

# HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Issue No. 311  
February  
2014



## We need help to keep the work of the Society going!

Over the past year the Society has had some fantastic achievements, but we can only continue to make a difference if we join together to get things done.

This year, the Society will have a significant number of people stepping down from the Management Committee. We will specifically need help in the area of **membership, administration, and nursery co-ordination.**

As the saying goes, many hands make light work so please contact us if you want to find out more or are interested in any way. You may even want to team up with a friend and help out together!

Please contact Tara Cameron 0419 824 974,  
[taracameron4@gmail.com](mailto:taracameron4@gmail.com)

## Do you want a say on the future of the Blue Mountains?

The **draft Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP)** has now been released for public comment. The public exhibition period closes on **5 March 2014**. This will be the only opportunity residents will have to comment and have input on the draft LEP.

LEPs are legal documents which set out rules to determine where new development will occur, how new development will be assessed and approved, and how new development should be built. The draft LEP incorporates important environmental provisions, aimed at protecting native bushland, watercourses and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

The Society believes the protection and conservation of the unique environment of the Blue Mountains should be a key outcome of the draft LEP, and therefore supports key provisions in the draft LEP. The Society is also seeking improvements to the draft LEP which would further strengthen the environmental provisions.

If you want the new LEP for the Blue Mountains to be one that has legally enforceable environmental provisions, aimed at protecting bushland, waterways and the surrounding Blue Mountains National Parks, now is the time to act. Residents need to make their voices heard, through submissions/letters to the draft LEP supporting the current environmental protection measures or by contacting directly their local councillors and state Members of Parliament. The community needs to make clear to both Council and the NSW Government that they will not accept a second rate "watered down" LEP, which sacrifices the environment for development at any cost.

The Society is urging all residents who care about our beautiful bushland environment to **ACT NOW**. See page 6 to find out what you can do.



## SUNSET GET-TOGETHER

Thursday 27 February, 7.00 pm  
at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls

Members and friends are invited to get together over a cuppa and share one of the best sunset views to be had in our glorious Blue Mountains. Meet old and new friends. Meet some of the Society's management committee and find out what they have been doing over the past year.

*Have you joined the Society recently and would like to meet other members?*

*Are you a long-standing member who would like to get to know and exchange ideas with some of our newer recruits?*

*Are you thinking about joining the Society, but would like to know more about it?*

**Then this special evening is for you.** Come along and discuss with other like-minded people what your concerns are, your special interests, and maybe how you could get more involved.

Margaret and Bob Fagan, of The Fagans, one of Australia's pre-eminent folk music families, have recently come to live in the Blue Mountains and will entertain with a few songs.

And if it is overcast, or even raining, we will have all of the above (except, possibly, a good view of this particular sunset) and what nicer place to join together for a cuppa and meet friends?

The Conservation Hut is in the Blue Mountains National Park at the end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls. Contact Christine (4787 7246 or [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)) a few days before if you need transport from Wentworth Falls Station.

## BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

**Lawson Nursery**, Wednesday and Saturday mornings, 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 map [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. Larger pots available.

Enquiries Kevin Bell 4787 6436,  
[kevinbell@efel.net.au](mailto:kevinbell@efel.net.au)

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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT  
ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS  
19 FEBRUARY 2014**

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**MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES**

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[membership@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)  
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## Nursery News

Our Lawson nursery opened for sales after the Christmas break in mid-January and will stay open every Wednesday and Saturday morning from 9am to noon until June. We will also be at the Blackheath Community markets on Sunday on every first Sunday of the month and the Lawson Magpie Markets on Sunday every third Sunday of the month. We have a good range of plants in forestry tubes, still at the low price of \$2.50, and advanced plants in 140mm pots from \$5. Come and see us!

**Feature Plant:** Our newest addition is *Melaleuca squamea*, commonly called the Swamp Honey-Myrtle. It grows in heath communities on damp ground in coastal districts and adjacent ranges from south of the Tweed River to Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. While more common on the coast in the Sydney district there are several communities growing in the upper Blue Mountains from where we obtained our seed. It is a compact shrub usually no more than 2m tall and about 1.5m wide, with white, corky bark and bears brilliant flushes of bright purplish-pink flowers in terminal clusters in Spring. The "Honey" part of the common name signifies that the flowers are loaded with nectar and attract honeyeaters.

But this is not the only *Melaleuca* we have for sale. Ranging from a magnificent tall tree (to 20m) like *M. stypheloides* (Prickly-leaved Paperbark with creamy-white flowers) to a small (50cm) spreading shrub like *M. thymifolia* (Thyme Honey-myrtle with deep-mauve flowers) we have numerous others in between such as *M. nodosa* (shrub 1-3m tall with yellow flowers), *M. hypericifolia* (Red Honey-myrtle, 2-4m tall with brilliant large, up to 5cm, orange-red brushes) and *M. linariifolia* (Snow in Summer, a small tree which is covered in white fluffy spikes in summer). We would be very keen to add *M. megalongensis* to our list but this was only first recorded in 2002 from a few sites near Megalong Creek.

While all of these prefer a moist situation, they will grow in drier conditions and, as all are bird-attracting, your feathered friends will thank you for adding some to your garden. We have all in stock at the present time.

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

## Respect mining heritage

Everyone who visits the oil shale ruins at Mt Airly will immediately fall in love with its delightful artefacts and spectacular setting. The ruins at Airly eloquently express the organic genius and determination of its past inhabitants, who struggled with adversity and hardship, and lived close to the earth. Yet Centennial Coal's proposal to expand its Airly Colliery under Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area will damage, if not destroy, this important mining heritage site.

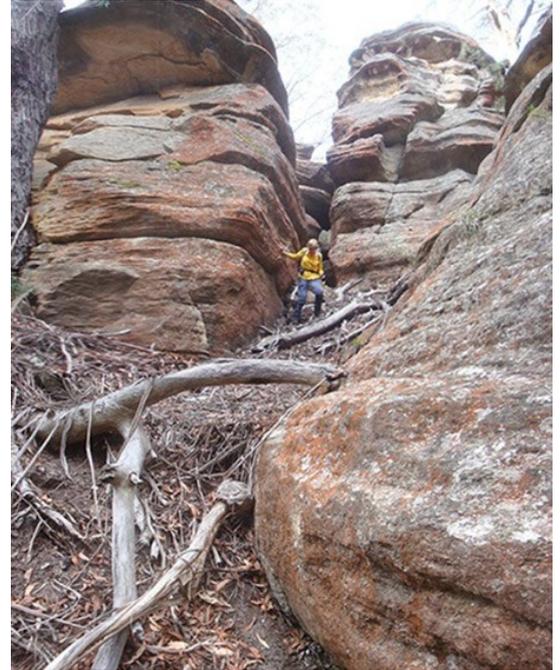
Centennial Coal's plans for its Airly mine were revealed earlier this month on the Federal Government's Environmental Website. The miner has proposed a mining method that will cause up to 500mm additional surface movement in the vicinity of the oil shale ruins, causing, they admit, damage to this fragile site.

The significant value of these oil shale heritage items at Mt Airly has been greatly understated by the miner's consultant archaeologist, RPS Australia East Pty Ltd. The ingenious cave dwellings of the miners, their mine workings, like the ventilation chimneys and steam engine emplacements, simply cannot be just of local value as claimed. The story told by these ruins is just too fascinating for the site to be destroyed. The Airly oil shale heritage is of national significance. It is as interesting, if not more interesting than other ruins, such as those at Newnes and Glen Davis, and in better condition.

Centennial Coal should revise its mine proposal and protect the Airly Oil Shale ruins.

**Source: Colong Foundation for Wilderness.** See more at: <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/media-releases/2013/12/conservation-group-calls-coal-miner-respect-mining-heritage#sthash.8bba0olb.dpuf>

## The Gardens of Stone—a photographic journey with Hugh Speirs



Photos: (left) Take off! Wonderful rock formations are found in the Gardens of Stone. (right) Bushrangers Gully—Alice checks a possible ascent point. Hugh Speirs.

### **Dominion over disaster** Don Morison

A dingo attacks a child in a National Park; government-sanctioned shooters fire on other dingos in the vicinity. A shark takes a swimmer off Western Australia; a mass cull of sharks is announced. A colony of endangered bats is found to be obstructing an option for a Pacific Highway bypass at Macksville; a tabloid newspaper fulsomely praises the Premier when he declares the bats have to go. Someone lets a dog loose in the bush in Wentworth Falls, the dog and a brown snake are both later found dead after a contest which could reasonably be judged to have ended in a draw; we mourn the dog and curse the snake.

Well, wild animals just get in the way of human activity, don't they? And if one member of a non-human species makes trouble – even if they are an ill ... or provoked ... or abnormal individual from that species - then every other individual of that species is, by extension, guilty. And every single individual from the rogue species must share in the death sentence or other penalty that the alpha males of the human race deign to administer.

One can find support for this doctrine of human dominion among many strata of human society, even among people who in most other respects would seem depressingly normal. I gather that some would interpret the Old Testament book of Genesis as supporting this kind of human ascendancy theory. I am no authority on that and if you want to become an expert on biblical interpretation, I suggest you either do a degree in theology or read the letters pages of the Blue Mountains Gazette.

But by continually attacking other species, humans can only gain dominion over an ecological disaster. As (probably) the most intelligent land-dwelling mammal, humans need to educate ourselves about other species' behaviour, how to avoid conflict with them and how to give them some territory of their own.

### **Cultural Understanding Workshop at Maiyingu Marragu (Blackfellows Hands Cave), Gardens of Stone area**

On Friday 17th January I attended a fantastic Cultural Understanding Workshop run by the Mignaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation at Maiyingu Marragu (Blackfellows Hands Cave). This is an 'Aboriginal Place' recognised under the NPWS Act. It is in the Gardens of Stone area, off the Wolgan road near Lidsdale.

It was a privilege to be shown the site by local elders. The Aboriginal art and beauty of the place is a delight. We heard about the significance of the area and also some of the management issues faced. Representatives attended from NPWS, Forests NSW, Lithgow Council and local teachers.

Maiyingu Marragu is a beautiful place and I would like to thank the Mignaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation for such a great day. Tara Cameron.

### **Extreme heat is a health hazard for native animals too**

When it's hot, native animals will try to find a way to cool down in any place they can. There are a few things you can do to help them survive.

Provide water. Keep SHALLOW bowls of water in the shade and refill them regularly. Put the water high up if possible to keep wildlife safe from predators.

If you have a swimming pool, keep it covered when you're not using it. Hot animals, looking for water to cool down, can drown in swimming pools.

Keep your dog and cat indoors as heat-stressed animals are easy prey.

If you find an animal that looks like it is struggling, call your local wildlife group for advice. You can contact Blue Mountains WIRES on 4754 2946.

## Green Paper Blues Don Morison

Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt released a Green Paper regarding carbon emissions just before Christmas and has invited submissions until 21 February 2014. (<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/cleaner-environment/clean-air/emissions-reduction-fund/green-paper>)

This is an unpromising step with little chance of achieving the Abbott Government's stated objective to find a viable alternative to the carbon price it plans to abolish. For one thing, the new Senate majority (although its numbers could be changed by the yet-to-be-finalised Western Australian representation) is likely to be hostile to any action on climate change. The Queensland coal miner and senator, Clive Palmer, is involved with a cluster of industries that want an exemption from any regulation associated with their impact on climate change.

The framework surrounding the Green Paper itself is racked with apparent doubts about its effectiveness. Fairfax journalists Tom Arup and Peter Hannam believe that most of the worthwhile elements in the so-called "Direct Action" policy will not be ironed out until a review of the policy in 2015. Other elements of its implementation could be clouded in commercial secrecy.

The Green Paper and the reactions to it throw climate change action into further confusion at a time when Australia has just experienced its hottest year on record.

### 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.

### A surprise visitor

My birdbath has been very popular this summer on hot days. 13 species were recorded during January, most of them small birds. Some species (a little flock of New Holland Honeyeaters, a pair of White-browed Scrub Wrens, Eastern Spinebills, Brown Thornbills) visited many times during the day. The birds perch in the branches of the Banksia and other shrubs, dart to and fro, preening themselves and fluffing up their feathers.

I was surprised to see a Dusky Antechinus climbing up the birdbath, at about 2 pm one afternoon, and managed to photograph him on the way down. He did not go above the rim to the water. Are birds part of his diet?

Christine, Blackheath, January 2014.

Photos: Dusky Antechinus, New Holland Honeyeater, Grey Fantail.



## Nature is no match for man

The latest figures from the Environment Protection Authority reveal that in the final three months of 2013 an average of 50 people a month were fined for throwing burning cigarette butts out car windows, including while bushfires were raging in the Blue Mountains. Another 2858 people were sent warning letters after other motorists reported them to the EPA.

Cigarette butts and other human activity, ranging from arson to fires accidentally lit by children, or falling power lines, are responsible for more than 90 percent of bushfires in NSW.

The NSW Rural Fire Service's figures show there were 6381 bush, scrub and grass fires between July last year and January 21 this year, including 4756 which were the result of human activity. Of those, 2804 were investigated and 209 were classed as arson. Lightning strikes caused 546 bushfires.

An analysis of Australian bushfires over the past decade found that natural events, most commonly started by lightning strikes, caused only 6 per cent of bushfires in NSW.

Extract of an article by Alexandra Smith, SMH 24/1/09

### The Road to Megalong

After the rain the light through the forest is beautiful, with lush green fronds of tree ferns, long ribbons of bark dangling from the white trunks and branches of the lovely *Eucalyptus oreades*, and Coachwood trees, stunning, with canopies of red. Christine, 24/1/14.

(The Coachwood, *Ceratopetalum apetalum*, is in the same family as the NSW Christmas Bush, and the flowers are similar. In recent months, from the lookouts, you might have noticed the abundant white flowers on the Coachwoods in the rainforest gullies on the valley floor. When the flower dies the calyx enlarges and turns red and papery. Each red 'flower' contains a single seed, which falls when ripe.)

Members will know of the fantastic news that, following a two year campaign, the proposal by Coalpac to destroy 800 hectares of the beautiful Ben Bullen State Forest was withdrawn late last year

Unfortunately, this does not mean that this pagoda wonderland is safe from destruction. Recent media reports suggest that Energy Australia, owner of Mt Piper and Wallerawang Power Stations, is in discussions with the Coalpac administrators in the hope that coal can be still sourced from the area. In addition, another open cut mine is planned to dig up 200 hectares further to the south.

It is now time for the State Government to **ACT** and make Ben Bullen State Forest a State Conservation Area.

Representatives from a number of groups in the NSW Environment movement will be shortly joining together to visit the Gardens of Stone and highlight the importance of the area.

Stay tuned for more in the next edition of Hut News...

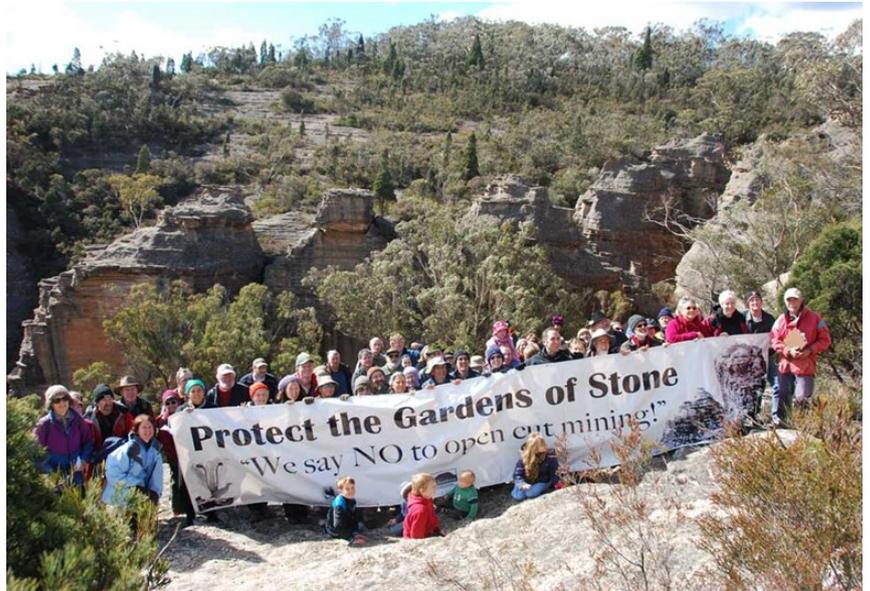


Photo: Gardens of Stone, Ben Bullen, Saturday 14 May 2011. This part of the Gardens of Stone was to be destroyed by mining. Over 120 people attended an event, organised by Blue Mountains Conservation Society, to say “No!” to open-cut mining in the Gardens of Stone. Pepe Clark, CEO of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW asked us to reflect that the precious sandstone formations of the ‘Gardens of Stone’ took 25 million years to create and can be destroyed in just 21 years of mining activity.

**Funding cuts undermine community rights and environmental protection**

The federal government’s decision to end funding for the Environmental Defender’s Office (EDO) network without notice will reduce the community’s ability to obtain timely, affordable assistance with public interest environmental law matters.

For nearly 30 years, the EDO has provided essential access to expert advice on environmental law, assisting local communities to protect their local environment and way of life. The funding cuts are likely to lead to the closure of a number of EDO offices across the country. In New South Wales, loss of federal funding will reduce the EDO’s capacity to respond to community requests for advice and legal representation.

Right across our state, thousands of people have turned to the EDO for advice and assistance. Their services play a critical role in helping people to engage in planning and development processes, understand natural resource laws and take an active part in protecting their local environment. Many of those who access the EDO’s services are individuals or small community groups who have nowhere else to turn for advice.

Continued support for the EDO network is essential to ensure ordinary people have access to legal advice that enables them to protect their local environment and the community’s health.

Source: Nature Conservation Council of NSW

**Managing visitor numbers Don Morison**

Fortunately for local businesses, significant numbers of visitors have been attracted to parts of the Blue Mountains during January 2014. With visitors comes the challenge of managing environmental integrity, residential amenity, infrastructure and public behaviour.

Members of the community have informed the Society of unauthorised visitors in bushfire damaged areas, wear and tear on walking tracks, misuse of trail bikes, camping in unauthorised areas, unauthorised use of privately owned bushland as dog off-leash areas and dog toilets as well as erosion of unsealed road shoulders by motorists accessing parking. The Abercrombie River bushfire this month may have started due to visitor carelessness.

The Society has communicated with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the service has been very prompt in addressing public safety concerns we identified, although many service staff are still fighting bushfires. The service has also reopened walking tracks in non bushfire affected areas.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society believes there are benefits in encouraging more visitors to non fire affected areas but these benefits can only be maintained if Governments give the NPWS and councils more funds to protect public safety, infrastructure and the environment.

(Published in Blue Mountains Gazette 22/1/2014.)

**BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit**

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly?

Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?

Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit [www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml)

## Making a submission on the Draft Blue Mountains LEP 2013 – why & how?

### **Why is my input to the Draft Blue Mountains LEP 2013 so important?**

The current Blue Mountains LEPs include important mechanisms to prevent or modify new developments that might negatively impact on environmentally sensitive areas, such as watercourses, bushland areas and the Blue Mountains National Park (and hence the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area).

Considerable effort has been made by Council to translate all the existing land use zones and special environmental provisions into the new draft LEP currently on public exhibition. There is a risk at any stage after the public exhibition that the draft LEP could be watered down and changed. The Department of Planning and Infrastructure can make major changes to the plan, with no guarantee of further public exhibition.

**A large number of public submissions and strong community support for the environmental provisions in the Draft LEP will make it less likely that they will be removed from the plan once it goes to the Department of Planning and the Minister for finalisation and approval.** We also need to ensure that if major changes are made to the draft Plan by the Department and the Minister, that the LEP is re-exhibited.

### **What can I do?**

#### **GET INFORMED**

The Draft LEP is a long and complex document and is daunting to read and understand. To assist residents, the Society suggests:

- Talk to Council planners at Council's Draft LEP drop-in centre at Katoomba (see <http://bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/draftlep2013> for details);
- Make full use of the resources provided by Council on its website <http://bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/draftlep2013>, including the series of Fact Sheets (especially Fact Sheet 14 'Environmental Zones'), the videoed information sessions (especially the one labelled 'Environment and Heritage'), the email enquiry facility and the Q&A forum.
- Read the relevant Information Sheets and Guides prepared by the Society and available on the Society's website at <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/lep-information.shtml>
- Attend a Society event. The Society is proposing a public meeting, a number of shopping centre street stalls, attendance at community markets and organising other public events to help the community to understand the draft LEP, especially its implications in terms of the environment, and to assist residents to write letters and make submissions. Further details can be found on page 7 of this newsletter and on the Society's website.

#### **MAKE A FORMAL SUBMISSION**

The Society has prepared a number of Information Sheets to help you understand the plan's environmental provisions and what changes could be made to improve them. The following relevant Information Sheets are now available on the Society's website at <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/lep-information.shtml>:

[www.bluemountains.org.au/lep-information.shtml](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/lep-information.shtml):

- **Information Sheet 2** 'Quick guide to the main environmental protection issues in the Draft LEP 2013' (2 pages with a table highlighting good & bad points in the draft plan)
- **Information Sheet 4** 'Overview and key environmental issues' (8 pp)
- **Information Sheet 5** 'Submission-writing guide and summary of key environmental issues' (4 pp)

You can quickly and easily make a submission by choosing any of the key points in Information Sheets 2 or 5 (above) and putting them into the standard template available on the Society's website or into your own words.

#### **WRITE A LETTER**

Completing a form letter or sending a template email does not carry the same weight as a personalised submission. However, the Society will be providing on its website several form letters which residents can complete and either send as a letter or email as part of the public submission process.

#### **CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR**

Contact your local councillors and ask for a meeting to discuss any environmental issues of concern in your area and show your support for the strong environmental protections in the draft LEP. Look up their email/mobile contact details on Council's website <http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/yourcouncil/councillors>

- *Ward 1 Bell, Mts Tomah, Wilson & Irvine, Mt Vic to Leura* – Michael Begg, Robert Stock & Don McGregor
- *Ward 2 Wentworth Falls to Faulconbridge/Springwood* – Chris Van der Kley, Romola Hollywood & Geordie Williamson
- *Ward 3 Faulconbridge/Springwood to Valley Heights* – Daniel Myles, Brendan Luchetti & Mick Fell
- *Ward 4 Warrimoo to Lapstone* – Mark Greenhill, Brendan Christie & Anton Von Schulenburg

We also suggest sending to your local Councillor a copy of any submission/letter you send on the draft LEP.

#### **CONTACT YOUR LOCAL MP**

Let our local MPs know you support the strong local provisions in the Draft LEP which protect the Blue Mountains National Park and other environmentally sensitive areas – write (and include a copy of your submission/letter), ring or arrange a meeting. Tell them you don't want to see the plan watered down and ask them to ensure that Council and Councillors have sufficient time to review the public submissions and complete the final plan.

Mrs Roza Sage, MP, Member for Blue Mountains  
132 Macquarie Rd, Springwood NSW 2777  
Email: [bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au)  
Ph: 02 4751 3298

Mr Stuart Ayres, MP, Member for Penrith  
Shop 23, Ground Floor, Penrith Centre  
510-534 High St, Penrith NSW 2750  
Email: [penrith@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:penrith@parliament.nsw.gov.au)  
Ph: 02 4722 8660.

## Want to know more about the draft Blue Mountains LEP?

The Society is planning a series of events throughout February and early March to inform residents about the new draft LEP, and to assist residents if they want to make a submission. Check the Society's website ([www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)) for further information and updates.

**PUBLIC MEETING: Sun 16 Feb, 2-4pm** at Mavis Wood Hall, Mid Mountains Community Centre, New St, Lawson. Information seminar for anyone interested in environmental issues in the Draft LEP. Speakers from the Society and Council, followed by Q&A and help with submission-writing.

**SEMINAR AND SUBMISSION-WRITING WORKSHOP for all Bushcare/Landcare volunteers**, at Presbyterian Church (small) hall, 160 Macquarie Rd, Springwood. RSVP or inquiries to Sue at [wollemi@exemail.com.au](mailto:wollemi@exemail.com.au) or mobile 0418 292 672.

### INFORMATION STALLS:

Blackheath Growers Market (Sun 9 Feb)  
Glenbrook Infants School Rotary Market (Sat 15 Feb)  
Lawson Magpie Markets (Sun 16 Feb)

**STREET STALLS:** Throughout February and early March the Society will be holding street stalls in Blaxland, Springwood, Hazelbrook & Blackheath shopping centres (possibly other locations – see the Society's website ([www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)) for updates. Days of the week will vary – generally Wednesday or Friday between 11am and 2pm.

**PRESENTATIONS TO COMMUNITY GROUPS:** Would you like the Society to come and give a presentation to your community group or organisation about the environmental provisions in the draft LEP? Contact Sue at [wollemi@exemail.com.au](mailto:wollemi@exemail.com.au) or mobile 0418 292 672.



### Living with wildlife: Lyrebirds

We watched two Superb Lyrebirds in the forest near Govett's Leap Lookout. One was singing and dancing and persistently pursuing the other. Was it a juvenile with his mother, being taught the art of being a male lyrebird? Christine, January 2014.

## Professor Elias Duek-Cohen, 1926-2014

Associate Professor Duek-Cohen was a figure in the Department of Town Planning at the University of New South Wales for many years. He was a prominent advocate for planning that allowed humans to co-exist with the environment. In collaboration with Warren Salomon, he set up the Bicycle Institute of NSW in 1976. This paved the way for the establishment of the Bicycle Federation of Australia a few years later with Wilf Hilder as its inaugural president. The late Mr Hilder was a well-known advocate for cycling, bushwalking and appreciation of the Blue Mountains.

Professor Duek-Cohen was a keen advocate for a cycleway linking all the population centres of coastal New South Wales for recreation and commuting. Many coastal councils implemented their sections of this proposal during his lifetime.

### Bullets not dodged Don Morison

An inaugural amateur shoot of goats on National Park controlled land is scheduled to occur in February. Although the Game Council was abolished following an enquiry in 2013, the amateur shooters participating must belong to the Sporting Shooters Association, a body whose personnel overlap with the defunct Game Council. The amateurs will be supervised by NPWS staff. The shoot will take place in the Griffith district near a large ammunition factory.

The Sporting Shooters Association is closely linked with the NSW Shooters and Fishers Party, whose support the O'Farrell Government desires for legislation concerning its new planning instruments. The Fairfax press employs editors who may think the fates of the Griffith goats and the planning legislation are conjoined because they have published side by side articles about the two matters. The National Park land will be off limits to sensible members of the public during the shoot.

### Grandma's Knitting

Three new babies by Christmas—  
I busy myself  
tiny garments plain knitting  
but threaded with the ribbon  
of my love

I would weave into the fabric  
the colour of dreams  
pink and gold for peace  
the brilliance of parrots  
black red and yellow  
of Koori struggle  
grey of mountain mist  
and green always the green  
of trees and nature's bounty

I would colour your lives  
with the plain and purl of humour  
with passion for wilderness  
and noble causes  
for the smallest creatures  
and with friendship  
which is love

**Rosemary Lewis, 5.2.89.**

A most enjoyable walk was experienced by members of the Plant Study Group at our last field trip for 2013.

Bonnie Doon Reserve is known to many for its short walk and views over Megalong Valley. Because of its biodiversity and presence of endangered flora and fauna the reserve was declared a Wildlife Protection Area (WPA) by BMCC in 2012. It is now a Category One WPA which means that cats and dogs are prohibited.

It is a place of considerable interest with creeks, rocky lookouts, ridges, with heath, dry and wet Sclerophyll forest, rainforest and swamps. *Eucalypts*, including the tall white trunked Mountain Ash, *Angophora costata*, *Acacia elata* and Coachwoods can all be seen on this short walk. *Tristaniopsis collina* (Water Gum) is also present.

The Bonnie Doon WPA has many species of wildlife, including six species of insectivorous bats which were identified in a recent survey.

Early in the walk we all stood on a rocky cliff edge peering down into the waterfalls of Nellies Glen looking for *Pherosphaera fitzgeraldii* (ex microstrobis). It was a warm summer's day so having morning tea sitting at a shady creek crossing was very pleasant. Then we walked through ferns along a southerly slope, passing large and some very old *Banksias* and *Leptospermum trinervium*. The last fire in this section was in 1971.

Beside the track we saw large spreading *Persoonia chamaepitys* covered in yellow flowers and Sue found some Christmas Bells, one of them in flower.

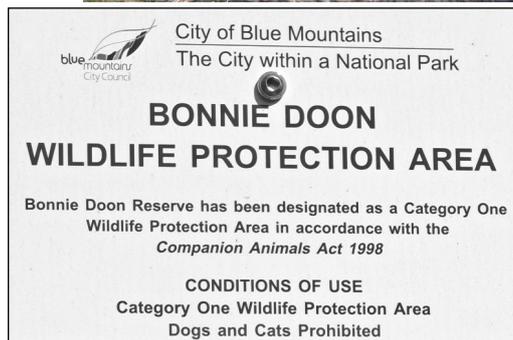


Photo: Members of the Plant Study group share a Christmas lunch on the shady walking track. What a feast we had. Photo taken by Don Cameron.

### AGAPANTHUS—off with their heads!

“So keep the waters flowing that have made our gardens here, These gardens that have flourished for a hundred thousand years, These lovely, perfumed gardens, in Blue Mountains, that I know, Australia’s bushland gardens, where the ferns and flowers grow.”

(An extract from Bushland Gardens by Denis Kevans.)

Denis Kevans loved the Blue Mountains bushland and its native flowers and birds. It’s a shame to see Agapanthus, which have become very popular in upper mountains gardens and streetscapes, spreading into the Denis Kevans Bushland Gardens in Valley Road, Wentworth Falls, which was dedicated to his memory. I noticed Agapanthus also moving down from gardens of houses off Falls Road into bushland along Darwin’s Walk.

Pretty as they are with their stunning heads of blue and white, Agapanthus do tend to wander. Blue Mountains City Council has classified *Agapanthus praecox* as an environmental weed – a plant that threatens natural ecosystems and diversity of fauna and flora.

You can help prevent them spreading into our bushland. After flowering, please CUT OFF THE HEADS to prevent seeding.

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

The degraded Nellies Glen ridge is slowly, very slowly regenerating. There is an excellent account of the ruination of Nellies Glen in *From Katoomba to Jenolan Caves, The Six Foot Track* by Jim Smith.

### What a difference taking the train (could) make ... Christine Davies

The current Blue Mountains train timetable enables commuters from some stations to travel from the Blue Mountains to Sydney in a marginally shorter time, while reducing service from other stations and discouraging local train travel within the Blue Mountains.

Sydney Trains ([http://www.sydneytrains.info/tickets/fare\\_calculator.htm](http://www.sydneytrains.info/tickets/fare_calculator.htm)) promotes the benefits of train travel by calculating the monetary savings and the reduction in greenhouse gases emitted if we travel by train instead of car. For instance, one person travelling from Blackheath to Wentworth Falls and return by train instead of in a medium car would save 4.52 kg of carbon emissions. (Just one journey by one person per day would save 1,649.8 kg per year!)

The Blue Mountains is not just a dormitory suburb of Sydney. It is a unique community with 18 villages scattered along 60 km of railway track. The railway should not be just a means of getting to and from the Blue Mountains to the Sydney CBD. A better timetable with more frequent trains stopping at all the stations between Lapstone and Mount Victoria could encourage local train travel and save carbon emissions.

## Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

This is the time of year - when most birds have finished breeding - that you are likely to encounter an "MFF", or mixed feeding flock. Take a walk through the bush and you might at first notice how quiet things are. There seems to be a distinct lack of birdlife, until.... suddenly, you round a bend and the trees are alive with activity, small birds of a dozen different species are all around you. There are so many birds it's hard to know where to look. You have found yourself in the midst of a mixed flock, a phenomenon characteristic of late summer, autumn and early winter.

There are certain advantages for a small bird to join with others and move around as part of a mixed-species group. With chicks fledged, it is free to wander away from its immediate nesting territory and make use of other areas. A flock provides safety in numbers, with many eyes to watch for predators. Different species can recognise and benefit from each others' alarm calls. By force of numbers they can also swamp any territorial birds without fear of being chased away.

In addition, looking for food in a mixed flock can be a more efficient way of foraging, with birds taking advantage of insects disturbed by each other, without necessarily competing for the same food. For example, a tree creeper hopping up a tree trunk looking for spiders, cockroaches and ants might flush out a small flying insect, which is then caught by a Grey Fantail. A Bassian Thrush turning over the leaf litter looking for worms might also uncover small landhoppers which an Eastern Yellow Robin pounces on. A Golden Whistler seizes a mantid too big for a party of Striated Thornbills moving through the foliage.

I've seen mixed flocks comprising up to 16 different species, and returned the next day to find almost the exact same mix of species together. It seems that the MFF is a fairly stable unit for a period of time, rather than a casual arrangement in which different birds drift together and apart at random.

Mixed feeding flocks consist largely of insectivores. The Grey Fantail - that acrobatic sprite of the canopy - is often regarded as an indication there are other species nearby. Migratory birds, like its cousin the Rufous Fantail, may join in until the time comes for them to fly north to their wintering areas.

Watching birds at this time of year is typically an all-or-nothing experience. Keep an eye out on bushwalks for the frenetic activity of mixed feeding flocks.

**Carol Proberts**, [origma@westnet.com.au](mailto:origma@westnet.com.au)  
Email: [origma@westnet.com.au](mailto:origma@westnet.com.au) Twitter: @carolproberts



Photo: Grey Fantail, by Carol Proberts.

(This instalment of "Loose Feathers" has been repeated from a previous edition of Hut News. Carol has broken her wrist in a fall down slippery steps on the National Pass. We wish her a speedy recovery)

## Membership Application Form

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....

Address: .....  
..... PC .....

Phone(s) .....

Email .....

**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. ....

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$30 Concession (Senior/Student) \$20

Household \$35 Household Concession \$25

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$ .....

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

Bushwalkers: please add

\$20 per walker per annum. \$ .....

TOTAL AMOUNT \$ .....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box  mail  internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline): Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Web or database management; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Society administration.

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)**

**BLUE MOUNTAINS  
CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc**  
'Like' us on Facebook:  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society  
Follow us on Twitter: [bmcnsnw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.

### Welcome to new members

Peter Birch, Katoomba  
Janne Worsley, Wentworth Falls  
Joe Goozeff, Wentworth Falls

### Raising funds for Wildlife

A Blackheath artist has created a series of three tea towels to raise money for WIRES bushfire appeal fund to help native animals affected by bushfire. Go to: <http://clothfabric.com/products-page/haberdashery/> and click on the banksia or echidna.

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

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

## TRUE PALS

For much of his time as a Blue Mountains ranger and track maker Walter Botting was accompanied by his dog and “little mate” Ben. They were inseparable. Many years later, a lookout near the top of the Golden Stairs was given the ranger’s name. It looks directly across to where Ben was killed while Walter was clearing a path in the aftermath of the Landslide. On the death of Carlo, the “noble companion and friend” of local coach driver Harry Peckman, Carlo was eulogised in verse and when Robert Scott of Springwood lost his dog Paddy he took his tools and carved his grief into several rocks around the town.

Some years ago, living in Springwood and regularly wandering the Birdwood Gully track, I discovered its Paddy memorial - “In Memory of Paddy/ a true pal/ 1917/R. Scott” – cut into a rock-face not far from the Boland Avenue entrance to the track. One of the principal pleasures of that walk, along with an occasional encounter with lyrebirds, was to pause as I passed this site. Such all-but forgotten traces of past lives deserve reflection.

Paddy, I subsequently learned, was remembered as “a large foxy-type dog” with a mysterious aversion to people who carried baskets. He was 13 at the time of his death. His companion, Robert Scott, had been a wanderer who washed up in the Blue Mountains and spent time in Katoomba before moving down the hill to live in a bushland cave between De Chair Avenue and Scott Street (possibly named for him). He could have been British, having once claimed to be an “old soldier” who served with the Royal Engineers in South Africa. In Springwood he worked as a gardener and casual labourer, left little imprint on the public record but was recalled kindly by those who knew him. “A very decent man” was the judgement of the local police sergeant, James Tomkins.

Two further rock engravings dedicated to Paddy (and as much memorials to the man who carved them as to his dog), one near the cave where they lived and another a couple of hundred metres along the track leading off the end of Sassafras Gully Road, bear further witness to Scott’s affection for his dog. Simple words, powerful feelings! His time in Springwood remembered sketchily, his origins and ultimate fate unknown, I sometimes imagine Scott to have come from the same mould as Henry Lawson’s shearer, Macquarie, the archetypal self-dependent, tough but tender bushman whose dog “watched over me; kep’ me from getting robbed many a time; fought for me; saved my life and took drunken kicks and curses for thanks – and forgave me. He’s been a true, straight, honest, and faithful mate to me – and I ain’t going to desert him now” (‘That There Dog of Mine’).

A man, his dog and an ancient, at times profound, relationship!

*The research of Brian Fox on Walter Botting and that of Mary Sandilands and Kerry Leves on Robert Scott is acknowledged. Also useful, a news report of a court case in which Scott was involved, reported in the Nepean Times, 18 October 1919.*

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

### A date for your diary: Bat Night 2014

Friday 21 March, starting at 6:30pm at Katoomba Falls Kiosk.

Details are still to be finalised but plans are to have a program similar to last year’s fantastic event with walks down to watch the little furry flappers catching insects in the lights of the Falls, fascinating talks and videos, interesting displays and enthralling craft activities.

Watch this space ....

## Living Sustainably Peter Green

Nearly five years ago during a BMCS promotion to reduce the family environmental footprint, a few of us jointly addressed a monthly meeting of ConSoc about sustainable living. With out of control population growth foisted on us by government policy and big business, and negligible, if any, reduction in the per-capita footprint, that topic is more relevant today, so I have brushed up my presentation for this edition of Hut News.

As a society, even among those who are concerned about living unsustainably, the effort required is little understood, and substantive change is rare. Reports that I have read include one of an English farmer who strove to extraordinary lengths to reduce fuel consumption on his farm; the result – a meagre reduction of about one quarter. As we move into the final decades of the 'oil age', that should be a cause for great concern. But society is blissfully unaware. Another study suggested that every new resident, either migrant or baby, negates the beneficial effects of over 50 people moving to 'low impact' lives. So there is an enormous challenge, and substantive change is a fundamental part of that paradigm shift in how we live. If the peoples of the Earth are to successfully halt and then reverse the progressive destruction of this planet's environment, then action will have to be taken by government, business and individuals/families. This is about the life that your grandchildren will lead.

My presentation was a personal account of how one person could resile from a highly consumptive lifestyle. I hope that it gives you some ideas, perhaps inspiration. The lifestyle features listed on this page and in following issues of Hut News reflect a variety of environmental aspects, including saving energy, saving water, recycling, avoidance, embodied energy and resources in products purchased, waste avoidance, societal cost of ill-health, and efficiency. I hope that you, too, will enjoy the same sense of achievement each time that you introduce a change in your life reflective of these aspects.

Over to you .....

## 60 Hints for Living Sustainably, 1-20

- Install long life bulbs; turn off lights where practical.
- Convert part of garden to growing vegetables; plant progressively in small batches; share excess with family and friends or at Crop & Swap.
- Set up a worm farm and compost heap.
- Collect lawn clippings from neighbours for your compost heap.
- When you rake up leaves, etc, dump them in a corner of the garden, not the bin.
- Refrain from planting exotic species that have a large thirst (eg roses, hydrangeas).
- Before planting, check the invasive and banned plants list.
- Reproach your nursery if they persist in selling invasive species – we live in a world heritage listed national park.
- Plant natives, especially those local to area or which provide nourishment for birds.
- Install a bird bath, and place it near dense shrubbery so that small birds can drink in relative safety.
- Rinse plates immediately after use, while still moist, and stack; wash dishes less frequently. Plates that have been used for grease-free foods can be let dry and re-used. Catch rinse water in basin, and pour onto garden.
- Plan ahead to thaw out foods rather than rely on the microwave.
- Consume less meat, since much meat has more embodied water, hard hoofed animals cause more soil erosion, and ruminants produce copious amounts of methane, a gas with a particularly high 'greenhouse' effect.
- Capture rain water for the vegetable garden; it is more beneficial for plants than chemically treated town water.
- Avoid bottled water; use a home water filter if town water is not to your taste; drink rain water.
- Run shower/bath waste water onto citrus trees.
- Pee under the citrus trees (easier for blokes, I know) or into a watering can; don't make kids feel guilty about doing so.
- Use washing rinse water on the garden, but not always in same place.
- Use washing water for multiple loads, starting with whites and ending with dirtiest. Rinse in basin by hand. Hang clothes wet to minimise need for ironing. Accustom yourself to unironed clothes.
- Dry clothes on the line or on a rack, not in a drier.

More hints next month .....



## Living with wildlife: Encounter with a Brown Pigeon

In temperate rainforest, along the road to Megalong Valley .... south from Blackheath:

The Brown Pigeon, also called Brown Cuckoo-Dove (*Macropygia amboinensis*), is a seed/fruit eater.

This bird landed on a small bush, then as I was about to 'snap'...it took-off and landed on the camera in my hands. Never before so close in the wild ...what a beauty! Beautiful eyes and plumage ... WOW!

My thanks go to Corinne Gaston for recording the experience.

Helen Lambert, January 2014.

## 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 contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy—phone 4758 6009, email [jp34@tpg.com.au](mailto:jp34@tpg.com.au) Check [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) for updates.

**Saturday Walks driver reimbursement:** *In an effort to ensure that car drivers are adequately compensated for the use of their vehicles a driver reimbursement policy applies* (Check [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) Saturday Walks page for details)

Because of the current hot weather conditions some of the bushwalks below may not proceed., or destination changed. Check with the leader during the week before the programmed walk.

Feb 15 **Summer Program Walk** to be decided on the day. Suggestion is **Federal Pass** – Katoomba end. Leader to be decided on the day. Meet at Leura Station Carpark at 8.00am.

Feb 22 Morning walk. **Darks Cave and Fortress Ridge- Leader Eddie-** Meet Leura Station Carpark- at 0800 - 8Km - Gr2/3- Map **Katoomba**

Mar 1 **Transit of Venus and Paradise Pool-Leader Bob-Meet** Woodford Station Carpark- at 0800 – 8Km- Gr2- Map **Katoomba**

Mar 8 **Neates Glen, Grand Canyon, Beauchamp Falls, Horsetrack to Evans Lookout - Leader Warren - Meet** Blackheath Station Carpark -at 0815 - 8Km - Gr3 - Map **Katoomba**

(Check with the leader first, then the BMCS website ([www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)) for updates)

**The Saturday Walkers Crossing of the Blue Mountains of NSW 2013 Day 6 and 7 will be rescheduled this year.**

**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 Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, [keithdor53@hotmail.com](mailto:keithdor53@hotmail.com)

Feb 10 **Mt Hay.** Meet Leura Station car park 8-20 am. Car pool Fare \$7. Maurice 47394042 or 0402402783. Grade 2/3.

Feb 17 **Bellbird Hill Megalong**, opportunity for swim. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8-45am. Car pool Fare \$5. Liz Stark 47544966. Grade 2.

Feb 24 **Mark Foy's Coach Track – Grand Canyon.** Via Old Point Pilcher. Meet Medlow Bath Station 8-30am. Car shuffle. Chris Smith 47842358. Grade 3.

Mar 3 **Bluegum Swamp Winmalee.** Meet Springwood Station Car Park 8-15 am. Car Shuffle. Tony Verwey 9625 3985. Grade 2.

Mar 10 **Dark's Cave.** Meet Leura station Car Park 8-20 am. Car pool Fare \$7. Ros 4733 3880. Grade 3.

**THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS:** Walks 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)

Feb 13 **Pope's Glen Blackheath.** Walk from Govett's Leap. Car pool. Take lunch. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Barrie 4782 9235. Grade 2

Feb 20 **Braeside Walk to Govett's Leap Blackheath.** Waterfalls, creeks and Grose Valley views. Take lunch. Car pool. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2.

Feb 27 **Kanuka Brook Glenbrook.** This is one of the best swimming holes in the Blue Mountains so bring your swimmers. Take lunch. Car pool. Meet Glenbrook Station Car Park 9.30am. Leader Narelle 4751 2467. Grade 2

Mar 6 **Aeroplane Hills Wentworth Falls.** Take lunch. Car pool. Meet Wentworth Falls Stockyard Car Park. 9.30am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2

Mar 13 **Medlow Bath to Blackheath.** Seven kilometres, 370 metres ascent. Views of Megalong Valley and Shipley Plateau. Take lunch. Meet outside Hydro Majestic 9.30am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2.



### Living with Wildlife: A Cuckoo in the nest

A Pied Currawong feeds a "baby" Channel-billed Cuckoo.

Photographed by Sue Nicol in her garden at Blackheath, January 2014.

### 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))  
or write to BMCS, PO Box 29,  
Wentworth Falls 2782 with your  
cheque or money order.