In This Issue

Sustainability Fair
Susannah Parker Bowen
Housing for Garden Fauna
Greetings. We are already well into the Autumn season and are once again heading toward the winter and its associated advantages and problems.

One advantage is of course that with the summer heat behind us for a while, we can relax a little in respect of bush fires. However keeping warm and safe is paramount, particularly in respect of the elderly living alone in our community. Checking on these residents from time to time to ensure that they are able to keep warm will let them know that there are caring neighbours around them and this will give them much needed assurance that they are not forgotten. If as a neighbour you are aware of someone who could be experiencing problems re transport to medical appointments and are unable yourself to help, please remember there is help available via the Community Care Group. Information on this group is listed on the inside cover of this publication.

The Bowen Mountain Association is constantly working to provide helpful information to the community and you will see evidence of these endeavours via the outstanding results of the recent Sustainability Fair, together with the advanced program for this coming season. Articles you feel would be of interest to the community are always welcome so please forward any such information to the bmanews@bowenmountain.org.au

Thank you.

Sue Hoare
Secretary’s Report - March – May 2017

We are indeed fortunate to live on Bowen Mountain and have such a unique and creative environment as the many posts and photos on our Facebook site depict. Many people took advantage of the unprecedented blue skies and delightful summer weather and attended the popular seventh Bowen Mountain Market Day, Sustainability Fair and Car Boot Sale. Twenty stall holders set up their wares throughout the Park with clothing, bric a brac, massage, ceramics, home made cupcakes and biscuits, vegetable seedlings and fresh vegetables. A range of Environmental Sustainability activities including the popular Rangers on the Run - Bugs display and demonstration, vegetable gardening, worm composting, native plants for a sustainable native garden, bird displays and displays from Council were a popular feature of the Market Day and Sustainability Fair. Elizabeth and Stacy Jenkinson engaged children and adults in interesting and challenging craft activities throughout the day. Also, they produced some amazing painted faces of lions, red back spiders and fairy faces. The ever-popular Bowen Mountain sausage sizzle, which also produced mouth-watering bacon and egg rolls, provided much needed sustenance during a fun filled family day. Thank you to Robin Woods, coordinator of the Environmental committee and her team, for organising the interesting, informative and productive sustainability and environmental section of the fair. A huge thank you to everyone who assisted at the Market Day ensuring that it was a successful event. A special thank you to the lady who ran home to bring back one dozen eggs to keep the egg and bacon rolls sustainable.

A working bee to clean up the Park and Park hall heralded the beginning of May. A clear sign with the bush fire classification zones clearly marked has been erected at the gate near the parking area in the Park. It is worth looking at so you are informed as to the classification of Bowen Mountain zones. New dog signage has been erected in the Park.

After the wonderful success of the Winter Musical Interlude last year a fifth Winter Musical Interlude is planned for Sunday June 18th featuring a range of artists on instruments such as harp, guitar, saxophone, drums and voice. Home made Devonshire teas will be served. Bookings are essential. For further details please see the advertisement further on in the newsletter.

Please note the date of the BMA Annual General meeting. If you would like to bring some new ideas to the BMA, we would welcome you nominating for a position on the BMA management committee at the Annual General meeting in August.

Enjoy the summer weather while it lasts!

Alison Kerr
Secretary, Bowen Mountain Association

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**BMA 2017 CALENDAR OF COMMUNITY EVENTS**

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<td>DECEMBER</td>
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President’s Report

Welcome to the BMA’s Winter Newsletter! At the time of my writing this, we have just finished the BMA’s annual Sustainability Fair, Market Day and Car Boot Sale on 29 April in Bowen Mountain Park. We were fortunate to have wonderful, sunny weather for the day, with a very good roll-out of display exhibits, market stall holders, participants and visitors. Thanks to all who helped make the day a success.

Since the last Newsletter, the BMA has also organised a St. Patrick’s Day Dinner at Thai Angelina in Richmond (lots of green curry!), and a Seniors’ Morning Tea in the Park, which was attended by 20 of our senior residents. On both of those occasions, the food was delicious, and the conversation lively. Many thanks to Liz and Alison for organizing these events.

You have probably noticed the recent roadworks on Bowen Mountain Road. Whilst this has caused some minor, sporadic inconvenience, the road now provides for much more effective egress access off the Mountain during an emergency situation. This was initiated by lobbying from the BMA in 2015/16, as part of its charter to help improve the quality of life on Bowen Mountain.

On Sunday, 18 June, from 2 – 5 pm, we will, once again, be sponsoring our Winter Musical Interlude, with a cabaret-style afternoon of music from local musicians and tea, coffee and home-made scones to whet your appetite. Bookings can be made by phoning Alison at 4572 1309. These afternoons have proven to be quite popular, and this year’s offering should be no different. We hope to see you there.

The Bowen Mountain Association will hold its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, 20th August, 2017. The Association has a 42-year history of providing services and support to the Bowen Mountain Community. To continue to do that, we urgently need new, active volunteers to participate on its Management Committee. Please come to the AGM, catch up with your fellow Mountaineers, and take a job on the Committee for 2017/18. Many hands make light work, and we do have a lot of fun with it! We look forward to seeing you there.

Best wishes for a wonderful Bowen Mountain winter!

Bill Kerr
President, Bowen Mountain Association

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You are invited to attend the
BOWEN MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION INC

Annual General Meeting

on

Sunday 20th August 2017 2pm –4pm

Bowen Mountain Park Hall

Speaker to be Advised

Enjoy a home made Afternoon tea, meet your neighbours and become involved in your community.
Smoke Signals

WINTER IS COMING.... HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THE FLUE YET??

Your chimney - and the flue that lines it - adds architectural interest to your home, but its real function is to carry dangerous flue gases from your fireplace, wood stove or furnace safely out of your home. A chimney helps your household air stay breathable. . . just as your windows and your bathroom and kitchen vents do. Unlike those other exhaust points in your home, however, fireplace and wood stove chimneys need some special care.

As you snuggle in front of a cosy fire, you are taking part in a ritual of comfort and enjoyment handed down through the centuries. The last thing you are likely to be thinking about is the condition of your chimney. However, if you don't give some thought to it before you light your winter fires, your enjoyment may be very short-lived.

Why? Dirty chimneys can cause chimney fires, which damage structures, destroy homes and injure or kill people. Chimney fires can burn explosively - noisy, with flames and dense smoke shooting from the top of the chimney. You may hear a low rumbling sound that reminds you of freight train or a low flying airplane. However, those are only the chimney fires you know about.

The Majority of Chimney Fires Go Undetected.

Slow-burning chimney fires don't get enough air or have fuel to be dramatic or visible and they often go undetected until a later chimney inspection, but, the temperatures they reach are very high and can cause as much damage to the chimney structure - and nearby combustible parts of the house.

Creosote & Chimney Fires: What you need to Know. Fireplaces and wood stoves are designed to safely contain wood-fuel fires, while providing heat for your home. The chimneys that serve them have the job of expelling the by-products of combustion.

These include smoke, water vapour, gases, unburned wood particles, hydrocarbon, tar fog and assorted minerals. As these substances exit the fireplace or wood stove, and flow up into the relatively cooler chimney, condensation occurs. The resulting residue that sticks to the inner walls of the chimney is called creosote.

Creosote is black or brown in appearance. It can be crusty and flaky ... tar-like, drippy and sticky ... or shiny and hardened. Often, all forms will occur in one chimney system. Whatever form it takes, creosote is highly combustible. If it builds up in sufficient quantities - and the internal flue temperature is high enough - the result could be a chimney fire.

Certain conditions encourage the build-up of creosote. Restricted air supply, unseasoned wood and, cooler than normal chimney temperatures are all factors that can accelerate the build up of creosote on chimney flue walls. Air supply may be restricted by closing the glass doors, by failing to open the damper wide enough, and the lack of sufficient make-up air to move heated smoke up the chimney rapidly (the longer the smoke's "residence time" in the flue, the more likely is it that creosote will form).

A wood stove's air supply can be limited by closing down the stove damper or air inlets too soon or too much. Burning unseasoned wood - because so much energy is used initially just to drive off the water trapped in the cells of the logs keeps the resulting smoke cooler, than if seasoned wood is used. In the case of wood stoves, overloading the firebox with wood in an attempt to get a longer burn time also contributes to creosote build-up.

Proper Maintenance. Clean chimneys don't catch fire. Your chimney should be inspected and cleaned annually, and repaired as necessary. Your sweep may have other maintenance recommendations depending on how you use your fireplace or stove.

Terry Hoare
Bush Fire Liaison Officer, BMA Inc.

Thanks to Burra Brigade & Burra Community Association

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Looking Back, the 1988 Plan

A plan of the Park drawn up by Ray Trappell and Howard Mitchell and prepared by the BMPMC (1988) shows intended improvements and features/structures of interest including trees (natives: eg kurrajongs, red cedars, turpentines; exotics eg :- oak tree, oaks, jacarandas) that still remain.

The Old Kiosk was where refreshments were sold to patrons using the old swimming pool. The swimming pool became derelict and was filled in with sand about 1985 while the Old Kiosk has been restored; the shingle roof covered with iron sheets, a concrete floor laid (1997) and more recently the leaning structure was made upright and stabilised with a metal frame.

There is a well (or is it just a water tank?) not far from the Old Kiosk. A pipe from the tank heads down the hill. The pipe has rusted, the exposed end has lifted and become a hazard. It has been cut so that it is no longer exposed.

Also there was a planned stage for “theatrical or musical performances eg carols, puppets music in the park” near the bottom of a natural amphitheatre at the southern end of the park. There is a pergola/viewing platform shown on the plan located near the old swimming pool and would have had a view over the lowlands looking towards Sydney.

Please send any corrections or further information on the history of the park to bowenmountainpark@gmail.com.

Autumn in the Park

See picture of oak tree and fallen leaves.

Booking the Park Hall

To request a booking go to http://www.bowenmountain.org.au/bookings/booking-community-room/, check out the conditions, facilities and calendar and submit a booking request or phone me.

Recent Functions

Apart from the usual children’s parties we have had weaving workshops; http://www.wastenotfibredesigns.com/ and Sasha’s children’s Art Education Program. Check it out on Bowen Mt Community Facebook.

See you in the park!

Colin Chesterman

Chairman for the Park Committee
A Celebration of Barry Hanly's Life
17/05/1930 – 28/05/2017
Saturday June 24th 11.30am-3pm
Bowen Mountain Park

We invite all of Barry's friends to come join our family in the celebration of Barry's life. He had lived a long and happy life with his wife Marian, spending the last 35 years on Bowen Mountain surrounded by family and friends. Everyone is welcome to attend. A light lunch will be provided.

For further information please contact his daughter (Lisa) on 02 42323352

A Winter Musical Interlude
on
Sunday 18th June 2017, 2pm - 5pm
Bowen Mountain Park Hall

Admission: $ 5.00 includes a home made Devonshire tea
Reservations essential on:

Alison: 4572 1309

A range of Musical genres featuring artists on piano, harp, guitars, drums, saxophone, voice and choir.
Bowen Mountain Market Day Sustainability Fair and Car Boot Sale

On Saturday the 29th of April, the Bowen Mountain Association ran the annual “Bowen Mountain Market Day Sustainability Fair and Car Boot Sale”. The weather proved to be glorious and many local and nearby residents turned out to sell their wares or search for a bargain.

The day was also supported by various sustainability groups who ran information stalls, workshops and demonstrations.

There were games and activities for the kids, face-painting, arts and craft and a delicious barbecue.

We were all treated to an electric ‘Science Workshop’ courtesy of long term resident and Science Guru, John Leahy. Sustainability groups such as Hawkesbury Environment Network, Hawkesbury River County Council and Henry Doubleday Research Association presented interesting information sessions and enthusiasm. This was fuelled by the wonderful coffee supplied by Chris and Marcel from ‘The Bean’ mobile coffee van.

Above all, there were many bargains to be found, with many residents trading wares such as toys, fresh vegetables, cupcakes, cookies, home-made arts and craft, second hand books and more.

All in all it was a wonderful day, full of community spirit, warm sunshine and laughter.

The ever beautiful Liz Rowan modelling how to browse a stall in style.

The equally beautiful Maisie selling her tea-light candles and second hand toys.

Chris and Maricel from ‘The Bean’ mobile coffee van provided glorious hot coffee.
Awesome cupcakes!

There was an abundance of quality, pre-loved and hand-made wares.

John Leahy demonstrating a simple electrical circuit to Maisie and Elisha.

Bree and Lana from the Hawkesbury River County Council

Our peak environmental organisation Hawkesbury Environmental Network made its presence felt.
The NSW Heritage Council refers to Susannah Parker Bowen as an “English lady, daughter of Vice Admiral Sir William Parker and the widow of a naval captain, William Henry Hawkwell Bowen RN, who died in 1813.

Susannah Bowen arrived at Port Jackson in NSW on the Henry Wellesley in 1828, one year after her son Lt. George Meares Countess Bowen, who after graduating from Sandhurst, had served in India, Galway and the Channel Islands and with the 39th Regiment in County Cork, under Captain Charles Sturt. As a lieutenant he sailed with his detachment for Sydney in October 1826, on the ship “Midas”, in charge of 300 prisoners, arriving in Sydney in February 1827. On retirement from his Regiment in that same year, GMC Bowen settled in the colony as a surveyor and land commissioner, determining the boundaries of counties and parishes. He obtained and settled a substantial land grant in Berambing at the base of Mount Tomah, in 1829.

His mother Susannah had obviously followed her son to the newly found colony of NSW and lived first in Castlereagh Street and then Macquarie Place in Sydney, before taking up residence in Windsor, NSW. She often spent time with her son at Bulgamatta, Berambing.

In 1830, Susannah Bowen wrote a letter dated the 22nd February, to Governor Darling, requesting a grant of land on Mount Tomah. She apparently attached a sketch map showing her proposed selection as a rectangular area, one mile by two, on top of the mountain. In her next letter of request she stated that she had been informed, this was impractical, due to the roughness of the terrain and that the surveyors could not mark a straight line anywhere for more than a few chains.

Susannah suggested that her land should extend from the two gullies at the Eastern Pass, down their courses to the respective main streams, then along the two main streams to the tributaries that came close together at the Western Pass. Her land would therefore be bounded by a major watercourse on each side. She was duly informed that this was too much land, so she drew a pencil line on her map indicating the line of cliffs on the west side of Mt. Tomah, as the western boundary, which at this point in time was where the track up the mountain ended.

Assistant Surveyor G.W. Stapleton, had been given the task of mapping the Grose River area and its northern tributaries. While based on Mount Tomah in January 1831, he surveyed the boundaries of Susannah’s grant. The weather had been particularly severe and had destroyed Stapleton’s tent. He borrowed another one from GMC Bowen, but this too, was destroyed. When Stapleton later asked Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell for a replacement for Mr Bowen, he was refused. Mitchell replied that Stapleton had not been authorised to borrow a tent and that the matter was between him and Bowen. (Anyone who knows Tomah and environs, would know the winds can be ferocious, blowing unrelentingly for days, on and around the mountain with great force).

Eventually, Susannah’s land was bounded on the suggested lines to the east and along Mill Creek to the Western Pass, then due east to the watercourse. This left a remaining large area of land on the south side of the mountain that her son George was later to acquire in 1842 at 12/- per acre. Susannah Bowen was authorised to take possession of her land grant, in May 1830 by Governor Darling. The formal grant of 1,280 acres, (510 hectares), was dated 25 February, 1836 and included the area now owned by the Mt Tomah Blue Mountains Botanic Garden.

GMC Bowen in his autobiography relates the character of the vegetation on Mt. Tomah as superb, “there is nothing else like it in the colony to date, except in the district of the Illawarra where the soil is rich and fertile......the brown green Eucalyptus are giants...... the undergrowth chiefly in the possession of trees of the laurel kind, many of them covered with blossom in the spring. The graceful and beautiful tree fern abound in there thousands, some 14 feet high (13 metres)......varieties and specimens of fern, moss and lichen are abundant.......some of the trees are almost strangled by enormous creepers, climbing up to the sunshine and mingling in the branches. Here and there the foliage is so dense overhead, as to make the place very dark. There seemed to me something awful in the silence.”

Susannah Bowen (nee Parker), returned to England in 1836, leaving her son George with power of attorney for her Tomah property. George had sold his own property Bulgamatta, at Berambing earlier that year in the January. In 1838 he auctioned his mother’s Mt. Tomah land, which then passed into the hands of a friend, a serving officer, George Bartley, paymaster of the 50th Regiment based in Windsor, for £50. Thought to have been, a long-time friend of the Bowen family, Bartley appears to have held the property in trust for GMC Bowen, who now resided in Berrima as the Police Magistrate (1830 – 1843), until purchasing and developing his Bowen Mount property on his return from England in 1848. Susannah Bowen had passed away at Teignmouth in Devon, England, or 23rd April 1840, aged 64.
Then in 1854 it was GMC Bowen, who re-advertised the Mt. Tomah land for sale. Once again it failed to sell and passed to GMC Bowen’s son George Bartley Bowen, who in the 1860’s built Mount Tomah Cottage, a wooden cottage with a stone chimney, within the area, now occupied by the Botanic Garden. Although George Bartley Bowen lived primarily at Bowen Mount, he continued to exploit the family’s significant holding on Mount Tomah, running cattle there and planting orchards. In 1893, he sold his beef cattle and his Clydesdale horses and built up a dairy herd on Mount Tomah, with a cream separator and a butter factory, under the management of Julius Kitson. This appears to have been unsuccessful and the dairying was withdrawn to Bowen Mount in 1895.

Soon afterwards, in June 1895 George Bartley Bowen sold the Mount Tomah farm (all three blocks for £7,000), to Major Phillip Charley who had made his million as one of the original syndicate who found and mined silver at Broken Hill and was now living at Archibald Bell’s former estate at North Richmond, where he built Belmont, now St John of God Hospice. Philip Charley bred horses, including mounts for the army, exercising his animals on the rugged slopes of Mount Tomah to enhance their stamina. He also established a saw-mill on the Mount, managed by Frederick Peck.

The bush-fire of Christmas 1909 is thought to have burnt all the dwellings on Mount Tomah, only the stone chimney of the original Mount Tomah Cottage standing in 1918. A note of interest: After WW1, Philip Charley began to subdivide the original Bowen property on Mount Tomah and in 1927 sold what became known as “The Jungle” to a syndicate of public men. This group maintained the integrity of “The Jungle” and had it declared a Public Reserve in 1929, but in 1937 it reverted to the ownership of Philip Charley’s son Wolford, who resided in the tearoom that had opened in 1927.

In 1935 Philip Charley sold the central area of “The Jungle” property (70 acres), to Mrs Effie Brunet for £450, where along with her French-born husband they established a cool-climate nursery, producing seedlings, plants and cut flowers for the Sydney Markets. In the early 1970’s through negotiations with the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and the State Minister for Agriculture, Mrs Brunet wished to bequeath 28 acres of Susannah Bowen’s original grant to the Crown for $1.00, and signed the land over on the 7th August 1970. On the 14th July 1972 the land was reserved for the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. Now known as The Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah.

Reference Texts
Meredith Hungerford 1995 Bilpin, The Apple Country
Mount Tomah Society 1987 The Mount Tomah Book
NSW Heritage Council 2010 Mount Tomah and Environs
C.H. Curry 1968 Mount Wilson NSW
John Barrett NLA George Meares Countess Bowen
D.G. Bowd 1994 Macquarie Country A History of the Hawkesbury
Vivienne Webb 1980 Kurrajong An Early History
The guest speaker at our Australia Day breakfast was John Flavin, a long time member of the Astronomical Society of NSW, who gave a most informative and entertaining account of the background of the Crago Observatory at Bowen Mountain. John, born in Ireland, resident for some years in England, and in Australia since 1959, has an infectious enthusiasm for astronomy, and he conveyed this very effectively in his talk. What follows is an edited version of that talk, taken from John’s notes.

The Observatory at Bowen Mountain is owned and operated by the Astronomical Society of NSW. Construction began in late 1978 after Council and the Lands Department approvals had been obtained. It was completed in 1993. The observatory houses a 16-inch Dobsonian (Newtonian), reflector telescope, one of the two main types of reflecting telescopes.

The Society did not begin in Bowen Mountain. Its first home was in the Sydney suburb of Belfield, where its founder, Gordon Patston, had a large battle-axe block, and it remained there until 1970. At that time, it was known as Sydney Amateur Astronomers, and the work of its volunteers got a boost in 1957, the International Geophysical Year (IGY). The group signed up to an IGY project called “Moonwatch” which involved the accurate timing of artificial satellites (“moons”) launched during the IGY. A grant from the IGY covered the costs of erecting suitable equipment, and the Society had to train observers to carry out the work. As it happened, they did not have enough observers in the membership, so students and staff of the local Canterbury Boys High School were trained to take part.

The Society got local publicity, a badge for participation from the IGY, and a letter containing best wishes from the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow. This for a project staffed by volunteers in a suburban backyard!

The Society ran Public Viewing Nights which drew hundreds of people at a time with great interest in satellites, and they got further publicity from this. They built a clubhouse, in late 1959, which was opened by Dr. Bart Bok, the Director of the Mount Stromlo observatory in Canberra. By the 1960’s public interest had declined, and despite the convenience of the Belfield site, it was not great from a dark sky point of view, and the Society, renamed the Astronomical Society of NSW, began to look for a field site. This became essential when Gordon Patston sold the Belfield property in 1970.

But why Bowen Mountain, and why is it known as the Crago Observatory?

Towards the end of the time in Belfield, the Society was joined by the husband and wife team of Jack and Marion Crago. The Crago family, of Cornish background, had come to Australia in the 1850s, and became established in the flour milling industry in NSW, with one of its mills, in Newtown, still bearing the family name. Jack Crago had retired before joining the Society, and had bought an old orchard at Grose Vale as a hobby farm. Marion’s family had business links with the steel industry in Wollongong. The Society took to using the Grose Vale property as its observing site, and holding public open nights, but on a smaller scale than at Belfield.

Marion Crago, who was an active and committed member, found a spot called The Devils Hole on Bowen Mountain, which she judged would be a good site for a Society observatory. She organised an on-site meeting with Colo Shire Council, but the campaign to secure the site took some years. Jack Crago died in 1980, and Marion became less active in the Society. She died in 1983, while on a trekking holiday in Nepal. When her affairs were finalised after a few years, the Society was named as a major beneficiary in her will. Jack and Marion Crago came to the Society when its future looked bleak and changed its fortunes.

The observatory, completed in 1993 on Bowen Mountain, is fittingly named in their memory, Crago.
On a holiday in Tasmania this April I visited the National Automobile Museum of Tasmania in Launceston. This is a Museum with unique, ever-changing exhibits of vintage automobiles & motorcycles and is well worth a visit.

As I entered the main hall, the first thing I saw was an Auburn Roadster from 1935. My father got a similar Auburn sedan under very unusual circumstances in 1937 in Iran. The car originally belonged to the Swedish ambassador to Iran, who had travelled to pick up the Swedish Crown Prince who had come from Baku on the Caspian sea, which is 600 metres below sea level. Most of Iran is a plateau 2000 metres above sea level. The Auburn was one of the American luxury cars of the time. It had a hydraulically operated overdrive in the differential, which was very useful on steep roads, because cars in those days only had a three speed gear box. The overdrive gears in the Swedish ambassadors car was faulty. Every time the chauffeur changed overdrive gears on the steep rise to the plateau it would make a big clunk under the back seat. The Crown Prince told the ambassador to get rid of the car. The ambassador approached my father, who was then setting up a technical college in Shiraz. Dad said he would take it off his hands. The school taught motor mechanics, so they put the car on the hoist and found that one hydraulic hose had come off the overdrive gear box - easy to fix. I have lots of pictures of that car in Iran and I can dimly remember it as a 5 year old.

The motor bike is a Norton Dominator, which was my bike when I was 20 (without the racing air flow covers of course). The black car is a Fiat 500 – my first car, for which I paid £125 when I was 22. Both the bike and the car had a 500 cc engine, which made the bike really powerful and the car pretty gutless.

It was quite an experience meeting three “friends” from my youth in one visit.

The trip from Launceston to Falmouth, where we had a lovely weekender, was also interesting. The forests around Derby in Northern Tasmania reminded me of the Black Forest, where I lived for many years - with fir trees mixed with other trees down to the valley.
One of the joys of having a garden is sharing it with others. Friends, family and neighbours join us for barbecues or simply a relaxing chat in the shade, but not all visitors are invited, many skulk around trying to avoid notice and interference. As they go about their business on our property, they forage where they will and sometimes struggle to build a home. If conditions aren’t just right, this homesteading can result in some unpopular building works. I’m not talking about squatters of the Homo Sapiens variety, I’m talking about local fauna. Insects, marsupials, birds and reptiles abound in the Hawkesbury and, for most of us, they are the icing on the cake of a well-loved garden.

There are many ways to make the locals feel welcome and encourage them to set up house in your garden. Number one on that list is providing inviting habitat. Food, shelter from predators and a place to reproduce are things a gardener can introduce into the landscape. Whether it’s planting a native flowering shrub, creating a water feature that doubles as a pond, or building a nest box, there are plenty of ways you can build an ecosystem that will bring the fauna storming into your garden. Plants and water are things most of us regularly bring into our garden but nest boxes take that extra bit of effort.

The internet abounds with instructions on how to build nest boxes to suit just about any garden visitor. Spend a few minutes with your favourite search engine looking for “nest boxes” and you’ll get descriptions of what type of structure is perfect for which inhabitant. The hardest part is deciding what you want to target – is it the bird you see regularly or the endangered marsupial you aren’t even sure passes through your property? My suggestion is to pick one and then when that’s done, move onto the next. I’ve yet to find a good reason not to keep providing homes for my visitors!

It’s foolhardy to try to compete with the internet in making suggestions but there are a couple of structures that I think every garden should possess because they not only help the fauna, they help the humans residents as well. The first is an Insect Hotel. This collection of potential nests for insects provides a number of places for a variety of insects to lay their eggs. Let’s not forget that insects do more than keep us awake at night and drive us crazy at barbecues, they’re hugely important to gardens and the surrounding environment. For one thing, they’re part of the food chain as many birds and reptiles feed on insects. But attracting birds isn’t their only gift to your garden, somewhere between buzzing past your ear and being consumed by a fantail, insects find the time to pollinate a large variety of plants.

Pollinators are critical in the reproductive cycle of many plants from garden flowers to vegetables and trees; from your backyard to the farm down the road and the bush along the river. Without pollinators the landscape would be transformed into someplace barren and our diet into something extremely limited.

If you provide an Insect Hotel, you invite insects to move in, hang out, meet up and procreate – all while pollinating their little hearts out.

Insect Hotels are available to buy but they are pretty easy to put together yourself. The simplest is a cluster of reeds or hollow sticks tied together and hung in a tree where insects can lay their eggs. For about the same effort you can drill holes of varying diameters in the end of a log – the different sized holes provide homes for different sized pollinators. Mud and clay home made bricks with holes poked in the side also attract their own inhabitants.

You can start out small with bits and pieces scattered around your garden or you can put it all together into something more structured, even with a roof to make sure your new neighbours don’t drown. Whatever hotel you setup, it will be greatly appreciated by the local insects and the surrounding plants.

My second suggestion is a possum box. There aren’t many Sydney-siders who haven’t experienced a possum in the roof and very few of those are happy about it. If you want to avoid a family moving into your roof cavity, your best strategy is to give them a home that’s more desirable than yours. That means installing a possum box nearby.

Many possums are territorial so an occupied possum box keeps other possums out of the area, ensuring your roof is possum-free for years to come. I confess to using this technique and having almost total success. For some reason, possums still spend a few weeks each year in my roof, but not long enough to damage the ceiling nor drive me to despair.

There are plenty of plans on the internet which give you step-by-step instructions on making boxes for your particular possum (brushtailed, ringtail, sugar glider) but a basic box has dimensions of 470x270x300 mm (HxWxD) with an entrance hole 120mm in diameter and a sloping roof overhanging the entrance. Either make your box from hardwood that won’t rot or paint the outside (not the inside). Nail or staple mesh on the inside under the hole so juveniles can get out on their own. It’s a good idea to screw a branch outside, under the entrance, for
your possum to use as a ladder. Finally, you’ll need something sturdy to attach your box to a tree – a chain surrounded by garden hose works well. Remember, a family of possums can weigh more than 10 kg.

I’ve always put leaves or other mulch inside as bedding and pieces of fruit in and near the box to lure the first inhabitants, but that’s not strictly necessary.

Neither of the fauna nest boxes I’ve described are particularly difficult to construct but the benefits are evident. A purpose-built home in your garden will provide a safe and secure spot for the local fauna to set-up house and enrich the local environment. Plus it will give you one more thing to love about your garden.
Community Care

Community Care assists residents of our community in need of assistance with transport to medical appointments, local social events, or general information regarding Hawkesbury Community Services.

Community Care organises social morning teas and luncheons for residents in the Bowen Mountain Hall. Transport is available if needed. Please check the newsletter and web-site for social events.

Phone: Liz Rowan 4572 2416 or Terry Hoare 4572 1140

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**Invitation**
Community Care Christmas in July Lunch

**Monday**
31st July 2017
Bowen Mountain Hall
RSVP Liz 4572 2416

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**Not So Long Ago? Part 2 The Laundry**

Continuing with excerpts from the Elementary Text Book of Cookery and Home Management (1954) we learn about the Laundry and the utensils required.

**Construction and Arrangement of the Laundry**

1. The laundry room should be built under the same roof as the house, without steps leading to the drying ground.
2. The walls should be ventilated and the windows placed so that the person washing will not stand in a draught.
3. The floor should be of concrete.
4. The copper, draining-board and tubs should be in line on one side.
5. One tap should be over the copper, and one over the tub.
6. Cupboards should be built in for holding the materials used in laundry work.
7. A standing board should be placed in front of the tubs.

**Utensils needed**

Beeswax pad, iron stands, bucket, clothes basket, clothes horse, copper, copper or pot stick, dipper, dusters, enamel basins, irons, ironing blankets, iron-holders, ironing sheets, ironing table, knife, laundry brush, clotheslines, peg bag and pegs, saucepan, skirt-board, soiled linen basket, tubs, washing board, wooden spoon, wringer.

**Irons**

*Flat and Mrs. Potts.*
1. Remove all stains with Monkey Soap, thoroughly dry and polish; 2. Keep in a dry place; 3. Stand on side or end, not face downwards; 4. Rust may be removed with powdered bath-brick and olive oil; 5. For storage, rub over with Vaseline and wrap to prevent rusting.

**How to use**
One or more irons are necessary. After heating and before use, rub on beeswax pad; then wipe well.

Also were ten points of how to use an electric iron, from turning it off if it is too hot, to it being dangerous to wear damp or wet shoes whilst using the iron, and to avoid standing on a concrete floor, a rubber mat should be provided.

**Mangle**
(A free standing wringer for smoothing or pressing out water of linen or cotton by means of rollers)

*Before use.* Uncover, dust and tighten pressure.

*After use.* Relieve the pressure by unscrewing the rollers; wipe them with a damp cloth; never scrub.

Oil screws once a week with machine oil, wipe well with a cloth and cover mangle to protect it from dust.

When necessary clean the cogs with kerosene; remove kerosene with a soft cloth before oiling.

**Tubs**

*Concrete or Zinc.* After washing remove stains with Monkey Soap; rinse and thoroughly dry.

*Wooden.* After use empty, wash inside and out, scrub with sandsoap and cold water, rinse. Half-fill tubs with cold water to prevent warping and cracking.

**Clothes Lines**

*Rope.* Wipe with a damp cloth before use and only put up when required. If exposed to all weathers, they perish. When not is use, keep in cupboard away from dust.

*Wire.* Always wipe with a damp cloth before hanging the clothes.

**Wooden pegs**

When new, bring to the boil in cold water, rinse and dry in the shade. After use, wash if soiled, dry and keep in a peg box or bag.

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Submitted by Elaine Leahy
Raining Again

Raining again, And raining again.
Freckles of rain on the window pane.
It pricks into puddles like millions of pins.
For a minute it stops But then it begins

And John flats his nose on the Window pane
Watching and watching and
Watching the rain.

Dorothy Aldis
“All Together”
Join the BMA facebook Page and connect with other people from Bowen Mountain.

To go to the BMA facebook Page
Go to www.facebook.com
Create your facebook account (this is free)
Search for ‘Bowen Mountain’
(the logo is the Bunya Tree)

Send a ‘Friend’ request to get accepted.
You will find lots of up to the minute information from the Mountain.

For Sale:
Concerning the King Size single bed and trundle under bed. Would the lady who telephoned me on 4572 1140 re purchase of this item please call me again, as the telephone number you left on my answering machine was one digit short. Thank you

Tai Chi Shibashi
is held at CWA Richmond
Mondays at 2:00 pm
contact U3a office on 4578 2333

CRAGO OBSERVATORY
The Observatory is operated by the Astronomical Society of NSW and is located at the northern end of Lt Bowen Road, about 200 metres past the gate on the fire trail.

Residents are welcome to attend our stargazing evenings on the listed Saturdays in 2017 - subject to weather.

Saturday 17 June
Saturday 15 July
Saturday 12 August
Saturday 16 September
Saturday 14 October

Please remember to cover your torches with red cellophane as you approach the observatory. White light causes the pupil of the eye to contract and it takes 20-30 minutes to regain dark adaptation.

For further information, and to confirm Friday openings, contact Paul Hatchman 0413 047 782 or VP_Crago@asnsw.com

Additional August Pansy Line Tour:
We are pleased to announce that after the very strong support for our June Pansy Line Tour, which is fully booked, we have decided to run another tour on Saturday 12th August, 2017
Bookings are now open on this website: kurrajonghistory.org.au/pansytour.html

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
for the 2018 Bowen Mountain Arts Festival

Co-ordinator Stacy Jenkinson is getting together a list of potential exhibitors

can you help?

Artists, sculptors, jewellery makers, wood carvers, patchworkers, musicians or as a volunteer on the organising committee.

Bowen Mountain has a long history of hosting a very talented array of children and adult artists. The last Festival was held in 2015 and now requires your support in getting it running again. If you are interested in helping in anyway, Stacy would love to hear from you.

Contact her at stacy@prismatic.com.au or drop a note at 77 Bowen Mountain Road
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