
THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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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.
Telephone 86-6263.

TYPIST: Kath Brown.

DUPLICATOR OPERATOR: Phil Butt.

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To the Krungle Bungle and Beyond	by Tom Wenman	Page 2
Dormant Heathlands	Peter Christian	4
Vale - Kath McKay		5
The Turon in Winter	Barbara Bruce	5
A Different Perspective		6
The Case of the Dirty Sandshoes	Jim Brown	7
Social Notes for August	Jo Van Sommers	8
Nerriga Area - Easter 1959	Frank Leyden	9
Ad - Eastwood Camping Centre		13
Trekking Through the McPherson Ranges - Part 1	Wal Liddle	14
Free for the Day	Spiro Hajinakitas	17

TO THE KRUNGLE BUNGLE AND BEYOND.

by Tom Wenman.

Why do men go to the hills? The prophets of old went to seek strength and guidance from a higher being. Today perhaps the reasons are more obscure but certainly there is an impelling desire to get away even for a weekend from the restrictions of modern life. Perhaps there is even a masochistic, not to say 'macho' intent. Certainly in the week leading up to the weekend of the 28/29th May anyone who said he was going bushwalking that weekend could have been looked upon as something of an excentric, if not to say a little light upstairs and certainly in need of some counselling!

Certainly my wife looked at me somewhat disbelievingly when on the Friday night with the rain still coming down and the mist rising up to meet it, I insisted that I was still going walking. Was there a moment of disbelief in her eyes? Perhaps I was really going away for a lustful weekend with a beautiful blonde (actually I am not un-partial to brunettes). Oh, happy fantasy! but I fear there was not the slightest chance of such a prospect. No, I was actually going bushwalking and psyching myself up for a sodden weekend of walking and camping on Bob Hodgson's Krungle Bungle and beyond adventure.

It was therefore with considerable surprise and some deep down hope that when we arrived at Budthingeroo it was not actually raining. True the sky was overcast but the clouds were moving across at a fair rate of knots and illuminated by an early full moon seemed to give some promise of a better trip than we might have hoped for. So we pitched an army of tents - one for each man (definitely no beautiful blondes to be seen) and settled down to sleep.

The morning came cold, damp and windy, although it's surprising how sheltered the campsite was. There had been some light rain during the night and now also a squally wind drove rain across the open paddocks beyond the shelter of the trees. The clouds too were still hurtling across the sky but through the several layers was occasionally glimpsed something which might just be blue sky. We lived in hope as we tried to encourage a reluctant fire to burn more cheerfully and to greater purpose.

A casual start at 9 o'clock caused our self appointed 'Leader Supervisor', Peter Harris, to deduct two points from the leader's starting total of ten. The definitely improving weather however encouraged some superstitious respect towards Bob, as of course it is often suspected and even claimed by some leaders that they have this power over the elements, or at least an understanding with the Almighty.

We walked by fire trails which were often waterlogged, past Mumbedah Swamp and Whalanian Heights, soon encountering our first flooded creek. I think it came as a bit of a surprise to Kerry McCarthy, a prospective on his first weekend walk with the Club, when he discovered that there's only one way to get across, but he took to the water like a veteran. In fact there were very few creek crossings on this trip which was tailored by our redoubtable leader to suit the conditions.

Without much fuss and by courtesy of various fire trails we arrived at the Mighty Krungle Bungle Range and leaving our packs by the fire trail ascended a few feet to the rocky outcrops which mark the summit of the range.

There were some good views to be had both of the route which we had followed that morning and of conquests to come. A cold wind however soon drove us from our vantage point. I must confess however that the direction of our approach to Krungle Bungle does not reveal it as much of a mountain, but that of course is because you are on high ground already.

Having thus achieved our initial success with some ease there still follow some intricate navigation after leaving a fire trail, for the use of which (the fire trail) our ever-vigilant supervisor deducted a further point. Bob however redeemed his reputation and the point by successfully navigating the party along the Krungle Bungle Range to our next peak, the famed Guouogang. Our route over Ferny Flat and the Krungle Bungle Range, although through bush, afforded good views from time to time of the ridges plunging down to the Jenolan Creek and of Guouogang in the distance.

The view from the top of Guouogang was superb. Looking east, the long finger of Narrow Neck pointing towards Mt. Mouin led the eye over the whole of the Wild Dog Mountains and thence in a great sweep to the southcast to the High Gangerang. The Kings Tableland provided a splendid backdrop to all this wealth of walking country, and away to the south Kanangra was just visible. Our climb through the thick scrub surrounding the final approaches of Guouogang, although difficult, was sheltered, but once out on to the exposed top of the mountain we felt the full force of the cold southerly wind and although there was blue sky with only patchy clouds we did not prolong our luncheon stop.

Queahgong to the north was our next objective and we were pleased to encounter reasonable going through the bush for our final peak. A short but sharp climb to the top and we then retraced our steps to join the ridge for the descent to the junction of Mumbedah and Alala Creeks. Soon after commencing our descent we encountered a crashed aircraft. Not having been previously aware of its existence we were rather subdued by this encounter and by nature of its damage could speculate on the awful suddenness with which the pilot met his death.

Time however was pressing and we had yet to find out if the selected campsite was in fact a viable proposition. The descent was steep and tiring on the limbs but we finally made it down to the creek and found a pleasant though nettle-infested campsite. Mumbedah Creek revealed by its torrent of water that our route for the morrow would have to be changed to take this into account. For the time being however we were pleased to sit around a roaring fire with some rum to revive us and rose to further lighten our spirits. In the course of the evening the moon, freed from obscurity of the clouds from time to time, gradually illuminated our little valley.

Such was the brightness of the moonlight that daybreak did indeed steal imperceptibly through the last vestiges of night revealing a day similar to the previous one, with patches of clouds pursuing their swift but seemingly interminable journey across the sky.

Our introduction to the day's walking was abrupt and to the point. First we crossed the torrent of Mumbedah Creek, a very cool experience, and then began the sharp ascent of the side of Moorara Buttress. The climb to the first level part of the ridge was a bit of a lung buster and cleared out any cobwebs remaining in the system. Looking across the valley we could see

the peaks of Guouogang and Queahgong and the ridge by which we descended to our campsite. Some streaks of white amongst the tree-covered gullies revealed the volume of water pouring down the mountain creeks.

After some scrambling through granite boulders a path was discovered which we estimated had been cut some time in the previous twelve months and probably for horse traffic. The way thus having been prepared for us our speed over the ground increased and by bridle track and fire trail we climbed over Moorara Mountain and Moorara Boss to find ourselves among undulating tree-clad country, and finally the Belara fire trail where we had started.

Bob having regained all his ten points, and the weather having proved superb through out the weekend, he retained some aura of 'leadership mystery', whilst Kerry was pleased to have completed his first weekend walk and enquired rather innocently if they were all like this. I had to tell him that they were not!

* * * * *

DORMANT HEATHLANDS.

by Peter Christian.

Lonely voices moan over windswept Curra Moors,
Flower buds lie dormant under spiky stem and leaf.
Honeyeaters vie for insects with fruity nectar yet to come,
State of slumber and storage as winter brings relief.
Full-throated chorus of multitudes not yet reborn,
However this lack of nature's symphony shall be brief.

Murmuring Curra Brook matures as surging stream
Falling freely into ocean's arms, as the fishes it delights.
Eagle Rock's baleful eye, misses not a beat of nature's moods,
Whilst craggy sandstone cliffs can test our nerve for heights.
Our minds drift over coastline, heathlands and ocean vista
Joining soaring gannet and sooty tern on migratory flights.

Corracorang waterhole relieves many a parched throat,
Crystal clear waters soothe and revive tired, aching hides.
The quietude of its bay belies its closeness to the city,
A perfect place to let our life flow rythmically with the tides.
Soon the drab heath will dazzle the eye with a myriad of blooms,
Colouring our memories of dormant heathlands, whatever fate decides.

VALE - KATH MCKAY.

On 4th June last and in the presence of her niece, Catherine, old family friends and bushwalkers of other days, the ashes of our loved member were committed to the bush in a quiet corner of one of her favourite areas, the Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park. This simple yet dignified ceremony had been arranged by The Dungalla Club. One of Kath's old walking companions, Laurence (Mouldy) Harrison, addressed those assembled, recapping her love of the great outdoors, her unusual qualities and pleasant personality and her contributions to her old Club (Sydney Bush Walkers), not only in good comradeship but in prose and verse in recognition of all of which, in her twilight years, she was elected an Honorary Member.

At the conclusion of the obsequies, Ron Knightley recited that poem of Kath's entitled "Bivouac" which appeared in the February 1983 issue of this publication. It is doubtful if any more appropriate words could have been spoken in carrying out Kath's expressed earlier wishes that she would rest amongst the wildflowers which gave her so much joy. The last verse is worthy of repetition:-

"Paltry ambition this, and negative
but fame enough: when we pack up at last
our bivouac of three score years and ten
sufficient if we leave no hurt to mar
earth's face or man's: but only, where we lived
may there be sunlight and such sense of peace
that wanderers who come upon the place
must pause, and say, "Someone was happy here".

THE TURON IN WINTER.

by Barbara Bruce.

Bill Burke's trip along the Turon River from Sofala to Hill End on the Queen's Birthday Weekend was one of those trips which is warmly satisfying to the soul. It was a car swap trip and as such did not have us actually walking along the river until almost midday Saturday, when it was still pretty chilly. We imagined what it would be like in spring and summer.

Most members of the party covered the 30 kilometres with ease, but I'll respect the wishes of the poor unfortunate who felt almost every step, and not name them.... The same poor unfortunate had their sock gallantly retrieved after they'd dropped it during one of the two necessary crossings.

The Turon had been in flood only a couple of weeks before, but now it is a serene stream with the occasional gentle rapid over the river stones. The banks were green and there was an abundance of wood for our morning teas, lunches and camps. Along the way we caught sight of a few kangaroos and many crimson and blue parakeets. The only minor detraction was the abundant and not easily visible tiger pear cactus, whose thorns were quite painful and hard to extract, if you were unlucky enough to step or put your hand on one.

On the Monday morning the 16 of us arose to a ground covered in white

frost, although some had been woken earlier with the drip of defrosting condensation from the ceilings of their tents.

Close to Hill End we saw strong evidence of the former gold mining days in the form of stone races and one of the tiny old huts which is still standing. (There is, however, an ugly ghost in this hut which takes unsuspecting females by surprise, so be warned.) At Hill End itself we 'did the sights' and visited the interesting museum, where I saw some things which made me glad I wasn't a doctor's patient at that time.

Then, as much as we would have liked to finish this pleasant weekend with a meal at the convivial "Cafe Sofala" with its pot-bellied stove and open-hearthed fire, we were too early for them, and reluctantly set our sights for home.

* * * * *

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.

Anonymous.

Having been a participant on Bill Capon's Anzac Walk in the Ettrema area, I feel I must clear our leader's reputation and set the records straight. (Reference: The Sydney Bushwalker, June Issue, Pages 2 to 6)

Bill's apparent disorganization, his mess of plastic bars and broken yogurt containers, and his holey jumpers and inside-out T-shirts, all disguise the brilliant qualities we look for and admire in a leader. I jest you not, and the Anzac Walk proved my point. Despite the difficulty of the Ettrema area, his navigation was "spot-on", and the error on Danjera Plateau was due to another party member's momentary misplacement. To this end, the article should be altered thus: Page 2 Line 30 "B" to read "Ph"
Line 33 "Ph" to read "B"
Line 35 "B" to read "Ph".

Similar distractions by other party members were the cause of other momentary hesitations about the location of particular passes, e.g. the pass near the Amphitheatre. Alter thus: Page 5 Line 11 "Bill" to read "Steve".

As for Bill's personal habits, any Time and Motion Study expert would tell you that he probably saves many hours over the period of a year by:-

- (a) Not taking time to turn each clothing item right way after removing it.
- (b) Not mending holes in clothes.
- (c) Only washing clothes half as regularly as the rest of us, by wearing both sides before laundering.
- (d) Leaving packs and clothes out in the rain to save washing them at all.
- (e) Blending his pears and yogurt in his pack whilst moving along during the walk.

We could all take a lesson from his "economy of motion" and navigational skills. I look forward to more of Bill's walks, particularly in this beautiful area.

THE CASE OF THE DIRTY SAND SHOES.

by Jim Brown.

In the May issue of the magazine a Federation newsletter was enclosed: this contained an outline of the search conducted on the Colo River for two young people, Ana Herzel and Nick Gann, who undertook a trip into the Colo Gorge in mid-March this year, and were a few days overdue before walking out under their own steam on Friday, 18th March. In the meantime a large Police-organised S. & R. action had been mounted, with some 60 walkers including members of S.B.W. taking part.

During the May meeting of Federation, which I actually attended as a Bush Club delegate, a letter from Ana Herzel's mother was read. In addition to enclosing a cheque for S. & R., it spoke eloquently of the kindness, encouragement and assistance given to parents of the missing couple by the S. & R. people present at the Culoul Range base. Now, I won't swear to the exact words, but Mrs. Herzel wrote something along the lines of "every time I see a pair of sand shoes, I will want to step on them and make them dirty like the shoes of the wonderful people who....."

The dirty sand shoes! I thought about it as the letter was read, and, because none of us is completely free of sinful pride, I recalled that I was one of the first S.B.W. to adopt the sand shoe for walking in the N.S.W. bush. That the sand shoes become dirty is, of course, a corollary of bush-walking: that their dirtiness has now become - to one lady at least - a symbol of activity and kindness, well that's just heartening.

At some stage, about 1948, I decided the boots I had been wearing during my prospective period and early membership were not for me. Many years later one of my work-fellows, at the close of a particularly crushing day at the office, would say "Well, bye-bye. There must be an easier way to make a living". This was my feeling - there must be an easier way to go walking.

In conversation with Tom Moppett, the then President, I learned that some pre-war walkers had worn either golf shoes or "sneakers" (leather upper with rubber sole). Since I had worn these sneakers on some of my own free-lance pre-war trips, I was easily persuaded and found that, although they had been out of production during the war years, they were once more available. I invested in a pair. The effect was remarkable, for a lightly-boned person. At the end of a long day I was still moving fairly easily with my feet shod in 2 lbs of leather and rubber, instead of the massive 4½-5 lbs of leather and metal (all boots were then studded with hobnails). When, at the end of a long day one emerged on the sealed road for the last mile-and-a-half into Katoomba or Blackheath or Kiama, the rubber felt kindly on the feet, while nailed boots send a metallic jar right up the spine.

After a few experiments, I began to talk others into it. My boon companions of the time, Ken Meadows and Phil Hall, were the first to succumb. In February 1948, Ken and I romped across the Alps, 95 miles from Tumbarumba to Kosciusko to Khancoban, in five days in sneakers. Our only problem was in crossing a snow slope on the east face of Twynam when our rubber soles iced up and we began to slither down an unpleasantly steep slope towards the rocks. We realised that rubber was marvellous on dry rocks and sandy tracks, but needed a different walking technique on mud, mossy stones . . . and snow.

In January 1950, I wore boots for the last time on a trip in Tasmania, where mud, snakes and leeches were deemed to make them essential. I had such a miserable time that I left a pair of boots in the hut in Mount Field National Park, and used an almost worn-out pair of sneakers down to the National Park railway station.

Of course, some of my converts to sneakers really didn't enjoy it. It was a case of the man who "tried it once, didn't like it". I remember I coaxed Roy Bruggy into sneakers for a jaunt on the Grose River and he had such a bad time, slipping and sliding and with battered feet, that he went back to nailed boots.

The big blow fell about 1951 when the manufacturers decided sneakers were either unprofitable or in insufficient demand, and ceased producing them. However, by this time I was so sold on light rubber footwear that I immediately switched to sand shoes - initially the 10s.6d. variety sold by Coles and Woolworths, which would give me perhaps 80 miles of hard going under wet conditions or 150 miles in kinder circumstances.

Now, I can't pretend that I persuaded, cajoled or coerced others to use the same footwear, but somehow people like Snow Brown, Garth Coulter, Ross Laird and Geoff Wagg, who came to the Club about 1952-3, all went straight into sand shoes. They were the tiger walkers of the early 50's, so what they wore became the "in thing". I know, in due course, I learned from Snow that, if you wore flight nylon socks with sand shoes, instead of the usual heavy woollen socks, you were less likely to suffer blisters.

Where boots were once the symbol of the bush walker, it seems now to be accepted that, in our easy N.S.W. conditions, sand shoes are the conventional footwear. I suppose I had some hand in it (should I say "some foot in it"?), but I was happy to hear that, for Mrs. Herzel, the dirty sand shoe has some significance.

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SOCIAL NOTES FOR AUGUST.

by Jo Van Sommers.

Ø August 17 - Talented Persons Concert.

Anyone who would like to join the line-up of singers and players and declaimers please contact Owen Marks - Phone 30-1827.

August 24 - Peter Christian will show a series of slides with natural sound effects titled - "Kosciusko to New England".

August 31 - Bush Dancing, with caller. 8 - 10 pm.
Nothing complicated, just good fun.

Ø Everyone is invited to meet beforehand at the Phuong Vietnamese Restaurant, 35.30 pm. B.Y.O.
87 Willoughby Road, Crow's Nest.

NERRIGA AREA - YADBORO ESCARPMENT - THE CASTLE - DRURY'S
EASTER, 1959.

by Frank Leyden.

(Following the reprint of Ron Knightley's article on an early trip into the Budawangs, and the reprint of the article by Frank Rigby and Malcolm McGregor of a climb up the east face of The Castle, we are planning to reproduce further write-ups of exploratory walks in this area, now so well known but then only being opened up by walkers. There follows an amusing "horror story" by Frank Leyden of a trip led by Alex Colley over Easter 1959 and published in the May issue of the magazine together with reminiscences by other members of the party. The true grit of S.B.W. walkers is clearly revealed.

For those wanting to trace the route on a map it should be pointed out that some place names have been altered since then. Jerricknorra Creek is now Wog Wog Creek, The Peak is now Corang Peak, Mount Renwick, the large rocky plateau west of Monolith Valley. It was first dubbed Mt. Renwick by walkers, and later the portion north of the crevasse which bisects it was called Mount Roswaine. In some subsequent maps Renwick became "Mt.Owen" and Roswaine "Mt.Cole", and these are the names by which most walkers know the plateau.

"Drury's" - A property several miles south-west from Milton and not far from Pigeon House Mountain. This was the accepted way of access to the Clyde River before construction of the road into Yadbore Flat.)

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A flock of black cockatoos circled above the tree tops uttering their screaming "wheelo" cries. But their portent of bad weather seemed so inappropriate that morning along the green banks of Jerricknorra Creek. The sun shone from a clear sky, and the air was crisp and clear with the highland freshness. Anyway how can birds in the sky compete for attention with bull-ants on the ground, especially at lunch time? But not even bull-ants, nor the next party's cooking smoke in the eyes, could dispel the optimism of Alex Colley's party of sixteen happy walkers. None suspected that the buoyancy of the spirits on that bright morning would yield, within a few short days, to the buoyancy of the bodies.

The line of approach from the Mongarlowe road is normally a compass bearing on The Peak, approximately ENE of Jerricknorra crossing. Alex took a ridge more to the north, to avoid some of the ups and downs and dense scrub. After a couple of miles a rocky top was reached, the watershed of the Corang River, and there, straight ahead to the ENE, was The Peak. The direct approach, although descending and beckoning, some of us had cause to know was pretty exercising. The party sat down and muttered. But when the leader reappeared from his reconnaissance they were docile and obedient. About a mile or so and the ridge came around to the east, and lo! a bridle track. Next time I think we will follow the open country on the right bank of the Jerricknorra to the clearings west of "The Twins" where this track would originate.

Our ridge now started to narrow and the trees gave place to open high country with low scrub. A great gorge to the north, the Peak to the east and 2,000 ft of cliff and steep to the south (Yadbore Creek Gorge) with Currockbilly beyond bathed in sunset splendour, was the setting for our camp. Alan Abbott somehow couldn't get aluminium tent pegs to go into rock. In fact, getting in the 81 tent pegs of the party occasioned more than passing

comment. The camp was elevated and a puff of wind on that treeless slope would have annihilated us. However, it didn't puff. Those whom the gods love get saved up for something better.

Currockbilly drew up layers of mist of varying shades and patterns to base the orange and red cumulus in the glory of the sunset. But the pattern was changing fast, and the saddle just below us misted over. Fortunately it soon cleared. The clouds vanished and left a clear starry sky. Then came the next performance. A magnificent display of the Aurora Australis, Nature's neon signs, filled the sky to the far south. Wide streaks and bands of light of faint pastel shades arose, changed and then vanished.

Next morning was misty and as we climbed higher the ground got wetter. The summit of The Peak was disappointing, as only fleeting glimpses were seen of Pigeon House, the ocean and the rugged gorges around us. The Peak is practically a perfect cone and is quite treeless. It rises some hundreds of feet above its ridge, and is prominent for many miles in most directions.

To get off the plateau-like area around The Peak means a drop over a cliff. The gentlest drop is to follow a ridge right out to its end, going about NE. Down below the route took us over swamps, keeping the same general direction towards the point called "Battleship Rock" (? south end of Mt. Tarn). A ridge to the south took us back on to the escarpment above the trees and into the mist, skirting to the north of a smaller grassy peak and on to a small creek for lunch. The whole area was oozing with water as if it had been raining for months. In the afternoon we pushed up the north-end clift on to Mt. Renwick. Yvonne Renwick, busy with her camera, recorded the mist and the burnt-out beauty of the family mountain.

Crossing the top to the southward we came to the crevasse that traverses the plateau. Access to this is straight down a crack for about 20 feet with a good stance in the centre. "I'm not going down there," said a voice. "It's nothing. Even I can do it....Look!" "Give us your pack. We'll take it down, and if you don't want to come, we'll bring it up again." "Don't look down, just put your foot over there, the other one on my shoulder and your back in here. Now lift this and put it on Brian Harvey and the other on John Scott and you're half down."

A mighty struggle and we were down, packs and all. Then the white ants collapsed on the ground and the elite climbed up the other side to see the view from the south end of Mt. Renwick in the mist. This did not take long. In clear weather, however, this view is really fine and takes its place amongst those many outstanding panoramas exclusive to walkers.

The next move was to get off Mt. Renwick by going eastward down the crevasse. We struggled through dense and tangling undergrowth, with rotting logs, loose and slimy rocks in the narrow dark wet chasm, getting rougher and steeper as we descended. Near the bottom we were stopped by a 15-foot sheer drop flanked by a deep cavernous pool in a narrow cleft. Bill Rodgers battled down and back with a great effort and relying on matted roots, but the sight of his quivering muscles deterred the party. We managed to get up the cliff to the right with another mighty struggle, and went back to our starting point at the top. Some chose to go down into the crevasse at its shallowest point and beat out a camp site, and the rest camped on the odd patches of swamp between the enormous rock slabs on the southern side of the rift.

Towards the end of the evening meal the mist turned to light rain. Everyone was tired. Tents were braced. Fires and voices became lower. From the crevasse depths about 40 ft below came a continental accent, a flicker of sparks, a faint glow, then blackness and silence. The rain steadily increased, drumming on the taut tent sheets. I got out and looked at the back of the tent, behind the bushes which had been selected as a wind-break. A large area of flat rock sloped down, draining towards the tent. Above that, the run-off from the next shelf was descending and so on to the top. The gully towards my tent drained about an acre. So in the event of six inches of rain, 136,000 gallons of water would pass through the tent. It did!

There was no escape. The plugs were all pulled out and down it came. At the start I knew there was nowhere to move to, so I put clothes in the pack and got into the bag in swimming trunks. I managed to get the first part of the usual nightmare over before being suddenly awakened. Bill Cosgrove was WET. In fact, he was partially submerged. Salvation was in the li-los, which were blown up another couple of notches. A wail came from Jean Harvey in the darknews - the tide was rising. Then came the sounds of Max Gentle's tent giving way, and his going in with David Ingram. I lay half-awake, submerged to the knees. The lilo and waterproof pack were invaluable.

In the morning we had a cold breakfast and drank the water from the ground in the tent as needed. Sodden gear was packed, and we lost no time in battling up the crack on the other side and so back to the cleft of our original entry on to Mt. Renwick (this would be the natural pass between The Donjon and Mt. Cole.) There were some murmurings and threats of mutiny in view of fear of the Clyde River being impassable. But Alex soon quelled this with soft words, and with docile obedience they plunged into the vegetation-choked chasm and followed him, their packs oozing wet tents and wet sleeping bags.

A few hundred yards eastward and we pulled out on to a shelf on the right, leading to another great clift between the cliffs of Mt. Renwick and three great spires as massive as Belougerie. After some complicated manoeuvring we came to a saddle in a high valley, surrounded by cliffs, spires and chasms, with even a "bread-knife" rock thrown in. (Later known as Monolith Valley.) Here would be the place for a base camp for a few days. It is really impressive.

Dropping eastward down a creek below the north wall, we descended the roughest and scruffiest of the gorges so far. An hour or more of descent to the steep waterfall and below this came sidling below the cliffs of the "North Col" of The Castle. In rain, mist and cold and with time running out, we struggled down the great rugged slope west from the saddle.

Yadboro Creek and all side creeks were in high flood. But it was great to be among the trees again and get some big log fires going to dry out the sleeping bags. During the evening cooking, that doleful burst of song about "Poor Old Ned" rose in brief polyphonic crescendo and died suddenly like a chorus of cicadas between showers.

Next morning we walked half a mile up the Clyde River to where it was wide and deep and the current less strong and "floated" over in whatever could be got wet. Some even tried floating the packs up-side down, but Irene Pridham floated right-way-up, as also the "piece de resistance", David Ingram, towed on a lilo. We even had to "float over" the Boyne Creek after a lunch

frustrated by time and rain.

The last run into Drury's was a gallop, but of no avail. Fortunately, our hired bus had waited, but at Nowra the last train was missed. We were joined in our bus by a Bush Club party, also delayed by the floods. It was Alex who, by stout efforts to the last, got us out of the predicament, and managed to organize a special bus all the way from Nowra to Sydney. Cheers to the leader!

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In the same magazine was published comment by several of the people who survived the "Night on Bare Mountain". A few extracts from these accounts follows:-

From the Leader, Alex Colley - Having spent many a wet weekend at Jamberoo, not far from Peter Page's rain gauge, I think I can estimate precipitation fairly well. For long stretches of the night the rate of fall must have been at least an inch an hour, and the night's total a good six inches (150 mm). As the deluge intensified I recalled Frank Barlow's recent experience at Lamington during a similar downpour. The only place he could camp was on the track with groundsheet spread over the rivulet which ran down it. During the night four large crayfish left the stream to share his couch. The morning after our wetting I asked Frank whether the lobsters had annoyed him, but he was too busy wringing the water out of his sleeping bag to heed my joke....

From Yvonne Renwick -- Colley Constructions were furiously digging a canal around the tent, through which a three-inch stream of water moved at about 8 knots. Alan continued the canal around the other end of the tent while I watched to see nothing was swept away by the tide.... Alex crawled outside when the rain eased a little and, returning about 10 minutes later, reported he had cleared a space on the crest of the rise, and if we moved camp we should have no more trouble with water rushing through the tent.... We stuffed our gear into our packs, which were swirling around in the deeper pools, up-rooted the tent and fought our way through the wet scrub to the cleared space. Alex and Alan re-erected the tent - an awkward business as all the cords had become hopelessly tangled and had to be cut and re-tied. Looking through the saplings I could see two grotesque figures crawling around in the mud, making strange noises and passing an evil-looking knife from one to the other.....

From Jean Harvey -All were averse to braving the elements to dig trenches, so, still in our bags, we turned on to our tummies and, advancing bare hands under the edge of the tent, we dug, finger to finger, a series of ingenious channels which eventually turned the stream of water away from our heads. Brian suggested we get out of our sodden sleeping bags and spend the night sitting up. As it was not yet midnight, Irene and I protested volubly against such folly, preferring pneumonia recumbent, enclosed in bag, to pneumonia sitting up, without bag.

From Frank Barlow (this perhaps has some slight exaggerations) - ...What I heard was exactly like that thunderous sound one hears when standing at the foot of Niagara Falls. As a wall of water 6 inches deep washes through my tent I see my pack disappear through the flaps and slide away down the slope. Leaping out into the deluge I rescued it 100 ft down the slope. To get back to the tent I had to swim and leap up the rapids like a salmon. Into the flapping tent I flung myself only to discover that the groundsheet had disappeared. I found it together with my sleeping bag caught against a large rock.....

* * * * *



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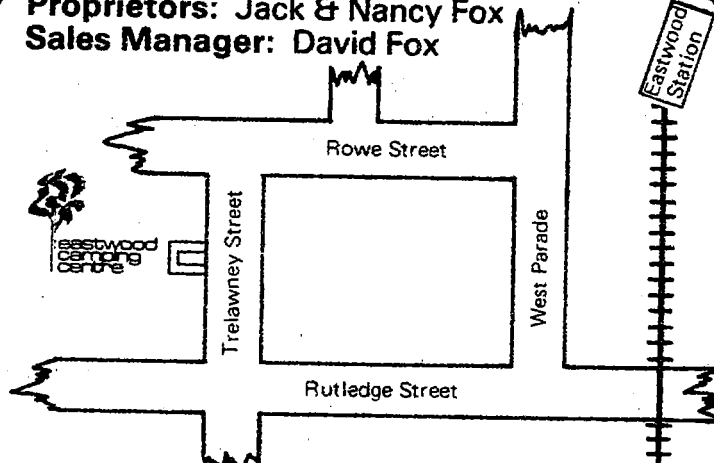
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TREKKING THROUGH THE MCPHERSON RANGES, NOVEMBER 1982.PART 1.

by Wal Liddle.

Through a break in the white fairy floss clouds we could see the high rise apartment towers of the Gold Coast silhouetted against the blue-gray of the coast line. The pilot's voice came over the intercom, "Fasten seat belts, extinguish all cigarettes," as the plane started on its descent flight path. The airbus 200 landed at Brisbane airport one hour twenty minutes after take off from Mascot.

Our group of three were greeted by the tour leader Pat and co-leader Mark (a biologist) and escorted to a waiting mini-bus. The bus then proceeded to the South Brisbane interstate railway station where another of the Sydney people was waiting, having travelled by train the night before. A further stop in one of the suburbs to pick up a local walker and we were on our way to the McPherson Ranges. At Nerang 45 miles from Brisbane Pat stopped the bus and loaded our victuals on board.

From here we proceeded to Beechmont and stopped at Rosettas Lookout which is situated on a high road at the top of the mountain. The vantage spot presented a breath-taking view, looking down into a deep but wide valley, the light green of the cleared farm areas standing out against the dark green bush of the mountain side. A wire fence plunged down the steep slope on our left with three high tension power lines above effectively dividing the boundaries of the land. Two brightly coloured hang gliders could be seen in the distance, the pilots taking advantage of the updrafts to soar like eagles, whilst a young man was navigating a radio-controlled model plane at the top of the slope.

Resuming our journey we proceeded to Natural Bridge which consisted of a cave and natural stone arch above a deep crystal blue waterhole in a beautiful bush setting. Picnickers from the city were having lunch under the trees whilst the younger members were swimming in the waterhole. The more adventurous were climbing the sides of the cave and then diving into the pool. A stone flagged path led upwards from the creek and waterhole to a rustic timber bridge halfway up the gully from where a sweeping view of the scenery and activities below was obtained.

Our luncheon spot was on a dirt road near an A-frame house not far from Natural Bridge. As the luncheon was being prepared a strange cooing sound came from around the bend. Further investigation revealed that the sound emanated from a large fat pigeon that was waddling across the road. The bird was brown in colour with a white lower breast and was feeding on fallen berries and grass seeds. Mark indicated that this was a Wonga Pigeon.

We then saw a black-faced fly catcher flying between the trees. This small bird was coloured blue grey on its upper parts with an orange under-belly and a black face.

After devouring the last of our cheese sandwiches and finishing off the black tea the group piled into the bus and were driven to Binna Burra, a camping area adjacent to Lamington National Park. We pitched the two-man tents on a terraced area at the edge of a mountain plateau with views towards the ocean. While setting up the tents we were introduced to Graham, a tree surgeon from Northern N.S.W. who was joining us as the last member of the bushwalking group.

After dinner that evening Mark produced a large spotlight and attempted to show the party some of the animal and bird life that lived in the trees.

Alas, all we found was a brown Boo Book Owl that seemed to be fast asleep in the fork of a low branched tree.

We awoke the next morning to a hot and sunny day. Pat indicated that the bus would drive on to our next camping spot and we would only need the bare essentials for the day's walking. Whilst the breakfast was being prepared I strolled over to a cleared area close to the thick bush. Joyce was there before me taking photos of a family of paddemelon wallabies that were grazing on grass seeds and small plants. Here also a scrub turkey was scratching in the dirt and undergrowth for berries and insects. The bird's plumage was black with a red head and a yellow band of colour around its scrawny neck.

After breakfast Pat called the group together and indicated on the map our route for the day. Mark looked resplendent in khaki shorts, grey shirt, leather leggings and boots, complete with a Forestry Commission yellow hard hat. In addition to his haversack he was carrying a briefcase full of reference books and key maps.

Shortly afterwards we set off on the well-defined graded Border Track. In a few minutes the temperature had dropped considerably because of the tall trees and dense canopy overhead that blocked out the rays of the sun.

Mark said that all of the trees in this section of the plateau were rainforest species and that eucalypts did not grow here. He pointed out some of the species as we proceeded along the path - Red Carabeens 100 to 140 feet high, Rose Mahoganys, White Walnuts, the Silver Quandong, the Mock Orange tree, down to the smallest, a Finger Lime only 50 mm in diameter with tiny 'bananas' that a person can eat. At each bend in the track the forest opened up new vistas for the walkers. The light that filtered through the trees accentuated the different colours and textures of the vegetation.

Suddenly a sharp sound like a rifle shot rang out. This call repeated at intervals came from a Rifle Bird. The bird was black in colour with a white cheek.

Many of the tall trees that we passed were 'buttressed', a method devised by nature to widen their base to support the immense height of the tree. Here and there the group came across a deep gully filled with tree ferns of different varieties.

As the walkers came over a rise in the track a strange sight met our eyes - two tall trees were growing together, one over the other. The outer one was the notorious strangler Fig which was actually choking to death the Mahogany tree underneath. The Fig starts its life via a seed which is dropped by a bird or possum at the top of the host tree. The seed germinates and spreads its leaves to the sun whilst its roots drop to the ground below. Soon a curtain of slender roots enclose the trunk of the host tree, thickening and fusing together in an ever tightening lacework until eventually the host tree dies and rots away. The Fig then stands unaided as a huge hollow column.

The bushwalkers broke out of the cool of the forest into bright sunlight at 10 am near the Joalah Lookout. The lookout commands an awe-inspiring breathtaking view of the lush Tweed Valley below. The valley extends for 30 miles. In the far distance a bright orange/red flame tree stood out from the dark green of the surrounding trees. Our view was partly obscured by fog over the distant mountains but Mt. Warning could be seen some ten miles away at the western side of the valley. Mt. Warning was originally the plug of

a great volcano that erupted some 20 million years ago pouring forth lava. Over the years some of this lava eroded away to form the Tweed Valley. Pat the leader explained that we would be walking south for the rest of the journey not far from the rim of the escarpment and we would eventually traverse the whole length of the valley.

After a short rest the party again plunged into the cool of the forest. Not far along the track a Native Raspberry was growing. The members of the party that tested the berries said that they were bland in flavour. Mark pointed to a Duboise tree stating that the Aborigines had used the bark of the tree to catch fish. The bark when placed in water has a stunning effect.

At a bend in the track we witnessed a dance by the Rufous Fantail. This small bird about the size of a robin is generally brown in colour with a patch of white under the beak. A splash of orange is featured on the head and this colour also extends down the back and halfway up the tail. The bird flitted along the track in front of us seeming to say "Catch me if you can".

The path then turned inland through pristine green gullies and at 11.00 am the party reached Dragon Bird Creek which was flowing with water from the Coomera River.

At 12 noon we reached Mt. Merino Lookout overlooking the Tweed Valley. Our view was of cleared farmland interspersed with trees. Dense bush grew on the mountain top. Mt. Warning again appeared on our left but with a changed perspective because we were viewing it from a different angle.

A large grey bird, the Top Knot Pigeon, so named because of the shape of the feathers on its head, flew above the valley. Purple flowered bushes and yellow clumps of daisies grew at the edge of the lookout. At 2.30 the walkers reached Moon Joorara Lookout from where could be seen the township of Murwillumbah and in the distance Byron Bay.

Not far from the lookout, the group saw a number of King Parrots feeding in the tree tops. These large birds were coloured orange/red on the head and lower parts with soft green feathers to the rest of the body. They have a tail which is almost as long as the wing.

Dingo droppings were observed on top of a rock near the junction of a dry creek bed. These droppings marked the boundary of that particular dingo's territory and served as a warning to other animals.

At 5.30 we broke out of the dense forest to a large cleared area on top of a mountain. A large timber arch over the track proclaimed that we had reached the boundary of that section of the park. We had come to O'Reillys, an area consisting of a large guest house/motel complete with a camping and caravanning area. Our tents had been pitched for us alongside the minibus, in a clearing commanding an extensive view of mountains and valleys that receded in the distance.

The evening meal was partaken with a picturesque red sunset in the background, the sun taking half-an-hour to sink below the horizon. We shared some of our food with two blue and black satin bowerbirds and a yellow and black regent bowerbird. The satin bowerbirds are so named because of the sheen of their feathers. After the meal the party adjourned to the guest house where a film evening was in progress consisting of coloured slides and a commentary by an ornithologist. The room was packed with birdwatchers, including some people from America and Japan.

End of PART 1.

FREE FOR THE DAY.

by Spiro Hajinakitas.

Date: Saturday, 26th March, 1983.

Route: Carlon's Farm, Tin Pot Mountain, Goolara Peak, Jenolan River, Mount O'Reilly, Cox's River, Breakfast Creek, Carlon's Creek, Carlon's Farm.

Starters: Craig and Christine Austin, Ian Olsen, Alan and Dorothy Pike, John Redfern, Richard Winthorpe, Spiro Hajinakitas.

Energetic young offsprings can really wear out good-hearted grandparent babysitters, consequently it's much easier to arrange to leave the youngsters in the loving care and attention of their grandparents, or whoever, for one day as opposed to two days. Understandably, bushwalkers bringing up a family do have their walking activities somewhat restricted, but with a little organisation it is possible for them to go walking now and then.

So with the babysitters organised, John Redfern and I were pleased to accept Chris' invitation to go on a long day walk in the Blue Mountains.

We left Sydney at some ungodly hour and arrived at Carlon's Farm at 8.15 am. On the way up John remarked how strange it was for him to pack for a day walk as he usually goes on overnight walks, as I do. He felt sure he had brought along too much gear and food. Thus whilst we waited for Craig, Christine, Richard and Ian to arrive we sorted out our gear, got our act together and walked up to Bert Carlon's newly located shop to pay our parking fee, then we merry eight were off.

Along the road to Ironpot Mountain we could see that the bush had benefited from the recent rain and looking back towards Narrow Neck we envied the view that the people at "Galong" had. Christine wished she had a view like that from her backyard. We made our way out along the ridge to Ironpot Mountain and Goolara Peak, occasionally catching a glimpse of the Cox's River 600 metres or so below. A little difficulty was experienced finding a negotiable route down off Goolara Peak and at one stage a loose stone, as large as a kettle drum, was sent rolling and crashing down the mountain. I hope there was no one in the way!

Once past the steep section, the ridge flattened out and we stopped to admire a most handsome stand of Iron Barks and our botanists Ian and Christine, with lots of help from Dorothy, answered all questions. Craig pointed out a couple of red cedars. We reluctantly dropped off the ridge on to the Cox's, and stopped for a short break. The Cox's was flowing strongly and high, its water glistening in the midday sunshine. What a difference a good bit of rain can do, it was indeed heartening to see the Cox's again running freely and clean after months of severe drought.

We started off up the Jenolan River and after a short walk stopped for lunch on a nice grassy bank. As we had all had a very early breakfast we did feel rather hungry and we ate a hearty lunch washed down with tea and coffee. Then we were off again and soon we were admiring the spectacular

steep sides of the Lower Jenolan Canyon. I had not ever walked up or down the Jenolan River and I was impressed with the scenery it offered. Many years ago, Craig told us he did walk right up to Caves House, the upper reaches of the river being much slower to manoeuvre.

At last the time came for some uphill going. Shlowly up and up, with Richard setting the pace, we plodded on until we reached the top of Mount O'Reilly at about 900 metres. We stopped to rest and regroup, measured our pulse rates, why I can't imagine, listened with interest to John about his "nutrition" course, and as Alan was dying for a cup of tea, we marched off down the north-eastern ridge to the Cox's. In no time at all Alan had a fire going and we finished off the carrot cake and other goodies.

Richard raced off up the river and up Breakfast Creek to get back to the cars before dark, whilst we followed at a slower pace. At the junction of the Cox's and Breakfast Creek we came upon a large party of school children and their teachers cooking their evening meal. We walked through their camp, exchanged greetings and started off up Breakfast Creek.

By the time we reached Carlon's Creek the sun had set and as we walked on in the dark, occasionally we would feel the slight stinging sensation of the stinging nettles hiding in the dark shadows. Sometimes the full moon managed to penetrate the tree cover and we finally got back to our cars at about 7.30 pm.

John and I remarked how nice it would have been if we had stayed out and camped on the Cox's as is our usual Saturday night habit. We changed into our "clean "street" clothes and thought back on the day's walk. We all agreed it was a great trip and made plans for a follow-up day walk in the not too distant future.

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF WALK. LEADER - IAN DEBERT.

Ian advises that due to unforeseen circumstances he is unable to lead the walk set down for July 23,24 - Hartley Vale Historical Walk, Base Camp at Hartley Vale. The walk will now be on the 30,31st of July, details as programmed for the earlier date.

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The Treasurer is at present on holidays overseas, but the President, Tony Marshall or John Holly will accept subscriptions in the Clubroom, or UNFINANCIAL members may send their cheques to the Sydney Bushwalkers, Box 4476 G.P.O., Sydney, 2001.