready to make eye contact with the one person taking up a set of four seats with their extended feet and their voluminous luggage. I know I am immediately making an enemy by expecting them to create room for me, but I deserve to be rewarded for lessening climate change.

Fortunately, I have taken some anger management classes, so I have yet to assault anyone who reveals their criminal history or sexual irregularities through an over-loud mobile phone conversation or threatens their own hearing through playing impossibly bad music with the volume too high through their headphones. I have however changed my views on corporal punishment as a result of recent train travel and support the reintroduction of the cat of nine tails for young men who play American rap music containing obscene words and images demeaning to women.

Flogging with a very large number of strokes could be injurious to the criminal but I cannot decide how many lashes is enough for those who graffiti the train windows or spray paint their puerile "tags" on the railway property that provides the scenery while I am travelling.

So you see, I have become less tolerant and more violent in my imagination by using City Rail. But I have met some lovely people on trains and I am doing my tiny bit to save the planet.

Visit to Currarong Christine Davies



This photograph shows the spreading roots of one of the lovely mangrove trees lining the creek beside the Currarong Beachside Holiday Park. The green fruit of the mangroves was scattered around, some with tiny seedlings emerging.

Ironically, Australia's military establishments have been instrumental in preserving some of our natural heritage by stopping development. Among these, nowhere is development more constrained than around Currarong. It is a tiny village with little room for expansion.

The Thursday Interpretive Bushwalkers spent a wonderful few days at Currarong during November. I just love getting up early to walk on the beach at sunrise. And I could wander for hours exploring the inter-tidal zone at low tide.

Walks were good and varied. A feature of every walk was the strong scent of the prolific *Kunzea* flowers. The name of one of the places we walked to, Honeysuckle Bay, describes the perfume.

Heather loved the rock formations on the shore line beside the tannin-stained creek at Abraham's Bosom Beach. Someone else commented on the sight of Jenny and Bob's bottoms disappearing through a dark tunnel and following them "to stand on a cliff ledge overlooking the ocean, with spectacular tumbled boulders lying above every fissure shaping the pattern of the waves as they slapped against the shoreline".

A local fisherman invited us to go onto his friend's property to visit Lake Wollumboula, where he goes prawning. Although he neglected to mention the barbed-wire fence we had to crawl under, it was well worthwhile to see about 400 black swans there. As some of the group approached them, the swans took off at leisure and gracefully flew across the lake—it was quite spectacular!

We saw lots of other water birds, especially Cormorants—including a large flock flying in formation. Sooty Oystercatchers on the rocks at dawn reminded me of Graham Alcorn's poem (see page 10). Some of the group saw a Broad-headed Snake on the track to Lobster Bay. And we saw two echidnas, one crossing the boat ramp while we were having dinner on the veranda of one of the cottages. Less popular members of the coastal fauna were the ticks that latched onto four of us.

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

A SECRET GARDEN

Once upon a time, in those long ago days before the air-conditioned distractions of mass entertainment, shopping malls and fast food havens, the Christmas holiday season in the Blue Mountains was a vibrant and busy time. The local population swelled as extra trains coped with the urban exodus. Guesthouses and holiday cottages filled and hundreds of hamper-laden picnickers set out to colonise the popular beauty spots.

Leura Falls with its network of walking paths, lookouts and shady picnic nooks (with seats, fire-places and stacked wood) was among the most sought after retreats. Some time ago I became curious about one old picnic spot in particular, 'Gwennies Grotto', which does not appear on any modern map but was described in early 20th century editions of the *Mountaineer Illustrated Tourist's Guide* as found near Leura's Weeping Rock, between the Bridal Veil and second falls.

Most probably this 'grotto' was named for Guinevere Goyder, born in Katoomba in 1890 and granddaughter of Frederick Charles Goyder, owner of the Carrington Hotel, Mayor of Katoomba and early trustee on the Katoomba, Leura, Echo & Banksia Parks Trust. It was common for such attractions to be named for female relatives of trust members and when Goyder senior died in 1900 he was succeeded as trustee by his son William, also an alderman and local businessman.

With the help of some friends I set out earlier this year to find this special place. Just below Weeping Rock we climbed down from the present track to where an earlier path followed more closely the edge of the creek and made an exciting discovery - evidence of an old bridge and the buttresses that had supported it. I recalled a lovely old photograph by Harry Phillips of two young girls standing on this bridge with Weeping Rock and the Bridal Veil in the background. But where had the girls been going to (or coming from)?

A scramble across the creek and up the opposite bank provided the answer, leading us to a series of steps and into a hidden recess of moss and fern that must surely, we thought, be Gwennie's Grotto. Two overhangs, a levelled and stone-wall supported floor, a fireplace, metal spikes (to hang picnic gear?) and an abundance of old graffiti spoke clearly of a place once buzzing with activity. A further path and steps wandered on to a ravine, the remains of another bridge visible in its depths, hinting at even more secrets to discover!

We had stumbled into a place long hidden from the world, closed up like a room in an old house. Changing times had shut the door on Gwennies Grotto and now only the ghosts of memory remained to shape and shift the shadows of its present disuse. William Goyder, his wife Phoebe and daughter Guinevere moved to Sydney ca.1904 where they settled in Mosman. 'Gwennie' never married and died there in 1933. Did she, I wonder, ever revisit her grotto? I'd love to know.

John Low (johnlow@iprimus.com.au)

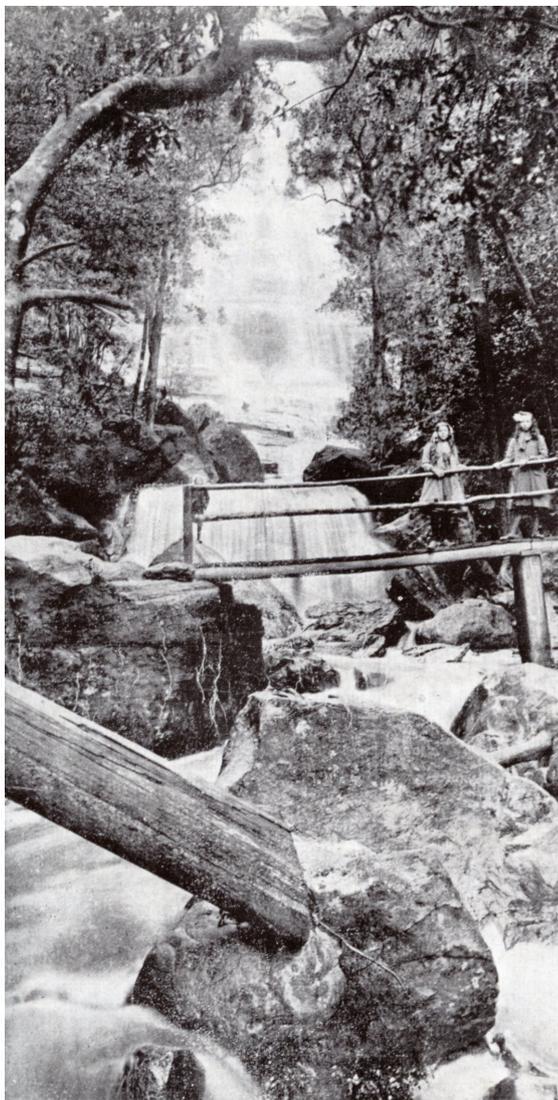


Photo by Harry Phillips.

CORRECTION

BOOK REVIEW

The Six Foot Track: Journeys 1887-2000
Edited by Jim Smith

In November Hut News, I reviewed and recommended Jim Smith's recent book about the Six Foot Track. The book contains 20 Six Foot Track narratives written between 1887 and 2000, mine among them, and a whole lot of interesting snippets, illustrations and photographs from old newspapers and other historical sources.

I said that the book was available at "My Book", Leura. Some of you might have already realised that this was incorrect. But for those who are still wandering up and down Leura Mall searching for this fictitious bookshop ... try **Megalong Books**.

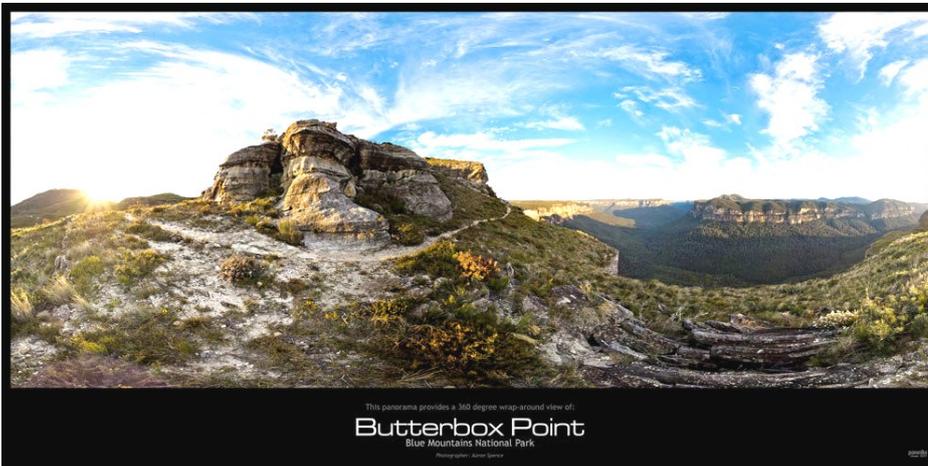
My apologies. I must have had a little trouble reading my own shorthand.

Jim tells me that copies of the book are still available at Megalong Books, 183 The Mall, Leura. Price is \$25.

Christine Davies.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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Mountains Conservation Society
Follow us on Twitter: [bmcsnsw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)



It's hard to be Green

Snail control

We live in a National Park, sharing our environment with birds and lizards whose diet includes snails, so how can we grow vegetables and protect them from these voracious pests. I've taken the easy way out – I've given up!

I have a native garden, full of wildlife. I believe that when my garden has reached this stage, it no longer belongs to me – it belongs to all the creatures that have made it their home. I refuse to use poisons.

An Iron Sulphate bait is supposed to be wildlife friendly. But sites on the internet cast doubt on this. Natural methods of snail control are recommended, like leaving out a saucer of beer, or going out at night and squashing them. It all sounds like hard work and requires dedication, so I buy my vegetables from the green-grocer or the co-op.

How do you manage to have a veggie garden and not harm our wildlife?

Plastic bags and wrapping.

I spent the first part of my life in a world without plastic. Now we can't live without it – or can we?

When a product is found to be harmful to humans – asbestos for instance – it is banned. But plastic is filling our landfills and accumulating in our oceans. It is killing whales and turtles and sea birds. And it lasts forever and the plastic already there will continue to kill whales and turtles and sea birds.

I love going to the coast, but when there feel compelled to pick up plastic lying on the beach. At Royal National Park there was so much plastic rubbish that trying to remove any seemed futile.

What can we do? How did people manage before plastic? What do you use to contain the garbage we put into the bin, for instance?

Write to Christine, BMCS, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782, or email hutnews@bigpond.net.au.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience
www.worldheritage.org.au

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience DVD,

featuring 40 panoramas taken in and around the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is available now from our website for \$12 including postage and handling.

To place your order go to www.bluemountains.org.au/dvd.shtml

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience

(www.worldheritage.org.au) is an interactive website that contains over two hundred 360 degree panoramas of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, plus still images of landscapes, flora and fauna, and stories and experiences.

40 of these high-resolution panoramas have been selected for the **GBMWHE DVD**.

The panoramas are slowly rotated clockwise, taking 35 seconds to complete each rotation. Gentle acoustic guitar music is provided as background.

Our journey begins at dawn at Mt Hay and visits each National Park in the GBMWA before concluding 24 minutes later at The Conservation Hut at Wentworth Falls.

Of particular note are the panoramas inside Jenolan Caves, the Grose and Jamieson Valley lookouts, the Gardens of Stone and a visit into the Kedumba Valley. Plus Wollemi Canyons, Kanangra Falls and Dunns

The above image is a 360 degree wrap-around panorama .

Blue Mountains Wildflowers

The wildflowers of Western Australia have a great reputation and no doubt they are very beautiful, but the wildflowers in the upper Blue Mountains this spring would surely be more than match for them. Individually, most of our wildflowers are small and can go unnoticed. But when flowering in mass, as on the heath-covered ridge tops surrounding the Grose Valley, the variety, the colours, the sheer numbers are just amazing.

Wongarra Ridge is off the Bell's Line of Road near Mount Banks. This was the first time we had been there, on a misty Thursday morning. Such a display! And too hard to describe! You'll just have to go there yourself next November. I know we'll be back there then. It's an easy, fairly flat walk which ends with what I am told is a great view of the Grose Valley.

Rigby Hill is not far from Wongarra Ridge, near Pearce's Pass. We used to go there every year and the masses of Boronia were a highlight. But the 2002 fire came through when the Boronias were flowering. When we went there a couple of years later there was lots of Flannel Flower, but no Boronia. It appears that the Flannel Flower is able to take advantage of conditions after fire. This year the Flannel Flowers are still most plentiful, but the Boronia is starting to come back.

Christine.

Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

This is the time of year you'll often find awkward youngsters - following their parents around, constantly crying for food, or sometimes sitting quietly and well behaved. I'm not referring to school holidays - I'm talking about birds, of course!

A fledgeling is a young bird which has recently left the nest, and they can look very different to the adults. For example, juvenile Rufous Whistlers are heavily streaked, while juvenile Golden Whistlers are rufous! Young Yellow Robins are brown and streaky. The cuckoos are even more confusing, and waiting to see who comes and feeds it won't help as cuckoos are raised by foster-parents of a different species.

With most of the bird species that you'll find in your garden or the bush, the young are "altricial", which means that they hatch blind and naked and remain helpless in the nest while they grow. By the time they leave the nest, they are more-or-less adult size. (The exceptions are birds like ducks and quail, which have "precocial" young, meaning they can run around and feed for themselves shortly after hatching.)

So how do we recognise that a bird is young if it's the same size as the adults? There are certain clues which make a young fledgeling instantly recognisable. Firstly, they usually have a pale, puffy gape. The gape is the bare skin at the edges of the beak. When a chick is in the nest this light coloured skin acts as a stimulus for the parent to feed it and makes the open mouth a sort of target to put food into.

Secondly, when a bird has just left the nest, its feathers are still growing. It might have tufts of down among the body or head feathers and its tail has not yet reached its full length. This is why just-fledged birds look like their tail has been chopped off!

Thirdly, their behaviour can give them away. Until they've had some practice flying around, very young birds are often clumsy and unsteady. But in next to no time they'll be zipping about the branches like an old hand. It takes longer before they stop pestering the parents for food, though. The constant begging calls of a young bird are quite different to the adult calls, and it can be a challenge sorting out all the different bird sounds of late spring and summer.

Young birds are particularly vulnerable to predators and misadventure and it's a fact of nature that most do not survive their first year. But the lucky, the smart and the strong will survive into adulthood, some going on to live and breed for many years.

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 \$30 Concession (Senior/Student)\$20
Household \$35 Concession (Senior/Student)\$25
Corporate (open to negotiation) \$100

Bushwalkers only:
(\$20 per walker per annum) \$.....
Donation (tax-deductible) \$.....

Send my copy of Hut News by
Please tick box mail internet only

TOTAL AMOUNT INCLUDED \$.....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

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
or pay online at www.bluemountains.org.au

JOIN Blue Mountains
Conservation Society, or
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online. Go to our website:
www.bluemountains.org.au

Photo: Juvenile Yellow Robin
(Carol Proberts)

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.

Oystercatcher

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

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

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

Graham Alcorn,
"The Bird Baths of Umbigumbi"

Share your wildlife observations

Our first meeting of the Wildlife Protection Group fell on a beautiful spring day. The kind of day so full of exuberant life that one could easily forget how threatened our mountain fauna have become.

We shared our stories and observations about native wildlife and the threats they experience. One accident mentioned, was about a human almost silicone sealing a Gecko into a downpipe.

An instance of lyrebird predation in Woodford was also reported. Interestingly, in the Dandenongs, lyrebirds were in decline due to fox, feral animal and domestic pet predation. Following a coordinated control programme by the Shire of Sherbrooke and the Victorian Gov., the lyrebird population has stabilized and 25 chicks approx. are banded each year nowadays. The full story can be read on <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~slsg/Home.htm>.

What is needed here in the mountains is a coordinated control programme for feral and domestic animals.

Concern was expressed about the number of barb wire fences in the Blue Mountains, as thousands of animals are reported to die on these fences across Australia and a total of 75 species have been identified as dying on barb wire. This website is worth looking at -<http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com/WFF/Home.html>

We identified the following issues as being a concern in the Blue Mountains-

- Household chemical threats to wildlife
- Garden accidents to reptiles, birds, possums
- Barb wire fences as a threat to wildlife
- Human cruelty and peoples attitudes
- Fox, wild dog and cat predation
- Roadkill

We want more information about native wildlife accidents, injuries and deaths, especially as some wild animals do not get taken to a wildlife carer or WIRES. Can members please forward any observations, and include locations, dates etc.?

We would like to prepare a list of properties with barb wire fences to submit to Council for attention. Can members please forward locations and state if fences border private/public land?

Please provide contact details so we can further investigate incidents or fences.

Send your observations to Jo Newman, Wildlife Protection Group, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls or Email timesrkool@hotmail.com

ABC Science Updates

Science Updates is the ABC's weekly Science newsletter. I have been receiving it for some time and there is always something of interest about Nature, the environment or science generally and explaining "why" things are the way they are. There are links to the latest science features, and each subject has links to related stories.

You can subscribe by going to <http://www.abc.net.au/science/> or just google ABC Science.

You will receive an email once a week highlighting recent content that has been added to ABC Science Online, and providing details of upcoming science programs on ABC Radio and Television.

A Journey to Jamberoo by Lucy Mark

On Tuesday 25th October 2011 Karen and I left Springwood about 9am just as the rain was setting in. We tried to feel optimistic that the weather would improve as we went south. We certainly felt some curiosity about the walks that we hoped to do. By 11am we were in the village of Jamberoo having gone through Narellan and down the dense wet rainforest of the Mt Keira road. We booked in to the Pub which is best described as rustic but comfortable, very reasonably priced and with kitchen facilities.

Jo and Jim were there about lunchtime so we had time to eat before heading up to the Minnamurra Rainforest about 10 minutes away by car. By this time a steady drizzle had begun. Wet weather gear was the order of the day. The woman in the National Parks office was helpful but expressed doubt about our mature aged party reaching the falls and returning inside the three hours before the park gates closed at 5pm.

In spite of the showers, or maybe because rain forests look best in wet conditions, the walk was excellent.

I had walked to the falls in 1986, when there was a rough track along the creek bed. The boardwalk, constructed in 1989, gave a new perspective. We were able to look down on the trees and the river which was flowing strongly. Many of the trees and plants in this subtropical rainforest are labelled. Coachwood, Sassafras, Cabbage Tree Palms, Strangler Fig and Lilly Pilly were numerous, but the huge Red Cedar was a surprise to me as I thought they had been logged out by last century.

The falls were worth the climb as there was more water than usual because of the rain. We also saw and heard many of the birds that were in the area, including a Bassian Thrush, and a White-throated Gerygone. The party did indeed reach the falls and we were out the gates by 4.30pm.

By Wednesday the cloud was lifting and at least it was not raining. The trip up Jamberoo Mountain Road to the Barren Ground took about 15 minutes. The Griffiths Trail starts at the Picnic Area heading east towards Saddleback Trig, then turning south to a natural stone bridge. Being springtime, the heath-land plateau was covered with wildflowers and wildflower gardens beside much of the track. Along the way we had many chances to go to the edge of the escarpment for great views of the Illawarra countryside, as well as up and



down the coast.

Because of the rain on the previous days, the stone bridge was flooded. Undeterred, we battled across, avoiding being seriously soaked. By this time we were more aware of the range of vegetation and micro-climates in these so-called Barren Grounds. It included heath, hanging swamps and tall woodland. The variety of plant was quite amazing, causing us to stop frequently to show the others, and take photos. Boronia, Epacris, Isopogon, Bauera and Xanthorrhoea were just a few of the wonderful display.

We came to an intersection in the track and headed out to Cooks Nose. This is an impressive out-crop of sandstone rock with a view over farmland to the coast south of Kiama. We had lunch here as it was after 1pm.

This last section back to the car, completing the circuit, was where we saw and heard many birds. While we failed to see a Ground Parrot or an Eastern Bristlebird, both of which are threatened, we did see a Beautiful Firetail, a Fantail Cuckoo, a Golden Whistler, both Eastern and Crimson Rosellas and many more. All in all, it was a good day. The weather behaved itself, the track was excellent if somewhat eroded in parts, and the company was just great. After all, Jim knew the tracks. Jo knew all of the birds and most of the plants, Karen knew most of the birds and plants, and I knew quite a few of both, as well as the rocks. What a group!!

On the way home on Thursday we called in at Carrington Falls. It was years since I had been there, but Jim and Karen had never been there in the past. These impressive falls drop 50 metres into a basalt gorge. The tracks lead to a number of lookouts, and also to the area above the falls.

The weather was beginning to close in again so we headed home through Robertson (pie heaven!) and I followed a route along Range Road and the Old South Road to avoid the Hume as long as possible. It was interesting country.

I am already looking forward to my next trip to the area, perhaps in the autumn, but definitely in October next year. The area of the Barren Ground is significant for being kept in its natural state. However, many other walks nearby are definitely worth exploring.

Photos: Lucy, Jo and Karen, Minnamurra Rainforest walk. Minnamurra Falls.

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

- Dec 10 **Copelands Pass (1893)** - spectacular pass down Sublime Point into the Jamison—some exposure. Leader: Emanuel 4757 1090 after 7pm. Meet Wentworth Falls station carpark 8am. 6 km. Grade 3/4. Katoomba map.
- Dec 17 **Christmas Party Lunch at Wentworth Falls Country Club.** Deposit \$10. Bookings essential to Jim \$22 per head. Drinks for sale at premises, no BYO. Followed by a walk around Wentworth Falls Lake. Leader: Jim 4758 6009. Meet Wentworth Falls Country Club, Blaxland Road, Wentworth Falls at 12.30 pm. Lunch at 1pm. Short walk. Grade 2.
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve—no programmed walk.
- Dec 31 New Years Eve - **National Pass** constructed in 1906-08 to celebrate federation. Leader: Meredith 4782 4823. Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard carpark 8.30 am. Approx 6 km. Grade 3. Katoomba map.
- Jan 7 **Wentworth Pass** or an alternate walk will be decided on the day dependant on the weather. Leader: **Bob** 4757 2694. Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard Carpark 8:30am. Approx 6 km. Grade 2/3. **Katoomba map.**
- Jan 14 **Leura Forest** or an alternate walk will be decided on the day dependant on the weather. Leader: **Bob** 4757 2694. Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard Carpark 8:30am. Approx 6 km. Grade 2/3. **Katoomba map.**
- Jan 21 **A suitable walk** will be decided on the day dependant on the weather. Leader: **Bob** 4757 2694. Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard CarPark 8:30am. Approx 6 km. Grade 2/3. **Katoomba map.**
- Jan 28 **A suitable walk** will be decided on the day dependant on the weather. Leader: **Bob** 4757 2694. Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard CarPark 8:30am. Approx 6 km. Grade 2/3. **Katoomba map.**
- Feb 4 **Federal Pass** – Leura end – or an alternate walk will be decided on the day dependant on the weather. Leader: **Bob** 4757 2694. Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard CarPark 8:30am. Approx 6 km. Grade 2/3. **Katoomba map.**
- Feb 11 **Federal Pass** – Katoomba end – or an alternate walk will be decided on the day dependant on the weather. Leader: **Bob** 4757 2694. Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard CarPark 8:30am. Approx 6 km. Grade 2/3. **Katoomba map.**

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

- Dec 12 **CITY**—new walk. Five ferries + 12 km walk along Parramatta River. Meet Central Station 9.05 am. Contact Judith 4758 6310. Grade 1/2.
- Dec 19 **Christmas party at Hazelbrook.** Details from Judith 4758 6310.
- Jan 9 **Grand Canyon, Blackheath.** Spectacular canyon walk. Meet Blackheath Station 8.45. Car pool. Eddie 4784 2691, Grade 2/3.
- Jan 16 **CITY WALK—Hen and Chicken Bay.** Interesting historical walk. Meet Central Station 9.30. Bus/ferry. Judith 4758 6310. Grade 1/2.
- Jan 23 **Golden Stairs and Ruined Castle.** Meet Katoomba Station 8.30. Car pool. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2/3.
- Jan 30 **Springwood walk + Birdwood Gully.** Meet Springwood Station 8.45. Tera 4751 3303. Grade 2.
- Feb 6 **BUS TRIP—Bent's Basin.** Meet Springwood Civic Centre 9.00. Grade 2. Leader Heather 4739 1493. Book/pay Keith 4736 1010, \$12.
- Feb 13 **Berghofers Pass.** Explore early mountains road. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.45. Marion 4759 2575. Grade 2.

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 Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, roybev12@bigpond.net.au

- Dec 8 **Numantia Falls, Faulconbridge.** Walk down the Victory Track to the falls. Meet Faulconbridge Station car park 9.15 am. Contact Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2/3.
- Dec 15 **Christmas Party** 12.30 pm. Bring a plate to share (salads or dessert). BBQ sausages provided. BYO drinks. Phone Gail 4782 1215 for venue details and to confirm attendance.
- Jan 12 **Walls Cave, Blackheath.** Take lunch. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9:45am. Car pool. Maurice 4739 4942 Grade 2
- Jan 19 **Fairy Bower, Mt Victoria.** Walk from Mt Piddington. Take lunch. Meet Mt Victoria Station 9:45am. Barrie 4782 9235 Grade 2
- Jan 26 Australia Day. No walk.
- Feb 2 **Den Fenella, Wentworth Falls.** Descent through variety of vegetation overlooking Jamison Valley. Meet Stockyard Car Park Wentworth Falls 9:30am. Car pool. Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 2.
- Feb 9 **Red Gum Park, Bullaburra.** Meet Bullaburra Station south side 9:30am. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.
- Feb 16 **Dante's Glen, Lawson.** Steep descent into cool valley, past waterfalls and rainforest. Take lunch. Meet Lawson Bowling Club Car Park 10am. Barrie 4782 9235. Grade 2.