
THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER
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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 Cahill Community Centre (Upper Hall), 34 Falcon Street, Crow's Nest. Enquiries concerning the Club should be referred to Ann Ravn, telephone 798-8607.

EDITOR: Evelyn Walker, 158 Evans Street, Rozelle, 2039.
Telephone 827-3695.

BUSINESS MANAGER: Bill Burke, 3 Coral Tree Drive, Carlingford, 2118.
Telephone 871-1207.

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Helen Gray.

TYPIST: Kath Brown.

DUPLICATOR OPERATOR: Phil Butt.

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CONSERVATION NOTES - THE COLONG COMMITTEE.

by Alex Colley.

Those who were active in the Club during the late sixties and early seventies probably know something of the work of the Colong Committee, and a number of members are amongst its regular supporters. Many, however, are not familiar with its work, even though its overall conservation objective, the preservation of wilderness, is the same as that of the Club and the Federation.

The Committee was created in 1968, when the Metropolitan Portland Cement Co. (a subsidiary of A.P.C.M.) proposed to mine 50 million tons of limestone at Mount Armour. A mining lease was granted over the area, which intruded far into the proposed Kanangra-Boyd National Park and had previously been a reserve for the preservation of Colong Caves. The Sydney University Bushwalkers called a meeting to oppose the mining, at which I represented the S.B.W. At this meeting a Committee was formed to carry on the campaign. I was co-opted by the Committee in 1969 and have worked with it since, becoming Hon. Secretary in 1976.

Another "hole" was created in the proposed park when the Government gazetted 15,000 acres of the Boyd Plateau, in the northern section, most of which was a reserve for the protection of flora and fauna, as part of the Konangaroo State Forest, with the intention of bulldozing the area and planting pines. The preservation of the Boyd became the second objective of the Committee. Bushwalkers can well imagine what their favourite walking area would have been like with a roaring quarry complete with roads, slurry pipelines, dams on the Kowmung and the like in the south, and the highlands of the north crowned by a pine plantation.

The Committee was soon drawn into the fight to preserve other wilderness areas such as Bongonia (limestone mining), Lake Pedder (hydro dam), Wollongambe wilderness (gas pipe line), Kakadu (uranium mining) and the Eden forests (woodchipping). It became evident that all wilderness areas were threatened by development of one sort or another so the Committee was formed into a national wilderness society. In order to give it financial and legal standing, it became a limited company in 1973. It has no members, except its directors, but it has more of these than the B.H.P., or perhaps any other company - 25 in all. It has a large number of supporters, many of whom have been with it since the early days, who subscribe to the Colong Bulletin (now in its 73rd issue) and provide funds. Any supporter is welcome at its fortnightly meetings, and is eligible to be made a director if keen enough to attend regularly. This form of organisation has proved very effective. Those interested to participate in work and decisions do so. No time is wasted carrying inactive members.

The campaign to save the Kanangra-Boyd wilderness was a turning point in the fight to preserve our dwindling wilderness remnants. For perhaps the first time the entire conservation movement, then consisting of over 100 societies, was united in support. By reason of the widespread publicity achieved the public became aware of the issue, and very sympathetic. This was not achieved without a good deal of effort and original newsworthy projects such as a relay run from Colong to Parliament House, an abseil down the State Office Block during a demonstration at Parliament House, a petition to

Parliament by over 100 prominent doctors and another from Catholic priests. One of the most effective ploys was to sell one share in A.P.C.M. to each of 1200 shareholders. Some 300 of these shareholders or their proxies attended the company's annual general meeting converting it into what "The Sun" described as "The most theatrical gathering of its kind in Australia". At one meeting the shareholders sang "Happy Birthday" and "For he's a Jolly Good Fellow" when it was announced that a 72 year-old director sought re-election, and a lady accused the Board of sexual discrimination because her dividend was 2 cents, whereas her husband received 3 cents. Although the venue of the next meeting was moved to Melbourne, attendance was not affected.

By 1975 both Colong and the Boyd were saved. One or two members of the Committee thought that perhaps it should wind up. A meeting was held to discuss its future. It was unanimously decided that the experience it had gained should not be wasted. Three new goals were adopted. There were:- (1) The creation of a Border (Macpherson) Ranges National Park. (2) The creation of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park. (3) Kakadu National Park. The name "Colong Committee" was retained both because it was derived from the Committee's origin, and because of its now considerable publicity value.

Most of the Blue Mountains is now national park, though some logging will go on until next April. The State Government has announced its intention of creating a narrow strip along the Queensland Border as a national park, though this is no substitute for a wilderness park. The Australian Government has created a Kakadu National Park, though it will be little more than a surround to three enormous uranium mines which will remove some 20 billion dollars' worth of uranium.

The Border Ranges park remains the Committee's No.1 objective. This campaign has now escalated, by reason of the widespread publicity achieved, into a campaign to save all major rainforest remnants. A State cabinet sub-committee chaired by Mr. Wran has been formed to decide the issue. The Committee's second objective is now park management, to ensure wilderness protection. Several submissions have been made and a working committee formed consisting of representatives of the Colong Committee, the National Parks Association, the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs and Messrs. Armstrong and Starling of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The third objective is now the reform of the Forestry Commission, so that the Commission's function will be not to log "to the limits of economic accessibility" as now, but to re-establish worked out forests and re-afforest derelict areas and eroded lands. A lawyer is drafting a Bill for the Committee which would give effect to this aim. The Committee is also helping in the "no dams" campaign. A special issue of the Colong Bulletin on the subject is planned.

Although many of the members of the Committee, such as Charles Culberg (Treasurer, ex S.B.W.), Milo Dunphy, Jim Somerville and Ian Land are bushwalkers, its strength lies in the fact that it attracts support from most of the community, barring the anti-conservationists. Its collective membership embraces a wide range of professional experience, and it is assisted by many highly qualified scientists. Most of its members are on the executive of one or another of the leading conservation organisations, such as the Australian Conservation Foundation, The National Parks Association, the Nature Conservation Council and the Federation of Bush Walking Clubs. This ensures close liaison with such bodies. The S.B.W. has given valuable support to the Committee in the past and will, I hope, continue to do so.

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SNOWY SOLO.

by Gordon Lee.

This is the fourth year in succession that I have programmed my "Snowy Classic". The first year I had 17 bodies, the second, 14, third, 2 and this year - one! Perhaps there's a lesson to be learned here. Certainly the wrong dating in the programme didn't help. This walk has always started on Boxing Day not Xmas Day. It was a 2 x 4 day walk, not 7 days straight and Guthega Power Station comes in only at the beginning and end.

This year there was to be two others with whom I made arrangements. Unfortunately they mistook the meeting place. So after waiting from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm I decided to go it alone.

An hour and threequarters later I had walked up the Aqueduct track to White's River Hut. There I sorted out my gear, left half my food in the ratproof cupboard and planted the 2 doz cans for my New Year's Eve party up the creek.

A rather battered party arrived to share the hut for the night - they had come from Kiandra and were on their way to Kosciusko.

In the morning I left with them and accompanied them as far as Consett Stephen Pass. There I stopped on the eastern ridge and made for the Pondage. After lunch, just past the Pondage on Farm Creek, I headed up the track to Illawong Lodge. Here I came across two Queenslanders who didn't know a great deal about the country so I shepherded them to a previously used campsite just off Spenser's Creek near the road. There I left them and moved up the road to Charlotte's Pass.

It had been showering on and off all day, but now it decided to get at it in earnest. I pitched my tent just off the road near the gate and after eating my next day's lunch for tea, bedded down.

I woke a couple of times during the night. Everything was calm, no rain; things augured well for the morning so I addressed myself to sleep confident of a dry start up the main range.

What the hell was happening? Waking with the dawn I found the wind had got up, changed direction 180° and rain was pouring through the blown tent flaps, which I hadn't secured. So there I was, looking down at 18" of wet sleeping bag and gazing out at thick, low Snowy Mountains cloud. What to do? Close flaps, bed down again for the next couple of hours.

Still raining. Get up, pack up and head for that haven, Khandahar, eight km down the road at Perisher.

There I learned to quaff large measures of spirituous liquor; to play "500"; that my voice was more melodious to my ears than those of others and that closeknit community living is not quite my thing. However I enjoyed the stay - the discussions, especially on women's rights - the food and drink and the daywalk on the Main Range. There to witness the miraculous skiing off the Townsend cornice of David Rostron, who would, I'm sure ski the frost of his freezer if it were possible.

Mine host Bill Burke very kindly dropped me at Charlotte's Pass at 8.30 am on the 29th (remember I had started on the 26th), and from there I went up past Blue Lake and on to Twynam. I had never walked the route before which

I will call Tate SW Ridge. How on earth Tate East was ever called such has always been a mystery to me for it is almost due south of Tate. From Twynam you pass those lumps of rock marked Anton, Anderson and Main Bluff, then Tate.

Although from almost any high point on the Main Range Tate stands out as a dark prominence, when standing on the grassy verge on the eastern side it is not in the least impressive and you have to look to find the trig.

In all the time I have spend in the Park in summer since 1968 I have never seen it looking so attractive. In most areas the grass was lush, the wild flowers already in profusion (I still think the best time for them is mid-January on) and the snow fantastic.

After I paused on the Rolling Ground for a short lunch break (what a glorious day) I pushed on towards Whites. These days the Snowy in summer is almost like George Street in Sydney. Each year the traffic increases exponentially. The NPWS-generated enthusiasm around Charlotte's Pass, Blue Lake and Kosci has spread like some devastating contagion which I find almost abhorrent. I don't want to seem "dog-in-the-mangerish" and I don't have any answers, but can't see how this is going to be of benefit in the long term, for they have increased the usage but haven't the manpower either to police or maintain the area.

At 3.15 pm I was back at Whites. I couldn't resist the temptation. I slipped up the creek and got myself a beer. It was delicious. After resting in the shade savouring my beer, gathering wood, welcoming more guests and sorting myself out I decided to do some of my washing to save me the chore the following day.

I must confess that I have changed my mind in regard to huts in the Park. Whites River Hut which would have the highest usage of any in the Kosciusko National Park was in the best condition for many years, that is, the hut surrounds; actually it was comparable to the first time I saw it in 1968. Naturally firewood is scarce in the area and the hut is 14 years older and 14 years more neglected and vandalised. I fear the Kosciusko Huts Association has not been entirely successful. As I have observed, little has been done to maintain this hut in the last four years.

Whites River Lurgy. Maybe I have a cast iron stomach but since 1968 I have spent approximately 396 hours (16½ days) in or near Whites and must have drunk dozens of litres of Whites River water during that time. At no time have I or anyone associated with me ever suffered from the dreaded Lurgy. The rumour has even got as far as Victoria, so please don't spread this disgusting story.

Since the snow season was the best since 1964, the snow drifts still remaining were the largest and most numerous that I have ever encountered. From Tate to Consett Stephen there was an almost continuous drift. And as I have previously noted the good condition of the Park is perhaps due in no small measure to the quality of the Snow Season.

Back to the walk. It was so designed that after walking for four days there is a rest day and a New Year's Eve party. Those who wished could go home for New Year or if desired join only for the last four days.

I must recall what happened on the first of these walks in '78-'79. At about 8.00 pm it was realised by some of the male members of the party that the following day (31st) was New Year's Eve and they were grogless. I forget who said, "Do you mind if we slip into Jindabyne for some grog for tomorrow?" My reply, "If you think you can get to J. before 10, go your hardest." Four bodies raced off down the road to Guthega Power Station. At 1.00 am the same four bodies staggered into the hut bearing their offerings. One doz cans, 4 litres of wine, one bottle of Scotch, potato chips and a tape recorder. They had run down to the Power Station in 45 mins and got to J. by 9.50, had a couple of quick ones, bought the loot and returned. Two of those who participated were Ray Turton and Bill Capon. I've forgotten the others.

Needless to say, the party was a huge success. What with the three-quarter Xmas cake left by someone, Margaret Bentley's popcorn, Ray's excellent pastry cooking and all the other goodies, the table was loaded. One of the best New Year's parties I've been to.

This year things were a little different. I had to invite a couple of guests to share a beer, some popcorn and my steamed pudding and custard.

The following day it rained again and I decided not to venture forth. I was joined by some South Australians of similar mind and under patient tutelage I learned to play some simple bridge.

On the 2nd the wind had gone into the west so I expected good weather for the next four days. At 8.00 am I left for all stations north. Up over Gungahen and on up the Kerries heading for Mawson's and the Big Bend. As always Gungahen was windy. I've never been there yet and found calm conditions. However, wind or no wind the view is worth the suffering. In the tin I didn't find a logbook but there was a slip of cardboard recording Richard Fox and Gordon Lee's visit of 1981. The only difference being I was one day later this year.

I had lunch at Mawson's and was joined by a large party of C.M.Ws. who seemed surprised when I told them I intended getting to Jagungal and on to Rocky Bogong that afternoon.

No matter from which direction you approach the Big Bongong it dominates the landscape for kilometres. A majestic lump of rock, the delightful green apron on its southern approach always a satisfying sight.

I didn't stay long on Jagungal because of the wind, and dropped off the southwest spur to the road near the head of the Tumut River. Followed the road to the edge of the Bogong Swamp, crossed the Tooma to the foothills on the west side and followed the old, almost obliterated road on that side, round to and across the Tooma once more. Then up the hill to camp below Rocky Bogong. This meant that I had covered nearly 30 km in 10 hours, for by this time it was just after 6.00 pm. So much for that day.

Ice was on everything in the morning. The condensation inside the tent was ice. The cup of water I left out overnight had a $\frac{1}{4}$ " of ice on it. So I slept in. By the time I had breakfasted and got going it was 10.30 am. I almost decided not to go onto Rocky Bogong, but since I would or could be on road at Valentine's before dark, I went.

To "do" the Strumbo is always a nice walk and worth the effort. That useless sheet the Kosciusko 1/100,000 leaves a lot to be desired. It misses a lot of trigs and one of these is the south end of Strumbo. The definitely marked road SE to Grey Mare Hut isn't there unless you look very carefully - it was there once, when Grey Mare Mine was in operation. However, taking a punt on the position of the trig I "compassed" to the hut and came in on the Mine Creek right at the Hut.

Leaving Grey Mare I headed down Back Flat Creek, over the hill to the Geehi, then up and over to the Valentine - the short cut. It's a very nasty short cut if you miss the track. You have about 600' of steep, extremely dense scrub to claw your way through if you miss the track. This time I managed a fairly clear passage.

Met some people at Valentine's and had some lunch with them. Then it was on up Duck Creek (not the road) and eventually to the road and so on to White's. Got there at 6.15 pm. I had left one last beer in the creek - boy! did I enjoy it, for I had been walking continuously since 10.30 am, about 19 km, so I reckoned I'd earned a beer and a rest.

Since I had completed most of a scheduled 4-day walk in 2 days, after starting a day late I had a day up my sleeve. It wasn't difficult to put the day in, cleaning up the hut, doing a few minor repairs, talking to visitors and hating every minute that ticked by.

After having been in the mountains for so long you are apt to forget that up here at 6,000' the humidity is very low and it's an awful shock to the system when you get to Jindabyne and the more "normal" 80% plus. How many times have I wished I could turn round and go straight back up to the pleasant climate of the Snowys in the summer. It's a unique part of Australia, so if you haven't savoured it either in winter or summer then do so.

With the right approach it is not difficult country. Precautions have to be taken. Weather changes can and do occur almost without warning. Even in high summer it can snow, hail, sleet or rain severely, so it is necessary to carry light blizzard gear. Do NOT plan a trip with the intention of using a hut each night, rather be prepared to camp: it will change the direction of your thinking.

Also bear in mind that the Main Range offers little or no shelter, so wind can be an important factor. Above the treeline there is no fuel so if the intention is to spend some time on the Main Range then a burner may have to be carried.

Lastly, the sun can exact harsh penalties, so if you are not used to lots of sun, don't tempt fate. Use sunburn prevention - blockout lotion/cream, wear a hat, long sleeves, maybe even light cloth overtrousers for the high country.

Don't be persuaded by what I have written that I am a solo walker by choice. A gregarious like me could never be a successful loner. Still I believe it does one good to walk alone occasionally.



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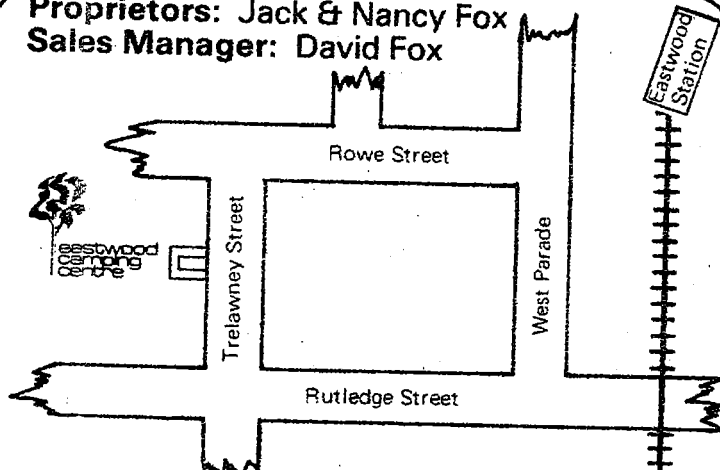
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THE WALK THAT VERY NEARLY WASN'T.

by Bill Gamble.

The rain which had fallen steadily at the Camelot car camp through Friday night and into Saturday morning nearly brought Don and Jenny Cornell's weekend walk on 16-18 April, 1982, to a premature end. The walk is listed in the autumn programme as:

Camelot - Nattai Road, Nattai River, Surveyors Crag, McArthurs Flat, Starlights Track, Camelot. Map: Hilltop, 1.25000. Distance: 25 km Medium.

By the time the rain showed signs of lifting soon after 8.00 am on Saturday, 17 April, five bodies had departed for home wet and/or cold. The remainder - Don and Jenny Cornell, Hans Stichter, Victor Lewin, Frank Taeker, Joy Hynes, Ian Debert, Deirdre Brady and Bill Gamble - hung grimly to a modestly optimistic weather forecast and signs that the grey clouds overhead were breaking. At 9.00 am, as soon as the rain had stopped, the party moved away from Camelot on the chance that the improvement might continue and make the walk worthwhile after all. In the event, it was a chance worth taking and the beginning of a pleasant weekend.

The way at first was, of necessity, on a fire trail which turned north across the Nattai Tableland. Three hours of road-bashing through a rather monotonous landscape seemed to have little merit, but once the descent to the Nattai River commenced that quickly changed. The lush growth and the sound of tumbling water in the steep gully drew our interest and the walking which preceded it now seemed effort well spent. Frank disappeared for awhile on what turned out to be the first of several side trips in search of flora to observe and photograph.

Lunch break was taken down by the Nattai in the warmth of a now clear, autumn day. The almost obligatory fire was lit for a brew over an extended lunch, before the river was crossed for the afternoon push up the true left to a flat below Surveyors Crag. A little time was spent in making a dry crossing and by accounts everyone succeeded, though one or two balanced precariously on slick rocks on the brink of disaster. The afternoon's walk did involve scrub-bashing through some prickly bush and it was necessary to move about 50 metres above the river to avoid difficult travelling lower down. Some said it was easier going on the true right and in places it looked inviting to cross; but, then, it could just be that the going always looks easier on the other side of the river.

The planned scramble to Surveyors Crag was abandoned to another time because of the late start from Camelot. This did enable an early camp though. Under tall trees, on a flat almost lawnlike, near idyllic tenting conditions were found. With plentiful firewood and flowing water close, there were no complaints. Around dusk there was a hint of rain - shortlived and no more than a drizzle - which soon cleared to a fine night. The mildness of the evening was conducive to lingering around the campfire to talk. Some of the party, recently returned from a month of fighting sandflies in New Zealand's South Island, relaxed their guard for the first time in weeks and enjoyed the benign night air, free of bites.

Sunday morning saw the party split. Frank did more of what he had started the previous day. Joy and Ian eventually succumbed to the warm

sand and sun alongside the Nattai - a contrast from the bitter cold of New Zealand's Nelson Lakes National Park which they had left behind barely a week before. The front runners moved quickly, alone or in groups, paths sometimes crossing in the quest for the easiest line of travel. It became something of a race. Early, Victor found fast going away from the river and soon overtook others who had left camp well before him and kept to the river bank.

For most, there was time for an extended morning tea (and, for some too, a wash in the chilly water) at the confluence of Wanganderry Creek and the river, and then a short stroll to a long lunchbreak at McArthurs Flat prior to the uphill walk on Starlights Track. The day was warm and before eating Don, Jenny and Bill dipped briefly in the pool adjacent to the flat - any briefer it was noted and they might not have even got wet! Somewhere between his pack and the water's edge, Hans' mind changed about swimming, so too did Deirdre's. After lunch, the Nattai was crossed on rocks and logs about five minutes upstream from the pool.

Hans, Deirdre and Bill began their walk up Starlights Track, Don, Jenny and Victor lingered by the river until word arrived with Frank that Joy and Ian were sunbathing and would come out on their own later. So, for most, it was a reasonably early finish - around 4.45 pm at Camelot. Certainly, members missed the more strenuous part of the programme with the deletion of the scramble to Surveyors Crag, but that did not detract from a pleasant weekend walk through an attractive valley. For the record, the party met no other walkers.

And a brief comment to close. Undergrowth alongside Starlights Track now seems ready to cover many parts of the route. Does one attempt to clear the path or leave it to nature (in the form of a bush fire) at some future date? Surely, a track as popular with bushwalkers as Starlights ought to receive some maintenance by its users.

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SOCIAL NOTES FOR NOVEMBER.

by Jo Van Sommers.

* November 17. Club Auction.

Everything a bushwalker could desire, and objects whose use will stretch your imagination, will be up for sale. Donations of equipment and goods very welcome. A fun night even if you don't buy anything.

November 24. Slides and prints by the members of Bill Gamble's trip to New Zealand earlier this year.

November 27-28. The Barn Dance is on again this year at the Club's property "Coolana" in Kangaroo Valley, followed on Sunday with swimming and relaxing by the river. GEORGE GRAY 86,6263 (H) will answer queries and arrange transport.

* DINNER before the meeting at the Malaya, 73 Mount Street, North Sydney.

THE COOLANA PYRAMID REPORT.

by the Coolana Publicity
Officer.

There were two reasons why the Coolana Committee decided to build a replica of King Cheops Pyramid. One was that it looked so nice in the film "Callipolli" and the second was that Phil Butt stated that it couldn't be built in this day and age, "Why, it was built in cubits, and we have metres now, you know!" The Committee had a surplus of funds for the current year, so the Treasurer with the Trustees' blessings, gave us permission and relying on the "Do it yourself Taj Mahal building outfit book", it behoves me as secretary to jot down all the doings for posterity.

The Planning Stage.

The three sided pyramid was discounted as was the five sided one, both being too difficult to join up at the corners; it was decided to pick the four sided one, upon the advice of Charlie Brown our main adviser until he suggested building it upside down, and after a few sharp words was dismissed. Another Utzon!

Another problem was that no one could work out how the design could be duplicated. Everyone knows that the height is πR^2 . George Gray explaining that the height is four times the radius of a Magic Circle that is based on the circumference of the earth in relation to the moon with the distance between the two bodies being the multiple of the co-efficient of the radii of both and the difference between the two circumferences. But still the problem, how to go about it. No one knew until Fazeley Read explained it by the water tank method, that is used over there in N.Z. whenever anyone wants to build a pyramid.

A gigantic water tank of x diameter is rolled once, one full circle, which is then half the length of one side of the pyramid, while the height is 4 times the x .

Where to build? This was worrying until Bill Burke remembered that he thought he had a block of ground at Bellevue Hill, but it turned out he lost it on a wager and so he offered some land near Dundas/Pennant Hills. And as luck would have it, the block was solid granite and dead flat (just what we wanted) and if the ice caps ever melted, the world's oceans would rise exactly 253 ft which would make our pyramid exactly 400 metres from the crashing waves.

Everyone became excited and made suggestions. Helen Gray requested that the outer mantle be not all in white marble as the original, but with green stripes "to give that Florentine touch about it, the 5000 year old design being rather dated". Agreed to. Then Jo van Sommers started to make a scene, and cried copiously. "Did you know that the Cathedral spire of St. Pierre at Beauvais that fell down on Ascension Thursday in the early 1500s was 20 ft taller than the Grand Pyramid and if medieval woman could build thus, surely we in the 20th century can do better." Tony Denham gave her consolation and he agreed to hand-carve a 21 ft flag pole if the committee agreed, and to stop her whingeing we gave her the O.K.

Belinda McKenzie brought us down to reality, "Where are you going to find all the marble?" Would you believe that we hadn't thought of it! This was an emergency and Dot Butler was called into the operations, to find

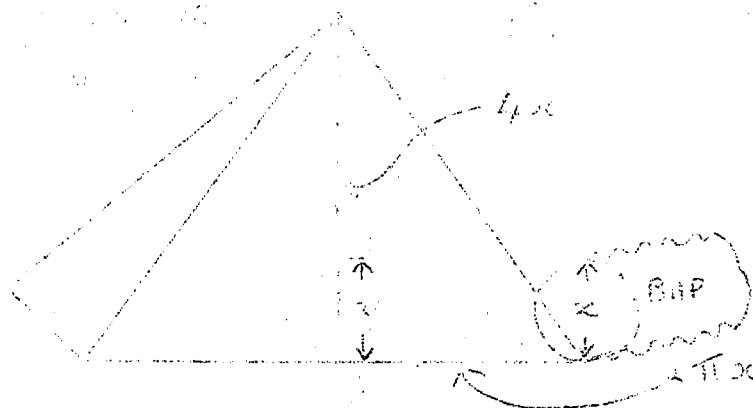
965,728 tons of white and green marble. "No problem. My son Wade has some blocks on his property fortuitously all cut into the same size, and furthermore - -" But we didn't listen to her anymore, we were so excited.

Owen Marks offered to accept responsibility for sculpturing the sarcophagus on the condition that only Carrara marble was used, and so we gave him a piece the size of a telephone booth and he was last heard remarking "I hope nobody will object. I won't sculpt the mattress. After all, it is a bed for the dead."

Once the club was informed, everyone was keen and members kept on making suggestions to improve the building of it. The logistics were gone into and it was realized that even if all the club members worked through their Xmas hols it would take some time, but the incentive was there. Gordon Lee offered his Nile Grass Palm orchestra to serenade the builders which worried some of us, because as we all know, when Gordon plays all noise and activity must cease, but as Bill Gamble pointed out, we would be able to drown him out, and so we agreed.

David Cotton and Fiona Moyes were in charge of providing snacks, both being Superior Cooks, but the tragedy that occurred during the capping process was partly due to their peculiar choice of menu. (More about that in a later report.) And to the surprise of everybody Ray Hookway, out of the goodness of his heart, decided to dress as a clown to make the workers happy and add colour to the Western Wastelands, as he called the area.

In a later magazine, we shall go into the building stage more clearly; tell of the small problems that kept on cropping up; of how Ainslie Morris got lost whilst exploring the base and was found by Yvonne Kingston; of how the American spies in our club dobbed us in to the C.I.A. and of how the millionaire friend of Owen Marks offered us \$5,000,000 to fly a jumbo around it. Tony Jarshall offered to be logistic controller but was embarrassed by his great gaffe when Barbara Bruce did her Dance of the Seven Veils on opening day. He only gave her six. But I am disclosing too much too soon. More in the coming months.



DAY WALK on 21st NOVEMBER - Waterfall to Otford - Leader: JOE MARTON.

This walk is a TEST WALK - Please alter your Walks Programme accordingly.

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SO-SO SNOW, SO WHAT?

by Ainslie Morris.

A week of cross-country ski touring had been a wish of mine since a few day trips four or five years ago. The dream was realised when Jo van Sommers asked me to join a small group led by Jim Percy from 21st to 28th August. The party of five was completed by my son of 19, Anton Gillezeau, and Barrie Murdoch.

Inspiration was gained from Craig Austin's beautiful slide show of sunsets on the Snowys, and David Rostron's advice on gear. Although packing food is similar to that for a week of walking, I found I had to bring a considerable amount of survival clothing, and gear such as a bivvy bag. Anton and I also needed to hire a snow tent and two sleeping bags from Norski, where we hired two pairs of skis and boots (at a total cost of \$132). Barrie hired his skis from Paddy Pallin's at Jindabyne, and as they were metal-edged fish-scale he was very happy with them.

Barrie met us at Sawpit Creek camping area after a week of downhill skiing, which gave him the edge on us as evidenced by some nice telemarks displayed on our practice slope above Perisher on Sunday morning. We felt ready to set off at lunchtime, and started our foot slog from Guthega Power Station up the road for 2 km to make our first camp on snow grass. As we were only at 1,400 metres we were pleased to see a few patches of snow.

On Monday we took the Horse Camp turnoff and the aqueduct track on the west side of Mynyong River. It had patchy snow along it, so it was skis on, skis off, right up to Schlink Pass, where the snow cover was consistent. We became very proficient over the following days at clicking bindings into place as we stepped back on to a patch of snow for a brief slide. As Anton said, you had to watch out for the snow between the grass and bushes in case you slipped!

This made it slow going after our second camp at the weather station at 1,739 metres, this time on snow. A groundsheet is essential to prevent wet edges to sleeping bags. It was here that Barrie was sick, so the Tuesday was made more difficult for him by lack of snow along the Valentine's Fire Trail. We settled into Valentine Hut early with a brisk breeze outside. By the way, if you see a flannel flower glinting on a rock in Valentine Falls, it's the membership badge on Jim's hat which a gust whipped off and, of course, it went straight into the fast-flowing creek.

We made our usual 10 o'clock start to avoid the hard, crusty snow of early morning, all a bit bleary-eyed after listening half the night to the squealing, shouting, fighting rats of Valentine's. With some amusement we had read the sign printed on the cupboard "BEWARE THE FIRE AND THE RAT". The rat? Did the writer run out of ink before adding the essential "S"? Over a hole was printed "FEARLESS THE RAT", a character doubtless well-known to veteran ski tourers in the club. Jim shone his torch in Fearless' face, staring wrathfully, and Fearless twitched his/her whiskers and stared right back.

Now off the Mt. Kosciusko 1:50,000 sheet and heading north on the Khancoban sheet, and after only about 15 km it was Wednesday. However, with Barrie much better as well as the snow cover, we felt we could still make Mount Jagungal if we added a day to make it six and a half days out.

Although another party had advised us that the best snow in the mountains was on the Grey Mare Range, we decided on a quicker route east to Mawson's Hut.

A group of lads beat us to the hut by a few minutes, so we headed off after lunch north to Tarn Bluff, and weren't sorry to make camp here for two nights. Have you seen how the moon lights up the snow-covered ranges? I could believe the story of skiing down Jagungal by moonlight - its peak looked so bright in the distance.

Yet another perfect day of sunshine on Thursday gave us an easy day trip, ten kilometres return to Mt. Jagungal, 2040 metres high. Did I say easy? Plodded up and tumbled down, but all worth the great views across to Kosciusko, north to the soft blue of Round Mountain, and far away the white peaks of the Victorian Alps.

We headed for Tin Hut on Friday, on sparse snow in Valentine's Creek and deep drifts on the Brassy Mountains. After nearly two weeks of brilliant sunshine, the snow was melting so fast that where we had skied out to Jagungal in the morning, we returned hours later to see our tracks end abruptly on dry grass. But up here on the Brassys the snow cover gave us good skiing, and Jo and Anton had to chip through thick ice to get water in Finn's Creek.

Undaunted by memories of Fearless, we settled into Tin Hut for our last night. Our extra night out gave Barrie's surplus Deb potato an unexpected popularity. His nuts were popular too, as a faint nibbly gnawing after candles out suggested that we'd been followed. Jo read the hut visitors' book out to us next morning. Other parties had had a canvas pack chewed through, a snow tent eaten into holes, and had even pulled out of the hut and camped nearby. Wildlife it is, though, and apart from animal tracks in the snow and birds, bush rats were the only wildlife we encountered.

Off to our usual late start on Saturday on rapidly softening crusty snow up Gungartan for a great view north to Jagungal, southwest to the Main Range all white, and south to nearby Disappointment Ridge, all clothed in green. So after some discussion, we wended through the trees down to Gungartan Pass for some fun slides. After Schlink Pass we expected to run out of snow, but by taking the aqueduct track on the eastern side of the Munyang we had so-so snow to within a kilometre or two of the Power Station.

So, no snow? So what! It was a great week of a new sport, bush-touring. Or is it ski-walking? Anyway, we weren't lang loafing.

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P.S. For the statistically inclined, precipitation figures are: For Thredbo 1648 mm annual average (since 1966), August being the wettest month with 124 mm av. In 1982 at nearby Perisher Valley the total for the first six months was 664 mm, with 63 mm in August, that is, half the usual August precipitation.

MT. KINABALU - August 1982.

by Brian Holden.

If by some unfortunate twist of fate you find yourself in Sabah (one time crown colony of British North Borneo) you can escape the humidity, pollution and general dreariness for a couple of days by climbing Mt. Kinabalu. Standing alone only about 50 km from the sea and rising to 13,455 ft (4101 m), the mountain must be one of the most majestic on earth.

You first must get to Koto Kinabalu which is the capital of Sabah. This should be no problem as public transport is both plentiful and cheap. Check with the National Parks Office in the centre of town for advice on how best to make the two-hour trip to the Park Headquarters and also to arrange accommodation within the park. With luck you will get a bed in the hostel at \$7 per night. A guide is compulsory at \$14 for the two days but you can share the cost with others you will meet at the Park H.Q. (elevation 4,800 ft).

Starting from Park H.Q. at 7 am the climb is a leisurely one and by 3 pm you will have arrived at a superb hut providing 79 bunks and flush toilets. This hut is at 11,000 ft. At 3 am the next morning your guide will get you up for the final three hour push to the summit. You may be able to get an explanation as to the necessity of scrambling up ladders and ropes by torchlight - we couldn't. I suspect that it is the only way the guides can guarantee that they will arrive home that day. Any walker worth his salt, however, will be back at Park H.Q. by 1 pm.

The steepest part of the climb starts right at the backdoor of the hut. One literally steps out of bed at 3 am on to a track equivalent to climbing out of Blue Gum, and it's a bit of a shock to the system. With luck you will get a clear view from Lowe's Peak which is the true summit by a few feet. There are several peaks on top of the mountain which had been climbed for 30 years before the true summit was identified.

Now comes the hard part - mustering up the courage to once again face the lowlands of Sabah.

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THE HALF-YEARLY GENERAL MEETING

There were about 30 members present when the president called the meeting to order at around 2015. Apologies were advised from Fazeley Read, Ainslie Morris and John Jennings. New members Vicki and Henri Endrickson were welcomed in the traditional way.

The minutes were read and received and the correspondence to and from Dunlop was read to the meeting in accordance with a previous motion. Correspondence comprised a letter from Stan Cottier explaining that although he will be retiring from the Royal National Park advisory committee he will remain as a ranger at Burning Palms, a questionnaire on club activities from FBW and a copy of the FBW Search and Rescue annual report. The meeting agreed to pass the questionnaire to the walks secretary for completion and return.

The treasurer's report revealed that we began the month with \$2,717.67, received \$376.40, spent \$1,788.29 and closed the month with \$1,305.78. The closing balance in the Coolana account was \$25.03.

The walks report began with the report of a walk to Mt Colong and back over the weekend of 13,14,15 August. Spiro Hajinakitas was leader and there were eight starters enjoying good weather but rather dry conditions. Barry Wallace's wine and cheese walk along the Cox that same weekend had 15 starters, good weather but no report of dry conditions. Jim Percy's day walk from Heathcote to Engadine attracted 23 people on what was described as a great day. There was no report of Hans Stichter's walk to Ruined Castle.

There seemed to be some confusion about Peter Hislop's walk (?) from Kalong Falls and back via Thurat Spires over 20,21,22 August. It seems the leader did not turn up and the remnant who did were not good at improvisation. Len Newland's Saturday start trip went, but there was no report. Brian Bolton's coastal day walk that weekend was fully and fulsomely reported. There were 23 starters, a slow visitor, and they all finished the trip eating apple pie at some wayside snack bar. Jim Brown, on the other hand, had 23 starters and a rather keen stray dog. Unfortunately no one could produce a copy of the program to read him the riot act about dogs on walks.

Over the weekend of 27,28,29 August Ian Debert reported 13 people on his Berambing walk ... which went to Newnes. George Walton's trip that same weekend was cancelled due to the leader being injured at work. Sandy Johnson reported 12 starters and beautiful weather on his day walk that same weekend. Bill Hall's Wednesday 1st September walk attracted six people.

The following weekend, 3,4,5 September, saw Don and Jenny Cornell leading a party of 20 people on their Kowmung River trip in fine but cool weather. It seems a large but unstable rock initially tripped up and mauled Peter Miller and then terrorised the rest of the party by thundering down the slope off their near flank. Frank Taeker's trip to the Budawangs was cancelled because of fuel problems. There was no report of Peter Christian's day walk, but David Ingram had 18 people, including Stan and Jenny Madden, out on his Point Clare to Wondabyne trip enjoying the wildflowers and feeding the Kookaburras.

Federation report indicated that an FBW committee is to investigate the possibility of purchasing land for conservation purposes, that CMW have indicated that they expect to become more active in Federation matters and that Sydney Uni Bush Walkers are now members of Federation. There is concern in Federation at the NSW government's intention to remove present limits to development in the Kosciusko snowfields. The Lands Department has agreed to mark the route of the Six Foot track to permit its continued use.

Then followed the selection of a site and convener for the 1983 re-union. Coolana and Spiro were the winners, in that order. General business brought a motion that we write to NPWS congratulating them on track restoration works carried out on Kanangra Tops. Passed.

So then it was just a matter of the announcements, and the meeting closed at 2102.

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