

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



NEAR MT. PERISHER

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 7.45 pm at ELLA COMMUNITY CENTRE, 58a Dalhousie Street, Haberfield (next to the Post Office). Prospective members and visitors are invited to visit the Club on any Wednesday.

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JULY, 1987.

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ETTREMA CREEK SEARCH AND RESCUE PRACTICE.

BY Peter Miller.

It was late when three weary Sydney Bushwalkers finally put their heads down to sleep at Quiera Clearing. Greta Davis had driven Ian Wolfe and myself safely down from Sydney and with corrugated roads and patches of fog it had been a long, slow trip.

Filled with a righteous passion for participating in a practice Search and Rescue weekend we joined about 30 other walkers on Saturday morning to be given a search area, a lecture on using the two-way radio and the radio. It was a cumbersome, weighty device which bore no resemblance to Dick Tracy's wrist radio. We were given the task of searching Gallows Gully and part of Ettrema Creek so, in brilliant sunshine, we set off.

Gallows Gully varies from steep to very steep to almost impassable. The going was very slow and by lunchtime we arrived at the top of a sheer waterfall only about half a kilometre from Ettrema Creek. Ian, our leader, went off and found a way around the waterfall while we started lunch. With hardly room to sit down and sheer cliff faces all round, Quiera Clearing seemed a haven of peace and contentment - why had we left it? However duty called and Ian found a way past the waterfall. It was a tricky route covered with loose rocks waiting to roll down and crush some hapless walker. By sticking close together we got down safely and thankfully set foot on the level boulders in Ettrema Creek.

We kept in radio contact with base all day but found no sign of the lost party. After searching the lower end of Jones Creek we continued to the campsite at the junction of Myal and Ettrema Creeks.

On Sunday we had a choice of going back up Myal Creek or climbing up to Jingles Pass. We chose the pass as Myal Creek has some tricky climbs and we were tired of walking over boulders. The pass is 400 metres up from Ettrema Creek and is steep but not dangerous. Greta had a slight mishap getting tangled with a sapling stuck in her clothes while her feet dangled in mid air. Ian and I extricated her from this very uncomfortable position and an interesting discussion ensued on how Greta would have rescued herself unaided.

We gathered at the site of the cliff rescue to see a stretcher hauled up a sheer cliff by a party of muscular walkers. All that remained was an easy stroll back to base for a de-briefing and then the long drive back to Sydney.

It was an interesting weekend and more of us should attend search and rescue practices. It is comforting to know that if the worst should happen and walkers are injured or lost a team of trained and dedicated Federation members are ready to get them out of trouble. As the largest and oldest club in Sydney we should be prepared to support the good work of the Search and Rescue team.

* * * * *

W A N T E D.

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS

by the Editor of the S.B.W. 60th Anniversary Historical Book
We have a good selection from 1927 to 1947, but need a couple of photos of the concerts. We need photos of people in distinctive club situations, not just general scenery, from 1947 to 1987.

Please ring Ainslie Morris on 428-3178 if you think you have any gems hidden away.

THEATRE NOTICE."LES MISERABLES".

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FAZELEY READ - 909,3671
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Neutral Bay. 2089.

HILLTOP TO KATOOMBA VIA BIMLOW TABLELAND.A FIVE DAY EASTER WALK.

BY Fazeley Read.

The reason I don't write up trips is that I'm never entirely sure where we went, when it is all over, so this may not exactly be the walkers' companion guide from Hilltop to Katoomba.

The 5.35 pm train trip was a relaxing way to avoid Easter traffic on Thursday night. Two hours later we were met by Bob and Jeff Niven whose table top truck transported us to Hilltop, some twenty kilometres distance - a breezy trip. A fading Easter moon provided sufficient light for a two-hour walk to our first campsite on the Nattai River. As was the pattern for the next four mornings, Bob Niven rose pre-dawn and noiselessly lit the fire - a most considerate fire lighter. This enabled us to begin walking at about seven o'clock each morning, and make camp around four o'clock in the afternoon.

Humidity caused Friday's walking to be an enervating business. Bill's earlier reconnoitre trips provided us with an easier route over Belloon Pass, avoiding most of Travis Gully. We wandered along open countryside, popular with kangaroos, mostly along fire trails where we enjoyed clear views to the south up the Wollondilly Valley to Bonnum Pic. The campsite that night on the bank of the Tonalli River was excellent, as promised - plenty of space to park away from snoring and other nocturnal noises.

The following day, Saturday, we climbed through a pass to the Tonalli Tableland, about five hundred metres or so. On an insignificant stone, one of thousands on the Tableland, we were surprised to see the date 1939 and the initials A.H. and W.H. engraved as if by a professional stonemason with time to spare. What was their story, we wondered. After a wet lunch at Bob Higgins Creek we headed down into the gloomy depths of Lacy's Creek, made even gloomier by heavy rain, slippery rocks and logs, and bloodthirsty leeches thrown in for good measure. For recently arrived Ruth, this was a first encounter with these creatures, but she took it with the aplomb one might expect of a Kiwi. (She did say she would rather have any number of N.Z. sandflies, however.)

Round the corner from The Prow, at about four o'clock, Bill declared a halt. Life seemed much more cheerful for the donning of thermal underwear and woollen jumpers. With the warmth of a substantial fire and a hot drink in your hand, you could even grow to like Lacy's Creek. Rain eased so that we could eat in comfort, but it soon began again, rather relentlessly. What better sound is there than rain on a faithful fly sheet?

The third day, Sunday, dawned with a clear blue sky. We continued along a kinder Lacy's Creek for about three hours before climbing up to the Bimlow Tableland. After some pack passing and rock scrambling (nothing death defying) we were pleased to see familiar territory - Green Wattle Creek, Broken Rock Range and beyond to an almost imperceptible Katoomba. Quite a distance for the next two days, I thought. Having carried water, we were able to enjoy a high camp. After darkness the lights of Katoomba lit up the northern horizon while in the east there was the glow of a distant Sydney.

The fourth day, Monday, we crossed Green Wattle Creek and climbed to the Broken Rock Range. Bob Milne, who wishes to preserve his knees for later life, remained mostly at the back of the party, a stout, Grim-Reaper-style stick in hand. While descending a steep ridge from Broken Rock Range, Chris fell, injuring her ankle which immediately became swollen and painful. By dividing pack loads, and with a wonderful effort on Chris's part, we made slow progress to Butcher's Creek. It was obvious that Chris would not be able to complete the trip.

We made ourselves comfortable for the night around a fire. Bob Niven, a man of action, tossed on a few sticks, knocking over Bob Milne's billy of apples - a common enough occurrence. Then he threw in a branch upon which Bill's brown nylon socks were innocently draped. Well, how's a man to see those in the dark? It took Bill a while to realize that the shrivelled objects being consumed in flames were his beloved socks. Well, Bill - life's like that sometimes! Bob's son, Jeff, said that, generally speaking, we had been let off lightly this trip!

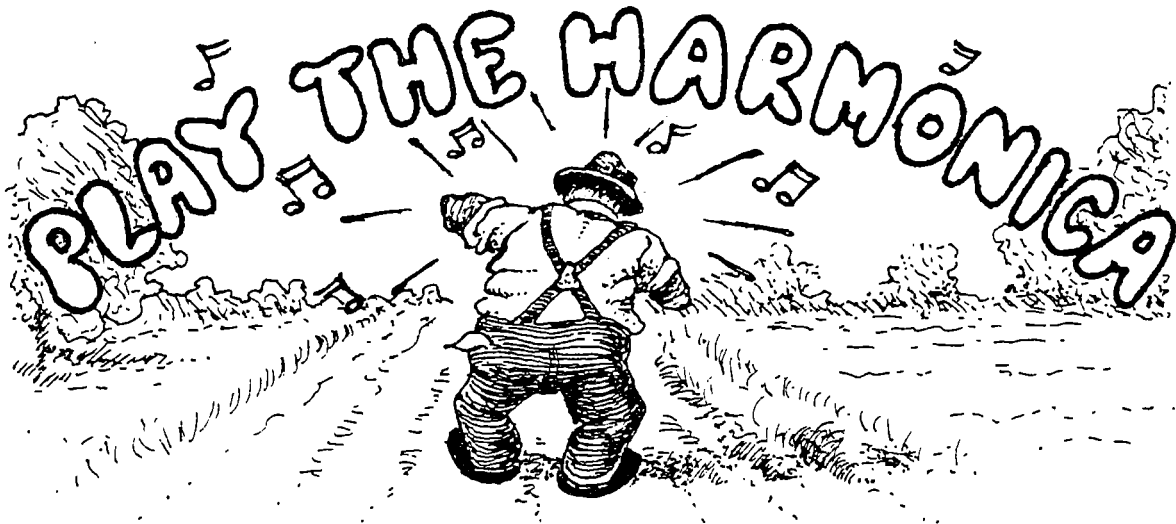
The next morning, Tuesday, we rose earlier, knowing that we had a long day ahead of us. Team effort brought a hobbling Chris to the Old Cedar Road, Scott's Main Range Road, the steep Mt. Cookem descent to Cox's River, then on past the Koumung/Cox's confluence to the beginning of the White Dog Fire Trail. Bill had already gone ahead to Carlons Farm where he hoped to arrange transport for Chris. Wayne and Chris continued slowly while the rest of the party made a dash for the 8.10 pm train from Katoomba.

The haul up White Dog, the thirteen kilometre scuffle along Narrow Neck in chilly darkness, and the final fling through Katoomba streets were tough going, but, weary and scratched, we made it to the station in time. Chris, Wayne and Bill caught an earlier train from Blackheath.

So, in split fashion, an excellent walk was ended and thanks go to Bill for his organization and navigation. We all hope Chris will soon be out walking again.

PARTY: Bill Capon (leader), Wayne Steele, Christine Scott, Jeff Niven, Janet Waterhouse, Bob Milne, Ruth Hesslyn, Bob Niven, Fazeley Read.

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POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF CLUBROOM - Wednesday, 2nd September.

The Caretaker of the Ella Community Centre informed members on 8th July that the hall may not be available on the evening of Wednesday, 2nd September, when the members of the Community Centre will be holding their Annual Meeting.

It is probable that the S.B.W. Committee Meeting to be held that evening will be transferred to a private home, and other members should refrain from attending at the normal meeting place.

Report on Ian Debert's Test Walk: 16/17 May 1987. - by Errol Sheedy

Carlons - Medlow Gap - Mobbs Swamp - Yellow Pup Ridge - Konangaroo Clearing - Cox R. - Breakfast Ck - Carlons.

The walk went as per the program. The weather was sunny on Saturday, and the forecast rain did not eventuate until we got back to the cars just on dark on Sunday.

Most of the party of 27 camped at Megalong Ck on Friday night, and the rest of us arrived about 8 a.m. Saturday. We paid our parking fees at Carlons' shop and followed the road up the ridge to the fire trail leading to Medlow Gap. After lunch at Mobbs Swamp we reached Mt Yellow Dog where we were joined by two late starters and the few who had eschewed the lunch spot to visit Splendour Rock. The descent of the Yellow Pup Ridge track proved to be a real knee trembler and sorted the sheep from the goats (though I'm not sure which species arrived at the Cox R. first) and saw some using branches as walking sticks to relieve the pressure on the knees, while others, for a time, even resorted to walking down backwards as a means of relieving the continual strain.

During the afternoon someone said that Keith Docherty had gone down to the river the previous day, and that, in view of his piscatorial proclivities, he might possibly have caught some trout. This intimation hardly prepared us for the sight at Konangaroo Clearing, at the junction of the Cox and Kanangra Rivers, where we met Keith who had caught his legal daily limit of ten trout. There they were, magnificent specimens of rainbow trout ranging from one and a half, to one kilograms, strung up in a bunch and hanging from a low branch. Keith magnanimously invited us to help ourselves, even providing the previously folded sheets of aluminium foil in which to wrap the fish for roasting in the coals. When the foil was unfolded and the unscaled skin pushed back to reveal the steaming flesh we were provided with a superb treat before the remainder of the fish (the half underneath the backbone) was handed over to someone else to finish off.

I had seen some small trout in the Cox River before and I had heard Keith speaking of trout fishing, but I had not realized that such fish were lurking in the water we had often waded across. When we set off upstream on Sunday morning Peter Sharpe had his telescopic rod out and did spinning in pools, and when he caught up with us he was very pleased to have caught a large brown trout, complete with the distinctive brown spots. He said somebody had mentioned that there were no brown trout in the Cox River.

On the botanical side, numerous walkers commented during Saturday on the great variety of fungi to be seen following the recent rains. (One variety of fungus I am saving up to describe to Frank Taecker.) At Mobbs Swamp there were Native Fuchsias (*Correa reflexa*), while along Yellow Dog Range were numerous *Brachyscome* specimens.

On Sunday morning along the Cox we discovered a small grove of the giant stinging tree. I thought that the pale-green heart-shaped leaf on the ground came from a stinging tree, and picking it up, quickly dropped it again as my finger was stung. The sensation was numerous degrees worse than a stinging nettle, and the finger throbbed for the next half hour. This was the first stinging tree I had seen outside of a rainforest, and I will be on the lookout in future.

The Cox was crossed numerous times, and we managed to keep our shorts dry. Then followed the umpteen crossings of Breakfast Creek. We finally arrived back at Carlons just on dark. Many thanks Ian for the leadership. The group included, I think, six prospective members.

(Prospective members should realise that trout is not served on all walks.)
- Editor

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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WHAT'S BITING YOU?!! - CRAYFISH.

BY Geoff McIntosh.

Yes, bushwalkers have been bitten by crayfish. Peter Christian and Rudi Dezelin suffered razor-like cuts to their digits on a McCarrs Creek daywalk in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park about three years ago because they were not careful when picking up crayfish.

There is much interchange and variation in nomenclature throughout Australia involving crayfish, yabbies and lobsters. "Yabby" is an aboriginal word.

There are approximately 400 species of freshwater crayfish on earth, with approximately 100 of these species in Australia.

Australia has the largest freshwater crayfish and also the smallest. The largest is the *Astacopsis gouldi* from small streams in North-west Tasmania and measures 76 cm (30 inches) from claws to tail. The smallest is the *Tenuibranchiurus* which measures 2 cm (3/4 inch) long and is found in Queensland.

Biology of the Crayfish.

The crayfish is a decapod (ten-legged) crustacean which evolved during the Mesozoic era between 130 and 225 million years ago, the period during which the dinosaur appeared and disappeared.

The crayfish has two gill compartments whose cover can be closed to trap moisture allowing it to live out of water for short periods (much longer for semi-aquatic and terrestrial crayfish). It has a simple brain; compound eyes; touch receptors in its antennae, walking legs and body; chemical receptors for tasting in its antennules and on the walls of the gill chambers; and odour detectors in its antennae.

Moulting.

The crayfish has an external skeleton and to grow must moult as follows:

1. Calcium is withdrawn from the skin and stored.
2. A new soft folded skin forms beneath the old skin.
3. The old skin splits and the crayfish steps out.
4. The crayfish grows quickly within its soft skin.
5. The crayfish draws calcium into the new skin from its calcium storage areas and the surrounding water, and from eating its old skin.
6. The new skin hardens.

During successive moults, the crayfish can gradually replace lost legs, claws, antennae and antennules, but not its eyes which are replaced by another set of antennules.

Locomotion.

The paddle-like swimmerets are used to aerate the crayfish and propel it forward. The high speed reversing from danger with claws at the ready is achieved by quickly closing the tail to produce a jet of water.

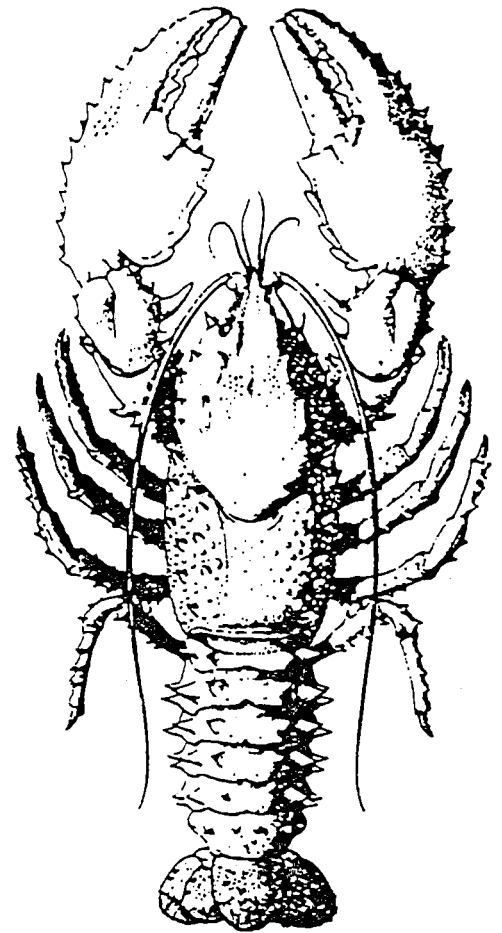
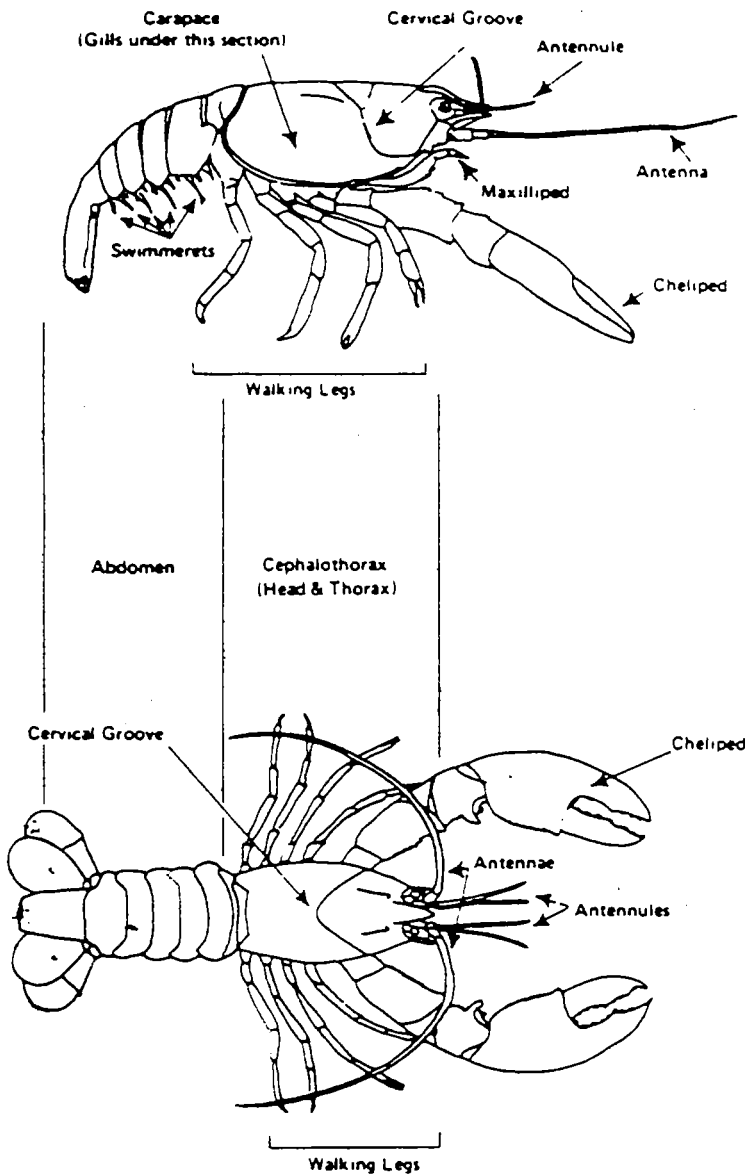
Reproduction of Crayfish.

The male throws the female on her back and mounts her, spaying sperm from his two penes on to her two genital openings. The female passes hundreds of eggs through the sperm, fertilising them, then pushes the eggs down to the underside of her tail where they stick firmly and are aerated by the waving of the swimmerets.

The hatched crayfish grow from the eggs, then moult and hang upside down on her swimmerets. (In the northern hemisphere, they hang right side up.) On moulting again they become facsimiles of the adults and leave Mum permanently.

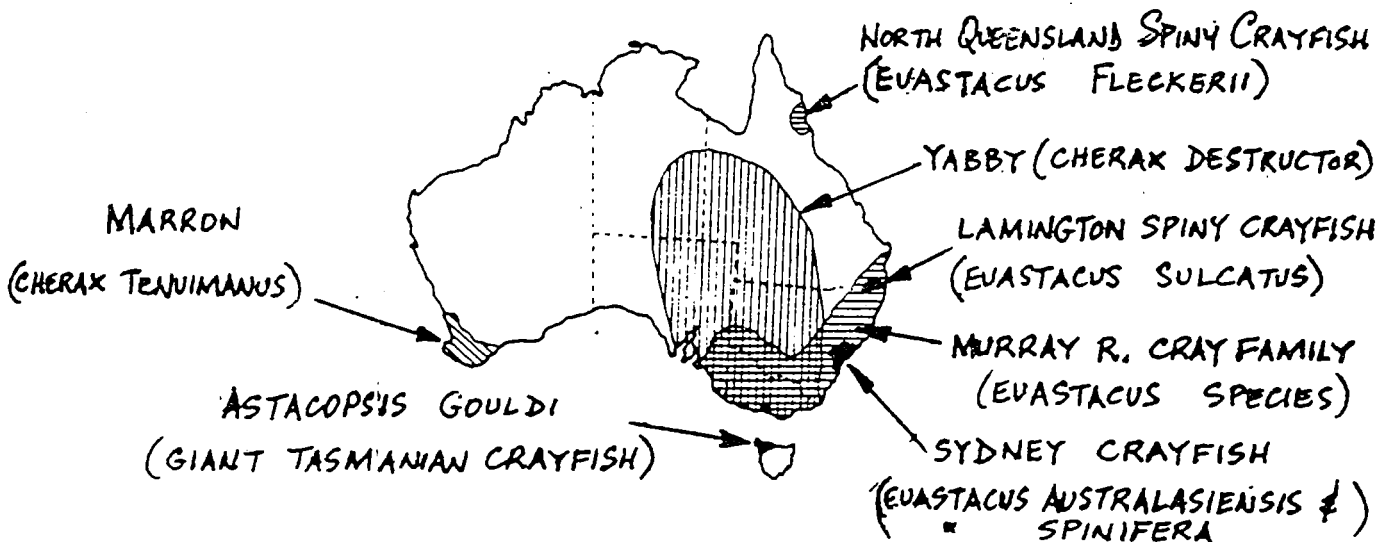
Mating is in spring and summer.

Food. Crayfish are mostly vegetarian, but will eat almost anything if need be, including each other.



THE MURRAY CRAY
 THE SYDNEY CRAYFISH HAVE
 A SIMILAR APPEARANCE,

YABBY (CHERAX DESTRUCTOR)



MAJOR FRESHWATER CRAYFISH GROUPS

Types of Australian Crayfish.

Australian freshwater crayfish are classified in three broad groups:

1. Aquatic Freshwater Crayfish (of which the Sydney Crayfish is one) occur only in permanent rivers, creeks and sometimes lakes.
2. Semi-Aquatic Freshwater Crayfish live in burrows connected to water (dams, rivers etc. which are not necessarily permanent) by access shafts and are capable of surviving out of water for long periods. One species, the Chera destructor, as mentioned previously is known by an aboriginal word, "yabby", and inhabits about one third of Australia. (Refer map.)
3. Terrestrial Freshwater Crayfish live anywhere on land provided there is water with 2 metres (6 feet) of ground level.

The Australian Aquatic Freshwater Crayfish -

Has several genres, the main one being the Euastacus (Spiny Freshwater Crayfish). There are 27 species of this genus around Australia, the main ones being:-

1. The Sydney Crayfish.
 (a) Euastacus australasiensis which occurs in creeks around Sydney. The young are a muddy brown colour changing through moults to a bright orange in the adults. They grow to about 20 cm (8 inches) from head to tail.
 (b) Euastacus spinifera which occurs in creeks north of Sydney Harbour. They are usually dark greenish with red markings.
2. The Murray Crayfish.
Euastacus armatus is the second largest freshwater crayfish on earth measuring 45 cm (18 inches) from head to tail and is found in the Murray River and many of its tributaries.
3. The Lamington Spiny Crayfish. (Euastacus sulcatus)
 Is well known to walkers in the beautiful rainforest of the Lamington National Park in south-east Queensland, its only domicile. It is the most spectacular species with bands of bright blue and white with scarlet at its joints. It is sometimes seen walking along the well-graded tracks of the park, hundreds of metres from its creeks in wet weather. When approached it will rear up, waving its large claws and hissing. A threatening sight, even though it only appears to grow to about 22 cm (9 inches) long from head to tail.
4. The Gippsland Crayfish - of Victoria.
5. The North Queensland Spiny Crayfish. (Euastacus fleckeri)
 Is found only in the Daintree River and Mossman River areas.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

- "A Salute to the Humble Yabby" by Peter Olszewski.
- "Australian Crustaceans in Colour" by A. Healey & J. Yaldwyn.
- "Australian Freshwater Life" by W. D. Williams.
- "Australian Inland Waters and their Fauna" by A. H. Weatherley.

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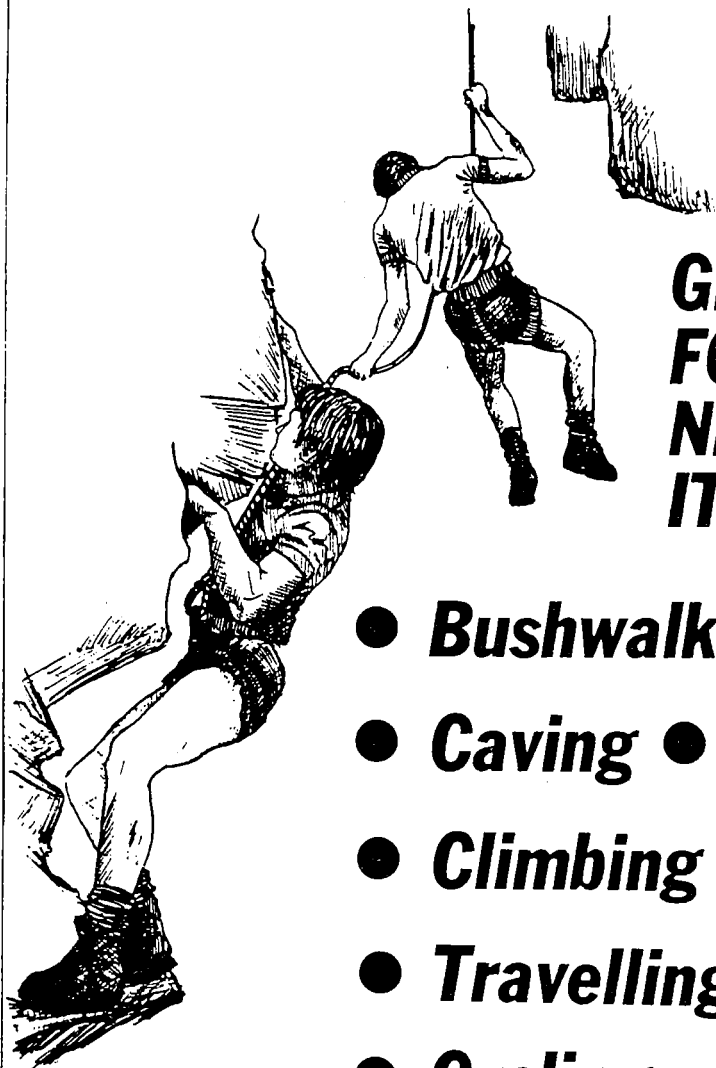
AUGUST SOCIAL PROGRAM.

by Wendy Aliano.

19th August. Magazine Wrapping Night. Come along and help to put the Club magazine together. Many hands make light work, so don't just leave it to the same old regulars.

26th August. Night dedicated to the COLO. Colo area is at its best in spring, so come and see what it has to offer, so that you can plan your spring walks. Idyllic pools and sandy beaches, sandstone cliffs and rugged countryside all combine to make the Colo one of the greatest walking areas. And it is comparatively close to Sydney as well!

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

from Alex George,
Bureau of Flora and Fauna, Canberra.

May I comment on the article 'Which Banksia?' by Kath Brown (The Sydney Bushwalker, May 1987, p.18)?

Joseph Banks and his botanical colleague Daniel Solander in fact collected four species of Banksia at Botany Bay in April-May 1770. It is worth considering that, to the explorers marvelling at the strange plants there, virtually none had names. Imagine walking in bush where you not only cannot recognise the plants, but then you realise that they have no names at all! Banks and Solander were able to place their specimens with broad classification groups that had been devised by the founder of modern plant nomenclature, Carolus Linnaeus. They gave many species names in their manuscript, but on returning to England published none themselves.

The Banksias that Banks and Solander collected we now know as Banksia serrata, B. integrifolia, B. ericifolia and B. robur. The first three of these were formally named in 1782 by Linnaeus' son, also Carolus Linnaeus. Apparently the younger Linnaeus did not see Banks' specimen of B. robur and it lay unnamed until a Spanish botanist, Luis Née, gathered specimens in 1793 and took them back to Spain. There the botanist Antonio Cavanilles named them B. robur in 1800. Cavanilles also named B. marginata and B. oblongifolia, two species that Joseph Banks did not see.

Regarding flowering times, it must be remembered that these may vary from year to year according to seasonal fluctuations. In fact, the Banks and Solander specimens of all four species from Botany Bay are in flower and bud. There is a photograph of a specimen of serrata in my book, The Banksia Book. In contrast, when the Endeavour was being repaired in the estuary where Cooktown now stands, it was long past the flowering season of Banksia dentata, and the explorers' specimens have only old spikes from which all the flowers have fallen.

Incidentally, the name Botany Bay was bestowed by James Cook, not Joseph Banks, but prompted, it is true, by the wealth of unknown plants found there.

* * * * *

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THE JUNE GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

The President being overseas as they say, it was VEEP Bill Holland who gonged the gong at around 2022 and called the 25 or so members to what passes for order in these parts.

There were apologies from Barrie Murdoch (O/S), Wendy Alliano, Anita and Alan Doherty and from FRan Holland. New members Serala Seenivasagam. Kay Chan and Mörrie Ward were welcomed in the usual way.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received, with the only matter arising being a further report that our incorporation is through the N.S.W. Finance Department and still proceeding.

Correspondence comprised a letter from the Police Air Wing acknowledging our letter of thanks, from the Wilderness Society re South-East Australian woodchipping industry and the resisting thereof, from Brian Harvey regarding printing of the magazine and inter-alia the use of grey inks, from Helen Gray advising of the discovery of some quite old unrepresented S.B.W. cheques, and to the new members.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we began the month with \$3739.97, spent \$1117.02, acquired, presumably by fair means, \$1535.50 and closed with a balance of \$4154.45.

The Walks Report, presented by Don Finch, began with a report of his trip over the weekend of 15,16,17 May. That same weekend Ian Debert had 27 starters on his Cox River walk in cold conditions laboring somewhat up the final slope out of Carlons Creek. Joe Marton's trip went with around 20 people and Jan Mohandas led 8 on his Carlons to Splendour Rock scramble.

Over the weekend 22,23,24 May Bill Holland had either 15 or 17, depending on the version, on his Blue Gum, Grand Canyon walk. Bill Capon had 10 people out on his walk in the Budawangs only to find that they could not find an exit from Holland Gorge and had to return the way they came. Jim Percy reported 15 on a beautiful day out from Waterfall to Engadine, and Alan Mewitt had 25 starters on his trip from Wondabyne. They encountered some unexpected obstacles, trip-cords, bent-sapling booby traps and the like in suspicious proximity to an encampment of Scouts, but otherwise the walk was O.K.

Carol Bruce and Don Finch reported 18 people on their Budawang car-swap over the weekend 29,30,31 May and John Redfern had 17 starters on his Tyan Pic - Pantony's Crown (Crown Mountain if you are looking for it on a map, old names die hard) base camp trip. They even got invited into the farm house for coffee and cake on Saturday night. Gordon Lee's St.Helena Ridge trip was cancelled due to the condition of the access road. Errol Sheedy had 37 people out on a good day in Royal National Park on the other day walk that weekend.

Over the Queen's Birthday weekend it was wet, wet, wet! Bill Capon had 5 starters on his Ettrema Creek trip which was described as "interesting". Ian Debert had 21 people dodging the showers, cooking dampers and getting bogged on the way out from his Yerranderie base camp. Carol Bruce led a party of 5 on some of the more "interesting" parts of her Coorongooba Creek flounder, and Ralph Pengliss had around 7 starters battling the rain on his Sydney Harbour walk.

There was a brief Federation Report and no Conservation Report.

The 60th Anniversary Committee once more urged us to buy, buy, buy.

General Business saw passage of a motion that we write to the Scouts Association protesting over the incidents on Alan Mewitt's walk.

John Redfern reported on the meeting held recently at Kangaroo Valley with the local Bush Fire authorities. There were various recommendations and the Committee will consider these.

Then it was just a matter of the announcements and it was all over again, at 2204.

* * * * *

HOW I CAME TO JOIN THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKERSOR NEARLY DIDN'T MAKE IT.

by Dot Butler.

I left school, a shy little teenager, determined to live up to my chosen motto MENS SANS IN CORPORE SANO (A sound mind in a sound body). Week-ends saw me at Bondi, a member of Wal Balmus's Acrobatic Troupe, doing cartwheels, catherine wheels, handstands, back flips and pyramid balancing with "as fine a bunch of young Australians as you could find" as Wally proudly announced whenever we appeared pictured in the newspapers. We swam all through the winter with the Ice-bergers and attended dances at the Bondi Surf Club, who numbered among their members three future Presidents of the S.B.W. (Wal Roots, Tom Herbert and Harold Chardon) - although I didn't know them at the time.

Studying to be a Physiotherapist at Sydney University I was introduced in the Anatomy dissecting room to the human body in full detail, and in Physiology classes learnt of its functioning. When learning Surface Anatomy we had a magnificently muscled man model clad only in a G-string who could twitch every muscle independently when tapped by the Professor's pointer. "Deltoid!" he would order, "Biceps! Triceps! Trapezius!" and the muscles would bulge under his wand. "Serratus Anterior!" and what looked like a row of eggs would magically appear on the side of the thorax. "Rectus Abdominus!" and what looked like a tree-trunk would isolate itself from the flat wall of abdomen. It was fascinating.

I also attended the School of Tropical Medicine which ran a course for people planning to work or live in the tropics - missionaries, planters, young District Officers soon off to New Guinea. Amongst these was a hard-working serious-minded young man called Phillip. He and I became friends. In the interests of getting over our shyness in public we joined Michael Sawtell's Public Speaking class. Michael was a Sydney "identity", friend of the great Chidley, an eccentric who used to stalk majestically around the streets of the City clad, winter or summer, in nothing but a long white cotton robe and sandals, and (for the 1920's) had very advanced and outspoken ideas on sex.

Mike Sawtell's class included all ages from little Miss English (me) aged 19, to an apple-cheeked little lady from the Radiant Health Society who could have been anything from 50 to 80. She was spry as a sparrow as she expatiated on the benefits of raw foods, fresh water, exercise and sleep. We also had an Astrologer/Numerologist, a tall, cadaverous man with snowy hair and beetling black eyebrows. He wrote out our horoscopes and predicted our futures according to the stars. Half a century had to go by before Australia became really gripped by this occult Eastern belief. Great areas of our forests are now cut down, pulped and turned into paper so that the Press may print its daily inanities - its readers' fortunes as influenced by the stars.

There were gentle Theosophists voicing their beliefs, and Anthroposophists, and the lady who urged daily colonic irrigation as the panacea for all health problems. All details concerning the elimination of 'pisons' from the colon were given - no holds barred. All this rich melange of knowledge was absorbed by the class without dispute. Little Miss English, who knew nothing about it, was coerced into giving a discourse on "Painless Childbirth".

One week-end a small group of us young ones from the class went for a camping trip to a beautiful little deserted beach one of them had heard of - Era. There was only one other group in this remote spot. I was surprised, but excited, to see that they plunged into the sea naked and disported like nymphs and sea gods in the breakers. When they came out they wore only shorts and shirts. They looked like my kind. One of their boys came over and invited us to join them that night around their camp fire, and the die was cast that shaped the future whole of my life. They were members of the Sydney Bush Walkers Club, then in its 5th year of existence. The boy, Edgar Yardley, said I should join their club; they would be meeting next Friday night and he would introduce me. And this was done. I found in bushwalking the adventure I had known as a child, trailing barefoot through the bush with my brothers, feeling, smelling and dancing my way into the blood and bone of Australia. And so it has been for 57 magnificent years..... but.... and here we come to the second part of the title.....

NEARLY DIDN'T MAKE IT.

My mother was a practicing Psychologist. One day there came into her Macquarie Street rooms two distraught parents who couldn't understand why their son was turning into a sexual pervert - they had always been so

conscientious about his upbringing..... when he was a little boy "If ever I catch you playing with THAT again I'll cut it off with a carving knife!" (said knife being brandished before his terrified eyes to drive home the lesson) - how could he now have such perverted ideas? My mother's private talk with the boy brought the tragic cry from the heart that here he was 22 and had never seen a naked human body. I had told my mother of our freedom from clothes at Era (I remember one night when a sudden fierce downpour occurred - the boys threw off their clothes and rushed out naked into the storm to batten down the flapping abdulled tents, then came in, dried themselves and got into their dry shorts again. Very sensible.)

My mother asked would I do Cecil a favour by taking him down to Era, so next week-end down we went, Phillip and Cecil and I. The whole place was deserted. My boyfriend and I dropped our simple clothes and dashed into the surf, and no doubt Cecil in a wild turmoil did the same - we didn't turn to look back. So there we were jumping up and down and shooting the breakers and having a mighty time, when all at once we became aware that the shore was getting a long way off - we were caught in an undertow! Frantic swimming back and we reached a sand bar. Here we three joined hands and (with yells and screams of relief you can be sure) dragged each other to the beach.

Just then who should pass by but an "Official" Bushwalker group, led by a member who was the wrong shape for nudity and hence very much against it. She reported to Committee that a recently elected member was behaving herself in an unseemly fashion on the beach and demanded that she be dismissed from the Club. A letter was forthwith sent to the culprit, its import being 'please explain, or else'. Replies followed from the evil-doer, from my mother, Mrs. English, and from poor little Cecil (whom, incidentally, I never saw again. I can only hope that the Club's action didn't reinforce his complex). A great storm occurred amongst the Committee members, some of whom, including Marie Byles our legal representative, and Cliff Ritson the President, threatened to resign if the Club persisted in its narrow bigoted behaviour.

I knew nothing of this; my sponsor, Edgar Yardley, merely telling me at the time, "It's only a few prudes blowing off.... don't take any notice.... they'll get over it." So I took no notice, and it wasn't until I was looking through the early Minutes to get information required for the writing up of the First Decade of the Sydney Bush Walkers that I read the full story with amazement and disbelief. How times have changed (for the better) over the past 60 years!

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NEW ZEALAND - NOVEMBER, 1987.

I am at present researching a tramping trip for November, 1987, to Mount Aspiring National Park and Fjordland National Park. I am looking for good company of fit but not necessarily "tiger" walkers. It is envisaged that walking will be over less publicised country and that leadership will be open and/or democratic.

Would anybody interested please contact - JIM OXLEY (phone) (W) 282 2670
(H) 807 2128

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW OVERDUE.

Anita Doherty.
Hon. Treasurer.

The 1987 subscriptions were due as from the March Annual General Meeting - many are still outstanding. Are you one of the guilty parties?

Please check if you have paid - if not, complete the form in the March, April or May magazine, attach your cheque and mail it to G.P.O. Box 4476, Sydney, 2001. If you have any doubts don't hesitate to contact me on 818-1138.

The Committee would hate to have to get tough with unfinancial members, so do your bit to keep us in the black. See you out on the track.

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