

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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MARCH 1993

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THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

SBW OFFICE BEARERS & COMMITTEE

1993

The following Office Bearers and Committee Members as well as other Club workers were elected at the Annual General Meeting held on 10th March 1993:-

President	* Ian Debert
Vice-President	* Spiro Haginakitas
Public Officer	* Fran Holland
Treasurer	* Tony Holgate
Secretary	* Joy Hynes
Walks Secretary	* Bill Holland
Social Secretary	* John Hogan
New Members Secretary	* Laurie Bore
Membership Secretary	* Barry Wallace
Conservation Secretary	* Alex Colley
Magazine Editor	* George Mawer
2 Committee Members	* Morrie Ward
	* Zol Bodlay
2 Delegates to Confederation	* Jim Callaway
	* Bill Holland

2 Confederation Delegates NOT
on Committee

Magazine Production Manager

Magazine Business Manager

Printers

Assistant New Members Secretaries

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Search & Rescue Contacts

Kosciusko Huts Assn. Delegates

Wendy Lippiatt

Belinda McKenzie

Fran Holland

Joy Hynes

Kenn Clacher

Margaret Niven, Les Powell

Kay Chan & Barrie Murdoch

Margaret Niven & Fran Holland

Ian Debert

Barrie Murdoch

Chris Sonter

Morrie Ward, George Mawer
& Margaret Niven

Ian Wolf & Len Hanke

* Indicates members of Committee

NOTE: All Club workers are
Honorary

For ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

see Page 7

* * * * *



BY: MORAG RYDER

GUTHEGA SKI VILLAGE TO GUTHEGA POWER STATION VIA VALENTINE HUT

DECEMBER 26 TO DECEMBER 31 1992

Leader: George Walton. Followers: Wendy Arnott, Margaret & Laurie Bore, Patrick Bradley, Bruce Dunn, Peter Lafferty, Morag Ryder and Dick Weston.

Saturday 26

At 1.20 pm we rendezvoused in the simmering heat, at the Jindabyne Bowling Club. After a quick lunch we left one car at Jindabyne and one at Guthega power station, then squeezed ourselves and our packs into two cars and drove to Guthega ski village. Here the air was several degrees cooler, but we still perspired our way up the steep track to our campsite.

An ominous sky hastened the erection of our tents. After the late and rather heavy lunch in Jindabyne, no-one was particularly hungry. Instead we feasted our eyes, first on the stormy sunset and then on the slender new moon, which hung over Mount Tate as the clouds departed east.

Sunday 27

Away we went in cold wind and sunshine to Consett Stevens Pass, but as cloud refused to lift from Mt. Tate, the proposed side trip was cancelled. Long ribbons of snow drift decorated the eastern side of The Rolling Ground and because of the lingering snow, we squelched through unexpected bogs. Lunch near Dicky Cooper Bogong - it was hard to know which was the strongest, wind or sun. Down to Schlink Pass, struggling through assorted flowering shrubs in the marshy gully as we dropped to our campsite. By 3pm we were settled and fairly well sheltered from the ever-increasing wind, which was blowing heavy cloud over the ranges at a tremendous rate.



Monday 28

A wet and blustery night gave way to a morning where low cloud shrouded the hilltops and passing showers kept us in bed. Only energetic Bruce left his tent to make a fire, everyone else stayed snug indoors until mid morning, when departing cloud indicated that we should do likewise for Valentine Hut. By the time we reached Duck Creek we were back to the sunshine-and-flowers scene, with patches of buttercups golden among the bushes.

The old track had dissappeared, so Wendy and Laurie mistakenly stayed on one bank while the rest of the party went on the other. After some skilled rock-leaping they rejoined us for a quick lunch at the newly painted hut.

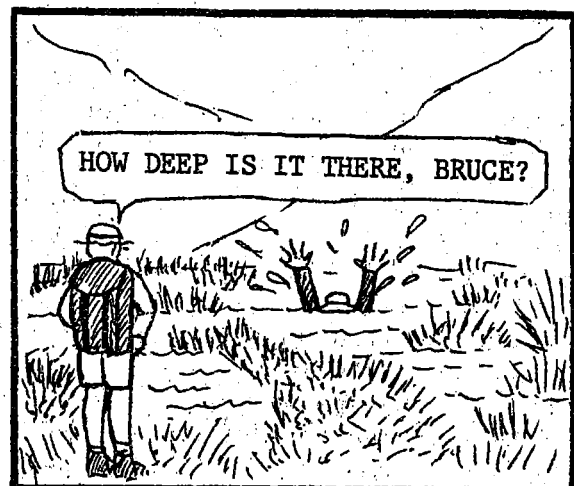


Between Valentine and Mawson Hut all ground proved to be sloping, boggy, windswept, scrubby or creekless, and we wandered about like migratory birds trying to roost. A nice spot at last, with lovely views over Valentine River. Plenty of fallen wood from a recent storm, and the fire was built on a high spot. This proved unwise, for the swirling wind ensured that the smoke choked all of us in turn. All except Wendy. Perhaps her years in dusty shearing sheds had made her immune.

Tuesday 29

Dry feet lasted about five minutes as we plodded accross the gully and toiled up over the next saddle. And the next, and the next. At last, Mawson Hut - looking smart and clean in the blazing sun. Morning tea and sunburn by Valentine River crossing, where brave Bruce went ahead to find a way through the 'rice paddy' - a brilliant green and far-too-deep swamp which lay between Valentine River and The Brassys.

By lunch the sun was so fierce we sought the shade of a small snowgum,



and lay there for a hour, idly shooing away the flies and admiring peaks Brassy and Big Brassy. Alas, these views did not satisfy our leader, who wanted bigger and better views - from the top of Big Brassy. After an exhausting battle through a tangled thicket of snowgums we got our view; over the ranges to Lake Adaminaby. Getting down from the south side was even worse, the only 'open' going was a rock filled gully overlaid with prostrate bushes.

Back on terra firma, the hunt for a campsite began. Dick found the best one, with snowdrift water close at hand and a Very Large snowdrift below us. Here Bruce learned the bumpy art of toboggoning on a plastic bag, while the less energetic read books or washed their socks.

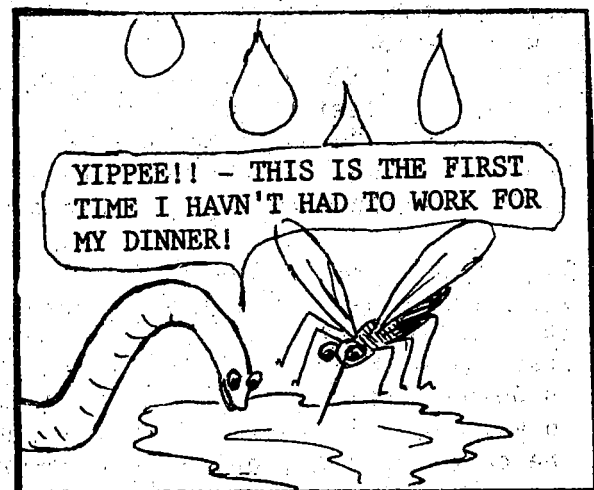
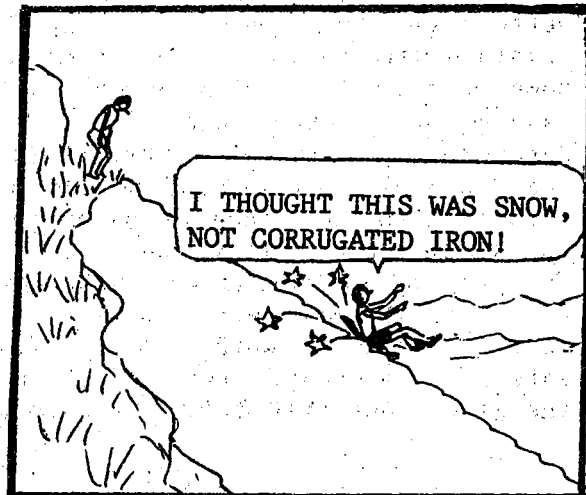
When the new moon again hung in a pink western sky, George disappeared. After about half an hour we became concerned, took our torches and prepared to search. A few bellows brought a muffled response. George was in the swamp with the mosquitos, reclining beside a pool, while his nose bled, and bled and bled....

Having got George back to a more comfortable position beside the fire, Patrick clamped finger and thumb on the bridge of George's nose, and eventually the flow ceased. Heaven only knows how many mosquitos/leeches George had fed down in the swamp.

Wednesday 30

With the sun hot on our backs, we arrived at Tin Hut for morning tea. Sitting in the shade, admiring the Kerries with their random icing of snowdrifts, we listened to the roar of a snow-fed cateract tumbling down the hill. More climbing, this time through flowering bush to Gungarten Pass, stopping to chat to a young man with three cameras and a tired lady friend." Where are you going to camp?" we asked, "Jagungal" they replied - ("VERY late," I added silently)

Lunch on a grassy patch just below Gungarten Trig, where a massive rookery was in full cry - perhaps this was their mating season. A group of day walkers joined us and said they wanted to visit Tin Hut. George tried to advise them, but as the route was trackless they seemed to have some difficulty following his directions.



More paddling in a nice deep gully before Disappointment Ridge. What I wonder, was the disappointment - it looked fine to me. A brisk struggle through the shrubbery, and we were in the first saddle. "Let's camp here," said George. Dick said it would be better on the western side, so opinions were divided. Some went up, some down and some sideways. We watched a stormy sunset over Main Range while the mosquitos marshalled their armies into suicide squads and zeroed in to any piece of bare skin. Fog filled the valley, but the sky was full of stars and we began again the discussion of Finding The South Pole With The Southern Cross. Peter explained the theory, but somehow we couldn't make it work. So we watched and timed the nightly parade of satellites instead. Peter said it took only 8 minutes for them to circle the globe, but that didn't seem to work, either.



Thursday 31

With the north wind at our backs we wandered along the ridge. We needed only to take a gully down to the road and we'd soon be back at Guthega power station. But which gully? After rejecting one or two, we chose one with lots of Caledonia orchids and flowering scrub. Another wash for our already-wet feet - and we were on the road. A quick morning tea and we sped down to Guthega; but not as fast as a group of young cyclists, also on their way down. We made way and exchanged cheerful comments with them - an attitude which was soon to prove beneficial.

Taking our clean clothes from Patrick's car, we changed at high speed, while the drivers piled into Patrick's car. The starter motor groaned, but the car refused to start. A pretty, blond young lady cyclist tried to start it with jumper leads and her Volvo. No go. So she took the drivers to Guthega ski village, while Patrick rang the NRMA. Sorry, he would have to wait for at least an hour. Further investigation by Patrick revealed the cause of the problem, a bone-dry battery. A quick refill, but still no start. The others returned and George produced his jumper leads.

Obviously recognising defeat by skilled hands, Patrick's car started immediately. Relief and joy all round. Away we sped; goodbye Snowys for another year - back to the heat of Sydney. I found some withered leaves in my pocket and sniffed them; Alpine Mint Bush - but from where? - ah yes, Gungahlin Pass.

FOR SALE

1 pair Men's HI-TEC P.C.T. Walking Boots - size 8½ = \$60
NEW - Contact Nigel Wingate - Tel. 909 8956

CONSERVATION

The Funny Fund

by Alex Colley

Near the end of 1991 the S.B.W. learned that the Wilderness Fund, established in 1987, had no money in it. This seemed a pity, so the S.B.W. donated \$130 to the fund in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of our acquisition of Blue Gum Forest for 130 pounds. Tim Moore was glad to accept our gift and to add another \$80,000 to it. Last September we learned that there was still no money in the Fund, so we wrote to the new Minister for Conservation, the Hon. Chris Hartcher, to ask where our money had gone. Mr Hartcher replied that the establishment of the Fund would require the National Parks & Wildlife Service to incur considerable expense in altering existing accounting systems.

He told us that - "The Service has established a separate working account within the existing system, to accept any funding for wilderness that it received. It was into this fund that the Sydney Bush Walkers' donation was deposited and I am pleased to be able to advise you that this money is to be used to purchase six copies of the publication by Michael Hall entitled 'From Wasteland to World Heritage' for use in reference libraries throughout the National Parks & Wildlife Service".

It is a pity that the Wilderness Fund is still empty. It might have been hoped that our donation would inspire others to donate and that the money could have been spent on projects such as the acquisition of inholdings in wilderness areas. Nobody is likely to donate to a NPWS account. From our viewpoint the money would have been better spent in purchasing copies of Pat Thompson's book on our founding member, Myles Dunphy OBE. We simple bushwalkers find it difficult to appreciate the expense incurred in crediting the S.B.W. and debiting the recipient.

Nevertheless, our money was well spent. It inspired valuable publicity in the Sydney Morning Herald (see February 1992 issue). Seen afterwards Tim Moore declared ten wilderness areas within national parks and announced a schedule for the assessment and exhibition of ten other wilderness areas.

And the Wilderness Fund retains the unique distinction of being the only fund in Sydney with no money in it.

* * * * *

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS 1993

The following annual subscriptions were decided at the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th March 1993:-

Single Member	\$30
Household	48
Non-active Member	9
Non-active Member plus Magaxine	21
Magazine subscription only	12

* * * * *

EARTH WIND FIRE RAIN



THE

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.

At \$249.00 it represents outstanding value for money for a fully featured Gore-Tex rainshell. The Barcoo passed with flying colours

the stringent tests carried out by W.L. Gore as part of their Guaranteed To Keep You Dry

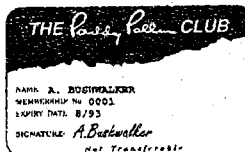
programme.

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.



THE TIKA CORONET - FOR TRAVELLING BUSHWALKERS.

You're off on some lengthy travels that could involve some bushwalking along the way? If so the Tika Coronet (\$389) could be the pack for you. It has both a top loading and front opening facility, a comfortable 2 size adjustable harness system that can be zipped away for avoiding the airport baggage chewer! The front pocket zips off and converts to a daypack. A fine pack for those travelling to Europe but stopping off in Nepal on the way home to trek around Annapurna.



'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

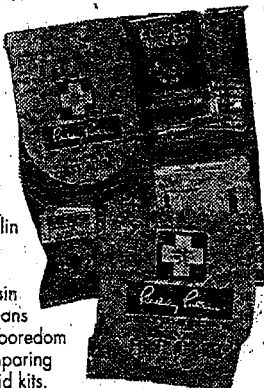
PADDY PALLIN COVERS THE COUNTRY!

All 400+ products in our catalogue or any other item of outdoor equipment can be sent anywhere. So if you

can't make it to a Paddy Pallin store call Toll Free 008 805398 for a copy of The Paddy Pallin Catalogue and full details on our Mail Order Operation

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

DON'T BAG THE ENVIRONMENT - 16,000 BAGS SAVED!

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

Paddy Pallin

THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE

Sydney	507 Kent St NSW 2000	Ph 02 2642685
Miranda	527 Kingsway NSW 2228	Ph 02 5256829
Canberra	11 Lonsdale St Braddon ACT 2601	Ph 06 2573883
Jindabyne	Kosciusko Rd NSW 2627	Ph 064 562922
Melbourne	360 Little Bourke St VIC 3000	Ph 03 6704845
Box Hill	8 Market St VIC 3128	Ph 03 8988596
Adelaide	228 Rundle St SA 5000	Ph 08 2323155
Perth	1/891 Hay St WA 6000	Ph 09 3212666
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	(Melbourne Residents Ph 03 6709485)	Fax 03 670 4822

THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS HAVE ARRIVED. See them in your Paddy Pallin store now!

YERRANDERIE - ANOTHER BROKEN HILL?

On April 30th-May 1,2 Ray Hookway will be leading a walk in the Yerranderie area. Some years ago Ray did a deal of research into the history of the mining activities in the region, and his article, first published in the June 1974 magazine, is reproduced for the benefit of members planning to join his April/May walk.

In earlier years of the Club, Yerranderie often featured in Club Walks Programs as it gave access to the Middle Kowmung, Colong Caves and the fascinating Blue Breaks country. The town is in a spectacular setting, with cliffs, gaps and plateaux filling the entire western and northern skylines. Access was not unduly difficult by reason of the road that came from Camden following the floor of Burragorang Valley along the Wollondilly River for about 15 km. Indeed, there were regular buses from Camden on Friday evening, and a return journey from Yerranderie about 4.30 pm on Sundays and holidays until the early 1950s.

However, with the winding down of mining operations and in the knowledge that the flooding of the valley by Warragamba Dam would close this route, the population of the town had dwindled to a dozen or so people by about 1955, and by 1959 road outlets to the east were being submerged. A few determined land owners around Bindook bull-dozed a rough trail along the old stock route to Mount Werong, south of Oberon, and this route has been improved greatly over the years. There is, however, quite a complex of roads on the plateau between Oberon and Mount Werong and drivers unfamiliar with the route should consult Ray about it before attempting to find the way to Batsch Camp at night.

JIM BROWN.

YERRANDERIE

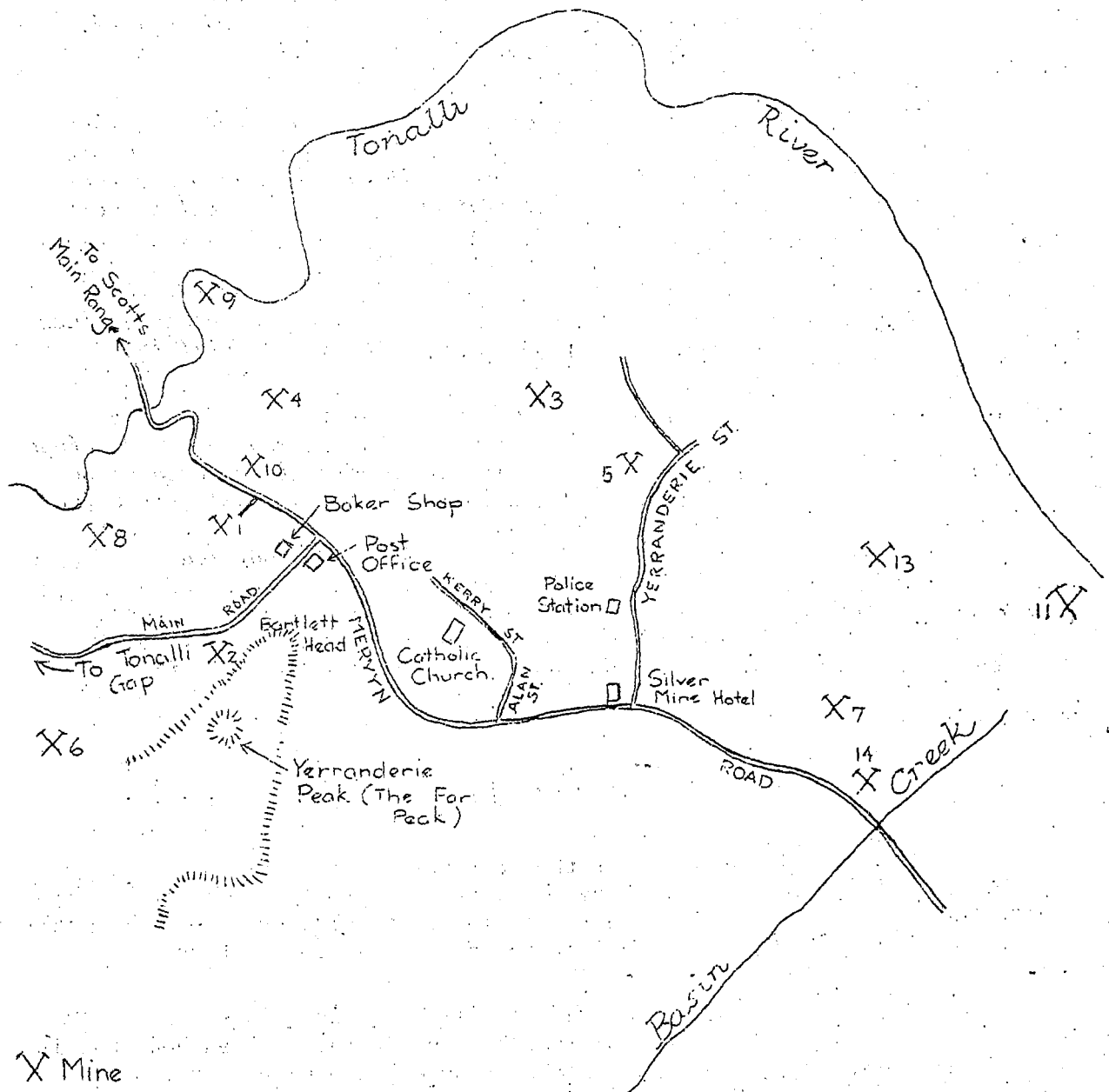
by Ray Hookway

The first white man to enter the Yerranderie area was Ensign Francis Barallier. In 1802 Governor King sent Barallier to find a route over the Blue Mountains. To circumvent a regulation that soldiers were not permitted to go exploring, King sent Barallier on an "Embassy to the King of the Mountains".

Some confusion exists regarding Barallier's exact route, but investigations by Else Mitchell in 1938 indicate that Barallier reached what is now Yerranderie on November 24th, 1802, crossed through Byrnes gap, proceeded down either Church or Cedar Creek, along the Kowmung and up Middle Christys as far as Barallier's Falls. He then turned back, not knowing that he was only about 4 miles from the Kanangra plateau and a crossing of the Blue Mountains. His explorations, however, led to a steady stream of squatters who settled along the Nattai, Tonalli and Wollondilly Rivers.

Silver was first discovered in 1871 by Billy Russel and Billy George at a spot later to become the Foldsworth Mine, two miles east of Yerranderie Post Office. The first mining title was issued in 1874 and by 1885 about 20 leases had been issued, but little mining was done as transport difficulties made it uneconomical.

The main Yerranderie lead was discovered by John Viga Bartlett in 1898 and by the end of the year about 80 men were engaged in mining in an area of about 500 acres.

YERRANDERIE SILVER FIELD

X Mine

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Colon Peaks (Bartletts) | 8. Coffey's |
| 2. Silver Peak or Boreblock | 9. Piece of Pork |
| 3. Wollondilly | 10. St. George |
| 4. Wonga | 11. Feldsworth (off map) |
| 5. Burraborang | 12. Myall Ridge (off map) |
| 6. Great Western or Nevada | 13. Silver Star or Terni |
| 7. The Silver King | 14. The Great Peak |

One sample from Bartlett's St. George lode assayed 3000 ozs of silver to the ton (silver was 24 c oz), and a Mr. Webb Mackie recovered from 60 tons of ore, 3420 ozs silver, 20 tons of lead (\$25.05 a ton) and 6 ozs of gold (\$7.75 an oz), a total of \$1,352. However, returns were patchy and the total return for Mr. Bartlett in 1898 was only \$1,600. Between 1898 and 1921 Mr. Bartlett's Colon Peak Mine produced nearly \$1.5 million in silver. The record of this mine was unique as practically no capital was raised during its life, all costs being met from the ore won.

In 1908 the Wollondilly Mine (later the Yerranderie) employed 351 men and the ore output was 7402 tons, having a value of \$228,058. A peak in ore output at Yerranderie was reached in 1910 and by December 1914 the main two mines had exhausted their first grade ore. First grade ore was hand selected and dressed underground, second grade ore was concentrated locally by gravity methods. Because of selective mining first grade ore comprised 50/60% of the total.

Up until 1925 when motor trucks were introduced ore was shipped to Camden, 42 miles, by waggons drawn by six or more horses, thence by rail to the Sulphide Corporation smelter at Cockle Creek. In 1922 when this smelter closed the mines were forced to ship their ore to Port Pirie in South Australia. In 1914 there appeared enough second grade ore available for the Government Geologist to propose a railway to Yerranderie from Picton Lakes, and surveys were undertaken, but in 1916 the then Government Geologist warned that mineral prospects could not warrant the expenditure and the project was dropped.

At the peak of mining there were 14 mines operating, but between 1923 and 1925 this had dropped to four, Colon Peak, Silver Peak, Wollondilly and Wonga.

The extensive workings on the western side of the Tonalli Gap road belonged to the Silver Peak Mine which commenced in 1904 and in twenty years made \$650,000. Mine workings were extensive. Three multipair boilers with a total capacity of 300 H.P. drove one surface winch and one underground winch on the main shaft. Fifty tons of material per shift could be handled and 30/40 tons milled in the steam-driven hammer and roller mill. Two concentrating tables handled the second grade ore.

Recovery from the mill was 60/70% of the assay value and unrecovered metals left in the slime assayed 10/18 ozs silver to the ton. Most of the mess at Silver Peak resulted from the treatment of the slimes in 1935 to recover this residue.

Mr. Bartlett's Colon Peak Mine which was located about 500 feet N.W. of the rear of the Baker shop had four main shafts. One shaft 700 feet long extended under the Baker shop to a spot S.W. of the Post Office.

All mines closed during the general mining strike in 1929/30 when miners who earned \$10 for a 44 hour week struck for higher wages and a 40 hour week, and from then till 1938 only sporadic mining or treatment of the mullock heaps was carried out. The total production of all mines to 1930 was over \$4 million.

In 1927 there were over 500 people in Yerranderie. Three general stores, a Baker, a Butcher, a Milkman and a Hotel which took up to \$240 in good weeks. (The license was later transferred to St. Mary's.) Three established churches attended to the community's religious needs

and crib games, picture shows and dances in the community hall provided entertainment. Fourteen differently pitched mine whistles regulated their working day.

In 1955 a visiting journalist reported a population of 25, all former miners and most on silicosis pensions, and in 1959 the filling of the Warragamba Dam spelt the end for Yerranderie.

Many people believe that Yerranderie will live again and that rising metal prices coupled with world shortages will render mining economical. Several recent prospecting leases have been issued and test drillings have been made.

Miss V. Lhuede, a director of Tonalli Mining, who owns 1,100 acres of Yerranderie land, including the old Post Office, believes the mines could be re-opened, but has come to believe that this would ruin the fascination of the place. She would now rather see it become an artists' colony.

Bushwalkers who have visited the area will share her feelings.

References: Dept Mines Geological Survey of Mineral Resources No.35

Royal Australian Historical Society Journal Vol.23/24 1937-38

CONFEDERATION OF BUSHWALKING CLUBS NSW

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

by Spiro Hajinakitas

All walkers are urged to be on the lookout for illegal activities in National Parks such as unauthorised vehicles, stealing rocks, plants and animals, bringing in pets. Report any clues of the identity of the offenders, number plates of vehicles are very useful.

The Plans of Management of the Wollemi and Blue Mountains National Parks have been delayed. The Minister is known to consider that no plans are necessary and the problem related to increasing the water level of Warragamba dam is yet to be resolved. Increase in catchment air-space above the spillway could result in the loss of choice areas of the Park e.g. the Kowmung area.

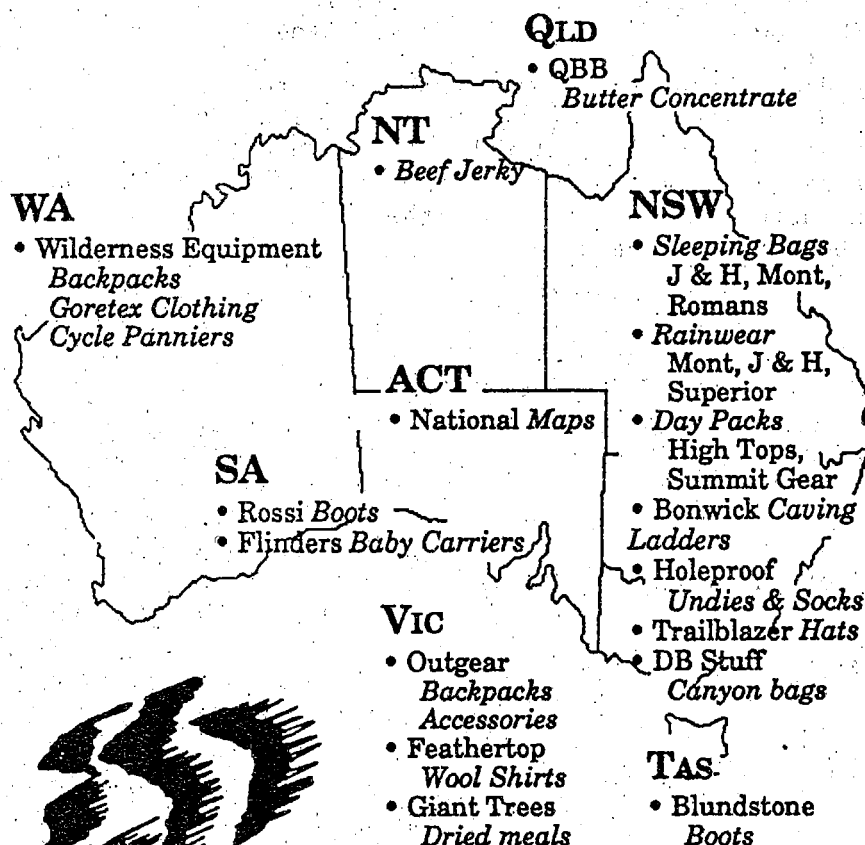
Confederation is opposing the entry of horse riders in the northern Kosciusko National Park.

The next Search & Rescue practice is to be on 27/28 March with emphasis on remote area first aid. Appin map 1:25000 reference 997083.

Clubs that have large groups of people interested in doing the St. John Ambulance First Aid Course should organize their own group, i.e. a group of ten or more.

Confederation's insurance company has asked that the term "Club Visitor" be explained and defined in a way that is acceptable to the insurance company.

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THE FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

At about 2018 there were some 16 or so members present so the President gonged the gong and went for it, as they say, with apologies, minutes and all that stuff. The meeting finally grew to number around 26 souls in all but it was from this small beginning let it not be forgot. There was an apology from Margaret Niven and no new members to welcome.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received with no matters arising. The Treasurer's Report indicated that we acquired income of \$519 for the month. This report was received.

Correspondence brought a letter from solicitors acting for our insurance company advising us that the matter concerning a damages claim by Frances Drew has been stood over for mention in the same court on 15th March. It has still not been determined whether the action will be taken to the district court with an increased claim but in either case it is expected that the hearing will be set for June or July this year.

The Walks Report began at the weekend of 16,17 January with Ian Debert/Bill Holland reporting 6/11 starters on the canoe trip/walk in the vicinity of Lake Yarrunga. The weather was fine and warm, which was O.K. by the canoeists, and Bill, who somehow or other attempted to maintain the virtues of a 3-hour slog through hot scrub as a way of getting to the campsite. All the other walkers didn't seem to be so sure. Geoff McIntosh's trip in the Mount Wilson area went, with a party of 8 in rather hot conditions. Zol Bodlay's Saturday coastal walk was cancelled. Oliver Crawford reported 12 on his Sunday Wollongambe trip, returning to the cars early so as not to miss the heat of the day. Jim Callaway had a party of "7 to 6 to 8 to 4" on his Bundeena to Otford trip enjoying the hot conditions with lots of swimming along the way.

The Australia Day weekend saw Brian Holden and a cast of 18, including Bill Holland and his walk to Yalwal Creek, participating in a gloriously unstructured relaxation weekend on the Shoalhaven River, walking, floating, sunning, swimming, side-tripping and generally enjoying what sounds to have been a great weekend for that sort of thing. Two people arrived at half time and everyone seems to have left at different times as suited them best. Zol Bodlay and an undisclosed number of wise men or fools went to Blackheath for his Saturday Blackheath to Blackheath via Centennial Glen walk, took a long hard look at the teeming rain and came home again. Whether this be seen as cowardice, wisdom or "been there, done that" will depend on one's perspective. Alan Mewett, the timekeeper of note, led a party of 17 through fine weather with sunny intervals on his Hawkesbury River trip on the Sunday.

At tiem of report Ian Wolfe and party were still out there, somewhere, on his 12-day Tasmanian walk. Watch this space.

January 30,31 saw Belinda McKenzie and a party of 3 enjoying a pleasant time on a day-and-a-half stroll through the Royal National Park from Bundeena to Otford. Bill Holland's party of 19, rampaging through the wilds of farthest Eloura bushland, piked early and went back to the barbecue to join the others. Maurie Bloom's bike trip along the south coast was rendered more pleasand by the onshore breeze which provided much needed cooling airflow. The continuing Canyon Odyssey of Peter Christian had 7 in the Twilight Canyon of the program.

Oliver Crawford's walk in the Budawangs over the weekend of 5,6,7 February saw the rains come with drizzle and fog, so the party shrank from 12 to 10 and the remainder camped under Mount Donjon to keep their powder dry and

enjoyed the views next day. Zol Bodlay led a party of 4 on his Saturday trip to Murra Murra N.P. Things were better here than in the Budawangs, with fine but overcast conditions. Of the Sunday walks Eddie Giacomel had the 17 people on his trip to the Colo River back at the cars by 1900 and George Mawer led his party of 17 through an enjoyable day from Waterfall to Heathcote. Somewhere in there Kenn Clacher led a party of 3 through the milling hordes in Claustal Canyon and backed up to repeat the experience with a party of 5 in Bell Creek on the Sunday. Here endeth the Walks Report.

Our \$130 is still out there, not doing well and about to disappear into one of those agglomerated funds so beloved of politicians and bureaucrats, or so the Conservation Report revealed. It was all cloaked in double-speak about "costs of establishing separate fund", "separate accounting overheads" and so on, but it all means that the State Government's Conservation Fund, established with press releases and fanfare is to be buried quietly. Weep not, gentle reader, for we are advised that our \$130 will be put to purchasing copies of an uplifting book about transforming industrial wasteland into parkland. The moral presumably being that it's OK to make industrial wastelands in the first place. Alex has written to the National Parks & Wildlife Service on the matter of planning for the Nattai National Park, and will write to the RTA urging them to re-vegetate the scarred verges of the Mittagong bypass.

Detailed Confederation Notes are somewhere in the magazine so we will not attempt to cover those matters here.

There was no General Business so after announcements the meeting closed at 2118.

KIMBERLEY EXPEDITIONS

For a limited time, Willis's Walkabouts is offering special discounts on some of our 1993 Kimberley Expeditions. All trips are planned to use air transport to and/or from Kununurra to minimise the amount of time you have to spend cramped up in a vehicle.

Drysdale River National Park: May 30 - June 20, June 20 - July 4

Drysdale River is the largest and least accessible of the Kimberley parks. It contains a variety of landscapes, a wealth of aboriginal art and numerous beautiful pools, perfect for swimming and fishing. The first expedition will be a leisurely exploration of the northern part of the park, using a food drop so that we won't need to carry more than a week's food at a time. The second is planned as a through walk from the southern end through the central section.

Mitchell Plateau: May 9-30, August 22 - September 4

Located in the north central part of the Kimberley, the Mitchell Plateau is blessed with a milder climate than much of the region. It's wealth of different habitats gives it a larger variety of native flora and fauna than most of the Kimberley. Both trips include two weeks concentrating on the area close to the Mitchell River. The May trip includes our first exploration of the Lawley River. Both include numerous aboriginal art sites and plenty of time for swimming. The area continues to be threatened by mining so see it while you can.

For details of these trips and others (please ask for the trip notes and specify where you saw this ad to be eligible for the discount) contact:



WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

12 Carrington Street

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BALDUR BYLES AND KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK

by Reg Alder

(Originally published in National Parks Assn
ACT Bulletin - December 1992.)

During the summer of 1931-32 Baldur Byrd, a forester with the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau and a brother of the early environmental activist Marie Byles, carried out a six month period reconnaissance of the mountainous part of the Murray River. His report formed the basis for more effective control of the fragile environment of the alpine areas on the New South Wales side of the Murray which eventually led to the formation of Kosciusko National Park. The park was later consolidated and extended because the Snowy Scheme needed strict control of erosion.

In the 1930s all the mountain country was held under some form of grazing lease which did not permit the destruction of trees or the lighting of fires in the summer months. In practice, lessees lit fires as often as they thought fit, talking about lightning, glass bottles and spontaneous combustion as a reason whilst having the knowledge of who lit it. If the fire happened to burn one of their own paddocks they had no proof, their only hope being that during the next summer they may be able to get even with the man who lit the fire. These fires destroyed thousands of acres each year.

Fires, in destroying the alpine woody scrub and alpine ash, initiated erosion in the high country and gullying in the freehold properties below 700 metres. The velocity of the degradation process was increasing in geometrical proportion to the extent that in areas where alpine ash had completely disappeared, landslides were occurring. Gutters and gullies were forming on the grass slopes of the Kosciusko tops and in the lower altitudes soil had been completely washed away from under fence posts. Ninety-nine per cent of the fires occurring were lit to clear away the collection of rank unpalatable grasses or to remove scrub from the stock routes.

At the time of the report approximately two-thirds of the area originally covered by the alpine woody scrub type had been completely cleared by fire. All the species forming this cover are extremely fire sensitive and once burnt out do not coppice and their powers of seed production are light. Where grass formerly grew it may thrive after a fire, however where the soil is too shallow the organic layer dries up and blows away to be followed by the loose sandy soil, leaving bare granite rocks and stones.

In only one place did Byles see a snow gum stand to the almost natural state, but even then this had been badly burnt around the butts. Although snow gums coppice abundantly after burning, successive burnings kill them altogether. In the more accessible country no signs of original stands were left. Where an original snow gum stand is killed by fire, fairly dense undergrowth comes in which, with further burnings causes the scrub to disappear and a final stage of snow grass to be reached.

All of this clearing caused serious drying-up of the swamps in the plateau country; whereas 30 years previously a swamp in the parish of Jagungal could not be crossed by horse, now in an average summer a bullock dray could be driven across it. A change in climatic cycle was discounted as a reason for the drying-up as this was not shown from the rainfall records of the surrounding country.

When fire destroys an alpine ash stand a good crop of seedlings comes up in its place. However if fires occur at intervals of five to ten years, the new crop does not reach seed-producing age as mature trees need to reach a height of near 20 metres at an age of 20 to 30 years before producing seed.

Baldur Byles travelled on a saddle horse supported by one pack horse and because of the strenuous nature of the work and somewhat poor natural feed, frequent changes of horses were necessary. There were few tracks and the locals had little knowledge of areas which were not of direct interest to them for grazing. In many instances he had to walk from the tops to a valley bottom which frequently involved 12 hours of arduous walking and climbing without the assistance of local guides.

Whereas today we are used to paved motor roads and fire trails, 60 years ago Kosciusko could have been defined, apart from the grazing, as an almost true wilderness area. The report lists access points: motor vehicles could only reach Possum Point on the Tooma River, Khancoban, Wollondibby near Jindabyne, Adaminaby, Snowy Plain on the Gungahlin and Kiandra. Access was gained by bullock teams to Wheelers selection and Round Mountain on a track described as very bad; grey Mare and Mawsons Hut by bullock team; and from Adaminaby, Pretty Plain and Geehi by pack horse. Groggin was reached by bridle track from geehi. From Groggin a bridle track led up to Dead Horse Gap from where a poorly defined track led to the Pilot and on to Omeo.

A recent track led from Geehi up to the main range at Kosciusko and a metre and half track from Groggin to Limestone Creek was impassable because of fallen logs and washouts. From Jindabyne a motor road led to Thredbo River and from there a bridle track led to Dead Horse Gap and on to Kosciusko. The remaining descriptions only cover bridle track routes and from them it can be seen how much of the alpine area has been opened-up with the aid of bulldozers and graders since World War Two.

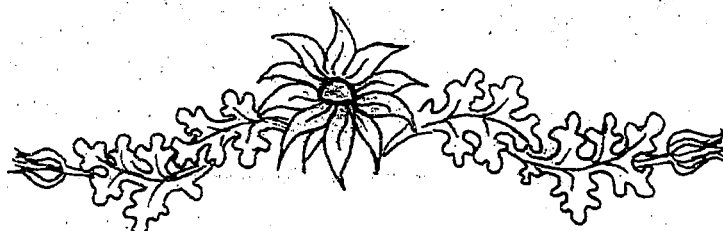
It is well to reflect upon how much more of the Kosciusko plateau would have been degraded if Baldur Byles had not drawn attention to the serious erosion occurring in 1931-32. In 1931 Myles Dunphy did a grand walking tour of 200 km from Beloka to the Snowy and on to Mount Kosciusko and Thredbo. It would be probably no coincidence that Myles with his association with Marie Byles, both of the Sydney Bush Walkers, talked about the degradation of Kosciusko and formed his idea for a national park.

Baldur, besides being a forester, also had a deep regard for the environment and because of his official position would use Marie as his public voice. Myles worked on his proposal for a Snowy-Indi National Park or Primitive Area and displayed his scheme at a public exhibition in Sydney in 1935. The war intervened and in 1943 he was requested by the Lands Department of NSW to develop further his National Parks and Primitive Areas Council scheme for a national park. Kosciusko National Park was declared in 1944.

* * * * *

CONGRATULATIONS!

Alex Colley's daughter, Fran, who now lives in Adelaide, has given birth to twins, a boy Alexander Robert and a girl Louisa June. A busy time ahead for Mum and Dad!



EXPERIENCED WALKER

by Bill Gamble

The question, allegedly vexed, with which Confederation is grappling, namely about what constitutes an "experienced walker" for media purposes, reported by Barry Wallace in the December meeting notes (January 1993 issue, page 16), may not be without interest, as many members of this Club would claim to be experienced bush walkers of some kind.

Barry's report reminded me that a beaut little booklet (48 pages put out by the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand in 1978, 6th edition, entitled "Safety in the Mountains") which I carry on extended walks as a memory jog, contains all sorts of practical advice, hints and reminders, including a definition of EXPERIENCE.

The portion of the booklet on leadership, which states that many accidents occur because the leader is presumed to be more experienced than he or she is, defines experience thus:-

KNOWLEDGE + SKILLS + EXTENSIVE PRACTICE = EXPERIENCE.

Extensive practice is the most important.

Instruction courses provide knowledge and skills only, adding that a recognised leader needs not only experience but ALSO a positive disposition and physical fitness.

I do not know if any of this is going to resolve the Confederation's dilemma, though it may be of interest to those Club members who lead walks or aspire to do so.

The booklet weighs about 25 grams and is probably still available in a later edition. The duties of a leader to his or her party en route are also succinctly put.

SOCIAL NOTES FOR APRIL

- April 7 - Committee Meeting
- 14 - General Meeting
- 21 - "A Visit to Mawson's Hut in Antarctica" by John Noble
- 28 - "Australian Native Plants" - slides and talk by Jill Dark

