

RED ROCKS

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 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli (near Milson's Point Railway Station). Visitors and prospective members are welcome any Wednesday. To advertise in this magazine please contact the Business Manager.

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JULY 1991

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WINTER WALKING

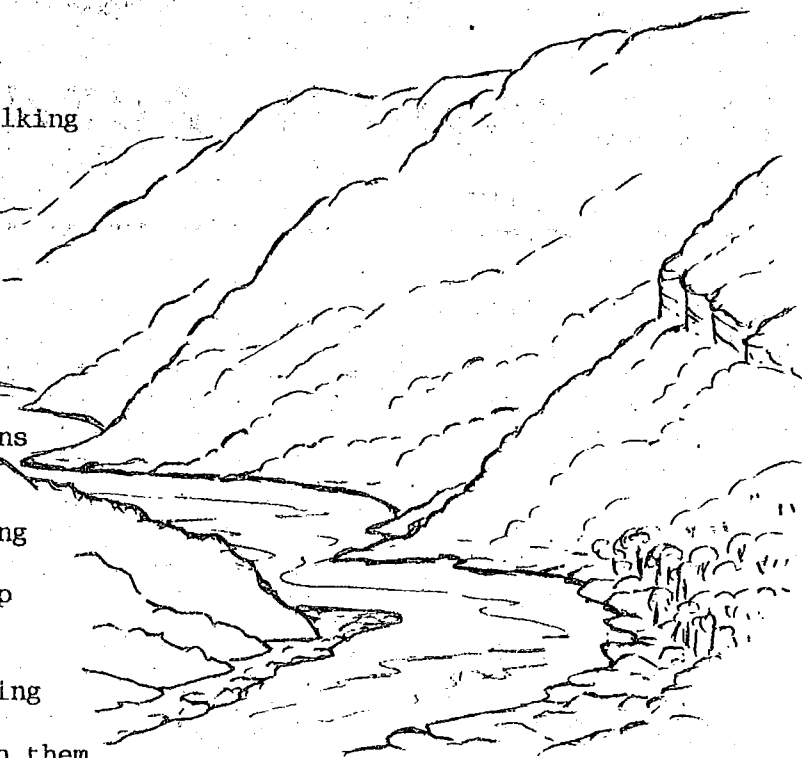
The mist is on the mountain
and the dawn is on the day
and all you who would be walking
come along, come away.

For Gouougang is calling
and the Cox is running free
on a sunny winter's morning -
it's there that I would be.

Butcher birds are singing
where sun-gold ridges rise
and bellbirds ring carillions
where the ferny gully lies

In the chill of early morning
we swing our packs again
and as we gain the ridge top
I hear a glad refrain

For the currawongs are calling
as they greet another day
and my heart is calling with them
"Come along, Come away".



By Morag Ryder

SBW ANNUAL REUNION

This year the Club's Annual Reunion will be held at "Coolana" in the Kangaroo Valley on 14/15 September.

Come along for a nice relaxed and friendly weekend, an opportunity for new members and prospectives to get to know other members and their families. Yes, children are very welcome, the more the merrier.

Activities will include camp fire singing, entertainment, supper provided, swimming if warm, damper cooking competition, Coolana boundary walk led by Dot Butler (whose birthday will be celebrated at the campfire).

A full program and details of how to get to Coolana will be published in the August magazine. People requiring transport (or people who can provide it) please phone Spiro Hajinakitas 332 3452, Ian Debert 982 2615 or Helen Gray 876 6263.

NEW MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES: Interested in joining the S.B.W.? Find out how to become a Prospective Member by contacting -

PETER YARDLEY, New Members Secretary, Phone 878 2499 (Home) or
BILL HOLLAND, President, Phone 484 6636 (Home) or 925 3309 (Business)

A KOWMUNG SAGA

by Tom Wenman &
Morag Ryder

Being a record of the truncated/extended Queen's Birthday Weekend walk led by Ian Rannard. Participants: George & Christine Floyd, Jean Kendall, Morag Ryder, Dick Weston, Jan Mohandas, Alan Wells, Tom Wenman.

- - - - -

"Is it on? Yes, right, see you there." This somewhat cryptic telephone call at 4.30 am on a Sunday morning could have been quite easily misconstrued. In fact it related to the somewhat fateful decision to go ahead with a shortened version of a walk from Kanangra which had been postponed from the Friday night, due to inclement weather (i.e. lots of rain).

So on a somewhat subdued Sunday morning we forgathered at the Kanangra car park. The party consisted of some nine more or less keen souls who wanted to stretch their legs a bit, in the bush. Although it had been fine and sunny the previous day it had rained heavily that night and a somewhat damp and discouraged Carole Lubbers, Kay Chan and Glen.... having arrived the previous night decided that they would not accompany us on our epoch making venture.

It was overcast but not unpleasant as we wound our way through the now one remaining track across Kanangra Tops to the Coal Seam Cave. The shrubs had been dried out mostly by the wind and we were not thus unduly discomforted by wet vegetation. The path however was very wet. Kanangra and Kaleen Falls presented a splendid picture as they roared and tumbled into the deep - how much different from the last trip some three or four weeks previously when not a drop of water was to be seen or heard.

A brief pause at Coal Seam to shed our parkas and other warm gear and the merry party proceeded along the Gingra track to Bullhead Corner. Here, appropriately enough, we turned off to the Bullhead Range, over the now somewhat overgrown former helipad, and followed with pleasant conversation the mainly downward and well trodden track to Cabbage Spire.

On the way we met a party of fishermen returning after an unsuccessful expedition to the Kowmung.

On arrival at Cabbage Spire we paused for lunch which, however, was hurriedly terminated by the commencement of rain, driven unpleasantly by a strong wind. The clouded sky looked heavily ominous and quite evil, portents which I fear we should have more seriously noted.

Driving rain pursued our descent of the Spire, making conditions quite unpleasant, however they improved at river level where the rain ceased. Surprisingly the Kowmung flowing clearly and with no great urgency did not seem to reflect the weather of the past few days. Christie Creek, however, was running strongly and deep.

The campsite adjacent to the junction of Christie and the Kowmung had a very well-used appearance and so it was decided, in view of the Kowmung river level, to camp at the very much nicer site at Church Creek caves. So we pursued our destiny up the Kowmung, crossing a number of times in either ankle-deep or calf-deep water.

To our surprise Church Creek was not flowing and accordingly we decided to camp on the spacious green sward on the banks of the Kowmung close to its junction with the creek.

The usual firebuilding, tent erecting chores were interrupted by a shower of rain but this eased and we eventually enjoyed our tea and some specialities around a substantial fire. The occasional light rain and

generally damp conditions, however, subdued the proceedings and soon after about 9 pm everyone had sought the comfort of their sleepingbags. Shortly thereafter I heard the substantial patter of rain on my tent fly and the steady rain developed which was to cause us so many problems.

Morning broke to some exclamations and some activity. The river had risen substantially and was running a banker. It was also still rising! Two of us departed with Ian to examine the crossing of the previous day. Alas, the river now very muddy, was running too strongly and too deeply to do anything but attempt to swim across - that is, if you had a mind to.

Consultations were held. Markers placed to check the level showed a continuing rise, however it was hoped that as the rain had eased, the river level would fall as quickly as it had risen. Church Creek incidentally was now also a substantial and fast flowing creek. The fire was relit, more wood gathered and we began to husband our food resources in case our stay proved to be longer than we might otherwise have hoped.

Further markers were placed to gauge the fall or rise of the river and anxiously examined from time to time to ascertain what was happening. At first it rose rapidly, but then eased off and remained fairly stable during the latter part of the day. The rain persisted with one or two heavy showers and although the river level remained fairly constant we moved our tents to higher ground, in case the unthinkable happened to our campsite.

At four o'clock the rain ceased altogether and as it had not renewed its onslaught by the time we all went to bed, we had some hope that the worst was over.

The next morning, Tuesday, with no rain having fallen since the previous afternoon, revealed a considerably reduced river level, which was continuing to fall rapidly. With great cheerfulness and expectation we packed up our tents and flys and repaired down stream to the crossing point. It was decided on arrival to postpone the crossing for a couple of hours as the level was still somewhat high and the current strong. With the rapidly falling level, we waited in confidence for it to become passable - Thank God the Egyptians weren't pursuing us, but, as someone remarked, "we could certainly do with a Moses".

Some heavy rain lasting about two hours and a darkening sky tempered our enthusiasm. By 1 pm the level had ceased to fall and then began to rise again. Rain although not heavy continued intermittently, and with some frustration we re-pitched our tents at the crossing. The fire was built up and we reconciled ourselves to one more night by the river. It was certainly going to be our last at that location as even the carefully husbanded remains of our food supplies were running out. On the morrow, it had to be Yerranderie or the Kowmung. With the comforting thought that at least the waiting would be over, I went to sleep as the rain once more resumed its pattering on the tent fly.

Wednesday morning - could it be believed? Yes, blue sky. The river alas had maintained its temper, strength, and level. Accordingly therefore after a frugal breakfast, Ian and I set off for Yerranderie, where we would arrange either accommodation and victualling or transport out for the party. Jan Mohandas was left in charge of the remainder who were to delay their departure until 1 pm in case a search & Rescue party appeared on the other bank, otherwise they were to follow us to Yerranderie.

The morning was bright and clear as we strode off through the Church Creek Caves clearing and up Mount Armour. The steep climb made itself felt on our somewhat empty tummies, but we both had sufficient nibbles still left to enable us to stop at regular intervals to feed ourselves some more

energy. On and up over Squatters gap, through Colong Swamp - plenty of water here, on to the road to Yerranderie, past a now strongly flowing Tonalli River (how different from the Easter trip when we had walked down the dry river bed). It was, despite the circumstances a splendid morning's walk, and the country looked refreshed and clean.

On arrival at Yerranderie Post Office Ian began his spiel about us being the advance party of bushwalkers stranded on the Kowmung River. He was cut short, they had been picked up by helicopter. "No, not us," we said, "must be some other party." Our informant was adamant. "Better come inside and give NPWS a ring." We were invited into Val Lhoede's kitchen where some attractive bowls of mushroom soup were being placed on the table. "Just in time for lunch," said Val.

What had happened on the Kowmung, I leave Morag to tell you.....

Morag's story.....

The clouds dispersed, and it became positively hot in the sun. Tents and groundsheets were dried and packed, endless billies boiled on the embers of our fire. Only our rumbling tummies reminded us this was not an ordinary weekend. Once, we thought we heard voices, but it was a false alarm. Around 11.30 am the tranquility was suddenly shattered by clattering and roaring as a large orange and white helicopter passed low overhead. We snatched up Jan's silver groundsheet and flapped it in the sun.

The 'copter circled lower, and we grabbed loose items to prevent them from being blown away. "Wave your hat if you need help," said A VOICE from the loud hailer. Hats were waved with alacrity. The craft dropped lower, and hung for a few seconds. "Too small - can you get rid of some of those bushes?" said The Voice. The 'bushes' were young casuarinas, and they were stronger than we were. The pilot tried again - no go. "Sorry, we can't get in," said The Voice, "We'll land in the clearing on Church Creek." Away they went, now accompanied by a smaller Police helicopter. A frenzied five minute scramble to collect the remaining items and we scurried over the rise, plunged down through prickly bushes and splashed across the ankle deep creek. A glittering slash of orange and white paint showed between the trees, where the helicopter waited for us. 'N.P.W.S.' proclaimed a badge on its side, and the two occupants, dressed in heavy, brown leather flying jackets, looked us over.

As we arrived, so did two people in blue overalls from PolAir, which was parked in a second clearing. When they removed their elegant white helmets, one proved to be a lady, with shining bronze hair braided around her head. She had a sense of humour too. "You're going to get a big reception," she remarked, "There must be cameramen from every TV station in Sydney at The Walls."

Shrieks of horror from the ladies - "Oh, no, I look a mess".... "My hair".... "I'm filthy".... "Just joking," grinned Ms PolAir, "Truly, there's no one there except the rescue teams."

We were sorted according to weight and strapped into our chariots. Packs were heaped on the ground, to be collected on a second trip, along with Ian and Tom. A starter motor whined, and the immense instrument panel came to life. The vanes picked up speed, and we were away, tilting and angling over that ribbon of muddy water which was the cause of our problems, lifting over the gorges of Christies and Kanangra Creeks. Impressive waterfalls were everywhere and the wind buffeted us as we approached Maxwell tops.

At The Walls carpark were vehicles from the S.E.S., Police and Ambulance service. More importantly, there was Carol Lubbers, Bill Capon and Glen McMahon who greeted us with good cheer and FOOD - glorious food!

- - - - -

Meanwhile, back at Yerranderie, Ian verified the story by telephone to the N.P.W.S. "Oh, well, looks as though we missed out on a helicopter ride," and we tucked into the mushroom soup. I enquired about transport. "Be able to take you out tomorrow," I was told. Just then, the telephone rang. It was N.P.W.S. - Stand by for the helicopter. We rushed our soup and with thanks and apologies to Val for our indecent haste scrambled for the airstrip.

Twenty minutes later, touch down at the Kanangra car park. An incredible flight, and an incredible end to our saga.

THE COST OF USING YOUR CAR

Which do you prefer, being the driver or a passenger in a motor vehicle going to and coming from a bushwalk?

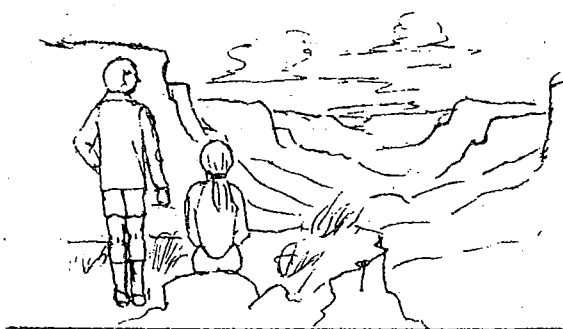
First of all let's look at the cost. As a guide the cost of using a vehicle varies according to the type and age of the car - not the driver! The average running cost of a medium size car (petrol, tyres, service etc. but excluding fixed costs such as depreciation, insurance, registration) is 12 - 15¢ a kilometre; for a larger car this may increase to 14 - 17¢ a kilometre. Therefore a 400 kilometre trip to Kanangra and return will cost \$50 - \$70.

But there are advantages in being the driver. You decide the time of departure, the route, organise the use of the boot, select the music, decide whether to visit the restaurant or not. And there are disadvantages; having to keep your eyes open all the time, risking the speeding fine, putting up with passengers ceaseless chatter, damage from bouncing kangaroos etc.

Passengers outnumber the drivers but have little say in the arrangements. Sometimes they are quite unaware of the drivers habits or skill (or lack of it). They have to put up with pathetic tastes in music or close their ears to the drivers ceaseless chatter.

Yet some long lasting friendships have developed from sharing a car. Even a romance or two. It has been known for a passenger to eventually marry the driver; after all, if you can put up with your spouses driving you can put up with anything.

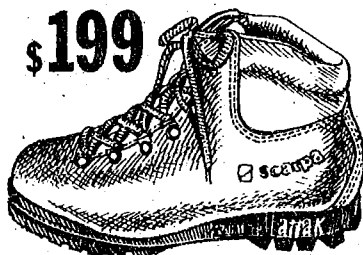
There must be many an interesting story to tell about hair-raising or humorous experiences going to or coming from a bushwalk.



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THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE

THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATIONBy: James Oxley

At the last June committee meeting an account for our group membership of the YHA of Australia was mentioned. As copy for the Sydney Bush Walker is always welcomed by editorial and as I have stayed at some number of hostels in some parts of this world I offered to write a few lines.

The youth hostel movement began in Germany and has spread rapidly so that there are now 5000 hostels throughout the world, with 150 in Australia. There are no age limits to membership in Australia. An early impression of the "youth" age range was on the Yorkshire Dales. The sight of a sixty-year-old man cycling and putting up like me, with the cold water of a frigid spring morning. If a person accepts the attitude of "young at heart" then he/she can understand the world view of the youth hostel ethic.

If you are a party of six or more you can, by booking ahead through our corporate pass, stay at a hostel somewhere in the bush or somewhere in a city. You may have to put up with a dormitory rather than a tent. Perhaps you will have to put up with a snore but I've found tents scant insulation. You'll have the luxury of a warm night and, probably, warm morning and shelter from the storm. You will buy or make a standard sheet sack - which you won't regret as it will be 'de reguer' at any of those 5000 other places.

I agree that it's not really going bush and it's certainly not 'roughing it' but there are times when you may overnight in Christchurch, frugally, or stay somewhere comfortable when going to a distant place. And then there are the times you might downhill, cheaply, at Thredbo (you must book well ahead). Perhaps there will come the time when you're fragile be you young or old. Perhaps you might want to stay at a converted guest house at Katoomba and use a luxurious base camp. Anyway, you should have comparative luxury at little cost and you might meet some splendid people from anywhere.

But when it comes to the crunch there's nothing like the bush and the burnt comraderie of a eucalyptus night.

But sometimes it pays to be versatile.....

NEW MEMBERS

Please add the following names to your List of Members:-

FOSTER, Henry - 50 Red Gum Avenue, Hazelbrook 2779 Phone (047) 58 8405

MCEWAN, Kathy - 17/29 Mactier Street, Narrabeen 2101 " 971 4883

INSURANCE

In more recent times the question of insurance has occupied the Committee's attention. The extent of our cover has been stated in financial reports and magazine articles but it may be of interest to members to summarise the Club's current position.

There are three types of cover available to an organisation such as ours;

- ♦ public liability, ie. indemnifying the Club against claims from third parties (the general public, not members) arising from club activities.
- ♦ property cover, ie. the cost of replacing property such as the printing equipment.
- ♦ accident and personal loss, ie. reimbursing members of the Club for loss of income etc. from injuries sustained whilst on club activities.

The first cover (public liability) is compulsory under The Associations Incorporation Act. The Club must provide cover of at least \$2 million as a condition of incorporation.

The second cover (property) is optional but we have covered the cost of our equipment located on the printing premises.

The third, accident and personal loss, was taken out by the Club for a short time some years ago but discontinued as it was seen to be preferable for members to make their own personal arrangements. It was noted at the time that many members have already arranged this insurance outside the Club or have adequate arrangements for sick leave etc. through their employment.

So in summary, the Club is covered for loss or damage we do to others, and our equipment, but not for damage we do to ourselves. We cannot insure against acts of illegality, such as criminal negligence, libel etc.

It may also be of interest to note that duplication of our public liability insurance has occurred in the current year by the Confederation taking out a blanket insurance policy for affiliated clubs. The premium for this policy accounts for the large increase in our affiliation fees.

The problem facing your Committee is that the Confederation insurance policy does not extend to our Coolana property. We are investigating the cost of a separate policy for Coolana and plan to have this matter ready for discussion at the August General Meeting.

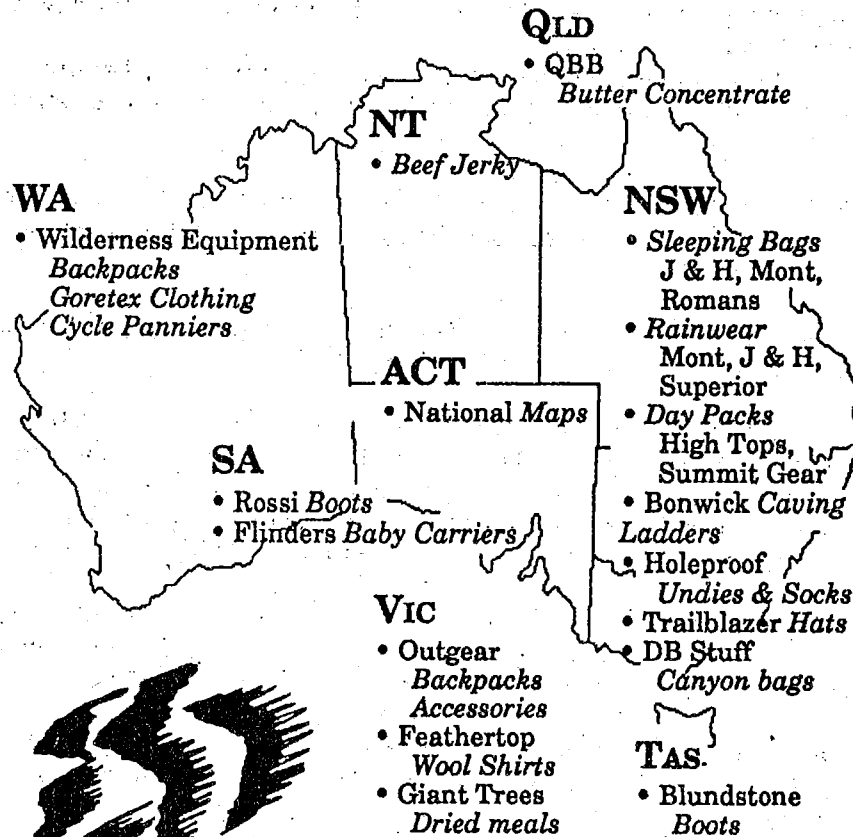
Bill Holland

NOTE FROM COMMITTEE

At the July committee meeting SPIRO HAJINAKITAS was appointed as a delegate to the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc. Spiro, of course, is already on Committee as Vice-President.

Another appointment (not a committee position) was to appoint JOY HYNES as Magazine Business Manager. This is to help with advertising arrangements.

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GENERAL MEETING 12 JUNE, 1991

By: James Oxley

President Bill opened the meeting with Michelle Powell back from Kakadu in her place taking minutes. Bill seemed sad that he could only kiss one new member but consoled himself with the excellent infusion of she and eight men (their names appear elsewhere). Actually I lost count of their number - welcome to the Club, new members.

A litigants letter (and reply) were read to the meeting to update the club on the progress of a matter that not all knew about. It is still in abeyance with Barry M. assisting on the matter.

A painting has been offered to the club as a gift. What to be done? There is a problem of where to put it. Heritage building considerations prevent us hanging it securely on the bare stone walls. A few opinions were sought. Any further suggestions?

Erith Hamilton reported for May:

Surplus for month:	\$1565
Bills payable:	\$1020
(incl. \$132 Social; \$780 Kirr.; \$156 Mag.)	

The meeting was well entertained with Bob Hodgson's report of our attempted rescue of our party mislaid in the rain of last long week-end. Modern technology intervened and the party were uplifted by the police rescue. The drama unfolded with the arrival of the leader Ian Rannard, still looking tired no longer sodden but very thankful for all the help.

According to the walks report, ably introduced by Carol Lubbers, most went to the best of our knowledge. You need to come to the meetings to hear descriptions such as by Alan Mewett and Bob Hodgson.

In the social area, Fran H. suggested that you book ahead for the night at Sydney Observatory.

The meeting broke at about 9.30pm.

BUSH SKILLS WORKSHOP - AUGUST 3 and 4

This weekend has been designed to help prospective members and members who do not do much overnight camping, to go to the Club property "Coolana" where they can sleep in the large shed (no tents necessary) and be taught First Aid, Map Reading and general camping skills. Tests will be given.

Contact BILL HOLLAND 484 6636 (H) or 925 3309 (B)

On the same weekend IAN DEBERT 982 2615 (H) is running a camp for "Coolana" maintenance. New members and old can socialise and meet one another.

HONORARY RANGERS?

Club member Rudi Dezelin has come up with an idea he'd like SBW members to think about. During his many years of walking through our National Parks, in particular the Royal National Park, he's noticed a steady increase in litter and evidence of 4-wheel-drive vehicle damage.

Rudi, as all who know him will testify, is a man of strong opinions... and actions. He's taken the bit by the teeth and written to the NSW Minister for the Environment, Mr. Tim Moore, setting out his concerns... and coming up with an interesting suggestion. He's put it to the Minister that Honorary Rangers be appointed to keep an eye on what's happening in the national parks and, if necessary, give them the power to caution offenders or perhaps take down registration number plates.

Mr. Moore has replied saying he thinks the idea has merit. In his written reply to Rudi he says: "...we did have a program of honorary ranger appointments some years ago but this program has since lapsed. We are now undertaking a review of the matter with a view to formulating a new policy on this issue."

If you have any views on the matter, how about writing a note to the Editor (don't make the language too strong) or, if you'd prefer, write direct to Tim Moore, supporting (or otherwise) the idea. His address is Level 20, Westfield Tower, 100 William Street, East Sydney.

Better still, does anyone have any recollection of such a scheme existing in the past?

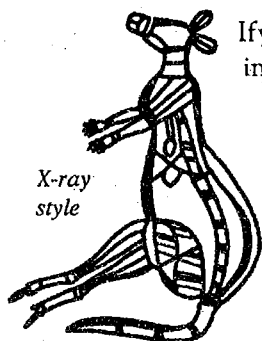
In the meantime, I'm sure Rudi will keep us informed.

Ed.

ABORIGINAL ROCK ART IN KAKADU

The rock paintings in Kakadu reflect a cultural tradition spanning tens of thousands of years. During this time, there has been a distinct sequence of styles, many of which are almost unknown to the general public.

A few major galleries such as Nourlangie and Ubirr are easily accessible by vehicle. Hundreds of others are accessible only on treks of three days or more. Willis's Walkabouts offers trips which visit many such sites throughout Kakadu, the rest of the Top End and the Kimberley. Even in areas where our guides have been walking for ten years or more, we continue to find as yet uncatalogued art sites.

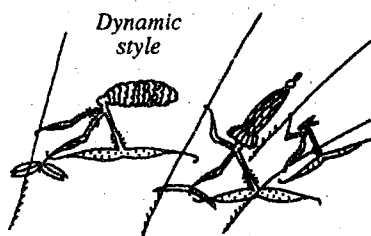


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TO SWIM OR NOT TO SWIM.....

Morag Ryder

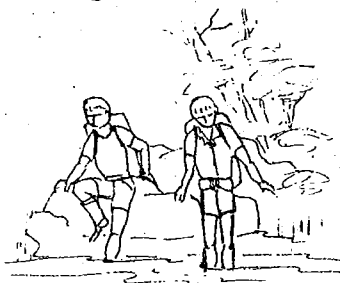
During the June long weekend, over 100 walkers had to be helped out of the Blue Mountains. Many were stranded on the wrong side of flooded rivers, as was an SBW party. Having waited 36 hours in van for the river to subside, and almost out of food, we had to make a plan of action. S & R would probably have been alerted by this time, so it seemed wise to stay on our intended route. However, we didn't know what sort of rescue would be attempted, so we wanted to contact the outside world and discover what was being done. We might also have been able to obtain transport to take us out. Accordingly, two fast walkers spent four hours going to the nearest telephone (at Yerranderie) while the rest waited by the river.



Why not swim the river? The water was over 2 metres deep, muddy and flowing very fast. Small pressure waves were everywhere, and at least two members of the party were not strong swimmers. Add to this the hazards of invisible submerged rocks and tree trunks, and the reason for our decision to not attempt swimming became obvious.

As the weather had cleared, the party was found by helicopters. But what if low cloud prevented this? Then the rest of the party would have walked to Yerranderie, where food and shelter were available - and hopefully, some kind of transport. Was there a better solution?

Only by camping on the right side of the river.....



Letter to the Club - from Illawarra Branch of the National Parks Association NSW Inc.

WALK OF SHAME - COASTAL WALKING TRACKS IN ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

The Illawarra Branch of the National Parks Association NSW Inc is deeply concerned at the deplorable state of the coastal tracks in Royal National Park.

To bring attention to this national shame we are inviting members of bushwalking clubs, the general public, the media and local politicians to a WALK OF SHAME.

This event will be held on SUNDAY 18 AUGUST at 10.00 am leaving Beachcomber Avenue entrance to RNP at Bundeena and along the coast track to Garie. The walk is timed to correspond with the first budget of the new government, due to come down in September. It is our aim for additional funds to be made available to NPWS for repairs and ongoing maintenance of the track. We would appreciate it if you could publicise this walk in your newsletters and list it in your walks program.

Letters to the Minister for the Environment Parliament House Macquarie Street Sydney objecting to the condition of the tracks would also assist the cause. Thank you in anticipation - Yours sincerely

SOCIAL PROGRAM

Fran Holland

A reminder that on the 17th July we are having a club debate, so come along and join in and/or form part of a supportive audience. As it is the 3rd Wednesday we will be meeting in the downstairs room on the left of the building. Also on this night some members will be meeting for dinner at the Thai Restaurant, Fitzroy St., (a few doors down from the club - upstairs) so please come and join us and have a pleasant meal before the meeting.

24th July is our MIDWINTER FEAST, bring a plate of food, the club will provide liquid refreshment, very pleasant atmosphere, and lots of old, new and potential good friends.

31st July we have booked a visit to the SYDNEY OBSERVATORY for a demonstration, tour and star-gazing. Observatory charge is \$2.50 per person, \$1.50 Pensioners and there is a limit of 60 visitors, so please let me know as soon as you can to book a place. The club room will be open if you want to go just for a chat but no activity is arranged.

AUGUST 7th COMMITTEE MEETING

14th GENERAL MEETING + Slides

21st Quiz night - Who? What? Where? When?
Bushwalking trivia - outstanding prizes

28th Recollections of a True Mountain Bushman - Ben Esgate
Walking in the Blue Mountains before maps, pollution, down
sleeping bags, etc from the 1920s.

We will be meeting for dinner before meeting on the 21st August at the Quon Phong (Chinese Restaurant) 16 Ennis St., 4 doors from Milsons Point station entrance.

Please Note: As the Brasserie Restaurant has been closed, members who would like to meet for dinner on the other nights before club meetings will be buying 'take aways' and meeting in the kitchen - all welcome.

CONFEDERATION OF BUSHWALKING CLUBS OF NSW INC.BUSH DANCE - 13 SEPTEMBER

Petersham Town Hall - 8.00 pm - Entrance Fee \$8 - BLACK FRIDAY THEME

There will be a table for SBW - casual dress - no need to bring a partner

B.Y.O Food and drink. More details next month.

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DOWN AT THE SNOW -

The annual Paddy Pallin X/C Ski Classic will be held on Saturday 3 August in Perisher.
