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THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER  
Established June 1931

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A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers,  
Box 4476 G.P.O. Sydney 2001. Club meetings are held every Wednesday  
evening from 7.30 pm at the Cahill Community Centre (Upper Hall),  
34 Falcon Street, Crow's Nest.

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SEPTEMBER, 1984.

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A MOMENT OF TRUTH.

by Jim Brown.

I fancy this title comes from the horrendous sport (!) of bull-fighting, when the matador stands face to face with a killer bull. For myself, I couldn't care less for that sort of moment of truth. I would rather think of it as that instant in time when one makes a major discovery about oneself, about one's fellows, about the way one wants to spend a lot of one's life. I dare say many of us can't identify the exact moment, but I feel I can define the very place and time it happened to me.

It was about 10.00 am on Easter Saturday; March 23rd, 1940, and at the southern rim of Kanangra Walls, where the track begins to dip down towards the Coal Seam Cave and the Gingra Range. Not a very startling place you may say, unless you harbour some strange notion of becoming a bushwalker, but you are an only child, probably something of a mother's boy, and you are out there alone in the mist and unsure of what lies ahead.

Of course, I had been to the bush quite a few times before. There had been a progression of day walks, gradually growing more ambitious, until about two years earlier there had been an introduction to overnight walking. On that occasion two of us set out on an Australia Day weekend to do the conventional walk from Wentworth Falls via Kedumba Creek, Cox's River, Burratorang Valley and the Nattai River to Picton. Our trip had not been exactly a resounding success - we became ill on the water of Kedumba Creek flowing from the Leura Sewage Farm, one of my knees packed up, and we finally limped into Central Burratorang and caught a bus out to Camden on the Monday afternoon.

After that I almost "Quit for Life" and probably would have done so, except that Life and the Bush seemed to have become inextricably interwoven. Instead I tried several other overnight trips, all of which ended in disaster of one kind or another, but when I voiced an intention of going to Kanangra and beyond at Easter 1940, my companion of the Kedumba trip opted out. Of course he was the smart one.....or was he? No, I really think he was plain scared, and maybe with some cause considering the calibre of my navigation at that stage.

At all events at Easter, at the end of Sydney's driest-ever summer, I set off alone for Kanangra, Gingra Range, Hughes Ridge, the Kowmung and Cox's Rivers and back to Wentworth Falls via the known Kedumba route. I caught an all-night tram into town and joined the 2.55 am Orange train - the "paper" train with a mixture of passenger and freight cars, on Good Friday. There were a few other odd-ball types aboard, and I remember some of them dancing bare-foot on the recently hosed-down platform at Penrith about 4.30 am, and singing a pop song of the times which included the words -

"I'm sorry for myself, so sorry for myself,  
I'd go and jump right into the sea,  
But there's nobody here to rescue me -  
I'm so sorry for myself."

As the train slugged up the hill to Springwood the first vague light of a March dawn illuminated the paler rocks of the cuttings so that they looked like waste paper, and the pungent engine smoke mingled with the

smell of cattle in the trucks ahead (I've said it was a mixed train). By the time we were at Mount Victori<sup>a</sup> about 7.00 am, it was gloriously sunny and warm. I had to wait about four hours to catch a tourist coach to Jenolan Caves, and filled in the time eating biscuits, chocolate and oranges.

The bus brought me to Jenolan about 12.30 pm, and I walked up the steep hill to the Kanangra Road Junction. Nearby I found water for a late lunch, then went on to Budthingeroo (Cunninghame's Clearing) for an evening meal, followed by a night walk to the Boyd River Crossing. There the new road formation ended, and I passed a rather wretched night in one of the tents vacated over Easter by the road gangs. About 4.30 am, the chill and my inadequate sleeping bag made further rest impossible, so I started out over the loose earth of the newly turned road surface towards Kanangra.

Mist hung in the hollows and a gigantic Easter moon went down like a yellow dollar coin, and about 5.45 am I first saw Kanangra, with the valleys full of blue cloud, and the rising sun throwing a blood-red finger over the hummocky tops of the mist. Only once since have I seen the same miracle of sunrise over cloud-filled ravines at Kanangra, and found again that the effect was wholly awesome.

I breakfasted out of a tin of cocktail frankfurts and vegetables, looked at the bodies cossetted in their sleeping bags in the Dance Floor Cave, where there was still quite a lot of the wooden platform, and went on up the ladders which then gave access to the Tops. Took a few black and white photographs, mostly of headlands silhouetted against the rising mist, and then veered south past Kanangra trig towards the Gingra Range. Half an hour later I was brought to an abrupt halt at a swampy patch, where the trail disintegrated into half a dozen threads. Very circumspectly I groped my way through this maze of tracks until I came again to a clear path, which showed signs of dropping downwards.

But my confidence had been shattered into little fragments like the track. I looked south towards Mount Colong's table top, which stood up above the mist, but the gorges of Christy's Creek and the Kowmung were still enveloped in slowly-moving wreaths of cotton wool, and looked even deeper and more mysterious than they are. There was another song popular at the time which went:

"Good Doctor Jekyll, naughty Mr. Hyde,  
Day and night, wrong or right,  
They're arguing inside."

Mr. Hyde now spoke to me loud and clear. He said, "Turn back. It's too hairy. You're no hero, not even a half-baked bushwalker."

Dr. Jekyll replied. "If you go back, you'll always regret it. You'll never become even a half-baked bushwalker."

"Take the easy way out," counselled Mr. Hyde. "Remember how you suffered on Kedumba Creek and in the lawyer vine below Clear Hill? You can easily get back to Jenolan. No one will ever know."

Said Dr. Jekyll. "You will. You'll know you turned chicken."

"Well," argued Mr. Hyde. "You wanted to get to Kanangra. Well, you got here. There will be even better views on the Tops as you go back. Oh,

and by the way, are you really sure this is the way to Gingra?"

Dr. Jekyll: "Chicken!"

Mr. Hyde: "Where do you think you're going? You'll be sorry!!!"

Years later, in a magazine article, Geof Wagg wrote of a party facing a similar decision "..... but our feet were already going down the trail, and we knew we wouldn't be back." I knew just what he meant. At the time I didn't say anything, but if I had it would have been, "Cheerio, gents. Have one for me at Caves House, Mr. Hyde."

So I came to Gingra Range, to Hughes Ridge (finding that must have been Mug's Luck), and the Kowmung for lunch. That night, near Gingra Creek junction I met up with some real, fair-dinkum bushwalkers. They may have been S.B.W. - I never found out. They were very kind, and didn't sneer at my queer assortment of gear, and even offered some helpful suggestions.

Why agonise over the rest of that awful trip? On the morning of Easter Day the chill drove me on my way before dawn and I reached Cox's River via the Lower Kowmung Canyon about 9.00 am for breakfast. The Kowmung wasn't flowing, neither was the Cox, but there were large pools, and beside them some cattle that had died in the drought. On the lower Kowmung I also found a dead wallaby, which must have been shot the previous day: I went on my way cursing in the filthiest language I then knew those people who took pleasure in destruction.

I was determined not to drink polluted water again, so I waited until I found the Cox flowing before I filled my aluminium water-bottle for the stage up Kedumba. What I didn't notice was the Cox began to flow where a puny stream came out of a narrow ravine.....Kedumba Creek. About 3.00 pm, already bilious from the "Cox River" water in my flask, I started up Kedumba Pass. Mount Solitary was ringed by the flames of a bush fire.

I just caught the last train from Wentworth Falls about 8.20 pm, and was glad to have to myself a compartment in a box carriage, so that I could go and be sick in the toilet when I needed to do so. I arrived home about 11.30 pm on Easter Sunday, very sick, sore and sorry for myself.

Yes, like the character in the pop song, I was sorry for myself. In fact, I wondered again if I should Quit for Life, except that I no longer had any real choice. At South Kanangra I had passed through an invisible barrier, that sort of Moment of Truth.

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Even as I have been writing this, a most disturbing thought has occurred to me. I know that Thomas Carlyle cautions us about speculation on our "might-have-beens" and derides it as a totally futile exercise. Perhaps it is. But suppose.....just suppose.....I had turned back at South Kanangra... Would I have ever gone again to the bush? Could I have ever nerved myself to try to join a Bush Walking Club seven years later and after the War?

If that had happened, I might have failed to do almost all the things that now seem to me to have been most worth-while, most rewarding. Worst of all, I may never have met most of the people I have come to respect..... to admire.....yes, to love.....

It doesn't bear thinking about.

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A NEW NATIONAL PARK AT PORT STEPHENS- AND IT'S MAGNIFICENT.

From "The Sydney Morning Herald", 11th August, '84.

N.S.W. gained a magnificent new coastal headland national park at Port Stephens yesterday, when the Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr. Sheahan, opened Tomaree Park. The 800-hectare park - near Tomaree Head at the entrance to the port - embraces an outstanding scenic coastline of mountains, islands and beaches on the southern headland near Shoal Bay.

And it is only 30 minutes' drive from the centre of Newcastle.

Mr. Sheahan said that since 1976 the length of the N.S.W. coastline covered by national parks and nature reserves had doubled from 17 to 34 per cent. The addition of Tomaree Park would preserve the scenic and biological features of the area and cater for swimming, surfing, bushwalking, nature study and fishing.

The vegetation of Tomaree Park includes open forest, mixed eucalypts and extensive areas of heath, as well as rare species of teatree. Fauna includes koalas, bandicoots, swamp wallabies and an outstanding variety of seabirds on the offshore islands and cliffs. There is also a number of archaeological sites.

An important part of the park is the Fingal promontory, which for much of the year is an offshore island, but sometimes is connected by a sandy isthmus.

Mr. Sheahan said negotiations were underway between the State and Federal Governments to transfer the historic lighthouse on Point Stephens to the State for inclusion in the park.

The N.P.W.S. also hopes that the Crown land on Tomaree Head controlled by the N.S.W. Health Commission may eventually be included in the park.

JOSEPH GLASCOTT.

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(Perhaps a member would like to lead a walk here? Ed.)

COMMITTEE MEETING.

Some information presented to the September Committee Meeting suggested that on a few recent walks lunch-time fires were not extinguished as thoroughly as they might have been. In some cases, apparently, sand had been scuffed over the embers.

For bushwalkers there is only one way to put out a fire - DROWN IT COMPLETELY WITH WATER.

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NEW MEMBER: Please add to your Membership List.

OSPREY, Martina - 57 Melaleuca Drive, St. Ives, 2075

Phone 440,8877 (H)

OUR CONSERVATION SECRETARY AWARDED O.A.M.  
From "The Colong Bulletin" July '84.

Alex Colley, Honorary Secretary of the Colong Committee for the past eight years, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Alex has given sustained and invaluable assistance in a voluntary capacity to conservation in Australia for nearly fifty years. Seldom in the public eye, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that future generations of Australians will be adequately provided with a rich natural heritage in terms of national parks and wilderness.

In his professional career, Alex was, until his retirement, an economist with the N.S.W. State Planning Authority. Thus his life's work has been concerned with conservation-related matters and public service. He has served not only his employer but a host of public spirited bodies with distinction, bringing to the task enthusiasm, devotion and exceptional counsel.

Alex Colley joined The Sydney Bush Walkers Club in 1936. By 1937 he was filling a position on the Committee, and four years later was elected President for 1941-42. He later served as editor of the Club's magazine "The Sydney Bushwalker", and he has played an active part in the N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs. For about twenty years he has been the Sydney Bush Walkers Club's Conservation Secretary.

In the conservation field, Alex has been closely involved in The Colong Committee, which he joined in 1968, when it became known that limestone deposits at Colong were under threat from mining. He has given continuous service to the Committee as Director, editor of "The Colong Bulletin", and Hon. Secretary since 1976.

His contribution to conservation has always been a willingness to take on activities that involve both time and effort. Aside from editing "The Sydney Bushwalker" and "The Colong Bulletin", he has written scores of articles for conservation journals, including "The National Parks Journal of N.S.W." and the Australian Conservation Foundation's magazine "Habitat". His work is influential, in so far as his research is thorough and his comment is always reasoned and lucid.

In conservation, Alex was vital to campaigns conducted to preserve the integrity of the southern Blue Mountains from limestone mining at Colong, and the threat of logging of the Boyd Plateau. Today this area is protected by the Kanangra-Boyd National Park. In the northern Blue Mountains he made representations leading to the proclamation of the State's second largest Park, Wollemi National Park. For over a decade he has worked to bring to fruition the gazettal of the State's principal rainforest areas as National Park. His efforts in other parts of Australia include valuable submissions for campaigns in south-west Tasmania and in the dedication and management of Kakadu National Park.

It is perhaps typical of Alex Colley that when, in July 1981, the Sydney Bushwalkers Club elected him as their second Honorary Active Member, he told those gathered that he felt the Club owed him nothing - rather that he owed the Club for the many good years it had given him.

Alex's many friends and colleagues in the great conservation movement are delighted at the well-deserved honour he has received. And to this official recognition we all heartily add our own special "Well done, Alex".

Hardly need we say - "Keep up the good work!"

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NO NEGOTIATION ON THE DAINTREE.  
From "The Colong Bulletin", July 1984.

The July A.C.F. Newsletter reports that:

Last November the State Government gave the (Douglas Shire) Council \$100,000 to begin work approximately along the line of a rough track last bulldozed in 1976. The Council now has between \$20,000 and \$40,000 left (they claim the December blockade cost them \$20,000). Despite the efforts of the Environment Minister, Martin Tenni (Barron River), the government does not appear to be about to put more money into the road.

The lack of preparation and haste of the Council in bulldozing from both ends last December has now become quite clear. In places the grading is so steep that it is difficult to walk, let alone drive a vehicle. At the northern end where the road climbs above the Woobadda River large landslips have sent sections of the road into the river. Some low sections of the road behind Cowie Beach would be flooded during summer rains. At the southern end between Emmagen Creek and Cape Tribulation the road is also excessively steep and sections have slipped up to 100 m. Throughout its 38 km length erosion has created deep channels and gullies up to 3.5 m deep over some creek crossings.

It is obvious that a road in this terrain and climate will have to be thoroughly drained, graded and surfaced, and kept that way if it is to be usable. Simply pushing a bulldozer through the scrub is not only destructive, but useless. An all-weather road might well cost millions of dollars.

Mr. David Connolly, Federal Shadow Minister for the Environment, has informed us that the Minister "has not even taken the preliminary step to initiate negotiations with the Queensland Government", and has "rejected the Opposition proposal to offer Federal Funds to build or upgrade an alternative road, inland from the coastal rainforest". The Federal Government's inaction on this matter cannot be reconciled with its over-generous treatment of Tasmania.

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AN EXTRA WALK FOR THE HOLIDAY WEEK-END.

EASY CAMP

Sunday 30th. Sept. ) (Suitable for beginners)  
Monday 1st Oct. ) GLENBROOK - St. Helena - Springwood. EASY/MEDIUM  
15 km - Traini 9.10 am Country.

LEADER: Barbara Evans. Phone 94,6333 (H) before 9.0 pm.



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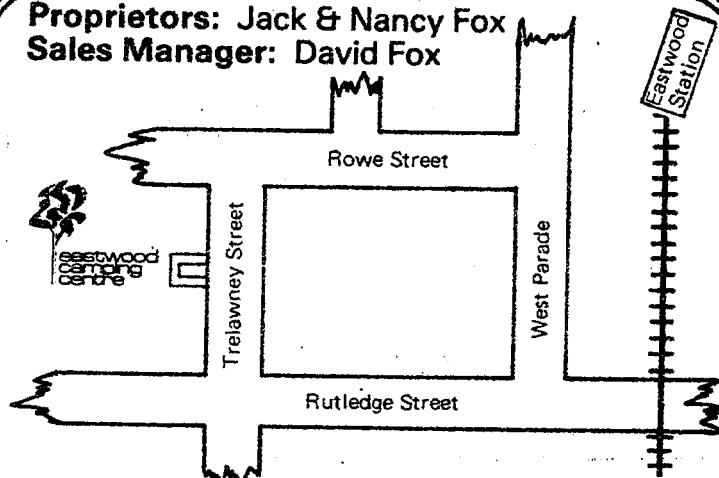
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"WILDERNESS"

by Peter Christian,

Touch the stillness of twilight huddled deep in the lap of wilderness  
 As cool night air brushes ruddy complexion and prickles even a leathery  
 skin;

Incessant stars shine above unblinking as both air and time stand still,  
 Faces framed by flickering flame give friends a ghostly grin.

Feel the icy, swirling mountain waters as they numb both calf and knee,  
 Agonising pins and needles and futile battle of shoes versus rigid feet,  
 When unrelenting, scrub and lawyer vine nearly reduce pack and limbs to  
 shreds,

The luxury and reprieve of grassy river bank where rest of bones is  
 complete.

Rugged granite spurs and ridges tax heart and limb to limits of endurance,  
 Solitary mountain peaks stand witness to the weathering of eons of time.  
 Fragile heath spreads its delicate lace and lightly springs beneath our  
 tread;

Persistent leeches, sand and march flies find the tempting bare skin  
 sublime.

Stinging nettle on snaking Colo keeps tough walkers recoiling in retreat;  
 Casuarinas as dense as bristles stubbornly resent and rebuff our advances.  
 Evil black oozing bog of ancient sphagnum swamps, squelches between the toes  
 Whilst walking in the birthplace of many a great river's humble traces.

Sandstone buttresses stand sentinel in far-flung Hawkesbury reaches.  
 Currawong and lyrebird sing of a newborn day as morning mist disperses.  
 Shy platypus and wild duck cautiously ripple those tranquil inland waters  
 Where rock orchids display their creamy finery perched on protective  
 ledges.

Sense the wild and untamed beauty, the balm for restless heart and soul,  
 That can only be found in unblemished places where nature reigns supreme  
 But only a few oases remain due to destructive hands of ignorance and  
 greed,

So precious little left on this tiny planet - preserve it before it's  
 only a dream.

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CONGRATULATIONS - on the birth of a daughter, Catrina, on 9/7/84 to  
 Rowena and Victor Lewin.

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THE DESERT SURVIVAL PROBLEM.

Marion Lloyd, a Club member for some years, was introduced to the following "quiz" during a recent holiday at Binna Burra Lodge on the Lamington Plateau. Feeling it may be of interest or value to Club members, she has forwarded it for presentation in the Magazine. - - -

INTRODUCTION.

The situation described in this problem is based on over 2,000 actual cases around the world in which men and women lived or died depending on the survival decisions they made. Assume that your "life" or "death" could depend on how you apply your present knowledge to a relatively unfamiliar problem.

THE SITUATION.

It is approximately 10.00 am, in mid-December, and you have just crash landed in the Simpson Desert in the Northern Territory. The light twin-engine plane, containing the bodies of the pilot and the co-pilot has completely burned. Only the air frame remains. None of the rest of you has been injured.

The pilot was unable to notify anyone of your position before the crash. However, he had indicated before impact that you were 110 km south-south-west from a mining camp which is the nearest known habitation and that you were approximately 105 km off the course that was filed in your Flight Plan.

The immediate area is composed of sand ridges with a little vegetation including prickly pear. The last weather report indicated the temperature would reach 43°C that day which means that the temperature at ground level would be 55°C. You are dressed in light weight clothing - short-sleeved shirts, pants, socks and street shoes. Everyone has a handkerchief. Collectively your pockets contain \$2.83 in change, \$85.00 in bills, a pack of cigarettes, and a biro.

THE PROBLEM.

Before the plane caught fire your group was able to salvage the 15 items listed below. Your task is to rank these items according to their importance to your survival, starting with (1) the most important, to (15) the least important.

- You may assume:
1. You are one of the actual people in the situation.
  2. The team has agreed to stick together.
  3. All the items salvaged are in good condition.

ITEM SALVAGED.ORDER OF PRIORITY FOR SURVIVAL

(1) = most important  
(15) = least important

Flashlight (4 battery size)  
Pocket Knife  
Sectional air map of the area  
Plastic raincoat

Magnetic Compass  
 Bandages  
 .45 calibre pistol (loaded)  
 Parachute (red & white fabric)  
 Bottle of salt tablets (1000 tablets)  
 1 quart of water per person  
 1 pair of sunglasses per person  
 A book entitled "Edible animals of the Desert"  
 2 quarts of overproof Vodka  
 1 Top Coat per person  
 A cosmetic Mirror

The views of the "experts" will be published in the October issue of the magazine.

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CAROL'S WALK.

by Bill Gamble.

There was Brian, Shirley, Jan, Paul, John, Marilyn.... in all thirty-one on Carol Bruce's walk in the Royal National Park on Sunday 10th June, 1984. In brief, it was, after a 9.00 am start at Waterfall, downstream on Kangaroo Creek and then uphill from Yaala Pool to Engadine in time to catch the 4.14 pm city train.

Carol led a procession of many prospectives and a few members, generally on a well-used track along the true right of the creek (there are a couple of places where the track swings to the true left, e.g. downstream from Karloo Pool) and Peter Miller kept the rear intact. Sometimes it was easier to forget about the track as travel was often easy on both sides of the creek.

Lunchbreak was taken above Karloo Pool and there was plenty of time for an afternoon snack in the sun on the east side of Yaala Pool (for Laurie Quaken and a lady it was sufficeent for a quick dip in the chilly waters) before doubling back a couple of hundred metres to recross to the true left and climb up the established track to Engadine Station before rain closed in quickly from the south. It was a pleasant if uneventful day.

At the time, Kangaroo Creek was running cold and clear and the way was easy. Given a warmer time of year there would have been ample opportunity for the party to have swum and waded itself downstream. The rock pools are numerous and a delight, and the walk is recommended for inclusion in the summer walks programme.

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WILDLIFE IN THE APSLEY RIVER GORGE.

First printed in "The Sydney Bushwalker" May, 1967.

by Dot Butler.

In the spacious days before speed, when the whole of your life stretched ahead in a golden never-ending summer, you travelled by coastal steamer from Sydney to Port Macquarie taking several days over the trip, including the wait to get over the bar. Uncle met you there with his buggy and you bowled off inland along a dirt road through the dense rain-forest filled with Buffalo Marys (a large-bodied yellow and green wood pigeon), where bullock tams were dragging logs out of steep rocky gullies. You passed cleared areas where the plovers made their odd call by day and the curlews wailed in the dark. Walcha, in those days hardly more than a homestead property, was an infinity of time and space away from Sydney. Now we get in our cars at 6.00 pm Friday, travel non-stop through the night, and in the early hours of the morning we have arrived.

Easter Friday morning saw 12 Sydney Bush Walkers and a number of N.P.A. members arriving at the Apsley Lookout Reserve in the New England Highlands, about 12 miles out of Walcha. The N.P.A. people were going to view the region from the top, visiting its various lookout points, while the S.B.W.s were planning, in the four days at our disposal, to negotiate some thirty miles of its rugged gorges and canyons. As far as we knew, this trip had never been done before.

The Apsley River winds its way in great loops from west to east right across the map, dropping about 2,400 ft in this distance. While the car drivers took the cars on some thirty miles to where we planned to come out on the last day, the rest of us wandered round to admire the falls, and to speculate on our chances of getting through the deep, rock-piled canyon floor down which the brown water tumbled, building up back eddies of yellow foam. It was beautiful hot dry inland weather and billies of tea seemed much more in demand than climbing activity. However, when our ruthless leaders, Ross Wyborn and Don Finch, arrived back at about 11 am it was a case of "Finish your eating and get packed up; we're moving off in ten minutes!" And strange as it may seem, in less than ten minutes we were actually moving off.

We clambered down a steep spur, covered with scant vegetation, and moved across to a steeply falling creek bed. Although this is to be an account of the native fauna, I can't omit mentioning a specimen of introduced fauna - the exotic Homo Sapiens who dislodged a large boulder on the hillside, which split into several pieces as it bounded down, one of them grazing Ross's head as it screamed past. Of course, being Ross's head, it caused no damage. However, another piece hit him on the arm, paralysing it, and it remained out of commission for the rest of the trip. We applied band-aids and continued on our way.

When we reached the river bed we found it even more rugged than it looked from the top. Huge dark grey block-up boulders lay crowded together in great heaps and over these we clambered for the rest of the afternoon. Those in the lead had plenty of time to admire the scenery while waiting for the tail-enders to catch up. The warm air had a dream-like quality. The sun filtered down in a golden haze. The scene looked like a picture done in pointillism - that form of art in which the whole effect is achieved by

little dots of colour. The thousand-foot high rock walls, dark grey and almost vertical, were spotted with palest grey-green lichen, the pale blue sky was a backdrop to countless thousands of lightly floating thistledowns, interspersed with long shining streamers of airborne spiderwebs, and the brown earth-stained water at our feet was flecked with spots of foam the size of golden guineas. Great casuarinas, their gnarled roots gripping the rocks at the water's edge, had entrapped thousands of the floating thistledowns and looked like a child's drawing of trees spotted with snowflakes. IN the stark dead branches of a ringbarked gumtree on the skyline a flock of white cockatoos settled - live white flowers dotting its limbs.

We camped in the afternoon on a flood-strewn heap of rocks. To say something in its favour, it was at least fairly horizontal, and after we had scraped up heaps of dry casuarina needles for a bed it was even comfortable. The keen ones studied the map and found we had achieved hardly a mile. We'll have to make better time tomorrow.

Away bright and early in the morning. The water must be swarming with eels; we came across many 2 ft long ones dead among the rocks, probably killed by the impact of flood waters the previous week. Stranded shells on the black mud gave evidence of fresh-water mussels. This rocky gorge is a lizard's paradise; every jutting piece of rock had its watchful water-dragon, poised on strong front legs ready to plop into the water as we drew near. Over the brown water skimmed swallows, slim little arrows of delight, never still a moment.

Our progress this day involved much swimming, pushing our floating packs before us. I heard no complaint about the temperature of the water from the girls, but poor Digby, shivering his way over the rocks from one swim to the next, was heard to remark through chattering teeth, "Oh, for a little bit of that something that we males haven't got, namely subcutaneous fat!" As we came swimming into their view, flocks of ducks would take off from the water. We counted as many as fifteen in one flock, thirteen in another. Then there would be crashing amongst the bushes on the steep hillside, and the eye following the sound would see thickly-furred rock wallabies leaping effortlessly upwards. At a safe distance they would pause and look down on us - the intruders in their country.

After cooling off in the water it was a delightful sensation to lie on the hot rocks and dry off. We weren't the only ones who appreciated this; we found we were sharing the rocks with lizards and snakes, the red-bellied black snake, a greyish whip-snake, a beautifully marked diamond python. With his tail in the water and a large frog on its way down his throat, a bright green tree-snake tried to look inconspicuous and failed.

Camp for the night was another heap of rocks - the only thing offering in this steep gorge country. We made a big campfire from dry wood brought down by the floods and sang into the late hours, though you might wonder what we had to sing about as this day we had only covered another four or five miles, and no knowing how we were to get out. All night long bats flitted across the star-shine and disappeared into the dark shadows of the trees.

Next day more swimming. In fact, the first seven miles of the gorge involve as much swimming as walking. For this reason it would be wise for anyone else planning this trip, to find out about local rainfall during

the previous week as it would be extremely hazardous, if not impossible, to swim the canyons in flood. Huge logs and other flood debris was piled 20 and 30 ft up the sides of the gorge.

This was a glorious day. With most of the food eaten the pack was light and easy to carry. Going quietly, barefoot, over the rocks, the wild creatures were not frightened into hiding. The lizards hardly bothered to plop into the water. As I swam quietly behind my pack the ducks accepted me as part of the scenery and stayed floating above their reflections as I swam among them. A vivid cerulean blue kingfisher darted out of the bank and skimmed across the water. Flocks of swallows filled the air overhead and I floated on my back to watch their darting flight. Up the rocky hill-sides rock wallabies grazed, the warm orange-coloured fur on the front of their bodies making a splash of colour on the grey-green hillside. Some black gang-gang parrots were tearing away at a tree with their powerful beaks. I was thinking, "I'll come back here when I'm old and spend the rest of my days floating in this beautiful river." Suddenly there was a great beating of wings above my head and a huge eagle flew by, his wings marked with dark feathers like all eagles, but his underbody a sparkling creamy white. I have never seen a more perfect bird in a more perfect setting. He circled round and finally came to rest on a branch - king of all he surveyed.

In the afternoon the country began to flatten out. The stark rocky canyons had given way to thickly wooded mountains, which now gave way to lower hills. Clawing his way up a tree a 6 ft goanna looked like some ageless antedeluvian monster in the never-ending sunshine. Bright little butterflies flitted about, some with black and orange markings and some as yellow as a buttercup. Dragonflies skimmed by water on gauzy wings. Huge spiders hung<sup>1</sup> their webs busy with the day's butchery - trussing up 2-inch long green grasshoppers in silken cocoons.

We had now finished with swimming. Grassy river flats made walking a pleasure. In place of the rock wallabies we now saw pale grey aristocratic kangaroos feeding on the fine native grasses.

Camp for the night was a complete contrast to our previous ones - right in the middle of an acre of grassy river-flat. We made a big camp fire and when Ross arrived we found that he had another close shave - this time with an exotic female who chased him into the river when he appeared to be threatening her baby. After the evening meal we initiated Donnie into the mysterious practices of the masseur's profession - kneading, stroking, hacking, clapping, pounding, wringing, toe-rolling, etc. Donnie took to it with sadistic delight and everybody became his victim in turn. Joan was worried "I think Donnie has become a compulsive masseur. Just think what will happen next time he goes to a beach and sees all those recumbent bodies - he won't be able to control himself."

Next day we had only a couple of miles walk along the river flats before the long pull up a steep ridge to the farmlands above and so back to the cars and home.

The Apsley Gorge has such high potential for a Natural Reserve that we hope it will be dedicated as such in the near future.

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GOOD NEWS AT NARROW NECK.

by Bill Gamble.

On Sunday, 17th June 1984, Jim Laing led a party of twelve members and prospectives in a loop walk from Golden Stairs. The sections of the walk may be summarised thus:-

- . Golden Stairs car-park to Narrow Neck fire tower
- . Fire tower to Cedar Head via Walls Pass
- . Cedar Head to creek (for lunch) and up to Ruined Castle
- . Ruined Castle to car-park via Golden Stairs.

The party went at 8.45 am and was back at the cars by 4.15 pm.

A doubtful weather forecast and fog in Sydney did not augur well for the walk; but at the car-park it was fine and clear with billowy clouds of fog filling the Megalong and Jamison Valleys.

A cracking pace was set for the walk along Narrow Neck to the fire tower (at times I think that there ought to be a law against this sort of thing early on a Sunday morning). Jim allowed us about five minutes at the fire tower for a mouthful or two of morning snacks before setting an arc-like course around Cedar Head swamp to reach Walls Pass without delay.

The descent by chains slowed the pace as one by one we clambered down the almost cliff-like pass. Barry Wallace's rope was needed by some as was the steadying hand of Bill Capon stationed on a ledge half way down. And Brian Bolton was anchorman at the bottom, holding the lower chain taut and directing footholds on the awkward last couple of metres. Most of an hour was spent getting the party safely down the pass and everyone had plenty of time to enjoy the warm sun and the views.

But once we were down Jim forged ahead again, around the cliff line to Cedar Head by a tricky route, finally slipping off on to the steep ridge for the descent to Cedar Creek and a well-earned lunch break of twenty-five minutes.

Within forty-five minutes of lunch break we had clambered the east ridge out of the creek and up to Ruined Castle and were sitting atop the highest rock parapet in somewhat chilly conditions. By this time the party was so taken by Jim's pace that they declined a bonus break until 3.15 pm and were soon plunging downhill to join the Mt. Solitary/Golden Stairs track. BY 3.55 pm the tail end had left the bottom of Golden Stairs and it was all over at the car-park by 4.15 pm, save for the hot chocolate etc. at Aroneys.

It would be easy to write off the walk as just another S.B.W. race in which kilometres covered in the least possible time is the purpose and end. Not so. The route which Jim took has a lot of merit. It mixes the familiar with the not so familiar. Easy walking becomes more demanding and in the end resolves into a relaxed conclusion. Any descent of a pass requiring chains and good footholds is a personal challenge - for some to overcome fear of heights and for others not to be too cavalier in their approach as rock faces can be unforgiving places. The sidling around the cliff line and out onto Cedar Head was a delight where more time could be well spent in future trips. The soaks were dripping profusely and an overnight bivvy on Cedar Head for a small party is possible. Cedar Creek

was flowing well and the banks on both sides were heavily timbered and ooZed moisture. The rocks in the creek were slippery with moss. In a few words it was rain forest. And the ridges, down from Cedar Head and up to Ruined Castle were subtle and demanded some attention to route finding.

In all, there is good news for bushwalkers seeking to traverse the country between Walls Pass and Ruined Castle.

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SOCIAL NOTES FOR OCTOBER. by Roger Browne.

October 3 - Committee Meeting.

October 10 - CLUB AUCTION. Buy and sell your second-hand billies, tents, rucksacks, clothes, cameras, beanies, raincoats, pogo-sticks, toys, furniture, nic-nacks and unwanted relatives at the Club Auction. ONce again, the popular Charlie Brown will conduct the auction. Maps, books and records will be sold on a separate table. Small items are generally donated to the Club, however you may receive the proceeds for any of your items, with a 25% commission to the Club. You may set a reserve price if you like. Clean out your cupboards, get a small return on your surplus equipment, and help newcomers equip themselves for bushwalking. Bring CASH too - you never know what bargains await you!

DINNER before this meeting at the Phuong Vietnamese Restaurant, 87 Willoughby Road, Crow's Nest. Meet outside at 6.30 pm, late arrivals ask for the "Sydney Bushwalkers" table. BYO. Cheap.

October 17 - HIMALAYAN NIGHT with Stan Corney. Stan has led treks through the Himalayas each year for some time now, and has interesting tales to tell, plus movies to show. Stan will also talk about a forthcoming trip to the area for those who are interested in seeing it for themselves.

October 24 - GAMES NIGHT. Deirdre Schofield will host a games evening. Form tables of 6 on the night for loads of fun.

October 31 - MACDONNEL RANGES - Slides from the S.B.W. trip that was written up in the July issue of the Club magazine. HOsted by Spiro Hajinakitas, with frequent interjections from others who went on the trip.

DECISIONS - HALF-YEARLY MEETING.

1. Roger Browne has now returned to Sydney, has withdrawn his resignation and will now continue as Social Secretary.
2. Barbara Evans has been elected as 4th Federation delegate.
3. Mike Reynolds has been appointed as Assistant to the New Members Secretary.
4. The motion was CARRIED "That this meeting recommend to the Annual General Meeting that the category of Married Couple Membership Subscription be replaced by a Household Membership Subscription".
5. Coolana has been chosen as the site for the 1985 Annual Reunion and Spiro Hajinakitas has been appointed as Convenor.

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CONGRATULATIONS: To Marsha Durham and Tony Marshall who were married on 15th September.