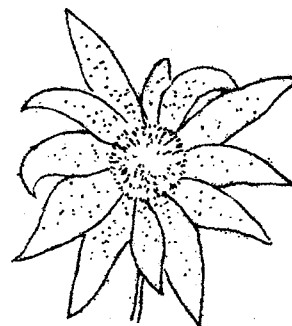


THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers, Box 4476 G.P.O. Sydney, 2001. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening from 7.30 pm at the Wireless Institute building, 14 Atchison Street, St. Leonards. Enquiries concerning the Club should be referred to Mrs. Marcia Shappert - Tel.30,2028.

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MAY - 1978.

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EDITORIAL

Most readers will be aware of the proposed dam on the Colo River and, rightly, are horrified at the prospect of the last wilderness area close to Sydney being destroyed. To argue that dammed water is not unattractive or sometimes even improves the landscape is ridiculous, for the associated construction sites, roads, power-lines, etc. are the real destroyers of beauty. (In a satellite photo I have of the whole of Tasmania, taken from about 3,500 km above the earth, not even Hobart shows as a blot on the green of the island, yet the construction roads to, and power-line clearing from, Lake Pedder show as huge scars even from that height.)

The Colo's waters will not be used for drinking water or for hydro-electric power. The plan is to mine coal on the Newnes Plateau, build a huge coal power-station there -- Wallarawang size! -- and use the dammed water for cooling. The used heated water will no doubt be stored in artificial lakes near the power station. We are therefore protesting not just at the building of a dam but the destruction of a huge area of bushland.

Let's look at the Colo from a bushwalker's point of view. It is an area of spectacular scenery with huge cliffs close to the river, quite unlike the Grose and other Blue Mountain valleys. It is an area of real challenge, with no tracks, long distances. The river is still clean; drinkable, and well-stocked with fish. For we bushwalkers, faced with increasing petrol costs and the inevitable fuel shortages of the future, a wilderness area and ideal walking country so close to Sydney is especially attractive. In the last 25 years we have lost the Warragamba Gorge, the Burragorang, and many miles of the Cox River; we have seen the flooding of the Kangaroo River and part of the Shoalhaven; we have lost so many valleys in the Snowy Mountains.

I am appealing to every reader to write one letter of protest and urge others to do likewise, to:-

The Hon. W. F. Crabtree,
Minister for Lands,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY. 2000.

*****ooOOoo*****

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS.

by Max Crisp.

(Max is an S.B.W. member who has been working in Saudi Arabia for several years. He has travelled widely around the Middle East.)

It started as a mildly protesting sound from the transmission, then with hardly any further warning, there was a loud expensive bang and our gear box casing broke in half, leaking its life's blood all over the desert. Hardly an auspicious start to the second day of an eight-day holiday car camping trip from Riyadh to Petra - a Nabatean city (circa 200 B.C.) cut into a rocky gorge between the Gulf of Akaba and the Dead Sea. At the time of our little mishap we were about 300 kilometres north of Medina - a city forbidden to non-Muslims anyway - and perhaps 1,000 km from Jeddah, the next closest city with repair facilities in Saudi Arabia.

Very shortly a couple of Syrian lads off home to Damascus for the holidays, and no doubt touched by the look of doleful confusion on my wife's face, stopped to examine the situation. Their knowledge of English was matched by my almost total lack of Arabic, but they did provide a tow rope of sorts and in no time we were hurtling along at 100 km/hr behind their ancient Mercedes. Except for the tow rope parting every 30 km or so and the seized gear box going into a shattering self-destruct phase, it was a fairly uneventful 150 km trip across the desert to the next village where we finally parted company.

Taking stock of the alternatives, obviously at least a replacement gear box was necessary for our little Russian car. Being assured that there were Muskovitch repair facilities in Amman, Jordan, and of course almost all north-bound trucks were empty, we negotiated the most expensive piece of hitch-hiking I've ever done - for myself, my wife and our car to ride the 600 km or so to Amman with us peering out of our car at the scenery through the high slatted sides of a large Mercedes truck.

In Amman we arrived to find everything in the process of closing for the four-day Ramadan holiday - about the equivalent of our Easter - not exactly an auspicious time in a large strange city to get an extensive repair job. Mr. Ali, the friendly truck driver, unloaded us at the outskirts of Amman, from where a young Jordanian confidently offered to tow us to the Muskovitch garage. Alas, he couldn't find it, but he did have the grace to find us a hotel after depositing our immobilized vehicle in a car park. The reason he couldn't find the Russian car agency became apparent over the next two days - there wasn't one. Finally the very helpful commercial attache at the Russian embassy confirmed that the garage had closed down two years ago, but there were spares and repair facilities in Damascus 250 km to the north.

But there's the rub; firstly the whole population was engaged in the end of Ramadan feasting, hence there wasn't much activity in the car transporting line, and secondly, you really just don't stand on the street

side in the inner suburbs of Amman hitching a ride to Damascus for yourself, your wife and your broken motor car. With a flash of inspiration, Elaine said, "Let's hire an Avis car and tow ours to Damascus." Well, yes, there was an Avis place, and it did have a car, but not registered for use outside Jordan. Feeling slightly desperate, we took it anyway, ostentatiously collecting maps and directions for the many Holy places in the vicinity. I towed Elaine 150 km north across the Jordan border, depositing her at the Syrian point of entry. Returning the Avis car, I caught an inter-city taxi back to the border, where we spent the night in our car under the curious eyes of the border guards.

Early next day we pushed it through the check-point - to the great amusement of the local officialdom. A piggy-back ride on a transport truck not apparently forthcoming, I hitched into Deraa - a town of Lawrence fame - and negotiated a deal with a young Syrian to tow us to Damascus that day. By that time, I was beginning to realize that with a wife and a broken-down car on my hands, I wasn't in a very strong bargaining position in these deals. I put Elaine in the Toyota utility with the young driver, hoping that her combination of Arabic and sign language would keep him at sub-sonic speeds.

At that stage, nearing Damascus, like Paul we really felt that things must get better. Even though our car wasn't worth all that much, we couldn't just walk off and leave it because it had been entered on my passport when we crossed the border.

Syria seemed on a semi-war footing with police and army road blocks every few miles. We suspected that the lad towing us was perhaps a draft dodger or didn't have the necessary papers because he went to all sorts of lengths to delay or avoid crossing through check points. At one stage he suddenly diverted off the road into the front yard of a farm house when he noticed two police checking cars and papers about a hundred yards ahead. So we sat in the increasingly hot sun for an hour or so, a little stocky Syrian farmer in black baggy pants brought us tea and smiles - and we just waited. After a while the police moved down the road towards us and set up their check point in the shade just outside the gate. We just sat nervously on the front steps, trying to look like visiting cousins.

Following a little consultation between the farmer and our tow driver, the farmer casually strolled out to chat to the policemen. A few minutes later, they left the road and walked towards us in the front yard. Smiles, nervous handshakes and Arabic greetings all round, and the farmer ushered them round into the back of his house for tea in the shade. No sooner were they out of sight than we tip-toed out to our two vehicles, silently but frantically pushed them round to face the road, then roared off down the highway to Damascus.

We found out later that the previous day, some P.L.O. guerillas had seized a Damascus hotel full of tourists. In the ensuing rescue operation a few people were killed; the Syrian authorities, not terribly amused

about the whole episode, summarily and publicly hanged three P.L.O. commandos in the city square as a deterrent. This happened the morning we arrived in Syria, hence the tense atmosphere and military activity along the highway.

Salvation was obtained in Damascus, this time in the form of a French/Arabic speaking mechanic, equipped with the necessary spare parts which fitted well enough to enable us to limp back the 2,500 km or so to Riyadh.

We both picked up fairly severe tummy trouble in Damascus and at our last meal outside teetotal Saudi Arabia when we could have been having a final couple of bottles of wine in a pleasant restaurant, we sat out in the cold windy desert gingerly sipping a little hot Bonox.

Next day at the Saudi border, still both suffering direly from our unidentified malady, we were directed to take four large yellow anti-biotic tablets by the Saudi health authorities. At our protests that our injections were up to date and we'd never had to do this before, the health officer patiently explained that these were an additional precaution as we'd come from Damascus where, unknown to us, there had just been a massive cholera outbreak. Our peace of mind shattered, we took the tablets - gratefully - and tottered off home to Riyadh and rapid recovery a few days later from simple food poisoning.

* * * * *

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

I felt that having the Wednesday evening before Easter set aside especially for discussing and organising the Easter walks was "a jolly good idea"..... I was able to organise my Easter trip almost entirely on the Wednesday evening concerned. I had one telephone enquiry at the clubrooms on Wednesday evening and had only one person to organise by phone on the Wednesday evening or on Thursday. Unfortunately I was unable to contact this person on either day despite about a dozen phone calls.

I feel many people are a little mean and selfish when choosing the walks they wish to attend, often ringing up at the last minute causing the leader many additional phone calls to reorganise transport arrangements.

Whilst many people are unable to get to the clubrooms on Wednesday evenings to organise walks, possibly the Committee could look into and clarify the availability and use of the incoming telephone located in the foyer at the clubrooms and the number could be included in the walks programme for Wednesday evening contacts regarding walks.

DAVID COTTON.

Paddy's

Lightweight bushwalking and camping gear.

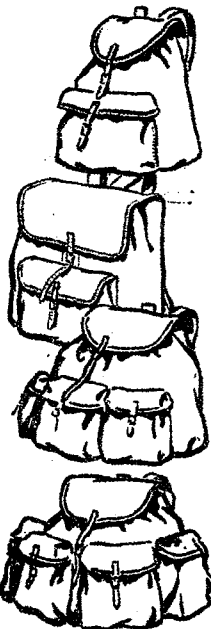
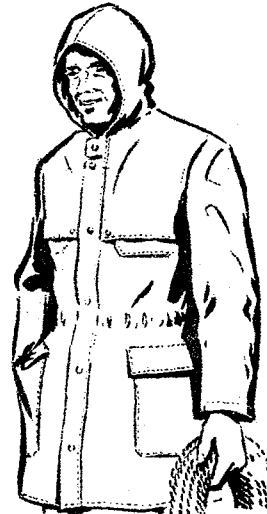


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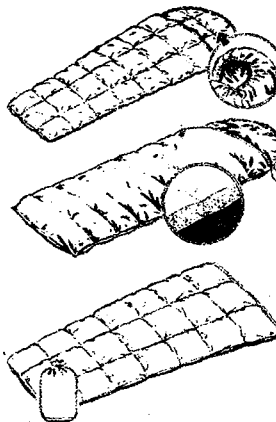
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Paddy's

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EASTER 1978 ON THE WOLGAN AND CAPERTEE RIVERS.

by David Cotton.

Over the Easter break I ran a very successful trip from Newnes - Wolgan River - Wolgan/Capertee junction - Capertee River - Glen Davis - Pipeline Pass - Newnes. A distance of about 80 km. Persons present included Dot Butler, Bob Parkes, Faye Smith, Don and Jenny Cornell and Rod Peters.

This trip had become an obsession with me since first making an unsuccessful attempt at the circuit over the Queens Birthday holiday last year. From various reconnaissance trips I have made in the area I couldn't see any reason why this trip could not be undertaken over a three or four day period. Getting reliable information and advice from persons with first-hand experience in this area was a much more difficult task. I cannot recall this trip being on the walks programmes over the past 15 years or so that I have been involved with the Club and yet it offers a tremendous variety of walking conditions together with splendid river and mountain views, and the cliff scenery along the Capertee River is some of the finest that I have seen. On this trip we had a bonus in views as creeks were running and presenting a myriad of waterfalls down the cliff faces.

A week's heavy rain prior to Easter, with severe flooding of the river systems, looked like dampening things a little, although with fine weather forecast and no real necessity to cross the river, the trip was never under any threat of cancellation. The only area causing concern was the Newnes Road below the Wolgan Gap which could be closed. This in fact was the case. The "road closed" barriers were up at the Gap, the trouble being three partial washouts in the first 2 km down the mountain. On inspection the road appeared to be quite safe, so with the arrival of the rest of the party we proceeded on to Newnes, camping at a nice spot on the Wolgan River.

On Friday morning we had our first view of the damage and destruction along the river caused by the very recent flooding. We had to leave the vehicles about 4 km from Newnes Hotel as this section of the road had been completely washed away. At Newnes several camping parties had become stranded on both sides of the river and about 2 metres of water had been through the Newnes Hotel at the height of the flooding.

From Newnes we ambled along to our first campsite at Annie Rowan's Clearing after finding a very substantial log that enabled us to cross the Wolgan River.

Saturday morning presented us with a few exciting moments as the Wolgan had to be recrossed, and the first opportunity presented itself in a rather small fallen tree that, besides being on a slope and partially debarked, had its last 5 metres submerged. This log had to be negotiated by walking along the log until it became too narrow and slippery; at this stage a straddling position had to be adopted with one's legs dangling in the surging water which was tending to offset the possibility of overbalancing with the weight of one's pack. At the point where the log

submerged a knob of wood about the size of a 2 litre billy-can had to be got over. Everyone managed this successfully except myself. I managed to do a complete about-turn and found myself in a predicament similar to riding a galloping horse bareback back-to-front. After negotiating this first obstacle we found ourselves on a long narrow island with the only way off being across a rather small shaky log perched high on top of a pile of unstable flood debris.

Saturday was our hardest day and a murmur of doubt as to whether we would be able to complete the trip arose just before lunch as we had only managed to cover a very small distance all morning. I don't think it was generally realised that it had taken probably an hour to cross the river, and after crossing the river we had encountered a patch of extremely rough going. I was also having a few problems with some of the soft patches of sand and mud, and during the morning had become bogged to my knees in a patch of particularly nasty silt. Being the heaviest in the party I was finding it totally unreliable to follow in the footsteps of some of the lighter members of our party. I was very amused to come across Faye bogged to the knees and doing a fantastic impression of an imbecile patting an invisible dog.

The junction of the Wolgan and Capertee Rivers was reached at about three that afternoon and I knew the walk was in the bag although the next 3 km up the Capertee took over $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. It was impossible to cross the Capertee River as it was carrying about four times as much water as the Wolgan.

At the end of the day I was wringing wet with perspiration and had quite a huge amount of material from leaves to sand down my back. Under normal conditions I see little need for extravagant washing rituals on walking trips other than a quick swim if it is hot, relying mainly on copious quantities of wood smoke to provide a natural all-round clothes and body deodorant..... This time, however, it was an all-round scrub up, clothes included, and for some reason I felt it necessary to wash my hair twice..... It had been a hard day.

Sunday was a rather ordinary slog, mostly along tracks from Gaspers Creek. As I hadn't done any bushwalking for over 9 months I spent most of the trip at the rear, leaving the front of the party under the very capable supervision of Dot Butler who also selected all our excellent camp sites, leaving an hour or so of daylight to allow the stragglers sufficient time to reach camp in daylight.

Monday was a rather quiet day, with a short inspection of Glen Davis and the ruins of the Shale Oil Works on the way through. The trip over the Pipeline Pass was also quiet with a long lunch stop at the top, and then on to Newnes, reaching the vehicles about 4 o'clock. Most of us stayed for a cup of tea before moving off. By Monday both the Wolgan and Capertee Rivers had returned to almost their usual levels.

I consider this trip to have been a 100% success. The walking, despite the flooded river conditions, was excellent, as a lot of undergrowth

and rubbish (with the exception of the wretched lawyer vine) had been washed away and the newly deposited beds of driftwood were quite stable for walking over. The flood damage along the Wolgan River was much more severe, with very large trees washed away, than that on the Capertee River.

I was most fortunate in having Dot Butler along to keep the front of the party moving (many thanks once again, Dot) and each morning we managed to move off around 8 o'clock.

The weather was excellent. Friday and Saturday were mostly overcast but dry. Sunday and Monday were fine and sunny although we had a few showers each night.

This trip could quite reasonably be undertaken in three days. I would recommend Gler Davis as a starting point, making a dash to the junction along the Capertee on the first day, then up the Wolgan to Annie Rowan's Creek on the second day, and through to the Pipeline Pass to Glen Davis on the third day..... For a four day trip it would be best to start off at Newnes and follow the Wolgan, camping at Annie Rowan's Creek or preferably a little further on the first day, reaching the junction and making about 6 km up the Capertee on the second day; reaching Freshwater Creek on the third day, and through to Newnes via Glen Davis and the Pipeline Pass on the fourth day. On both trips I feel that where possible the Pipeline Pass should be avoided on the first day out, as it is important to get as much distance in as possible on the first day to ensure the success of the trip.

* * * * *

ONE "WALKER'S" EASTER.

by Helen Gray.

What would I do at Easter?

It was still too hot for a hard walk, and I decided easy walks were out. (On the last two easy weekend walks I had found myself in the company of some pupils of mine; nice kids, but I do like to get away from my work as much as they like to get away from their teachers).

Then the perfect solution came up.

Peter Levander is the proud owner of a 32' sloop which he has recently completed. Many readers are familiar with the boat which, in Dot Butler's front yard, has been taking shape for the past $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. Peter bought the hull but has done everything else himself, including designing his own winches, doing all electrical fittings, carpentry, curtain-making, carpet-laying, you name it.....

Peter (jokingly?) said that the ideal new member is female, experienced (sailing, that is!) and young, but as I filled one requirement I'd do.

Phil Butt and Bob Hodgson each filled one requirement and Kathleen Game was eligible on two.

Easter Friday, you may recall, was really wild; howling winds, rain, and heavy seas. (Many Sydney beaches were closed.) The sloop had never been out in the ocean, so obviously this was the day to test it. After a ten minute lesson for the crew in Sydney Harbour, out we went. I was useless, with everyone calling ropes "sheets" and left "port" and front "bow" etc. By the time I had translated the captain's order the crisis had passed or that veteran sailor Bob Hodgson had done it for me. Speaking of veterans - I always wondered what happened to working seamen when they got sea-sick, and now I know. Bob was working the tiller and chatting when he suddenly said, "Someone take over, please," leaned overboard, regurgitated the complete contents of his stomach, burped, smiled, said, "Ah! That's better", and went back to steering and chatting. Kathy, in the meantime, was reminding us of the religious significance of that Good Friday by draping herself on the back railing as if crucified, and praying for death. (Her previous prayer for a calm sea was unanswered.) I will give a free plug here to Andromin tablets; those of us who took one before leaving the harbour had not one twinge of sea-sickness.

We went seven miles or so off the coast and didn't see another boat. Actually, I couldn't see anything. When we were in the troughs the waves towered above us, and on the crests the wind and rain on my sunglasses blinded me. (Why sunglasses? I have seen those cigarette ads with people on yachts and they always wear sunglasses, so I knew that was part of the uniform.)

The storm abated and Kathy came to life as we reached Barrenjoey Head and once in Pittwater it was so calm our engine was needed. We spent the night on board without even a gentle rocking to lull us to sleep.

Saturday was a rest day. We circled Scotland Island, then out into Broken Bay and around Lion Island, anchoring off its tiny beach for lunch. Later, we sailed up the Hawkesbury for a mile or so, before returning to anchor for the night in beautiful America Bay.

The evenings were delightful. Peter has a perfect collection of tape-recordings - Handel, Mozart, Telemann, which we listened to while consuming pre-dinner cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, main course, sweets, afters, coffees and liqueur. The conversation flowed and at one stage got onto the ills of modern-day society. Someone suggested lack of touching caused hang-ups and we all agreed that was what was lacking in our lives and we'd do something about it right away, which we did.

Later, we spent some time on deck waiting for the eclipse which Phil told us all about. Fortunately, a couple of hours before 2.30 (eclipse time) someone read Phil's newspaper, his source of information. The event had occurred the night before. Imagine! Phil Butt wrong! We were all too mellowed by his Irish Creamed Liqueur we'd been sipping to feel too cross, so we went to bed. My bed was a coffin lined with padding and

carpet. Actually it is called the quarter-bunk, but a more coffin-like shape doesn't exist, unless it's the real thing.

Sunday morning Bob Hodgson left us, having been rowed ashore and replaced by Alastair Battye who had walked down from West Head Road, where his car now awaited Bob's use. We welcomed Alastair aboard with one of Handel's Coronation Anthems played at full volume, as a substitute for the traditional piping aboard.

Cowan Creek was the day's trip, with lunch at the head of Smith's Creek. The oyster-lovers spent a long time on shore collecting the poor little creatures, which they later fried in cheese until they looked like the contents of Bob's stomach had two days previously, but were none the less eaten enthusiastically. The conversation turned to other strange tastes. Alastair and I insisted that the tropical fruit durian was the world's strangest-tasting food. It defies description but we tried: parmesan with persimons, or goulash with guavas. Peter attempted to reproduce the taste by giving us a dessert of strawberries with mangoes, topped with yoghurt and fresh cream. Close, Peter, but not quite it.

Back in America Bay - that night we had another eating orgy. And the other? It wasn't an orgy, but a hair-combing session. I have decided that the combination of a slightly rocking boat, Mozart's serenades, moonlight and having my hair combed for me is sheer delight.

Monday, and back to sea and thence home. This was more like those ads - swimming costumes, sunglasses, blue sky, cotton-wool clouds, and hundreds of other sailing boats heading for Sydney Harbour. This time we were much closer to shore and could enjoy the sights, even if the excitement and exhilaration of Friday were missing.

.

If you are interested in developing your arms instead of your legs, take a rest from walking and try sailing. And what nicer way is there to do so than with a group of walking friends. Thanks, Peter, for a fabulous weekend.

WALKING - CAMPING HOLIDAY.

Are you interested in some walking/camping in June for a couple of weeks? My plans are flexible and all suggestions welcome. Leave Sydney about 5th June.

Please phone Frank Roberts - 969,1884 (H) or 233,6966 (B) after 22nd May.

* * * * *

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THE APRIL GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

It was about 8.25 pm when our brand new President vigorously belaboured the ceremonial gong to bring the 35 or so members present to order and announced the general meeting for April.

Christine Austin was the only one to apologise. And Philip Lormer was our only new member.

The minutes of the A.G.M. were read, and after a number of questions of fine detail, received and duly signed. There was no business arising from the minutes, the only comment being that the question of a holding company for Coolana would be discussed in general business.

Correspondence in consisted of magazines, annual subs (keep those cheques and money orders coming in folks!), a form letter from the Department of Services requesting details of the new committee, and a letter and telegram from a legal firm acting for a Mr. Dick Smith.

Correspondence out was limited to a letter to our new member, and an order for a new slide projector and accessories.

The only business arising concerned the threat of legal action over a recent magazine article. The meeting agreed that we should seek advice regarding our position and delegated the president and secretary to seek to resolve the matter with our hon. solicitor.

The treasurer's report showed a starting balance of \$1583.68 with expenditure of \$529.65, income of \$104.50 and a final balance of \$1158.53.

Then came the walks report, and as suggested in last month's notes we shall "do" the walks reports in somewhat more detail than usual.

Over the W/E 11/12 March there was the reunion. With two reports in last month's mag. what more need I say.

Vic Lewin had a crew of 3 prospectives down in the Budawangs the following weekend and reported a rather wet but enjoyable walk. Hans Beck's Glenbrook Creek ramble on Sunday 19th attracted 2 members and one prospective all of whom were rained on for their trouble. They reported some apparent role confusion between the creeks and the tracks in the area, and shortened the trip slightly by exiting via Martin's Lookout to catch the 5.20 pm train. Jack Perry had 3 persons out along the Woronora River but they were confined to the west bank by flooding. The mapping instructional under John Fox was abandoned because of rain.

The Easter weekend had a good crop of walks, with David Cotton reporting swollen rivers, and promising a full account in the magazine -- but finish reading the notes first. Vic Lewin scrapped his Grose Valley classic because of flooding in the classic Grose Valley and Tony Denham and Laurie

Quaken moved their base camp from the Shoalhaven to the Colo for similar reasons. Peter Harris transferred his New England walk for all starters except Roy (is you de lav) Higginbottom (Hello Roy) who was travelling in from some remote location and could not be contacted. While Roy was busy shifting for himself in the sodden wilds or fleshpots of New England, the rest of the walk, three plus leader, went to the Ettremah area and wandered around Dangerra Dam. Jack Perry's trip on the 26th had, at last estimate, a total of 15 bodies, at least three of whom were leaders. Jack arrived late at the start, collected the lone prospective waiting there and set off after - - Barbara Evans, who was leading all those who arrived on time. They never met! A short time after Jack left the start a further prospective arrived and conducted his very own walk. He didn't meet anyone either! We also have a report from a usually reliable source that the Uloola creek track was in fact the Uloola track creek, but this pales to insignificance beside the sheer complexity of the report of the walk itself.

The following weekend March 31/April 1 saw Hans Beck leading 6 members and one prospective on his Cox River walk. They report extensive flood damage to the banks of the river. David Cotton's photographic workshop drew two members for a pleasant weekend at Darkes Forest. The Heathcote area day walk ended up being led by Barbara Evans (again?) They had one member, three prospectives and 9 visitors and, as far as we know, only one walk. John Fox cancelled his Mount Wilson trip.

On the 7/8/9 April Bill Burke conducted a party of about 21 souls through swirling mists on a tour of the area around Splendour Rock. Mobb's Soak cave provided welcome shelter on the Saturday evening and they were all back at the cars at 3.30 pm Sunday, so I don't think they visited the Cox. Barbara Evan's walk over the 8/9th had four members, four prospectives and one visitor. They reported an enjoyable walk with some rain and numerous mosquitoes at Accacia Flat. Len Scotland alone led the day walk in the Heathcote area with a total of seven starters. And here endeth the walks report.

The chairperson's call for a Federation report bought assurances that there was none.

General business bought a report of a Coolana Committee meeting held at Wood's Creek during the reunion. In brief, they decided against forming a company for Coolana, decided to pay rates immediately on portions 104 and 105, and are going to write proposing that portion 203 be combined with 104, 105 for rating purposes. They also report that a picnic area appears to be being prepared on land across the river from Coolana.

A motion was then passed providing for preparation of a separate account for Coolana monies. A motion to introduce an additional walks grade between the present 0 and ++ grading was discussed, but lost.

Peter Harris then moved two motions on conservation matters which will involve us in writing to the N.S.W. Mines Minister and the Premier of Tasmania.

The meeting closed at 9.54 pm.

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OWEN ON TOUR.

The overnight train from Delhi arrives at the bottom of the Himalayan foothills at dawn. At Kalka, beside the wide main gauge, is a narrow gauge toy train all painted blue, and after one hour's stop for breakfast, the train choofs off. Up a narrow gorge with only cactus and brushy scrub the train with 6 carriages ascends very rapidly with loops and tunnels (every tunnel numbered) and every 500 ft altitude is a wooden cut-out of a page boy/bell hop holding the notice. 15 m.p.h. maximum, with tea stops every hour. A pleasant ride.

Soon the air becomes fresher and ruus trees in deep russet cover whole hillsides, while far below is the wide dried-up bed of the river. Tunnel 30 and still we wind. At one stage I counted four tracks below - a series of loops and tunnels with lines looping over roads and riding on curved viaducts. Everything is of hand-cut stone blocks. Then suddenly pine trees appear and the first glimpse of the snowy peaks (a low mountain ridge, not part of the Himalayas). From our armchairs (Yes, We were travelling first class!) magnificent vistas from all points.

After three hours we arrived on a ridge and Simla could be seen in the far distance looking like a scene of the Lhasa Palace in Tibet. Soon pine trees were interspersed with rhododendrons, and what a lovely sight they were when the full Himalayan range in Kashmir came into view in the distant background. $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours later we pulled into Simla station and tunnel 103 (a tunnel can be 300 ft long or 6 ft). I made a wish! I wished that Jim, our illustrious train madman/nut (Don't sue me, Jim!) could have been accompanying me and my mother. It is even better than the Darjeeling train. I was told in Delhi it took 2 hours, but it took $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours and I wish it would have taken ten.

But when you arrive in Simla - well, words fail. If you were to take back to Planet Mars three examples of ridiculous, improbable, earthly cities, Venice would be one, Urgup in Turkey another, and Simla the third. Built by the British 100 years ago as the summer capital and used until 1948. They picked the most ridiculous spot imaginable. Imagine building a metropolis on Brindle Pup in the Wild Dogs! (I'm not getting carried away.) Well. It's there for all to see. A complete city growing down on each side of a ridge with the ridge being a MALL 6 km long. No cars anywhere except Governor's and ambulances. All other join-up roads are all pedestrian paths and cars only allowed 500 ft below. In fact you can live there for five days as we did and never get down to the roads.

Except when we were taken for a trip to the nearby snow-fields. Only 20 in the bus plus us two. Everyone brought snow into the bus and Mum and I were popular targets. The sareed ladies would slide down the snow slopes; a sillier sight you could never imagine, although I've seen tennis played in sarees. I imagine that rugby has been tried by the ladies in sarees - it is completely possible.

There is no noise here. Along the entire horizon can be seen the

Himalayan range. Far below are pine forests with cricket fields in green patches, and the chill of 7,000 ft to make you hungry.

All the architecture is odd - partly iron foundry gothic with five storey wooden hotels similar to the old Neutral Bay wharf. Sydney's kiosks by the harbour or Coogee bathing pavilions of long ago are all alive today in Simla. The main shopping part of the Mall was forbidden to Indians in the Good Old Days. There's the Tudor Public Library still going and the Gaiety Theatre, and Green Room Card/Bridge Society built as a gothic crypt with outside walls in Tudor topped by staircases in the open but covered in as in Blois (Loire Valley style). There are Peruvian stone buttresses holding up Tudor fire stations. There is a lift built in two steps. There is talk of a cable-car but it's been all talk for 25 years, so - - - -

Simla has been made the capital of this Himachel Pradesh province and is a growing city. All of the falling-down hotels are being used as Government buildings. The law courts are on a peninsular jutting out into the haze; the "Weights and Measures" office is an old squash court; "The Chalet (straight from a Xmas card) is a school.

Not all is like this. I climbed a hill behind the town and on the way strayed into the world of Emily Bronte. Old English cottages like "Oakwood Terrace" or "Fotheringway Castle" - the latter had a glass conservatory with wrought-iron titbits and was higher than the actual house and with run-down gardens to give a melancholy air. No car can ever reach this part of Simla and the path is 1 in 3 (or 1 in 4 - George, what is 45°? In five feet it fell five feet). The houses are still lived in but have the Indian owner's name under the house name.

At night after work, everyone starts walking home, because the Government buildings are everywhere as are the houses, and the main Mall is as busy as Wynyard Ramp and the coffee shops are full. Very Indian, indeed. Also faces are different - Iranian and Kashmiri with few of the Mongoloid strain, also very few dark Dravidians.

Our hotel, the Grand, was on the highest point and from the windows could be seen the whole Himalayan world. The hotel is administered under the Estates Acts, so is Government run. The price of room plus dinner/breakfast was R42 (\$5 Aust) for the two of us (we had a 4-room suite, but no water, as Simla is a 3 hr a day water town). Anyone would enjoy a stay here, but be careful of the monkeys - they pinch soap and towels off the balconys and can make lots of noise too. No beggars are in this part as it's too cold for them to survive. The climate in spring is very severe (only snowed two weeks ago) and we hired a radiator which was on 8 hrs every night. At this time of writing it is 104°F in Delhi, yet here snow is in the shadows and daffodils are popping up.

There is a roller-skating rink, 3 cinemas, two western restaurants - and views and views and views. Tunnels take pedestrians under the Mall in short cuts and it is an absolutely wonderful place to escape the heat of the plains.

The British build the weirdest of cities and it is all there still, fading fast, the opulence tatty. Only the arrogant British would build such a place.

I promise that I won't mention India ever again, but if you ever pass by Delhi there is beautiful sad Simla ***** awaiting you.

(***** recommended by Owen Marks and mother!)

Regards to my S.B.W. friends.

Owen Marks.

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WALKS NOTES FOR JUNE.

by Spiro Hajinakitas.

June

2,3,4,5
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- Queen's Birthday Weekend: Our new President, Fazeley Read, is leading a test walk in the Widden Brook area, not too far from Rylston. One encounters a variety of good scenery in this region, rugged wooded mountains, narrow bubbling creeks and open clear pastures. Good camp sites, bird and wildlife. Phone 909,3671(H).

2,3,4,5
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- Bob Younger is also leading a 3-day test walk in the Yerranderie Mt. Colong area. A very pleasant 35 km walk through some very interesting country. Good views of Yerranderie Peak and the Burragorang Valley. Well worth the drive to the Butch Camp starting point an hour or so further on through Oberon. Good lunch and grassy, flat camp sites assured. Phone 57,1158 (H).

4,5

- A two-day walk was to be led by Jack Perry. We have, sadly, just learned that Jack died on April 27th.

Sunday 4 - Barry Zieren is leading an easy day walk in the Kuring-gai National Park in the West Head region. Very good views of Lion Island, Palm Beach and Brisbane Waters. Phone 93,4830 (H).

10,11

- If you've ever been on a walk with Rod Peters and tasted his delicious home-made wines and wondered how he achieved them, then come along to his Home Wine Making School, Saturday evening and Sunday at St.Marys. Phone 623,0171 (B).

Sunday 11

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- Evans Lookout - Govetts - Grand Canyon - Neates Glen with Peter Miller in the Blackheath area. A most interesting and scenic Sunday test walk through some beautiful bushland and rain forests, breathtaking views of the Grose Valley and surrounding peaks. Phone 922,4016 (H).

Sunday 11

- Gordon Lee (contact in the clubroom) has a walk in the Heathcote area. Tuckawa Rill, Head of Navigation, Robertson Knoll, Uloomla Track, Karloo Pool, Heathcote. Train travel.

JUNE

16,17,18 - John Redfern is revisiting the Bonnum Pic - Wollondilly River area to see if the family of platypuses have had any family additions since they were sighted last year on the Wollondilly. Beautiful unspoilt bushland - 25 km of exhilarating walking. A test walk. Phone 808,1702.

16,17,18 - Another test walk with David Rutherford starting from Carlon's Farm, Splendour Rock and back via Yellow Pup, Cox River and Breakfast Creek. Mostly track walking, excellent camping, famous views from Splendour Rock. 40 km Medium. Phone 406,4571.

Sunday 18 - Jim Brown has a trip in the Wondabyne - Tunnel Hill area. Mainly track walking, pleasant views of Broken Bay, perhaps some early wildflowers. Train 8.30 am. Phone 81,2675.

Sunday 18 - Waterfall to Engadine via Uloola Falls and Kangaroo Creek with Neil Brown. A very popular and scenic walk in the Royal National Park. Phone (042) 94,1376. Train 8.46 (C).

23,24,25 - Wattagan Creek area with Brian Hart. Congewoi - Wattagan Creek - Mt. Warrawalong. A 30 km medium test walk west of Wyong. Spectacular views to the coast, deep creeks and heavily wooded forests. Phone 85,0355 (B).

23,24,25 - Kanangra - Bullhead Range - Mt. Kowmung - Chiddy's Obelisk - Christies Creek with Craig and Christine Austin. A 40 km medium/hard walk in the Kanangra area (1 hour or so past Jenolan Caves). A fair bit of climbing involved but well worth the effort to escape from Sydney and hide away in truly majestic and breathtaking country. Phone 80,3399.

Sunday 25 - Govett's Leap - Pulpit Rock - Hat Hill - Anvil Rock - Perry's Lookout - Blue Gum Forest - Junction Rock - Govett's Leap. A 16 km good Sunday test walk with Victor Lewin, just out from Blackheath. Splendid views of the Grose Valley. Enjoy the tranquil beauty of the Blue Gum Forest. Phone 50,4096 (H).

Sunday 25 - Another interesting and scenic walk in the Royal National Park with Paul Mawhinney. 17 km medium. Waterfall to Audley. Phone 799,2889.

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CONGRATULATIONS to Diane Southgate and John Fox who have just announced their engagement.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: These are now due and payable, and are as follows:-

Ordinary member	\$10	Subscription includes the
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