

SYDNEY BUSHWALKER July 1969.

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A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the
Sydney Bushwalkers, Northcote Building, Reiby
Place, Circular Quay, Sydney.

Postal address: Box 4476 G.P.O. Sydney.

EDITOR: Bill Gillam, 19 Old Bush Rd. Engadine 2233

BUSINESS MANAGER: Bill Burke, Coral Tree Drive,
Carlingford 2118.

TYPIST: Christa Younger, 71 Yarran Rd. Oatley 2223.

THE JUNE GENERAL MEETING.

Jim Brown.

This took a little more time than the short-lived May Meeting - but only a little longer.

Minutes were understandably quite brief and in "matters arising" we heard Heather White had reported on the Kangaroo Valley land purchase: negotiations with the Society of Friends were proceeding, but it appeared that prices had been agreed upon with \$3860 as the S.B.W. share.

The President then called hopefully for nominations for several vacant offices, and although a Lady Committee member was not to be had, Jack Perry undertook magazine sales and circulation activities, and Marion Lloyd volunteered as one delegate to the Nature Conservation Council. There was a suggestion of Helen Grey as the added S & R Contact being sought.

Movement of personnel occupied some of the Correspondence with Dawn & Brian Anderson transferring to non-active and Pat and Ian Wood going active. Mention was made of a Nature Conservation exhibition to be held in July/August and moves were initiated to obtain some SBS custodians (this project later came to naught).

The Treasurer reported a month of favourable results with current funds rising by about \$30 to a closing figure of \$538: there are many outstanding subscriptions.

Although three programmed walks folded up for lack of starters, there was reasonable walking activity in May, beginning with a party of 9 on Bill Gillam's trip to Splendour Rock and Cox's River, and 29 on Jim Calloway's day walk in National Park. On the second week-end Bob Younger, with a party of 10, carried out a mid-day Saturday start to Blue Gum and Grand Canyon, and 13 folk went down Middle Harbour Creek on a day walk with Gladys Roberts - some of the party had a dry lunch as the creek smelt "high". The Instructional Walk from Mt. Caley to the Grose and back via Coal Mine Creek was led by Don Finch, the party of 21 including 17 prospective members. On the same week-end Marion Lloyd had 8 people on an energetic trip over the Queahgong-Guonogang massif, and back via Kanangaroo and Yellow Dog.

Coming to the fourth weekend of the month, Barry Pacey was leader of 16 who made the circuit Kanangra-Cloudmaker-Kowmung River and back via Gingra Range, and on the Sunday 21 were out on Jack Gentle's Otford-Burning Palms-Helensburgh day jaunt. On the final week-end Joan Rigby and party of six were out on Wollemi Creek and the Colo River, and David Ingram's day test walk topped the attendance score with 32 (Waterfall-Woronora Trig-Heathcote).

Federation Report was temporarily deferred to see if a delegate with a detailed report would turn up, but finally Alan Round gave a brief verbal report, mentioning S & R had received two alerts - one from a party who sought to canoe down the Capertee/Colo Rivers on Anzac week-end and finally got out a week later. It is also thought that the usual annual S & R demonstration may be allowed to lapse this year, but the New Zealand Alpine Club has offered to give a demonstration of rescue operations in snow country. Federation had issued a warning on leaving empty plastic bags around camping places after ten cows on a farm property died from eating bags left by an Army group on exercises.

The President announced that some Committee members wondered if Club rules should be framed to cover the possible suspension of members, in view of the deletion of an old resolution relating to such action. Your reporter suggested that the expunged rule merely covered the question of payment of subscription by a suspended member, and the Constitution already gave Committee scope for any punitive action it may deem desirable, save that the extreme penalty of expulsion carried a right of appeal.

With a reference to celebration of our senior citizen (Taro's) 90th birthday late in June, the meeting came to its close at 9.00 p.m.

E. (Ted) Caines Phillips of the River Canoe Club passed away last month after a brief illness. Members of long standing, particularly those who served on Committee, will recall the sketch maps of various districts prepared by him and forwarded for our information. He was the author of several books on walks in the Sydney area and South Coast (now unfortunately out of print). His extensive knowledge of the country within 100 miles of Sydney was always available to the members of the Club who sought it.

BE A DEVIL AND LEAD A WALK!

MITTAGONG TO PICTON BIKE TRIP.

Marion Lloyd.

At Mittagong we scrambled out of the first carriage down a ladder then a short jump to the ground, stumbled along the track and up onto the platform. We collected our bikes from a bewildered station assistant then stoked up at the cafe before proceeding to ride the 18 miles to Malcolm's Farm. The last bit was very hilly, muddy and bumpy, certainly not ideal conditions at 1.30 in the morning. However, Fitz's horn prevented stragglers from drifting off. We reached Malcolm's Farm about 2 a.m.

Next morning we proceeded down Burnt Flat Creek, which was badly eroded from recent rains making it treacherous in parts and slow going, often lifting our bikes across the creeks and numerous obstacles. Lyn Drummond had a spectacular bust up on her bike but escaped with multiple bruising.

Before leaving the creek it was quite obvious that not all were going to make it to Katoomba. Five decided to take the track back to Picton. From here the track became much better but still very hilly and bumpy. However, we turned off fire trail too early to follow a sheep path down a gradual then very steep hill to the Wollondilly. To our horror and dismay the river was in full flood.

Bushwalkers can be very pig-headed at times and we were quite determined to reach Katoomba at all costs. However, it became quite clear that all the combined know-how could not produce a floating object. Here I have noted some examples -

1. A long log was propelled across by 3 intrepid swimmers. Half way across the current was too strong, log abandoned, swimmers returned.
2. Two long logs with two bikes on top tied together with boot lace, but forgot to check whether logs floated. Ten feet out these went to the bottom.
3. Optimistically, two bikes were thrown on some logs that had previously floated one. 15 feet out our ferry submerged rapidly with great displacement of water.
4. A log was fitted cross bar and handle bars of H.M.B. Wade. Wade rode through the water like a torpedo only to disappear gracefully out of view. Apologies to the tadpoles were given for this intrusion.

One hour later discussions and lunch over, we grudgingly surrendered to the Wollondilly. So it was back to Picton for us too. First we had to push our bikes up a fantastically steep rocky hill. We got over the top and Graham optimistically

suggested taking the right fire trail (now about 2.45 p.m.) to Yerranderie, reckoning we could get there by 8 p.m. After much umming and ahring boss Russo decided it was too late and that we should catch the others up. So the race was on again and as usual we spent most of our time trudging up the hills and jackhammering down them. Every bone felt dislocated and my muscles like quivering blubber. Not long afterwards we caught up with the others so it was a good excuse for afternoon tea.

By and by we found we were riding along the shores of a very big pond, the sunset on it was beautiful giving it a tinge of pink - may be that is why it is marked in pink on the map.

We picked our camp site well out of sight of the highway. Here we saw lots of ducks and swans and a lot of kangaroos (about 6) hopping around.

Next day we found the track very busy with bulldozers and workmen as quite a few sections of the road had collapsed due to recent rains with splits up to 12 feet deep.

For a few hours we followed the shores of this pond. All was beautiful and quiet except the occasional hum of machinery and it was a glorious day. Eventually this track joined the tarred road down to the Nattai. We had a good spin down a steep long hill to the Nattai but to our dismay the bridge had been washed away so we had to make a detour of about a mile up river before we found a place to cross. Here we had lunch, then worked away down the river. Before the bridge we had to make another detour up and over very steep scrub as we didn't particularly want the bridge fixers to know we were around. Back on the tarred road again we commended the very gradual climb of several miles from the Nattai. The country was beautiful with water all along the road, but it was more than once we were practically skittled by that cursed species called Sunday Afternoon Tourists.

About 3.30 p.m. a man in a landrover going towards us pulled Dot and myself up. The dreaded ranger. He bawled at us "Ya going up...didn't ya see that notice". We looked back and about twenty feet down the road was a notice with half the paint weathered away and slightly hidden by bush "NO CAMPING, NO FIRES, CAMPERS PROHIBITED, FINE \$100." "Oh dear, terribly sorry we didn't see it on the way down" says I. After he roared off I said to Dot "Phew, twenty feet this side of the law. That was close. Just as well he didn't see us near his pond."

Apparently the ranger got the same answer every time he pulled up a group. By the time he got to Lynn, who was last in line, he had given up asking or he had lost his voice.

After this calamity and when we were all together again, we had a little bit of something whilst giving our various versions. Eventually we got on to the tarred road to Picton. Not far out of Picton is this fantastically steep long tight winding hill. The only time I applied the brake was when a stupid idiot came around the corner on the wrong side. Fuming that I had to slow down, I went around the next corner so fast I nearly went over the safety fence. Later we all agreed it was the best downhill spin of the trip.

We reached Picton about 5 p.m., quenched our thirst at the pub while we ate fish and chips. However, one chap was going to ride back to Sydney. He left his pack on the pub verandah. Some of us thought he had gone up to the cafe with some of the others. About an hour later he came to the cafe wanting to know if any of us had his pack because it wasn't at the pub. He had ridden about ten miles before he realised he wasn't carrying his pack. This meant he had no money and had lost a new pack and other new equipment. We had to pass his sock around to get enough for his fare home.

The train we were to catch was full. The guard wouldn't have us in his van - 'gainst regulations - and the old ladies and civies wouldn't let us contaminate them, so we had to stand, sit or lie.

SKI TIPS:

Angulation, the dropping of your downhill shoulder, is the way to give edging control and stability to your skis. In the traverse the lateral plane of the hips is parallel more or less to the slope. If your lower shoulder is brought back at the same time so that the line through your shoulder is parallel to the line joining your ski tips you are in a perfect, stable safe position.

Always warm up well before the day's skiing. Knee bends, body bends with your chin touching your knees, calisthenics in general all help. So will a lot of bushwalking.

When skiing from a lift check your bindings before running down.

INDULGE YOURSELF AND LEAD TWO WALKS!

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF BROKEN ROCK RANGE.

Dorothy Noble.

It was obvious from the outset that this was going to be a Pat Harrison Special.

Thursday night (it was Anzac weekend) saw the glow of eight torch beams bobbing their way down the track at Kanangra. A few lights terminated at a snug little cave above the track while the remainder continued on to that chilly cavern further down.

Next morning the leader, true to style, was up and away, bounding energetically across the Tops while the rest of the party was still engaged in the usual semi-conscious potterings around before breakfast. With the leader out of the way the party heaved a sigh of relief and settled down to a leisurely meal.

Fortunately we caught the leader up in time for us to admire the view together before turning away from the valley to head towards the Gingra Range. Ross Hughes strode ahead, intent on locating his ridge (it actually is named after a relative of his), hotly pursued by Alan Round who was intent on proving some highly original theory about his muscles. The rest of us proceeded in a more dignified manner and turned down Hughes Ridge to arrive at the Kowmung River by late morning.

To our surprise the other two were not there. We waited, thinking that they may have landed a little up or downstream. While we waited, two cattlemen on horses arrived, surrounded by a surging mass of yelping dogs, and leading a couple of cows. The few words that passed between the men and ourselves convinced Pat that they were highly suspicious characters, especially when one of them refused to take Pat's boots across the river with them. Consequently, with our imaginations fired, we entertained ourselves by inventing elaborate stories to explain their actions. But those were hardly more exaggerated than the ones we began suggesting to explain the continuing absence of Ross and Alan.

Pat had planned on at least reaching Butcher Creek or even green Wattle Creek by nightfall so that we could do Broken Rock Range the next day. We doubted however, whether Ross or Alan had an appropriate map with them, so we considered going down the Kowmung as far as Gingra Creek and making a fixed camp, especially as Marion Ellis intended to anyway. Then we could do a day trip out to Broken Rock. Admittedly this meant doing 25 miles in one day,

but, as our leader was careful to point out, we could do it if we got up early enough, namely 5.30 a.m.

Since such an idea was too horrible to contemplate, we put it from our minds and decided in the meantime we'd cross the river and have lunch. Barry nearly froze doing gallant St. Christophers across the swiftly flowing waters, and others got their clothes wet mid stream. But a warm fire, a warm sun and a two hour lunch later and we had all revived.

Our thoughts turned once again to the missing two bods. Maybe they's missed the turnoff and gone all the way down the Gingra, or gone down the wrong ridge or perhaps they's gone on ahead and were aiming for Butcher's Creek. Eventually our resourceful leader decided we'd camp down the river and do the day trip out to Broken Rock. He had cunningly omitted to tell us that this variation would turn the trip into a good fifty-miler.

So in blissful ignorance we sauntered down the Kowmung, stopping periodically to try and decipher the various footprints whenever they trailed across a particularly muddy section of track.

Well, they weren't there to greet us at Gingra Creek, so we set up camp and cooked dinner while we considered new theories and picked others apart. We'd nearly finished eating when they appeared, looking rather the worse for wear. After a lengthy interval when they made a semblance of recovery, they began their explanations which unfortunately came in disjointed clumps that took most of the week-end to sort out.

It appeared that Round's Rantings and Hughes Blues had lead them astray on an incredibly ridiculous wild-goose chase up and down various parts of the Gingra Trail (apparently they stopped and waited for us when they were only five minutes ahead and by some miracle we managed to pass them). They even managed to find a new way off the Gingra, a route that landed them in a creek which they refused to describe to us in English. They weren't quite sure what part of the river they had landed on, because unlike our leader who always has at least six Lands Department maps in each pocket, Ross had no map at all and they's walked off the only one that Alan had. However, after a bite to eat they even managed to do some thinking and after deciding where they were, they headed downstream. They found our lunch spot, and after being hopelessly confused by the myriads of footprints in umpteen different directions, they eventually sorted things out and galloped down the Kowmung in the dark until they found us.

Our news of a 7 o'clock start next morning did not seem to cheer them up greatly.

The night was clear before the arrival of an early morning mist which settled around us and dampened the air. We breakfasted to the sounds of the gently lowing cattle across the river as our cattle duffers and their dogs moved them about the yards. By half past seven we were ready to leave, having spent some time organising three packs between seven people. We left Marion behind to mind the camp and spend a restful day on the river.

After catching up with the leader who had of course left on time, we headed up a ridge decorated with wildflowers and before long we had climbed out of the mists and were looking at a clear blue sky as we followed the road past "Bran Jan" and onto Scott's Main Range. Here we turned right and walked along the road, keeping our eyes peeled to avoid the occasional dingo trap. After a mile or so the leader selected a map from his extensive files, looked at it and charged off into the scrub, explaining as we followed that this was where there ought to be a ridge leading into Butchers Creek. Needless to say there was, and after tramping down the bare and burnt-out ridge we came to Butcher's Creek which was beautiful with its clear sparkling water lighting up the trees and rocks, giving them an unusual brilliance in the shadows of the creek.

Before leaving the creek we boiled the billy for a quick morning tea and filled all available containers with water because we were unlikely to find any more until late afternoon when we would again be on Butchers Creek.

We started up a likely looking ridge, scattering kangaroos as we went, and after gaining height gradually for some time we saw the impressive sight of the end of Broken Rock Range towering above us, dry and rocky and supported by buttresses of crumbly red earth. As we made our way to the top, we began to feel less keen about the clear blue sky, but we were thankful not to have to carry all our gear as originally planned. There was a final rock scramble and levering-up of bodies before we finally reached the top and started off along the length of the range. There was a surprising amount of cover on top, as it was well treed and even managed to house some lyre-birds.

We walked along, waiting hopefully for a suitable lunch spot to appear before us. Eventually Alan did some detouring and found a little cave and, to our amazement, a creek with water in it. So we all plonked down, our spirits soaring at the thought of water for lunch.

GO THE WHOLE HOG - LEAD A WALK A MONTH!

Many sandwiches and cups of tea later we left the little creek, which was later discovered to be Fritz's Creek, and continued on our way. We'd passed the trig station and the "Break" which names the range and which makes the only route off it other than the ends. We continued onwards in an unending series of ups and downs, a couple of hundred feet each time. Every bump we thought must be the last one (i.e. the one on the end), but it never seemed to be, as each time we reached the top only to see another drop below us and another rise beyond that.

Just as we were beginning to get worried about the failing light, we came to the last of the rocky rise and turned off the range onto a ridge. We began picking our way carefully down the rest of the way - carefully down the steep crumbly bits, and then thundering down the rest of the way in the hope of reaching Butchers Creek before it was completely dark. This we just managed, and after a good many gulps of lemon and lime we started, at half past five, to make our way up the 2,000 feet of ridge onto Scott's Main Range.

As we later discovered, we came upon the road somewhere near New Yards. The party collapsed in an oddly regular line on the roadside and after a while began to think of food and scrambled in the bottom of the three packs for the few remaining bits and pieces. When all was eaten we started plodding the miles along the white, moonlit road, and again made the occasional dicey detour to avoid a dingo trap. We waited at the turnoff for bods to catch up, and then it was all downhill to the causeway on the Kowmung where we walked upstream a short distance to reach the camp.

It was ten past nine when we arrived, and we were exceedingly tired, so we were really grateful when we saw that Marion had a fire still going for us, although she had gone to bed. For a long while we sat around it in silence - no energy. Around 10 o'clock there were some stirrings as some thought of food and others of bed. Then followed some weary wanderings around the camp as packs and gear were sorted out. In our absence Marion had cleaned our billies to such a shine that nobody knew whose was whose, and she's even aired our sleeping bags. Confusion ensued with Laurie using someone else's billies and Doug managing to sleep in two bags at once, neither of them his own. Around midnight everything had been sorted out and everyone eventually reunited with their gear, could at last go to sleep.

The fine weather stayed on for Sunday, and after some debate we decided to go up Singra Creek and Croft's Ridge, over Page's Pinnacle to Crofts Wall and back along to Kanangra.

We made our way up Gingra Creek, stopping in places to marvel at the smooth water-worn rocks vividly coloured in pinks and greys, greens and purples, and whites and beiges, and carved into beautiful curving geometries. The shapes are so regular that they must be mathematical, and the clear water curves over them like delicately blown glass.

Crofts Ridge rises at the junction of Gingra Creek and Gabes Creek, and this was where we planned to have lunch before going up. But before getting there we managed to have two false alarms at previous creek junctions, much to the ire of the hungry members whose harassed digestive juices began voicing a noisy disapproval. At lunch time, those with much food left ate well, and those who hadn't didn't. After a good hour we reluctantly left the creek and started slowly up the ridge. Two hours later we were admiring the marvellous view from Pages Pinnacle. We were able to point out the route we'd followed and saw that the whole length of Broken Rock Range was clearly discernible and we realised how immensely satisfying the trip had been.

We made our way up to Crofts Wall and along Kilpatrick Causeway as the sun sank low. The inimitable view from Kanangra was enhanced in the golden afternoon light and my memory of it so vivid that the subsequent car journey to Blackheath seemed to last but a few seconds.

ONLY 17³/₄ DAYS TO GO.

The Spring Walks Programme (September-November) is not exactly revelling in the abundance that should be Spring.

You can help eliminate this discrepancy by spilling a cornucopia full of walks onto it in the club room or pouring them into the telephone at 84-4497 (H), 630-0251 ext 19(B). Don't wait until the sap rises. Select a date and book now to avoid disappointment. If you're lost and don't know where to go, contact the Walks Secretary - she has just the walk for you.

PADDY MADE

- 12 -

THE GATEWAY TO ADVENTURE.

Through Paddy's doors have come hundreds of young people looking for a club to join, asking for advice on equipment and on places to go, obtaining detailed information about trips both tough and easy.

Paddy Pallin is not only Australia's original and leading lightweight camp gear specialist, Paddy's shop is the complete equipment centre for all the requirements of Bushwalkers, Rock-climbers, Campers, Ski Tourers and Mountaineers. It is the meeting place they know they can have a yarn, browse over maps, choose the best equipment, find all the little things they require, get a special job done or some gear repaired, just as generations of walkers have done since 1931.

Good advice to all new members:

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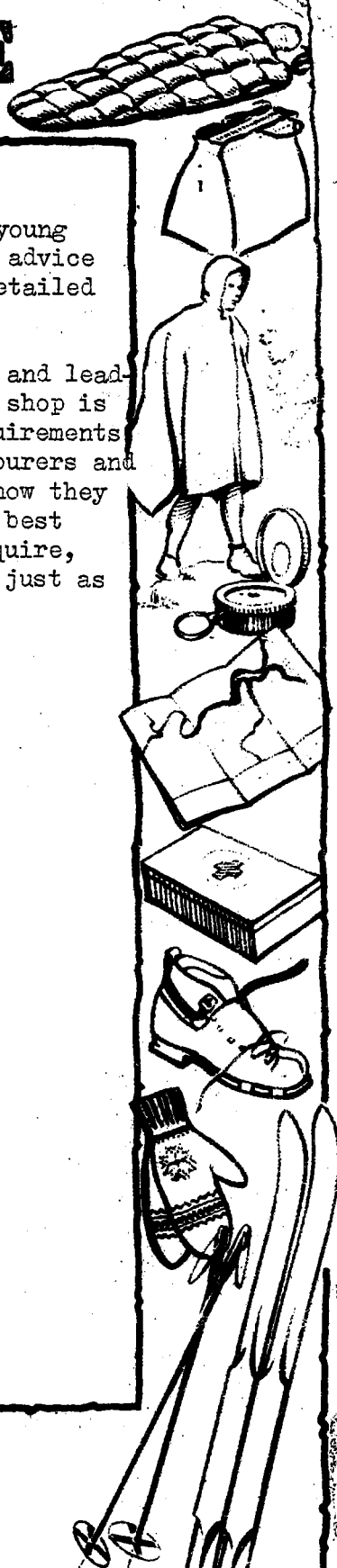
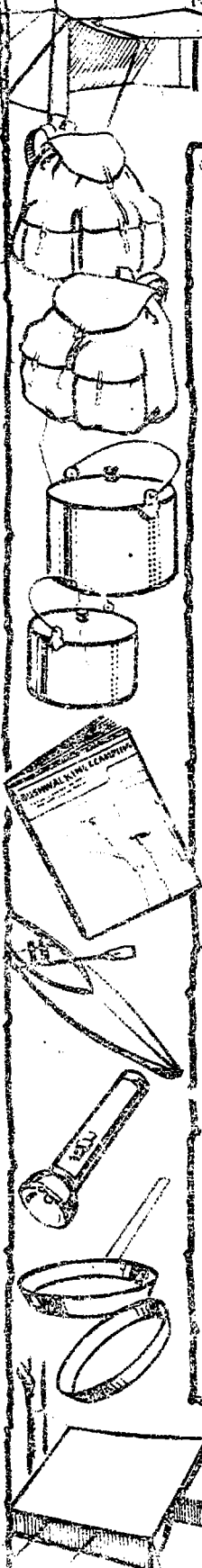
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July 30th (omitted from Social Programme)

A patrol officer from New G will give a slide talk on July 30th. It should be a very interesting and informative evening with the recent uprising there. We'll be able to get some of the background on this.

All members who have not paid their membership fees are reminded that they are long overdue. Keep our accountant happy.

Active Subs \$5.50 Active Students \$3.50
Non Active \$1.00
Plus mag. sub. \$1.50

The Surveyors Crag

Don't miss the chance to survey the breathtaking panorama from this vantage point. The miles and miles of burnt black bushes will give enough bruises to gladden the heart of any masochist. And the views make it all worthwhile for ordinary mortals. The trip, a good twenty-five miles should be classed as M-R and will be going on August 22 23 24. See Mike Short.

THE FIFTH WAVE

Observer.

"It was a damn close run thing." The Duke of Wellington said after Waterloo. In many years of watching the training films of a rather hazardous industry I have grown indifferent to the "Fire Triangle" and the well-conducted laboratory demonstrations and the rather frightening attempts in practice to remove one side of the triangle. Fuel, oxygen and the source of ignition. Familiarity with fire does not breed contempt. The wail of a siren or the jangling of a blood red telephone starts a reflex action which, if I were a religeuse, would start by crossing myself. Not being so inclined, I merely shudder and remember to do up my seat belt on the way to the station.

The theory of fire fighting is, of course, very simple. Removing one side of the triangle will remove the fire. When the fuel is Royal National Park it is difficult to remove the fuel and still have a park, although this is virtually the present position. Ironically the source of ignition occurred during Fire Prevention Week. Even if you don't drink the water you must still breathe the air. None of the "Heralds" correspondents suggested excluding oxygen from our National Parks. The problem then comes down to the practice of fire fighting and the future of all our National Parks is basically dependent on fire damage and control. The tragedy of the last days of October has probably caused more damage than all the potential mismanagement, inertia and rubbish dumping combined.

All our National Parks are basically botanical in concept, Colong possibly excepted. The management ultimately must be concerned with the preservation of the flora assuming that if we have a complete cover and a close to natural association of genera there will be faunal population to follow. The Heathcote Primitive Area, now the Heathcote Park, is ample demonstration that this can be obtained (the absence of wheeled vehicles ensures that rubbish doesn't extend far beyond the gates). Where a few weeks ago there may have been some climate associations left in the park this is now unlikely. We can only look forward to a regeneration which will almost certainly be of a lower order, and which in fact will take at least ten years to approach a reasonable level for a park. Many of the larger angophoras reached the limit of their survival during the fires. I doubt if they will be replaced.

Ten years is the approximate time it takes for seedling eucalypts and casuarinas and mallee-rooted stock to grow 15-20 feet; hakeas and banksias need about the same time to mature and hold fruit for the next regeneration. Because the overhead story of large trees has been reduced the content of the cover is increasingly made up of hakeas and casuarinas and less of the more delicate heaths and sought after flowers. The Park just degenerates with each fire. At ten years there is a dense understory of extremely inflammable material reaching to the fully recovered crowns of the larger trees. This is the stage for an extremely dangerous situation, the understorey brews up the crowns which explode through an immense cloud of burning gas into further crowns. At any time after ten years the first critical drought of winter and spring provide, with the undergrowth the real source of ignition. It is no coincidence that the literature cites 13 years as the critical cycle; ten years plus the statistical certainty of one severe drought and one moderate drought year in five. Our own 1984 could conceivably see the whole of the south east coast of Australia ablaze again.

What is being done? Despite the evidence of devastation, something is being done.

Sutherland Shire is the key to the protection of the Royal National Park and to a lesser extent the Heathcote Park. In the past few years the effectiveness of the Bush Fire brigades has increased enormously due to the creation of the office of Fire Control Officer and the provision of mobile radios that at last are reliable. The FCO had political troubles at its gestation, an area larger than the Shire being advocated at one time by an interested group. Ray Watchorn, the FCO, is a full time Shire employee, a trustee of the Heathcote Primitive Area and has that rare quality in a boss to inspire loyalty. He has bushwalker's knowledge of the terrain (complimenting bushwalkers), and a realistic grasp of what is possible. His No. 2, usually Communications Officer, is Max Lowe the Ranger for Heathcote Park. Another "leader" but with a shorter temper. They are the only "paid" officers excluding Park officers. The area of responsibility extends from the Water Board Road to the Woronora Dam, Garrawarra, to the Georges River at Deadmans Creek, the R.N.P., Kurnell peninsula, Heathcote Park and the northern side of the Heathcote Road. For reasons of physical safety it does not now include the Military Area - live if defective mortars and that sort of thing. In the normal course of events house fires are dealt with by the appliances of the Metropolitan Fire Board.

There is a control room in Watchorn's house at Heathcote,

and
a radio/conference room in the Shire Chambers and brigades at Illawong, Sandy Point, Menai, Lucas Heights (C of A), Loftus, Heathcote, Mainbar, Bundeena, Kurnell and Engadine. A Land Rover tender, Yarrawarrah, is manned by residents of the "asphalt" suburbs not normally considered bush fire risks. A fire occurring in one area is the responsibility, initially, of the brigade in that area.

Dependent on the magnitude and projected course of the outbreak the Group Office can request assistance from any or all of the other brigades. This reciprocity is not taken lightly; to call out a brigade to put out a fire extinguished during the call out inertia is damaging to morale. Where houses are immediately threatened the Fire Board can and does provide "last ditch" protection if reticulated water is available leaving the bushfire brigades to mop up or control fire where access is more difficult. This is no denigration of the Fire Board. Being paid ultimately by the Insurance Cos. they must follow the tune the boss plays. The Fire Board can be backed up by appliances from most of the metropolitan area, the degree of help being balanced against the denudation of the city fire cover. It comes, ultimately, and at times with terrifying suddenness, to a concern for lives.

The Police Force can supply men at short notice for "ho se-pulling", ancilliarics such as ambulance, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and the Cliff Rescue Squad appear almost by magic, day or night. The Regular Army is ponderous, querulous and exclusive.

Present equipment of the Brigades is based on 4-wheel drive vehicles, at least 25 years old but well maintained. The "off-highway" capacity is necessary to negotiate fire trails and at times the heath and more open wooded areas. They carry water tanks of five hundred gallons, two pumps, five hose reels of rubber and an assortment of canvas hose from 1" to 2 1/2". Knapsacks, the rake-hoe McCleod tools, First Aid gear including AirViva. Crews take their chance somewhere.

A minimum of five, Deputy Captain, driver-radio operator, pumpman and two helpers is desirable. The trucks have radio communication with the control centre and with each other and walkie-talkies nozzle-to-pump and captain-to-driver. Ideally all jobs are interchangeable. Engadine has a converted petrol tanker, not 4-wheel drive, of 1,000 gallons capacity and is frequently used to replenish the other tenders in the field. It can negotiate most of the fire trails. Shortly all brigades will be re-equipped with new 4-wheel drive Bedfords, uniformly equipped so the capability of each tender is known to all and the effectiveness of the whole system improved.

Tactics to be effective are infinitely variable but depend on training a thorough knowledge of the area and co-operation. Preferably fires are "washed" right out. This implies that time is available for the job, water is unlimited and that the perimeter has been secured. Fires burning slowly at night can be put right out. We have pumped, at times, through 3,000 feet of hose for eight hours to put out some outbreaks. The recovery, stowage, drying and re-rolling of so much hose is exhausting work.

If washing a small fire is not feasible and conditions are suitable handtools can isolate a fire and "spots" prevented with knapsacks. This is the only justifiable use of knapsacks, or indeed of any work done away from the tender. Frontal assaults from fire trails need conditions less than explosive and likely to remain so. It is only under these conditions that a "backburn" is allowed and justified - then only if sufficient men and water are available to prevent spotting. The burn is lit as the main fire approaches, allowed to burn towards the front and then extinguished from the trail inwards. With the advancing front blunted the edges of the main blaze not directly downwind are attacked. Several years ago the brigades controlled a major fire during a week of intense heat. With frequent wind changes it was not feasible to work far from the radiation and atmospheric heat. It was possible to allow the fire well within a hundred yards of a trail, burn and then wash. What looked like being a disastrous fire was contained between trails and the Hacking River.

How effective are the volunteer brigades? Up to conditions on the possible side of catastrophic the combination of sufficient training, suitable equipment, mobility and good leadership the brigades can control fires in the R.N.P and the Heathcote Park. Possibly a similar situation exists for Kuring-gai Chase and the Blue Mountains National Park. I don't know and can't comment. In the catastrophic conditions of late October no amount of men or equipment could have saved the park. Fire crossed the gorge of the Woronora almost from top to top, a carry of 800 yards. A similar carry crossed the Hacking River. There was no chance. Brigades sent north along the Highway to extricate other brigades were stopped by flames; by the time they turned to retreat they were enclosed. Internal combustion engines need oxygen to operate, as do firefighters. Motors and men stop suddenly when there is no oxygen left for them. It is the limit of human effort. It was reached.

Waves reaching a shore are the result of storm centres scattered over the ocean. When the wave patterns interact they sometimes cancel each other and then reinforce. Very often the fifth wave is an enormous wave engulfing the rock fisherman. It is too late to learn to swim when you have counted to four.

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COLONG - WON OR LOST.
3069.

Rolf Janssen.

The fight to save Colong is still on - it must not lag for if we lose this case future cases will be harder to win. Many of our beaches and the Barrier Reef are threatened in the "interest" of the State and nation under the heading of MINING.

Many readers have already shown support to SAVE COLONG by

- 1) sending articles to me referring to the Colong issue. Please keep them rolling in. Send the entire page in which the article occurs because
 - a) it saves you cutting it out
 - b) me from losing it if it is small
 - c) gives me the date, place and type of publication - all very important
- 2) Giving support, if they can at a time when the Colong Committee wants to publicise Government vandalism.

If you want to be asked to help SAVE COLONG send the following details to the Membership Secretary Rolf Janssen:

Name

Address at home

Home Tel. No.

Business Address

Bus Tel No.

Have you access to a car? Will you take passengers

How many?

The Colong Committee

- 1) Has had a meeting with management of A.P.C.M. to reconsider mining in the Colong Caves area - details in the next issue as they are not ready at present.
- 2) Is arranging for a "Cave-in" (living in the caves which are to be mined) around 8th August. Your participation is welcomed. See the club notice board for more exciting details or contact the membership Secretary or the Colong Committee.

Next issue - revealing details of Government incompetence on the Colong scandal.

SAVE COLONG OR LOSE EVERYTHING.

REMINDER FROM THE TREASURER: The majority of members have not yet paid their annual subscription. The Treasurer appeals to all who are guilty in this respect to assist the Club by the payment of their dues.