

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Issue No. 295

August 2012



BLUE GUM FOREST 80TH ANNIVERSARY

Saturday, 1st September, 2012

BE PART OF THE STORY AND CELEBRATE

Overnight camp at Acacia Flat from 4pm—limited to 100 people. Relaxed campout with a ceremonial campfire, a chance to record your story, guest speakers, and more. (contact Vanessa Richardson, vanessa.richardson@environment.nsw.gov.au, 4787 3112 to book your campsite). OR

Govetts Leap at 4pm. Songs and poetry and a birthday cake. Bring family and friends and finger food to share and stay to see the full moon rise over the Mount Hay Range at 6.22 pm (sunset is at 5.37 pm)

Blue Mountains Conservation Society

MONTHLY MEETING

7.30 pm, Thursday 30 August 2012

Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls

Andy Macqueen, author of *Back from the Brink*, will tell the story of Blue Gum and the Grose Wilderness.

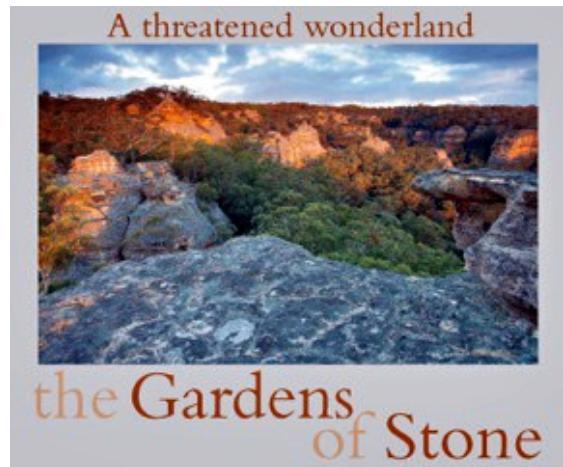
"The Grose has escaped development. There have been schemes for roads, railways, dams, mines and forestry, but the bulldozers have been kept out. Instead, the valley became the Cradle of Conservation in New South Wales when it was reserved from sale in 1875—an event magnificently reinforced in 1931 when a group of bushwalkers were moved to save Blue Gum Forest from the axe."

NO HUNTING IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS



400 members and supporters came to a rally organised by Blue Mountains Conservation Society at Carrington Place, Katoomba on Sunday 15th July 2012

Speakers were: Lachlan Garland (Blue Mountains Conservation Society), Vanessa Richardson (Ranger NPWS and Public Service Association member), Kevin Evans (National Parks Association), Leanne Taylor (WIRES), Darren Halloran (Senior Field Supervisor NPWS and Regional Australian Workers Union Delegate), and Bob Debus (former NSW Environment Minister and Member for Blue Mountains).



The Gardens of Stone – a threatened wonderland: A free slideshow to music.
6.30pm, Wednesday 15 August, 2012
Theatrette, NSW Parliament
Macquarie Street, Sydney

Ian Brown will launch a coffee table book on a spectacular part of the unprotected Gardens of Stone, threatened by open-cut coal mining.

A slideshow of Ian's dramatic images will be accompanied by a new work 'the Gardens of Stone' by the noted composer Amanda Handel, followed by wine and cheese supper. Hear too about an exciting recent discovery of Aboriginal rock art.

Hosted by the Hon. Catherine Cusack, MLC
More information: Keith Muir, ph 02 9261 2400

The Gardens of Stone – a threatened wonderland can be purchased from <http://www.blurb.co.uk/bookstore/detail/3282780>

The message was loud and clear – **WE DON'T WANT RECREATIONAL HUNTING IN ANY OF OUR NATIONAL PARKS!** National Parks are for nature conservation, not blood sports!

Our local member for Blue Mountains, Roza Sage, supports this legislation.

WE ARE NOT HAPPY, ROZA!

Over 300 signatures were collected on petitions. "Not Happy Roza" signs were taken by many participants. (If you want a sign to display outside your house, please contact Christine, hutnews@bluemountains.org.au, or 4787 7246)

We ask the O'Farrell Government to reverse this legislation.

"Hut News", the newsletter of
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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
21 AUGUST 2012**
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Nursery News

Nursery re-opens: After our winter break, our Lawson nursery will be open again on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from 8th August from 9am to noon. We will also resume our market attendances starting with the Blackheath Community Market on Sunday 5th August (and thereafter every 1st Sunday of the month) and then the Lawson Magpie Market on Sunday 19th August (and thereafter every 3rd Sunday of the month).

Plants of the Month: In the September 2011 *Hut News* we featured the genus, *Goodenia*, and, particularly *G. ovata*, a lovely shrub with brilliant yellow flowers. We now have a prostrate version of this same plant which makes an excellent rockery specimen or a good groundcover for filling in under shrubs. It has the same flowers and leaves as its taller version and tolerates semi-shade.

In another issue of *Hut News* we described our holdings of plants suitable for rockeries and as well as the above and those offered previously we now have a new addition, *Rhodanthe anthemoides*, formerly named *Helipterum anthemoides* or, commonly, Chamomile Sunray. This perennial plant is widely distributed from coast to alpine areas of Queensland, N.S.W., Victoria and Tasmania and I saw a whole hillside in bloom making a spectacular display in Mt. Kaputar National Park, near Narrabri. It grows to about 25cm high with small (about 10mm), narrow, greyish-green leaves. The flower heads occur singly at the end of the stems and are 20-30mm in diameter with yellow centres surrounded by white, papery bracts. The flowers occur over a long period between winter and early autumn and can be dried for a permanent display. Massed plantings with other daisy species such as *Brachycomes* (of which we have plenty) are most appealing.

Come and see us at Lawson or the markets for these plants as well as numerous others, still at the bargain price of \$2.50 for tube-stock. We also have some plants in larger pots from \$4 and ferns in 65mm pots for \$3.50 and larger pots starting at \$5.

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager, kevinbell@eftel.net.au



Photo: Goodenia ovata, Brian Walters, <http://anpsa.org.au/g-ova.html>

Land Clearing—a bit of history not to forget!

At the Kyoto Conference 31 developed nations agreed to limit their emissions by the year 2012 to targets below the levels of 1990. Australia, Ireland and Norway were allowed to increase their emissions. The targets could, however, be increased if additional emissions were offset by the establishment of "carbon sinks", which Australia achieved by stopping land clearing.

The NSW Government is now apparently about to rip these arrangements, established by the Howard Government, up!

Keith Muir, Director, The Colong Foundation for Wilderness

Blue Mountains City Council 8th September 2012 Elections

Nominations close on 8th August, and if the 2008 election is any indication there will be over 60 candidates across the four wards.

In order to gain an understanding of candidates' views of environmental and conservation issues, the Society will be providing a questionnaire for candidates.

The questionnaire will consist of ten or so straight-forward questions.

Their answers will be collated and placed on our website.

NO HUNTING IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS **The Premier's broken promise**

Most members will know all about this and have written letters, attended rallies, phoned their local MP. The responses we are getting to our letters are misleading. We need to remember the facts.

The Premier of NSW has broken his pre-election promise to keep recreational shooting out of our National Parks. The Bill to allow hunting in National Parks, the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012, has passed through parliament and is now law.

Amongst other things, these amendments will allow the minister to make National Parks available *"for the hunting of game animals by persons who hold a game hunting licence"* and prevent anti-hunting protesting by making it an offence *"to interfere with a person who is lawfully hunting game animals on public hunting land"* (including national parks).

The Premier announced that 79 reserves, consisting of 34 national parks, 31 nature reserves and 14 state conservation areas, have been identified for assessment. **These 79 reserves cover, in total, an area of approximately 2.9 million ha, which is approximately 41% of the total area of NPWS reserves in NSW, and 3.6% of the state's land area.**

The amendments to the Act only specifically excludes 48 of our metropolitan national parks and other types of reserves, along with wilderness and world heritage areas. This leaves a lot of our 779 reserves at risk of being opened to hunting.

This decision was a deal with the Shooters and Fishers Party so that they would support O'Farrell's electricity privatisation bill. **IT IS NOT ABOUT CONSERVATION!**

Ground shooting by volunteers is almost never effective in controlling feral animal populations, and this program will take away resources from the NPWS' professional control programs.

This decision raises safety concerns for park staff and visitors as well as animal welfare concerns.

This decision undermines the core values of national parks being for the protection of nature and the enjoyment of the NSW public

Go to National Parks Association of NSW website <http://www.npansw.org.au/> and help continue the fight against this bad law, brought into force for all the wrong reasons. **We want NO Hunting in any of our National Parks.**

6th National Wilderness Conference

**Wilderness, tourism
and national parks:
taking stock and
looking ahead**

21-23 September 2012

**University of
Technology Sydney**



Program and booking details can be found at www.colongwilderness.org.au

This weekend conference is only \$90/person (\$60 concession)

The Conference opens with a free public address, "Wilderness in a dangerous future" by Dr Bob Brown on Friday night (Sept 21 at 8pm), with supper provided afterwards.

The conference seeks to answer the question: how should tourism relate to wilderness and national parks? If you're a researcher, a park manager, a student, a tourism person, a conservationist or a citizen, dealing with these issues, this conference is for you!

The 6th National Wilderness Conference will be co-presented by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, the NSW National Parks Association and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

Sponsored by Paddy Pallin.

Join us for

Bushcare's Major Day Out

Join experienced Bushcarers and those who've never tried Bushcare before. Help us rid our bushland of weeds and help our native plants thrive.

9am to 1pm
Sunday 9 September 2012

**Central Park,
Falls Road, Wentworth Falls**

Morning tea provided. Bring a hat, wear sturdy shoes and sunscreen. Tools and gloves will be provided by Council.



RSVP by 1 September, to the Bushcare Office 4780 5623 or bushcare@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

A phenomenal effort from our supporters on the campaign to stop Coalpac's mining proposal

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society recognizes the value of individual submissions being sent to the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure to voice opposition to the open-cut mining proposal which threatens the Ben Bullen State Forest.

Over 700 submissions were received and the Society wishes to thank everyone for their efforts. This is a phenomenal result! The many residents of Cullen Bullen who will be directly affected were moved by the level of support.

It is unfortunate to note that the concerns from residents around negative health impacts from the open-cut proposal are very real. As you may recall, the mine is extremely close to the small town and its Cullen Bullen Primary School.

NSW HEALTH has stated in its submission on the proposal:

We have a number of concerns, particularly in relation to the long-term health effects from dust, emissions from blasting and noise effects.

NSW ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY stated in its submission:

(the EPA) cannot support the project as is currently proposed for the following reason:

1. The EPA considers that the potential for unacceptable noise impacts upon both rural residents and the residents of Cullen Bullen is too great based on the assumptions in the noise modelling of the proposed 24 hours a day/7 days a week operations.

It is important we continue the campaign to protect this area and prevent the NSW Government from setting a precedent that would allow open-cut mining in areas that will directly affect the headwaters of the Cox's River and the hundreds and hundreds of native plants and animals that reside in this magnificent landscape we all know as ***The Gardens of Stone***.

Justin McKee

Inquiry into the management of public land in NSW

Three government MPs and one from the Shooters and Fishers Party have initiated a NSW Upper House inquiry into the management of public land in NSW, including state forests and the national park estate.

NPA has serious reservations about this inquiry as it represents yet another mixed message about the State Government's commitment to existing and future protection of our national parks.

The chair of the inquiry is Mr Robert Brown of the Shooters and Fishers Party. NPA is concerned that this inquiry will be used to halt the reservation of parks and to justify the degradation of the existing national park estate through grazing, logging, and high impact recreation

Amanda Handel: Gardens of Stone CD launch



Amanda Handel is a revered Australian composer with a catalogue of scores that represent music for a range of acoustic instruments. Amanda's first compositional models include Bartok, Debussy and George Crumb.

Amanda has just recorded a new CD of her compositions for piano and didjeridu titled ***Gardens of Stone***. The music is inspired by landscapes in the Blue Mountains and other natural phenomena. With this work, she has successfully navigated the nexus of Contemporary Classical and World Music.

A concert will be held to launch the album on Sunday 23 September in the Blackheath Uniting Church at 4pm. The event is part of the Sydney Sacred Music Festival.

The album features virtuoso didjeridu/didjeribone player Michael Jackson playing with Amanda as pictured. Her compositions are highly original and distinctive. The recording sessions for her CD were made at Sydney's prestigious Studio 301 on a big, beautiful Yamaha C7 piano.

Amanda has been very kind to gift use of her 11 minute composition also entitled 'The Gardens of Stone', to help profile our campaign to protect the precious area. This piece is dedicated to Wyn Jones, a passionate bushwalker, photographer and educator with a longstanding commitment to the conservation of the Blue Mountains.

'Gardens of Stone' will feature in the launch of the Gardens of Stone picture book in NSW Parliament House, 6:30pm on 15th August, 2012.

For more information about Amanda, go to www.amandahandel.com

such as four wheel driving and horse riding.

The terms of reference for the inquiry are highly skewed in favour of economic interests and fail to adequately cover the importance of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system to provide resilience for our natural environment. Our conservation areas are important not only for biodiversity protection, but also for other critical ecosystem services such as fresh water catchment protection, and storing carbon in trees and soils. The landscapes, places and objects in national parks are significant for their Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural values, yet such considerations are absent from the terms of reference of the inquiry.

Shooting threatens local tourism

Don Morison

The Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon present a united front to potential visitors in promoting outdoor tourism. But publicity from the State Government implying that these areas will be unaffected by the expansion of so-called "conservation hunting" fails to tell the complete story.

A caller to an ABC local radio program recently told of a fishing trip to Thompsons Creek Dam, near Wallerawang. The fisherman and a companion were narrowly missed by a projectile, apparently fired out of the nearby Farnash State Forest.

A BMCS member reported that a Game Council representative was present at a meeting on the future of Dargan Weir Reserve, near Bell. This reserve is part of the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 proposal and is dominated by a deep and narrow winding gorge. Although it is visited by large numbers of bushwalkers, picnickers and rock climbers, the nature of the landforms and vegetation make it difficult for visitors to see each other.

These areas have been important to the experience of the Greater Blue Mountains for decades. The possible presence of shooters and the fact that National Parks staff are not quarantined from State Government staff cuts are very bad advertisements for a region specialising in natural area tourism.

From October 6 to October 14, the second Blue Mountains Festival of Walking is planned. Last year's festival began with a launch attended by Federal and State Members, Louise Markus and Roza Sage. It was pleasing that they wanted to show their understanding of the importance of bushwalking to regional tourism, but if they attend such an event this year, the expansion of hunting and the threatened National Parks staff cuts will be the elephants in the room.

Wild hog season all year

In the US, where the gun lobby is strong and hunting is a popular pastime, it is reported that feral pig populations have exploded, with estimates that there are five million wild pigs in the United States (<http://planetark.org/enviro-news/item/65745>). Part of the problem is that "hunters are relocating pigs to hunt them and the territory is what is expanding so dramatically". Not only has recreational hunting not reduced the numbers of these pigs, but their numbers have increased to the point where they are out of control. And the American solution is more hunting: "hunting seasons are being flung wide open for wild hog across the nation". One wonders!

Photo (right): A young Bush Tracker investigates a native currant (*Leptomeria acida*) along the Fairy Dell track- "Awesome! They're really sour and delicious!"

Walk on the wild side Gary Humble

Families visiting the Mountains will be soon be able to call in to a NPWS or Visitors' Centre or perhaps log on to a website and pick up a couple of kid-friendly bushwalk guides written by local kids.

The *Bush Trackers* program being run by National Parks and Greater Blue Mtns World Heritage Organisation has started up with students from Springwood and Mt Victoria PS involved in the first local wanders.

Eventually most children in Yrs 3 & 4 throughout the Mountains will have explored a local area, investigating the plants, wildlife and landscape, taking in the views and soaking up the ambience. The drawings, photos, poems, notes and maps they produce will provide the basis for the guides, which will then encourage other local and visiting children to take a walk on the wild side.

In late May some 90 kids from Springwood PS explored the Fairy Dell track in smaller groups accompanied by NPWS Discovery Rangers, other local environmental educators, teachers and parents. The students were assigned roles as Bush Detectives, Photographers, Mappers and Funsters (hunting for fun activities). Their keen eyes were soon finding angophoras - "That tree's melted like lava over that boulder", reveling in the sight of shafts of sunlight striking ferns in a rainforest glen, tasting bush tucker and spying sunbathing skinks. They enjoyed quiet moments listening for birds and frogs and writing poems.

Last term I visited Mt Vic PS to introduce Yr 3-4 to the European crossing of the Blue Mountains and to teach them some basics of mapping as preparation for their exploration of Mt York to produce their local *Bush Trackers* guide. Last week during their walk, they gazed westwards from the Mt York lookouts, imagining the thoughts of the early European explorers, watched wedge-tails soaring above and discovered a lyrebird's nest. They examined the hand-chiseled cuttings of Cox's Road- the oldest remaining original roadway in Australia. Discovery Ranger Janelle was able to give the keen young explorers an introduction to Aboriginal life and culture in the Mountains.

With a major funding grant from the Commonwealth "Your Community Heritage" program and further financial support from ConSoc and a number of other local organisations, *Bush Trackers* has made a good start and hopefully will continue to expand through the Mountains, with many more guides produced by kids over the years to come. Their sketches, photos and writings will encourage others to take a walk with a wild guide!



The National Park Hunt by Alan Foster

I love a-huntin' and a-fishin' and we're goin' on a mission
To do a bit of shootin' after dark
Just me and my mate Daryl now that Farry O'Barrel
Lets us to do it in the National Park
We're gonna shoot some feral hogs and a few native dogs
A koala or a kangaroo
But you'd better not come near 'cause with our bellies full of beer
Mate you never know we might shoot you.

Bang bang! Coupla blokes on a sportin' mission
Bang bang! Got our rifles and our ammunition
Bang bang! Got a few slabs of tinnies in the boot
As you do when you're headin' for a shoot.

Well we arrive at the park and it'll soon be gettin' dark
And I think the weather's headin' for a storm
And we set up both our tents near a rusty barbed wire fence
And we down a couple tinnies to get warm
Then we head into the night with our trusty old spotlight
Two mighty hunters out upon the prowl
And when the shootin's o'er and we tally up the score
All we've shot's a mangy possum and an owl.

Bang bang! Coupla blokes on a sportin' mission
Bang bang! Got our rifles and our ammunition
Bang bang! Hope we don't shoot you my friend
On our good old Aussie blokey weekend.

I got up later in the night and by the pale moonlight
I saw somethin' movin' over by the tree
And I reached for my gun at a quarter past one
Is that the wild black panther that I see?
So I fired off a round and somethin' fell to the ground
With a thud and gave a little moan
And I yelled "Hey Daryl!" as I lowered me gun barrel
No reply; I think I'm campin' on me own.

Bang bang! Coupla blokes on a sportin' mission
Bang bang! Got our rifles and our ammunition
Bang bang! Now I wonder what has happened to me friend
On our good old Aussie huntin' weekend.

And far too soon by the pale light of the moon
I see that poor old Daryl's lyin' dead
And much to my surprise I shot him right between the eyes
I'm a damn fine shot it must be said
And sadly now I see why he was standin' by the tree
And I know this 'cause his pants are still unzipped
And I see what he was doin' and it spelled his fatal ruin
Mate I'm sorry but that wasn't in the script.

Bang bang! Coupla blokes on a sportin' mission
Bang bang! Got our rifles and our ammunition
Bang bang! Seems I mighta shot me own best friend
On our good old blokey huntin' weekend.

So Mate, don't you be a shooter just play games on your computer
And just listen to the words I have to say
You really should remember at the duck-shoot in September
That an ill-directed shot can spoil your day
So you should save yourself some grief and turn over a new leaf
Don't be a hunter be a bushwalker instead
And then you won't be a danger to every passing ranger
And you'll never shoot your best mate in the head.

Gonna learn a peaceful occupation
Gonna do some bush regeneration
Gonna learn all about conservation
Because shooting is an awful aberration*.
And these laws need an urgent cancellation.

* i.e. in National Parks



Eastern Yellow Robin
Photo by Carol Probets,.

What Bird is that? Confessions of an Amateur Bird Watcher

I became interested in our feathered friends while in my mid-fifties. Nearly twenty years on, there's still a lot of catching up to do. Bird-watching is very satisfying but can be just a little frustrating at times.

Our Thursday Interpretive Bush-walkers are an interesting group. From time to time when a bird calls, someone will ask the question, "What bird is that". When I'm not sure (don't know) I usually say, "check it out with Sue", commonly known as passing the buck!

Sylvia, who has a pretty good eye and doesn't use binoculars, will spot a bird and point it out to me. At times it is hard to find, and before one knows it whatever it was has gone. Carol comes along once a term, puts up with the chattering, asks us to keep quiet and we usually find and identify twice as many birds as per usual. Interpretive walkers – yes, but minds sometimes wander and other topics crop up. Sadly no one is prepared to discuss cricket

with me!!

"What bird is that"? When I walk by myself, life is so much simpler. Can still be frustrating, but no questions, you can talk to yourself, it's pretty satisfying.

There are the easy to identify calls. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Ravens, Magpies, Gang Gangs, King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas, Spotted Pardalotes, White-throated Treecreepers, Grey Butcherbird, Brown Cuckoo Dove, Boo Book Owl, Lewins and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, and of course, the beautiful Lyrebird.

One of the most accommodating of birds is the Eastern Yellow Robin. Recently, and not for the first time, one joined me along a fire-trail. It's that flash of yellow as he flies just above the ground in front. Seconds later he appears, clinging on the limb of a tree. They seem quite happy for you to have a look, before a quick swoop to the other side of the trail,

then down back on the ground, sometimes caught in the sun's rays.

Thornbills and other LBBs are pretty frustrating and don't often give you the opportunity for a look. Not the Eastern Yellow Robin though! This one was with me for a few hundred metres. What Bird is that? - easy to answer, even though I was on my own. Ron Hyslop.

Vale Michael (Ted) Maack

Michael (Ted) Maack was a much loved member of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and the Blue Mountains Community more generally. We are very sad at his passing and would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the contributions that Ted made. The following is an extract from Andy Macqueen's eulogy at the funeral service held at Leura Crematorium on 20 July 2012.

Ted joined Springwood Bushwalkers in 1990 and was an active member participating in day walks with children and NavShield rogaines: trips to Spendour Rock for the Anzac Day service.

But Ted was no ordinary bushwalker. He served with distinction in the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs for 24 years, being a delegate firstly of Sydney Uni Bushwalkers, then Springwood and finally the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Ted's Confederation career started with the role of Junior Vice President in 1988. And because he had a 4WD—an old short-wheel-base Landcruiser—he also landed the job of Transport Officer with the Search and Rescue Service.

1991 saw him as Confederation President—a thankless job if there ever was one. Then, after holding a variety of other positions, in 2001 he was appointed Conservation Officer, arguably the most important role in the Confederation. He worked hard at it for 10 years—until ill-health forced his retirement last year. Dodie Green, the current President of Confederation, said that “Ted was our friend and ally in the protection and preservation of our great wilderness areas and national parks.

Individuals with his sense of service, passion and commitment are few and far between, he will be very sadly missed”.

How true. Ted was a campaigner—rarely the upfront man, but always the passionate and tireless supporter.

And, of course, he was a conservationist at the more local level.

Back in 1992, the 60th anniversary of the saving of Blue Gum Forest saw Ted as MC at the ceremonies in the forest. He then became an inaugural member of the Friends of Blue Gum Forest, an involvement which saw him on many trips to the forest surveying trees, weeding, or just helping to clean up rubbish. Ranger Cath Ireland, now up the north coast, recalled this week that Ted “was a beautiful man, warm and caring”.

He was also a long-time member the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. He was on the Land-use Subcommittee, where his engineering and mapping skills proved very useful in looking at Development Applications and in helping with the Society's submission on the Council's Environment Plan. He was an active member of the Mayor's Blue Mountains World Heritage Advisory Committee, and the campaign against the Stealth filming saw him at the blockade on the Mount Hay road.

More recently he was on Consoc's management committee, serving as Meetings Secretary.

Even more locally, Ted started the Tortoise Creek Landcare Group, near his home, and successfully lobbied to have a sediment retention basin to protect it.

As if all that wasn't enough. All this time there was Ted's contribution to youth—his role in the Scouting Movement.

Cub Leader Keith Holley recalls that Ted was a very caring leader, and was popular with the boys. He was known to them as Bagheera (a black panther). Ted's involvement with the Cubs and Scouts spanned about 15 years. I'm sure many young men of today are richer for Ted's voluntary service.

In closing I'd like to return to Blue Gum, a place that Ted loved. At that 60th anniversary when Ted officiated, a bunch of us were there from Springwood. In a rush of enthusiasm we shook hands that we'd meet in the forest on the 100th anniversary in 2032—when we were all about 80. I don't know whether any of us will make it to that anniversary, but Ted won't even make it to the 80th, coming up in a just few weeks time.

Yet maybe he will, because some of us will be there and we will remember him. We will have a picnic in the woods and our Ted will be there. Andy Macqueen.

Canowindra and Nangar NP Christine Davies



During July, ten Thursday Interpretive bushwalkers spent four days in the Canowindra area. This photo, taken from the Escort Way, shows the silt-stone cliffs of Mount Nangar, in Nangar National Park. Road access to the park is through a gully following the twists and turns of Terarra Creek in the former Dripping Rock property.

The flats and lower slopes were largely cleared for agriculture and provide a wonderful habitat for the many macropods we saw—mobs of Eastern Grey Kangaroos, lots of solitary Common Wallaroos, and several shy Red-necked Wallabies. Swamp Wallabies are also listed. Trees include some lovely Kurrajongs.

Some of us walked to the top of Mount Nangar from the car park near the dripping rock wall, sometimes waterfall, which gave the property its name. This is a 3.6 km, 3 hour walk, made more difficult because of lots of fallen trees on the track.

Wedge-tailed Eagles were a feature of the day. The Eagle we saw while stopped for the above photograph, and his mate and perhaps a juvenile, were frequently overhead checking out the walkers on their way up and the others who had taken the easy option and travelled to the top by 4WD vehicle. Flowers seen were Boronia and a pretty, low-growing,golden wattle. When in season, orchids are a feature of the Park.

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

The Climate Change Denial Waltz ...

I recently had the pleasure of seeing Peter Hicks perform at a house concert in Lawson. Peter Hicks is an Australian political folk musician based in Tasmania. This song is from his CD "The day the market died". More information from <http://peterhicks.com.au/> Christine.

Let's Pretend

Written by Geoff Francis, sung by Peter Hicks

Let's pretend it isn't happening
Let's pretend it isn't true
Let's pretend that we can go on
Just the way we used to do.

Let's pretend that cutting carbon
Ten per cent or maybe five
Will be enough to shape a climate
That our children can survive.

Let's pretend that giving handouts
To those polluters who are worse
Will in some strange way save our future
From forever being cursed.

Let's pretend it isn't happening
Let's pretend it isn't true
Let's pretend that we can go on
Just the way we used to do.

Let's pretend that there's a method
Of burning coal that's clear and clean
Let's pretend that nuclear power
Is safer than it's ever been.

Let's pretend that turning lights down
And giving plastic bags away
By itself is all that's needed
To usher in a brighter day.

Let's pretend that growing output
More and more each year
Is our best hope for tomorrow
Rather than our darkest fear.

Let's pretend it isn't happening
Let's pretend it isn't true
Let's pretend that we can go on
Just the way we used to do.

The Botany Bay Weevil Jill Dark

On a recent walk at Linden I spent some time photographing this weevil. Although I have seen this species many times before I didn't actually know what it was. So, Google to the rescue!

I discovered that my weevil was a Botany Bay Weevil or Diamond Weevil and specimens was first collected by Banks and Solander on Cook's voyage in 1770. It was one of five insect species collected and was the first Australian insect to be scientifically described in 1775.



These weevils range along the east coast from central Queensland through Victoria to eastern South Australia. They are most common around the Sydney region. The larvae feed on the roots of Acacia species while the adults eat the shoots and leaves. This one was feeding on the flowers of Acacia suaveolens.

What was your most memorable experience in connecting with Nature?

What remarkable things have you seen and heard in the bush. Was it seeing a special bird for the first time, or hearing its song? Was it something big, or something very small? Was it an unusual occurrence or something that happens every year but it was special to you because this was when you noticed it for the very first time. Was it at the setting of the sun, or during the long shadows in the late afternoon?

In July last year Jim Smith spoke about some of the remarkable things he has seen and heard over 22 years at Wentworth Falls and beyond at a special time of day – dusk. After the talk several people approached Jim with stories of their own about events that they had experienced.

At our monthly meeting at the Conservation Hut on Thursday 27 September, starting at 7.30 pm, Jim Smith will host a forum where members can tell THEIR stories about events they have experienced while connecting with Nature.

We need more people to be part of this event, and to commit beforehand. It can be something very small—something that was special to you. You need only speak for one or two minutes, or you could write down your story for somebody else to read. Contact Christine Davies, phone 4787 7246 or email hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Pollution in Jamison Creek, Wentworth Falls

In mid July, Blue Mountains City Council warned residents and visitors to avoid contact with the water in Jamison Creek, Wentworth Falls, after a mass die-off of freshwater crayfish, native fish and other macro-invertebrates (water bugs) was reported by a bushwalker. An inspection by Council staff found hundreds of crayfish, both adult and juvenile, dead or dying in the creek, extending from the Great Western Highway through to the waterfall at Wentworth Falls.

At the time, the cause of the contamination was unknown and NSW Department of Primary Industries Fisheries Division and the Environmental Protection Agency were carrying out water testing. We are waiting to be advised of the test results.

Jamison Creek flows into Blue Mountains National Park and eventually into Sydney's water supply. Darwin's walk, alongside Jamison Creek, is a popular bushwalk.

Welcome to new members

Craig Lawlor, Springwood
Jacqui Love, Blackheath
Sue Cunningham, Leura

Loose Feathers, with Carol Probets

Flocks of Red Wattlebirds were already flying south along Narrow Neck peninsula on 20th July. These were most likely birds which had come north for the winter to feed from flowering banksias, and were now starting the journey back to their breeding areas. The banksias on Narrow Neck were literally dripping with sweet nectar, providing sustenance for the travelling wattlebirds in addition to thousands of smaller honeyeaters, like the wintering Yellow-faced and White-naped, as well as Silvereyes from Victoria and Tasmania.

An hour later, I was watching a pair of Red Wattlebirds in my garden duetting with gusto and zealously chasing every other bird within cooee - behaviour which suggests nesting is imminent, if it hasn't already begun. Further evidence was found with the gradual dismantling of last year's nest, though I hadn't yet located the new one. Recycled twigs are obviously *de rigueur* for the modern wattlebird nest.

In our area, Red Wattlebirds appear to be partial migrants. In other words, some individuals migrate and some don't. The birds which migrate have the advantage of utilising super-rich food supplies - like the banksias on Narrow Neck, or flowering box eucalypts west of the mountains - in winter when food might be scarce in their breeding areas. On the other hand, the ones that don't (like the pair in my garden) can start breeding earlier. Thus they can fit more breeding attempts into a season and probably get at least one brood underway before the cuckoos arrive. The Koel is the cuckoo which normally parasitises wattlebird nests, and it usually starts arriving around September.

Red Wattlebirds are so named because of their red wattles - small flaps of skin, like dangly earrings on the side of the head. As breeding time approaches, the pair of wattlebirds in my garden move around together so closely it's as if they're joined by an invisible piece of string. This behaviour is called "mate guarding", and it's the male which follows the female around. It's believed the reason he does this is to ensure she doesn't mate with another male at a time when she is at her most fertile. After all, if he's going to invest time and effort into raising young, he needs to be sure they are his. Mate-guarding behaviour is found in a wide variety of bird species, but it's not restricted to birds. It has also been documented in insects, lizards, and primates... even sometimes in humans!

"Carol Probets, origma@westnet.com.au



Red Wattlebird,
photographed
by Carol
Probets on
Narrowneck.

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 renew your membership online.

www.bluemountains.org.au

BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am till noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat. New members are always welcome.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.

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.

Feathertail Glider on flower spike of *Banksia serrata*. Image: Gary Lewis, David Paul/dpimages, Museum Victoria
[http://www.biodiversitysnapshots.net.au/
BDRS/public/speciesInfo.htm?
spid=475&mode=fieldguide](http://www.biodiversitysnapshots.net.au/BDRS/public/speciesInfo.htm?spid=475&mode=fieldguide)

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

'Like' us on Facebook:
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Follow us on Twitter: bmcsnsw

Orphaned Feathertail Gliders welcomed by Taronga Zoo

I have been a member of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society since it began, and do so love receiving copies of Hut News. It brings back many happy memories, and I do wish you all much success with all your wonderful conservation ventures. My late husband, John Buki, was a founding father!

The reason I am writing is because I read the lovely story about the feathertail gliders in the July issue, and I felt I must tell you a story about my experience with these beautiful creatures.

In 1968 we were living in Rappville (where my husband was principal of the school and a very keen conservationist) when some timber cutters brought us a matchbox containing four tiny baby feathertail gliders which they had found when felling trees.

I raised the little things for nearly six months - the local chemist made up some special baby formula for me with which I used to feed them by eyedropper every few hours (had to get up all night as well for a long time); the little things thrived and I went on to feed them all varieties of things which seemed to work. As they got "bigger" they used to run all over the walls and ceiling, and clung to our shoulders and legs—it all began to get a little smelly as they were not suited to nappies!

Finally we decided we should return them to the wild, and took them out to the rainforest in the shoebox (filled with cotton wool) which had been their home all along. My husband carefully lifted them out and put them onto a tree trunk, and in a flash they were back clinging to his trousers and just as quickly jumping back into their box. After several attempts we realised we could not leave them there, and so returned home.

Eventually we called Taronga Zoo in Sydney and told them of our little orphans. They were absolutely delighted, and agreed that we should send them to the Zoo for housing, particularly as the Zoo had never had any in captivity; they organised transport - and we took the box to Casino airport where they were safely boarded and were collected by keepers at the Sydney end.

For many years I received an annual letter from the then President of Taronga, giving us updates on their progress; the Zoo even built a special nocturnal house for them. Eventually, on change of staff, this faded out, but I did often wonder about the breeding colony which now exists at Taronga, and what part my four little foundlings played in that.

Best wishes to everyone at the Society, and thank you for the always interesting Hut News.

Elizabeth Buki.



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

THE WANDERING POET

He was, according to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, a "wanderer and poet", an honourable profession with a long and distinguished tradition reaching back into ancient times. 'Old Phil the Poet' was a regular visitor to the Blue Mountains in the 1880s and 1890s, passing through on his perambulatory wanders around country NSW and Victoria. This was, it seems, a pattern he settled into out of despair following financial loss and the death of a woman he had hoped to marry. Occasional work and the recitation of stories and poems in lonely bush settlements sustained him and you could map his path by the appearance of poems he hawked to rural newspapers along the way.

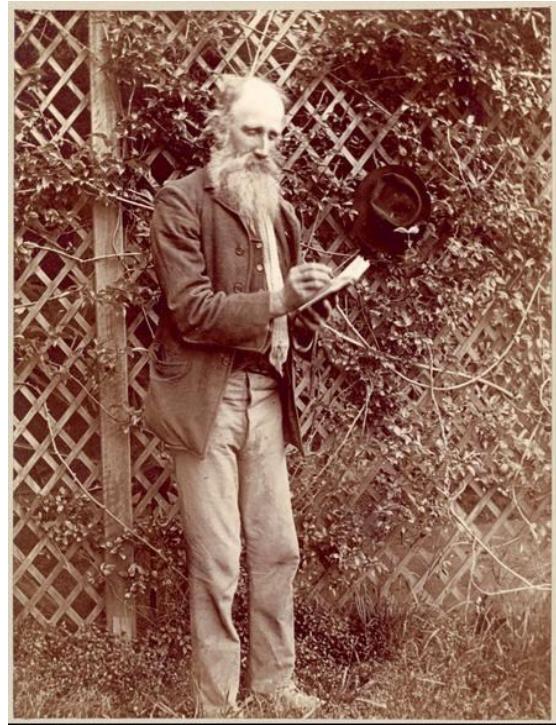
Phillip Durham Lorimer was born to Scottish parents in India in 1843 and educated in Edinburgh before arriving in Australia in 1861. After overlanding cattle in North Queensland he ventured a more settled life in Sydney and a literary career of sorts, claiming to have knocked around with Henry Kendall and to have lunched in Melbourne with Adam Lindsay Gordon the day before his suicide. His life was bohemian, 'Beat' before the term was even invented.

As the itinerant bard of his later years 'Old Phil' would appear in the offices of the rural press, "a tall, shaggy-headed, stooping old man, his unkempt, weeping-willow beard swaying in the draught. Soft, girlish, liquid blue eyes; on his back a bushman's swag, and in his hand an old billy can. He was dirty, certainly, travel-stained and weather-soiled; but ... there was about him the gentleness and simplicity of a child, and a voice soft and musical." Though written by a Parramatta journalist, this could as easily have been penned in the offices of the *Katoomba Times*.

While publication plotted his physical path, in the content of his verses you could trace a restless search for peace of mind. And it was in the Blue Mountains, in a cave near Lithgow, that he found a place to calm his wanderlust and attain some "quietude of life". He rested here for weeks at a time, writing poems and smoking his pipe, tea brewing in his billy and "my thoughts turned to the heavens". It was here, too, that he began to organise his poems into a planned (but never published) collection titled *My Cave Songs and Poems*.* Though lacking appeal to modern ears, his lyrical verse still rings clearly with the joy he found in the grandeur and minutiae of the natural world. It's where he located his God – in the flowers and the soaring eagles, in the morning sun and the evening thunder storm. I wish I knew which cave was his but, alas, the clues are few.

Predictably, 'Old Phil' Lorimer died destitute, at the Rookwood Asylum in 1897. He remains largely forgotten, a curious spectre haunting the edgelands of literary (and Blue Mountains) history. Perhaps, though, as one writer has suggested, he was "the only true bush poet of them all".

John Low (johnlow@iprimus.com.au)



National Library of Australia

nla.pic-an23460659-v

This photo of John Lorimer is from the National Library of Australia.

*A collection of John Lorimer's verse, *Songs and Verses*, was published privately in London in 1901, financed by his sister. A copy is in the Mitchell Library.

Our Monday Leisure Walkers are looking for new walkers (and leaders). See the current program on page 12 of this newsletter. A photo record of some recent walks can be found on Facebook: www.facebook.com/BmcsBushwalking



The Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

\$7.50 plus \$1.50 postage. Buy the map online (www.bluemountains.org.au), write to BMCS, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 with your cheque or money order, or ask for a copy at our monthly meeting.

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

Aug 18 **Dalpura and Jinki Gullies**—Another attempt to get from Dalpura to Jinki as a loop walk. Could be scrubby (gaiters and gloves). Leader Jim 4758 6009. Off track party limit—contact leader. 6 km, some off track. Grade 3/4. Mt Wilson map.

Aug 18 **ALTERNATE WALK. Vera Falls, Wentworth Falls Reserve, Grand Staircase, Slacks Stairs, Very Falls, Valley of the Waters Creek.** Leader Warwick 4757 1354. Meet Stockyard car park, Wentworth Falls Station, 8.30 am. 8 km. Grade 3. Katoomba map.

Aug 25 **Ruined Castle.** This walk has it all, historic Federal Pass, magnificent scenery and Furber Steps to start with, Golden Stairs to finish. Car swap required. Leader Eddie 4784 2691. Meet Katoomba Station car park, 8.30 am. 12 km. Grade 3. Katoomba/Jamison maps.

Sep 1/2 **Bluegum Forest 80th Anniversary celebrations weekend campout.** Day 1: Perry's Lookdown to Bluegum and camp. Day 2: Bluegum till lunch and walk out via DuFours Buttress, Dufours Head and the Pinnacles Track. 600M down and 600M up. Leader Emanuel 4757 1090 after 7pm. Contact leader by phone or email emanuelanddi@yahoo.com.au. Approx 10 km, most on track. Grade 4. Katoomba/Mt Wilson maps.

Sep 1 **80th Bluegum celebrations.** Meet at Evans Lookout for lunch at 12 noon, then walk by the Braeside walk to Govetts Leap, arrive at 4pm for the official 80th Bluegum celebrations. "There will be songs and poetry, and a birthday cake. Bring family and friends and finger food to share and stay to see the full moon rise over the Mount Hay Range at 6.22 pm. (Sunset is at 5.37 pm)", then walk back by moonlight via the Clifftop Walk to Evans Lookout. Leader required. Contact Jim 4758 6009. 8 km, 3 by moonlight. Grade 2/3. Katoomba map.

Sep 8 **Donkey Mountain, Wolgan Valley.** Magnificent garden gullies on top of the mountain. Steep and scrambling ascent with steep descent. Leader Bob 4757 2694. Off-track party limited—contact leader. Approx 5 km off track. Ben Bullen/Cullen Bullen maps.

Sep 8 **ALTERNATE WALK. Thor Head**—great views into the Grose Canyon and Machenzie Mine (bring torches for the mine). Leader Ron 4757 3984 Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.30 am. 9 km. Grade 3. Mt Wilson map.

FORWARD NOTICE:

Oct 22-25 **Barren Grounds and area.** Draft program: Mon—Minnamurra Falls; Tues—Barren Grounds; Wed—Kiama coastal walk; Thur—Jamberoo LO and Carrington Falls. Leader Lucy 4751 5347. Accommodation at Jamberoo Pub. Contact Karen 4751 9695 for details as Lucy may be away. Grades 2 and 3. Kangaroo Valley and sketch maps.

Jan 2013 **Snowy Mountains based in Perisher.** Leader Warwick 4757 1354. Details later.

Have YOU thought about leading a walk?

Is there a walk you would like to see on the program, then we can help. **BMCS needs your help!** We need all types of walks from easy to medium. Or do you know someone else who might be interested in leading a walk? There is help available for new leaders to plan and check out a walk. We need introductory walks and this is a great way for new leaders to start leading. Contact Jim Percy 4758 6009, jp34@tpg.com.au

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 Maurice Kerkham, 4739 4942, mauricekerkham@hotmail.com

Aug 13 **Bald Head.** Spectacular upper Grose views. Contact Phil 4787 5560. Meet Blackheath N/h Centre 9.45am. Car pool.

Aug 20 **Clarence to Zig Zag.** Must be in last carriage of the train—catch Lithgow train, arriving Zig Zag at 9.05am. Leader Mary 6351 3135. Grade 2.

Aug 27 **Blue Gum Swamp and Shaw's Ridge.** Walk through a Blue Gum Forest. Meet Springwood Rail commuter car park 8.45 am. Car pool. Leader Ken 0423 450 200. Grade 2.

Sep 3 **Lockley's Pylon.** Best views of the Grose. Meet Leura Station car park 9.30 am. Car pool, fare \$5. Leader Mary 4757 4569. Grade 2.

Sep 10 **BUS TRIP—Gardens of Stone Stage 2.** Fare \$12. Book and pay Keith 4736 1010. Magnificent pagodas. Meet rear Springwood Civic Centre 8am sharp. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2.

Sep 17-19 **KIAMA.** Several walks in the area. Further details to be advised. Leader Judith 4758 6310. 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,

Aug 16 **Kings Table and Little Switzerland Drive Lookout,** Wentworth Falls. Car pool Meet Stockyard Car Park, Wentworth Falls Station, 9.30am. Contact Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 1..

Aug 23 **North Parramatta Lake Walk Parramatta.** Bush Track (4.5km) around lake with little rocky climbs and stepping stones across river. Take lunch or buy at café . Ten minute bus trip to start walk. Meet at the Bus interchange outside Parramatta Station stand A3. Train arrives at 10:05am. Bus leaves at 10:15 am Leader Jill 4751 6926. Grade 2.

Aug 30 **Silver Mist to Solitary Restaurant, Katoomba.** Clifftop walk with many lookouts. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Katoomba Station car park 10.30 am. Leader Joan c/o 4757 2076. Grade 2.

Sep 6 **BUS TRIP to Tessellated Pavement,** \$12. Level walk to fascinating rock formation. Take lunch. Meet Council depot, South Street, North Katoomba 8.30 am. Leader Barrie 4782 9235. Grade 2.

Sep 13 **Nepean River walk, Emu Plains.** Easy walk around the river. Lunch at O'Donohue's Pub. Meet Emu Plains Station, south side, 9.45am. Leader Barrie 4782 9235. Grade 1.