

# HUT NEWS

Issue No. 301  
March 2013



**"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"**

## Nominate for a position on the Management Committee

At our AGM on Wednesday 27th March we will elect a management committee for the year from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

We do not currently have a Publicity Officer or a Bushcare Officer. All other positions will also fall vacant and some members of the present committee will not be standing for re-election.

Duties and responsibilities of all management positions were sent with the February newsletter, or you can find details on the website

[www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

Please give consideration to nominating for a position. Serving on the Management Committee can be immensely rewarding. No prior experience is needed, just a commitment to serve the environment and a determination to "make a difference".

Whilst our constitution allows for nominations to be received on the night of the AGM, we really need to be organised beforehand to ensure that there will be at least one nomination for each position.

Download a nomination form from the website and send to Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 to arrive before 22 March 2013.

Please contact Lachlan Garland (0415 317 078, email [lachlan.a.garland@bigpond.com](mailto:lachlan.a.garland@bigpond.com)) or Tara Cameron (0419 824 974, email [taracameron4@gmail.com](mailto:taracameron4@gmail.com)) if you want to discuss any of the positions or wish to be nominated.

## Blue Mountains Conservation Society Annual General Meeting

**7.30 pm, WEDNESDAY 27 March 2013  
Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls**

Business will include receipt of reports, adoption of annual accounts, determination of structure of Management Committee, election of President, Management Committee members and other office holders, and changes to the constitution.

The AGM will be FOLLOWED BY

**Monthly Meeting at 8.15 pm**

**"Heart & Soul"**

A pictorial stroll through the last year or so - mainly on track, but some off track fun as well. A presentation of images provided by Society members. Our rallies, events, bushwalks, activities - plus many sensational images taken in and around our precious Blue Mountains.

### **"A threatened wonderland - The Gardens of Stone"**

This 11 minute slide-show was initially shown at Parliament House in August 2012. It was prepared by Karen McLaughlin and features stunning images by Ian Brown and many others. Music was written and played by Amanda Handel in collaboration with Michael Jackson.

Come along and support those taking the responsibility for running the Society. Perhaps you have questions for them, or comments about the progress of our various campaigns. Stay to see the two short slide shows and meet other members of the Society over supper.

**Visitors are very welcome.**



*A Consoc Chorus Line*

## Native plants at AGM

Our nursery volunteers have donated a selection of native plants for our door prize and will have plants available for sale at the AGM.

Big range of beautiful plants, great bargains — tube stock just \$2 each for members.

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

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## Nursery News

**Our Seed Bank:** In this column we have often referred to our seed-bank where we maintain a collection of seeds from various parts of our local area. The long-term viability of seeds varies from species to species (eg. only a few months for Waratah seeds to several years for most Acacia seeds) but low temperature storage certainly prolongs viability. To this end we are grateful to Jenny Priestley for the generous donation of a small refrigerator which will house our more sensitive seeds at our Blackheath nursery. Again, our call goes out to our members for donation of seeds. Just note the species, location and date of collection and either drop them into our Lawson nursery or post to me at PO Box 81 Blackheath 2785. A collection of seeds from a wide area of the Mountains enables us to fulfil requests for plants of specific provenance.

**Feature Plant:** This month it is *Bursaria spinosa* (from Latin, "bursa", a purse, referring to the shape of the fruit and "spinosa" referring to the thorns on the branches), commonly called Sweet Bursaria, Blackthorn and Boxthorn. It is widespread, occurring in all States except Western Australia and the Northern Territory, and is a medium (2-3m) shrub in the Mountains but can grow taller in other favourable locations. Prolific, fragrant, small, white 5-petalled flowers are borne at the end of branches from January to April and these attract insects. There has been a continuous display for months on the left hand side of the road coming from Blackheath to Medlow Bath. The species is a useful honey-producing plant. It is hardy in cultivation and adapts to most situations except areas with poor drainage. There are many sub-species with ssp. *Lasiophylla* occurring in our area.

Most importantly, it is the exclusive host plant for the larvae of the threatened Purple Copper Butterfly (*Paralucia spinifera*). This is a small butterfly with a thick body and wing span of 2-3cm. Males are a shiny purple while females are dark-brown with some bronze and purple patches.

Both sexes display some small blue spots, black veins, and wings fringed with black and white. The species was first discovered in 1964 when a single female specimen was collected at Yetholme and was not seen again until re-discovery in 1977. It only occurs in the Central Tablelands above 900m and where Blackthorn occurs. In 2001 a survey identified 29 sites where it has been found in the Blue Mountains. After mating, the female will deposit her eggs on debris at the base of the host plant. Eggs take 14 - 17 days to hatch and the larvae are attended by an ant species (*Anonychomyrma itinerans*) while grazing on the host plant. As the larvae do not like traversing open ground, closely spaced plants with intertwining branches make the best habitat. Pupation occurs from late December to late February in the ant nest where they remain until the butterflies emerge in early August and stay on the wing until early November. Part of the threat to the butterfly is the removal of the host plant which, because of its thorny nature, is not liked by farmers. However, if you live in the Upper Mountains, you can help preserve the species by buying some plants for your garden. We have good stocks in tubes for just \$2.50. Come and visit us for this intriguing plant as well as many others.

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager, 4787 6436, [kevinbell@eftel.net.au](mailto:kevinbell@eftel.net.au)

Photo: *Bursaria spinosa*,  
Brian Walters, [http://  
anpsa.org.au/b-spin.html](http://anpsa.org.au/b-spin.html)



## Going Batty at Katoomba Falls

There'll be a lot of people going batty down at Katoomba Falls in a few weeks time, but don't get into a flap about it.

BatGirl will be flying into the Katoomba Falls Kiosk on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March bringing another Bat Night. BatGirl, (the secret identity of local ecologist, Marg Turton), has organised a night of fascinating fun with furry, flapping flying foxes and interesting, intriguing investigations of insectivorous indigenous microbats.

Over 20 species of bats make their homes in the Blue Mountains. You may well have some living under the bark or in holes of trees in your garden or even tucked away under your eaves.

Watch the sky at dusk and you're likely to see the silhouettes of tiny microbats fluttering and flitting about, heading out for an evening catching insects on the wing. The smallest microbats weigh only 3 grams - less than a 10-cent coin! But their appetite makes up for their size. Some can eat up to ¾ of their own weight in insects in a night.

Fruit bats generally eat nectar and fruit. They use their eyes and noses to find a blooming marvellous tree, unlike the microbats that usually hunt using echo-location and hearing. Sometimes called flying foxes because of their fox-like faces, fruit bats are much larger, often weighing in at over a kilo.

Orchardists might curse the depredations of flying foxes, but hundreds of types of plants and trees rely on flying foxes and bats for pollination and distributing seeds.

*"Holy flying mammals, Batman!!! Is it true they'll be able to watch microbats swooping around, catching insects attracted by the floodlights down at Katoomba Falls Lookout, with a Discovery Ranger."*

*"That's right, Boy Wonder, and they can also go on walks and use Anabat detectors to listen to bats hunting."*

*"Yes, BatGirl will have some there. It's really special equipment because humans can't normally hear bats."*

*"What about finding out more about bats?"*

*"There'll be experts talking about some of the amazing things our furry friends do and flaptastic films about their flying feats. And if watching all those little wonders catching insects makes you hungry, there'll be delicious food and drinks from the lovely people at Katoomba Falls Kiosk who are hosting Bat Night."*

*"To the BatCave. It'll be full of kids doing all sorts of batty things like making masks and cards."*

You don't have to be millionaire Bruce Wayne to love bats – it's FREE !! Come along between 6:30 and 9:30pm on Friday March 22<sup>nd</sup>, rain or moonshine. There's something fascinating for everyone and no bookings are required. See the real Twilight and don't get sucked into thinking all bats are vampires.

For any enquiries, ring the Batphone at National Parks on 4787 8877.

BMCS is a major sponsor of Bat Night. Education Officer Gary Humble will help in organising, promoting and running the event.



## Protect the Gardens of Stone

"Say NO to open cut mining!"

### The campaign to protect the Gardens of Stone continues - keep sending the letters in!

We are working hard to stop over 800 hectares of the Ben Bullen State Forest being turned into an open cut coal mine by Coalpac. The final decision about the mine is still being determined but clearly the best way to protect the forest is to have it declared a State Conservation Area. This will protect the beautiful pagodas and wildlife in perpetuity! Other open cut mine proposals are in the pipeline for Ben Bullen State Forest so we need the State Government to ACT NOW.

**Thank you to all of our members who have signed and returned the letter** (contained in the February Hut News) to declare Ben Bullen State Forest a State Conservation Area. We have had a great response and this is fantastic.

**If you haven't sent in your letter, please do so!** Just download it from our website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) or do it online (follow the links from the homepage).

Thanks again! Tara Cameron.

JOIN Blue Mountains Conservation Society, or renew your membership online.  
[www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

Blue Mountains  
**BAT NIGHT**  
starting at 6:30 PM  
ON FRIDAY MARCH 22  
@ **KATOOMBA FALLS KIOSK**  
102B Cliff Drive, Katoomba

**FREE EVENT !!!**  
bring a torch !!!

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## The fight to save our LEPs is on!

Many Society members will be aware from previous articles in *Hut News* that Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1991 is currently being reviewed by the Blue Mountains City Council. LEP 1991 covers areas on the edges of the townships at the urban-bushland (or National Park) interface, while our other LEP, LEP 2005, covers urban areas in the townships. The LEPs determine where development occurs, outlines what needs to be considered when development is proposed such as impacts on the environment and heritage, and sets development standards. The LEPs are therefore the major determinant in terms of future development in the Blue Mountains, including the conservation of our environment. The review of LEP 1991 is occurring in the context of past and present State governments' policy to introduce a mandatory Standard Instrument LEP (SILEP) in all Local Government Areas in NSW. Under this policy both LEP 1991 and LEP 2005 are to be converted to the SILEP format and standards.

The SILEP prescribes a standard format and standard provisions (e.g. definitions, zones, clauses) that are incompatible with our locally sensitive, 'place-based' planning instrument, LEP 2005. The SILEP cannot recognise nor incorporate the unique conditions and development constraints that apply in a city located in a national park and World Heritage Area. Adopting the SILEP will undermine the environmental planning outcomes that our current LEPs seek to deliver and which underpin our tourist-based economy and World Heritage status.

Reports to Council meetings in October and December last year reveal the impact that the SILEP will have in the Blue Mountains. Here are a few examples. The definition, principles and practices of Ecologically Sustainable Development in LEP 2005 will not be able to be carried forward into the SILEP. In determining development applications, the zone objectives in the SILEP will only be matters to 'have regard to' rather than to be 'complied with' as they are currently in our LEPs. The incompatibility of LEP 2005's Living Conservation zone with any of the SILEP zones means that the leafy streets of Leura, for instance, will either be zoned 'rural' land (which is absurd) or a SILEP residential zone. A SILEP residential zone will open up those areas to multi-residential development (e.g. Seniors housing) which is currently prohibited. Importantly, the SILEP can also threaten our World Heritage status if the Blue Mountains hydrology is compromised by development and if the high order stormwater management provisions in LEP 2005 cannot be included. Such provisions are essential to protect downstream environments like the World Heritage Area (and Sydney's water supply). These examples indicate the serious weakening of planning controls and environmental protection that will occur if we are forced to adopt the SILEP.

Council has consistently sought to exempt our LEPs from conversion to the SILEP (or, failing that, to ensure that our current environmental protections are transferred to the SILEP), arguing that the particular circumstances applying to the Blue Mountains warrant special consideration. The Council's original plan for conversion to the SILEP, with agreement from the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Minister for

Carolyn Williams, Landuse Subcommittee.

Planning and the Premier, was to first convert LEP 1991 to the standard and format of LEP 2005 to create a consolidated city-wide plan before moving to the SILEP by 2016. The benefit of this 'roll over' of LEP 1991 into LEP 2005 would be that the sensitive environmental areas in LEP 1991 would be covered by LEP 2005's more stringent environmental protection regime. To prepare for this 'roll over', Council staff and consultants since 2010 have been updating environmental constraint mapping in LEP 1991 (e.g. scheduled vegetation, buffer areas etc), undertaking various studies, reviewing the current Development Control Plan, and attempting to apply the same standards and approach used in the development of LEP 2005. The Society has supported this approach, arguing that the same planning and other controls which exist in LEP 2005 should apply city-wide.

However, as members may recall from reports last year in the *Blue Mountains Gazette*, Planning Minister Brad Hazzard has seemingly reneged on that agreement and has now demanded that Blue Mountains City Council accelerate the process and move directly to the SILEP. The reports to the Council meetings last year show the pressure being put on Council by the Minister and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, including imposing an impossible timeframe for Council to complete the conversion to the SILEP (sometime later this year). Council has objected that it doesn't have the staff and resources to comply. In response, the Department kindly offered to prepare a new comprehensive LEP for the Blue Mountains based on the SILEP, which Council agreed to. This draft SILEP was received by Council in November 2012 and a report on it will come to Council in March. A decision will then be made about whether or not Council should proceed with the SILEP. If it doesn't, the Minister could very well intervene and take the matter out of Council's hands altogether. Apart from that possibility, the most alarming aspect of this 'fast track' process is that, in contrast to the experience of LEP 2005, there will be little or no opportunity for community consultation before the draft SILEP goes on public exhibition.

The Society's Landuse Subcommittee (LUC) is currently developing a campaign plan to save our LEPs and support Blue Mountains City Council staff and Councillors. The State government seems determined that we will have a Standard Instrument LEP before the year is out so urgent political pressure needs to be applied to our local Member of Parliament, Roza Sage, as well as the Premier and Minister for Planning. We believe this is also an issue for the Commonwealth government as any decrease in the current environmental and planning controls through the application of a SILEP to the Blue Mountains could negatively impact on the national parks surrounding the city, and therefore impact on its World Heritage status and certification.

In next month's *Hut News*, the LUC will publicly announce its campaign, but we will need help from members. If you want to be involved in the campaign, contact Angela Langdon, [angela.langdon@bigpond.com](mailto:angela.langdon@bigpond.com)

You can find the Council reports (7<sup>th</sup> August, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 11<sup>th</sup> December) at <http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/yourcouncil/councilmeetings>

## Enquiry into Game Council and delay to introduction of hunting in parks

On 28 February 2013, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell tabled terms of reference for a review into the governance, management and performance of the Game Council, and announced that the introduction of hunting in national parks will be delayed until at least June after an investigation found evidence of alleged illegal activity by a senior executive of the Game Council NSW, the taxpayer-funded body which is supposed to oversee the program.

During February a stream of media reports and press releases revealed some of the more bizarre aspects of this scheme: unsupervised hunting to start during the April school holidays; park workers to wear high visibility clothing to avoid being shot; youths as young as 12 to shoot rifles, bows and arrows and muskets in parks; police to intervene in dangerous confrontations between hunters and other park users.

As late as 27 February emails were received from Barry O'Farrell containing the usual spin defending the program.

The Management Committee has sent a strongly worded letter to the Premier and Environment Minister outlining the Society's continued opposition to hunting in national parks. You will find a copy of the letter on our website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

Blue Mountains Conservation Society asks the Premier to abandon the whole insane notion of hunting in parks and, if the Game Council is shown by the review to be deficient in a variety of ways, to stop funding its activities and terminate its heavily-funded operations in State Forests.

## Australians pledge to switch to renewable energy

Earth Hour – the phenomenon that was started in Sydney in 2007 and now takes place in more than 6,950 cities and towns in 152 countries and territories around the world – is returning at 8.30 pm on 23 March.

Earth Hour is much, much more than a symbolic action of switching off lights for an hour; it's a continuous movement driving real actions, big and small, that are changing the world we live in. From new legislation in the Russian parliament to better protect seas from oil pollution, to the initiation of two huge reforestation projects in Africa – the impact of Earth Hour is widespread and real.

In 2013, Australians are leading the world again. This Earth Hour, we aren't just switching off our lights as a show of unity in protecting the planet. We're taking action into their own hands, and pledging to switch on to renewable energy.

To find out more go to <http://earthhour.org.au/>

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

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Blue Mountains Conservation Society

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## A STORY FROM THE UK TO INSPIRE US: People Power Saves England's Forests

In October 2010 the UK government announced plans to sell off England's forests. Experts, politicians, and journalists all said the forest sell-off was a done deal. There would be 'For Sale' signs up in woodlands across the country. But that was before hundreds of thousands of people came together with one shared message: keep our woodlands safe. People signed petitions, contacted their MPs, and chipped in with what they could afford. In January 2013 the government announced that it would halt plans to sell off state-owned forests and recommended keeping the woodlands in public hands.

Millions of people will now be able to continue to enjoy England's beautiful woodlands. Wildlife will continue to thrive in them. **If you ever needed a reminder that it's worth getting involved, surely this is it.**

"38 Degrees", the organization behind the campaign, was launched in 2009 and claims to now have nearly 850,000 members. It does not support any political party and is funded by donations from members. See <http://www.38degrees.org.uk>

This is how it happened:

**OCTOBER 2010:** The government announces plans to sell off public forests. 38 Degrees immediately launches a petition to save the forests – **over half a million people sign it.**

**JANUARY 2011:** The government launches a consultation on how to sell off the forests. 38 Degrees members chip in and pay for an independent poll – the results find **84% of the public want the forests in public hands.**

**More than 100,000 people write to their MP asking them to speak out against the sell-off.**

**Thousands of members pay for national newspaper adverts against the sell-off.**

**FEBRUARY 2011:** National newspapers report the government plans to scrap its plans to sell off the forests.

**JUNE 2011:** The government set up a panel to advise them on how to protect England's forests.

Over 33,000 38 Degrees members write to the panel telling them what they want the government to do with forests in the future.

**AUGUST 2011:** 38 Degrees members meet up all over the country, to go for woodland walks and collect ideas for how to protect the woods.

**SEPTEMBER 2011:** 38 Degrees members meet with the forests panel, delivering members' ideas and a huge petition with top priorities.

**JUNE 2012:** Rumours circulate that another sell-off could be started. **100,000 members of 38 Degrees sign a petition to the panel asking them to stand strong and keep woods in public ownership.**

**JANUARY 2013: VICTORY.** The government makes a statement to confirm it won't sell off the forests.

## Time for a gas?<sup>1</sup>

Brian Marshall

The gas acronyms comprise NG, LNG, LPG, CSG/CBM, SBG and UCG. What do they stand for and why should you care? This article will try to tell you.

**NG** (natural gas) is typically trapped above oil deposits, but is also trapped in porous rocks in bituminous sequences with little direct oil association. It is classed as '**conventional**' natural gas due to its ease of extraction from porous host-rocks. It comprises methane with some ethane and, with minor additives to make it smell, is the common piped domestic and industrial gas supply. Industry now broadens the term to include all gas naturally occurring in rock sequences and thereby includes CSG and SBG; 'natural' (like 'organic') is a popular marketing ploy.

**LNG** is liquefied natural gas. Liquefying NG requires low temperature (less than -160°C) and low pressure (10-25 kPa), so transporting it needs special cryogenic containers. Much is exported by Australia, which is one reason why the focus has shifted to CSG, SBG and even UCG.

**LPG** (liquefied petroleum gas) is refined from oil or 'wet' natural gas. It is mainly propane and butane, and sold in liquid form in pressurised steel containers. It is ideal for barbecues and camping, is used domestically if there is no 'mains' gas supply, and is popular with the taxi industry.

**CSG** (coal seam gas), also called coal bed methane (**CBM**), is classed as '**unconventional**' natural gas, because it is less readily extracted than 'conventional' NG. It can be used as a directly piped domestic and industrial gas supply, and also be liquefied and exported.

**SBG** (shale bed gas) mainly comprises methane from fine grained low permeability sedimentary rock. It is also '**unconventional**' natural gas and, being harder to extract than CSG, requires fracking from the outset. It may be liquefied and exported and is a major supplier of piped domestic and industrial gas in the US, but it is currently of less concern than CSG in much of eastern Australia.

**UCG** (underground coal gasification) involves coal combustion at 700-900°C in the presence of air, steam and added oxygen and yields a mix of CO, CO<sub>2</sub>, hydrogen and methane, plus some SO<sub>2</sub>, NO, NH<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>S. Although highly efficient in terms of energy production<sup>2</sup>, there are major environmental drawbacks; but when has this stopped big business?

NSW lacks conventional NG and is mainly supplied from the Cooper Basin in SA, while LPG is a derivative product with a relatively small market. Contrary to claims by NSW government, there is no shortage of conventional NG<sup>3</sup>. The Cooper Basin has enough conventional NG to last for the next 10-20 years at ~400 TJ per day and envisages supplying the east coast for the next 50 years. The reality is that the long-term contracts with NSW expire about 2014 and new domestic contracts will need to meet the anticipated international price-levels; in other words, Santos is looking at higher prices for its gas and the government is framing this as a shortage to justify CSG production. This is paradoxical because renewable energy sources

have now reached or are reaching price-parity with gas<sup>4</sup>, so if gas prices were to disproportionately escalate, the competitiveness of renewables would be further enhanced; surely a good outcome! It makes far more sense for the NSW government to accelerate the move to renewable energy resources, and not depend on a high GGE-producing industry.

Were such a sensible position adopted I could stop this article here, but because the NSW government insists there will be a sustainable CSG industry in the state<sup>5</sup> I will consider some of the implications. To do this, I firstly need to highlight the process of CSG extraction.

Extraction, which really means exploitation, is typically described as follows:

- a steel-cased well is drilled vertically some 200 to 1000 m to the coal seam;
- water is pumped from the well, thereby lowering the pressure at the coal seam and allowing the adsorbed gas to be released;
- the gas and water are pumped to a separator at the well head and gas is separated from the water; and,
- the gas is then sent via a compressor station into the natural gas pipelines, while the water is stored for further use.

Although broadly correct, the above is an over-simplification. It disregards the need to (hopefully!) prevent leakage by pumping in cement between the steel casing and the host-rock, the need for perforated casing within the coal seam to allow ingress of water and gas, and the increasingly common practice of drilling horizontally along the seam for distances up to 1000 m. It also fails to mention that the well is one of many within a grid with anything from 500 to 1000 m centres, variously linked by a network of roads, pipes and compressor stations; the destructive footprint is substantial. It further fails to mention the need for cryogenic plants and port facilities should the export market (not improbable in view of the scale of investment required for CSG exploitation) be targeted.

The principal threats posed by CSG exploitation are:

- 'Global' in terms of it: producing direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) and thereby contributing to climate change; impeding the full adoption of renewable energy sources; and purporting to be transitional between dirty coal-fired power and renewable (or nuclear!) power. The magnitude of this threat is made clear by the fact that "*Australia exports twice as much CO<sub>2e</sub> via coal and gas than it emits at home from burning fossil fuels for energy.*"<sup>6</sup>
- 'Local' through: destruction of surface carrying capacity of agricultural lands and biodiversity in environmentally sensitive regions; contamination of the hydrologic regime comprising surface water, groundwater and deeper aquifers; health risks associated with gas-field leakage; and, adverse impacts on scenic values and tourism.

(continued on page 7)

*Time for a gas (continued from page 6)*

And these are collectively exacerbated by:

- Fracking, typically employed (unless totally prohibited by government) to extend the life of a gas field when a company wants to maximise return on the infrastructure-investment, or for deeper, more cohesive coal seams.
- In-fill drilling to reduce the spacing of the production grid and maximise gas-recovery.
- Greed and sloppiness, including deliberately taking short cuts or using lower grade materials to increase profitability, and the inevitable outcomes from laziness and/or incompetence – more politely, accidents do happen!
- The disturbing fact that the coal remains in the ground and could potentially be exploited by underground mining.

The very real threats from CSG exploitation are expressed through events in the US, UK, France, Germany, Queensland, the Pilliga, Northern Rivers and Camden. The NSW Premier has partly acknowledged the reality of the risks by placing a two km exclusion buffer around 'residential zones' and 'critical industry clusters' which "...*have not yet been approved under the EP&A Act or the Petroleum (Onshore) Act*"<sup>7</sup>, and requiring the Chief Scientist and Engineer (Mary O'Kane) to review CSG activities in NSW, including the potential impact on water-supply catchments. However, I sympathise with Mary O'Kane because, in view of the abundant data, all she can do is evaluate the probabilities, assume best practice will apply, and recommend a risk-management approach. And when things do go wrong, it will be ascribed to human error, equipment failure, or sub-contractor deficiencies and, following a symbolic smack on the wrist, the money will still roll in! Big business pushes ahead with over-confident assurances, while the onus is on inadequately-funded research organizations and negligibly-funded environmental and community groups to prove otherwise.

The NSW Premier's attempt to address community concerns (as currently available<sup>8</sup>) is notable for its uncertainty and omissions.

- The EPA is charged with enforcing the environmental and health legislation, but the EPA is hard-put to manage its existing role, so where is the money for extra staff to sensibly undertake the mission?
- The exclusion zones will apply to any CSG activity not yet approved under the EP&A Act or the Petroleum (Onshore) Act. Yet all licences and leases, whether for exploration (PEL), assessment (PAL), or production (PPL), are issued and therefore approved under the Petroleum (Onshore) Act. Could it be that a company with a PEL can continue exploration but a PAL will never be approved, or that a company with a PAL will never be issued with a PPL? Please explain!
- Will the 2 km buffer around residential areas and 'Critical Industry Clusters' apply to all surface workings and the surface trace of the vertical

projection of subsurface activities such as horizontal drilling? Again please explain!

- Why have World Heritage areas, National Parks, State Conservation Areas, Nature Reserves, State Forests, areas of high scenic value and/or environmental sensitivity including ecotourism, water supply catchments and reservoirs, and prime agricultural lands, NOT been explicitly excluded?
- Where is the protection for groundwater resources in terms of avoiding disturbance and contamination of unconfined and confined aquifers? Such protection is essential in view of the Position Statement of the National Water Commission<sup>9</sup>.
- Why is there need for yet another review given the list of recommendations in the Senate Committee's Interim Report on the Impact of Mining Coal Seam Gas on the Murray-Darling Basin<sup>10</sup>, and the Legislative Council's Inquiry into Coal Seam Gas<sup>11</sup>?
- Why hasn't the same approach been adopted for open-cut coal mines which are arguably far more destructive in terms of the associated impacts?

What can you do?

- Call the Premier's Office (9228 5239), or send him a Fax (9228 3935) or email ([office@premier.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@premier.nsw.gov.au)) raising any of the dot-points above, or any other aspect of CSG which may concern you.
- Support **BMCS** in its campaign against CSG in the Greater Blue Mountains area by participating in rallies, petitions and continuing to make your views known to Roza Sage (e: [bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au), ph: 4751 3298, fax: 4751 1245).
- Join and support **Stop CSG Blue Mountains** at [www.stopcsqbm.net.au](http://www.stopcsqbm.net.au) and e: [info@stopcsqbm.net.au](mailto:info@stopcsqbm.net.au)

<sup>1</sup> Only essential references are included; the fully referenced article is available from the Editor, email [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)

<sup>2</sup> This is because there are no mining costs and a more comprehensive extraction of the energy locked into coal than with the CSG process; [http://www.cougarenergy.com.au/why\\_use\\_ucg.php](http://www.cougarenergy.com.au/why_use_ucg.php); [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underground\\_coal\\_gasification](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underground_coal_gasification)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2012/08/22/3573471.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2012/08/13/3565263.htm>; <http://theconversation.edu.au/renewable-energy-can-provide-baseload-power-heres-how-2221>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.premier.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/TOUGH%20NEW%20RULES%20FOR%20COAL%20SEAM%20GAS%20ACTIVITY.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2013/feb/21/dirty-fossil-fuel-exports-australia#start-of-comments>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.premier.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/TOUGH%20NEW%20RULES%20FOR%20COAL%20SEAM%20GAS%20ACTIVITY.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.premier.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/TOUGH%20NEW%20RULES%20FOR%20COAL%20SEAM%20GAS%20ACTIVITY.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [http://nwc.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/9723/Coal\\_Seam\\_Gas.pdf](http://nwc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/9723/Coal_Seam_Gas.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate\\_Committees?url=rrat\\_ctte/mdb/interim\\_report/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=rrat_ctte/mdb/interim_report/index.htm)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parliament/committee.nsf/0/318a94f2301a0b2fca2579f1001419e5/\\$FILE/Report%2035%20-%20Coal%20seam%20gag.pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parliament/committee.nsf/0/318a94f2301a0b2fca2579f1001419e5/$FILE/Report%2035%20-%20Coal%20seam%20gag.pdf)

## NSW ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE (EDO) NEEDS OUR HELP Angela Langdon

- Need a simple to understand guide to mining law in NSW and its impacts on you as a landholder – call EDO
- Need some free legal advice over the phone about an environmental or development issue near you – call EDO
- Need someone to run a free legal community workshop in your area on a wide range of environmental and planning issues – call EDO
- Need a lawyer to represent you in your public interest environmental law case in the Land and Environment Court – call EDO

The NSW Environmental Defenders Office (NSW EDO) is a community legal centre that is dedicated to protecting the natural environment using the law. It provides people and community organisations with independent legal advice and support to participate in planning and environmental decision making processes. Calling EDO has been what many individuals and environmental and community groups have done for years when they require expert, professional, up to date legal advice and information on environmental and planning law. The EDO's ability to deliver the wide variety of legal and policy work it currently provides the community is now under threat due to significant cuts to the public funding it receives.

The NSW EDO's services include a free telephone advice line that received nearly 1500 requests for assistance last year, a program of rural and regional community workshops (95 workshops over three years attended by 3200 people), publication of community legal guides, scientific advice, legal case work and policy advice, including detailed submissions to government.

The Blue Mountains community have benefited from the EDO's existence on many occasions. The NSW EDO acted on behalf of the Society when the Society brought civil enforcement proceedings in the Land and Environment Court against Delta Electricity (*Blue Mountains Conservation Society v Delta Electricity (No 3) 2011 NSWLEC 145*). The case had important public interest implications as it concerned pollution of waterways within Sydney's drinking water catchment. NSW EDO has presented or hosted a number of legal workshops in the Blue Mountains attended by many people, including Society members.

For nearly 15 years NSW EDO has received, as do many community legal centres, the majority of its operational funding from the Public Purpose Fund (PPF) of the Law Society of NSW. Funding from the PPF is provided via the NSW Attorney-General. The current Liberal government has been extremely critical of the NSW EDO, claiming NSW EDO directly engages in political activism and political advocacy while receiving public funding. This has not been the experience of the Society in its many dealings with NSW EDO. NSW EDO's assistance to the Society has always been in the capacity of it providing legal advice to ourselves as clients – in the same way that any business, government agency or individual gets legal advice from their lawyers. The EDO has acted with professionalism and integrity as the Society's lawyers and legal advisors,

and in no way has been involved in the Society's environmental campaigns or advocacy work.

So far in 2012/13 funding allocated to the NSW EDO by the government from the PPF has been cut by a quarter and allocated in three month tranches (rather than the usual three year period), seriously jeopardising the continued operation of NSW EDO. In addition, funding to the NSW EDO via the PPF has only been confirmed until June 2013. For the 2013-14 financial year, the allocation of funding from the PPF will be bound by the new guidelines for the government funding of community legal centres announced by the NSW Attorney-General in December 2012. These new Guidelines indicate that government "funding should be primarily used for casework for socially and economically disadvantaged groups" and "funding may not be used for lobbying activities, public campaigning and providing legal advice to activists and lobby groups". It could be argued that any individual or community association, local environmental group, landholders association, bushcare group or residents' action group, such as the Society and its members, who writes letters to politicians and advocates on behalf of the community and the environment, comes within the definition of an activist or lobby group.

Beyond 30 June 2012 continued funding from the PPF, which accounts for over two-thirds of the NSW EDO annual budget, therefore remains very uncertain. The full implications of the new funding guidelines on NSW EDO, and the consequent implications for all community environmental groups in NSW, remain unclear at this time. In the meantime, the NSW EDO needs your help and needs all of us "to speak up long and loud" - go to the EDO's web page at [www.edo.org.au](http://www.edo.org.au) to find out how you can assist. The Society has already written to the NSW Premier, NSW Attorney General and our local member Roza Sage expressing our concerns. An appeal for donations to the NSW EDO is also included in this month's Hut News.

### Nature study

Ring-tails  
mating in the rhodos.  
She watches me,  
a bit anxious.  
He's oblivious,  
gripping her from behind,  
slowly pumping away.  
She suddenly looks  
more nervous,  
disengages,  
jumps onto a higher branch.  
He just sits there  
looking dazed,  
licking his privates.

Brendan Doyle.



## Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

Within the shadows of the densest tree at the back of the Blackheath duck pond, a pair of round yellow eyes follow my every move. I can make out a strange, hunched shape with a largish head, pale breast, cinnamon back and black cap. A Nankeen Night-Heron.

As the name suggests, Nankeen Night-Herons are most active at night. It's quite a spectacle to see a colony moving out from their leafy roosts at dusk with their heavy flapping flight, like flying foxes, to hunt for fish, frogs, crustaceans and insects in swamps and on the edges of rivers and lakes. I saw dozens in 2000 in the Macquarie Marshes, and hundreds along the Bulloo River at Thargomindah in 2010. The inland river systems can be the site of very large breeding colonies in favourable years.

The word "nankeen" describes the yellowish-brown colour, similar to the colour of a cotton cloth once imported from Nanking (Nanjing) in China. You might also be familiar with the Nankeen Kestrel, a common small hovering falcon of a similar colour, which is often seen in our area around the cliffs, heathlands and open fields.

Immature night-herons are not nankeen in colour but brown and streaky, and sometimes mistaken for the much rarer Australasian Bittern. The bittern is larger and lives in dense reed-beds where its deep booming call is usually the only indication of its presence. It's not a bird one would expect to see in the Blue Mountains.

But the Nankeen Night-Heron occasionally is. When they're not breeding, small numbers, or individual birds, may turn up in suburban parks and gardens anywhere. Pughs Lagoon at Richmond is a regular site where several can sometimes be seen on careful scanning of the trees. Over the years, I've seen single birds at Wentworth Falls Lake, Katoomba Falls Reserve, Lake Wallace, and now at Blackheath. And recently, Paul Vale photographed a bird in a willow-infested section of Popes Glen which appears to be a different, younger individual to the one I photographed at the duck pond. Paul's bird had more speckled wings and lacked the white "breeding plumes" which extend down from the back of the head.

It's amazing what interesting birds can be found around our townships, often overlooked but there for the observant to admire!

### Carol Proberts

[origma@westnet.com.au](mailto:origma@westnet.com.au)

Twitter: [@carolproberts](https://twitter.com/carolproberts)

Nankeen Night-Heron, photographed at the duck pond, Memorial Park, Blackheath, by Carol Proberts..



## 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](mailto: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](http://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.

**The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience**  
[www.worldheritage.org.au](http://www.worldheritage.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

## LOST IN THE JAMISON VALLEY

After a full and tiring day, when evening called a halt to their labours, fresh orange and apple peelings were all that the searchers had found. They offered, however, a worrying clue for their location suggested that the missing hiker, having consumed his meal, mistakenly wandered on to a rough and perilous track. Rock falls had recently occurred in the area and the possibility of him losing his footing and falling was strong. Police dogs, it was decided, would have to be brought from Sydney to assist the search.

It was 1 August 1939 and Leon Levy, a 30 year old New Zealander, had left his accommodation in Park Street, Katoomba, early the previous day, intent on walking to the Ruined Castle. He didn't return and what happened to him over the following week became a drama of survival. As the searchers feared, Levy had indeed mistaken the route home and taken a path that led him further into the Jamison Valley where he became lost and disoriented. For three days and four nights, in bitter wind and heavy rain, he stumbled through the valley's dense bush and deep ravines, his food supply exhausted, his clothes torn and soaked and his hands and feet cut and swollen (crawling at times to lessen the pain in his feet), trying to find his way back to Katoomba.

Late on the Thursday afternoon, his vision severely impaired from having fallen and broken his glasses, he lay down in despair and expected to die. When he awoke the next morning, however, he not only found himself still alive but was surprised to discover he was lying beside a farm fence which, painfully but with renewed hope, he followed. So disoriented had he become that, far from leading him towards Katoomba, his meandering course had taken him away from the search area and clean across the Jamison Valley. The fence he bumped into enclosed a property at the head of the Kedumba Valley and as dawn broke Levy, weak and emaciated, knocked on the door of the Maxwell farm and collapsed. Warm food and a change of clothes revived him sufficiently to be sat on a horse and led up the precarious bridle track to Kings Tableland and into Wentworth Falls. His condition was so fragile he had to be held in the saddle all the way. Admitted to hospital in Katoomba, his epic misadventure was widely reported in the press and locals with long experience of the mountains expressed amazement at his survival.

Leon Levy then faded from public view, no doubt returning to his life as a manufacturer's agent in Wellington after his recovery. Within weeks, however, he may well have been swept up into a far greater struggle for survival for on 1 September, almost a month to the day his ill-fated bush walk in the Blue Mountains began, Hitler marched into Poland and Australia and New Zealand were again at war.

John Low ([grizzlybear3au@yahoo.com](mailto:grizzlybear3au@yahoo.com))

## Welcome to new members

Jennifer Finlay, Beecroft  
Marion Davie, Wentworth Falls  
Andrew Piggott, Leura  
Diane Piggott, Leura  
Amanda Carfrae, Katoomba  
Kym Strathdee, Lawson  
Leona Kieran, Blackheath  
Beth Koperberg, Winmalee  
John-Paul Amputch, Winmalee  
Lani Amputch, Winmalee  
Seda Amputch, Winmalee  
Robyn Hine, Glenbrook

## BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

**Lawson Nursery** –Wednesdays and Saturdays, 9am to noon.

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](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)).

**Blackheath Community Market**, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm.

**Magpie Market**, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:kevinbell@eftel.net.au)

## Woes of the Wail-Way, by Don Morison

(Details of a Neighbourhood Centre survey on train timetables at the end of this article)

One of the greatest contributions to environmentally friendly functioning of the Blue Mountains community is a regular train service between Penrith and Lithgow. The economics of transport mode choice is such that our State Government needs to provide attractive train travel at a reasonable fare so that members of a household that already owns at least one car will choose to make as many of their trips as possible by rail (although such households have already chosen to bear the depreciation, registration and insurance costs of their cars).

In recent decades, population (and the potential market for public transport) has grown more steadily in the Upper Mountains than the Lower Mountains. So far, State Government investment in rail has not altered to reflect this.

The Penrith-Springwood section already has the greatest number of passenger trains per day and would be the least expensive in which to provide an increased service over coming decades. This is because that section has already been modified to accept virtually all electric carriages operated by Sydney Trains. Sydney Trains is apparently the title resulting from the latest name change to characterise periods of non-improvement to train service quality during the many years since I got cinders in my eyes and the breeze through the open doorways of the red rattlers howled up my shorts – and the whole outfit was very honestly named 'the New South Wales Government Railways'.

Even electric carriages with five seats across can run between Penrith and Springwood, but only the 'Double Deck' inter-urbans (four seats across) can run between Springwood and Lithgow. These inter-urban carriages were built in the 1970s and 1980s; they cannot last forever; the smell their brakes make when they stop at platforms is apparently not asbestos; nevertheless they stink.

A public campaign is needed to maintain the existing level of service between Springwood and Lithgow and – it is to be hoped – improve it in response to future population growth.

Of course, potential passengers do not judge the quality of trains only by whether the service provider has enough carriages for a frequent service. There are other things which affect perceptions of quality.

It is most unfortunate that the uniform of the 'Transit Officers' is no longer a regular sight on trains. These officers greatly contributed to the sense of passenger security. It is further regrettable that the O'Farrell Government does not appear to have rostered enough police patrols of trains and stations at the same time it has introduced new regulations and protocols for rail travel.

A January regulation change totally prohibited smoking on railway stations. The State Government has failed to provide notices and enforcement resources to make smokers aware of this. The rank and file staff of Sydney Trains do not appear willing to enforce this rule. Understandably, I suppose, they fear they lack adequate



protection from government if they meet resistance from offenders.

The Kafkaesque attitude of State Government to rail improvement is on display in car 4 of four carriage trains and cars 1 and 8 of eight carriage trains. These are the 'quiet' carriages but don't make the kind of noise that would let anyone know that. Sometimes the guards announce it, sometimes not. To improve compliance between Penrith and the City you would need multi-lingual notices – at least passengers can have a choice of being annoyed by a loud mobile phone conversation in English, Vietnamese or other languages.

I have had some success by impersonating the guard announcement from the seat next to the loudest fellow passenger in the 'quiet' carriage. For example: "The last car is eight-zero-five-zero. Car eight-zero-five-zero is a quiet carriage". Perhaps it's because my voice is naturally inaudible and staccato that something about the way I do it usually makes the miscreant move carriages.

In summary, the O'Farrell Government needs to get its act together on Blue Mountains trains.

For the Neighbourhood Centre survey – go to <http://banc.org.au/> and follow links to 'Timetable Survey'.

### The Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

\$7.50 plus \$1.50 postage. Buy the map online ([www.bluemountains.org.au](http://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 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](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942 email [mauricekerkham@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:jp34@tpg.com.au)

- Mar 16 **Mt Piddington Area – the highlights.** Leader Liz 4754 4966. Meet Mt Vic Station CarPark 8.40am. Distance 6-7 Kms. Grade 2/3. Map Mount Wilson
- Mar 23 **River Cave a real adventure up to chest deep wade in the creek through a spectacular cave.** Leader Bob 4757 2694. Meet at Wentworth Falls Stock yard C/P 8.00am. 5 Km. Gr 3. Map Rock Hill
- Mar 30 **Porters Pass—good views some scrambling and creek crossing on the walk.** Leader Eddie 4784 2691. Meet at Blackheath Stn C/P 8.30am. 6 Km. Gr 2/3. Map Katoomba.
- April 6 **Bushrangers' Ck; S. Wolgan Valley. Remote pagoda wilderness.** Short, slow, easy, but rewarding walk. Some scrambling. Protective clothing/map/compass/first-aid kit. \$10 driver re-imburement required. Contact Leader for place and times. Book early. Leader Hugh 0423309854 (if unanswered, leave text msg) or email [hue.s@optusnet.com.au](mailto:hue.s@optusnet.com.au). Gr. 3/4. Map Cullen Bullen
- Apr 6 **Erskine Creek.** Leader Karen 4751 9695. Meet at Glenbrook Stn C/P 9.00am. 8 Km. Gr 2/3. Map Penrith.
- Apr 13 **Two heads and a Mine Walk No1 Ikara and Valhalla and Blair Athol No4 – 2 steep, scrambling descents – Bring torch for the mine inspection – approx half off track – Easier option - Ikara Head and return** Leader Jim 4758 6009. Meet at Blackheath Station Carpark 8:15am. Km 9. Gr 4. Map Mt Wilson

**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](mailto:mauricekerkham@hotmail.com)

- Mar 11 **South Lawson Waterfalls** via old Lawson Golf Course. Grade 2. Contact Annamaria 0420 658 183. Meet Lawson, start of Honour Avenue, 8.30 am.
- Mar 18 **Sassafras Ridge and gully.** Meet Faulconbridge station (south side) 9am. Contact Ken 0423 450 200. Grade 3.
- Mar 25 **BUS TRIP – Illawarra Fly (treetop walk), Robertson.** Entrance fee \$21. Bus fare \$12. Book and pay Keith 4736 1010. Lunch at Robertson Pie Shop. Meet Springwood Civic Centre 7.45 am. Contact Maurice 47394942. Grade 1.

**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](mailto:roybev12@bigpond.net.au)

- Mar 14 **Lyrebird Dell, Leura.** Some steep ascents and descents on good track. Car pool. Take lunch. Cnr Megalong Street and the Mall 9.30 am. Contact Chris 4721 4309. Grade 2.
- Mar 21 **Govett's Leap to Pulpit Rock Blackheath.** Cliff-top walk with spectacular views. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45. Contact Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2. Car pool. Take lunch.
- Mar 28 **Wall's Ledge and Centennial Glen Circuit Blackheath.** Delightful walk with some scrambling. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45. Contact Barrie 4782 9235. Grade 2. Car pool. Take lunch.
- Apr 4 **Bus trip to Auburn Botanic Gardens.** Fare \$12. Book and pay Barrie 4782 9235. Meet Council Depot South Street North Katoomba 8.30. Contact Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 1. Take lunch.
- Apr 11 **Ball's Head and Berry Island 7.5kms.** Delightful bushland harbour walk. Meet top of escalators Central Railway 9.30. Contact Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 1. Bring lunch.

### Paradise Lost? Autumn Series of Ben Bullen State Forest Walks

**Saturday, 9 March 2013**

**The amazing rock formations of Poseidon Arena - Part 1.** Details were in February Hut News.

**Saturday, 13 April 2013**

**The incredible pagodas of Hecates Cauldron. Map: Ben Bullen.**

Find out why Ben Bullen State Forest must be protected for future generations. This walk will take us to another unique and stunningly beautiful part of the Forest – Hecates Cauldron.

Park the vehicles near spot height 1051, GR 302 171 on the branch road off the Bicentennial National Trail. Follow the Great Dividing Range north to Mount McLean and Hecates Cauldron. From here, descend into the headwaters of Baal Bone Creek, then follow a ridge west

south west and south, before climbing back up onto the Great Dividing Range and reconnecting with the vehicles. If open cut mining is allowed in other parts of the Forest (eg the Coalpac project), it is only a matter of time before Hecates Cauldron too will be destroyed. See it whilst you can. Unbelievable views, rock formations and pagodas. Scrambling and possible exposure. About 7k.

**Saturday, 11 May 2013**

**From Heaven To Hell And Back. Map: Cullen Bullen.**

Ben Bullen State Forest west of the Great Dividing Range encapsulates, in a relatively small area, everything that is exciting and interesting about bushwalking – incredible rock sculptures, tall

pagodas, narrow slot canyons, magnificent caves, verdant forests and more. This unique area is currently under serious threat from mining and, if nothing is done, and soon, may be wiped out forever in the next few years. Join us for this walk that explores this amazing wonderland. It includes a visit to the stunning Hall of Elrond. See it whilst you can. All off track, some rock scrambling and mild/medium exposure. About 8k.

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These walks are conducted under the auspices of NSW National Parks Assn.