



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

MONTHLY MEETING

7.30 pm, Thursday, 31 January, 2013

at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls

Rapa Nui (Easter Island) – a story of hope:
Peter Ridgeway



"I live in the Blue Mountains and work for the Hawkesbury Nepean CMA as a restoration ecologist. My job is to get private landowners restoring the critically endangered woodlands of Western Sydney. As you see, I love a challenge! But when we stick at it, sometimes we find we have achieved the impossible.

In October this year I visited Rapa Nui, more commonly known as Easter Island. I was fascinated with the island's history, but I also wanted to see what this island might have to teach us back at home. Rapa Nui has an almost legendary status as the site of one of history's greatest cultural collapses – a self-destruction brought about by land clearing and population explosion.

Rapa Nui is confronting - an island so devastated it will never recover. But the island's story is also complex, and there are some unexpected twists along the way. I came away with something I have found more personally confronting than this story of collapse - a story of remarkable hope for our future." Pete Ridgeway

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

CSG PETITION—3,068 signatures collected!

A petition will soon be delivered to local member Roza Sage and her response will be published in the Blue Mountains gazette. The petition requests that Ms Sage publicly declare her opposition to Coal Seam Gas activity in the Blue Mountains. It further asks that she endeavours in Parliament to have the Blue Mountains removed from AGL's exploration licence which presently covers part of the Blue Mountains.

3,068 people have signed the petition! Watch our website www.bluemountains.org.au ...

Council Unanimously Opposes CSG

Good news! On Tuesday 27th November the Blue Mountains City Council voted unanimously to oppose Coal Seam Gas (CSG) operations in the Blue Mountains. The motion was presented by Greens councillor Geordie Williamson and significantly expanded and strengthened the earlier very useful motion presented by Labor at the Council meeting on Tuesday 6th November.

The above council motions stem from the Stop CSG Rally held at Glenbrook in mid October. At this rally both Greens and Labor councillors promised to oppose CSG in the Blue Mountains. It is gratifying to see that they have honoured their promise through this council motion; similarly the support given to this important motion by Liberal and Independent councillors is most welcome.

The O'Farrell state government should take note, there is clearly no "social licence" for CSG in the Blue Mountains. We sincerely hope that our local state member, Mrs Roza Sage, will show the same good sense demonstrated by her Liberal colleagues on council and come out in clear opposition to CSG in the Blue Mountains.

Full details of the BMCC resolutions can be found on the Society's web site: www.bluemountains.org.au

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

Lawson Nursery –Wednesdays and Saturdays, 9am to noon. Closed for the Christmas holidays from 8 December to 16 January. The nursery is located in the Lawson Industrial Area on the corner of Park and Cascade Streets, opposite Federation Building Materials (see the map on our website www.bluemountains.org.au).

Blackheath Community Market, 1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm.

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of the month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm.

Tube stock \$2.50 each. Larger pots available.

Enquiries Kevin Bell 4787 6436, kevinbell@eftel.net.au

**"Hut News", the newsletter of
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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
20 JANUARY 2013**

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MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

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JOIN Blue Mountains Conservation Society,
or renew your membership online.

www.bluemountains.org.au

Nursery News

Nursery Sales: Our Lawson nursery will close for sales after trading on Saturday 8th December and we will re-open from Wednesday 16th January 2013. But don't despair if you suddenly need to buy plants for presents as we will be at the Lawson Xmas markets (in our Santa hats) on Sunday 16th December. We will have a big range of advanced plants which make lovely presents as well as gift certificates which can be redeemed anytime.

Many thanks to all our customers who have bought plants from us over the year as the money is vital for continuance of the Society's environmental battles.

The Cultural Centre: Now that this has been officially opened take time on your visit to have a look at the roof-top garden where we supplied 2,300 plants covering 30 species. The landscaping and choice of species was designed by Sydney firm "Equatica" and we worked closely with them to produce, what we hope will be, a feature in keeping with the splendour of the inside.

The garden features several species which like "wet feet" and we have quantities of these left over so if you have a pond or wet area in your garden, we have advanced plants at bargain prices just waiting for you. These include *Juncus usitatus* (*Tussock Rush*), *Baumea rubiginosa* (*Soft Twig-rush*), *Carex appressa* (*Tall Sedge*), *Carex longebrachiata* (*Drooping Sedge*), and *Schoenoplectus validus* (*River Club-rush*). We also have numerous other species suitable for a wet area so come and see us if you have such a situation.

Finally, Season's Greetings from our volunteers to all our valued customers. We have enjoyed chatting with you about plants and environmental matters and we look forward to seeing you all again next year. And don't forget! New volunteers are always welcome and keep bringing back your tubes and pots!

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager, 4787 6436, kevinbell@eftel.net.au

Wilson Alcorn

Wilson Alcorn passed away at Orange on 28 November 2012 at the age of 93. Wilson and his brother Graham had a long association with Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Wilson was President in 1971 and Newsletter Editor from 1972-1984. In 2009/10 Wilson sent me some of his memories of working in the Blue Mountains as a ranger looking after the walking tracks and reserves and they were published in Hut News.

Jim Smith had great respect and admiration for the Alcorn brothers for their work in restoring the Blue Mountains walking tracks. They were employed by Blue Mountains City Council and just a few rangers covered the whole of the Blue Mountains from Lapstone to Mount Victoria. They took on extra jobs.

"The most amazing thing Wilson and Graham did was the restoration of the Wentworth Pass, the Vera Falls track and the Slack Stairs. These tracks had been neglected and overgrown for 40-50 years. The two brothers, with minimal resources, restored 3 - 4 km of walking track," Jim said. "They were particularly heroic in their restoration of the Slack Stairs. The original wooden stairs, constructed in the 1930s, were rotted, had missing steps and were extremely dangerous."

"At their retirement, Blue Mountains City Council had a ceremony where Wilson and Graham planted a tree each, in the Leura Cascades area," Jim added. "A member might be able to let us know if these trees survive."

Shirley Brown said that Wilson and Graham were "old-world courteous gentlemen", always positive, never complaining. They lived together in Medlow Bath for 25 years and "rubbed along" so well.

Wilson was a Life Member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society. "In the Blue Mountains I found my place: the wonderful scenery, the jobs, the memorable people." (Wilson Alcorn, November 2009)

Christine Davies.

EDO Under Threat

The NSW Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) is an institution held in the highest regard by all environmentalists in NSW. Time and time again it has been the legal support, guidance, and representation provided by the EDO that has allowed small environmental groups to stand up to the might of big corporations and self-interested governments.

But this very institution itself is now under threat, the target of financial cuts by the O'Farrell government. One does not have to be a political insider to know that many among the O'Farrell government (and its allies) would be more than happy to see the last of the EDO. If ongoing and adequate government funding is not secured very soon then the EDO will, for most intents and purposes, be gone by March 2013. With its demise, communities throughout NSW will lose the legal support they need to defend native vegetation and waterways, oppose inappropriate coal seam gas and mining operations, obtain fair planning outcomes, and many more worthwhile things.

The campaign to save the EDO is in many ways the most important campaign of all, for the EDO's ongoing existence is, without exaggeration, absolutely critical to the success of a myriad of important environmental campaigns.

The EDO has been of crucial importance over the years to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, providing "legal rights" education as well as specific legal advice and court representation. Many Society members, including myself, have attended excellent workshops run by the EDO. These workshops are vital if we are to have communities that understand their environmental rights and know how to pursue legitimate claims in defence of the environment. The Society's recent successful stand against water pollution by Delta Energy would have been impossible without the EDO.

To quote Jeff Smith, Executive Director of the EDO, "*If NSW loses its EDO, the community's only source of accessible, independent, expert, public interest legal advice on planning and environment matters since 1985 will disappear.*"

To learn more and find out what you can do visit: http://edo.org.au/edonsw/site/save_your_edo.php

To see the ABC 7.30 Report's excellent video report (just 9 minutes!) on this matter, go to: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-11-16/environmental-defenders-face-funding-cuts/4377128>

To see the Society's submission to Government on the matter see: <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/b5-submissions.shtml>

**Craig Linn, BMCS Project Officer
(Food and Environment)**

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.

Wollemi *Wild Things*

an exhibition of works from nature
captured by wildlife artist Fiona Lumsden
on her Blue Mountains field trips

1 December 2012 to 27 January 2013

**The Blue Mountains Botanic Garden
Mount Tomah**

Fiona Lumsden grew up in Mount Wilson. It was there that she began learning about the animals and plants of the wild places that surrounded her. Fiona's beautiful drawings of plants and wildlife are a result of her talent and genuine passion for the flora and fauna of the region.

Fiona is a keen conservationist, seeing her wildlife art as a link to foster greater understanding and connection with nature and the intricate wild ecosystems that sustain us. Fiona hopes that education and exposure to the beauty of nature through art, photography, literature and other media, will stimulate increasing awareness and concern for more of the environment. She is a long-time member of Birds Australia and other conservation bodies, including Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Well done, Justin McKee

Since April 2011, the Society has been fortunate to have Justin McKee coordinating our work to protect the Gardens of Stone. Justin has been spearheading the campaign to stop 800ha of the beautiful Ben Bullen State Forest being turned into an **open cut coal mine**.

His tremendous efforts in organising the banner drops, media, working in Cullen Bullen and lobbying decision makers have been appreciated and recognised by Justin recently being awarded the **Myles Dunphy Award for the most Outstanding Effort of an Individual** by the Nature Conservation Council in October 2012.

The Gardens of Stone Campaign Continues

Thanks to all of our members for their work to protect the Gardens of Stone. **The fight against the Coalpac Open Cut mine is NOT over.** The *Planning and Assessment Commission* is due to release its recommendations about whether the mine should or should not occur by February at the latest. We will fight against this mine every step of the way!

The Coalpac mine is not the only open cut proposal threatening the Gardens of Stone. The best way to protect this iconic area, with its magnificent pagodas, is to have it reserved as a State Conservation Area. We need help to continue the work done by Society volunteers and Justin McKee.

Can you help until March 2013? Please contact Tara Cameron 0419 824 974, taracameron4@gmail.com

Protesting O'Farrell Government's abysmal environmental record

Under Barry O'Farrell's leadership, the NSW Government has weakened environmental protection to unthinkable levels and taken us back to the 1980's. Many achievements brought about by hard working volunteers, campaigners and interest groups has been systematically demolished.

On 28 November, members of BMCS attended a rally in Martin Place Sydney organised by National Parks Association of NSW to protest the 12 environmental decisions NSW is most unhappy about. In no particular order, these are:

- Allowing recreational hunting in national parks
- Slashing jobs at the Office of Environment and Heritage
- Opening the doors to uranium exploration
- Winding back marine park protection and closing Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre
- Mounting a ruthless campaign to undermine the Environmental Defenders Office
- Opening the doors for Coal Seam Gas exploration
- Approving the Maules Creek Mine, which will devastate the Leard Forest
- Backsliding on planning reform and ignoring the community
- Prioritizing coal instead of water despite promises to protect our water catchments
- Announcing "trial grazing" in national parks
- Making political deals that reintroduces duck hunting

Another bullet from O'Farrell

Environment and animal welfare groups are outraged to see reports that a deal to overturn the ban on duck hunting in NSW had been successfully negotiated.

"If this information is accurate, this is yet another bullet from O'Farrell on all issues "environment". Allowing duck hunting in NSW might be good news for the Fishers and Shooters Party, but it is bad news for biodiversity," says Justin McKee, Campaign Coordinator for the National Parks Association of NSW.

"During the period 1983 – 2010, waterbird populations fell as low as 400,000 from a peak of 1.7 million. Our waterbirds must be left alone to recover populations and build resilience to ongoing threats, like climate change," says Mr McKee.

"The shooting of ducks more often than not leaves ducks severely injured, but not dead. The animals are left to suffer a prolonged and cruel death," says Leanne Taylor, General Manager of WIRES NSW.

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.



"Get out ya guns" - photographed by Dennis Wilson at Gloucester. Tasteful!

Shooters to escape park rangers' sights

Heath Aston, *Sun-Herald state political editor*,
11 November 2012

NO EXTRA staff or money will be added to monitor hunters who have been given access by the state government to shoot in national parks from Australia Day.

When Barry O'Farrell announced shooters would be allowed into 79 parks in May, the Premier insisted the feral cull would be "well-managed, properly resourced and carried out under strict supervision".

The Environment Minister, Robyn Parker, told Parliament the overhaul of the Game and Feral Animal Control Act was not about "letting people out into parks and reserves without supervision, without control and without proper management."

But, in answers to questions from the Greens, Ms Parker revealed on Friday that not one extra dollar or any new staff would be directed to National Parks and Wildlife Service to monitor the shoot.

"NPWS will prioritise enforcement activities as appropriate," Ms Parker said.

The Public Service Association has said rangers do not have time to "babysit recreational hunters".

The Greens MP Cate Faehrmann accused the government of lying over safeguards for the reintroduction of guns in parks, which was part of a deal with the Shooters & Fishers Party.

(<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/shooters-to-escape-park-rangers-sights-20121110-294we.html>)

Intercepted communication

PRESIDENT OF THE COWS UNION: Premier O'Farrell? About the grazing in National Parks. Our Association's membership will only agree to it if we're all supplied with flak jackets.

THE PREMIER: My Government does not give in to silly threats of industrial action.

PRESIDENT OF THE COWS UNION: It's not silly! You let the shooters into the National Parks ... now you'll have to wear it ... I mean ... we'll have to wear it. Don Morison.

Global Warming, Renewable Energy and Biochar

I doubt that any members of the Conservation Society would be unaware of the escalating threat posed by global warming to the planet's fauna and flora. On land, both animals and plants are being forced to migrate, if they can do so quickly enough, although the future looks bleak for those migrating up mountains in shrinking islands of coldness. Elsewhere the impact of a warming and acidifying ocean poses a crisis for shellfish and the food chain. With this in mind, I thought that the Hut News readership would be interested in a workshop recently held in Sydney. This workshop, on biochar, was promoted by the ANZ Biochar Researchers Network (<http://www.anzbiochar.org/>). A stated aim was to discuss the role of biochar in the recycling challenge, but the multiple benefits were striking.

The workshop featured presentations by Prof Lukas Van Zwieten (NSW DPI), Prof Annette Cowie (UNE/DPI Rural Climate Solutions) and Dr Adriana Downie (Pacific Pyrolysis). There was also reference to the International Biochar Initiative (<http://www.biochar-international.org/>). The advocates of biochar focus on four benefits of the technology.

The first is the production of a soil improver. In this regard I recommend reading about the terra preta soils of the Amazon Basin, developed by native tribes between 450BC and 950AD (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terra_preta). My knowledge of terra preta was the trigger to attend the workshop.

Managing green waste was the second benefit, and this would have relevance to the Blue Mountains City Council due to the imminent exhaustion of capacity at Blaxland tip. The management of green waste is also in the focus of a newly-formed group, the Blue Mountains Renewable Energy Co-operative (BMREC), with biomass seemingly the best option for local power generation. Exciting times indeed.

The third is the production of saleable, combustible off-gas.

The final, and for me the most compelling, aspect is the potential sequestration of carbon for hundreds of years, if not considerably longer. This contrasts with the undemonstrated, probably highly expensive, and perhaps illusory, CCS (carbon capture and storage) touted as essential to compensate for the atmospherically damaging emissions from thermal coal power stations. We tend to focus on prevention of GHG emissions, specifically with regard to thermal coal and CSG, but we will probably have to face the prospect of dealing with existing emissions, hence the attraction of cost-effective and technically feasible sequestration, at a local level.

I have copies of two papers, in electronic form, about pyrolysis technology, provided by the organisers, and can forward copies to those interested.

If we lose the fight against coal exploitation, then perhaps we could shame the government and companies into funding biochar sequestration into all offending industries (while being aware of the risks of trying to engineer the atmosphere).

Within the bigger picture the BMREC initiative presents a wonderful scenario for Consoc. In order to protect our natural systems, we seem to be fighting never ending battles against coal, and now against coal seam gas. If our governments, both state and federal, could be persuaded or compelled to favour renewable energy over thermal coal, our role as conservationists would be made immeasurably easier through the removal of these threats.

Peter Green, Sustainable Population and Climate Change Officer

Blue Mountains City Council opposes amateur hunting in ALL National Parks

On 6th November, Blue Mountains City Councillors passed the following motion unanimously. This is a positive step in the campaign to stop hunting in National Parks.

NOTICES OF MOTION Item 32, Ordinary Meeting, 06.11.12. SUBJECT: AMATEUR HUNTING IN NATIONAL PARKS

Notice of Motion by Councillor Hollywood:

That Blue Mountains City Council, as a city within a World Heritage National Park, opposes recreational hunting in national parks in NSW;

That with more than 70% of the Local Government Area being part of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage, Blue Mountains City Council recognises its leadership role in advocating with our community to repeal the NSW Government legislation allowing amateur hunters to shoot in National Parks;

That Council notes amateur hunting in National Parks has the potential to: undermine public safety and trust in our parks system, which, in turn, may reduce the use of parks by bushwalkers and campers and threatens our local economy, be ineffective in reducing feral animal populations, kill and maim protected wildlife

As a first step, that Council writes to the Premier Barry O'Farrell; NSW Minister for Environment, Robyn Parker and the local Member Roza Sage to express Council's opposition to recreational hunting in National Parks and ask the NSW Government to repeal its June 2012 amendments to the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002.

Passed by Cr Mark Greenhill, Cr Daniel Myles, Cr Chris van der Kley, Cr Brendan Luchetti, Cr Anton Von Schulenburg, Cr Brendan Christie, Cr Don McGregor, Cr Geordie Williamson, Cr Michael Begg, Cr Mick Fell, Cr Robert Stock, Cr Romola

Don't Raise the Dam

In October 2012 Infrastructure NSW released its strategy for the next twenty years. The state infrastructure report recommends the NSW Government immediately restart the proposal to raise Warragamba Dam wall by 23 metres that was rejected back in 1995. The proposal ignores the fact that the existing dam wall was raised by five metres in 1989 and an auxiliary spillway completed in 2002 that ensures the security of the dam wall under all floods. Read comment by Brian Marshall on pages 6-7.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience

www.worldheritage.org.au

Comment: Warragamba revisited – far-sighted planning or short-sighted stupidity?

Infrastructure NSW (aka the Greiner-Broad extravaganza) has released its 15 MB report¹. Section 12 deals with water infrastructure and seemingly favours raising the Warragamba Dam wall by 23m for the purposes of flood mitigation. This article examines aspects of the finding.

Warragamba Dam was constructed (1948-1960) for water-supply purposes. It was **never** designed for down-river flood-mitigation, although there was limited flood-mitigation potential. Subsequently studies showed that the dam could experience much larger floods than originally estimated, so in a two-stage process (1987-2002) the wall was raised by five metres and an auxiliary spillway constructed to comply with international dam safety standards. This was to preserve the integrity of the dam, **not** to achieve down-river flood mitigation. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 1995 examined the feasibility of flood mitigation by wall-raising, but this was rejected in favour of auxiliary-spillway construction, and managing residual flood-risks through town planning, emergency planning and upgraded evacuation routes.

Development over the Hawkesbury-Nepean (H-N) floodplain was slowly expanding. In the 1970s, councils opted for a floor level of 16m AHD (Australian Height Datum) which equated with flooding for the 1 in 100 year average recurrence interval (ARI)² at Windsor. But with the advent of new data, the 1 in 100 ARI at Windsor was revised upwards to 17.2m **minimum** in the 1990s; this still remains the basic guideline. Floodplain-encroachment by housing developments, other business enterprises, and the associated infrastructure is now rapidly escalating. Some developments may have used a substantial factor of safety, but many disregarded the possibility of floods greatly exceeding the 1 in 100 ARI levels.

To place the risk in perspective, the largest flood recorded during European settlement was in 1867. The event was rated as 1 in 200-250 ARI and registered 19.2m AHD at Windsor. Prior to European settlement there is evidence for a 1 in 500 event (equivalent to 20.3m AHD at Windsor). There is no record of a 1 in 1000 event (~21.9m at Windsor) or a 1 in 100,000 Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) event interpreted as ~26.4m at Windsor. For comparison, the floods in Victoria were rated as 1 in 200 ARI and those in Queensland as 1 in 1000.

Upgrading the dam's stability and constructing the auxiliary spillway implied that plans to manage residual flood-risks would be implemented. Comprehensive emergency plans and evacuation routes now exist and councils have updated their minimum floor levels, but the need to significantly improve parts of the evacuation routes remains. Infrastructure NSW appreciates this, but while recommending a review of **all** flood-mitigation to reduce the social and economic impact of flooding in the H-N valley, raising the dam wall by 23m is its preference. This seems to be driven by predictions that Sydney's population, currently ~3.3 million, will increase at a rate of 1.3% per annum to reach 4.4 million over the next 20 years (i.e., by about 2033)³. Increasing the extent and density of the population-footprint over the

H-N floodplain is the obvious solution – or is it?

Considered in the bigger picture, increasing the extent and density of the population-footprint is unacceptable. The nexus between GGE (climate change), population-growth and 'limitless' economic growth means that such expansion, particularly if supported by fossil-fuel-based power generation, should and indeed must be avoided. Yet this is improbable. The performance of the current and previous governments suggests that moderating population-increases in the interest of the greater and local environments, and the associated urbanisation and industrialisation of prime agricultural land, are way below the horizon. Indeed, the current Minister for Planning believes that focusing on infrastructure to back growth is paramount⁴. Infrastructure NSW is attuned to this reality; not surprisingly its report is 'business-as-usual', irrespective of the consequences. So are there more pragmatic and other (environmental) reasons for curtailing destructive expansion?

Any floodplain-based design which fails to distinguish between a council's minimum requirement and the probability of more destructive flood-events is taking a gamble. Yet home-owners and commercial operators have taken that gamble in the past, and many others are being encouraged to take that gamble in sites scheduled for future development (e.g., Penrith Lakes, the ADI site, Riverstone West, and the North West Growth Centre). Unfortunately, the developer's gamble (risk assessment) commonly involves different parameters from that of subsequent owners or tenants; the developer may aim to rapidly shed the risk through on-selling, whereas subsequent buyers may be seeking such things as long-term stability, location in a 'growth' region, or whatever was within the limited budget. *Caveat emptor* perhaps, but only to a degree, because when a major flood hits, the costs and consequences extend far beyond those experiencing inundation.

To what extent should government mitigate the risk of others' gambling? The answer must surely be that it should compensate **uninsurable** losses incurred through natural disasters, **provided that** the property complied with planning regulations in force when it was constructed. Conversely, government should **discourage** risk-taking by regularly reviewing risk-levels and appropriately updating regulations. It is time for councils to impose minimum floor levels consistent with a 1 in 500 ARI, and for the State government to avoid exacerbating the economic and social risks of major flooding by **opposing** growth in flood-prone areas.

From social and environmental viewpoints if dam-raising is adopted it will be extremely costly (>\$500 million), enable rampant urban expansion over flood-prone agricultural land, and periodically drown and in other ways compromise up to 75 km² of the World Heritage Area encompassing wilderness and declared wild rivers. There will also be adverse social, economic and environmental consequences for Warragamba village and its immediate surrounds. Furthermore, although the raised wall will reduce the flood-magnitude in terms of the levels reached at specific locations, it conversely increases the duration of such lower flood levels.

(continued on page 7)

(Warragamba revisited—continued from page 6)

Mitigation of flooding should in no way be construed as stopping flooding, so a strong case would remain for continuing to upgrade evacuation routes and relocate vulnerable assets. Indeed, as emphasised by Molino Stewart combining various mitigation strategies is likely to have a better outcome than any single strategy.

Six instructive questions and biased answers:

Q Is Infrastructure NSW correct in recommending a review of **all** the flood-mitigation options (including raising the dam wall) and then saying that, **if major flood mitigation is not provided**, evacuation routes should be upgraded.

A Yes to the first part; no to the second! All flood-mitigation options includes upgrading evacuation routes, so if major flood mitigation is excluded, so is evacuation-route upgrading. Also, as wall-raising will not stop flooding evacuation-route upgrading should still be implemented.

Q Is the Molino Stewart report definitive to the extent that Infrastructure NSW should implement its findings?

A No! The report relies heavily on the 1995 EIS and is a 'Preliminary investigation' – it in fact makes a set of recommendations which requires a full examination using updated methods and databases.

Q Is it true that raising the dam wall by 23m for flood mitigation has a benefit/cost ratio exceeding 2?

A Yes, but the economic analysis is only preliminary – intangible environmental costs (above and below the dam) were not assessed and benefits will be lowered if poorly regulated development is permitted – also note that evacuation-route upgrading was not included but it should be!

Q Will wall-raising substantially increase Sydney's water supply to meet the expanding population?

A No, or it would be self-defeating were it treated in this way. The 23m air-space above the top water level is needed to contain and slow (prior to controlled discharge) substantial inflows from the catchment. If the air-space is given over to long-term water-supply storage, the flood-mitigation role would be compromised.

Q Will wall-raising at Warragamba prevent flooding from the Nepean, Grose and Colo Rivers?

A No! Controlled discharge of the impounded floodwater will contribute to Nepean flows and then combine with flows from the Grose and Colo. Flooding of low-lying land is a cumulative response.

Q What is the opportunity cost of spending more than \$500 million on raising the wall, when more intensive planning restrictions, vulnerable-asset relocation, and evaluation-route upgrading **could** be a better composite option, **would** in any case be needed if the wall were raised, and **should** be implemented in such a flood-prone terrain?

A Difficult to say, but it could be used to expedite relocating assets and upgrading evacuation routes. It could also be used for schools, TAFE and hospitals.

In conclusion, I believe that the government's need to accommodate Sydney's population-growth and the

developers' enthusiasm to cannibalise agricultural and flood-prone lands, make the Penrith, Richmond, Windsor and Pitt Town floodplains low-hanging fruit.

Infrastructure NSW is concerned with maximising the availability of these regions and sees flood mitigation at Warragamba Dam as the way forward. I contend that there is nothing wrong with flood mitigation, but I disagree with the preferred method and I subscribe neither to the destruction of good agricultural lands, nor to unsustainable population-growth.

What can you do? I suspect that the government would rather listen to its specially appointed 'hacks' than to any form of contrary reason, but the first thing is to write to the Premier stating your concerns. A suitable letter is available on the Colong Foundation website at <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/dont-raise-dam-guide-letter>.

As an afterthought, the principal benefit if the raising goes ahead is that I could buy a boat and launch it (a little precipitously) from Sublime Point!

Brian Marshall

¹<http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/state-infrastructure-strategy.aspx>

²This is a probability term implying that a flood of a given magnitude (AHD) has a 1 in 100 chance of occurring each year on average, or it will occur on average once in 100 years.

³<http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/state-infrastructure-strategy.aspx>, Section 4 pp53-54

⁴<http://www.smh.com.au/data-point/bridging-the-future-planning-gap-35-million-become-the-lost-souls-20121123-29ytw.html>

Weeding on the Edge!

You care about our native fauna - don't you? Prince Henry Cliff Walk Bushcare is calling for volunteers to protect their habitat.

If you often walk the stunning Prince Henry Cliff Walk, no doubt you are concerned about the impacts of urban development on the Blue Mountains National Park you might see along the way. Besides land clearing, the next biggest risk to our native fauna is reduced habitat caused by the invasion of introduced plants. And many of those plants are escaping into the bush all along this precious track.

Well, here's your chance to assist the NPWS and Blue Mountains City Council Bushcarers to look after this critical urban-bushland edge. The Prince Henry Cliff Walk Bushcare Group is now meeting regularly on the first Wednesday morning and the first Sunday of each month. We rotate our work sites between Leura and Katoomba according to seasonal priorities. We work on the weeds but usually enjoy a cuppa and a chat halfway through. You're welcome to attend however much time you can spare – every little bit you can offer is a valuable contribution.

We're tackling those weeds and making plans for future events so if you're interested in joining us please register now. Contact Monica Nugent on monica.nugent@environment.nsw.gov.au or ring Blackheath NPWS on 4787 3104 to speak to the Ranger for the Jamison Valley.

Recent scientific paper highlights importance of groundwater to the endangered Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamps, and of the threat from longwall coalmining.

A recently published scientific paper in the plant ecology journal *Cunninghamia*¹ has highlighted the importance of groundwater to Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamps and their dependent plants and animals. These swamps are listed as an Endangered Ecological Community under Commonwealth and NSW legislation and have been the focus of a concerted campaign by conservationists and scientists, with a particular focus on the threats to the swamp ecosystems associated with impacts of longwall coalmining. The following Abstract is from the paper, which is available for free download from the journal website (see link below).

ABSTRACT: "Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamps are a series of low nutrient temperate montane peat swamps around 1100 m elevation in the upper Blue Mountains, west of Sydney (lat 33° 23' S; long 150° 13'E). Transect-based vegetation studies show a closely related group of swamps with expanses of permanently moist, gently sloping peatlands. Vegetation patterns are related to surface hydrology and subsurface topography, which determine local peat depth. While there is evidence that a group of the highest elevation swamps on the western side of the Plateau are more dependent on rainwater, the majority of swamps, particularly those in the Carne Creek catchment, and east and south of it, may be considered primarily groundwater dependent with a permanently high watertable maintained by groundwater aquifers. An integral part of the swamps are a number of threatened groundwater dependent biota (plants—*Boronia deanei* subsp. *deanei*, *Dillwynia stipulifera*, dragonfly—*Petalura gigantea*, lizard—*Eulamprus leuraensis*), which are obligate swamp dwellers. This association of dependence leaves the entire swamp ecosystem highly susceptible to threats from any loss of groundwater, the current major one being the impact of damage to the confining aquicludes, aquitards, aquifers and peat substrates as a result of subsidence associated with longwall mining. Impacts on the swamps may also result from changes to hydrology through damming of creeks, mine waste water discharge, increased moisture competition from pine plantations, recreational motorbike and off-road vehicle tracks and climate change. If these groundwater dependent ecosystems do not receive protection from activities such as longwall mining subsidence, significant ecological damage is unlikely to be avoided or able to be mitigated even where provisions of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation* and NSW *Threatened Species Conservation* Acts apply to groundwater dependent swamps and biota. The importance of the highest elevation part of the Plateau for a number of restricted (some endemic) plant species is also discussed."

¹Benson, D. & Baird, I.R.C. (2012). Vegetation, fauna and groundwater interrelations in low nutrient temperate montane peat swamps in the upper Blue Mountains, New South Wales. *Cunninghamia* 12(4): 267–307. Available from: http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/science/Scientific_publications/cunninghamia/contents_by_volume/volume_12#twelfefour



Mountain Christmas Bells, (*Blandfordia cunninghamii*).

November has been a special month with wonderful displays of wildflowers seen during our interpretive bushwalks.

Mountains Christmas Bells (*Blandfordia cunninghamii*) were flowering along the Prince Henry Cliff Walk between Gordon Falls and Leura in an area which was burnt late last year by an arsonist. The Christmas Bells bloomed in February and again in October/November. We met lots of tourists along the track and made sure that they noticed the Christmas Bells and knew how special they were. The track is badly eroded and the bridge below Leuralla was closed so that walkers had to detour back up to the road. Can Council find the means to repair and maintain this historic and popular walking track? It is a valuable asset for Blue Mountains tourism.

Another unusual event – again the result of a fire. Next to the Megalong Valley showground is bushland, hopefully in a reserve. In an area 100-150 metres wide, there were hundreds of Xanthorrhoea growing close together, all with flower spikes! Among the many birds feeding on the nectar we saw a Regent Honeyeater, a rare and endangered species not recorded previously in the Megalong Valley.

The garden has grown around my bird bath – a tall *Banksia spinulosa* on one side, low shrubs on two sides – multiple perches for the flocks of little birds – darting to and fro, splashing in the bath, perching to preen themselves. The open side just happens to be close to my lounge room window – beats watching television! Honeyeaters – especially the New Holland Honeyeaters - just love the flowering Callistemons. I enjoyed the talk by Megan Halcroft at our November monthly meeting and have been trying to identify native bees among the variety of insects feeding on and pollinating the Callistemon flowers.

Christine Davies.

Snowy Mountains– 14-20 January, 2013

There are a limited number of spaces left for this alpine experience. The alpine scenery and summer wildflowers are fabulous and the accommodation at Cooma Ski Club Lodge comfortable and affordable. Walking trips will be arranged by agreement and according to the weather and will range from short doddles to quite lengthy if desired. Find out more at <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/snowy.pdf> or phone Warwick 4757 1354.

Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

There is hardly a bird as eye-catching as the Australian red-breasted robins. Early last century, Samuel White wrote of the Flame Robin: "if a male has his grey back towards one and then turns his breast it is like a flash of fire." The Australian robins were named after the European Robin because of their red breasts. However they are not at all related to it, and in fact our robins are more truly red than the rusty orange of the European "robin redbreast", the bird often depicted on Christmas cards. Or the American Robin, which is actually a thrush.

Four species of red robin can be found in the Blue Mountains, two of which - the Flame and Scarlet - are in decline and listed as Vulnerable in NSW. Data from the Australian Bird Atlases show that during the 20 years prior to 2000, the reporting rates of these two species fell by 55-56% in NSW, and nationally by 57% and 31% respectively.

The male Flame Robin is instantly recognisable by his bright orange-red front extending all the way from the chin to the lower belly. In contrast, the Scarlet Robin has a black throat, below which the vivid, almost fluorescent scarlet gives way to a white belly, as if it ran out of red paint after a few brushstrokes.

Both species use the typical robin perch-and-pounce feeding technique, scanning the ground for insects from a low observation perch. The Scarlet Robin holds permanent territories in woodland and open forest, though it can wander locally in winter. Flame Robins on the other hand, are altitudinal migrants. They breed in moist forest and woodland at high altitudes or in cool-climate areas (Kosciusko and Tasmania are strongholds). In winter, they form groups and migrate to lower altitudes where they move into more open country, sometimes feeding on freshly ploughed paddocks, sometimes in grassy woodland.

Until a decade or two ago, both species were familiar birds in many upper Blue Mountains gardens and a common sight on bushwalks. During the 1980s, a pair of Flame Robins nested each summer in the old wooden tower in Catalina Park (The Gully). When the tower was pulled down, they built their nest in the disused brick toilet block. (Their natural nest-sites are cavities in trees and rocks.) The last time I saw a Flame Robin in The Gully was 2004. Today, they are much harder to find, but still nest around Blackheath, Shipley Plateau, Mt Victoria, and in the higher country of Newnes Plateau, Jenolan and Kanangra-Boyd. It seems to me their breeding range is contracting upwards.

Why the decline? Clearing and degradation of their winter habitat has been suggested as a possible reason - grazing pressure; removal of logs and fallen branches in the agricultural lands west of the mountains. Scarlet Robins are probably affected by fragmentation of their habitat. But the evidence also suggests that Flame Robins may be a victim of climate change.

I would be very interested to know if anyone still regularly sees Flame Robins in the Wentworth Falls to Katoomba area, especially in the spring-summer months when they are breeding.

Carol Proberts, origma@westnet.com.au

Photo: Scarlet Robin (male) - Carol Proberts

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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

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.

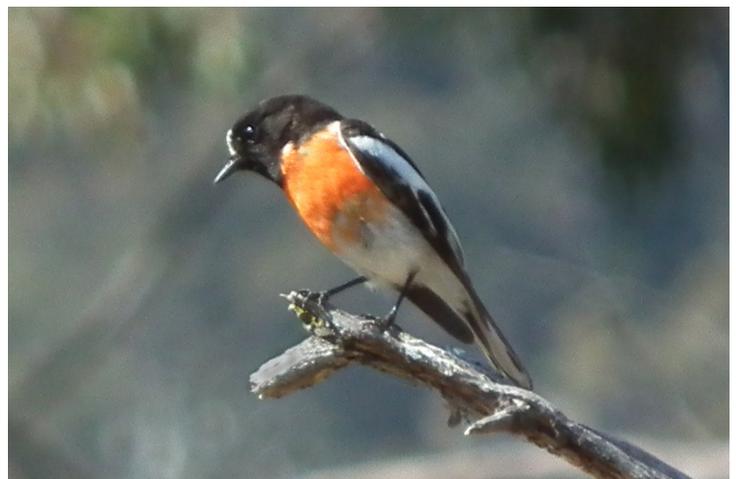
I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:

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



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.

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

SPRINGWOOD JACKY

One of the most exciting things about exploring local history is to come across interesting and unusual people who have 'slipped through the cracks', but whose lives were so closely identified with where they lived that they are, in effect, true 'spirits of place'. Springwood Jacky is one such person, an Aboriginal man, his real name unknown and his origins shadowy. It's said that he arrived in the Penrith district in the mid 19th century, travelling down from Queensland as a drover or horse-boy in the employ of James 'Toby' Ryan of Emu Plains. Sometime, possibly as early as the 1870s, he drifted into the Blue Mountains and, taking a liking to Springwood, adopted that town as his home for the rest of his life.

It wasn't long before he became something of a local identity, widely admired for his knowledge of the bush and his skills as an animal tracker, horse breaker and athlete. His ability to locate lyrebird nests and to swim under water in a long pool in Sassafras Gully was legendary. Gregarious by nature and a bit of a showman, he enjoyed a good song and dance and occasionally winkled his way (usually unofficially) into the program at local concerts. His repertoire ranged from popular songs of the day like 'Little Sally Waters' and 'The Babies on Our Block' to the majestic 'Jerusalem'. He was even known to venture into the city and perform for passers-by outside the GPO.

While no partner shared his life, it was reported that he once proposed to an Aboriginal woman, Na Daang, from Penrith but she turned him down. He lived alone in a one room slab and bark hut in the bush at the end of Peninsula Road at Valley Heights and supported himself through casual work around the district. 'Black Jacky's Track', as the locals knew it, into the area we know now as Sun Valley can still (I think) be walked today.

As Jacky aged he developed a skin condition that caused him embarrassment and took to wearing a scarf around his neck to disguise it. But a deeper problem cast its shadow over his later years. He was an alcoholic and, though the local hotels would not supply him with liquor, when railway deviation work began at Valley Heights in the early 20th century he hung around the construction camps soliciting money and drink from the men in return for a song. On 18 December 1913 he was found dead, lying in the shade of a tree at Valley Heights. Somewhere "between 60 and 70 years of age" he had died, according to the coroner, "from acute alcoholism, caused by intoxicating drink, unlawfully supplied to him". Other than "a few tools and clothing", the police constable confirmed that he'd owned nothing of value and he was buried in an unmarked grave in the local cemetery. Springwood Jacky left a very light 'foot print'.

John Low (grizzlybear3au@yahoo.com)

Welcome to new members

Len Jordan, Winmalee
Clarinda Jordan, Winmalee
Lyn Williams, Leonay
Joanne E Monk, Lawson
Josie Vendramini, Katoomba
Beryl Hesketh, Glebe
Tim Hesketh, Glebe
Belle Buttrose, Leura
Tomas Drevikovskiy, Wentworth Falls



Photo from Blue Mountains City Library's Local Studies Collection.

BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit

Over the next few months the BMCS Land Use Subcommittee (LUC) will be developing a 'Planning and Development Resource Kit' for Blue Mountains residents. Members of the BMCS and LUC are often approached to provide advice and help to residents concerned about inappropriate, non-compliant, possibly illegal but certainly environmentally destructive development activity in their neighbourhood or on other land in the mountains. Rather than respond to this on a case-by-case basis, the LUC thought a better and more broadly educative approach would be to develop a DIY 'resource kit' that would be available to the public on the BMCS website.

The kit will contain information on planning laws and development controls, responsible agencies, processes of development approval and compliance, links to information and resources (e.g. BMCC's interactive maps and list of development approvals) and, depending on the circumstances, what the appropriate action and response may be (e.g. lodging a complaint, notifying relevant authorities, available legal remedies and resources). This information will be organised in a user-friendly way, through various 'scenarios' for instance, and will be updated as the NSW planning laws change in 2013.

To help develop the resource kit, LUC is looking to tap into the knowledge of BMCS members who have experience in planning and development and/or in local campaigns against particular developments. Apart from the members and others we can readily identify, we are also putting out a call to all BMCS members who may have relevant knowledge and experience. If you want to share this with us, please contact Carolyn Williams on 4758 7895 or carolyn.r.williams@bigpond.com

What is it?



Can anybody identify this caterpillar(?) which turns up in my garden at Blackheath every year. The stripes along the body are yellow, blue, black and white, and its head is the prettiest blue colour. I found this one on 12 November. They seem to wander from their food plant, whatever that may be.

Christine 4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

"Walk grades" ...

At the Christmas 'do' held by the Monday walkers, our esteemed co-ordinator Bill Graham and I discussed the problem in regard to describing the degree of difficulty a walk was going to be. What was easy for us could be anything but for someone else.

Giving the matter due consideration and drawing on my experiences with the group, plus my previous incarnation as a walks co-ordinator, I think the following may be helpful.

Easy: Providing you do gym, weights, aerobics or boot scooting a couple of times a week, walks marked easy should be a 'doddle'.

Medium: General fitness as above. What's needed is a further descriptive word so that walks can be designated medium mind-boggling, medium incredible, medium excruciating, etc. A high pain threshold would be helpful. A well developed sense of humour a pre-requisite.

Hard: If this word should appear – be afraid – very afraid. Your screams cannot be heard under a roaring waterfall. Far better to wait until well after the walk has started, as any angst or sheer terror the walk leader can cause you, he/she will do. If you insist on going, leave your personal papers (will, funeral arrangements, insurance details, etc.) in a prominent position in case they may be needed.

Allan Macaulay, ~ December 1999.

(Allan gave me this for Hut News some years ago. Last week I discovered it hidden in a pile of papers from when I moved house. Sorry Allan. I remember my friend Dave Lovegrove saying that some walks are better enjoyed in retrospect—especially multi day walks when you are carrying a heavy pack. Christine.)

Early Christmas Gift

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. 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** 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.

Conservation Volunteers

Join Conservation Volunteers Australia at the beautiful Newnes State Forest. The town of Lithgow will be our base and we will head out each day to undertake valuable nature conservation works such as the removal of exotic pine seedlings in the snow gum and scribbly gum forests of the Newnes Plateau. People who live locally are welcome to come for a day to meet our team.

16-18 February, 16-18 March, 8-12 April, 25-28 April, 2013

Book online at <http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/get-involved/volunteer> or phone 02 9663 0020, email sydney@conservationvolunteers.com.au

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: 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. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending ring the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy 4758 6009 or email jp34@tpg.com.au

- Dec15 **Ingar Pool** with swim opportunities and **Mt Bedford circuit** with views into Bedford canyon. Bring food to share for picnic lunch beside the idyllic Ingar Pool. Leader **Jim** 4758 5009. Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockyard CarPark, 8:30am, Approx 5Km, Gr2/3, Map **Katoomba/Jamison**
- Dec 22 **Xmas Lunch Wentworth Falls Golf Club.** \$24 + \$2 Levy for wine, **Booking now** Leader **Bob** 4757 2694, Meet 12.30 for 1 o'clock start, Gr Easy, Map **The front 9**
- Dec 29 **National Pass** constructed in 1906-08 to celebrate federation, or an alternate walk will be decided on the day dependant on weather. Leader **Bob** 4757 2694, Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard CarPark, 8:30am, Approx 6Km, Gr3, Map **Katoomba**
- Jan 5 **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 6Km, Gr 2/3, Map **Katoomba**
- Jan 12 **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 6Km, Gr 2/3, Map **Katoomba**
- Jan 14 - 20 2013 Cooma Ski Club Lodge in Perisher Valley.** There are still spaces left for this alpine experience. Haven't holidayed in a ski lodge? Here is your chance - See fabulous wildflowers, old mountains huts, alpine lakes, walk up to the Kosciusko Summit. with views into the wilds of northern Victoria with a stop off at Blue Lake on the way, and there is often snow patches on the sides of Kosci well into summer - Imagine snow and wildflowers? **Leader Warwick 4757 1354**
More details at <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/snowy.pdf>
- Jan 19 **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 6Km, Gr 2/3, Map **Katoomba**
- Jan 26, (Australia Day) **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 6Km, Gr 2/3, Map **Katoomba**
- Feb 2, **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 6Km, Gr 2/3, Map **Katoomba**
- Feb 9, **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 6Km, Gr 2/3, Map **Katoomba**

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

- Dec 17 **CHRISTMAS LUNCH, Alexandra Hotel, Leura.** 12.00 for 12.30 start, \$30 p.p. Contact Judith 4758 6310, 0419780640. Money and order to Judith before 10th December.
- Jan 7 **Govett's Leap to Pulpit Rock.** Great views. Grade 2. Leader Ros 4733 3880. Meet Blackheath N'hood Centre 9.45 am. Car pool.
- Jan 14 **Dargan Dams** - "Historic steam train water supply". Grade 2. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Meet Mt. Victoria Station 9.50am. Car Pool. Fare \$5.
- Jan 21 **Darwin's Walk & Rocket Point**, "Historical Walk". Grade 2. Leader Mary 4757 4569. Meet Wentworth Falls Commuter Car Park 9.30am.
- Jan 28 **Horseshoe Falls Reserve**, "3 Falls Walk". Grade 2. Leader Judith 4758 6310. Meet Hazelbrook Railway Station 9.10am
- Feb 4 **Greenwich Point**, "Harbour circuit walk". Grade 1. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Meet top of escalators, Central Station, 9.30 am.
- Feb 11 **Bedford Creek**, Woodford. Grade 2. Leader Ken 0423 450 200. Meet Woodford Station (South side) 9.15am.

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 13 **Mermaid's Cave and Coachwood Glen, Megalong Valley.** Cool walk followed by swim in Megalong Creek. Bring a plate to share for picnic lunch. Car pool. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45 am. Leader Barrie 4782 9235. Grade 2.
- Jan 10 **Chester Road to Rocket Point Wentworth Falls.** Walk on fire trail to Rocket Point to view falls. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Stockyard Car Park Wentworth Falls 9.30am. Leader Beverley 47572076. Grade 2.
- Jan 17 **Greenwich Point Sydney.** Take lunch. Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Maurice 47394942. Grade 1.
- Jan 24 **"Deidre's Walk" Bullaburra.** Walk along fire trail to rocky outcrop. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Bullaburra Station north side 9.45am. Leaders Chris 47214309 and Tracy 0434362611. Grade 1.
- Jan 31 **Victoria Falls Mount Victoria.** Spectacular scenery. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.45am. Leader Tracy 0434362611. Grade 3.
- Feb 7 **Horseshoe Falls Reserve Hazelbrook.** Classic upper mountain's walk with waterfalls and rain forest. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Hazelbrook Shops Car Park 10am. Leader Keith 47361010. Grade 2.
- Feb 14 **Pope's Glen Blackheath.** Walk from Govett's Leap. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Barrie 47829235. Grade 2.