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## THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

Established June 1931

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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 Ann Ravn, Telephone 798,8607.

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### APRIL, 1982.

		Page
The 1982 Annual Re-Union	by Evelyn Walker	2
Tallong to Nowra	Wendy Hodgman	5
Conservation Notes	Alex Colley	6
Advertisement - Eastwood Camping Centre		7
New Zealand Memories	Patrick McBride	8
The Annual General Meeting	Barry Wallace	10
A Tree Falls in Blue Gum	Jim Brown	12
Proposed Expedition to the S.W. Corner of Fiordland National Park N.Z.	Peter Harris	13
Kedumba Connection	Bill Gamble	14
Canoeing the Shoalhaven River	Geoff Davidson	16
Social Notes for May	Jo Van Sommers	18
Annual Subscriptions	Barrie Murdoch	18

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THE 1982 ANNUAL RE-UNION.

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by Evelyn Walker.

As some 80-90 S.B.W. members and their families, friends and relations packed their cars and headed for the haven of Coolana on March 15 the uncertainty of the weather as to how to act resolved itself into a gentle, refreshing Scotch mist which set the tone for much of the weekend. It was time to re-une again. No one seems to know how this curious verb came into being, except as a derivative of the equally mysterious noun re-union, but the pleasant connotations of ample time for relaxed chat and good humour, for meandering on and in the river and general opportunities to maintain life-long friendships remain constant and draw people in.

On arrival, tents of every colour were found nestled among the trees. Red tents with orange flies, green tents with yellow flies, bright blue tents, a fascinating rust and yellow steel-ribbed igloo which intrigued several people, and in the middle two bright blue flies stretched between trees roofed over a space where the person you wanted to talk to was likely to be found, talking to someone else.

Small fires were lit and delicious aromas of all descriptions wafted between the trees as people prepared the inner man for the evening's festivities. A watch was maintained for our new president, Tony Marshall, elected at the A.G.M. three days earlier, but in vain. Had he chickened out? Gradually small groups walked over to the big camp fire, blazing hugely in the middle of a large semi-circle of fire-lit faces. But the president wasn't there. However, Geoff Wagg and Barbara Bruce stood up to try to get a musical response from the crowd. And they succeeded. With considerable expenditure of energy they led vigorous singing with the help of songsheets. Sometimes the key was thought to be set a little high or the pace a little slow by some and, bushwalkers being the independent people they are, and lacking a certain finesse ably demonstrated by our erstwhile singing group, a number of keys were chosen, close enough to those of the song-leaders, and a strange cacophony roughly approximating to the normally accepted tunes haunted the trees and drifted down to the Kangaroo River.

We were then handed over to the newsroom, after a warning and short pause to allow the feeble-hearted to make their escape, and after the announcement that the retirement pension was to be indexed to the salaries of federal politicians on a 30:1 basis, there followed the weather forecast which promised, among other startling things, an intense low over the federal electorate of Lowe, a high at Highams Beach, hot weather at Hotham and cooler at Coolana, rainy at Blayney and chilly on the Wollondilly.

There followed a few entirely spontaneous (?) limericks, culminating in the masterpiece:

Though hardly a match for cheetahs  
Some walkers are almost as fleet as  
Like Rostron and Marshall  
Who seem to be partial  
To footwear by Hajinakitas.

These entirely spontaneous limericks met with huge applause.

We were then informed that a new mapping organisation with the acronym Drongo planned to issue a range of maps on a scale of 1:1,000. While admitting the necessity of a huge number of new maps to cover the same ground as one of the old, it promised to produce the new maps in strip form, as demonstrated on Barbara Blizzard, who was tightly wrapped in what to the discerning looked remarkably like toilet paper. However, the obvious advantages of the technique and the other uses to which the map could be put were pointed out to the doubtful among us. And the orientation of the maps had sensibly been altered. No longer were they drawn with the top towards the north pole, on the assumption that no one could possibly wish to walk so far, but to Mt. Kosciuszko, with a special warning that walkers in N.S.W. and Victoria might find their maps diametrically opposed.

We then heard about a tribe of nomads who appointed a new chief on alternate years by the imaginative use of the word "Ug". The word has a wide range of meanings according to the tone, pitch and other linguistic qualities, but for those who speak only English it needed interpretation, efficiently done by Jim Brown. At last our new president Tony Marshall turned up and was presented with his badges of office, accompanied by the best wishes of all past presidents who were present.

There followed the harrowing tale of the green eye of the little yellow god and Mad Carew, who sustained a terrible injury requiring the services of a nurse. In she came -- dressed in a slinky black clinging dress, with a white cap and apron generously decorated with red crosses -- to minister to him. There was a stunned silence. Who was it? Underneath the luxuriant blond wig, the thick lipstick and strange contours the spies among us managed to detect the form of -- could it be? -- Ray Hookway? Later he reappeared without his uniform mincing round in the black dress with pearl necklace and bracelet with a lurex handbag, and a Mona Lisa smile on his face. And Jo Van Sommers was sighted, head wrapped in bandage from which a pencil torch -- or was it the green eye? -- shone gently. This act met with enthusiastic acclaim.

After further brilliant offerings from the hard-working repertory group supper time was announced, and a long queue gradually helped itself to a hot drink and large chunk of home-made fruitcake and munched in contented silence. Then, as the sleepy ones found their way back to their sleeping bags, the group round the fire continued yarning into the small hours.

During the night the familiar sound of rain pattering on canvas seemed to threaten the damper-making competition. However by breakfast the rain had subsided into mist again, which slowly cleared, and soon individuals could be seen with both hands hard at work in a billy. The great damper mixing had begun. The resultant culinary masterpieces were carried to the campfire ashes and duly buried, inspected and buried again with great care. Eventually the contents were deemed ready and, decorated with ferns and flowers, were triumphantly borne to the judgment rock, which had been decorated with an orange groundsheet. Appreciative oohs and ahs arose from the starving masses as each new offering appeared, until 12 were laid out for assessment, one loaf being made of wholemeal flour. Our venerable judges, Dorothy Dauntless and Jim Brown, used every sense they possessed -- including the sixth sense,

brought into play by the use of long blades of grass balanced in Jim's ears, over which the dampers were passed one by one. Finally they were broken open to determine how well cooked they were, and one damper was discovered to be filled with dozens of tiny chocolate eggs which were readily consumed by the younger members. First prize was awarded to Barry Wallace, the close runner-up being Gavin Jones, who had gained valuable experience on other damper-making occasions. But the final judgment -- that of popular acclaim which took the form of eating -- rested with the people, and the hot damper quickly disappeared, dripping with honey.

Resort was then had to the river, where bathing, liloing and canoeing were as popular as ever. Here the conversation turned naturally to health food (can anyone remember any bushwalk or other S.B.W. function in which the main topic isn't food?). Marcia Shappert suggested that recipes for favourite bushwalking foods should be published in the magazine, one of which could be her bran bread, an offer which she followed up with a large sample chunk, which drew much appreciation from all taste-testers. The idea seems a good one, and other recipes are sought of foods which are suitable in one way or another for bushwalking. What about toasted muesli, marinated steaks and the like? Please send them in -- we'd love to try them. And it isn't necessary in every instance to send a sample.

Another suggestion for the magazine was made -- that articles on Coolana and the Kangaroo Valley should be prepared. It seems that this is a series just waiting to be written, as the Coolana Committee discussed it some two years ago. We hope therefore to have articles on the purchase of the land, the building of the hut and floor, the local fauna and flora and the history of the area in subsequent issues. Good for you, Dot, George and Helen, John Redfern and anyone else who can contribute!

On the way up from the river we paused to admire the new tank which collects rain from the roof. Prepared by Wayne Steele and friends with an impressive array of bolts, the tank was recently brought in and installed by George Gray and Gordon Lee. Given a few heavy showers the tank should be able to supply enough water for any number of people camping in the area even if the creek dries up. A most useful acquisition.

Followed a leisurely lunch, in which Fazeley was heard loudly clucking while she fed her brood of children, and packing of gear and waving of goodbyes, as the cars turned their noses for home. There in the distance hung ominous clouds which flung their rain at us as we approached Sydney, and we realised how fortunate we had been that the weather had held in Kangaroo Valley and we had been able once again to enjoy the fun of an S.B.W. Re-union.

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AND NOW, in case you were wondering what the president was doing, here is Wendy Hodgman's account of a historic bike ride . . . .

TALLONG TO NOWRA.

(or how did you get to the Re-union?) by Wendy Hodgman.

The original plan was easy! A train to Berry on Saturday morning with our bikes, and then a pleasant two or three hours of cycling to Coolana for the Re-union. However, train timetables made this impossible, so when Bill came up with a brilliant idea late Thursday evening, we had no choice but to agree.

8.30 Saturday morning found us all assembled at Central - Tony Marshall, Bill Capon, Steve and myself. By 12 o'clock we were setting off from Tallong station along a fire trail, trusting ourselves to Bill's navigation and organisation. We made good progress over the gradually descending trail once we had shown Bill how to use all ten gears on his bike instead of only three. (A whole new world of cycling had opened up!) At the time, we thought the going a bit rough with wash-aways, rocks and gullies - little did we realise what was to come.

Arrangements had been made to meet Wayne Steele, our ferryman complete with dinghy (we hoped), at the junction of Bundanoon Creek and Kangaroo River at about 4.30. Consequently, when we had arrived at the lookout by 3.00 and could see the junction just 1,000 feet below we thought we were doing well. Then we realised that we had to get ourselves, our bikes and our gear down through the cliffs and thick scrub on a very steep slope. Two hours later we emerged onto a fire trail, having carried, passed, slid, wheeled and almost thrown the bikes down the difficult terrain. Crazy, battered and exhausted from pushing through scrub and over rocks, we found Wayne's face a most welcome sight. It was no consolation however when he informed us that the fire trail came right down from the lookout. (A lesson there for all leaders - look at the appropriate maps before setting out!)

By the time we had partaken of the essential cup of tea, it was 6 pm, and our newly elected Club President was showing some concern over his arrival at Coolana for his inauguration. Coolana still seemed a long way off.

Bill, Steve and I were ferried across the river and began the frustrating task of scrambling the 3 km along the water's edge back to Tallowa Dam. Meanwhile Wayne and Tony rowed (not rode) the bicycles to the dam in the dinghy (a strange sight for onlookers). I'm not sure which was the hardest - the rowing or the walking.

By the time Steve, Bill and I arrived at the car park, Tony had his bike loaded into Wayne's car, justifying his action by saying that he couldn't miss his inauguration. We conceded that he probably had a fair point there, but as it was after 7, almost dark, and we were exhausted and at the bottom of a long hill, we only agreed with some reluctance. Off they drove, while we began the long haul up the hill. The thought of food at the end of our trip, and of Spiro's Re-union supper, kept us going.

Coolana was a welcome sound an hour or so later, with Barbara Bruce's voice carrying several miles along the road. The fire looked inviting and the dry hut even more so. Although we missed the singing, speeches and skits, the supper was much appreciated and the company most enjoyable. The

ride out the next day over Mt. Scanzi was easy by comparison.

A most memorable and enjoyable Re-union. May more future Presidents arrive by bicycle (or other more devious means!).

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#### CONSERVATION NOTES.

by Alex Colley.

The South-West Tasmania Committee deployed a number of workers at polling booths in the electorate of Lowe during the by-election. They were successful in persuading some 11% of the voters to write "NO DAMS" on their ballot papers, despite the fact that many were deterred from doing so by fear that their vote would be invalidated. Mr. Wran was impressed by the conservation effort, and ex P.M. Sir William McMahon, whose resignation caused the by-election, said to one of the workers "You shouldn't have to do this". Many party workers at the booths helped hand out leaflets and the effort brought good media coverage.

The Colong Committee commissioned Michael Bell to draw up a Washpool National Park proposal, and Roger Lembit, Federation Conservation Secretary, to draw up plans for extension of Barrington Tops National Park. The FBW has been asked to contribute towards the cost of the Barrington proposal. The cabinet rainforest sub-committee will now have before it specific proposals for the reservation of the four largest rainforest areas - the Border Ranges, Washpool, Hastings and Barrington.

In October last year the World Heritage Council listed 11 new World Heritage sites. Three of these are in Australia. Kakadu was chosen because it possesses outstanding Aboriginal art, in addition to the best example of a range of ecosystems unique to northern Australia, the Great Barrier Reef because it possesses the world's longest stretch of coral reef, as well as the world's most diverse faunal collection, and Willandra Lakes Region, the richest fossil site in Australia, which includes both the arrival of homo sapiens and the extinction of the giant marsupials in its time span.

In the U.S. the Sierra Club presented a petition carrying more than a million signatures to the U.S. Senate, calling on Congress to replace Interior Secretary James Watt and resist the anti-environmental legislation of the Reagan Government. The campaign appears to have inspired Watt's surprise statement on February 21st in which he announced that the Reagan administration will seek legislation to ban energy and mineral development in the Nation's 80 million acres of wilderness areas to the end of the century. There is no such provision in this State.

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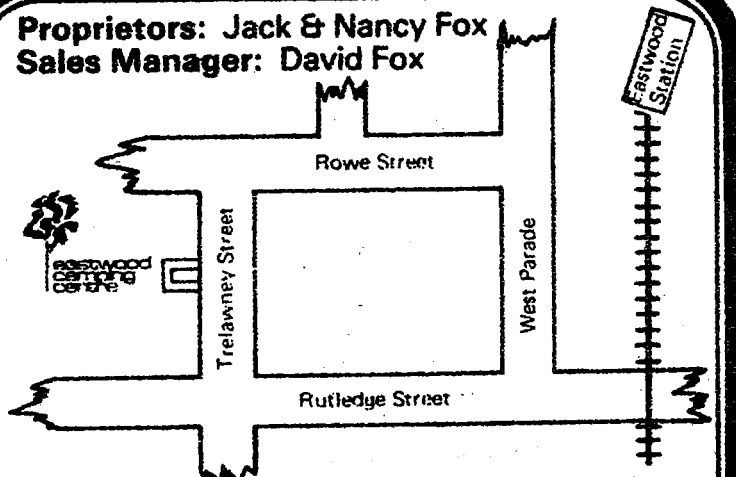
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NEW ZEALAND MEMORIES.

by Patrick McBride.

The calm evening air was filled with flying insects of all types, ranging from swarms of tiny gnats to fluttering half-size grey butterflies. Seated by a hot fire in woollen clothing I was led to reflect that, despite my impression of the ambient temperature, to the local fauna it was a balmy evening in peak summer conditions. Aspiring Flat must be a bleak place in winter when snow reaches to the valley floor and the brief days are shadowed by encircling walls. For us in January 1982 the days blazed long and golden, before easing to a slow twilight that left enough brightness in the sky to read fine print at 10 pm.

I was sitting alone now, drinking in the spectacular beauty of this glen in its evening garb and waiting to see if the soft silver of moonlight would reveal a new aspect. Spiro had finally given up the strain of focusing on his current paperback fiction and followed the other members of the party (Wendy Lippiat, Wayne Steele and Bill Capon) to tents and sleeping bags. The air was quite still and Turnbull Thomson Falls, one kilometre upstream, provided a background murmur. Nearer to hand Kitchener Creek, deflected by the grassy promontory on which we were camped, whispered its tale of tussock and glacier.

The past day had been good fun but a bit of a circus. Embarrassing too, in that Sisyphus is considered a tramper's mountain and we had reached nowhere near the top, mostly on account of deep, slushy snow and inadequate equipment. Part of the circus was leaving my lunch back at camp and having only emergency rations, an ancient tin of oily sardines, in my pack. Hardly the fare to accompany some of the finest scenery in Australasia, especially for a Pritikin dieter! However my cringing stomach was soon forgotten as the fabulous view unfolded. Mount Aspiring stood proud and regal over a world of snowfields and glaciers which hitherto we had only seen as white walls atop the Kitchener Cirque.

Perhaps this minor repulse heralded greater things to come, as had been the case earlier when our brush with Mount Jumbo had finished in wet retreat?

We had trekked up 1300 metres of loose scree gully from Jumboland Flats with the object of crossing directly to the Albert Burn and after some scrambly route-finding managed to gain a small top beside Mount Jumbo. From this vantage point, bodies braced against the wind and eyes half closed against the fine rain, we peered down a very sporting knife edge ridge which led to white unknowns in the swirling mist. At this time the leader acknowledged what the party had been in various degrees advocating for the last 600 metres; a return to the seductive greenness of the Wilkin Flats would bring greater delights than any matching of the challenge posed by the crossing into Albert Burn.

The following five days were spent exploring the upper Wilkin Valley which we would otherwise have missed and which proved a princely compensation. At Top Forks Hut I could hardly concentrate on my evening game of chess with Spiro as my eyes were drawn to the incredible peaks of Castor and Pollux



sparkling 1900 metres above us. Following up the North Branch had brought the excitement of ice floe hopping on a glacial lake where surrounding grey scree slopes and bare, moisture-blackened rock provided a setting of Antarctic starkness.

Suddenly the grass beside the camp blazed silver against the backdrop of shadow-darkened forest. Tatters of mist about the top of Sisyphus had parted to reveal the friendly disc of the near-full moon and in moments the whole valley was bathed in light. None of the daytime grandeur was lost. The sweep of the 1600 metre Kitchener Cirque was now like another dimension above, too remote for mortals, a playground of the gods. Round to the north, ice cliffs and snow slopes on the ridge leading to Fastness shone clear and bright over black rock, their soft luminosity holding the eyes with a gentle enticement so much more appealing than the glare of sunlight. At last the tiredness from a day's tramping in the mountains could be held at bay no longer, and slow steps led to a tent already sparkling with dew, and one final gaze back.

Three days later we were tramping uphill beside Hester Pinney Creek, boots wet from crossing the East Matukituki and our camp below at Junction Flat still in the blueness of early morning shadow. Ours was the only movement in this sombre world of moss and tree trunks. For all their luxuriant greenness of ferns and epiphytes, temperate rainforests are faunal deserts. Not even the air was stirring and one could sense eddies and ripples being created by our passing.

Abruptly we reached the treeline and after winding through a few scrubby outliers found ourselves in open country. Crossing the ecotone between forest and alpine grassland was always a landmark of practical if rather prosaic import since only the former is habitat for sandflies. High country brought the party relief from sandflies and the leader relief from complaints about sandflies. Several trip members were a bit paranoid about these insects even though it was only once, at the last camp in Fiordland, that sandflies were numerous enough to constitute a nuisance.

Long easy ridges now led upwards in graceful undulations, the warm scent of mountain meadows replaced the odours of moss and humus, and at our feet alpine flowers lifted their bright heads in greeting. A giant daisy (*Celmisia* sp.) with white petals around a yellow centre was particularly striking. At about 1100 metres the rarefied air induced more laboured breathing but no change of pace as instead of going directly to Albert Burn Saddle we diverged to the unnamed mountain to the north opposite Dragonfly Peak. This peak was composed of loose plates of slate (the renowned New Zealand "Weetbix" rock) bedded at a steep angle, and readily sliding over each other. Thoughtfully we pressed on. After all, how could the landscape collapse around us on such a magnificent day?

From near the top the view was breathtaking. Far below was our home at Junction Flat, a green triangle held by ribbons of translucent turquoise. Two lone beech trees growing near the centre of the flat proclaimed their enterprise and character. I thought of the relief map used as a display at Aspiring National Park Headquarters - if only the leaden-souled tourists shambling around that clay image could see the scintillating colours and

Olympian scale of the real country they would cast off their coats of lethargy and dance to the hills.

The ridge flowed smoothly down to Albert Burn saddle, a garden path of crushed slate from which protruded scattered tufts of grass and herbs steadfastly persisting in their efforts to colonise this barren ground. Some snow leads remained from last week's fall, blushing pink in patches where algae had multiplied on the surface. From the saddle the Albert Burn stood revealed as a beautiful classic glacier valley, a grassy paradise eminently suited to trampers and I resolved to sample its glories on a future trip.

While ambling downwards the idea came to bathe in one of the tarns we had passed coming up - the day was too good to hurry back to camp. The others made some excuse about washing in the Matuki and continued on.

Reclining on the softness of sun-warmed tussock I could see across the reflections in the tarn to a panorama of snow and rock. Mount Aspiring easily dominated all the other peaks, well deserving the poetry of its name. To the north one mountain was in soft contrast to all the craggy summits; Glacier Dome, a mound of shining ice capped by a tiny knob of rock. From time to time small avalanches of snow and rocks produced by the sun's heat would echo hollowly across the valley, sometimes discernible to the eye but more often on a hidden face or blended with a ribbon waterfall. I closed my eyes to fix the image and drew in a slow breath of the warm scented air. This was the real New Zealand that I would return to again and again.

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#### THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

The times were a little out of joint my friends, for there for collection were copies of the Annual Report. It seems there was not time for them to be mailed out, so they were held for collection.

Nonetheless, the President gonged the gong and called the 55 or so members present to order at around 2009 hours.

The Minutes of the previous general meeting were read, with no business arising.

Correspondence brought letters from Mary Unwin regarding the Washpool State Forest enclosing a letter from the Minister for Planning and the Environment on the subject, from the South-West Tasmania Committee advising of a "No Dams" rally, from Kath Brown proposing the creation of a position of "Magazine Production Manager", together with some change of address notices and circulars.

The Annual Reports were then formally presented, and after a three minute reading period, taken as read. The Financial Report was presented and adopted with some passing queries about magazine covers and investments.

So then we had reached the glorious moment of - - - "the suspension

of such of the Standing Orders as would permit the election of officers to proceed concurrently with the business of the meeting" - - and the election of Craig Shappert and George Gray as scrutineers.

You all know who was elected to what, it was in last month's magazine.

The Treasurer's Report revealed that we began the month with \$832.14, received \$297.36 in income and spent \$249.03 to close the month with \$880.47. The Coolana Account had a closing balance of \$157.15.

Federation Report indicated that that organisation is examining a proposal to take out collective insurance cover for affiliated clubs, that an audio visual presentation on the Washpool Wilderness is available, that the F.B.W. Re-union will be held on the Shoalhaven, that there will be a S. & R. abseiling instructional weekend held 20,21 March, a S. & R. exercise over 3,4 April and a 'Safety in the Bush' weekend over 19,20 June. The Federation conservation report brought mention of proposed roads in the Apsley Wilderness, a study to be undertaken on the Barrington Tops area and a request from Span Unlimited for permission to place a memorial plaque near the Camels Hump access route to Claustal Canyon.

In a break with tradition, the Walks Report began with a report of David Rostron's Morong Deep walk of 12,13,14 February. There were 19 people on the trip in very pleasant, sunny conditions. Ian Debert reported 18 people on his "nice walk" with swimming that same weekend. Joe Marton said much the same for the 18 people on his Sunday Waterfall to Otford walk. Jim Brown, on the other hand, had four starters on his Heathcote to Heathcote walk and reported "nothing in particular, but, well, a joyous day".

The following weekend 19,20,21 February saw Wayne Steele's Black Range trip rated as a non-starter. Peter Harris had 12, plus Frank Taeker, out on his Saturday start Du Fours Creek, Wollangambe Canyon trip, and of the two day walks Marcia Shappert had 11 or 12 people on her not-quite-to-programme Waterfall to Heathcote trip, and John Newman led Jim Percy's 14 starters from Lilyvale to Bundeena while Jim relaxed (?) in hospital.

There was another Jim Percy trip the weekend of 26,27,28 February. Ian Debert led that one, with 12 starters enjoying the luxury of Coolana. Charlie Brown's Cox River trip was cancelled. Ralph Pengliss led 30 people, with some dropouts, on his Sydney Harbour bushwalk on Sunday the 28th, and David Cotton had 11 people on his bee walk. Peter Christian's Heathcote trip attracted 9 people.

Over the weekend of 5,6,7 March Tony Marshall reported low river conditions for the five people who attended his Kangaroo River trip, whilst Bob Hodgson cancelled his second attempt on the Cess Pit Canyon. Gordon Lee had four people on his rock climbing day on the Saturday and 12 people on the Sunday abseiling instructional. Meryl Watman reported 7 people on her Heathcote to Waterfall walk, finishing the walk at 1405; and the Walks Report.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch; the elctions were over and the discussion

of Annual Subs raged to and fro, and back again. At one stage the meeting passed a motion which was subsequently ruled invalid under the Constitution. I guess we got it right, in the end.

Then there was a motion of thanks to the retiring committee, carried by acclamation, the announcements, and the President's cry of "Let us Re-une"; and then the meeting closed at 2200.

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#### A TREE FALLS IN BLUE GUM.

by Jim Brown.

Somewhere recently - and it may have been in the Federation supplement which often accompanies the magazine - I read that most of the mature trees in Blue Gum Forest are of similar age, and that the day would come when quite a big portion of the trees would die simultaneously.

I was reminded of this a few days ago when passing one week-day afternoon through the Forest. It was flat calm - not a puff of wind in the valley - and several days since the previous rains. Quite abruptly there was a long-drawn-out crackling, splintering noise two or three hundred metres distant, culminating in a thunderous crash. Looking in the direction of the noise I could see flying leaves and fragments of bark.

A little later I explored. A large tree, but not one of the very largest in the forest, had evidently been rotten at the base. I don't think the decay would have been evident to a casual observer. At all events, it had suddenly shattered and fallen, and its trunk had become entangled with branches of a smaller tree, which had also been uprooted and shattered. The ground around for thirty or forty metres was covered with broken branches, some of them almost large enough to be a respectable tree in their own right.

Of course, camping in Blue Gum Forest has been prohibited by the Parks & Wildlife Service for some years, but judging from the recent fireplaces and collections of firewood, the ban is neither observed nor strictly policed. On other grounds, however, it seems that it may be wise to refrain from camping in an area where quite a colony of trees may be approaching the end of their normal life span.

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PROPOSED EXPEDITION TO THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF  
FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK, NEW ZEALAND - FEBRUARY '83.

(Cascade Cove, Dusky Sound - Chalky Inlet)

by Peter Harris.

The south-west corner of Fiordland National Park is a remote alpine wilderness, little visited by trampers and climbers. The peaks rise to about 4,500 metres above a myriad of glacial lakes and deep, wild river valleys. It is an area which pits the human soul against some of nature's most beautiful and demanding challenges - a spiritual satisfaction, and a lifetime-lasting memory of rocky ramparts, cloud-piercing peaks of mica and quartz, virgin streams and brooks, alpine meadows and lakes set like shimmering jewels carelessly scattered on the ground. The ultimate challenge is survival against the combined wild elements of torrential rain and snow, electrical thunderstorms which split peaks asunder, and the human element of maintaining high morale against countless natural difficulties.

The criteria for survival is impeccable planning and research, time, physical fitness, experience in extended walking trips to remote wilderness, and continuation of a high morale at all times and on all occasions.

In February 1980, four of us successfully completed a difficult first crossing from Lake Manapouri to Cascade Cove, Dusky Sound, via the peaks of the Heath Mountains, Dark Cloud Range and Evans Range. We successfully accomplished the first traverse of the Evans Range including the first ascent of Mt. Evans, and the third ascent of Mt. Sparrman (first climbed in 1773 by Anders Sparrman from Capt. James Cook's "Resolution"). Our expedition was dependent upon only one air-dump of food, thus heavy packs, and uncertainty of a forward route made the trip more demanding. The region of complete and total spiritual bliss was discovered in the Evans Range, and in the many glacial lakes to the south (towards Preservation Inlet and Chalky Sound).

It is proposed to conduct a second expedition to this area, commencing after a flight to Cascade Cove, and pre-placement of food deposits in several strategic campsites. The termination of the trip will be Cascade Cove, thus allowing much more time (and less pack carrying) to investigate and enjoy this wild remote wilderness with all its magnificent natural features. It will involve walking only; there will be no technical climbing involved.

Initially it is proposed that the activity will occur over a three-week period in Feb/March 1983, since the weather is most stable at this time of year. All participants will assist with the planning and preparation which should start by June, 1982.

Participation is invited from members of the Sydney Bush Walkers who desire to visit one of the most beautiful wilderness areas on earth. There probably won't be a second chance! Exposure to forceful natural elements and the necessity to maintain a high morale require that the walk be graded hard; however because of pre-placed food drops and a high frequency of proposed one-day walks from a variety of different base camps, the standard of walking is only of medium grade. The key is safety, experienced leadership, party involvement in planning and decision-making. The party does

not move in bad weather conditions.

Should you wish to participate, or else have a strong interest but question your abilities, phone me one night (80-0322(H)), and we'll discuss it further. It is an expedition to a wild area of remote wilderness which you won't forget in a lifetime of walking and dreaming.

P.S. There are no sandflies above the treeline! The expedition may terminate with a charter cruise north to Milford Sound, exploring all the majestic fiords along the way.

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#### KEDUMBA CONNECTION.

by Bill Gamble.

Most bushwalkers will have covered the well-worn path from the Scenic Railway or Golden Stairs to Mount Solitary. It is a brisk day walk with time for a side visit to Ruined Castle and leisurely lunch at Chinaman's Cave. The back end to Mount Solitary is not quite as accessible (which may be considered a good or bad thing depending upon one's viewpoint); and, as a consequence, few approach it from the east ridge to The Col. For those who do so, there is the promise of terrain quite different from that along the usual route. Map references are Katoomba and Jamison in the 1:31680 series.

Ian Debert has included both sections in the walks programme for the last two years in overnight walks around June/July. For me, they have opened one of the most interesting routes I have encountered in the Blue Mountains abutting the main road/rail links. Those who are inclined to dismiss the walk as covering too much familiar ground or too close to civilisation; or, perhaps, put off by doubtful water quality in Kedumba Creek, should think again.

It is necessary to arrange a car swap before the walk commences, or road bash about six miles from Wentworth Falls if using public transport, which may be a little offputting too, but the time involved is well worth while. Do not be dissuaded.

The starting point is beyond the Sanatorium on the King's Tableland - take the Kedumba Valley Road which passes to the right of the hospital and continue down to the locked gate. While waiting for the car swap to be completed, or resting after the road bash, there are spectacular cliff-top views to be seen a mere thirty yards from the roadside, and from the gate if one wishes to sit or stand on it.

In 1980 Ian had about fourteen people on this walk, and of the eight who turned up in 1981, five had come the previous year. For the record, the 1981 party comprised Ian Debert, Joy Hynes, Sue and Bill Capon, Leith Docherty, Derek and Lyn Wilson, and the writer.

The walk proper starts from the gate and proceeds for about fifty minutes along the dirt road which passes through the cliffs to the buttress below Kedumba Walls. There the route turns off the road (rather subtly I might add, about five minutes along a flat section of the road running generally south and parallel to Kedumba Walls) on to a little-used route down to Kedumba Creek. The road walk is not without interest, as one

cannot but be impressed by the engineering work involved in breaching the cliff-face, and the fine views from the road.

The route from the road down to Kedumba Creek is probably best understood by walking it in company with someone who knows the way, rather than trying to understand my description. Briefly, though, one starts down a sort of disused fire trail, becoming a track on an ever-steepening route which bears left around the back of a gully and sidles down its farther side, ending up in the bottom of the gully alongside the near dry wash of a seasonal creek bed. Eventually, one emerges on to Kedumba Creek and then heads upstream for about five minutes to a reasonable campsite adjacent to cliffs on the opposite bank.

The campsite of 1980 had taken a bit of a battering in between visits and the fire in 1981 was lighted on a much reduced bench of packed sand above the creek. Considering the drought conditions throughout the period one can but speculate on the force of the flash flood which ripped through the original campsite. There is still the choice of a tent pitched on the hard sand or a few yards away among the tall trees which dominate this part of the creek flats.

The need to boil water is an excuse for a generous campfire and plentiful brews of tea. Overnight cold and damp tend to fall heavily on the campsite and a warmer alternative may be to camp about one hundred feet above the creek on the opposite side - it just means a little more effort to draw water and find wood. An advantage could be to place one at the beginning of the ridge walk up to The Col on Mount Solitary, without having to cross the creek first up.

Last year, on the Sunday morning, we walked up through thick mist to a beautiful, cloudless day atop Mount Solitary - at one stage we seemed to be adrift on a sea of mist - whereas in 1980 it had been clear throughout.

Probably, the most satisfying part of the walk - and this is what is missed by those who only day walk from the other end - is the climb from Kedumba Creek to The Col, and the walk along the top of Mount Solitary to Chinaman's Cave. It is a walk in open forest up a spur ridge to The Col, steady at first but increasing in steepness towards the cliff line until hands and feet are necessary. At the top of the buttress a dead-end track sidles around the cliff line to the north, while the track to The Col forks and continues steeply. About two-thirds of the way up, there is an abundance of bellbirds and the air is filled with their sounds - it is like walking through an aviary. At The Col are fine views to east and south-east and to Lake Burragorang. The track between there and Chinaman's Cave, across the top of Mount Solitary, is generally clear and keeps to the Katoomba side until shortly before descending to the cave, when it swings to the opposite side giving the opportunity for good views south beyond Cox's River.

There is no need to describe the familiar route out to the Scenic Railway - for Sydney Bushwalkers it seems to become an excuse for a headlong rush along a beaten track, or a time to spread out, lost in their thoughts and the 4.55 pm deadline for the last ride of the day on the railway.

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CANOEING THE SHOALHAVEN RIVER.

by Geoff Davidson.

(Over the past year or so, several S.B.W. parties have carried out trips by canoe on the waters of Tallowa Dam, at the junction of the Shoalhaven and Kangaroo Rivers. The following account of a trip by canoe from Sewells Point (near Nerriga) to Tallowa Dam, covers six days in January, 1982, and was written by Geoff Davidson, a member of both the River Canoe Club of N.S.W. and S.B.W., and was originally published in the March issue of "Splash", the monthly magazine of the R.C.C. It is reprinted here with permission of the Editor of "Splash". Days 4, 5 and 6 of the trip also relate to parts of the river often visited by walking parties. Ed.)

Day 1

On Saturday morning 11 canoeists, 8 assorted canoes and a few hanger-ons were seen clambering down and up the steep side of the Shoalhaven River at Sewells Point. For the benefit of future trippers, the best way to tackle it is not by putting the full canoes on your heads but by carrying the gear in rucksacks, and the canoes empty, and if anything is put down hold onto it or it will continue on its way without you.

Lunch was had after the first trip, and after the cars had left for Tallowa Dam the remainder made their second trip. Each downward trip took an hour and the upward trip half as long, but generous rest periods were needed at the end of each trip. The evening was fine and the water level low but excellent for swimming and all slept well, after prayers for rain.

Day 2

Day two dawned fine and we were all eager to begin the trip. Due partly to the low water level the first few kilometres were very slow and the Canadians, especially, took a beating. The performance of the polypropylene B-Line hire canoe was watched with interest, since it could not be repaired.

At morning tea much discussion over maps ensued but despite having a map attached to one of the leading canoes, we were having trouble monitoring our progress. After morning tea the trip proceeded more smoothly, although with much scraping. That evening we camped surprisingly close to where the leader had intended, near Trail Race Creek, high up on a sandy bank.

The day's casualties had included one paddle and one Canadian, but the best was yet to come, in the form of rain. As we sat around the fire cooking dinner and drinking tea, we could hear and see some thunderstorm activity. As it approached, we retired to our tents and flys, but its fury surprised us, and after 10 minutes huddled up in tents and flys holding up the poles, a sea of mud washed through the camp and we all had to evacuate our campsite for higher, rocky ground. One tent was eventually dug up from 80 mm of sand, while the site of another was quickly becoming a 1.2 m washaway. Soon the worst of the storm passed but we were all cold and lay awake for hours at night listening nervously to landslides, wondering how much gear had been washed away and how much the river would come up.

Day 3

Fortunately it was fine, if a little cloudy, and we all took it rather



leisurely, trying to sort out the previous evening's chaos, dry our gear and repair the canadians. By midday spirits had lifted considerably since very little gear of any importance had been lost and the river had come up only 60 cm. We paddled on that afternoon through glorious scenery and excellent, if reasonably easy, rapids. We camped at the end of the Great Horseshoe Bend and out came all the wet gear again. Luckily it only rained occasionally during the night, and that was fairly light.

#### Day 4

Surprisingly enough the river was still up and we were all rather eager again, if a little apprehensive, at the thought of the "washing machine". One of our members had done the trip a couple of years before and we all made the mistake of relying on his memory to tell us where this rapid was. Once we came across it we couldn't miss it and after a quick look some of us decided definitely to give it a go, and others, to bypass it. Lengthy precautions were made, including tying life jackets to a rope and the perching of photographers on rock pinnacles. Our illustrious leader donned crash hat and proceeded to show us how to do it. Yours truly also donned crash hat and surfaced right side up. Then the more experienced of the three canadians shot it successfully. After that came fun and games for all, with one young lady managing to capsize three times, while the other canadian went in for a good "wash" with one occupant and one keen rescuer hanging on. All were safely rescued eventually and after a leisurely morning tea we proceeded on to the Block Up Gorge.

In a number of places there were spectacular, wispy waterfalls and we stopped for a long lunch at Fordham Canyon. Our intended campsite that evening was opposite the old Tallong chimneys near where the food dump had been planted a week and a half before.

It was towards the end of our lunch stop that the river seemed to rise at least 15 cm in about half an hour, and one canoe took off on its own down two rapids. That afternoon while two canadians again made use of their repair kits - for the continuing after effects of that first day - most of us took a look at the old chimneys and marvelled at what must have been for some few years a very active copper mining and smelting operation. That evening we had a communal dinner consisting of mixed Vesta curries and baked potatoes, washed down with wine and followed by prunes, blackberries and custard.

#### Day 5

This day was not notable for anything in particular, just an enjoyable, relaxing, leisurely day, paddling an excellent river with interesting but not difficult rapids. Louise Reach was paddled with ease due to the current but the main rapid on the right hand side was considered a little too hazardous, so we all proceeded down the left hand side, which was in itself quite interesting. That afternoon we stopped early at Tryers Gorge where we were promised a nice, deep, clear pool for swimming, by our leader. This was not to be, but it was a very pleasant campsite, with clean water.

Day 6 - began warm and sunny and we all donned suntan lotion and neck protectors. We had lunch at Billy Bulloo's Canyon after a most interesting submarine effort by the orange B-Line canadian. Below Canoe Flat was a nice Grade 3 rapid with plenty of pressure waves and haystacks, and our leader, who was not wearing his bash hat, managed to capsize where most of us had little trouble. Later at Fossicker's Flat our illustrious leader again capsized

and Molly's canadian, which had previously not capsized, got into a rather tricky back eddy after successfully negotiating the rapid, and managed to capsize.

There remained only three more gravel races before we were on the dam water and paddling became rather difficult. After much discussion democracy decreed that we all paddle on to the dam wall, arriving about 7 pm. Unfortunately we didn't make it to the pub in time for dinner, so we decided to go on to Nowra for an excellent Chinese meal, where we all agreed that it had been an epic trip that none of us would have missed.

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#### SAFE CANOEING - Some suggestions from the R.C.C.

The individual should equip himself with safety gear such as buoyancy vest, crash hat, sandshoes or wet-boots, spray-deck and a properly maintained and fitted canoe (with buoyancy, decklines or slalom loops, and no leaks). A basic first aid kit and repair kit should be carried, and any necessary spare clothing. Gear should be tied in in such a way that it cannot entangle the feet in a capsize in rough water. If capsized; don't try to turn the canoe back upright in the water. Guide it to the bank upside down and full of air, then right it. Don't change places in canoes.

Never less than three canoes in a group.

When a rapid is encountered, stop, inspect and if shootable, proceed, one canoe in the rapid at any one time, then wait in the slack water below until all have arrived.

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#### SOCIAL NOTES FOR MAY.

by Jo Van Sommers.

Wednesday, May 19th. - Films from the National Film Board of Canada.

Tomorrow Winter Comes. A group of downhill skiers decide to desert the crowded slopes and learn to ski cross-country.

Ice Birds. Winter climbing of the Crystal Pillar icefall.

How to Build an Igloo. A block by block description of how it is done.

DINNER before the meeting will be held at Chehades Lebanese Restaurant, 270 Pacific Highway, Crow's Nest at 6.30 pm.

Wednesday, May 26th. - Ski Touring. Slides and commentary by David Rostrom and Craig Austin.

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