



THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER is a monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc, Box 4476 GPO Sydney 2001. To advertise in this magazine, please contact the Business Manager.

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THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS INCORPORATED was founded in 1927. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening at 8 pm at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli (near Milsons Point Railway Station). Visitors and prospective members are welcome any Wednesday.

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September 1995

In This Issue

- 2 **Elsies Tallest Girl**
Pat Harrison
- 3 **Detective Story**
Karen Brading
- 4 **On The Receiving End**
Fran Holland
- To Confederate or Not**
Don Brooks
- Lets Not Hurry**
Bill Holland
- 5 **Gordon Smith**
Reg Alder
- 6 **From The Clubroom**
Jan Roberts
- 8 **Letter To The President**
Joan Rigby
- 10 **Wolfe's Wanderings**
Louise Verdon
- 13 **The August General Meeting**
Barry Wallace
- 14 **Nav' 95**
- 14 **Wilderness Rescue Practice**

Advertisers:

- 6 **Eastwood Camping Centre**
- 7 **Willis Walkabouts**
- 9 **Mountain Equipment**
- 12 **Alpsports**
- 15 **Paddy Pallin**

The following article is submitted by a former member of the SBW, Pat Harrison, and contains reminiscences about club members.

Pat, aged 80, and still walking, was a very active member of the club, serving as Walks secretary and leading many interesting and challenging walks. He was also a prolific writer and submitted many articles to the Bushwalker.

"ELSIE'S TALLEST GIRL SEEMS TALLER THAN YOUR LITTLE ELSIE THEN, AND ETHEL IS A WOMAN GROWN AND WED"

(From 'The Sick Stockrider' by A.L. Gordon)

On Mother's day six years ago a little blue-eyed maid was playing with one of those notebooks the banks used to give away to children at the Sydney Show years ago, and as she played a couple of pages came loose and fell into my lap, and as I began to replace them in the book the words took my attention and this is what I read:-

"Monday 9th September 1968: Last days of holidays. Dad stayed home today and will stay home all week. Yesterday, 8th Sept, Dad and I went for a day walk with the Sydney Bushwalkers, whose leader's name was David Ingram. Sometimes Tear-away Callaway (Jim Callaway) charges off through the scrub and sometimes disappears, and then suddenly pops out of the bush, with long legs first, and then disappears again. The walk was supposed to be 8 miles but seemed more like 20 miles. We caught the 5.00 pm train from Waterfall back to Heathcote, and then Dad drove the car the rest of the way."

There are two little blue-eyed maids and their mother is the "Ethel" of the Sick Stockrider, but little did I know that she kept a diary of walks with her dad as an 11-year old, so I looked up my archives and found that the walk was WATERFALL - MT WESTMACOTT - KINGFISHER CREEK - MYUNA CREEK - WATERFALL and that there were 26 on it. Some of the names were Frank Leyden, Bill Cosgrove, Ern and Betty Farquar, Gladys Roberts, Muriel Goldstein, Colin Burton, Eric Rhodes and Ramon Ubrien.

David Ingram was noted for his grave manner, particularly when he formed a circle, announced his name, and said: 'it is my job to get you from Waterfall to Waterfall' (as the case may be). Tear-Away Jim Callaway always was, and probably still is, in a hurry because, 'twas said he always had a baked dinner

waiting for him on Sunday nights at his Heathcote home.

Frank Leyden, I believe, is now a Bishop of one of those funny 'churches', but in those days he was noted for having invented what he called his Kowmung shirt...which was really a Jackie-Howe Flannel with very short sleeves but otherwise only reaching to just below his arm pits, so that his shoulders were protected from sunburn.

Frank used to go down the Kowmung below Misery Ridge every summer for a week or so and apart from a hat his complete rigout was Kowmung shirt, a pair of sandshoes and nothing in between. Try to imagine the surprise (no skinny dipping in those austere times!) of the mixed party suddenly confronted by Frank and his Kowmung shirt and sandshoes and nothing in between as he one time rounded a bend somewhere near Venn's Selection, looking for all the world like a very large skinned rabbit.

As I read the pages of my daughter's diary the memories came flooding and I began to wonder whether the membership of the SBW still had the same leaven. Do you still have such characters? Are there still such wonderful nicknames as the Dalai Lama, Yarmak, and the Flying Dutchman? The Flying Dutchman! who used to sell papers outside the old Lottery office and who went on god-knows-how-many-walks before it was realised that he was not even a prospective. The Flying Dutchman whom Don Finch once retrieved from the wilderness on our trackless way from Uraterer to Grassy Hill on the Capertee! Does Don Finch still go afield with meagre necessities? Will he still carry you dry-shod across a river for the use of your map?

Good fellows, all of them, and I hope you still have many such amongst you and that these times of affluence and yuppiness and trendiness have not created too many Malvolios unable to crack a laugh at themselves! □

"How long can a new modern tent be expected to last"

A Club member asks "What is The Life Expectancy of the modern tent" ? and goes on to say:- "As the owner of several vintage Japara and canvas tents which show no signs of giving up the ghost, and as the prospective purchaser of a modern snow tent could we canvas members re their experiences with the new units? I am sure that there are many people who would find the answers informative and useful." □

THE SYDNEY BUSH DETECTIVES

by Karen Brading

"An easy weekend walk including at least 50% with day packs only" the description read of Bill Holland's Meryla Pass walk on the weekend of 5/6 August. It proved to be a very accurate prediction for some of our party.

We left the cars at the top of Meryla Pass and strolled down the firetrail on a clear cold morning with the sounds of lyrebirds and wrens to entertain us. We passed a clearing where a homestead once stood and reached a Y junction, where a track to the left wound steeply downhill towards our evening camping site and the right fork led into a dead end at Lake Yarrunga.

"We'll drop our packs here", Bill announced. We'd only need daypacks for the sidetrip. "Of course, you can carry your overnight packs if you want to." As no-one was willing to take him up on his offer, we hid our packs out of sight of the fire trail and set off at 11am feeling slightly lighter.

There were ten of us - Bill and Fran Holland, Alan and Anita Doherty, Paul Haines, Linda Mallett, Lorraine Bloomfield, Patrick Wasielewski, Karen and Richard Brading.

After lunch we returned to the junction, passing a group of 4 teenagers accompanied by two dogs. One of them remarked that they had just come down through the bush, pointing to his friend's machete. This seemed strange as the cliffline is only broken by Meryla Pass.

At the junction we went in search of our packs. From behind the bushes Paul let out a cry - "My pack is gone!". As everyone arrived we verified that 4 of the 10 packs were missing, clearly stolen. 40% of us were left with day packs only!

We immediately split into small groups to search the area for signs of other people. Two of us raced back to check on the cars, another two checked the other campsite, while the rest looked around for any clues.

Alan used his eagle eyes to spot some fresh disturbance on the uphill bank about 500 metres down the dead-end track to the lake. Out of sight we found three of the four missing packs. Only Lorraine's, which was small and light, was still missing. Curiously in one of the three we found a cigarette

lighter wrapped in Lorraine's pack cover, but otherwise the packs were still intact.

Light was failing so we regrouped and made camp outside the locked gate. Clearly the evidence indicated that the 4 teenagers we had passed were the culprits. There were no other people or vehicles in the area. Lorraine enjoyed a smorgasbord dinner and slept in Bill's car.

During the evening we decided on a plan to catch them red-handed when they returned to the scene of the crime. The teenagers had already told us when they were being picked up by their parents. So the next morning we replaced the packs and took up strategic positions nearby, knowing they would come back before 11am. We even had a camera ready to take their photo at the right moment.

We were correct. At 10:50am, after nearly 2 hours in the cold, the sound of barking dogs signalled their return. As two teenagers climbed up the bank straight towards the packs, their dogs sensed three bushwalkers hiding behind the trees. But just before they could give away their positions, Bill jumped up - "Hold it right there!". This startled the teenagers and they fled up the firetrail, dropping Lorraine's pack on their way. Bill continued to holler at them that they were caught and there were more of us up the track. Their two companions were carrying their gear and pretended nothing had happened. They all stopped without trouble as they had nowhere to run. An inspection of their gear revealed an identical cigarette lighter to the one we had found the previous evening.

We waited with the teenagers until their fathers arrived and Bill and Alan explained to them what had happened. At 3 pm, 10 bushwalkers crowded into Bowral Police Station to make statements and tied up the 3 available police in the Southern Highlands for 2 hours. Not an ideal way to spend a Sunday afternoon, but a suitable end to an eventful weekend.

The moral of this story is - keep your pack on your back, or it may be found by someone's hound. □

Dot Butler

- who had a hip joint reconstruction job done earlier this year is making a steady recovery and is now walking reasonably well and with the use of a stick for emergency support only. Well done Dot - but don't try climbing trees for a while.

Ed

ON THE RECEIVING END

Hello, yes this is the SBW contact number!

"I'm in Sydney for just a week or so - could you tell me at which station I should get out of the train to do a bush walk in the Blue Mountains?"

"My company has asked me to arrange a bush dance for our Christmas function this year. Could you tell me how to contact a Bush Band and a suitable venue?"

"I have decided to take up bushwalking and wondered if you could tell me which brand of walking boots your members wear and would you recommend them to new walkers?"

"I wonder if you could tell me what age most of your members are? I'm 23 and I really don't want to join a club where I'm going to be sitting around waiting for older people all the time." (I referred him to another club - with pleasure).

..... Thank you for calling The Sydney Bushwalkers !!!!!!!!!

Fran

TO CONFEDERATE - OR NOT CONFEDERATE

by Don Brooks

At a recent general meeting the subject of our continued membership of the NSW Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs was raised. The main issue of contention seemed to be what do "WE" get out of our membership which is costed at \$2.75 per head. This figure of \$2.75 is already included in our SBW yearly subscription and on its own would not buy a cheap bottle of wine so our membership of confederation is not a king's ransom by any stretch of the imagination.

The current situation is that the NSW Confederation represents 56 bushwalking clubs which translates into approximately 7452 bushwalkers which in turn translates into a reasonable voice on environmental, conservation wilderness and political issues. It also provides basic training weekends on bushwalking techniques, approved first aid and wilderness first aid courses and mapping-navigation training through its annual rogaine weekends.

With regard to confederations wilderness rescue section, there is no doubt that its need is not as important now as it was years ago when bushwalkers literally had to rescue themselves. Wilderness rescue

now only receives the call when all else has failed or that the weather is that bad that helicopters cannot be used. However wilderness rescue are the group who organise and run most of Confederation's training weekends and while some Confederation funds go into wilderness rescue's annual budget a larger percentage of their funds come from donations, Government grants and fund raising activities organised by themselves.

Sydney Bushwalkers is only one of a few member clubs who run their own training, so it's a fair observation that while SBW itself does not get a great deal directly back from confederation there is little doubt in my mind that for my \$2.75 Confederation does and can get a great deal from SBW's continued membership. A membership which I would like to see maintained. □

IF WE HURRY WE CAN CATCH THE EARLY TRAIN

by Bill Holland

Have you ever wondered why up to 70% of prospective members do not proceed to full membership? The following extracts from resignation letters may offer at least part explanation. These comments were included in responses received to a recent survey letter sent to members crossed off at the end of July.

"I went on easy, easy medium walks of 15 kms. Found the pace too fast to allow me to look and enjoy the surroundings. One walk was rushed so we could make the earlier (1 hr) ferry - cutting out decent stops for rests towards the end of the day"

"Very hard walking up sandhills against a coastal "breeze" with darkening skies and no leader in sight of us tailenders"

"Although other walkers were helpful I found the going too exhausting especially the bushbashing and rock climbing"

Perhaps leaders sometimes forget what it is like to be new to bushwalking. Describing walks as easy and medium makes sense to us but means little to new members. Tailenders like to catch an occasional glimpse of the leader when the going gets tough. Does an easy walk have to become so much more difficult at the end of the day when there is an earlier train, bus or ferry to catch? Surely, when we plan a day walk we mean "all day". In that case why rush at the end of the walk in order to finish ahead of time? □

*** Gordon Smith ***

by Reg Alder

The death of Corporal Gordon Smith, the doyen of the SBW 'Tigers' in pre war years, has been perpetuated in the Australia Remembers 1945-1995 exhibition at the Australian War Memorial. The exhibition includes his service photograph among the many other Australian service men who died in Borneo camps and on the infamous death marches. His name also appears as G.A. Smith NX26819 2/19 Battalion on the bronze memorial plaques which line the hall of memories. Selection of his photograph in the exhibition is made easy by the availability of alphabetical and service number lists.

Late in January 1945 the Japanese, evidently fearing invasion, began moving the prisoners from Sandakan to Ranau, a small village about 160 miles to the west. The first group of prisoners of 470, including 350 Australians, left in batches of 50 a day from 29th of January onwards. None were fit on departure and all were suffering from Beri Beri and malnutrition: 60 percent were bootless.

In March the gastly policy of withholding medical supplies, of which the Japanese held adequate quantities, and of systematic starvation, resulted in 317

deaths, including 221 Australians. Most of the men now only weighed between 5 and 6 stone. On the other hand the Japanese guards were still eating large quantities of rice, and had fish and meat daily as well as soya beans and potatoes. (The Japanese thrust. — Australian War Memorial. pages 600 and 601)

Despite his strong constitution, which had been demonstrated many times by his prodigious walking feats, Gordon succumbed to disease and the illtreatment of the Japanese, at age 43, on 8th March 1945, just a few months before the end of the war.

I have a good deal to thank Gordon for as he made my initiation into the Club a good deal easier than it might have been. I joined the SBW in 1938 and within a few weeks as an untried walker he invited me to join his epic, exploratory, Kowmung river bed party over the Christmas-New Year period. His leadership, strength and compassion for the weaker members of the party on this walk was an inspiration when every change of direction of the river provided a new challenge.

One can only contemplate the role that Gordon might have played with his men when his strengths of character and physique are considered.

His death was a great personal loss to many members and to the Club for which he was prepared to give so much. □

KIMBERLEY COAST EXPEDITION

March 24 - April 27 1996

Our 34 day Kimberley Coast expedition earlier this year was one of the best we have ever done. By building on that experience, we expect to make our 1996 expedition better still. Come north and join us when the land is green, when the rivers and waterfalls are at their incredible best. See for yourself what makes this area so special.

We begin with a boat from Wyndham to the head of the spectacular, 20 km long Berkeley Gorge. We make our way past a number of side gorges and waterfalls, then walk from creek to creek as we move overland to King George Falls where the river plunges 90 metres into the sea at the head of one of Australia's most spectacular gorges. From the King George, we walk to the Drysdale River where we do a week long loop along one of the largest rivers in the Kimberley. The expedition ends with a seaplane ride back to Kununurra.

Too long? The trip is divided into three sections. The seaplane will bring in two food drops and provide transport for those doing only one part of the trip.

Chartering boats and seaplanes is not cheap so this trip will be expensive. However, help us by booking early and we'll help you with a discount of up to 20%. If six or more people have paid in full by 1 November, we'll give them all an additional 5% discount. For more information about this expedition and the rest of our bushwalking program contact



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FROM THE CLUBROOM

By Jan Roberts

Climbing in the Argentinian Andes - August 16

Acknowledged as the highest non technical climb in the Andes, Mt Aconcagua at 6959 metres certainly appeared a formidable climb to those of



us who attended Rob Pillans' slide and gear presentation last month.

A polished presenter, Rob entertained and educated 70+ SBW members and prospectives for nearly two hours with his experience of a lifetime. We learnt that Rob (SBW member) had been greatly influenced by Lincoln Hall's book 'White Limbo', and rather than being turned off by the publication, he set out to explore the challenges of high altitude climbing for himself in the Andes.

The haunting music of pan flutes accompanied Rob's magnificent slides throughout the evening, as we relived this exciting expedition with him.

Finally, after many amusing (and some not so amusing) incidents, which included an encounter with two crazy snow-boarders at 5,000 metres, three of the party including Rob managed to reach the summit. The final day's climb started at 4.00am and took the party 10 difficult hours to reach the summit. Getting back down again was a different matter, with the sheer elation of having achieved their goal spurring the party on and reducing the return trip to 3 hours.

We were then taken on a hilarious tour of Rob's entire wardrobe for the trip, right down to his multiple pairs of sox, thermals and 'overnight' bottle..... definitely not a bottle to be confused with the drinking one!

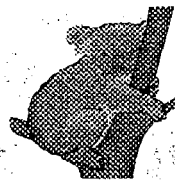
Thank you Rob, for one of the best night's entertainment SBW clubroom attendees have had the pleasure to experience. Come and talk to us again any time.

Wildlife Rescue and Information Service - August 23

The clubroom took on the appearance and acoustics of a small zoo last month when Maureen Naccachian from the North Shore Branch of 'WIRES' presented to us. Maureen brought with her two Rainbow Lorikeets, currently in rehabilitation, who spent the evening happily chattering away and nuzzling each other. Also visiting Sydney Bush Walkers was a very laidback Blue Tongue Lizard, which didn't seem to mind being handed from person to person for closer inspection and cautious stroking.

During the night we saw slides covering the skills used by trained foster carers, to rehabilitate the native birds and animals rescued by WIRES and quickly return them to the wild. The row of baby possums sucking on miniature bottles were particularly cute and of course we all wanted one!

Maureen told us that 'WIRES' is fully self funded and is responsible for the rescue, rehabilitation and release of approximately 3,000 native birds and animals each year. Sydney 'WIRES' now has over 500 dedicated members, and receives an average of 25,000 calls a year for information and assistance with distressed animals and birds.



For anyone who is interested in helping 'WIRES' with a donation, or perhaps keen to train with them to rescue or foster injured fauna, the North Shore Branch phone number is 9975 1633.

End of Winter Barbeque - August 30

The evening was more like the middle of summer than the end of winter, and as a result we had a great turnout for the annual end of winter bash. After the driest August on record we were able to set up tables and chairs with the utmost confidence that it wouldn't rain, and everyone had a great time table hopping, chatting and catching up.

Ken Chang, new member for September, agreed to be cajoled into lighting the fire on the basis that it was his absolutely *last* test for membership into Sydney Bush Walkers. □



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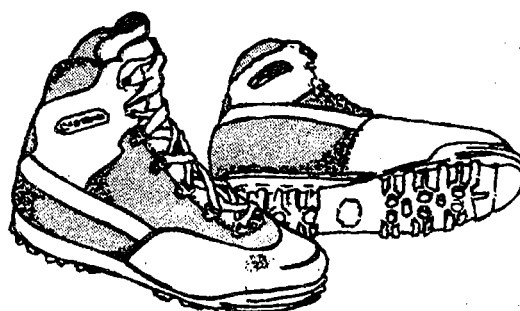


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A Letter To The President

from Joan Rigby

Dear Greta,

First, a bit of background. It started with a chance remark "What's that flower?" at last year's Reunion. Now that I rarely join 'regular' bushwalks - it's not only the age factor that stops me - I thought that here was a chance to spend time in the bush and do those things that are incompatible with weekend walking - observe, identify and photograph flowers and observe and identify birds. I could use Coolana as a camp and try to put together an album of its flora for those who were interested. I've had four 'sessions' so far at Coolana (we escaped to warmer climates in winter), have enjoyed them immensely and keep finding new delights among the trees and shrubs.

Now, we all regret the loss of the easy access to the river and the grassy banks of 10 years ago. The present state is an ecological horror, Scotch thistle, nettles, hemlock, fallen acacia, 'creeping jenny', mist flower or crofton weed, I'm not sure which, and over all that smothering Moth Vine with its seedpods like chokos full of dandelion seeds. Today I found patches of lantana up the hill almost to the Campfire site. This is Water Board land and probably far beyond our capabilities to repair (though I have tried Zero on the lantana). It's a pity perhaps that cattle were taken off this area.

While wandering around Coolana I 'explored' the creek gullies where the 2 creeks join, near the old log bridge and stockyard - also Water Board land. It is a wonderful collection of rain forest trees and shrubs, an old Cabbage Palm and a cluster of young ones, Koda with masses of orange berries in autumn, Violet Sandpaper Fig, tree ferns, numerous other ferns. Each visit I find something new. It is also being invaded by the Moth Vine, and is full of privet -- large trees now. The Moth Vine is also spreading up the slopes, from the flats towards the campfire site and from the gully towards the road - our land!

I would like to show you these areas at the next reunion. I don't want to upset whatever agreement we have with the Water Board by complaining to them, but I hate to see Coolana

under threat. I think we could do something as a club to hold back the infestations in these areas. I am trying to clear the vine out of some of the trees but it would take a working party and continued vigilance to halt the spread up the hill. Information I have gathered so far suggests physical control is the only method to use. I shall make further enquiries.

On the light soils of the slopes the young vines can be mostly pulled out by hand. Tedious but possible with weekend working parties over a period. I would (with committee approval) put such a weekend on the next walks program.

The privet in the gully is a harder matter. (I have also seen seedlings of privet further up the hill.) Do you think the committee and club would be interested in reclamation of this area? I certainly am but it is not a one person job. There is privet on the Bendela side of the river but it seems to be kept clipped.

The usual way to clear privet is to cut off the boughs or upper trunk and paint the stump surface with Zero. The trees are large and it would be easy to damage good shrubs or ferns while cutting and removing them. Also, sudden removal of the canopy may not be the best for the gully. However, I would like to discuss this with you at the reunion (or some other date if you are down this way). If club members should decide to try to clear the privet, advice from a bush restoration expert might be needed. Then again, in these ecologically sensitive days the Water Board may have procedures or help to offer.

Anyway, think about this, perhaps someone in the club already has it in hand. □

Rather disturbing stuff Joan. I think we all share your concern. Most of us were probably blissfully unaware of the extent of the problem. It is to be hoped that enough "Friends of Coolana" people will now step forward to enable a workable management plan to be developed and implemented to control the problem.

It would be irresponsible of us to ignore it and allow that lovely piece of bushland to be spoiled. Ed.



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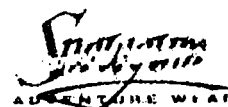
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Tasmania 1995

by Louise Verdon

Our group of six congregated over the course of a day at the Youth Hostel in Hobart. We were all greatly excited by the 14 day walk ahead of us. It was to take us along some of the most spectacular coastline of southern Tasmania and then onto the highest mountains along the Pindar Range.

The next morning we were all off to a flying start - showers, hearty breakfasts and that last minute fiddle with the packs. We transferred by bus to Cockle Creek which was the start of the South Coast Track. At Cockle Creek we were greeted by a very enthusiastic ranger who methodically detailed minimal impact camping and reminded us of a \$5,000 fine for lighting fires in the non-beach areas.

And so it was that each one of us donned a heavy but certainly not unmanageable, 14 day pack and headed off along the South Coast track. Initially the track meandered through light forest and then opened onto a button grass plain called the Blowhole Valley. From the valley we obtained wonderful views of Lion Rock, Coal Bluff and finally South Coast Rivulet where we were to camp on our first night.

The campsite at South Coast Rivulet was juxtaposed between a well sheltered lagoon on one side and fearsome wild ocean on the other. Potaroos frequented the campsites but unlike Ian's visit six years previously there were no platypi to be seen sifting the banks of the lagoon on dusk.

We had an early start the next morning as this section of the trip entailed a steady climb of about 670 metres. In parts the track became quite muddy. It meandered through glorious rainforest onto the South Coast Range. At the end of the range the track suddenly opened onto a rugged cliff that was to be the descent onto Granite Beach.

Our descent was aided by a well placed rope and ragged rocky outcrops that provided excellent footholds. Granite Beach was quite an anomaly, a thin strip of beach showered by a dense assortment of rounded boulders and pebbles. At the entrance to the beach was a gentle waterfall. In the middle of the beach was the campsite set on a plateau some 12 metres above the beach. In the far distance the boulders gradually vanished and once again became sand. There was plenty of time before and after dinner to explore the entire beach. We ended the evening watching the sea mist roll in to engulf the beach.

Our plans for a sidetrip to South Cape the next day were thwarted. Unfortunately a light drizzle had set in and the fluted cliffline was shrouded in a heavy blanket of cloud. Instead each tent group packed at their own pace and ambled over to Surprise Bay. It was delightful to climb along a steep track out of Granite Beach into a rainforest where one's olfactory senses were bombarded by the heady scent of leatherwood trees. The once muddy track was now carpeted by a confetti of leatherwood petals.

A party of eight had occupied the campsite at Surprise Bay. We back tracked a small way to a very large campsite that overlooked the beach. Surprise Bay was ideal for fishing. Not only were there a number of rocky outcrops from which to throw a line but at the other end of the beach were waist deep pools where the other party had caught a large crayfish.

The trip from Surprise Bay to Osmiridium beach was an easy day. Within two hours we were at the campsite beside Taylor's creek. After lunch we spent many hours exploring this intriguing beach. The beach was divided into two parts. At the western end one could scramble over the rocks, climb the rocks with the aid of a rope and end up in a well hidden private cove. It was probably an ideal place to fish. To get to the eastern end of the beach one had to venture a little way out into the sea to get around a rocky outcrop and into the other part of the beach. It was a curious labyrinth of rockpools and large expanses of sedimentary rocks.

In the late afternoon we had our first clear glimpses of Precipitous Bluff from the beach. The cloud lifted just long enough to admire the majesty of this 1400 metre peak.

There was a more serious start to the sixth day of the trip as this day we left those wonderful isolated beaches and headed inland towards Precipitous Bluff. Within a couple of hours we had travelled through light forest and then descended very steeply down sand dunes that overlooked Prion beach and Milford Creek. We took a brief exploratory detour along the sandbank at Prion Beach but quickly realised this route would become inaccessible. We backtracked to the west bank of Milford creek and climbed steeply up the sand dunes onto a lightly timbered crest then descended again to the sand dunes.

By morning tea we were at the Prion Beach boat crossing. From here one can cross the mouth of New River Lagoon and continue towards the Ironbound Ranges to Malaleuca. In our case we did not cross the lagoon but headed inland, wading through the lagoon for a number of hours. The lagoon is approximately nine kilometres in length and due to low rainfall was never

more than knee deep. Black swans graced the inner parts of the lagoon and at one point we had a brief glimpse of Federation Peak. By early afternoon we had finished wading the warm brackish waters of the lagoon and had settled into a very pretty campsite. The weather remained overcast but the cloud stayed high.

The big day had finally arrived - the ascent to Precipitous Bluff High Camp. Cavers Cave was the last place to have a saturation drink and to collect water. From this point we climbed through ancient rainforest. The track was very easy to lose. The ribbon markers were either very sparse or non-existent.

The rainforest ceased abruptly at around 1200 metres. Our track now led us around the base of a precipitous dolorite cliff to a magnificent lunch spot. We had a cloudless view of New River Lagoon, the coastline of Prion Beach and the Ironbound Range.

As we continued the climb, the views became absolutely breathtaking. The final assault was via a narrow gully formed by fallen dolorite columns. We made camp in a small semi sheltered area on the summit. This area was a gently sloping garden of small pandanus, venus fly traps, mosses and alpine grasses. Dolerite boulders were scattered along the peak.

Unfortunately the cloud came over and it quickly became very windy and cold. Despite the cloud we still climbed to the summit to make our mark in the logbook. On this night everyone retired early to their tents to cook dinner and sleep.

All night our tents were buffeted by a furious wind. We spent the next day in our tents listening to the rage outside. The day after the cloud remained low and gloomy but by this stage it was time to break camp and head to Precipitous Bluff Low Camp despite the weather.

Clouds kept rolling over the valley throughout the morning, but by early afternoon started to clear. We donned the day packs and made our way back to Precipitous Bluff summit. At 4 pm our two day wait was rewarded by mesmerizing views of Federation and its jagged peaks, the whole southern coastline, New River Lagoon and the surrounding mountain ranges.

On day nine we started walking in glorious sunshine. At least the sandfly bites were less itchy. We traversed the Kameruka range. It was mostly scrub-covered boulders and forests of six foot scrub. From Tramp Camp we were in a maze of eight foot Pandanus Forest and the track was difficult to find. After lunch at Wylie Knob we walked onto Wylie Plateau to make camp. Again there were no problems finding water as Huey decided rain, wind and mist were the order of the day. Ian and Paul even decided to ignore Huey altogether and climb Mt Victoria Cross.

From Wylie Plateau our group wandered to Ooze Lake via Learning Tree Saddle, Pindari Knob and Pindar Peak. On Pindar Mountain the winds were gusting at about 100 kms per hour. Two of our members were reduced to crawling up the mountain and hanging onto

any boulder or bush that would secure them to the ground. It was much easier walking on the lee side of Mt Pindar and at afternoon tea some still had enough energy to reach the summit of Mt Pindar while others enjoyed a well earned rest. From Mt Pindar we could review the semicircular route we had walked that day. By late afternoon we were walking down a steep slope towards Ooze Lake.

Now you may be wondering why its called Ooze Lake. I'm not sure as to the true origin of its name but from observation it would appear that the whole mountainside was oozing with water. There were rivulets of water everywhere and we had a very cramped campsite trying to avoid the watercourses. We also had some trouble with boot-stealing wildlife about an hour after we had retired. A quoll had taken a liking to our leader's left boot. It was found about 10 metres away from his tent in an undamaged state but another party member was not so lucky. She had found one boot that night with a quoll sitting inside it, and the next day, after some considerable searching, found the other boot in the woods but with the tongue and side chewed out of the boot! Nonetheless the boot was still quite useable.

From Ooze Lake we walked via Maxwell Ridge and took a sidetrip to Mt La Perouse and the Cockscomb before arriving at Reservoir Lake. It was a very energetic climb to the summit of Mt La Perouse but our efforts were richly rewarded. The summit was barren except for a few snow drifts. There was also a huge cairn to which we all added our donation of one rock each. We found a sheltered lunch spot and enjoyed fabulous views over the Swallow Lakes and to the far south including Cockle Creek and the Blow Hole Valley. On the other side of Mt La Perouse summit there were views of the Cockscomb, the Hippo and even Mt Pindar.

Reservoir Lake is actually two tiered lakes joined by a small waterfall. The upper lake has a large quartz-like shelf which leads into a beautiful forest of mature mossy King Billy Pines. From Reservoir Lake we had easy access to Pigsty Ponds and Arndell Falls.

The rain didn't let up the next day. We set out in light drizzle and mist and by mid afternoon we were knee deep in mud and "tracks" that were nothing more than fast flowing streams. We arrived mid afternoon at Moonlight Flats and ten minutes after the tents were erected the sun was out again.

Our last day was spent wading through muddy tracks but enjoying glorious sunshine. As we traversed the plateau we could see the Hippo and the mountains we had missed the day before. We descended through rainforest saying good-bye to the mountains. By lunchtime we had arrived at an old quarry which was only half an hour from our pickup point.

It had been a wonderful trip full of contrast and adventure. Thanks again Ian for a truly memorable experience. □

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The August General Meeting.

Barry Wallace

The meeting began at around 2015 with some 25 or so members present and the president presiding. The call for apologies brought no response so we moved on to welcome our sole new member for the night, Paul McCann. Paul isn't really a *new* new member, he just hasn't been available in the clubroom for welcome recently. The minutes of the July general meeting were read and received with no matters arising.

Correspondence saw a letter of resignation from Ken Gould. We also received a letter from the NSW Minister for Land and Water Conservation advising us that a section of the Benowie Track which passes through an area having a predicted non zero level of exposure to ricochets from the nearby small arms firing range will have an alternative route surveyed and signposted for those souls who do not engage in games of probability at any odds. There was a letter from Elizabeth Ratcliff and Steve Lengakis advising us that someone (presumably a 4WD desperate) has used a bolt cutter to cut the chain on the gate at Coolana. They also noted that someone had removed the nameplate from Dot's sapling but we were reassured from the body of the meeting that it has merely been taken away to repair the ravages of weathering. A subscriptions due notice from Confederation completed the tally of incoming items. For outgoing correspondence we sent a letter of thanks to a farmer who had provided access through his property near Glen Davis. As a matter of courtesy any party going to that area should check with the owner before entering the property.

The walks secretary then presented the walks report. This began at the weekend of 15, 16 July with Jan Mohandas leading some 23 souls on his Morton NP walk in what they described as perfect weather with cold winds and clear conditions. Maurie Bloom's cycling trip around Thirlmere on the Saturday is reported to have gone but that's about as much as we know. Ken Smith led 8 on his Sunday legstretcher from Glenbrook to Woodford. It turned out to be a full day by the sound of things; they caught the 1920 train at Woodford. The other two Sunday walks were not quite as strenuous. Laurie Bore led 20 on his Boudi NP "glorious beaches" walk and Bronny Niemeyer had 24 enjoying the wildflowers on her Loftus to Waterfall ramble. There was a bit of a mystery about 8 walkers who absconded without notice from Bronny's walk, but whether this was due to navigational difficulties or to the urgings of some inner caffeine or food deprived voice is unclear.

The weekend of 21, 22, 23 July saw a dearth of details for Kenn Clacher's two day ski touring trip out from Dead Horse Gap. There were maybe 4 bods on the trip but we knew no more. Wilf Hilder's series of Great South Walks has fallen out of synchronism with the walks program and he actually led some other section than the one programmed for the 3 starters who went with him. Morag Ryder described her Katoomba to Leura Saturday walk as good on behalf of the 10 walkers who attended. There was no report for Tony Mayne's 24 km walk in The Royal the same day, but Ron Watters reported 25 on his Wondabyne to Wondabyne Sunday walk. They noticed the less than commodious accommodation at Wondabyne railway station while waiting for their train on what turned out to be a wet, cold afternoon. Dick Weston had some initial delays with his Sunday trip to Mount Solitary but the 19 starters eventually got going and managed to return to the cars through late rain showers at around 1700.

There were no details available to the meeting of Ian Wolfe's 3 day ski touring trip over the 27 to 30 July. All indications are that there should not have been any lack of the basic ingredient. Ian Debert led a party of 4 on his Megalong Valley weekend walk. The Saturday was fine and windy but it turned out wet on the Sunday. Anne Maguire reported a party of 17 on her Grand Canyon walk on the Saturday enjoying a nice day and a good walk. Ken Smith's 60km legstretcher from Wentworth Falls to Glenbrook the same day attracted 2 starters. Of the Sunday walks, Frank Sandor led 27 on his Lane Cove River trip and Eddie Giacomel had 22 on his Colo River Tootie Creek walk.

The following weekend saw another Ian Woolfe ski touring trip mystery, with a scheduled four day trip and no details. Bill Holland's Meryla Pass walk was full of details just to balance the books. It seems the party of 10 had left their packs in the bush a little off the track near a junction and gone down one of the tracks toward the river when they met another party of four young people, accompanied by two dogs, travelling the same way. They discussed the matter of dogs being prohibited inside NPWS areas and generally passed the time of day with them. They were puzzled by their assertion that they had not come down the track the same way as Bill's mob but thought no more of it until they returned to their packs and found four of them missing. In the ensuing mill about and search Allan Doherty spotted some drag marks leading up a steep bank from a section of the track. A check along the drag marks revealed three of the missing packs stashed in two separate hiding places. After an

uncomfortable and worried night the party staked out the area around the hiding place at about the time the four had indicated they would be leaving to be picked up by parents. The dogs almost gave the game away, but the thieves were so busy discussing who should pick up which pack that they walked right in. Gotcha!

They had the missing pack with them so after a search of all to retrieve separated and missing items, Bill's mob accompanied them to their pick up point, where they discussed the matter with the two cars of parents who turned up to collect them. The difference in responses from the two groups of parents was illuminating it seems. They then went on to report the incident at the nearest police station.

Meanwhile Wilf, (remember Wilf?), was busy conducting the asynchronous non-final stages 17 and 18 of the Great South Walk with a party of 4. The only item of note seems to have been that they experienced curiously windless conditions on the Saturday. Tony Maynes' Saturday day walk from Bundeena to Otford along the rocks attracted 5 starters and was described as a brilliant walk on a sparkling day. Tony Crighton led a party of 21 plus one blow-in (Dick Weston) on his Leura to Bluegum and return trip. Good views were reported as a feature of the walk. Jim Calloway's Heathcote to Bundeena walk was slowed a bit by an injured prospective. They reported the park as recovering but still providing easier than usual walking in the aftermath of the bushfires. Doesn't it just make you long for the days when the scrub was..... And that was the end of the walks report.

The treasurer reported that we spent \$5,648 and closed with a balance of \$1,228.

Confederation report was short, mainly concerning their intention to write to the NSW Minister for Land and Water Conservation about the problems of access to parks through inholdings on park boundaries. The report triggered an extended debate about confederation and our relationship to it. It would be difficult to summarise the debate here, as it roved over insurance, membership fees and the calculation thereof, the changing role of search and rescue, and conservation issues. Maybe someone will write an article about it for the magazine.

Conservation report brought news of an apparent improvement in the outlook for conservation under the new NSW government. It seems Pam Allen has indicated that Rocky Creek will be added to the Wolgan National Park. There is also an intention to declare three more national parks and make additions to the areas of the south east forest that are protected. Some 7 wilderness declarations are expected within the

next 12 months and moves are underway to protect the remaining remnants of old growth forest. The newly corporatised Sydney Water appears to be taking a restrictive and hard nosed attitude to bushwalker access routes through the exclusion areas in the Warragamba catchment. To date there seems to have been no action on our complaint about damage to Bungonia Gorge by adjacent mining activities.

When the call was made for general business there was none to be had so the president moved on to the announcements and then closed the meeting at 2158 with a demure and almost inaudible strike of the gong.

Wilderness Rescue "NAV 95"

A PLEASING RESULT FOR SBW

SBW was well represented in the one-day competition of the Wilderness Search and Rescue's NAV '95 Rogaining competition held on the weekend of 24/25 June. This is probably the premier rogaining event on the NSW calender and this year attracted over 100 entries in the one and two day events. There were teams from bushwalking clubs, SES, Police Rescue, Bushfire Brigades, and other organisations including some from interstate.

An SBW team of Edith Baker and Kenn Chlacher came second in the one-day event. Other teams to enjoy the day were Ken Smith, Bob Horder and Ken Chaing, who also scored well before losing points for arriving home late, and Maurice Smith, Angelica Langley, Bill Ridley and Margaret Sheens who acquitted themselves very well.

Results for the one day event were:

Class 1: ANC Bushwalkers, 600 pts; Sydney Bushwalkers, 580 pts; 3 Peaks Bushwalkers, 580 pts and Berrima Rescue Squad VRA, 480 pts.

Class 2: Nordic Ski Club, 360 pts.

INVITATION Wilderness Rescue Practice

The next practice weekend is in the Newnes Plateau region on 14 & 15 October 1995.

The practice will be a two day simulated search to test and build on search and rescue skills. This will be a team building exercise, drawing on skills picked up in previous instructional weekends, as well as those gained from your own bushwalking experience.

For more detailed information contact
George Mawer (02) 707 1343,