

ZOE BAY - HINCHINBROOK

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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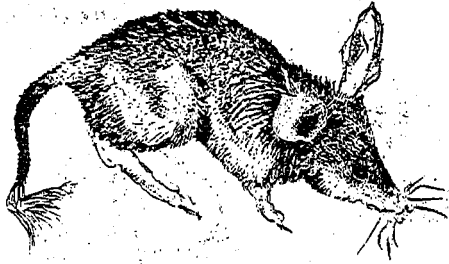
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EASTER AMONG THE BILBIES

by Dot Butler

A large range of small native animals exists in Australia. They were once more widely distributed but, as any bushwalker knows, they are rarely, if ever, sighted. The main reasons for their disappearance are twofold - the destruction of habitat by clearing, grazing and burning, and the depredations of feral animals (pigs, goats, cattle, foxes, donkeys and CATS). Many native species are extinct and many are endangered. The last refuge of many is wilderness.

One of our commonest small animals was the bandicoot. Three of our known varieties are thought to be extinct, and five are endangered, among them the bilby, about the size of a rabbit or cat. It has been named by the United Nations as one of the world's most beautiful animals. It was shot for sport, or because horses tripped in its burrows, and many were caught in rabbit traps. By early this century it had disappeared from most of its former inland range. One of its retreats is Davenport Downs Station on the Diamantina plains of Queensland, so I jumped at the opportunity to go there last Easter with my daughter Rona's husband Jack.

Between June 1990 and July 1992 Jack (Professor John Pettigrew) has led 9 expeditions to this extensive bilby colony. As Director of the Vision, Touch and Hearing Centre of the University of Queensland he has been studying the vision of birds, which is very relevant to the study of human vision, but, at the same time, a grant from the Australian Research Council enabled him to study the impact of dingoes and feral cats on the bilbies. Having brought about the extinction of our own native "tiger", the thylacine, we are now replacing it with our own "tiger" - the feral CAT. These animals grow to an enormous size - a metre long not counting the tail, and stand twice the height of a domestic cat. They can pull down a small wallaby and are rapidly causing the extinction of our small mammals, birds and lizards.

Travelling in Jack's 4WD with his assistant and my two small grand-daughters, Tara and Chloe, we covered the 1,300 km from Brisbane in one day, witnessing en route at Mount Isa a typically Australian Easter carnival - billy-goat racing down the cordoned-off wide main street, and contests in which burly countrymen ran a course with a 25 kg bag of cement hugged to their chest. We reached our destination that night, a huge cattle property.

Next morning was "Easter Bunny" day. However a Queensland confectioner, scorning this introduced pest, has manufactured attractive little chocolate "Easter Bilbies". We had bought a stock of these and in the morning hid them around the farm property and the littlies had much fun following the clues to their whereabouts.



The next day off we went over the vast Mitchell Grass plains to Jack's study area amongst a grove of coolibars on the bank of a creek. Night was drawing on as we started to erect the tents, using the car as one tentpole. Suddenly the grandfather of a willy-willy smote us; the tent-pegs pulled out of the sandy soil and the tents flapped madly upwards. My groundsheet took off like a dervish and disappeared forever across the plain in a cloud of dust. I spent the night in the more sheltered creek bed under a huge coolibar tree.

Our days were spent at various places across the plain climbing trees to peer into stick nests and count the letterwing kite eggs or young, and at night we would go in the car, spot-lighting to count the bilbies, which are night feeders. The ground was peppered with holes of native rats and bilbies, the bilby holes being distinguished by being nice and tidy at the entrance in contrast to the untidy rats' holes. Bilbies would skitter across our spot-light beam, the white slash on their tail making them easy to spot.

Jack came back later in July, when the creeks were so densely populated with cats that a spot-light shone at dusk, just before the cats go hunting on the plains, made the creek appear as if the bordering trees had been decorated with Christmas lights. Virtually every tree had a pair of eyes shining back, and some trees had as many as nine pairs of eyes.

The next day, in a single pass down the creek, 79 cats were shot from 73 trees, all perched on kite nests on what had been a thriving colony of letterwing kites at Easter. Jack's findings, a full page spread on the front page of the Brisbane Courier Mail, resulted in six Army sharpshooters being sent at the request of the Queensland Minister for the Environment, Mr. Comben. They eliminated another 400 cats from this same tiny area three weeks later.



Traced by Morag Ryder from a Courier Mail photograph.

There appeared to be no dramatic change in cat numbers in the other study areas, even though these areas had an equally large population of native rats. Jack is of the opinion that dingoes help to keep down cat numbers. In places where dingoes have been shot out for the bounty (\$10 a scalp - Finchy and Barry Wallace take note!) the cats are in plague proportions.

LANDCARE - the Federal Government's Youth Employment program, aims to employ young out-of-workers in improving and protecting the environment. It will take in 9,000 this financial year. Feral animal control is part of the work envisaged. 15 to 17 year olds will be paid \$125 a week, and 18 to 20 year olds \$150, plus living and travel allowances.

This sounds like a useful way keen young boys and girls can do a good job saving our native animals and having adventure at the same time. If the proposed bounty on the scalps of cats as proposed by Jack (\$5 a scalp) is brought in, think of the money that can be made!

Croajingolong National Park

by Stuart Brooks

Croajingolong is a relatively new National Park, amalgamating several smaller ones and some additional areas to form a continuous strip from Cape Howe to Bemm River, except for the Mallacoota township section. We planned to walk the length of the park. This was mainly Alan's idea, as he wished to be able to comment on a plan of management for the park soon to be released in draft form. As a leading light in the "Friends of Croajingolong" he felt some input was necessary to ensure protection of some sensitive areas.

There are four large inlets to cross and a number of smaller ones. Our plan was to walk from Mallacoota to Cape Howe and return (3 days), then from Bemm River to Mallacoota (8 days). Our first hurdle, the Mallacoota Inlet, was solved by engaging the services of the local boat hire business (Mr. Rankin). He ferried us across and promised to pick us up at the same spot in a couple of days.

Lake Barracoota is a large freshwater lake about 8 km from Mallacoota and 1 km inland. Bounded inland by forests and shorewards by immense sand dunes it proved a pleasant enough site for a camp for two nights. It is a 10 km walk along beaches to Cape Howe. A year or so before we had stood under Cape Howe obelisk with some bushwalker friends from Hobart after a walk through Nadgee - we now felt we had "done" Cape Howe.

The next section of our walk started from Bemm River. We had left a car at Mallacoota (outside the Police Station) and stayed overnight at "Cosy Nook", a fishermen's retreat run by Di and Don. Don had agreed to ferry us across Sydenham Inlet - our second major obstacle, so long as we were ready to leave by 7.00 am. This proved no trouble as every fisherman staying at "Cosy Nook" took it on himself to knock on our cabin door, starting at first light (5.00 am). So by 8.00 am we were on our way along the long, long beach to Tamboon Inlet - our third large obstacle.

Soft sand, 8-day packs and enough water for the day made for slow going. There are usually a few boats on Tamboon Inlet as it is a popular fishing spot. Today was no exception. An obliging couple on a day's sailing gave us a lift over, saving a long swim, or a short but precarious wade across the mouth.

Our first campsite was about 3 km further on at Clinton Rocks Creek - plenty of fresh water and a grassy flat, just what we needed. Next day was a bit more varied - a few kilometres of rocky shore, about 7 km of beach, a bush track across Cape Everard, which picked up the road from the Point Hicks lighthouse. This led around to the N.P. camp on the Thurra River. Being a weekend it was fairly busy but is so laid out that campers don't intrude on each other. We found a spot close to the day area which is equipped with tables and fireplaces, and right on the bank of the river. The river is fresh, and about 70 metres wide but is very shallow on a sandy bottom.

The next day was a "lay day" - but Alan had arranged an inspection of the lighthouse. This is one of many lighthouses being de-commissioned by the Commonwealth so its future is uncertain. It is a beautiful and historic place and the "Friends" hope it will become part of the Park and hence protected from vandalism and decay. We spent several hours here with the keeper exploring the lighthouse and its attendant buildings and hearing a lot of its history.

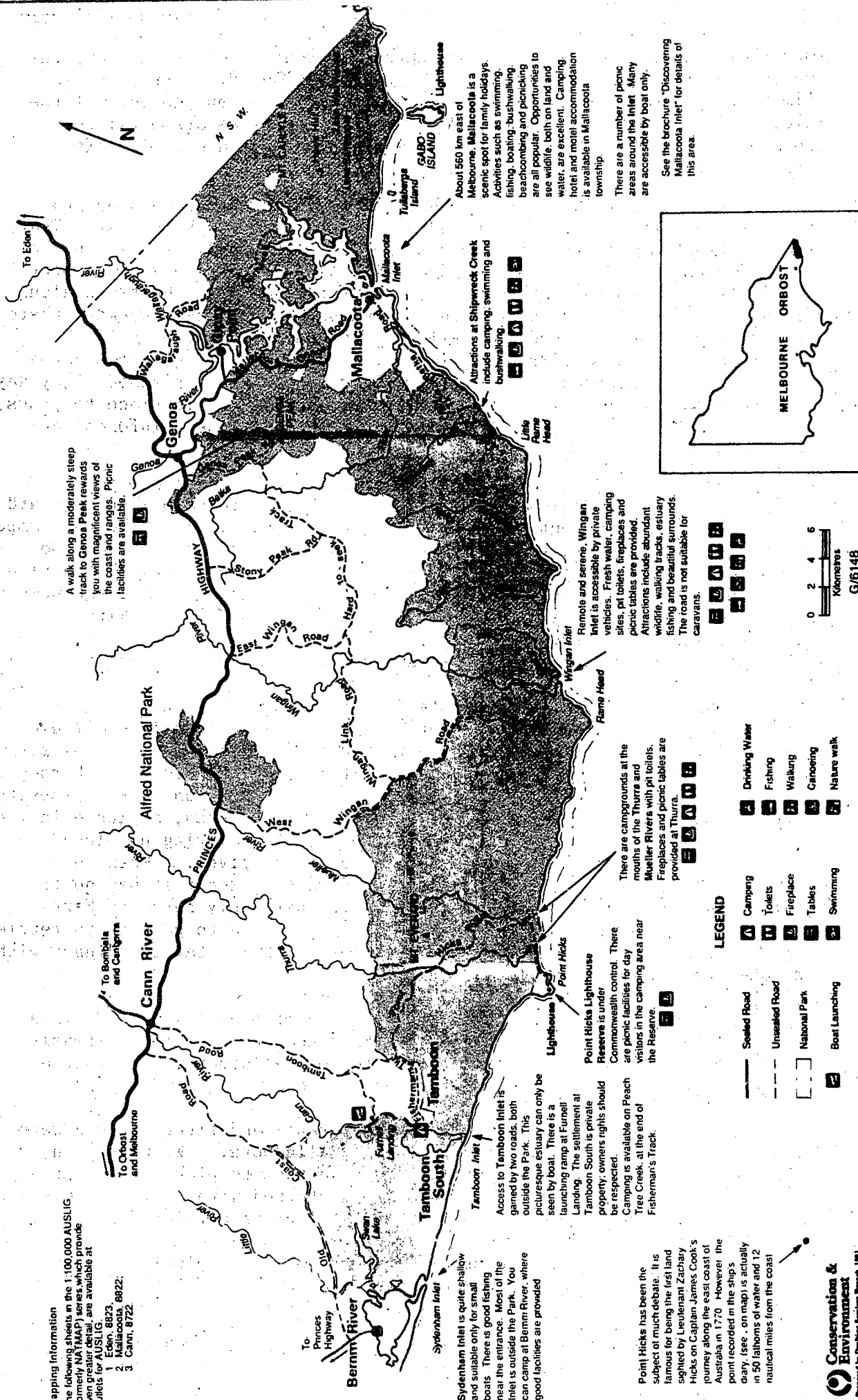
On the walk back we decided to have an early dinner in lieu of lunch,

Croajingolong National Park

Mapping Information

The following sheets in the 1:100,000 AUSLIG (formerly NATMAP) series which provide even greater detail, are available at outlets for AUSLIG:

1. Eden, 8823
2. Mallacoota, 8822
3. Cann, 8722



then press on to the Mueller River campsite (about 3 km) to cut down the length of next day's walk to Wingan Inlet. Mueller River campsite is primitive - a few sites on the grass behind the dunes on the edge of the inlet. There is no fresh water here and no open fires are permitted. The mouth of the river was closed so we crossed with ease early next morning.

The next day brought more beaches and rocky headlands culminating in a cut track through the thick and scrubby bush behind Rame Head. There is a cut track out to the trig on Rame Head (about 2 km), well worth the visit. Wingan Inlet has another very pleasant N.P. camp area set about 2 km in from the mouth of the inlet. It is reached from the beach along a long board walk through swamps and ti-tea scrub. Being a weekday there were few car campers around, and all were inconspicuous because of the thick forest and the well-planned layout. There is a large grassy area for walkers with abundant fresh water from a spring. We planned a lay day here, both to explore the mouth of the inlet for a possible place to cross, and to walk some of the "tourist" foot tracks through the rainforest and magnificent dunes around the inlet.

We had completed our walks and found a feasible way across the inlet (involving a 50 metre swim) and were on our way back to camp when we heard a pleasant sound - the put-put of an outboard motor. One of the car campers had brought his car-topper in to do a little fishing on the inlet. He agreed to ferry us over - one by one, early next morning, so we had a pleasant afternoon around camp washing, preparing dinner and discouraging the numerous large, over-fed goannas prowling the campsites for handouts. With their 2-inch scimitar claws they make you rather nervous as they lumber within inches of the very fragile (and expensive) nylon tents in search of tid-bits.

From Wingham Inlet on, the route is mostly inland along little-used dual tracks winding through forest and across moors covered in wildflowers, an agreeable change from soft sand. We had lunch where the track hits the coast about 14 km on, at a spot behind a little beach backed by high rock walls and a gushing cataract. As it was only a few "k" on to our campsite at Benedore River, we indulged ourselves with a long lunch, a plunge in the sea and a shower under the waterfall. Alan had been luring us along with tales of the breath-taking campsite on the Benedore River. When we eventually found it, it proved almost all he said - except it had no fresh water as the inlet here is very brackish. We were only saved by Harry having left his glasses at our lunch spot. As he had to go back to retrieve them we pressed all our empty water containers on him, starting dinner with the water we had with us.

Onwards the track leads through forest and moor again. There is a 3 km diversion out to the trig on Little Rame Head which offers extensive views along the coast and our first glimpses of Mallacoota. On to the N.P. camp area at Shipwreck Creek for our last camp.

We again occupied the day area with its table and fireplace and were joined by a young couple on a day trip from Mallacoota. We were soon coercing Harry to go back into Mallacoota with them to pick up his car and save us a long roadbash on the morrow. He returned with more than his car - some cold cans and a bottle of rough red to celebrate our last campfire.

With time on our hands we spent the next morning exploring the coast around the mouth of Shipwreck Creek, a fascinating area for rock lovers, botanists and beach combers.

And so back to Bemm River and Cosy Nook - with Alan reasonably happy with the results of our eleven-day trek.

* * * * *

Conservation

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS SENT TO CLUB MEMBER, GLADYS ROBERTS

THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS



FOUNDED 1927

Postal Address
Box 4476 G.P.O.
SYDNEY 2001

3rd December 1992

Dear Gladys,

I am pleased to tell you that at last night's Committee Meeting the Treasurer, Erith Hamilton, told us that she had received a cheque for \$930 from the Australian Conservation Foundation. This represented your donation, less their commission of 7%.

The Committee was very appreciative of your gift. They asked me to convey this to you and decided to add \$70 from Club funds to it and place it in the Club's Conservation Fund. It will then be invested in a government security which should yield some \$80 a year for a long time to come. The interest from the fund is used to promote conservation. Last year \$130 was presented to Tim Moore to establish the Wilderness Fund, \$300 was given to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness (of which I am Hon. Sec.), \$200 given to the Blue Mountains World Heritage Committee and \$100 to the North-East Forest Alliance.

Joe Turner opened the Conservation Fund with a donation of \$500 some years ago. The Committee hopes your gift will inspire others to follow.

I believe a donation to the Club's Conservation Fund is the most effective way of ensuring the money will be spent on preserving what is left of the bush.

Yours sincerely,

A. G. COLLEY OAM,

Hon. Conservation Secretary.



EARTH WIND FIRE RAIN



THE PADDY PALLIN UPDATE

FROM THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE

SEPT-NOV 1992

Welcome to Issue 1 of the Update, our way of letting you know the latest developments in products and activities available at your local Paddy Pallin store.

GORE-TEX VALUE - THE BARCOO. \$249

The Tanami Barcoo jacket is now available at all Paddy Pallin stores.

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the stringent tests carried out by W.L. Gore as part of their Guaranteed

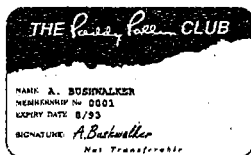
To Keep You Dry programme.

The Barcoo is mid thigh length and features seamfree shoulders, a waterproof front closure, external drawcord and 2 large volume pockets. Available in Red and Mid Blue

THE PADDY PALLIN CLUB

Back in June we launched The Paddy Pallin Club in order to stay in touch with regular customers. For an annual subscription of \$10.00 members receive a host of benefits including a special Club members discount on their purchases, special rates on adventure activities as well as exclusive trips for Club members. Members receive a newsletter full of outdoor tips, product news, competitions, information on new offers etc.

To join simply pick up a brochure in your local Paddy Pallin store or telephone 008 805398 TOLL FREE.



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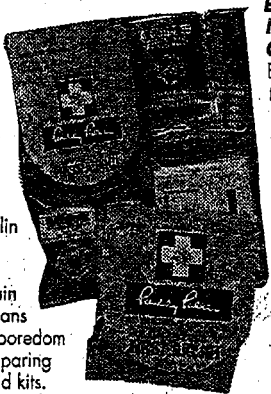
'medical' contents, the kit also contains a fully laminated First Aid Booklet, Casualty Record cards, a notebook and pencil and printed information on Hypothermia and Emergency contact numbers. \$69.95

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EXPANSION AND FACELIFT FOR CANBERRA STORE

By the time you read this the painters and carpet fitters will have left and our Canberra store will be looking bigger and brighter. So next time you're in the National Capital call in.



THE ADVENTURE FIRST AID KIT

A while ago some Paddy Pallin staff were tentbound in a storm on the Main Range. As a means of relieving the boredom they began comparing personal First Aid kits. Noticing a number of similarities in what they had ended up with over the years, the idea of developing a specific Adventure Kit came about. A week or so later we were meeting with St John Ambulance and many months later the joint Paddy Pallin/St John Ambulance Adventure First Aid Kit was born. The kit is packed in a brightly coloured, flexible, multi pocketed PVC pouch sealed with weatherproof press zips. Apart from the

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A big thank you to all our customers for the tremendous support you have given the above scheme whereby every time you elect not to take a bag for your purchases Paddy Pallin donates 10 cents to a charity. In the first 6 months of this year we were able to donate \$800.00 to the Wilderness Society and \$836.00 to a range of charities local to each store. That equates to some 16000 bags not going into precious landfill, less energy being used because we need to order less bags. Thanks to you, everyone benefits.

NEW INTEGRAL OFFERINGS

Drytech, the fabric that revolutionized the Bodywear market, has two more garments in the range.

The cycle short style **Techshorts** are obviously ideal for cycling but also well suited to canoeing or bushwalking with the stretch of the Drytech Jersey fabric accommodating the most extreme movements. Available in Blue and Red at \$35.95

For those who prefer short sleeves we've chopped them off the old favourite, the Techcrew, to give the **Techshirt** with a price of \$35.95

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HOW I JOINED THE S.B.W.

by Puffing Billy

PART 1: MOUNT SOLITARY - THE GREAT FRUSTRATION

Like many of the contemporaries of the late great Christopher Columbus, I knew that the world was flat. So did everyone else, born and reared on the endless plains of South Australia. Excepting, that is, the cliffs along the River Murray, some of which were a staggering 30 metres high. And perpendicular, to boot. South Australians came hundreds of kilometres to view those awesome precipices. Still do.

Thus enducated and aged eighteen in the by-gone age of steam, I ventured to the very end of the known world, namely to the fabled metropolis of Sydney, and there began my working life. Two years later I nostalgically decided to make a Christmas visit to my State of nativity; but I was daunted by a worrisome thought: what to say when, as a returning world traveller, I was asked, "What do you think of the Blue Mountains?" And I should have to confess that I had never seen them. I could see the incredulity on their faces and hear their shocked voices as they responded, "But they're almost in Sydney!"

I could not face the shame; I had to see the Blue Mountains first. So I visited a railway ticket window to enquire the minimum cost of a return to Katoomba. "Seven and six," replied the ticket man.

"S-s-seven and s-s-six," I s-stammered in shock, for that was almost a year's savings. By the time I paid my board and fares to work, I had 25 cents per week to cover clothes, text books and chasing girls.

But I had to see those mountains, so there was only one thing for it. From my older brother when he joined the army, I had inherited a tapered-frame road-racing bicycle of ultra-modern design. Three gears, no less. Thus a Friday afternoon came when I mounted the saddle after work, with some sandwiches and clothing in a make-shift haversack on my back and a flimsy blanket roll on the handlebars.

As I passed Penrith in the very last light of the evening afterglow, huge black clouds began massing above the western horizon, looming larger and blacker as the darkness got darker. I peddled towards the menacing storms, frantically searching for some shelter as I had no storm clothes. But then, the awesome truth struck me. They were not clouds; I was looking fair and square at the Blue Mountains, towering above me. My adrenalin gland went directly into overdrive.

Now, you who are veterans of the up-and-down world may well scoff at my reaction to the gentle slopes of Lapstone Hill; but, please remember, my previous altitude record had been those cliffs of the River Murray.

To say that I was excited would only begin to describe my state. Indeed, I was atop Lapstone Hill and looking back in awe at the blinking sparklets of distant Sydney (which stopped at Parramatta in those days) before I realised that my legs were tired from the uphill push, while my mouth devoured the first of my kindly landlady's sandwiches, my eyes devoured the panorama of fairy lights below. Wow! Now I could tell an enthralling tale even if I went no further.

But Katoomba lay somewhere in the rising dark ahead; I had to go on. Reaching Lawson at about 10.30, I slept in the shed of the school. My parents were both teachers, so the prospect of being roused out by the local

headmaster held no terrors for me - I knew the placatory formulae.

Next morning at about 6.30 I topped the rise at Leura and was almost stunned by the view southwards, down Leura Valley to the cliffs of Mount Solitary and King's Tableland, though the names were as yet unknown to me. Enthralled in the golden light of morning, I could not see the slopes of the Jamieson Valley and everything that I could see beyond the Leura foreground was vertical. Plumb-bob vertical. Perpendicular. Everything - the whole scene. Not a horizontal anywhere. And the puniness of those Murray River cliffs was indelibly impressed on my mind.

In that one moment, I became a captive and, trite though it may sound, my life has never been the same since. Racing on to Katoomba, I asked the mandatory, "Where to find the Three Sisters?" However, before proceeding thence, I had to attend to a necessity. The glimpse from Leura had shown me that there were no roads out there; no towns, no houses, even. It was like the open, empty spaces around us at home; but vertical. I knew now that no five minute gawk from Echo Point could satisfy me; I would need some sort of victuals for an overnight sortie into the country I had seen. Thus, I bought a half-loaf of bread and two lamb chops in Lurline Street.

Goggling at the view from Echo Point, I soon became aware of a frustration. The scene was tantalisingly incomplete. To my right, the cliffs of Narrow Neck (I now knew the names from a free locality map) formed a barrier beyond which I could not see, while similarly to the left King's Tableland barred the view. These, however, still left a wide vista of verticality to the front; but this vista was the cliffs of Mount Solitary, totally blocking the view of who knows what perpendicular enthrallments beyond. I just had to see them.

Hiding the bike in the bush, I walked as far west as Orphan Rock. No success - Solitary was unmoving. I started walking down Federal Pass (too poor for 5c on the Scenic Railway) and, never having descended into the very bowels of the earth before, I was half expecting Old Nick to raise his head to claim me as his own. However, the track flattened out at last and I found myself wandering along with the Three Sisters in view and ever more vertically above me.

Around midday I stopped by a stream for a brew-up in my jam-tin billy, supplemented by grilled chop sandwiches. On unwrapping the meat, I found it somewhat mobile. Unworried, I washed the wildlife off in the stream. This, remember, was before the days of local refrigeration, when the Coolgardie safe was state-of-the-art technology. Correction; terms like technology and state-of-the-art had not entered the lexicon, the hype merchants still confining their talents to religion. Just as modern, also, was the newspaper in which the butcher had wrapped my chops. Not until decades later did the do-gooders warn me that it harboured animalcules more dangerous than my 200-metre fall on Mount French, New Zealand, the survival of which started my now-unshakable belief in supernatural intervention, despite many friends' claims that the Great Architect of the mountains would never have intervened on my behalf.

By late afternoon I had breasted Leura Cascades, looking back over my shoulder to see if any new vistas were opening; but alas, the vista was unchanging - Mount Solitary and more Mount Solitary.

I could now ramble on about my subsequent adventures that weekend, such as my return to Sydney through 40° plus heat with 7 punctures to be mended along the way, followed by three days in bed with heat stroke; but that would not be really pertinent to the conclusion to which I am proceeding.

Arrived back in Sydney after regaling my Adelaide friends with tales of Blue Mountains escapades that made the aforesaid Columbus appear like a cut-lunch Charlie, I was still piqued because inwardly I knew that I had not seen the Blue Mountains. All I had seen was frustrating Mount Solitary.

"How do I get to see what lies behind it?" I asked my Sydney friends ad nauseam.

"You have to join the bush walkers," they replied with equal nauseam. Thus the die was cast.

END PART ONE.

THE NSW NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE sent the following letter to the Club's Walks Secretary, Bill Holland:-

Dear Mr Holland,

Occasionally members of bushwalking clubs may experience difficulties because organised walks may have been planned on lands managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service without a full understanding of the Service's local key rules which govern such activities.

I refer specifically to Nadgee Nature Reserve, a popular walking location, on the far south coast of NSW.

Although Nadgee is not a declared wilderness area, much of it has effectively been managed as wilderness, and certain rules have been in place for many years to help protect its natural state.

Bushwalking (ie backpacking) is by permit only with a maximum of twenty (20) walkers permitted at any one time in the Reserve. That is, if twenty walkers are in the Reserve no other walkers would normally be permitted during the same period.

We try to encourage small walking groups (say 7 or 8) rather than large groups (say 15 to 20) as, from past experience, several small groups tend to have less adverse impact on the area than large groups. It also provides the opportunity for individuals or other small groups to use the Reserve at the same time rather than the Reserve being dominated by a large single group to the exclusion of others.

Bookings must be in advance and are taken no more than three months before the proposed walk. This should give any walk co-ordinator ample time to plan ahead. Walk co-ordinators should not expect Service staff to make special dispensation to their group if the Reserve is already fully booked.

In all cases walk co-ordinators should contact this office before finalising plans.

I would be grateful if you could make this information available to all of your club's members, preferably by printing this letter in your club's newsletter.

Yours faithfully, K. R. Margus,
Superintendent - Eden District.

THE STONE BRIDGE

by Pat Harrison

(The author, Pat Harrison, a long-time member of the Catholic Walkers, also joined SBW for some years in the 1960s and early 1970s. He specialised in trips into the less-often visited parts of our local mountains, and regularly proved he was a first-rate pathfinder.

The area mentioned is on the southern side of the Hunter River valley, with Doyles Creek flowing from the divide between the Hunter and Macdonald River systems, and entering the Hunter near Jerry's Plains, west of Singleton.)

There is a natural arch in the sandstone cliff alongside Doyle's Creek which had tantalised me for years. At last I had to see it. I soon learnt that access was a problem, particularly the walk up Doyle's Creek, the way I had hoped to go. All creatures are territorial, including landowners whose stock have been disturbed, and worse, by the thoughtless few. Doyle's Creek and Appletree Creek therefore were definitely not access routes.

The flu put paid to a weekend walk planned for October to see the arch and the nearby Aboriginal Cave, but my cousin Geoff and I were still well enough to do a day of reconnoitring instead; and glad we were that we did because good results came of it.

The reconnaissance being a Cook's Tour by 4WD, I decided to say 'Good day' to a member of the old battalion whose property we would pass on our journey. Being a landowner, his knowledge of the surrounding country and of another matter was the sword which cut the Gordian Knot of access.

The day's touring thereafter was plain sailing and included a visit to the Aboriginal Cave and its stencils in Appletree Creek. A log book here indicates that the Cave's location was brought to notice about 90 years ago by a surveyor who was exploring Appletree Creek. Needless to say, the overhang has a steel mesh across its front to protect the stencils from 'civilisation'. We came home with first-hand information of all access routes -- mileages, road conditions, and knowledge of four possible walking routes to the arch.

The following Saturday we were out of bed by 3.00 am, on our way by 4.00 am, and walking by 8.00 am. We followed Little Oak Ridge to its end, dropped down to the cliff-line immediately above Doyle's Creek, then sidled our way upstream until we found a way into Doyle's Creek. From the cliff edge as we sidled we could see the arch on the far side of the creek. The scrub during this sidling was high, tangled, and scratchy. Doyle's Creek itself was adorned with the usual junk and campsites were scarce.

When in Doyle's Creek and getting close to where the arch ought to be it is necessary to keep eyes open because of intervening trees. The arch is a couple of hundred feet above creek level and a few hundred yards above the junction of Long Rocky Creek and Doyle's Creek. The arch is on the true left, that is, the southern side where Doyle's Creek has an east-west direction.

Immediately below the arch two shaky saplings have been placed against the sloping cliff to assist the climb through the arch to the higher ground on the other side, but care is needed because some skin could be lost by

sliding down the slope. A better way to the top of the arch is to go upstream, get above the cliff-line, then walk along the shelf to the arch.

A good look around, a lengthy lunch, and we were back at the vehicle by 4.30 pm. There was no flowing water in Doyle's Creek - or in Appletree Creek the previous Saturday - only cloudy pools, the cloudiness possibly caused by the yabbies we noticed.

The walk back along the ridge was a delight, the wildflowers and the Sydney Red Gums being glorious. Flannel Flower blooms were as big as saucers and their stems reached to our chests. The flowers of other plants were not as obtrusive but made a really wonderful display. There was also a small ground-hugging plant which formed a mat amongst the junk on the bank of the creek. It had a pale blue-and-white flower and was probably a Violaceae. Small white Daisies with yellow centres, Indigofera. A small pink-flowering plant, golden Buttercups, Bluebells. A superb golden yellow flower on a straight stem about 25 cm high with straight, thickish, fleshy leaves about 3 cm long and a delicate fringe around the button-like shape of the flower - possibly some kind of Craspedia.

Particularly noticeable was the colour of the leaves of the Sydney Red Gums which were numerous throughout the whole area. About half the foliage of most trees was a lovely reddish colour, presumably indicating the flush of spring in their growth. None of the other trees, which included Stringy Barks, Bloodwoods and Grey Gums had similar variation in their foliage.

Distant views of the arch are seen not only from the opposing cliff-line on Doyle's Creek, but also from the end of Little Oak Ridge. If Australia takes tourism to its ultimate (witness Ayer's Rock), perhaps in years to come there will be a road along the ridge and charabancs will take Japanese tourists to view the arch without their having to walk more than a few yards, to say nothing of encountering the scrub below the ridge!

This walk was well worth the waiting.

* * * * *

SHORT NOTICE - KIMBERLEY-KAKADU ODYSSEY SPECIAL

Trip starts with an amphibious plane drop off and pick up from incomparable Mitchell Falls and King George Falls areas, visiting local gorges with pristine Aboriginal burial and art sites.

Visits also to Litchfield/Gregory National Parks and Carr Boyd Range Gorges.

Optional Ord River/Carlton Gorge speedboat trip.

" Bungalows or extensive Kimberley Coast flights.

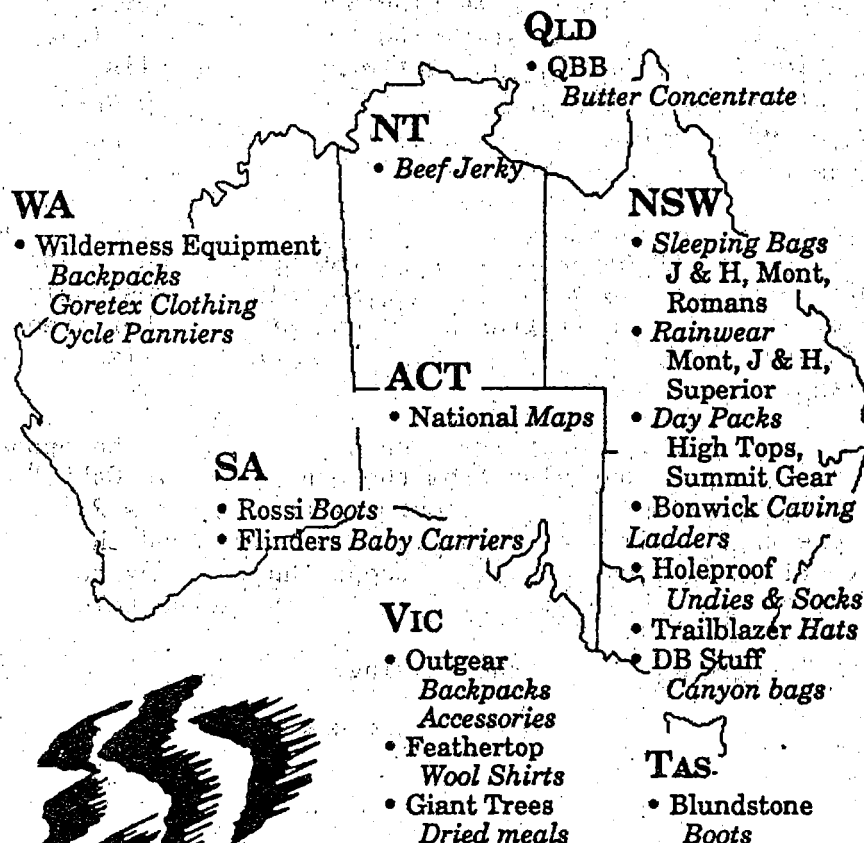
Trip finishes with Kakadu Highlights "the easier way".

Party limit strictly 5. Period approx mid-late April '93 for 2½ weeks. Price on application.

Please contact leader PETER CHRISTIAN no later than 3rd week February '93. Phone 476 1312

Please note: This trip format will be a "once only" opportunity.

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THE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

It was around 2016 and there were some 16 or so members present, if one searched diligently in the corners of the room, when the meeting was called to order. There were apologies from Bill and Fran Holland and Lorraine Bloomfield.

New members Shirley Hicks, Patrick Bradley, Maurice Smith and Louise Vernon were called for welcome and the Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received. There were no matters arising so we moved on to the Correspondence. There was a letter from your magazine Editor indicating that she will be moving to Melbourne for her work and will therefore no longer be available as Editor. There were letters to our new members advising them of their success and to our Hon. Solicitor, Barrie Murdoch, requesting that he review the details of the arbitrator's decision on the damages claim and advise whether the Club needs to make changes in light of the statements made in the decision. There was also a letter to Natural Areas Ltd requesting that they issue share script to the Club reflecting our equity in the organisation. Matters arising saw mention that Spiro Hajinakitas has agreed to take on the Editor's job until the elections in March.

The Treasurer's Report disclosed an income of \$1,245 for the month, outgoings of \$2,187 and a closing balance of \$679.

The Walks Secretary was off attending a work function so Morrie Ward did the decent thing and presented the walks reports. We began at the weekend of 13,14,15 November with a no report for Laurie Quaken's walk "The Six-Foot Track, the bludge way". Oliver Crawford reported a party of 12 on his Budawangs walk which was not to program for some reason. Ian Debert had a total of 10 starters broken up into at least two parties in overcast conditions^{on} his day-and-a-half "Yalwal Gourmet Weekend under the Full Moon". Of the day walks Zol Bodlay reported a party of 9 enjoying lots of swimming on his Glenbrook area trip, and Maurie Bloom's cycling trip went but no details were available. There was also a Morrie Ward Barrington area weekend walk which had been deferred from the weekend before. They had 7 walkers enjoying (?) a harder than average Sunday, and that after they had truncated the walk due to slow going on the Williams River. If arriving at the cars at 2250 means anything it was also a long day.

Next up was the weekend of 20,21,22 November with Les Powell leading a party of 10 on a water-impered trip down Ettrema Creek on the Saturday. It got worse when the rain set in that night and the party availed themselves of some local knowledge provided by Frank Rigby (hi Digby) to cut and run via a little used but substantially more direct route out, up an unnamed creek. Greta James's Instructional Weekend went but there were no details to report. Dick Weston in a late report exclusive to this article led 8 souls on his Valley of the Waters day-trip to lunch in a cave to escape the rains, which also fell on the unjust no doubt, exposing their trembling white flesh to the rapacious appetites of the local leech hordes. Kenn Clacher's abseiling instructional produced no report, but Alan Mewett had 8 plus 1 starters enjoying a spot of swimming on his Marra Marra N.P. day walk.

The weekend of 28,29 November saw an outbreak of Saturday-start weekend walks. First came Ian Debert's Tootie Creek/Colo River bludge which was cancelled. Wilf Hilder's Great North Walk (GNW) stages 16 and 17 saw train/bus confusion start the leader off one hour before the rest of the party. It was of little impact, however, for the leader got lost in a new subdivision which had sprung up across the GNW and was sitting enjoying a midday repast

of humble pie when the party arrived. It took the combined skills of the party and no small amount of what they chose to call intuitive navigation to restore them all to the true GNW. Despite threatening weather which kept the party on edge throughout the walk it did not rain during daylight hours. The Saturday campsite was at a Scout camp which provided hot showers at a reasonable charge. Sunday saw an early start deliver the party to the end of 300 km of total walking by 1510. Tony Maynes led 12 on his Waterfall to Engadine day trip with lots of swims along the way. Peter Yardley's Walford Creek trip had 10 starters and went to program and Zol Bodlay reported 15 on his Colo River walk.

December 5,6 saw Laurie Quaken repulsed yet again in his efforts to conquer the more relaxed aspects of the Six Foot Track. His walk was cancelled. Then followed a pair of no reports with Peter Miller's Otford to Burning Palms being the first victim and Ray Turton's Illawarra Range trip the twin. Dick Weston, in a report which now looks most suspicious when compared to certain other facts, led a party of two on his Kanuka Brook walk through threatening conditions to shelter from the rain over lunch in a cave. No, Virginia, I don't believe it's me. But it is the end of the walks report.

Conservation Report brought news that Gladys Roberts, a senior member of the Club, has made a generous donation to the Club Conservation Fund via the ACF. (One can only hope there is no relationship between this and the broken leg reported last month.) The Mount Genowlan/Mount Airlie mining saga grinds on and they have started re-screening "Yes, Minister".

The Confederation Report was next with news that Bateman's Bay Walking Club have joined the Confederation, that the Port Hacking Advisory Committee is again active and that Confederation are grappling with the vexed question of just what, for the purposes of the media, constitutes an "experienced walker". One might almost fear the effects of attempting to impose precision on a beast to whom it is so foreign a concept. Search and Rescue group have purchased a new trailer and volunteers are still sought for the show at Darling Harbour in the new year. In celebration of the silly season there was a letter from some well-meaning soul recommending the utilisation of brightly coloured helium filled balloons for lost bush-walker parties.

There was no General Business and apart from mention of the binding into sturdy volumes of the archival copies of the Club magazine, and encouragement of all those present and others to search diligently for volunteer/conscript Office Bearers for the coming year, there seemed no reason not to close the meeting. So that's what Ian did, at 2111.



THE "LANDSLIDE" CYCLORAMA POINT - CLIO ANSWERED

by Geoff Grace

It would appear that Katoomba mining history is not as well known as it could be. Are there others like Clio (The Sydney Bushwalker, Dec '92) who are unaware that mining was conducted in the Katoomba area and believe that a more likely explanation of the "Landslide" at Cyclorama Point is erosion of underlying shales?

Ample historical evidence exists of mining in the Katoomba area and there is no doubt that the results of such mining were the primary cause of the "Cyclorama Landslide".

- * Traces remain of the failed aerial ropeway to mine sites at the Ruined Castle.
- * The inclined railway was built specifically to haul shale and coal out of the Jamison Valley. It is now the "Scenic Railway".
- * The present walking track to the Ruined Castle follows the route of the primitive railway along which, commencing approximately in 1891, horses pulled skips of shale from the Ruined Castle area for transfer to the inclined railway.
- * A short distance from the lower end of the "Scenic Railway" is a heavily barred entrance to mine workings.
- * A tunnel was driven under Katoomba cliff lines and through Narrow Neck to allow straight line haulage of shale mined in the Megalong Valley to a point near the lower end of the inclined railway.

Interesting information about Katoomba area mining is given in a publication of the Blue Mountains travel Association "The Blue Mountains Weekly" July 1978. Regarding the landslide, it states:-

"This is not a natural landslide, but is a result of the coal mining behind the cliff here. A man-made erosion of the supporting coal layer resulting in a sudden (by geological standards) removal of the support under hundreds of thousands of tonnes of rock. That section of the mine was abandoned in June 1930 when raising of the floor and lowering of the ceiling indicated that substantial rock movements were imminent. As was normal mining practice the props were removed to allow the tunnels to collapse, and the section was forgotten. Six months later Arthur Mellor who worked at the mine discovered a 6 inch crack at the top of the cliff. The next day they went back to investigate and it had widened to 6 feet. The crack was measured at more than 300 feet deep. Six more tension filled months passed until it had slipped completely into the valley. It didn't topple over as was commonly expected but slid into the valley. The first fall on January 28 1931 at 4 am causing 'heavy rumblings' and mild earth tremors. It fell in three sections. On January 28th, May 2nd and June 20th 1931."

Surface subsidence resulting from underground mining is a serious issue. Not only can it cause general surface subsidence but, as with Cyclorama Point, it can cause major cliff falls. Observe the massive cliff falls associated with the Burragorang Valley mining. The Pagodas near the Capertee Valley could be under threat from mining subsidence.

Notwithstanding assurances from mining engineers (whose side are they on?) I believe that mining should not be allowed in, or under, our National Parks.

THE BARBECUE at Obelisk Bay was held on Wednesday 6th January despite the rain which delayed the cooking until about 8 pm. About 12 people attended, including someone from each of the Xmas-New Year holiday trips, so there was a lot of talk about bushwalking. No swimming - a bit cold. Stoves, lights and liquid refreshments were all brought. An enjoyable evening was had by all, including a couple of visitors who may become prospective members in due course.



VACANCIES FOR OFFICE BEARERS!

At the Annual General Meeting in March there will be an opportunity for new office bearers - several people will not be seeking re-election. These include the Treasurer, the Editor and the Secretary. George and Christine Floyd are off on a long overseas trip (bon voyage!) so the Club's secretarial work will be looked after by the Committee and also by Joy Hynes, a sort of "stand-in secretary". Thank you, Joy.

Torres del Paine National Park

One of the most beautiful Andean parks in South America

Willis's Walkabouts will spend about ten days trekking through this spectacular park as a part of our five-week tour to southern Chile and Argentina beginning in December 1993. On our last trip we enjoyed magnificent views of huge glaciers, snow-covered mountains, beautiful lakes, dense forests and sunny meadows covered in wild flowers. We walked through herds of guanacos and watched condors soaring above. It was the high point of a trip full of high points.

This tour is unlike any other on the market. The itinerary is not rigidly fixed. If some place is especially nice, we have the flexibility to spend extra time there. You pay only \$950 for the guide for the full five weeks. Everyone, including the guide, shares the rest of the expenses. If you have a few extra days, you can include a visit to Easter Island in the itinerary. If you have a few more weeks, you can include our Amazon basin wilderness expedition.

Write for full details.

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