

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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RAFTING THE FRANKLIN.

by David Lewis.

Two years ago, very few people would have been aware of the Franklin River's existence. Today, it must surely be Australia's best known river. Rafting the Franklin is reputed to be a dangerous activity but as an issue, the Franklin has taken a far greater toll amongst politicians - many of whom have probably never ventured within a hundred kilometres of its rushing waters.

After only a short time in the political arena, the Franklin claimed two governments, as the issue changed first the Tasmanian State Government and then played a significant part in changing the Federal Government. The movement which formed to preserve this unique wild river swelled beyond anyone's imagination. Their cause won the strong support of vast numbers of Australians - most of whom gave their support in the knowledge that they would never directly experience the Franklin's rugged beauty.

Anyone who has been to south-west Tasmania will know that the region is characterised by contrasts and erratic weather. If anything is definite, it's rain; those who venture into the south-west can be sure that at some time in their trip it must rain. The Roaring Forties bring to Tasmania's central highlands a climate of frequent rain, snow and sudden storms at all times of the year.

Draining from the lakes of the central highlands the Franklin River begins its 125 kilometre journey south towards its confluence with the Gordon River. Over its course, the Franklin passes through the world's largest remaining temperate rain forest and through one of its most spectacular ravines.

There are no rivers like the Franklin left in Australia. Indeed, there are very few like it in the world. There are no towns or houses by its banks; there are no farms with domestic animals grazing nearby; no drains empty into it and, apart from the Lyell Highway, which crosses its upper reaches, no roads or railway lines run anywhere near it.

Yet the rafter can hardly begrudge the existence of the highway crossing, as it is from here that access can be gained to the river.

The journey down the Franklin commences where the Lyell Highway crosses the Collingwood River, the Collingwood being a substantial tributary of the Franklin. It was here that our party of seven set about packing, water-proofing and shock-proofing three weeks' of equipment and supplies. A trip of this kind takes many months of organisation and preparation as all manner of contingencies must be accommodated. It is a trade-off, however, as the more you take, the more you reduce the buoyancy and manoeuvrability of the inflatable rubber raft on which you rely to get you to the other end of the river.

This was my second journey down the Franklin (and my fourth trip into south-west Tasmania in as many years) but, nevertheless, preparations on this occasion proved to be just as demanding as before. Each member of the group made a paddle from aluminium tubing and marine ply covered with a thin protective layer of fibreglass. Three weeks' of dehydrated foods had to be individually packed and water-proofed by copious layers of plastic bags. Recipes for trips of this type depend upon the imagination with which one can combine various dried vegetables with rice, lentils or pasta. The alternative is pre-packaged freeze-dried meals which have much the same impact on the digestive system as would a stick of gelignite. Meals are supplemented mainly by nuts, cheese, dried

fruits, biscuits, and chocolate. (It is astonishing how quickly the demand for chocolate rises to a point where it becomes virtually inelastic against all other substances.)

Once food, clothing, raft repair kit, people repair kit and numerous other miscellaneous pieces of equipment have been assembled, the task is then to compress them, and their numerous layers of plastic coating, into a water-proof home brew barrel and a ruck sack. If there are any leaks you can be sure that the river will find them. All is then secured to the raft and covered by a spray sheet. The rafter then applies his own protective coating; a wet suit, a buoyancy vest and a canoeing helmet. (For anyone who contemplates the journey down the Franklin, there is an excellent publication available from the Wilderness Society entitled "NOTES FOR FRANKLIN RIVER RAFTERS AND BUSHWALKERS" which provides the definitive tourist guide for coping with a trip down the river.)

The trip takes around 14 days to complete but this can vary considerably according to weather conditions. The slightest rain can flood the river's narrow ravines and leave parties stranded for many days. Water levels must be monitored religiously.

Upon setting out, the rafter immediately disappears into a wilderness of green and misty valleys, canopied by the dense rainforest which crowds the Franklin's banks. There are rapids from the first stroke of the paddle and these give but a small taste of what is to come. For the uninitiated, the Collingwood provides a good introduction to the art of riding rapids as the river becomes progressively more challenging. A rafter soon becomes adept at dodging mid-stream boulders and logs. (Sometimes it seems there are as many logs in the river as beside it.) However, the river is a great equaliser and all rafters meet the challenge with mixed success; the last fatality on the Franklin was the drowning of a professional guide and yet the majority of people who have travelled the river have had no previous rafting experience.

Prior to 1976, only two parties - eight people - had successfully travelled the Franklin; although, in the early 1800s, many convicts sent on logging expeditions from the penal settlement on Sarah Island in Macquarie Harbour must have been well acquainted with the Franklin's lowest reaches. The first successful expedition over the Franklin's full length was in canoes in 1958; it was that party's third attempt. They were not followed until 1970 when another group of four made the trip on wooden rafts and inner tubes. In 1976, a total of seven people travelled down the Franklin - among them was Bob Brown. Over the next seven years, the Franklin lost its low profile. Whilst the river was under threat, thousands made the journey each summer. BUT to each rafter, knowledge of those numbers has little effect on what is always a very individual experience.

After three days on the river, our party reached the Irenabyss (which means 'chasm of peace'). Here sheer cliffs rise up a hundred metres above the river to frame a narrow piece of sky. At this point, the Franklin is about five metres wide. Water moves slowly through this narrow channel (except after rain when precisely the opposite occurs). The foam from the rapids upstream swirls calmly on its surface. The rafter is left with the impression that the ravine must be as deep as it is high. It is hard to comprehend just how much water is flowing past with each passing second. For 10 or 15 metres above the water level the cliffs show no sign of vegetation, having been regularly scoured by floods.

In the course of our first three days on the Franklin, the cliffs that flanked us had grown - or, more correctly, we had dropped. The roar

of rapids provided a constant reminder that the river was dropping into an ever deepening series of ravines - each one more spectacular than the last - as it carved its way through Tasmania's western ranges. By and large, our party had been successful in making its way through the rapids. So far, we had had only one puncture among the seven rafts; unfortunately, its position, near the join in an air tank, made it difficult to plug completely and so periodically this raft needed some pumping.

Each rapid, where the path is difficult or obscured, must be scouted before a decision is made as to how it would be best negotiated. This process invariably involves much rock climbing and scrambling through thick vegetation before a suitable vantage point can be reached. Then the deliberations begin as each member of the party attempts to predict where the river will take him and the potential pitfalls that such a course might present. Early in the trip, this process takes some time as the Franklin gives most rafters considerable cause for hesitation. But, of necessity, everyone soon learns how to assess a rapid. Usually, one of the more reckless of the party announces that he will 'give it a go' and the others reserve judgment until they see how he fares. The alternative to shooting a rapid is portaging. This often necessitates unpacking all gear from the raft, deflating it and humping the same over some fairly demanding obstacles before joining the river again. Often, safety necessitates portaging, but this is never an attractive option; it is certainly easier having a raft carry you than your having to carry it. In high water some rapids can take up to a day to portage.

From the Irenabyss, the river opens out slightly and the rapids appear less daunting as the rafter has become more adept at manoeuvring his bobbing yellow craft. This is grand river rafting country. There are no major portages to dampen the exhilaration generated as you glide through the rushing waters. The 25 kilometres to the Great Ravine is easily covered in two days.

The Great Ravine is the most spectacular of the Franklin's gorges. It is impossible for any photograph to do it justice. Over the centuries, the river has cut a passage through the rock that is now 700 metres deep. From water level, the cliffs appear to soar to infinity and make the sky seem insignificant. The ravine is punctuated by four huge rapids. They are aptly named: the Churn, the Coruscades, Thunderrush and the Cauldron. All demand full or partial portage. They drop like four giant steps and divide the ravine into five long reaches - each of a grandeur that would compete with that of New Zealand's Milford Sound. The Great Ravine is 10 kilometres long and takes two to three days to negotiate in good weather. After rain, progress is impossible.

The Great Ravine is followed by two more long gorges before the last major rapid, Newlands Cascades, is reached. Newlands Cascades is a rapid that sends every rafter's adrenalin pumping. The river narrows into a 300 metre chute of foaming water containing six drops, each of about two metres. Skilful paddling will see a rafter through in about 30 seconds. It is quite a sensation.

After Newlands Cascades, the Franklin opens out. The low banks are crowded with foliage. The river widens and slows down as it moves more sedately amongst towering beech and blackwoods and the more stunted huon pines that surround it. The banks are lined with forests of huge tree ferns. Thirty-metre limestone cliffs, while less grandiose than what has gone before, nevertheless possess a haunting charm.

Here we relaxed and drifted with the current. There was an eerie feeling - as though we had left something behind. It was the silence. For 10 days we had been accompanied by the inescapable roaring of rapids.

Now at last the river was tranquil.

The lower reaches of the Franklin are characterised by their serenity. A party will spend two or three days here before reaching the Gordon and there will board the Denison Star - a tourist launch which will carry them over the last leg of the journey through Macquarie Harbour to Strahan, a fishing village on Tasmania's west coast.

In the afterglow, the words of Wilderness Society patron Yehudi Menuhin are worth reflecting upon:-

"We will not be judged in the future by our Gross National Product, we will not be judged even by our excursions to the moon, we will be judged by whether we have left this world habitable. The most wonderful things in the world have been achieved without the hand of man."

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COLLEGE PLANS BUSHWALKING GUIDES COURSE.

(From The Blue Mountains Gazette, 19 December, 1984)

Katoomba College of TAFE will be offering a Bushwalking Guides Special Course in 1985.

The aim of this new course, which was trialled by a Participation and Equity class in 1984, is to produce qualified and trained professionals who can organise a bushwalking party and perform an educational function as a mobile teacher, lecturer/demonstrator and be responsible for the health, safety and welfare of the party. The course is subdivided into 8 modules and is to be conducted over both semesters in 1985.

Its emphasis is aligned towards local tourism, and while the core modules are based upon local area geography, local flora and fauna, Aboriginal history, and practical bushwalking, there is a significant content aimed towards tourism marketing and tour operations management.

Entry requirements are: That potential students be 18 years of age or over, hold a school certificate with passes at level 3 or better in English, Geography and/or Science, or, completion of PEP Bushwalking Guides Course. However, alternative selection may be via interview.

TAFE colleges encourage the equal enrolment of both males and females. This course in particular is suitable for both men and women seeking fresh opportunity in a new field.

To enable planning to be finalised at the college, interested students are invited to call at the college now where further information is available at the College East Campus, Parke Street, Katoomba.

WALK NOTICE.

CANCELLATION of the CARLONS walk on 2, 3 March has been notified by leader BILL GAMBLE.



eastwood camping centre

BUSHWALKERS

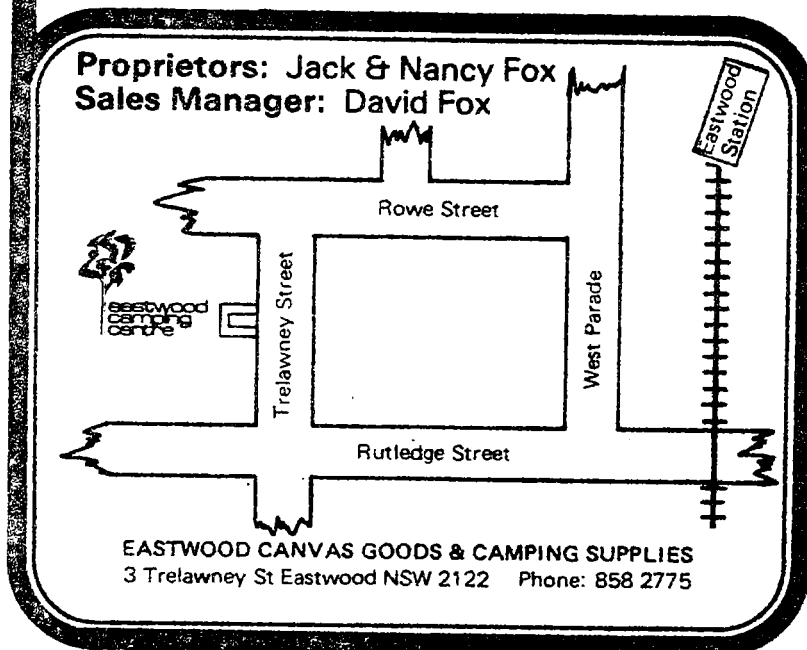
Lightweight Tents • Sleeping Bags • Rucksacks •
Climbing & Caving Gear • Maps • Clothing • Boots
• Food.

CAMPING EQUIPMENT

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ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BUSHWALKING

by Paul Sharp.

I set out below, from my vast experience of bushwalking, a few simple facts that will surely help the less experienced, the blind, and the lame, more fully to enjoy that most spiritual and uplifting of all man's (sorry, dears, person's) activities.

1. 75% of all journeys, in either direction, are up hill.
2. However much you eat from it, the pack gets heavier rather than lighter.
3. The map is wrong.
4. There is (always) a magnetic anomaly (maybe ironstone) in the area that causes the compass to be misleading.
5. The last pair of boots was more comfortable.
6. The job of the leader is to be way out in front, to prove that he is the leader.
7. The best camping spot is a little farther on.
8. Halfway through the journey back it is "only about five minutes to the cars".
9. An easy descent to, crossing of, and ascent from, Pigeon House Gorge exists, and is easy to find.
10. The "Beers for Bushwalkers Association" actually exists.
11. Women are better walkers than men.
12. It's only now that this heavy storm has set in that the tent has suddenly sprung a leak.
13. It doesn't matter if you can't find the exact ridge where the trail is indicated. One ridge is as good as another.
14. My boots are waterproof.
15. Leeches won't attack you if you are smoking.
16. Lung cancer is good for you.
17. Waterproof matches are.
18. It's easy to light a fire in the heaviest rain.
19. The pass used to be here last time I came.
20. Men are better walkers than women.
21. At Wog Wog they love you.
22. Bushwalking is relaxing, and good for you.
23. Dot is an orthodox conservative.
24. Inflatable mattresses are just as good when they are punctured.
25. I like walking in this heavy fog - it's a good test of navigation.
26. No, you don't subtract the magnetic deviation, you add it.
27. A competent bushwalker can always find his way from the sun.
28. "The bush is not a rubbish dump".
29. This river never floods.
30. Members of S.B.W. don't get lost.

THE COUNTRY WITH A HUMAN FACE.PART 2.

by Wal Liddle.

(Wal continues his account of a 16 day bike/bus tour - cycling 660 kms - through Southern China, from the Macau border to Canton and then north to Hot Springs.)

AT SHIQUI.

Returning to our hotel, Joseph and I were stopped by the swing bridge which had been raised to allow the river traffic to pass down stream. After a thirty minute wait we formed a long queue of people waiting to cross the river by means of pole-propelled punts. Three or four of these crafts were doing a roaring trade, ferrying bikes and people from bank to bank. The queue became a crush of men, women and machines in a metre wide alley that led to the wharf. As each punt approached to discharge its passengers, we would move forward, with the more agile men pushing to the front, elbowing the weaker men and women out of the way.

At one stage, the gate holding back the intended passengers was wrenched off its hinges by some of the impatient Chinese, and the crowd surged forward. It became very difficult to maintain ones balance and cope with the press of bodies, in such a narrow space. I had visions of finding myself and the bike in the middle of a very wet, deep stream. Seeing a break in the crowd and using the bike as a battering ram, I pushed through to an exit gate and found myself in the street. Joseph, seeing my change in direction, joined me and we cycled back to the hotel, via another bridge up stream.

The hotel staff informed us that the afternoon excursion bus had left without us. Grabbing a street map, we cycled back down town, losing our way and ending in blocked streets on a number of occasions. Finally we found a narrow lane that twisted and turned before joining a path by a muddy canal which led to the local Middle School.

We had been invited to play basketball against the school team.

Russell looked resplendent in his Macau T-shirt and black track suit pants, Joseph was dressed in a grey T-shirt with blue pants, Malcolm ran onto the field in his Cross Point Tours, red and white shirt, Margaret wore jodhpurs and Kim chose black. The Chinese team looked very professional in maroon and white track suits.

The first half proved to be very thrilling, with the score being 32 all. School children of all ages cheered their favourites as each basket was scored. Two male sports instructors were the "main-stays" of the Chinese side whilst the women players were relegated to lesser positions on court. The Australians treated the second half as a fun match, fielding Lesley, Phillip and Jan as replacements, whilst the Chinese kept their strongest players. The score at full-time was 64 China to 56 Australia, and a great time was had by all!!

Our evening's entertainment consisted of ballroom dancing at the local "Palace of Culture", a large hall in one of the main streets. A sign above the counter serving cold soft drinks stated "WARMLY SERVICE FOR YOU". The ballroom floor was paved with ceramic tiles, whilst blue, red and yellow glass shades (vintage design 1940) illuminated the scene. All the doors and windows were open, letting in the icy cold but the Chinese did not seem to mind. The young couples, who were dressed in slacks and jackets danced the foxtrot beautifully, whilst we Aussies stumbled around the floor in parkas, gloves and sandshoes. When we asked for disco music, we were told that it was banned by the Government as bourgeois and decadent.

The morning of the 13th January saw our party cycling 42 kms, to Da Liang, a small town in the county of Shunde. The road led past many irrigation channels which were used to transport bricks, sawn timber, bamboo poles and sugar cane. Our group came to a halt beside a very wide, swift flowing river, one of the main arms of the Pearl River Delta. We queued on the side of the road, in a long procession of Chinese and Japanese made trucks and buses, waiting for the boat ferry.

A long punt loaded with coal was tied up at the river bank with two hens pecking on the top of the heap. A young family of two children, a man and wife, lived in the back section, with no screen between them and the coal. One of the roadside vendors was selling black market cassette tapes whilst others sold cakes, fruit and cigarettes. An old lady crossed the road, right under our noses, carrying two buckets of evil looking human manure, for use on the vegetable crops. We now knew the source of the peculiar smell that permeated the countryside.

The first vehicle ashore from the incoming ferry was a large, black limousine with a red flag insignia on the bonnet. The chauffeur-driven car contained high government officials travelling to a conference. So much for the equality of the proletariat! The cyclists were ushered on first, being crammed in by the high-sided trucks, many of which were of a 1940 Russian design, similar to the Chevrolet. Our ferry curved in a wide arc for about 15 minutes before reaching the opposite shore of the muddy brown river.

Joseph suggested a ride into town, to get some milk which proved to be different to what I expected. The shop was a very drab affair with a concrete floor and hard wooden benches. The proprietress was distinctly grubby, but did wear long leather gloves to serve the milk which was kept in tinned buckets on a white-tiled fuel stove. The junket-like milk was served, hot or cold, in ceramic bowls. I don't think they had ever heard of "malted" or "chocolate flavouring".

That evening we went to the unheated "Cultural Palace" to see two films, the temperature being 7 degrees Celsius. Patrons were seated on wooden benches and the men used the floor as a spittoon. The second feature "Posted in the Forest" soon warmed us because of our own laughter and body movement. This film, made in the American classic style of the 1950's, was sloppy, sentimental and exaggerated, to the point of being ridiculous. The story revolved around a young, handsome, Chinese soldier who was posted to the border with an Alsatian guard dog; he lost his girl-friend to another guy; the dog was shot three times; came to life twice; and the hero riddled the Japanese Spy with a machine gun! Well, that's how we understood the story, as the dialogue was in Chinese. Our hosts did not appreciate our humour as the film to them was deadly serious and true to life!

The next day saw the cyclists at the Dae Li County Commune, one of the many that provide work and sustenance for 800 million people from birth to death. Mr. Chang, the chairman, said that the commune was only partly mechanised because full mechanisation could mean unemployment for some of the 81,000 persons under his control. He stated that since Mao Tse Tung's death and a change in Government policy, people could now build and own their own homes.

We visited a typical home of a farming family which was situated in a village of 50 houses in the middle of agricultural fields. Each house was joined to its neighbour with a small backyard to each. The house was not luxurious, by Australian standards, but was adequate and comfortable

for a family of seven adults. A TV set stood in the corner of the lounge room. The kitchen contained a fuel stove and a white tiled bench on a concrete floor. Mrs. Chen was very proud of her electric rice cooker and washing machine but said that the washing machine had its drawbacks because there was no piped water supply to her house.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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IN RETROSPECT.

by Bill Gamble.

This is a reflection on part of a brief walk I did in Olympic National Park (which is located in the north-west corner of the United States) at the beginning of October, 1984. Apart from the couple I met in the last five minutes of the walk and who gave me a lift into town, I saw no one else.

The route is not difficult. The tracks are well-maintained and there are sign posts at every trail fork. That is why I chose it, along with the prospect of walking through some fine mountain scenery. Simply, I had been staying with friends on nearby Vancouver Island on what had largely become a fishing holiday and decided to take a break to do a quiet walk across part of the Olympic mountains not altogether unfamiliar to me. But the weather changed (as it had done during previous visits in 1977 and 1979). If anything, this account points to the way I try to see walks which are mostly better in retrospect. It would be untrue to say that I love mountains in all conditions - for me, there is no comparison between the joy of a walk along the tops on a mild, clear day, and the bitterly cold task of making my way along exposed ridges and over passes in driving sleet and poor visibility. I had a disproportionate amount of the latter on this walk. So, perhaps, I can be excused for being a little disappointed and saying so.

Anyway, amid the measure of disappointment there was a walk to be remembered and for about five or six hours I did cover some marvellous high country in generally fine conditions. I shall start with a comment or two about the weather.

I know that mountains make their own weather, often compounding into high winds, sleet and/or snow at altitude what often passes as a mildly unpleasant day in the valleys below; yet, somehow, I always hope for a great run of fine weather on the tops. Perhaps most people who like mountains do hope so at heart, and particularly so when the journey to reach the tops has been a long one. There is no way to bring about a fair weather change at will and I accept the mountains on their own terms, and continue to hope.

On this walk the wind came in long waves. There would be the occasional lull then, in the distance, from the direction of Cameron Pass (6450') a faint roar would grow in a crescendo as it approached. The wind would sweep over my campsite and seem to want to lift the tent off the alpine meadow where I had camped and carry me downhill. Occasional checks were reassuring. They confirmed that all pegs were secure and that little rainwater was being driven inside (it was one of those times when I was glad to have packed a small, low-roofed tunnel tent as it offered very little resistance to the wind).

My sleeping bag remained dry and warm, but I still dozed fitfully. More than once that night I questioned the wisdom - even the sanity - of being on a stormy mountainside, 5500' above sea level and a long way from home. Now, at home in Sydney, the walk improves as its immediacy fades.

The wind, cold rain and sleet no longer threaten. My photographs show mostly fine days as the camera was buried in my pack for protection during the worst of the weather. And the memories of the distinctive smell of fir trees, the sightings of marmots and squirrels and the sounds of tumbling mountain streams, among other things, almost convince me that the walk was a delight to the senses from beginning to end. It wasn't really. I have to remind myself that some risks are taken when walking in mountains and probably a little more so when alone. But there is always something to be learned from such walks. Like coping with bad weather, difficult terrain, and one's own limitations. And my respect for what mountains can do to the weather grows apace. These sort of things are not gained from a book or talking to others. It comes from being out there doing it oneself. Anyway, back to the walk itself, or, at least, some of it.

The day started pleasantly enough in the upper Elwha Valley where camp had been made 850' above the river alongside an icy stream tumbling down from the tops. Sunlight filtering through the tall trees (Douglas fir and western hemlock) suggested a fine day ahead and the temperature to its likely mildness. The weather so far had been almost summerlike and there was nothing to indicate that a cold front would sweep in from the south-west before the day was out.

The track up to Haydens Pass (5847') was well-graded and maintained but it still took the best part of four hours (with generous breaks) to reach the pass. The track eventually broke free of the trees to cross small alpine meadows and then finally to clear the tree line altogether in a long sidle to the pass. The glimpses of rocky snow-covered peaks from between breaks in the forest cover gave way to a sweeping panorama of mountains and densely forested valleys and slopes. The jagged peaks, capped or slabbed with ice and snow, stood out starkly against the blue sky. Later the sky slowly turned grey as a strata of high cloud moved in from the south-west. The pattern was familiar. I had seen this happen before on the two previous walks in the park. It meant bad weather.

Around noon the warm autumn breeze ruffling the snowgrass turned a chill edge, and it was necessary to seek a lunch stop on the north side of the pass in the lee of a rock outcrop. And to put on my wool pullover. The alpine views, mainly into the upper Dosewallips basin and across to Thousand Acre Meadow were memorable in the juxtaposition of almost rolling country with jagged peaks. After lunch I plunged down a good zig zag track into the upper basin of the Dosewallips River, and shortly after reaching the tree line turned off onto another trail to climb very steeply to Lost Pass (5550').

I cleared the protection of the tree line again to meet a cold breeze. It was a portent of the remainder of the walk for I was never again really warm outside of my sleeping bag.

There followed an excellent sidle around the alpine basin at the head of Lost Valley with a cirque of peaks as a backdrop. The stiff breeze had removed every vestige of haze (smoke from slash burning in areas outside the park logged during the summer) and everything was sharply clear as often happens in mountains. By this time it was after 4.30 pm and a lower strata of clouds was beginning to creep in and cover the peaks to the south-west. I had been walking since 8.00 am, felt rather weary and would have preferred to have stopped for the day, but it was important in my assessment of the weather to cross Cameron Pass (6450') before the front arrived.

The route was steep, up a mountainside buffeted by the wind. I recall it as being a rather slow climb and it became necessary to count my progress:

fifty steps and stop, then five deep breaths and repeat (and occasionally the fumbling of the camera with cold hands to record the views). There was no respite at the pass. The wind blew into every likely place of shelter and my rest stop was limited to a few minutes, some photographs and a handful of scroggin.

I picked my way down the north slope scree trying to follow the faint route trodden by many summer backpackers and soon to be obliterated by storms and snow. Packed snow dropped well down into the basin below and I wanted to avoid having to kick my way across the snow with its icelike consistency. It was difficult to scuff the surface let alone kick steps. With an iceaxe it would have been an interesting glissade and a quick descent. The key to the route was a spur of loose rock between two snowfields, and once descended it left me with a small crossing of the packed snow of about thirty yards

As soon as I reached flat ground in the first small meadow offering some protection from the approaching bad weather, I erected the tent and cooked supper promptly. No time had been wasted. In less than an hour I had dropped over 800' and made camp (in mild conditions it would have been a delight to have descended much more slowly and stopped frequently to enjoy the surroundings). Already the pass and nearby peaks were shrouded in mist and cloud. By 7.00 pm the camp was as secure as I could make it. For a while I walked around in the fading light taking in as much as was left to be seen of the upper Cameron basin. Then the prospect of a warm sleeping bag enticed me out of the cold. The wind came in soon afterwards in the long waves already described.

Next day the walk continued across the mountains in cold rain and sleet, driven by the wind and a stubborn frame of mind. It ended on the Hurricane Ridge alpine road at Obstruction Point (6100') in horizontal sleet and poor visibility; and, by sheer luck, with a lift into town in the utility of a couple from Oregon who had just abandoned a short walk nearby. A little over the hour and we were down at sea level. It was a mild to warm afternoon in Port Angeles. On the following day I took the ferry back across the Juan de Fuca Strait to Victoria, B.C., in Canada. The salmon would soon be biting on the Cowitchan River.

Map reference: Mt. Angeles quadrangle 1:62500 (US Geological Survey)

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & THE ANNUAL REUNION.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 13th March. Among the business of the meeting will be the election of Office-Bearers and Committee. Each year all official positions become vacant. Any member may be nominated for any office, and only Club full members may vote.

The Annual Re-union, held on the weekend following the A.G.M., is a social gathering with overnight camping of present, past and prospective members. The incoming President is inaugurated in a simple ceremony at the Saturday evening campfire, and there is usually a programme of campfire singing and short sketches. Clean (though sometimes off-beat) humour is the aim. Supper is provided by the Club. On Sunday morning there is a damper-making competition using the ashes of the previous night's campfire. Only self-raising flour, salt and water may be used for the dampers. The Re-union this year is at our property "Coolana" in the Kangaroo Valley. There is swimming available in the river. Transport is by car (cars are left at the top of the hill), and anyone who can provide transport for others is asked to get in touch with George Gray, phone 86-6263.

"YOU SHOULD ENJOY THIS NEXT BIT . . ."

by Tony Cunneen.

(Reprinted by permission from The National Times in
"Tandanya" - Adelaide Bushwalkers Magazine - June/August 1984.)

Some adventure tours have to be viewed carefully. I'd always wanted to be a mountaineer, so I did some push-ups, jogged around the block a few times then barrelled off to North Wales.

At the Plas Y Brenin Centre for Mountain Activities I enrolled in one week of sheer terror called Introductory Rock Climbing. As with any adventure, all parameters of daily existence are changed, not the least of which lies in your trust of language.

Now the subtle suggestion can mask a horrible alternative. When the brochure says: "Candidates are advised to bring wetsuits," what it really means is that people who fail to bring wetsuits will find themselves having to survive Arctic conditions in their underpants.

Plas Y Brenin is set in the Welsh mountains near Snowdon. Each day rock climbing students are taken to various cliffs then, accompanied by an instructor, begin their fearful ascent.

On the second day a dour Scot took myself and another student in the team up a gloomy gash of wet rock in the Cwm Idwal and introduced it as The Devil's Staircase. Then he growled: "I think ye'll find this interesting. It's got some nice exposure." I was intrigued by this description. What made a climb "interesting"? What constituted a "nice exposure"? I soon found out.

Scared out of my wits, trying to move from a bridge position to a balanced hold on a bulge of rock I realised that I was now in an "interesting" position. The fact that there was a drop of 200 feet or so below me was "nice exposure".

I knew now that the words of the instructor were heavy with implication and should be interpreted as such. These experts use a private system for grading climbs. What follows is a handy guide for climbing novices so that you can make sense of this system. Climbs can be:

"Interesting" - Scary.
 "Technical" - Terrifying.
 "Sustained" - Terrifying for a very long period of time.
 "Thoughtful" - A spiritual state of mind rarely reached by other people except perhaps passengers on trans-Pacific flights who have just been told that the plane has run out of fuel in flight.

Then there are those wry comments made, while actually climbing:
 "You'll enjoy this next bit" - Nothing in your entire life will be worse than the next few moments.

"You'll find the next 10 feet quite thought-provoking" - You'll need supernatural powers to get any further.

"This is pretty strenuous for a Grade 4 climb" - We've come the wrong way.

On occasions more specific descriptions of the rock conditions are given: "A bit fingery" - You'll have to claw your way up using your fingernails and teeth.

"A bit slimy" - Like glass.
 "It's rather steep" - It's an overhang.
 "Good exposure" - A long drop.
 "Unprotected" - No rope.
 "Open to the weather" - A blizzard.
 "Dubious rock" - An avalanche.

As we, the novices, struggled to sort out our equipment, we heard a number of comments regarding our handling of belays, runners, slings and ropes:

"Your belay is loose" - You might fall.

"Look at that bloody belay" - I might fall.

There is a subtle scale of implied criticism used in the teaching of handling equipment in the proper and safe manner. Our instructors used the socratic method - teaching by asking questions.

"Are you happy with that?" - You're wrong.

"Are you quite happy with that?" - If you move you'll fall.

"Are you really quite happy with that?" - If you move we'll all fall.

Then finally there are the instructions and exhortations delivered while you are actually climbing.

"Well I suppose you could do it that way" - Never do it that way.

"Sort yourself out" - You're upside down.

"Keep your head" - Stop screaming.

"That would be most unethical" - Don't use the tree.

"Think carefully" - Pray.

"That was a bit of a mistake" - Did you hurt yourself?

"I think he's having a wee bit of trouble" - I think he's dead.

"Coming unstuck" - Falling.

"A bit dicey" - Hitting the bottom.

Soon we took refuge in such expressions ourselves:

"Can I just think about this a bit" - I'm stuck.

"This rope's tangled" - I've tangled the rope.

Well, we all survived. As well as learning about climbing we learnt about ourselves. For this all credit is due to the young, dedicated and talented staff of Plas Y Brenin, whose climbing ability was matched only by their mastery of the understatement.

Once, as I clambered, quivering with fear over one of those very severe climbs at Tremadog I was greeted by a cheery "That was fun" from my instructor. I thought he must have gone a different way from me.

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ST. JOHN AMBULANCE FIRST AID CERTIFICATE COURSE.

- * Need to RENEW your St. John Ambulance First Aid Certificate?
(It expires after 3 years)
- * Need to get one because you are on the Search and Rescue list of volunteers? (It is compulsory for insurance cover)
- * Need to upgrade your knowledge of first aid so that you are confident in its use on bushwalks?

YES? Then come to our Club's SPECIAL GROUP TRAINING SESSION to be held on 13th and 14th April. (Saturday and Sunday 9 am - 5 pm).

The EXAM is on the following Wednesday, 17th April, 6 - 8 pm.

VENUE: 6 Hunt Street, Surry Hills. (Train to Central or Museum Stations)

COST: \$47. Send your cheque (made out to St. John Ambulance) to AINSLIE MORRIS by 13th March next.
In the Clubroom or post to 45 Austin Street, Lane Cove, 2066.

OBITUARY - MYLES DUNPHY O.B.E.

(From The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday, February 2, 1985
- Joseph Glascott. - Environment Writer)

MYLES DUNPHY, CONSERVATIONIST

Myles Joseph Dunphy, regarded as the father of conservation in N.S.W., died on Wednesday, aged 93.

In his lifetime, Mr. Dunphy saw his dream of a system of national parks throughout the State come true. More than 50 years ago he began exploring and mapping important natural and wilderness areas - and agitating for their preservation.

His efforts to publicise and protect natural areas in N.S.W. equated those of John Muir, the great advocate of wilderness preservation in the United States.

Mr. Dunphy was born in Melbourne in 1891, the eldest son of an Irish immigrant, but he spent most of his boyhood in Kiama on the N.S.W. South Coast where his exploration of the beautiful countryside stimulated his love of nature and bushwalking.

A holiday at Katoomba in 1910 began a life-long love affair with the Blue Mountains, which he and his bushwalking friends systematically mapped.

In 1914 he was a founding member of the Mountain Trails Club, the first wilderness walking group in Australia and later he was joint founder of the largest N.S.W. bushwalking club, Sydney Bush Walkers.

In articles on Mr. Dunphy, Mr. Pat Thompson, of the Colong Committee and Mr. Jim Somerville, of the Nature Conservation Council, have recorded two events in the early 1930s which turned his interest to bushland preservation.

In 1931 members of Sydney Bush Walkers visiting the magnificent Blue Gum Forest on the Grose River were horrified to learn that a farmer was about to cut it down and plant walnut trees. The club eventually saved the forest by raising funds and buying the lease which it handed over to the Crown. Redgum, an early conservation correspondent for the Herald, publicised the campaign.

Two years later, the scenic Garrawarra coastline south of Sydney was threatened with development. Mr. Dunphy led a campaign which

saved the area and it was later added to Royal National Park.

In 1923, after watching conservation developments in the United States, Mr. Dunphy helped form the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council of which he became secretary. Over the next 25 years this council spearheaded the movement for park reservations.

The council's first major campaign was for the Greater Blue Mountains National Park. The first reservation for this park was made 27 years later and the largest park in the mountains, Wollemi, was created in 1979, 47 years later.

Kosciusko, Morton, Warrumbungle, Brisbane Water and 10 others were on the way, before the National Parks and Wildlife Service was set up in 1967.

Mr. Dunphy was a life member of the Australian Institute of Architects and served on the Geographic Names Board of N.S.W. He qualified as an architect in 1923 and taught architecture at Sydney Technical College and N.S.W. University until he retired at 71.

Last year, the International Union for Conservation of Nature awarded Mr. Dunphy the Packard International Merit Award for his long and distinguished service to conservation causes. The union makes only one such award every decade.

Mr. Dunphy is survived by his wife, Margaret, of Oatley, and his sons Milo, who has carried on his conservation work as director of the Total Environment Centre and vice-president of the Australian Conservation Foundation, and Dexter, Professor of Business Administration at N.S.W. University.

A private family funeral was held yesterday at Woronora crematorium.

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MYLES DUNPHY was an Hon. Member of Sydney Bush Walkers, and, as mentioned above, was one of the foundation members of the Club.

Bushwalkers over the years have been very grateful for the many maps that Myles compiled and drew - e.g. the well-known Gangerang Wild Dog Mountains map and the Tomat - Bindook - Yerranderie map.

The Club extends its sympathy to Mrs. Dunphy and his sons Milo and Dexter.
