

MOORE CREEK

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers Incorporated, Box 4476 GPO, Sydney 2001. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening from 7.45 pm at the Ella Community Centre, 58a Dalhousie Street, Haberfield (next door to the Post Office). Prospective members and visitors are invited to visit the Club any Wednesday. To advertise in this magazine please contact the Business Manager.

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WHILE THE BILLY BOILS.

Looking at some photos of 1960's walkers embarking on a 5 day trip, the size of their packs caught my attention. How ever did they fit 5 days food and other essentials into such tiny packs?

Judging by the huge packs now carried by some of our members, it is obvious that we have allowed high pressure advertising to brainwash us into 'american style' walking. We carry giant 'high tech' packs with more padding, straps and fastenings than a space suit. Instead of a cape-groundsheets and a little fly, we must carry a tent which can withstand an arctic blizzard and rain-gear (now known as 'shells') suitable for the open tundra. Add to these some 'thermal' clothing, a multi-fuel stove and a dozen or so 'essential' little high tech gadgets. Having cranked this load onto your back, you will probably find that notwithstanding your 'ergonomically engineered' boots, (whatever that means!) the best you can manage is a slow plod along a smooth, level pavement.

Somehow, I think those happy-go-lucky lads with their scant possessions had a lot more fun, and covered a lot more ground.

Perhaps what we really need is something which cannot be bought in a trendy gear shop....

A spirit of adventure.

See you on the track....



BUSHFIRE DANGER PERIOD! - See November magazine Page 5.

BOOK REVIEW

SING WITH THE WIND Selected by Colin Gibson

Bushwalkers it seems, have always enjoyed writing poetry. Colin Gibson's little book of 100 bushwalker's poems covers a time span of 77 years - 1902 to 1979. S.B.W. members figure prominently, from Dorrie Lawry to Gordon Lee. One of my favourites, 'Bivouac' by Kath McKay was included, as was a tribute to Tarro, by Bernie Peach of C.M.W. There are even some quotes from the Chronic Operas. Not all of the poems could be classified as Deathless Verse, but many are very amusing, showing true bushwalker's humour. I particularly liked 'The Kowmung' and 'I Remember' by Ted Hartly, 'Holiday' by Barry Dwyer and 'Kedumba Creek' by Jim Barratt.

Sources are given with each poem, and the pages are enlivened with delightful line drawings. My only criticism is that the index is in page order, instead of in alpha order of titles. The latter method makes it much easier to find a desired poem, which is important, as books of poetry are surely meant to be read many times. The book is light enough to slip into your pack - reading aloud from it could make an interesting change from campfire singing.

The price is a modest \$10-00. Copies can be obtained from Alex Colley when he comes into the clubroom, or by phoning the Colong Foundation on 247.4714.

MITTAGONG to KATOOMBASeptember 28 - October 3 - Leader: IAN RANNARD

By Morag Ryder

PART ONE: Nattai to Butcher's CreekThursday 28th September

It was bitter cold in Mittagong when the train arrived at 9.30 pm. We climbed into the back of a ute belonging to Ian's friend and nearly froze on the long bumpy journey down the Nattai fire trail. We bivvied on the ridge-top, and slept well despite the cold.

Friday 29th

Low misty cloud blanketed everything when we started walking at 7.30 am. The wattles were out in force, a golden presence that kept us company for the entire walk. By 10.30 the cloud lifted and we admired the sunlit face of Surveyors Crag, strolling along broad 4WD tracks on the lush green river flats. Unfortunately the Nattai was unfit to drink, murky and full of slimy green algae. A huge sign told us we were at the foot of Beloon Pass track which started just opposite Colleys Flat, on the north side of Travis Gully. Not too steep, and very faint, the blue markers beckoned us ever upward. Ian collected water from a small pool and we reached the top at noon. Magnificent views, despite the heat haze. Wollondilly River, Lacey's Tableland and Broken Rock Range were spread out before us.

After lunch in the shade of a friendly casuarina, we scrambled down the short, steep escarpment, and along a gentle ridge to the Wollondilly. Parrots everywhere, and glory pea in flower. A small pure stand of yellow bloodwood, their pastel ochre trunks and huge green leaves vivid against the olive scrub. The Wollondilly was knee deep and clear, cooling our feet. Groups of kangaroos peered at us from the tall golden grass as we walked up, admiring Burragarang Walls and Bonnum Pic in the afternoon sun.

Meadowlarks sang, an eagle soared - all was tranquility until we passed two 4WDs, which covered us in dust as they tore along with their loads of yelling people. Perhaps they were staying at the Jooriland Guest House. Afternoon tea break was on the Jooriland River, a green flat which tempted us to camp. Resolutely we marched on, shaded by thick casuarinas. Crossing the river, we encountered Hereford cows with very young calves. They fled, and we rambled on, stopping at 3.45 pm on a high bank overlooking the river. Large enough for a sub-division, our three little tents looked rather comical, perched in one corner. After washing off the day's sweat, I took drinking water from the side creek. This was so full of minerals that it foamed when boiled - good for making capuccino! By 6.30 pm it was cold enough for a jacket, and we watched the sparks from our fire fly up to a dazzle of stars.

Saturday 30th

Low cloud again, blocking the last views of Bonnum Pic. A 7.30 am start up the gentle hills, following faint farm tracks, while groups of kangaroos and lumbering cows watched us from afar. When the cloud lifted at 9.30 we were sheltered by young trees with a thick understorey of brilliant gold wattle. A pair of eastern rosellas and a quarreling flock of fire-tail finches entertained us. We found the remains of an old out-house in the scrub, and had a snack stop there, which drew raucous comment from a gang of Gang-gangs.

Morning tea was at Basin Creek, where it crossed the Yerranderie Road, a grassy flat with a huge wattle in full flower. Several 4WDs passed, unaware of us. The road was hedged with wattle, and Yerranderie was quite busy, cars and children everywhere. We stopped for lunch at Tonalli River, lighting a small fire in the river bed. Birds rushed about, shouting and arguing - it must have been the stress of raising their families. The vivid lilac of Native Indigo mingled with golden pea flower and wattle, where we lounged in the shade sipping our tea.

The fire trail from Tonalli River to Byrnes Gap was undoubtedly the most tedious part of our walk, although we walked in shade most of the way. At the 4WD club bouse there were two front end loaders, busily working among the trees behind the building. Among the 4WDs was a truck loaded with riding horses and the verandah was crowded with people. Down the hill we went, to where Butchers Creek crossed the road, and at 3.30 pm began searching

for a campsite. Should we sleep among the little tea trees? Further searching revealed an open grassy area behind them. This would have been pure swamp in wet weather, but now was merely rather damp. In the creek were deep pools of good water and no leeches - incredible!

On one side of the camp were the cliffs of the Axehead, on the other the rock faces of Tonalli Mountain. A cool breeze fanned our fire and gums ringing the emerald turf shone snow white. Armies of rosellas began evening manoeuvres in the trees, commanded by several raucous kookaburras. The rocks turned gold in the setting sun, and we settled ourselves on a huge log provided by Ian, while a few bold rabbits mowed the lawn.

TO BE CONTINUED

WHY WORLD HERITAGE?

A book review.

We tend to be rather blasé about our east coast scenery. It has always been there, so we take it for granted. It might come as a surprise to learn that our Blue Mountains are absolutely unique in their combination of geology, flora and fauna. We are fortunate that some of it has been declared National Parks. So if an area is already a National Park, why have it listed as a World Heritage Area? One good reason is that National Parks are only protected by State Governments, but World Heritage Areas have Federal Government protection.

After years of labour, the Blue Mountains World Heritage Submission is finally complete. Dr. Geoff Mosley has written a book on this, covering all the most important points. Particularly interesting to walkers are the chapters on natural scenery, vegetation and fauna. Lavishly illustrated with photos by Henry Gold, this book gives fresh insights into some of our favourite walking areas.

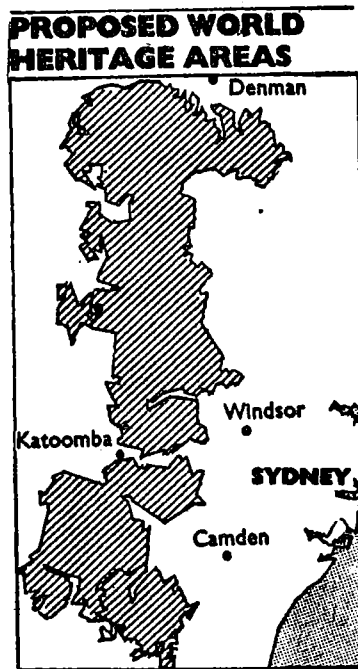
I learned that Yerranderie was once the site of a volcano, 4 km in diameter. Bindook Highlands still contain deposits of 'tufa', a stone formed from the volcanic ash. An aerial photo shows clearly that Thirlmere Lakes used to be part of a river. The land slowly rose, and the river lost its headwaters to the Nepean - now only the lakes remain.

Our east coast is one of the oldest areas of land in the world. Endrick River was old before the Himalayas were born. The coast was originally a massive, shallow basin. Multiple layers of soil and rock were washed into it from the then surrounding mountains. About 90 million years ago, this basin began to rise. Volcanic activity began and lava flows covered large areas with basalt. When streams finally cut through this hard capping, they eroded the softer sandstone beneath. In doing so, they created a most complex multi-layered biome.

The plants reflect this complexity. When walking down one of those long ridges during springtime, I have often noticed how different flowers seem to be arranged in horizontal bands up the hill, like some rich layer cake. This is because different plants have adapted to live on the various types of soil, some only about 10 metres deep.

The whole of our Blue Mountains area is a paradise for geologists, botanists, and zoologists - not to mention the humble bushwalker! If ever an area was worth preserving, this is. Dr. Mosley's little book is clearly and simply written, beautifully illustrated and extremely informative.

It might well be sub-titled 'Everything You Wanted To Know About The Blue Mountains, But Didn't Know Who To Ask'. Available from the Colong Foundation - phone 247 4714. At \$15.00 post free, it's a bargain.



THE EDITOR

* * * * *

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BIRD TRACK

by Jim Brown

Yes, that's right - the Bird Track, not the Birdsville track.

How do I know there's a Bird Track? That's easy, it's mentioned in the Summer Walks Program, where the day walk for December 31 commences "Helensburg - Bird Tracketc." And, of course, the SBW Walks Program would never tell a lie, would it?

On reading this particular item I behaved like that naive girl "Little Audrey" who featured in a series of smutty jokes back in the 1930s, and I laughed and laughed and laughed because I was sure the route had been volunteered over the telephone and been misheard. You see, Helensburgh has a final "h" in the spelling, and the track from there out towards the coast is the "Burgh Track" borrowing the last syllable of the town name. But there's another complication, because the town is named after a mining town in Scotland, not so far from the Scottish capital Edinburgh and that's not usually pronounced as "Edin-burg".

When I discovered that last fact a good many years ago I tried for a while to do what I thought was the right thing. I soon found that if I asked a Railway Booking Clerk for a "Weekend excursion ticket to Helens-burra" he would look at me in a peculiar way and ask "Where?" Presently I surrendered to force majeure, especially after I joined SBW and heard Bob Younger's story about the American serviceman travelling on a south coast train during the War years peering at the blacked-out station and asking plaintively, "Say, what burg is this?" to which the walkers answered, "Oh, I guess it's Helen's".

But what I really want to waffle on about is the Burgh sorry, Bird Track, because its name evokes some memories of trips over it back in the 1930s, when it was mostly used by miners from the town going out to the coast for the fishing. My first journey over it was in June, 1938, after finding Burning Palms and Era beaches and the tracks leading to them from Lilyvale and Otford.

My walk actually started at Stanwell Park and began with a torch-light passage through the mile-long railway tunnel beneath Bald Hill. The tunnel had been abandoned for rail operations almost 20 years before, but it was still intact and hadn't even been invaded by mushroom growers. This brought me to Otford by 10.30 am, and it was a simple matter to walk out to Burning Palms along a known track, arriving shortly after noon. By 1 pm I had lunched and was wondering how to fill in time until the afternoon train passing through Otford at 5.7 pm. Why - of course! - find the Burgh Track, which I had been told started at the northern edge of Maynards Farm - now Garawarra Ranger Station.

I hustled up the northern ridge out of Burning Palms and quickly located a rather vague thread of trail skirting the northern fence of Maynards property. After a few hundred metres the track became clearer and remained quite fair down to the Old River Road, a bush trail along the eastern side of the Hacking River, which was replaced by the present motor roadway a few years later. West of the river crossing I found a tracery of pads and tracks but settled on a fair foot track climbing out of the valley and becoming a passable bush road on top of the ridge.

By about 2.45 I was clearly approaching the town of Helensburgh, and came to a fairly large open space, very rich green in colour and much ploughed-up. The track abruptly divided into three, the middle one leading across the verdant meadow to some corrugated iron sheds on the far side. This seemed the obvious route, and it was only after going across the clearing that I realised it was a Sanitary Depot, where toilet pans from 10,000 unsewered Illawarra homes were delivered, and the contents buried. Hence the rich growth of grasses.

Actually, walkers and fishermen crossed the area regularly without trouble, except during the exceedingly wet winter and spring of 1950, when much of the ridge-top soil had the consistency of porridge. At that time I warned one party that I led across it that "it was a death-defying exploit", and one of the Club's ardent conservationists, sounding off at a meeting about the poor condition of the Depot, accused the cartage contractor of "failing to throw himself into his business".

I certainly had no difficulty on that first time over the Burgh Track, and came to the Railway Station about 3.25 pm. I killed time by walking down the line to the No.1 tunnel, half a mile south, to watch the Up South Coast Daylight Express storm out of the shaft in a cloud of smoke and steam. I wished I had a camera to record it.

The next memorable journey along the Track was on 15th January, 1939. I can place the exact date, because it was the day after "Black Saturday" when the temperature in Sydney reached 113.5° in the Fahrenheit scale (45.3°C). That day big areas in Victoria and the Southern Tablelands of NSW were savaged by bush fires, some people perishing. However, a southerly change blew through late at night, and when Bill and I stepped from the train at Helensburgh about 9.50 am on the Sunday the mercury had dropped to 68°F (20°C) and it was drizzling rain. Bill and I planned to do our very first overnight walk on the Australia Day weekend, a fortnight away, and hoped to do a lively day walk to "get in condition".

As far as the Hacking River crossing the vegetation was a bit withered and sun-scorched, but undamaged. On the hill up to Maynards (Garawarra) it was a desolation of blackened tree-trunks, grey and white ash and seared reddened leaves - where there were any left. Once we paused where a big tree was still smouldering, with plumes of smoke coming from broken branches, like steam from the spout of a kettle. Then we moved around to the up-hill side, and found the trunk was a hollow shell with the interior still glowing angrily in each puff of wind. We ran until we were beyond its reach if it should collapse. The clearing at Maynards was a tiny island in a sea of devastation.

That's all the old memories. Post-war the Burgh Track received less and less foot traffic and became heavily overgrown in places so that it could easily be mislaid even when you knew the general direction of the route. At one stage some local enthusiasts marked the trail but over a few years most of the markers vanished. About 1978 the Parks and Wildlife people erected notices "Burgh Track heavily overgrown and closed. It will be re-opened after it has been cleared". The signs stood for about 10 years until 1988, when it was finally cleared and re-opened - but only from Garawarra Ranger Station to the Hacking River. From that point you're on your own, but there are several routes in to Helensburgh, each of which skirts the former Sanitary Depot, now a King Size Rubbish Tip.

There are two notices about the track near the Ranger Centre. They are only about fifty metres apart. One mentions the "Burgh Track" and the other has it "Burg Track". Clearly NPWLS is not too sure of the spelling, but at least it's not for the Birds.

* * * * *

"ENVIRONMENT '90"

WHO IS DOING WHAT TO REPAIR THE ENVIRONMENT?

Believe it or not, some 14 Government bodies and a growing number of private companies! The International Conference and Exhibition will be held at Darling Harbour in May 1990.

One of the umpteen ways to clean up the mess is to turn garbage into something useful :-

GOOD-BYE TO THE MUNICIPAL DUMP - BRICKS MADE FROM GARBAGE.

NEUTRALYSIS, a new high technology process invented in Queensland, blends garbage straight from household rubbish bins with clay and liquid waste to form pellets. These are then fired in a kiln, heated by burning garbage to produce a light weight aggregate for use in concrete, and building bricks.

The process retrieves valuable metal by-products, and also creates surplus energy which can generate electricity. All gases produced are either combusted internally, or cleaned and cooled before being released to the atmosphere.

If you want further details, ring FAYE CAMERON on 449.5279.

PORTRAIT OF A CLIMBER

PART TWO:

BY 'CLIO'

'The Blue Mountaineers'

Around 1929 or '30 Dr. Dark, Eleanor and Eric Lowe were visiting the Ruined Castle near Narrow Neck. Dr. Dark started scrambling on the rocks and soon felt his confidence coming back. The others were soon doing gentle climbs and were joined by Osmar.

"Lowe and I were 40," said Dr. Dark, "Eleanor more than a decade younger, and Osmar in his early twenties. We began with easy climbs on the Second and Third Sisters, and the Orphan Rock. The more we climbed the more we liked it, so one evening we decided to form ourselves into a club, which we called The Blue Mountaineers. We adopted as our theme tune a fascinating little phrase from Petroushka, which was whistled as we walked to a climb." This was the first rockclimbing club in NSW - probably in Australia.

The other foundation member was Eric Lowe who was related to a well-known grazing family and had trained as an engineer and accountant. He wrote a trilogy of books dealing with station life, the most famous being "Beyond Nineteen Counties" which was dramatised for radio. Others to join the club were Frank Walford who was then editor of "The Mountain Echo" (and later Mayor of Katoomba and Leura), Paddy and 'Shrimp' Carson who seemed to take climbing rather casually. Dr. Dark remembered one climb when Shrimp let down some rope for Eleanor to tie on. They used 32 mm yacht manila or heavy sashcord on rock belays. Upon reaching the belay ledge Eleanor found Shrimp lighting a cigarette with the rest of the rope neatly coiled beside him.

After they had been climbing for about a year, Osmar, Eric Lowe and Jim Starkey attempted to climb Arethusa Falls. They reached the mouth of the gorge and climbed to the lip of the lower waterfall late in the afternoon. Osmar in later years recalled "It was then too late to tackle the cliffs above the falls and we turned back, hoping to reach a reasonable camp site before nightfall. After two or three hours stumbling around in the pitch dark and heavy rain, trying to keep as close to the foot of the main cliffs as possible, we sat down where we were and went to sleep."

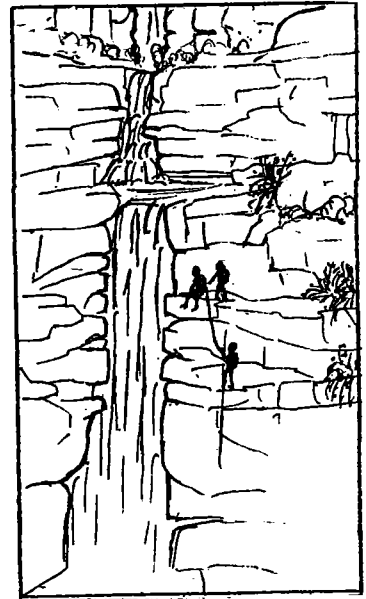
"It was sobering to wake in the morning and discover that we had bumbled our way up a fast rising ledge and had slept with a metre or so of a sixty metre drop." As Dark acidly pointed out, they had shown poor judgement in attempting to travel at all in such conditions.

Several weeks later Dark and Walford joined the team. They planned to bivouac on a narrow level platform above the first fall, and tackle the tough climbing to the tableland with a full day in hand. White recalled that it was "a forbidding place indeed..... cold, windy and full of echoes. My private anxiety was that the creek would flash-flood during the night and wash us all to kingdom come".

Osmar, who had sprained his ankle at camp getting a second cup of tea, had the ignominy of being hauled up the climbs - the only casualty in the life of the club.

Also about this time (1932) a party of Queensland climbers including Bert Salmon came to the Blue Mountains. They did not believe in using ropes and scaled the Boars Head, the Three Sisters as well as a number of other cliffs. However they could not get above the falls on Arethusa.

Dr. Dark said "What we considered our first serious ascent was the Boars Head. Lowe and I began from the bottom of the narrow gully between it and the mainland. We worked along a ledge from the eastern end to the southern side, then straight up a cliff which brought us to a ledge right under the jaws; from this a short sloping rock led to the top."





"A friend of Osmar's, Jim Starkey, joined us and brought our first bit of notoriety. One afternoon we were all on top of the Boars Head when I thought it would be a nice idea to try to get into the jaws. It was a mildly acrobatic bit of climbing, which Jim photographed. The picture was quite sensational and Jim got it published in a Sydney paper. It was probably this which attracted Movietone News, who were always seeking unusual items for their Newsreels.

"We decided that the best shots would be got from the Boars Head, Castle Point, and the First Sister. Lowe, Osmar and I climbed Castle Point, up through the series of galleries on the north side, making our way from gallery to gallery with the help of a most unethical instrument. This was like a two-metre long ice-axe with a deeply curved pick and a notch to hold the rope where the shaft entered the head.

"We had not yet climbed the First Sister, but it simply must be done before the day appointed for filming. I went up the deeply eroded pitch, from where the Council later placed that sacrilegious seat,

to the ledge along the eastern face. Lowe and Osmar went out onto the ledge to climb that obvious gash which leads up from a few feet along it. It would not go. Then Osmar poked further along the ledge, round a slight angle, and came back to report that there was a vertical cliff, which looked climbable, and should lead to the top. Osmar was right, so we finished the climb."

Osmar was 'cast' to make the descent into the Boar's Jaws while Joe Stannard from Movietone News captured the action. Intending to wiggle into the 'mouth', a problem with communication left Osmar dangling painfully on a rope over a very long drop. A long lens recorded "my expression of alarm and gibbering fury and the microphone picked up my Nixonian language - no expletives deleted! When Stannard ran the raw film through the studio projector in Sydney, audience reaction, particularly among the female technicians, could fairly be described as pronounced. Joe had a wicked sense of humour....."

Dr. Dark missed the Australian release, but some years later, whilst he and Eleanor were in America (1937) looking at medical procedures, they happened to visit a theatre and saw the antics in a film captioned "Unusual Sports".

They had many memorable climbs, such as the traverse of the Three Sisters massif from the valley floor, the ascent of the First Sister on the western face from the valley, Boars Head from the valley, the ascent of Arethusa Falls and Minnehaha Gorge from the Grose Valley, the skyline traverse of Kedumba Point, a number of routes from Megalong to Narrow Neck, and two or three routes up onto the western cliffs to Kings Tableland.

They only had one fall. Eric Lowe was standing on a boulder over Nellie's Glen when suddenly it came away from the wall. He fell about twelve metres and by sheer good luck landed on the narrow ledge where Dark and Osmar were holding a secondary belay. Fortunately he escaped with only a bruised thigh.

The Blue Mountaineers incorporated bushwalking as well as rockclimbing, going as far afield as Barrington tops. Occasionally they were called upon to assist the Katoomba police in search and rescue work.

At the beginning of the climbing season both Dark and White needed a little time to adjust their sense of balance - Osmar would sit on a cliff and dangle his legs over the edge whilst reading a book. He remembered Dr. Dark as "a stylish, strong rock man with gymnastic ability and impressive rhythm". Dark was strongly adverse to iron-mongery, and preached the Mummery doctrine that a rope should never be used as an aid to climbing, only as a precaution against misjudgement or accidents from rotten rock. The challenge was to

pit the physical and mental capacity of the climber against the difficulties of the pitch. "The art was to judge physical ability accurately." (White)

When he was a boy of twelve, Dr. Dark was inspired to visit the Warrumbungles by seeing copies of the Town and Country Journal, which were stuck to the walls of Mittagong Railway Station. Interestingly these photos by Judge Docker also caught the attention of another youth - Myles Dunphy who went on to have the area declared a national park.

Eventually in the early 1930's the Darks, Eric Lowe and Osmar White travelled to the Warrumbungles. Dark and Osmar succeeded in making the first successful ascent of Belougerie Spire via the West Face. The last hundred and fifty metres were the hardest. Vertical, exposed climbing with one pitch involving a hundred metre traverse across the face of the mountain along a ledge 30-90 centimetres wide with a sheer rock wall above and a drop of 300 metres below. On the first climb this margin of safety was possibly overstepped.

They also climbed the Tondurion Spire via the South Arete. The crux involved a narrow chimney which both Erics were able to scale. Osmar could not fit through the final section and had to make the ascent from the outside. Osmar recalled that Eleanor became jammed "and was unable to move either up or down under her own steam. Dark, Lowe and I heaved mightily on the rope and pulled the distinguished novelist out of her pants. She was not amused."

Next month THE SYDNEY ROCKCLIMBERS.

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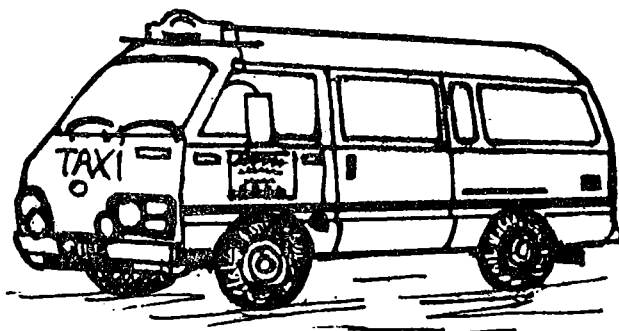
NEW MEMBERS. Two new members were admitted to the Club at the December Committee Meeting. They are Peter Sternhell and Ed Franklin. Their addresses and telephone numbers will be included in the new List of Members to be sent to members during February.

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THE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

It was around 2018 when the President in the chair called the 20 or so members present to order and declared the meeting begun. There were apologies from Carol Bruce, John Porter and Jeff Niven and the call for new members brought Ed Franklin and one Paul Churcher from a previous meeting for welcome in the usual way. Peter Sternhell was called, and although he was not present at that time he arrived later and was swooped upon and welcomed.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received, with no matters arising.

Correspondence saw a letter from the Total Environment Centre, thanking us for our recent donation, from Ian Wolfe notifying us of some scheduled private walks in the mistaken belief that such notification was still required. We discontinued our personal accident cover some while back and our Public Liability cover is only applicable to direct club activities and property. There was also a news release from the NSW Minister for the Environment and outgoing letters to our new members and to Gestetner, ordering the new duplicator/printer.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we received income of \$217.50, spent \$562.99 and closed with a balance in the current account of \$1,883.81.

The Walks Report was presented from the chair, the Walks Secretary being absent, and this resulted in a few gaps in the reports as you shall read. The first weekend covered was that of 10,11,12 November. Barry Wallace led a party of 8 on his Bonnum Pic walk in indifferent weather with a few showers. Bob King had 6 on his Quilty's Mountain trip, reporting some rain, and difficulties in getting off the far side of Quilty's. Of the day walks Judy Mehaffey led her 21 intrepid walkers up the side of Sublime Point to morning tea at the cafe. They must have emerged eventually, as they reported rain in the rainforest later in the trip. There was no report of Peter Miller's mapping instructional, and Ian Debert's Mount Carrialoo trip suffered a similar fate.

The weekend of 17,18,19 November saw Wayne Steele's Christy's Creek trip, led by Les Powell with a party of 4. They reported generally good weather with rain overnight on the Saturday. Jim Percy's Mount Stormbreaker, Kanangra Creek trip had 14 starters and was slightly re-routed away from Murdering Gully and up Mount Berry, due to the damp conditions. Of Alan Mewett's day trip to Gunderman Creek there was no report, but we are told that Peter Miller's Grand Canyon trip, led by Brian Hart had a complement of around 10.

Ian Debert's canoe trip of 24,25,26 November went unreported, we trust they are not still adrift out there somewhere. Kenn Clacher had a mixed party of 18 on his family walk to the Cox. The weather was fine and a challenge cricket match revealed the not-too-surprising fact that if you spent your time bushwalking you are likely to be a lousy cricketer. The "others" won by a mile. (That's odd, I thought you scored runs, or maidens, or something in cricket.) Jeff McIntosh led a party of 5 or 6 on his Grose River trip, starting mid-Saturday, and Les Powell's day trip to Eleanor Beach went to program after some initial delays, courtesy of State Rail. There were 10 starters enjoying the dense wet scrub on Govett Ridge. They claim to have made it to Eleanor Beach and returned in time to catch the 1911 train.

Jan Mohandas called off his trip to the Kosciusko Main Range over the weekend of 1,2,3,4 December due to a persistence of snow in the walk area. Don Finch had a party of 6 on his Colo weekend trip, and Bob King led a party of 7 on his canyons trip. The instructional days had varying success. The Saturday rock climbing was cancelled due to a lack of starters, but the abseiling instructional on the Sunday saw a cast of thousands (well around 20) enjoying a pleasant day of mucking about with ropes. Maurie Bloom's bike trip went, led by George Mawer, with a party of 4. There was no report of Ralph Pengliss's Sydney Harbour National Park walk.

The weekend of 8,9,10 December saw Mike Reynolds and Ainslie Morris leading 5 starters on their Durras Lake walk. There was no report of Rudy Dezelin's Newport to Palm Beach trip, and although we were assured that Errol Sheedy's Deer Pool trip went, there were no details. This rather inconclusive note brought the Walks Report to an end.

There was no F.B.W. Report, so it is probably not covered elsewhere in this magazine. The Social Secretary reported on the coming Christmas party. Too late!! It will all be long gone by the time you read this. Likewise the closure of the clubrooms during certain Wednesdays in December and January, and the beach barbecue at Obelisk Beach come mosquito feast.

The Conservation Report indicated progress in the Colong Foundation's efforts to have the Blue Mountains National Park given World Heritage listing. There was also mention of a letter from the Water Board to the Nattai Foundation cautioning them about track making activities within the catchment area.

General Business brought a motion that we produce a S.B.W. songbook, with Don Finch as the sub-committee. This was passed.

The question of a venue for the next Re-union was resolved in favour of Coolana, despite some misgivings about the ticks. Don Finch was elected as convenor.

Oliver Crawford has advised of his resignation from the position of Membership Secretary. On the position being thrown open Barry Wallace volunteered and was duly accepted.

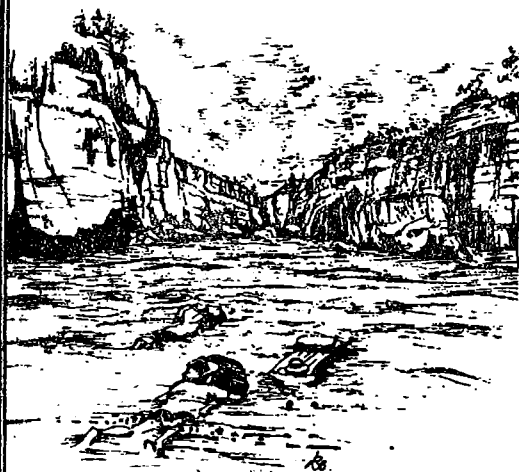
There was some discussion of a recent clean-up of a section of the Woronora River and a suggestion that the Club become more active in restoring fouled areas of the bush. In the absence of a substantive motion debate lapsed.

During the course of the meeting an interlude of showing members' slides of recent walking trips occurred, and although these were greatly appreciated by the members present it did lengthen the time of the meeting.

After announcements the meeting closed at 2200.

* * * * *

Kakadu ~ Wet Wonderland

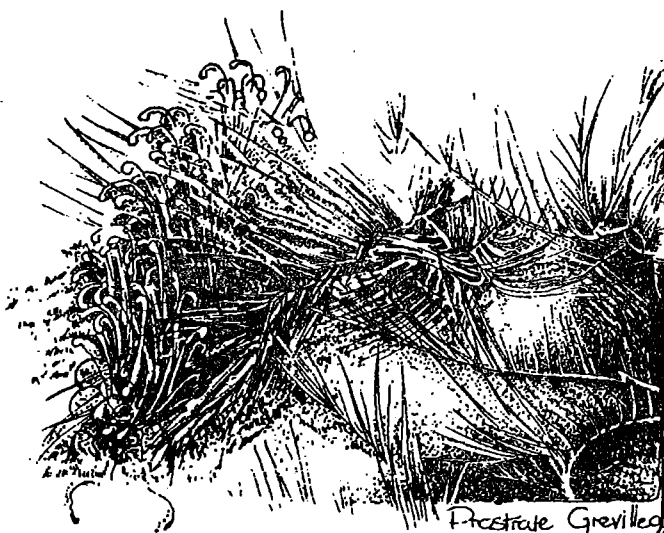


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MOUNT CAMERON TO BELL

by David Rostron

(First published in the magazine July 1982)

A study of maps is possibly the best way to become inspired about a new route (for us). This resulted in the programmed car swap trip for 1st/2nd May, from Mount Cameron to Mount Tootie with Don Finch and I, leading the respective "legs". However, after learning of the experience of others on the 30 km ridge section, over the Maiden and Mount Mistake to the Colo (thick scrub, no views, 13 ridge junctions and one-mile-an-hour country) we decided to proceed as per program only if the area had been burnt in the 1979 fires.

When subsequently travelling by plane to Dubbo on two occasions I determined that the area had not been burnt and it was obvious that the trip would be 'hard work'. I walk to enjoy myself and I believe this is also Don's philosophy. Not for us the foolish belief quoted by many: "The greater the suffering, the greater the trip". Don readily agreed to a change of route - from Mount Cameron to Mount Wilson - but later considered Mount Cameron to Bell would be the ideal trip. He felt the crossings of the canyons and creeks would provide sufficient "sport".

On the Wednesday night before the trip we had eight starters, but then Tony Marshall dropped out with a virus and Pat Harrison didn't appreciate the route change. So David Martin, Bob Hodgson, Don Finch, Spiro Hajinakitas, Barrie Murdoch and I, plus three vehicles, convened at Bell at 8.30 pm on Friday night. One vehicle was left at Bell, and we headed off along the maze of roads on the Newnes Plateau. After more than a few false leads (Don, of course, was navigating at this stage - allegedly on reliable information) we found the Mount Cameron fire trail. After a few kilometres we were stopped by a badly rutted hill.

We had known it was not possible to drive past Natural Bridge, but this meant a further 2 km on the 9 km we had intended to walk that night. For me it was two hours of mental torment along a fire trail we did not know and with partial moon for only the first hour. I had the sensation of being on a treadmill - our surroundings didn't seem to change. After two hours we began the slight climb to the basalt cap of Mount Cameron. With the change in vegetation there was a different aroma evident. There was the usual luxuriant grass on the cap which provided an ideal campsite.

The next morning we were up at 5.45 am and away by 7.05 am. We followed the fire trail over the cap until it turned east and we then headed south-west. The map indicated a perfect route down to Nayook Creek at 535117 and an easy ridge up the other side. When 400 metres away the route down and up looked ideal. However, when almost on the creek 15-20 metre cliffs on both sides were evident. We headed west for 300 metres but there were no apparent routes. So it was back to the ridge top and along a south-west ridge for a possible crossing opposite a creek at 524107. Again the map indicated the route was feasible.

When dropping off the ridge we had to negotiate a rocky ramp and then a causeway 40 metres long and 2 metres wide at 524112. We were able to drop off the causeway but when above the creek there were still 15 metre cliffs. We eventually found a gully down at 523108 and then a route through the cliffs on the other side. However, the diversions had cost us 1½ hours, so it was head down and tail up for the next 6 km and 1½ hours south across the plateau.

We carried water for lunch and this was enjoyed at 507076 with extensive views to the south. Mount Wilson was visible, many kilometres to the south-east. Lunch was a brief affair of 35 minutes and then it was west for 1 km across the ridge top before heading south again towards Derailment Hill and, we hoped, a route to North Bungleboori Creek.

After passing over Derailment Hill the route ahead had the appearance of a bushwalkers' minefield - cliffs, gendarmes, etc. We decided to descend to the creek to the west and follow it south to Bungleboori Creek. However it was about an hour later that we finally reached the first creek after negotiating gullies, chimneys and faces as well as exploring about four other possible routes.

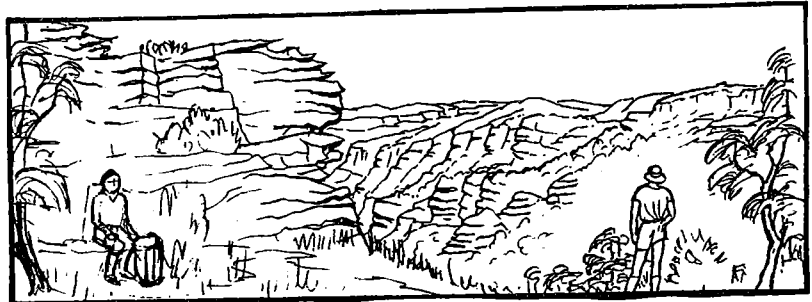
The floor of the valley was slow going with heavy growth, but eventually we crossed Bungleboori at 493045 and then had afternoon tea. We decided to carry water just in case we didn't make South Bungleboori Creek before nightfall. We headed south up the ridge to reach a firetrail at 491035. David Martin had been troubled by a knee problem and decided to retire at this point - to try to find his car via the fire trail maze.

Five of us then followed fire trails for 3 km - first south-west and then south-east and turned off south at 492018. Bob had walked along this part of the route before and was confident about finding a pass down to South Bungleboori Creek. We traversed a ridge to a cliff top about 100 metres above the creek at 496004 and then tried a number of gullies before finally reaching the creek just on dusk.

First impressions of the creek were that there would be no 5-star campsite that night. Bob was optimistic about a possible site 200 metres downstream, but to reach it took another 10 minutes. Well - it was about ½-star rating. We had to clear sites for adjoining flies and then the fire on sand amongst fallen trees. The location was typical of the creeks in this area - 40 metre cliffs on both sides.

Next morning saw a later start at 7.30 am and then it was up ledges and cracks at 497003 with some rope work to emerge on top of the Western Arthurs (named by Bob on a previous trip). These are rocky tors extending over 2 km and provided some interesting scrambling and route-finding with good views.

We headed west over these tops for about 1 km and then it was south again over a high valley to the next ridge top. We crossed this and followed a ridge south - more scrambling - and then it was down a pass at 490985, which Bob had used before. We followed the creek south to North Dumbano Creek, which we crossed at 493978. It was then time for morning tea. Dumbano Creek at this point has only small cliff lines - 5 m to 10 m with numerous breaks.



We had contemplated visiting Wollongambe Crater but the ridge from Wollongambe River to Bell - about 7 km - was still an unknown quantity. We decided to continue by the easiest route to the river. We crossed the marshy area of South Dumbano Creek at 498966 and then followed a ridge south-west to the Shay Ridge Fire Trail. A gallop along the trail for 4 km to the end was followed by open ridge walking and then a drop of about 100 m to the Wollongambe. This was reached by a series of ledges and gullies at 505928.

The lunch that followed was the most relaxed meal of the trip. We had the luxury of a fire in cool sunshine. The route up the other side looked reasonable and, from what we could see of the ridge to the Bell Road, our hopes for an easy final 10 km were rising.

The ridge proved to be delightful. It comprised rocky tors and large areas of heath-type vegetation - the formula for expansive views and relaxed walking. The view from a height of 994 metres was probably the best of the trip. Later, among the low eucalypts, the waratahs were prolific.

As we neared the road Don pushed to the front and began a none-too-subtle increase of pace. From a flowing, relaxed pace there developed an urgent panting stride. Spiro was heard to remark "Anyone would think it's Carlon's horses heading for home".

Then we were on the road on the north side of the rail line with 3 km to Bell. Foolishly we let Don set the pace. Whereas normal fit walkers are capable of 5,000 rpm Don appears to have 6,000 rpm available. With my longer legs I was just able to match his walking speed, but Spiro and Bob were periodically jogging whilst Barrie jogged all the way to keep up.

I think we all hoped to put on a final spurt for the last 150 metres up a hill to Bell, and overtake Don, but he started running before we did and all we could do was chew his dust! It was 4.15 pm and the end of a great exploratory trip.

I should add that the area around Mount Cameron was not burnt in the 1979 fires. These fires apparently extended to Nayook Creek, about 3 km south of Mount Cameron. There has been considerable regrowth since but the walking through most of the area is straightforward - there is no dense scrub to push through. Views are mainly restricted by low eucalypts which have recovered to an amazing degree. Throughout the area the waratahs, compared to most parts of the mountains, are prolific. An early spring walk would be a delight.

FEDERATION NOTES

Federation Meeting Place. From 16/1/90 the Federation will meet in Demountable Classroom No.4, Burwood Primary School, Conder Street, Burwood.

Clean-up Day, 21/1/90. S & R officers are organising this clean-up in the Royal National Park.

TV Transmission Tower. The Federal Minister for Communications is proposing to erect a tower at Little Forest Plateau (in the Budawangs overlooking Milton). Federation have protested and an Environmental Impact Statement is being compiled by the Department.

Warringah Bushwalking Club has been admitted to Federation. An application from the Nattai Foundation for membership is being investigated.

Incorporation. Federation has lodged its formal application for registration as a Corporate Body.

Search & Rescue. Next training weekend to be March 31/April 1 at Howes Swamp along the Putty-Singleton Road.

Pollution of Streams. Salmonella germs and Giardia parasites have been found in some streams in the Kosciusko region, also in the Grose River. All drinking water should be boiled.

F O O D I N O T E S

S.B.W. CHRISTMAS PARTY. The Club's Christmas Party held on 20th December attracted a very large number of members, around 100 including all seven of the Club's Honorary Active Members. Enthusiastic conversation, good food and drink - old members not seen for a while, new members and their new club friends - a night to remember!

BEAUTIFUL POSTERS

Alex Colley will be bringing into the clubroom posters of Kakadu and Pagoda Country, taken from elegant photographs by Henry Gold. Priced at \$8-00 each, all the proceeds go towards the Blue Mountains World Heritage Submission.

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS -

of Tiger Walkers, hobnailed boots and discovering new routes. Photographs, equipment, our bushwalking history as it really happened. If you have any memorabilia of those Roaring Days, come and add it to the collection which will be on display at our NOSTALGIA NIGHT on February 28th