



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 at 8 pm.

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DECEMBER - 1990

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WHILE THE BILLY BOILS.

How many people does it take to carry out someone with a broken ankle? Judging by what I saw a few weeks ago, between 20 and 30 plus two helicopters.

At the bottom of the Grand Canyon track, where it meets Greaves Creek, a very small and slender lady lay on a stretcher. A space blanket over her and a uniformed medico adjusting an inflatable splint around her ankle. Standing around were 20 or so walkers and six or seven guys dressed in overalls, clutching portable radios. Deciding there were more than enough observers, I continued up to Evans Lookout. Coming down were more guys in overalls, with ropes and sundry equipment.

"Where's the helicopter?" I enquired facetiously. "It will rendezvous in about 10 minutes" was the solemn reply. Sure enough, it came roaring over the trees, closely followed by a Channel Ten helicopter. They circled in tandem for a long time, and I wondered if the rotor blades would fit into that narrow crevice.

At the Evans car park were two police paddy-wagons and five fire trucks - from all the nearby towns. Obviously, the local Emergency Teams were having a field day, with a Real Live Rescue. I recalled to mind two occasions when SBW members suffered similar injuries, and were simply taken out by their own parties.

I never did learn how the story ended, but perhaps the patient enjoyed all the fuss.

See you on the track....

Monag



RING THE BELLS...

and tie white ribbons on your pack -
for January the 6th is the day for
The Wedding of the Secretaries!

Patrick James (club sec.) and Greta Davies
(social sec.) will be the happy pair. When the last
of the champagne has been drunk, they will be off to go
tramping in New Zealand. All our very best wishes go with them.
Health - wealth - and happy walking!

..... and before I forget -
A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO
EVERYONE!

Ed.



A SEARCH

by Bob Younger

It was 9 o'clock on the evening of 13th November when I received a call from Keith Maxwell, the Federation of Bushwalkers Search and Rescue Co-ordinator. He explained that the Police Rescue Squad had requested some assistance from bushwalkers in a search for an eighty-two year old man who was missing from the Queen Victoria Geriatric Hospital on the King's Tableland. The hospital is about 8 km from Wentworth Falls on an old road which originally led to a steep pass known as the Jumpback or 1 in 4 which gave access to Burragorang Valley. This valley is now known as Lake Burragorang and the road exists mainly for the convenience of the Water Board.

I found my rather obsolescent 1984 list of SBW members available for S & R call out and proceeded to telephone possible starters. Keith had suggested that one car load from each club would suffice. Eventually Greta Davis, Jim Oxley, Keith Perry and myself volunteered to uphold the honour of S.B.W. and take part in the search which was to commence shortly after 7 am the next day from the hospital grounds. This meant a 5 am start from home with a cut lunch, compass, torch, first-aid kit, water, wet weather gear and a map of the area if possible.

We reached the rendezvous before 7 am due to lack of traffic on the Western Highway at such an early hour. We would have preferred an extra half hour in our beds. The Federation S & R trailer was already in position and Peter Treseder was busy liaising with the police, supervising the erection of a radio aerial and distributing portable transmitter receivers.

Various vehicles continued to arrive and disgorge volunteer searchers. The bushwalker contingent mostly came in their family saloons and station waggon whilst the police, bush fire brigades, National Park Rangers and State Emergency Services vehicles were all heavy duty orange, red or white 4 W D trucks bearing insignia. Those emerging from these machines were dressed in brightly coloured overalls and heavy boots whilst the bushwalkers mostly wore shorts, dilapidated volley sandshoes and travel worn rucksacks. Peter remarked that some people thought that the bushwalkers did not appear at all professional alongside the rest. There is now a Federation of Volunteer Rescue Organisations and it has been proposed that all S & R participants should be fitted out in a similar fashion for identification purposes. Nevertheless, it was good to see 37 bushwalkers, looking fit and optimistic, ready for action.

After each searcher had signed on to ensure that all could be accounted for on completion of the search, Peter briefed us on the situation. The missing man had been admitted to the hospital on the weekend to give his wife a break after a long period of caring for him, but he apparently did not like this arrangement and had absconded. He had packed his belongings in a pillow case and walked out. The police had searched all day Tuesday with the aid of tracker dogs without much success. They had found articles of his clothing in the bush either side of the dusty road but no sign of him apart from some tracks in the dust. Various fire trails branch off the old road in an easterly direction and we were assigned a sector of bush that the police considered most likely to yield a quick result. Other groups were given other areas to search on either side of the old road and along various tracks leading into the scrub.

Our group were then transported by a convoy of police paddy waggons to our search area. It was a very crowded and bumpy ride enclosed inside the steel wire cages like so many drunks on New Year's Eve, but liberty was soon restored.

By now the Polair helicopter was overhead making continued passes along the fire trails searching for any sign of the missing man. It was decided that our group should conduct a line search through the scrub on a compass bearing of 80 degrees. We placed ourselves about 15 metres apart in a long line along an east-west firetrail ready for the order "Forward".

The bush was thick and scrubby in places with rocky outcrops and creeks in our path. Ken, the leader, had great difficulty in keeping us in line as some of us lost sight of each other, lagged behind in the hard parts or spread ahead on easy bits, or even strayed off course due to insufficient attention to our compasses. A radio man was positioned at each end and one in the centre of the long untidy line. It reminded me of a film I had seen featuring a thin line of British Redcoats, complete with packs, advancing towards the French. At least there was no one trying to pick us off, just lots of hostile scratchy bushes and uneven ground to impede our progress.

By noon we were hungry, hot and thirsty so a halt was called for lunch. Those with water bottles had just about exhausted their supply but the more cunning had carried their water in well filled wine casks.

After lunch we continued our line search on a slightly different bearing until we had thoroughly covered our search area. This fact was conveyed to base by radio and paddy waggons were despatched to take us to another sector. When they arrived there was a rush to refill water carriers with iced water and cordial which had thoughtfully been provided by the police.

The helicopter had gone home and the afternoon was slipping away. We did not start our next search until about 3.30 pm. This area fell steeply towards an inhospitable creek and we wished we all had a set of overalls. Our bare legs and arms were badly scratched and tender through constant abrasion caused by pushing through spikey scrub. We gained a short respite while a member of the Bankstown Bushwalkers received first aid for a bad cut and was escorted back to our starting point.

The creek was a fair way from the firetrail, was very difficult, it was getting late and the party was very tired after a long strenuous day so it was decided to retreat back up the hill and back to our cars.

The police thanked us all for our efforts and issued certificates to those who need them, acknowledging their participation in the search, for the information of employers. We then signed off and headed back home. It was disappointing that the search had been unsuccessful. We knew where the man was not, but were left to speculate on his possible whereabouts.

A party of police and park rangers continued to search the following day - also without success. We felt sympathy for the man's wife and relatives in their anxiety and grief. The bush is not always benign and we don't always succeed.

* * * * *

OF BEARDS, BUSHWALKERS AND BULL-DUST

by Jim Brown

"Tell me," said the Vice-President, to a prospective member seeking admission to the Club about 1950, "do you find your beard any problem when walking through thick bush?" (The Vice-President was Alex Colley, the prospective Neil Schäfer.) As far as I recall, Neil answered "No worries".

Considering the subsequent proliferation of beards amongst walkers (inter alia) the question would not be appropriate nowadays. But it does point to an interesting historical fact - that beards have had certain periods of popularity - and that the first twenty or thirty years of the bush walking movement were virtually beard-free. In 1950 they were certainly a novelty, despite the fact that the Australian explorers of much of the 19th century, some of the first true bush walkers, were often hairy about the face.

Now, kindly don't think that in writing about beards, I am being discriminatory simply because about half the population cannot grow a presentable "ziff". After all, I suspect that over the last 30 years of thereabouts, quite a lot of the ladies have come to have a much more intimate acquaintance with beards than I have ever done.

But it is quite certain that beard cultivation, as a male activity, has been in vogue for limited time periods only. There are indications, in the illustrations in history books over a span of about 500 years, that beards were "in" during the first Elizabethan period (when Francis Drake "singd the beard" of the Spanish sovereign at Cadiz) and during part of the ensuing 17th century, although even then many menfolk risked after-shave irritation to present "that face you love to touch".

By about 1700, however, and for the next 140 years so so, beards were "on the nose" instead of being on chin and jaws. Can you think of any important bearded historical personage in that era? Napole. Wellington, Cook, Phillip, Bligh, Flinders, Macquarie, Doctor Johnson, Keat, Byron, Bach, Hayden, Mozart, Beethoven are all shown in clean-shaven mode....well, shaven anyway.

Then about 1840 the beard bounced back - Prince Albert, Gladstone, Lincoln, Grant, Brahms and a host of others appear heavily whiskered.... and this embraces many of the Australian explorers, Eyre, McDouall Stuart, Kennedy, Leichhardt and his alter ego "Voss", Forrest, Burke (what about Wills?), not to mention Henry Parkes and Ned Kelly. This phase went on until the end of the century and into the beginnings of the 1900s. And about that time, beard-mania began to cut out (should that be cut off?) so that by the time of World War I it was reasonable for the British Army to decree "moustaches permitted, but no beards" and for the Navy to permit beards provided the sailor obtained "permission to grow".

My father, who was born in 1888, told me that, as a young man about 1906 he decided against a beard, because he had seen his father, a foreman shipwright at Southampton's dockyards, come home on damp winter days with his beard frozen stiff. Perhaps in the British Army, a weapons training sergeant might have anticipated Alex Colley's 1950 question with, "Do you find your beard ever gets tangled in the bolt action of your rifle?" (Probably it had been bad enough in earlier wars if a bearded soldier's whiskers caught fire when the powder in the pan of his flintlock musket flared up).

At all events, during World War I, and the 1920s and 1930s beards were decidedly "out". Thus the bushwalking movement - as a recreation instead of the exploration of Terra Australia Incognita - began in the Beard-Free Zone of the 1920s. By the 1930s beards were confined to a few aged monarchs, and some other eccentrics. In fact, they were almost in the "joke" category, so that a Pop song of that time went -

"I love the bearded lady, 'cause her whiskers tickle so,
Her kisses make me prickle from my head down to my toe.
The kiss that makes me passionate
Is the kiss with the moustache in it....
I love the bearded lady 'cause her whiskers tickle so."

Beards were still quite peculiar - except in the Navy, of course - during World War II, when Army personnel were issued with a safety razor and, at a time when razor blades were in short supply - the steel was going into tanks and ships - we were supplied with one blade per month, together with advice on how to smarten it up when it became blunt using either a kind of strop, or by rubbing the blade around the inside of a glass tumbler. Some people reverted to the old "cut-throat" razor, and I recall the unfortunate case of one young fellow shaving naked outside his tent with the aid of a mirror propped in the fork of a tree. After he had lathered up a pestilential fly began to buzz around his bare backside; he lashed out at it - and six stitches were later inserted in his bottom.

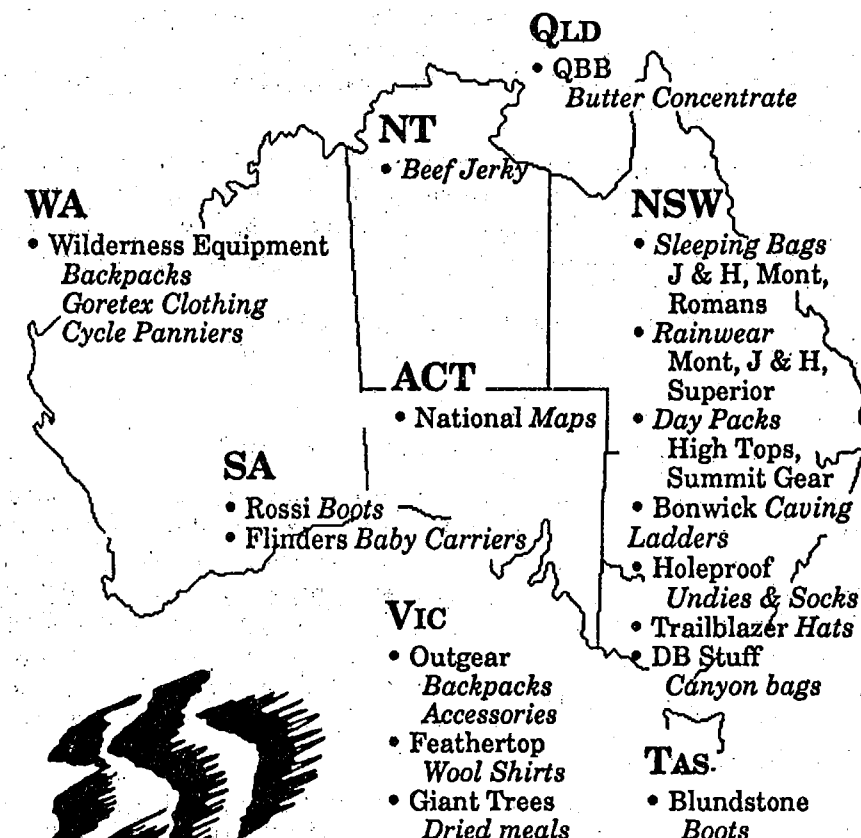
I made one attempt to grow the tolerated Army moustache, mostly because all the Section I was with had decided to do so, but quit when I found the first week's growth looked like a shaggy tooth-brush, growing in uneven blonde tufts. Of course, the job I was on at the time, walking around in the West Australian bush, up-dating and correcting the impossible maps of the area, involved being out in strong sunlight much of the time. The job was most congenial for a potential bushwalker, but the effect on my moustache was disastrous. Later, the nearest I ever came to growing a beard was during a 14-day walk in the Victorian Alps in 1948. I have an old photograph to prove it, but it also shows why I never contemplated growing a beard.

Of course, beards began to make their comeback during the 1950s and especially in the '60s, with our own Neil Schafer as one of the advance guard. Over the years, a striking collection of bushwalker beards was grown, though I doubt whether they were quite so widespread as in the late 19th century. By some time in the 1970s the practice was so common that I was given authority by my boss at the time to "promulgate" an instruction to Sydney's bus drivers and conductors authorising them to grow beards. I tried to express the idea diplomatically, especially as it came so late in the "beard era", and suggested the start be made during a period of leave "because in the early stages, a beard can appear untidy, and suggest the employee has neglected to shave". At least one of the Bus Union officials complimented me on the "sensible and reasonable wording of the Instruction".

One night recently, when about 40 people were present in the Club Room for a social evening, I surveyed the scene, and found.... yes, ONLY ONE BEARD present. What, are they going out again? Or was it just an aberration. Well, you'd better tell me.... Oh, you may say, you called this "Beards, Bushwalkers & Bull-Dust". Well, all right, there's quite a lot about beards, a little about bushwalkers. What about the bull-dust? My answer....you've just been rading it.

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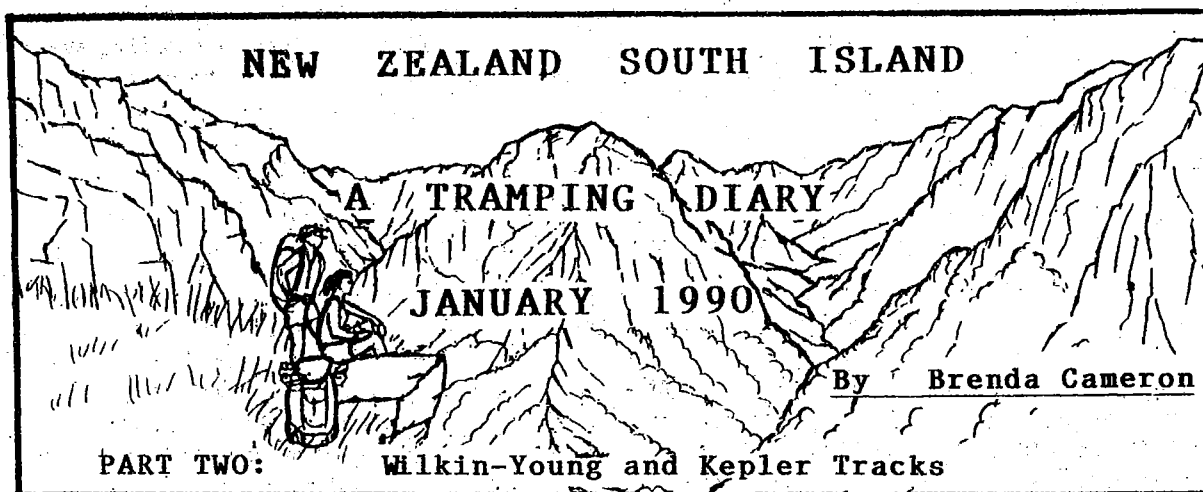
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Thursday 18 January

A day in Queenstown. Got ready for our Wilkin-Young walk starting tomorrow. Lovely weather.

Friday 19 January

Caught government inter-city bus from Queenstown to Makarora, starting point for our Wilkin-Young Walk. A quite scenic journey through the arid looking Otago country. After the journey followed by lunch, had to psyche ourselves up for the walk which started with a deep wade across the glacial swift-flowing Makarora River. Had 15 km to do to Young Hut, our destination for the night. Weather dry but threatening. Went through the beech forest alongside Young River, reached the junction of Young River and South Branch at 4 pm. Climbed up the increasingly rugged track and a big land slip, following South Branch Creek. Lovely wild country and much less tramped than other tracks.

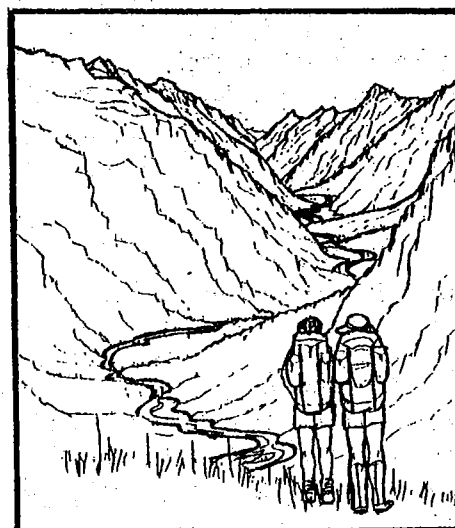
A very tiring day after the long bus journey and the late start. Reached Young Hut at 7.15 pm, in cold threatening weather and encroaching gloom. And what a location! It was placed high on a hill looking up and down the wild and remote glacial valley. A glorious place to spend the night, and the long New Zealand twilight enabled us to savour the scenery before darkness.

Interesting hut book entries including ones by apparently lone walkers enjoying the remoteness on Christmas Day and New Year's Eve.

Saturday 20 January

Left Young Hut just before 9 am, walked slowly up the valley for half an hour, over the grass tussocks, to the start of Gillespie Pass. We were near the head of Young Valley which is absolutely beautiful; the effects of the ice age and glaciers very obvious and seemingly unchanged, as though the glaciers had departed yesterday. A steep climb up and over Gillespie Pass; paused for a while on the high part of the Pass to enjoy the views of surrounding valleys and the snow-covered mountain tops, shrouded slightly in mist this morning, and to which we seemed very close.

Next, a steep, slippery descent over the snow grass down to Gillespie Stream, another steep descent through beech forest into Siberia Valley, and finally a glorious stretch of walking along open grassed river flats which brought us to Siberia Hut at around 4.30 pm. Hut at the side of the Wilkin River with splendid views up and down the valley.



Weather fine today after an "iffy" start and skies clearing tonight.

The small hut could just accommodate our party - but why sleep in a cramped hut on such a lovely night with all that space and the sound of the river outside; I happily gave up my bunk to some late arriving trampers and pitched my tent outside. Had the best night's sleep so far in New Zealand!

Sunday 21 January

In the early morning, as I sat in my tent eating breakfast I was able to observe the startling effects of the sunlight hitting the tops of the surrounding mountains.

Left Siberia Hut to walk down the Siberia and Wilkin Valleys. A lot of up and down through more forest on rough track. Plan was for us to be picked up by a pre-arranged jet boat to take us back to Makarora. Arrived at pick-up tree at 9.45 am, weather having turned cloudy, cold and a little rainy. After a cold wait, two jet boats appeared up the river, arriving at our sides with a flourish. Half-hour journey down Wilkin River, up the Makarora River to a landing place, and from there we were conveyed by open truck back to Makarora township. Time for lunch before catching the bus back to Queenstown.

This was such an enjoyable walk, and more demanding than the others in that the terrain was more difficult. Of all our walks, too, it was certainly the closest to being in true wilderness country (despite the ubiquitous track markings). I loved those quiet glacial valleys.

Monday 22 January

A day in Queenstown. After a morning of coffee drinking and pie eating, six of us walked to the top of Ben Lomond (the mountain which overlooks Queenstown), an ascent of 1500 metres. Once the treeline was passed, very spectacular hill and mountain scenery to enjoy. At the summit, 360 degree views of mountain range upon mountain range. Very cold on top, so did not linger. Despite the height, this climb was on a gently graded traversing track, making it relatively easy going and easily accomplished in an afternoon. The views are marvellous. Weather for it was cloudy, dry and clear.

Tuesday 23 January

Another day in Queenstown. So much to do, so many activities in and around this town (however, we all gave the bungy jumping a miss). For a small party of us, rafting on the nearby Shotover River; a cloudy, chilly morning for it. The drive out to the river along Skipper's Canyon road was very interesting with quite unusual scenery - a very arid valley with some different rock formations. All this together with an "informative commentary" from the very young bus driver/river guide - sometimes too informative, though, as he turned right around to commentate to us whilst negotiating perilous bends over precipitous drops.

Pretty canyon scenery along the very blue waters of the river and grade 3 rapids (quite exciting enough for me), with a long dark tunnel towards the end of the trip, which was constructed by miners in the last century at a cost of 10,000 pounds in order to get at what turned out to be 60 pounds' worth of gold! But they certainly left an interesting tunnel behind for posterity, just the right width for rafting in the 1990s.

Rest of the day spent preparing for the Kepler Track starting tomorrow - a long walk of 76 km in a day and two half-days with a big ascent/descent; the last walk of our New Zealand trip.

Wednesday 24 January

Comfortable and scenic Inter-City bus trip from Queenstown to Te Anau in fine sunny weather. Arrived at Te Anau, a thriving holiday town set prettily at the side of Lake Te Anau, in the late morning. Started our walk about mid-day. Track extremely well graded and smoothed out, mostly devoid of tree roots and rocks. Through the forest to the first stop for lunch at Brod Bay on the lake. Pretty spot, nice beach, with plenty of sandflies - so on smartly went the Dimp repellent. Then the long steady climb on a gentle gradient up to Mount Luxmore hut - an ascent of 800 metres - firstly through the forest and then into open and glorious mountain and lake scenery.



Arrived at hut 4.15 pm; it is in a terrific spot on the side of the hill looking down on Lake Te Anau and distant mountain ranges beyond. The 40-bunk hut was quite full (camping is not allowed anywhere on the Kepler Track) so one or two of us decided to sleep out on the verandah, such a beautiful fine night being in prospect. That is until someone told us there were kea birds about. This information resulted in a swift retreat from the verandah to the kitchen.

A long sunny twilight was enjoyed - the colours of the sky and distant ranges were fantastic.

Weather today - super.

Thursday 25 January

Lovely clear sunny morning and cold and windy. Away at 7.45 to continue our ascent up Mount Luxmore with about another 400 metres to climb. Did a side trip to summit of Mount Luxmore. Marvellous high open ridge walking with views of Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau far below. Most exhilarating walking.

Descended, through the forest, to Iris Burn Hut (set attractively in a valley clearing) where we had lunch, 37 km all told to walk today - we had done

about half by this stage; so had a hard afternoon's slog through the forest to our hut for the night, Motorau. The forest was as pretty as ever, but all agreed that the highlight of this walk was the alpine heights of this morning. Reached hut at 5.15 pm, as threatening dark clouds gathered over the hills. Hauled our sore limbs up to the hut and slumped inside for rest and sustenance.

Friday 26 January

Some 22 km to walk out of the Kepler Track, virtually all through forest. Weather cloudy but dry. It really was an anti-climax after yesterday's scenic splendours, but pleasant enough, all these things being relative. Finished the whole circuit of 76 km just about 48 hours after starting it. Ended up in the pub at Te Anau before catching the bus back to Queenstown.

Saturday 27 January

Last full day in New Zealand - spent pottering around Queenstown in the sunshine.

Sunday 28 January

Back to Sydney today - by a Mount Cook Airlines aircraft bumping us through the atmospherics to Christchurch, then by a real Qantas plane with food and drink and movies to Sydney.

* * * * *

ADDITION TO THE SUMMER WALKS PROGRAM

Sunday 30 December - ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

Helensburgh - Burgh Track - North Era - Figure 8 Pools - Werong - Otford
Leader: JIM CALLAWAY - Medium - Train: 8.03 (I). Phone 520 7081.



TRIPPING TO EUROPE?

Some useful tips for the globe-trotting bushwalker

By BRIAN HART



Maybe it was the mulberries....the vino....the life style....or the British women walkers. In any case, I suffered very little pain on a recent walk in the Sierra Nevada in Spain.

The trip was one of four I made in a four-month visit to Europe, clocking up total ascents and descents of about 70,000 ft in Spain, Portugal and France-Switzerland-Italy.

Three of these trips, each of 14 or 15 days, were made with commercially-based British walking groups; to my knowledge, few SBW members have walked with these groups, so some general information may be useful for anyone bound for Europe.

Quite a number of UK firms run walking trips in Europe - some of them being Exodus, Explore, Sherpa and Waymark. For an Australian, the advantages are - quick access to walking areas from Spain to Poland, time savings in searching out and organising trips to otherwise unknown areas, and generally, problem-free arrangements and useful local knowledge.

For various reasons, I thought the Spain trip represented the best value. In July and August I walked with two Exodus groups in the Sierra Nevada, just south of Granada, in the south of the country. Travel was mainly between small villages, staying overnight in village inns and on a mountain farm. This meant light packs - just a change of clothes, with no camping gear necessary, although I took along a sleeping bag and a few other odds and ends (including food) just in case. There is no more pathetic sight than a cold or hungry bushwalker. Although the food was more than adequate, occasional mulberry and cherry trees along the way enabled the more voracious to top up, in my case, to overflowing.

In Spain the weather in July and August is hot and ultra dry, but walking in the Sierra was mainly around the 3,000 to 5,000 ft level, with many pleasant stops at streams, shaded areas, village inns and so on.... Coffee and vino were readily available, with adequate, not to say copious, amounts of vino provided at lunch and dinner. Breakfast was typically at 9 am, lunch at 2 pm and dinner at 9 pm. The lifestyle, including the walking, was fairly relaxed.

Although the walks would grade from medium to easy on an SBW scale, the Sierra offered plenty of options for longer, harder walks. The range runs for maybe 50 kilometres at heights up to 11,000 ft, averaging perhaps 9,000 ft, as I found when I crossed it to join an Exodus group on the southern side. There is a large ski resort on the northern side, with extensive runs at 7,000 to 10,000 ft, and until recently, the southern-most glacier in Europe. It has disappeared in the last few years, possibly due to the greenhouse effect.

The Sierra trips are led by an Englishwoman, Carol Donovan, who went to the Sierra Nevada on a horse trek in the 1970s and has stayed on to become a permanent resident, with a fine Spanish villa on the outskirts of the small town of Orgiva, south of Granada.

I also joined an Exodus trip on the classic Tour de Mont Blanc circuit; a circumnavigation of 16,000 ft Mont Blanc, involving a total of 32,000 ft in ascents and descents, and passing through France, Switzerland and Italy. In Spring I joined an Explore trip through the Maritime Alps on Provence, Southern France.

These were very well run, with excellent leaders, varied walking, good food and the scenery in the Alps difficult to surpass. But I found the tourist glitz of Chamonix and the much frequented Mont Blanc environs not altogether to my taste. On these trips, camping gear and food were transported from campsite to campsite by vehicle, with approximately

16 walkers carrying day packs and usually staying at developed sites with showers, amenities and alas, lots of people.

Still, good value for keen walkers and anyone interested in Alpine scenery.

The cost? I paid about \$2,500 for the three trips, making about \$800 each. The cost would have been \$100 or so more had it included air fares to and from London, but I elected to meet the groups at their starting points.

The cost included all food and wine on the Spanish trip, with a two-day excursion to Granada and one day on the Mediterranean cost thrown in. Group members paid for some meals in Granada and extra vino and coffee along the way - about \$100 in my case. On the Mont Blanc and Provence trips, the group paid for dinners at restaurants on about seven nights. On the Mont Blanc trip, additional teleferique (scenic lifts) and train rides, and sundry coffee and chocolate stops lifted the total extra expenditure to about \$300.

What about the British women walkers, you ask. Suffice to say that one of the Sierra groups consisted mainly of most agreeable British women and we shared the occasional vino and melocoton (peach) liqueur. I promised them that if they ever came to Australia, Wayne Steele and Bill Capon would be waiting on the tarmac!

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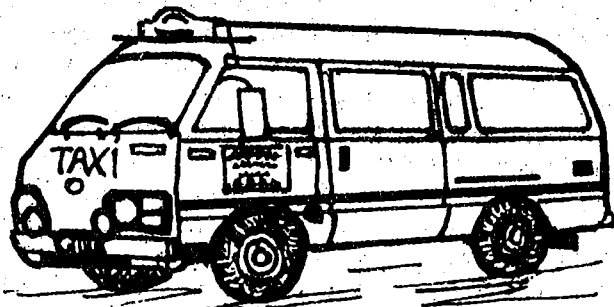


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PINDAR'S GULLY BY ANOTHER ROUTE

(Map: Gunderman 1/25000)

By Frank Woodgate

Following the appearance in the October 1990 Bushwalker of a previous article I had written about a trip to the Pindars Gully area of the Brisbane Waters National Park I became involved in a discussion of the old route to Pindars Gully and a track shown as going southwards from this location in the Dunphy sketch map of the area. The old route ran up a ridge south of Wondabyne Station and was in use back before 1970.

On 10 November 1990 I went out on a walk to Pindars Cave with the Newcastle Ramblers and left the party at the large rock formation on the 190 metre contour at 354924 where the track runs off at around 310 degrees true down Pindars Gully. After doing a bit of sketching and having lunch I set off on about 160 degrees true along a ridge with plenty of open rock to walk on. The wild roses were so abundant that they were like weeds. The going was easy and after 1 hour I was into a beautiful rocky gully to the north of the end of the ridge. There was a little stream dotted with small waterholes just large enough for a cool off which dropped over a small cliff and off the map below 360920. The train line was around 300 meters to the east. On this particular day the line made it simple to navigate as there was continual sound of exploding detonators and locomotive whistles due to rail track work of which more later.

Following the cliff line northwards I climbed a headland just below 363920. From there I could see straight down to the Hawkesbury River railway bridge and a sharp bend on the opposite side of Mullet Creek. As I knew that there were 2 large gullies between me and Wondabyne Station and as time was limited there was no option but to come down towards the train line. This I did south of the second inlet from Wondabyne just under 365920. The going became rough at this point with a small rip to the right thumb. When I got down on the line I met a train controller who advised me to keep to the side of the dead line which was being repaired and to keep clear of the work going on around the corner. Where there was no room along the side of the line I climbed up the cliffside above the line. The high tide had me hemmed in on the opposite side. This was not what I would call a recommended route as slips don't count over. When I came to the next inlet at 372923 I had to come down to the line. There was a hive of activity going on with cranes, trucks, track reconditioning equipment, and a ballast train all there replacing a pipe culvert. I was allowed to pass through to Wondabyne provided I kept well away from the live line. I was soon at Wondabyne resting in the shade behind the sculptures.

For the first time I saw people swimming in Mullet Creek and not one taken by a shark. The rest of the Ramblers soon arrived. At 4.42 pm. our train came in on the other side of a Sydney train being held at the station and we quickly scrambled aboard for a fast trip back to Newcastle.

The experience was interesting but I would certainly not recommend the alternative route to Wondabyne except as a side trip down to 363920 and then back northwards to Kariong Ridge to the current track back to Wondabyne Station. Time involved would be about 2 hours.

When I get an opportunity I will check the old route shown from 354924 down towards Mooney Mooney.

DISCLAIMER. The author disclaims responsibility for the accuracy of the information or opinions in the forgoing article or any damages sustained by any person relying upon these.

RAGING ON DOWN SOUTH



by Ian Wolfe

Having brushed up my Spanish and dusted off my sombrero, it was southwards I drove in late September, to once again brave the high country of Victoria. Whereas last year we had been blasted by stormy tempests and scoured by icy blasts this year it was our lot to endure the heat and sunburn.

The first trip was for 4.5 days to Mount Feathertop, hopefully to enjoy the first class XCD runs that this mountain offers. The party rendezvoused at Harrietville at the base of the mountain to connect with the Mount Hotham bus service offered by Hoys Coaches (\$26 return). After a spectacular drive up the switchback mountain road we were dropped off at Diamantina Hut and commenced the trip by skiing along the aptly named Razorback Ridge to camp in a pleasant saddle sheltered by snow gums.

Next day continued along the ridge over Twin Knobs and High Knob to Federation Hut for lunch, with the great pyramid of Feathertop growing larger above us all the while. Over salami and cheese we contemplated the climb, and then we were off - upwards ever upwards, to at last stand on the summit (keeping well back from the edge of the 20 metre cornice with a 300 metre runout). Feathertop is a magnificent isolated peak in the middle of the Victorian Alps with extensive views on all sides. Far to the north on the horizon was the Geehi Wall and the lonesome sentinel of Jagungal, closer in, the whaleback ridge of Mount Bogong loomed beyond the expanse of the Bogong High Plains. To the west and south the snow-covered islands of Mount Buller and Mount Buffalo stood as guardians before the jagged rim of the Crosscut Saw and the Viking.

However, views will sustain a man for only so long, in time meat of a more substantial kind is required, and we supped aplenty. Down along the ridges, finding a way through the cornices, we swooped with telemarks and parallel turns. Over the untracked spring snow carving and turning to stand heart pounding, lungs gasping, legs aching and the mind reeling to look back up, the "run".

We shared the hut unexpectedly with two Novocastrians who we had met two years previously at Grey Mare Hut (it is a small world!). Federation Hut is lined, fairly clean and sleeps eight in the loft and more on the floor. The night was clear and full of stars, so the following day brought frozen crusty snow on which we slipped and skittered across to MUMC Hut. This is a large geodesic hut which sleeps twenty or so on two floors, and is on the crest of a ridge which has a magnificent view of Mount Feathertop and the Fainters beyond.

Well, if the day before we had skied ourselves into the ground this day we went subterranean. By 10 am the snow had softened to a lovely consistency and we proceeded to ski all the slopes in rotation as the sun fell on each slope in turn. The SW gully and the NE ridge were excellent but the run on the mountain was the SE ridge, which just kept on going down and down at a uniform 40 degrees.

Next day we bade farewell to the mountain and skied back along the Razorback and on to Mount Hotham. We put on our dark glasses and blinkers to avoid being seduced by the temptations of civilisation as we skirted the resort to link up with the Mount Lock ridge line complex. This we proceeded to explore in a fairly relaxed manner out towards Swindlers Spur which is the through route to Falls Creek.

The night was spent in Derrick Hut (clean, lined and sleeps eight on the floor and benches. Those on the somewhat sloping benches require roping up - one of our party had a lucky escape from a fate worse than death, but no more on that. On the morrow we skied off for a side trip along the Mount Lock ridgeline to the ruin of the Red Robin mine. Why the name? Well, everywhere along the way flit these marvelous little birds with their scarlet plumage, darting in and out of the snow gums.

The day and the trip were concluded by skiing back to Mount Hotham to catch the bus back to Harrietville.



After our sojourn on Feathertop we retired to the Mount Beauty Caravan Park and Pub - to wash our bodies, feed our stomachs and wet our whistles. After we retired into our Yurt, the rain came tumbling down. The morrow dawned bleak and dark, so we decided to delay commencement of the second trip by one day, and instead tour the towns of this part of Victoria. Off we went, straight to the cake shop at Myrtleford, which has delicate morsels of all descriptions to tempt and titillate the palate. Having survived a close encounter with a vanilla slice we looked at the flowers and gardens in the historic town of Bright.

En route, we drove through an extensive golf course stretching along a valley bottom which was treed with the local variety of wattle. These just happened to be flowering profusely, so there was vibrant yellow in every direction for nearly two kilometres.

But one day in the lowlands is enough for mountain men and on the following day we mounted the Pyles coach and took the upland path. Falls Creek was exited by catching the Halleys Comet chairlift to the ridge top and braving the roaring wind and icy blasts. Would the promised high pressure system arrive or would we be left to shiver? Fortune smiled on us and as we descended from the ridge to skirt the northern edge of the Bogong High Plains the weather began to break, improving rapidly as the day progressed.

The Niggerheads and the Fainters form an extended ridgeline system projecting into the plains from the plateau of the Bogong High Plains. They are thus very well positioned to provide views of Mount Feathertop and Mount Lock on one side and Mount Bogong et al on the other. The vistas on either side are enjoyed whilst skiing along a gently undulating ridgeline through open glades and copses of snow gums.

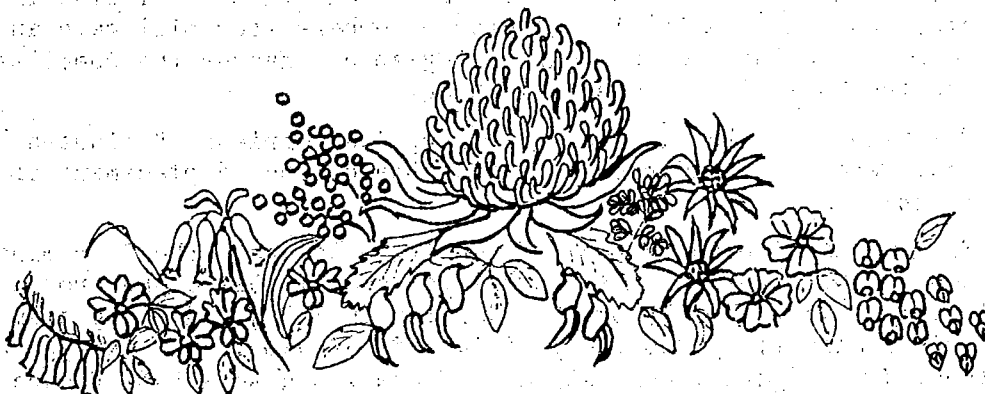
Regretfully the heavy snow falls and high winds earlier in the season had wreaked extensive damage on the snow gums. Opinions differed as to whether giants had been playing ninepins or the RAAF had strayed in their bombing runs, but there were whole hillsides of devastation. Some trees had been uprooted and thrown across the slope, others were snapped off 10 feet above ground level whilst others were bent and contorted into fantastic shapes by the weight of the snow. In all a sobering and daunting sight.

However, the slopes of the Fainters soon lifted our spirits as we sought out the gullies and slopes. A series of magnificent runs before and after lunch were enjoyed with a particularly good chute run down through the rock walls on the southern face being the finale.

To exit the mountain we skied down along a fire trail over and under and around the fallen trees. Soon the devastated zone was left behind as we dropped into the realm of the Mountain Ash. Graeme, our resident Forester, regaled us with tales of these mighty trees which stretched cathedral-like towards the heavens. The night was spent surrounded by these giants at Springs Saddle before walking down the trail to Bogong Village to catch the bus back to Falls Creek.

Thus ended our second foray southward, but as we drove northward over the Murray, the mountains were with us yet. Far to the south they rose majestically from the plains, glistening hard and bright in the early afternoon sun.

* * * * *



THE GREEN KIMBERLEY

Two thirds of the rain that falls each year on Western Australia falls between the months of November and March on the Kimberley. Most of the people who visit this region do so in winter. They see rugged mountains, dry river beds and a landscape dominated by the colour brown. They do not see raging rivers that could fill Sydney Harbour in a matter of hours. They do not see mighty waterfalls plunging down into massive gorges or straight into the sea. They do not see the lush green growth and masses of wild flowers that cover the land. They see only the bare bones of the magnificent spectacle that is the Green Kimberley.

Green-season access to many of the Kimberley's best bushwalking areas is excellent. Some are close to Kununurra with its daily jet connections to southern capitals. If a track is closed, a helicopter can drop you off where you want to go. If the distance is too great for a helicopter, an amphibious plane can land you on a river or on the sea.

Picture yourself next to King George Falls as they plunge into the sea below. Picture yourself in a rock shelter, watching the rains come down just as the Aboriginal people have done for thousands of years. Imagine carrying a full week's worth of food and equipment in a pack weighing 12 kilograms or less. This is the Green Kimberley.



Write for a free brochure describing our 1991 bushwalking program.

Willis's Walkabouts
12 Carrington Street
Millner NT 0810
Phone (089) 85 2134
Fax (089) 85 2355

THE NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

There was obviously something going on. There were people at the meeting we haven't seen for ages. In fact, when the President called the meeting to order at 2022 there were a total of 35 members present. We were so anxious to get on with it that Bill almost forgot to call for apologies. In the event there were apologies from Greta Davis (she being involved in an S & R call out), from Bob Younger (also with S & R), from a party trekking in Nepal and for Bill's grandson who attempted to compete with Bill every time he spoke. It is as well that Fran, wise in these matters, took the budding interjector elsewhere, for Bill gave an extended introduction to the meeting, explaining about changes the committee have made to the form of the general meeting.

The Minutes of the previous meeting, "user friendly" minutes we were advised, were read, and received after the corrected placement of an apostrophe.

Then we came to the Report of Committee Doings, "the Club management section" as Bill put it. The committee has discussed the proposed change in location for the clubroom, has written to F.B.W. advising them of John Porter's resignation from the position of delegate, and has appointed Jim Callaway as delegate in his stead. There was also a bit of hard sell for the new Walks and Social Program but I feel sure that you, gentle reader, are numbered among the converted and need no such urging, so I will not attempt to reproduce it all here.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we have to date earned or otherwise acquired income of \$15,410, spent \$9,769 to hold a balance of \$7,425. We have an investment of \$5,000 maturing in November. This will be invested in Premier State Bonds.

The Walks Report began at the weekend of 13,14 October with Jan Mohandas's gourmet weekend. This report began by indicating that it had been an awful weekend and that they, the reporters, would not encourage others to attend. It finally emerged that it had been a very good weekend with 18 starters, excellent food, and Patrick James as the best dressed reveller. The only other walk that weekend, Sandy Johnston's Kuringai Chase day walk had 12 starters enjoying pieces of surprisingly unspoilt creeks on North Head on a lovely fine day.

The weekend of 19,20,21 October saw Jim Percy leading a party of 18 out to Hundred Man Cave through extraordinarily wild and cold weather. They struggled through a mix of high winds, sago snow, hail and rain, but of course thoroughly enjoyed it. The Confederation was also out that weekend training for Search & Rescue in bad weather. Bill Holland's Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens, Pierces Pass, two day walks with overnight camp and barbecues trip, attracted 12 on the Saturday and 20 for the walk down Pierces Pass on the Sunday. Bill reckons it's the way to go and is threatening to schedule it around this time next year. Watch that space. There was no report of Joe Marton's Benowie Track walk.

Maurie Ward and Rob Webb both cancelled the walks they had scheduled for the weekend of 26,27,28 October. The abseiling instructional on the Sunday saw Gordon and Serala Lee together with Edith Townsend and a swarm of students enduring rather warmish conditions while sliding down ropes. Bronny Niemeyer reported that of the swarm of starters who rang and said they were coming on her Loftus to Waterfall walk, 16 actually did. Conditions were hot and swimming was the order of the day.

November 3,4 saw Anita Doherty with a party of 3 enjoying the Breakfast Creek, Cox River, Galong Creek circuit with waterfalls and numerous birds, in good weather. The Coolana Barn Dance, celebrated at Woolaway Woolshed, saw a party of 9 party on through the Saturday night and wrest some rest from the Sunday. Jim Callaway led a party of 7 on his Engadine to Waterfall day trip, which Jim described as enjoyable.

Then it was on, on at a maddening pace to the weekend of 9,10,11 November for Kenn Clacher/Bob King Wollemi National Park walk. There were 4 starters, the going was scrubby with Tambo Pass providing moments of interest as a steep rock scramble. Greta Davis reported 7 starters and beautiful weather on her Gingra Creek - Kowmung River trip the same weekend. They encountered numerous serpents and two dead cows. A member of the party caught trout for them, someone had a loaf or two of bread, and they claim there were seven full baskets left over. There was no report of Errol Sheedy's Engadine to Heathcote day walk or of Bronny Niemeyer's. The other important, though sometimes overlooked aspect of these two walks is that they brought the Walks Report to an end.

Conservation Report brought news of three separate conservation-related court actions, launched by individuals. The matter of John Corkhill versus the NSW Forestry Commission relating to commission actions in the Washpool Forest has been found against the commission. An action brought by graziers from the Oberon district, seeking to restrain Elcom from routing a transmission line through farmlands in preference to an area of bushland, went against the graziers. The matter of Keith Muir versus Mount Flora quarry is still under consideration. A letter from Colin Gibson, who has compiled a book of poems, indicates that he has produced a detailed walking area index for articles published in The Sydney Bushwalker. Alex Colley will contact Colin and ask if we may have a copy of the index. We were also advised of a forthcoming conference on sandmining. Natural Areas Ltd is proceeding with weed eradication on the area under their control, in fact our own Dot Butler and her boy Wade have been reported to have laid waste many of the bamboo stalks which had come to call the place home.

The Confederation Report this time from none other than Kay Chan, brought a request for the use of Coolana for the next Confederation reunion. Committee has indicated that it will view such a request favourably. There was also news of a move to hold the Confederation A.G.M. over a weekend, in order to facilitate the attendance of country base clubs. The Confederation has written to the N.P.W.S. regarding the apparently excessive use of oversnow vehicles outside (and inside, come to think of it) the resort areas in Kosciusko National Park.

I'm not sure whether it was a magazine report, or just what, but we were advised that the Editor, she of the stirring editorials, has written to tour operators who advertise with us to advise them that advertisements which include programs of local walks will not be accepted for publication.

General Business brought a preamble on the question of the Club meeting venue and a guide to discussion on the matter. A motion was then moved: - "That we change our meeting place to central location in accordance with Club guidelines". This was subsequently passed. A motion: - "That the general meeting supports the committee's intention to seek accommodation at the Railway Institute, Kirribilli House, or some other location" was then moved, seconded and passed. The chair also sought an expression of preferences from those present for the possible locations. There was also some seeking after opinions as to the most favoured night of the week for general meetings, with the resultant expression that Tuesday night was not an overwhelmingly bad choice.

Announcements saw Sever Sternhell touting another trip to Nepal, and various walks announcements. There was also notice of supper to come, Minute Books for the browsing and all forms of undefined excitement. I must have blinked I guess. The meeting closed at 2124, which as Jim Brown would no doubt tell you, is 9.24 pm.



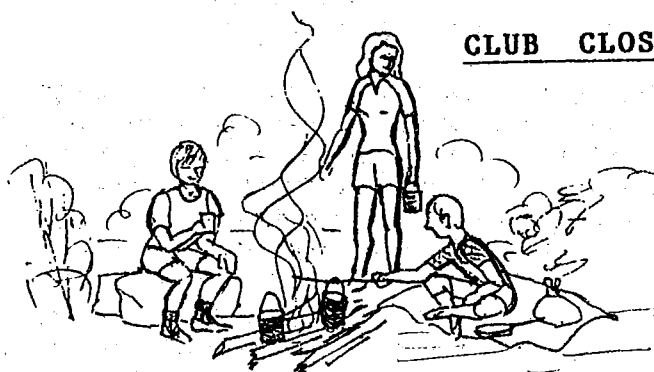
JANUARY SOCIAL PROGRAMME

- 9TH Club Closed - BBQ AT OBELISK BEACH, off Chowder Bay Road, Mosman from 6:30pm. BYO food and drink. Contact Bill Holland (925 3309W or 484 6636H) or Ian Debert (982 2615) for details.
- 16TH GENERAL MEETING followed by Video 'Walk Safely' on Bush First Aid.
- 23RD THE 1990 AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC DULHUNTY & ELIOT RIVER EXPEDITION. Canoeing in Northern Australia. Slides and talk by Peter Treseder.
- 30TH MEMBERS SNOWY MOUNTAINS WALKS SLIDE NIGHT Bring your favourite slides of Snowy Mountains WALKING trips (not skiing - we've done that already). A chance to remember the wonderful Christmas/New Year trips.

CLUB CLOSED.... on DECEMBER 26 1990

CLUB CLOSED.... on JANUARY 2nd 1991

and on JANUARY 9th 1991



SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS INC. JANUARY 1991 WALKS PROGRAMME

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR EXTENDED WALKS

DEC 26 - BOGONG HIGH PLAINS

JAN 1 Bogong Village - Mt Fainter - Mt Cope - Mt Nelse - T spur -
Mt Bogong - Quartz Ridge - Bogong Village.

Medium 75km Map: Bogong Alpine Area 1:50,000

IAN RANNARD 958 1514 (h)

JAN 2-6 BEN BOYD NATIONAL PARK: (Eden)

Boyd's Tower to Green Cape Light House

Beautiful coastal scenery, rock formations, swimming,
snorkelling

Easy Medium 40km (approx) Map: Kiah 1:25000

GEOFF DOWSETT 875 1945 (h)

JAN 6 ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

T Coastal Walk Bundeena to Otford. Lots of swimming.

Medium Test 28km Map: Royal National Park

Ring leader for train time RALPH PENGLIS 399 6143 (h)

JAN 5, BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

6 Mt Victoria - Little Blue Gum - return via Govett's Leap (or
possibly Evans, if cooler weather)

Easy/Medium (on tracks) Map: Mt Wilson

MORAG RYDER 809 4241 (h)

(after 6pm)

JAN 12, COASTAL WALK

(Saturday) Northern Beaches - BBQ & swimming at end of walk

Map: Gregorys guide to Sydney

Easy 8.30am bus to Palm Beach

IAN DEBERT 982 2615 (h)

JAN 13 HEATHCOTE NATIONAL PARK

Waterfall - Moray Track - Bulawaring Track - Giromba Ck -

Boobera Pool - Lake Eckersely-Heathcote Train 8:03 (i)

Map: Royal National Park Tourist

Easy/Medium 12km. Swimming

JUDY MEHAFFEY (042) 263589 (h)

(042) 290109 (w)

JAN 12, BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

13 Carlons - Breakfast Creek - Cox's River - Kowmung River
(Return route dependent on temperature)

Medium Maps: Jenolan, Kanangra

WAYNE STEELE 796 7050 (h)

JAN 19 NEPEAN RIVER

CANOEING

(Sat.) Douglas Park to Menangle

Flat water canoeing with BBQ at Menangle - Plenty of swimming-
sandy beaches - no speedboats

Medium 25km

ALAN & ANITA DOHERTY 476 6531 (h)

476 1856 (w)

SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS INC. JANUARY 1991 WALKS PROGRAMME

- JAN 20 *T* BLUE MOUNTS NP (LOWER)
 Glenbrook - Jack Evans track - Erskine Creek - Dadder cave -
 Blands Pool - Pisgah rock - Jack Evans track car park. Plenty
 of swimming. Train (i) 8.20 am.
 Medium Test 20 km Map: Penrith JAN MOHANDAS 872 2315 (h)
 516 7640 (w)
- JAN 20 HAWKESBURY RIVER
 Hawkesbury River (Brooklyn) - Dangar Island (one hour visit) -
 Little Wobby - Rocky Ponds (swimming) and return
 Easy 10km Map: Hawkesbury River tourist
 Phone leader for train time ALAN MEWETT 498 3028 (h)
- JAN 18, MORONG DEEP
 19,20 Kanangra Road - Morong Falls - Kowmung River - Hanrahan's
 Creek - Kanangra Road. Compulsory Swimming.
 Medium 20km DAVID ROSTRON 451 7943 (h)
- JAN 27 ROYAL NATIONAL PARK
 Waterfall - Kangaroo Ck - Karloo Pool - Karloo Tk - Heathcote.
 Easy/Medium 9km. Swimming. Train 8.36 (s)
 Map: RNP Tourist
 GEORGE MAWER 707 1343 (h)
 774 0571 (w)
- JAN 26, WOLLEMI NATIONAL PARK
 27,28 Mountain Lagoon - Colo River - Tootie Creek - Mountain Lagoon
 Three lazy days of swimming and exploring. If Monday is not a
 public holiday, will be a two day walk.
 Easy/Medium Map: Mountain Lagoon BILL HOLLAND 484 6636 (h)
- JAN 26, MURRAMARANG NATIONAL PARK South Coast Walk
 27,28 Long Beach - Circuit of Lake Durrass - Pretty Beach. Plenty of
 surfing. Limit 15 Please ring by January 18.
 If Monday is not a public holiday, will be a two day walk
 Easy/Medium Maps: Durras, Kioloa
 AINLSIE MORRIS/
 MIKE REYNOLDS 428 3178 (h)
- JAN 25, BUNGONIA
 26,27 Long Point - Shoalhaven River - Barbers Creek - Long Point
 (2 days) Medium (Long steep climb) 15km (to suit weather)
 Map: Caoura BARRY WALLACE 645 9159(w)
- JAN 25, KANANGRA - BOYD NATIONAL PARK
 26, 27 Kanangra Road - Colboyd Range - Christies Creek - Kowmung River
 (2 DAYS - Bulga Denis Canyon - Rootes Ridge.
 ONLY) Medium - wet Test Maps: Kanangra, Yerranderie
 T DEBBIE SHAPIRA 798 0309 (h)
 439 7555 (w)

JAN 30 CLOSING DATE FOR 1991 AUTUMN WALKS PROGRAMME

Please send your walks details to: GPO Box 4476 Sydney 2001
 or, to the Walks Co-ordinator MAURIE BLOOM 525 4698 (h)
 543 3637 (w)