



**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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# November 1996

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## Jagungal - Weather to go or Not?

by Kenn Clacher

It was, we admitted to each other on Saturday morning before setting out, the sort of weekend you would stay home if only you had not committed to someone to drive, passenger, lead or otherwise ski. So the five of us set out into threatening weather. The objective of our three-day trip was to ski from Munyang to Jugungal and back, base camping at or in the vicinity of Mawsons Hut and taking in the summit of Jugungal on a day trip.

The weather forecast read:

"Overcast. Rain developing later tonight and continuing into Sunday. Some snow mainly about higher ground tonight and early tomorrow. Strengthening south east winds.

Outlook:

Sunday: Showers clearing, snow possible above 1500 metres.

Monday: Snow showers"

It wasn't wrong. It was, we later discovered, the weekend when violent storms hit Sydney.

Initially, conditions weren't too bad, just a little rain, sleet and wind to herald our departure from Munyang. Up Disappointment Spur, past Disappointment Hut and over Schlink Pass, it could have been worse. It was, as soon as we started to climb up Bogong Creek, about 400m west of Schlink Pass on the way up to Gungartan Pass. What had been a simple, pleasant wander up the creek one week previously was now an epic struggle.

It only took about 100m of desperate effort up a gentle but hard slope into a fierce wind to convince us that this was not the way to go. So we turned towards Schlink Hilton Hut, to battle on

there, have lunch and consider our options.

As we regained our composure in the hut, we were presented with a fascinating array of characters, not unlike the unfolding of a soap opera. At regular intervals the door would burst open and people would stagger in to announce that conditions were the worst they had encountered in 75 years or thereabouts of skiing. The clincher came when we heard tales of three skiers having to remove their skis to make any headway from Orange Hut to the Valentines Hut turn off, and still not being able to make any progress. They were apparently last heard of being blown into the Geehi Valley. Wayne Steel and Wendy Lippiat, out for a quiet weekend ski by themselves, set out for Valentines Hut, only to return 10 minutes later claiming impossible conditions. So we decided to stay the night at Schlink Hilton.

To fill in the afternoon however a return trip to Valentines Hut with only daypacks seemed worth a try. It was. After some uncomfortable conditions for the first few hundred metres from the hut and again over the saddle into the top of Duck Creek, the skiing was great. Once in Duck Creek we were sheltered and the snow good. We cursed ourselves for not bringing our full packs, the more so when we returned to Schlink Hilton to discover that 20 people would be sleeping there that night.

On Sunday morning, despite the weather conditions as on Saturday, we resolved to get to Mawsons Hut. We had to escape the hordes at Schlink! We were now without one of our number, who had decided to

return to Munyang with some other Schlink Hut inhabitants. It turned out that the wind had abated a little and again there were only a few short stretches before Duck Creek where the wind was difficult. After skirting the northern end of the Kerries we arrived at Mawsons Hut around 11.30.

After lunch we wandered off in the direction of Jugungal although it was shrouded in cloud. We climbed over the northern side of the Cup and Saucer and of Mailbox Hill, then skied to beyond McAlister Saddle. All the while the cloud covering Jugungal was lifting and by around 2 o'clock the peak was revealed in all its awesome beauty and splendour. A check of torches carried by the party revealed that there weren't enough for a return in the dark. A trip to the top of the Monarch of the Snows would have to wait another year. We returned to Mawsons by way of McAlister Saddle, Smith's Perisher, the Bulls Peaks and the southern side of Mailbox Hill and the Cup and Saucer. The ski down the creek was a disappointment as we had to push hard downhill through soggy snow. Compensation was in the form of having the hut to ourselves.

The next day we returned via the Kerries with only a little cloud to contend with. After morning tea at Whites River Hut we lunched at Horse Camp Hut, reclining on deck chairs on the snow in the sun. By 2.30 we were back in Munyang.

We who had started as reluctant voyagers returned very pleased we had succumbed to our self-imposed obligation after a great three days of skiing on a most rewarding trip. ■

## MAIL

**About the Magazine.**

The October edition of *The Sydney Bushwalker* asked for a response to some questions on the magazine.

**From Kenn Clacher:**

1. It does not matter at all which day of the month the magazine arrives - there is no time-sensitive information in it that requires that it arrive at any particular time.

2. The odd photograph would be great. The magazine has contained many line drawings in the past few years - particularly those by Morag Ryder. There have not been many of these recently.

3. The paper on which the magazine is printed is recycled. This paper is used by specific decision of the Club's committee, for the obvious environmental reasons and despite the cost being higher than standard paper. A new batch of paper was purchased a few months ago. If the committee were to change their policy on the type of paper to use, either it would take around 18 months to use up our current stock of paper, or someone would have to find a buyer for around 200 reams of paper.

4. I want to be able to recognise that it is *The Sydney Bushwalker* without having to look twice.

5. Within reasonable limits, it does not matter how the magazine is compiled. I think the present layout and format is quite satisfactory. Any further bells and whistles would not add anything worthwhile to the presentation of the magazine in my opinion.

6. What was not asked, but the most pertinent question of all, is

"will the members contribute more interesting, relevant and entertaining articles for the magazine?" It is pointless dressing up the magazine in fake finery if the content is not worth reading. The most effective way to improve the magazine is to improve the quality and quantity of the articles in it. Paper, timing, layout and the software used to produce it come a far distant second.

**From Bill Holland:**

1. My interest is in the content of the magazine and it does not matter to me whether it is delivered on the second Monday, third Tuesday, third Wednesday or fourth Monday. The important thing is that once every three months I receive the Walks Programme in time to book on the walks.

Peter's choice of second Monday implies collating and posting on the first Thursday each month. Having been Walks Secretary I know how difficult it is to complete the draft programme in time for Committee scrutiny (first Wednesday) then amend, plug holes and tidy up in time for printing on the second Thursday. At present the collating team assemble the magazine on the third Thursday (sometimes third Tuesday). It may be possible to advance this by two or three days but Peter's deadline is unrealistic. What is important is that a firm day each month is selected so that the ten to fifteen people involved can organise their calendars.

2. Line drawings have regularly featured in our magazine. The addition of photographs would be welcome but there is a cost involved. The magazine (paper, printer and postage) already costs \$12.00 per member, net of

advertising income. To print one page with photos requires commercial printing, costing an additional \$100 per issue. This may mean an increase in membership fees.

3. The paper quality is not an issue. The important thing here is that a bushwalking club dedicated to conservation should use recycled paper. Higher quality paper (as used commercially) means more trees chopped down.

4. The front cover establishes the identity of the magazine. I had no problem with Alan Rigby's original cover or the later version. Let's settle on one design (that can be printed on our own machine) and stick to it.

5. Desktop publishing requires professional skills. Our magazine should remain an amateur production put together by volunteers. We do not aim to produce a commercial standard publication. The editor changes every year or so. Does Peter suggest that desktop publishing skills should be a prerequisite for future magazine editors?

6. My only other suggestion is avoid unnecessary change for change sake. Our magazine compares more than favourably with other bushwalking clubs' publications. Improvements have been made over the years and will continue as each editor makes their own contribution. The important thing is not to lose sight of the nature of our club and the purpose of the magazine.

It puzzles me that all of a sudden the content, quality and timing of the magazine has become such an issue with Peter. ▸

◁ "The Sydney Bushwalker" is an internal publication aimed to entertain and inform members. It is not necessary that we impress the general public at increased cost to the Club.

#### From Alex Colley:

In reply to the questions listed on page one of the October magazine:

1. It doesn't matter to me but may to more active members.
2. Yes, I have suggested this before and could supply copies of photographs published in the Colong Bulletin.
3. No, the present recycled paper is good. Since we are not marketing the magazine it doesn't merit higher quality paper.
4. No, I want the traditional cover.
5. Yes, even if done properly.
6. I am disappointed that the state's most successful wilderness and old growth forest campaign, and the death of Miles Dunphy, did not have coverage.

#### From Mouldy Harrison:

I was interested to see the current issue of **The Sydney Bushwalker**. I very much enjoyed the splendid article on Alan Rigby. However I was very disappointed to find that my old friend, **The Sydney Bushwalker** cover, had disappeared. It was like losing a member of the family. It was a cover that was well designed by one of our members, vigorous in execution and gave a very good impression of the Blue Gum Forest. I do hope that you will record my vote as strongly in favour of returning to the old cover design. The inside of the magazine I felt was very nicely handled.

#### From Geoff Bradley:

One of the real pleasures of SBW membership has been the opportunity to hear and to oppose many of Peter Miller's views - not because he is generally wrong, far

from it, but because of the variety of reactions such opposition engenders. These range from benevolent, avuncular (Uncle Peter) tolerance, to explosive and strident irritation - the latter sadly now less frequent as he melts into gracious, albeit youthful, middle age. On the subject of the magazine cover however, I am perforce forced to reinforce his views and vote for change.

While the pull of nostalgia is strong - after all many of us wooed a lifetime, many more a sometime, and some a one time, partner, under the shelter of the magazine cover, (figuratively speaking) - it is however time for an upgrade. The present cover, whilst a pleasant example of the illustrative art of its time, comes up much too dark and heavy in print and is generally pretty dated.

Some recent suggestions promote upgrading to glossy and expensive paper. Before we amble too far down that track, we should have some regard for our espoused views on conservation and environmental pollution, lest we be open to a charge of hypocrisy and double standards.

#### From Patrick James:

I have read the comments published in the magazine concerning upgrading, modernising or altering of **The Sydney Bushwalker**. I have also discussed the same with members. Notwithstanding the real or perceived need to change, or not to change, the magazine cover I find it extraordinary that a unilateral decision was made by the acting editor to change the cover of the October issue. As you know George, editors are responsible for the content of a magazine (Macquarie Dictionary) and not the form of a magazine. Our Club has a democratic record of nearly seventy years and well established

procedures for achieving change. Such procedures do not include unilateral actions.

#### From Ian Rannard:

Write me as one who favours the old magazine cover. It has done, and is doing a serviceable job. To me the cover identifies **The Sydney Bushwalker** and I'm comfortable with it as it is.

When I get it is unimportant but as my attendances at club meetings are infrequent, the magazine gives me the feeling that I know what's going on in the club.

#### From Helen Gray

"I will (next issue) draw up some alternative front pages for you to think about . . ." So wrote Peter Miller in August's magazine.

In September the magazine arrived like an old friend, with its original cover. And mercifully with no added leaves or spots! Sorry George, it's horrible. But I do appreciate why you did it, (all that blackness is a printer's nightmare.) No alternative front pages to think about either. Good. I like the old one. And why change a sixty something years tradition? We don't need to have a more modern, more eye catching, more anything cover. We are not competing and we are not trying to attract a market.

Then - horror of horrors - the October magazine arrived with the most amateurish unattractive cover I've ever seen. So Peter Miller has once again decided he knows best. (Shades of a past incident at the Coolana Hut.) No need to let the members decide on a cover when Peter can do it for us! His action has broken the long continuous run of our magazine with its famous (in bushwalker circles) cover. Shame.

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

by David Trinder

Tony Manes took a group of ten to Talaterang Mountain in the Budawangs, west of Milton on October 26-27. Thank you, Tony.

The Budawangs are colourful in October. In the distance we could see the Castle, Byangee Walls and the ocean across wide blue valleys and the sky. When the clouds rolled in, wispy white pieces floated up from the valleys, then a solid grey cloud moved across and hid the distant mountains. The grey cloud brought fine rain that now drifts with the wind and lands on everything. Distant views are lost but the colours in what we can see are stronger and better.

We look down over a small cliff onto the tops of rainforest trees close below, they are dark green with lighter green new tips. They are interrupted by several dark red rocks the size of houses and between them is one lonely light green tree fern with a strong radial pattern of fronds. Some rocks are covered on their vertical faces with a pattern of mosses, orchids and small ferns. A common view is a light green under-storey with coloured flowers and a random pattern of brown and black trunks in a generally vertical pattern carrying the tree tops. Some small bushes have so many tiny pink purple ball shaped flowers that the whole bush appears that colour. A member of the Protea family has bright yellow flowers like small Waratahs. The Lambertia has orange pink trumpet shaped flowers. There are fields of white flowering bushes, there are flowers of purple, rust coloured, yellow orange and blue. Many Eucalypts have cream coloured flowers at their tops and others have new tips of pastel pinks, oranges and reds.

The old man Banksia and the young man Banksia have bottle brushes with a ball of water at the tip of each bristle, each reflects the bright light of the sky. Leaves also hold balls of bright water. Small spiders build their webs in bushes, and we don't see them until now when they are sagging under the weight of a thousand drops of water.

Banksia has hard serrated leaves, most Hakeas are spiky, neither is friendly to us, it was not built for us as the world we live in was, it was made before we came, we don't own it, we only pass through and look at it. To pass through we walk, climb, jump and crawl.

This world has been developing here for a billion years, it was not designed, the layout depends on mountains decaying, rocks falling randomly and weathering. Plants grow where they can, one in a million seeds germinates, it is a world of growth and decay, green and brown, survival of the fittest.

Only bushwalkers can see this world and while they are immersed in it they wonder about the world they live in, "how has it happened?" and "where is it going?"

The world they walk in is the mould we evolved into, we belong here, it is our mother but we have left it. We tried to adapt it and created something new instead, the built world.

When the ground is not flat we level it, when it rains we build a shelter, when the wind blows and the insects come we enclose ourselves with walls, when they decay we build stronger ones. Our climate is friendly to clothed whites most of the time, the original inhabitants

didn't bother with elaborate shelters or clothes. Still we follow the patterns of our predecessors from northern Europe and build unnecessarily protective and large shelters. We become acquisitors and possession has become the goal instead of the means to a goal. Our tribe has increased to millions and our work is specialised, we have to travel and build more shelters to work and play in. Our cleverness has invented new materials to make all this easier, and methods of thwarting natural population control measures. We use enormous amounts of material resources and energy to live an affluent, extravagant life style.

Waste is thrown into the water, onto the land or into the air. Our cleverness has discovered problems caused by the waste. Gases from burning are increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. CO2 reflects some of the earth's heat back to the surface, maintaining a temperature that suits us, the increased amount of CO2 raising the temperature of the earth's surface. This will raise sea levels and cause floods, cyclones, drought, land degradation and fires and who knows what else. It is potentially genocidal. The use of chlorofluorocarbons as an aerosol propellant has caused an accumulation of CFC in the stratosphere. This chemical is breaking down the ozone gas which protects us and other life forms from harmful ultraviolet rays that come from the sun. The use of CFC has stopped and as a result stratospheric ozone will continue to reduce only until the year 2000 and the ozone layer should correct itself by 2050. People and animals are dying and will continue ▸

< to die as a result of this loss of natural protection.

It has recently been discovered that males of humans and other animals have been losing their fertility. This is caused by a molecule of a plastic that is mistaken for the female hormone during the formation stage and the males are given an extra dose of female hormones. Again potentially genocidal. There is still also the threats of unbeatable killer viruses and nuclear weapons in the hands of angry unreasonable national leaders, overpopulation, hunger, poverty and debt.

Can our cleverness solve these problems, find future threatening problems and solve them in time to allow us and other species to survive. In the past politicians have allocated money to solve similar environmental problems only when there is enough public pressure for them to do so.

At the current rate of "progress" and departure from the natural world how long will it be before we meet a problem that kills us before we can solve it? We live on a knife edge. Where are we going? ■

**R**egretably, those who care about the destruction of our planetary environment can't stop it, and those who can stop it don't care enough.

We seem to be living in an age where greed (usually hidden under the cloak called economic rationalism) surpasses all other considerations. When there are big bucks to be made, the fate of the planet and the future of the diminishing inhabitants are given scant consideration.

You can't blame the politicians. They've got the next election to

worry about, and that's in a few years time. Why worry today about what a few crazy greenies think MIGHT happen some time in the future. You're lucky that they make a few appeasing gestures. (and then get on with their real agenda.) Governments world-wide seem to have been hijacked by the Big Bucks fraternity.

And, just in case you're hopeful, don't think you're going to get many more independent politicians the like of Pauline Hanson, or much action on the ideas she espouses. Ed. ■



## Trip Information Requested

Descriptions of known routes required for:

### **Budawangs.**

1. Off Talaterang Mountain top level onto the intermediate level on the eastern side towards and into Pigeon House Creek, (and/or reverse direction.) Also from the western side towards and into Holland Creek, (and/or reverse.)

2. Into Pigeon House Gorge from Wombat Ridge.

*Accounts and full descriptions of identified non-negotiable routes (failed attempts) also appreciated.*

### **Colo River.**

Full and detailed plan of a walking (and/or lilo-ing) trip from near the source to the Putty Road Bridge. ■

## A few quotes to help get you through the day

"Indecision is the key to flexibility"

"You can't tell which way the train went by looking at the track"

"There is absolutely no substitute for a genuine lack of preparation"

"Happiness is merely the remission of pain"

"Nostalgia isn't what it used to be"

"Sometimes too much drink is not enough"

"The facts, though interesting, are irrelevant"

"The careful application of terror is also a form of communication"

"Someone who thinks logically is a nice contrast to the real world"

"Things are more like they are today than they ever have been before"

"The more you run over a dead cat, the flatter it gets"

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler"

"This is as bad as it can get, but don't count on it"

"I have seen the truth and it makes no sense"

"There is always one more imbecile than you counted on"

"Not one shred of evidence supports the notion that life is serious"

"All things being equal, fat people use more soap" ■

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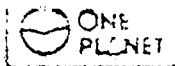
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## Tunnel Vision

by Judy O'Connor

I thought when I found myself teetering precariously on top on a 10 foot high hurricane fence, one leg on either side of the curled barbed wire, that I had reached, quite literally, the summit of a Wilf Hilder walk. The moment was indelibly etched in my mind because, let's face it, of the absurdity of the situation.

In a sort of out-of-body flash, I saw our bedraggled group as a total outsider would. Not only were we risking bodies of broken bones by trying to make those triangles of hurricane fit the toeholes of our over-sized boots, a beautifully sculptured bitumen road (it looked as priceless as a work of art from my bird's eye view) was only a few hundred metres away.

This was not surprising, of course, given that we were scaling the fence of the Westmead Hospital's nursing quarters and nurses are not stupid. And even if they were, they have unions to protect them. Unfortunately, bushwalkers don't and, even if they did, I've got a feeling Wilf would not curb his passion for finding adventure in the suburbs without a fight.

There is, of course, always a bright side. In this case, there were no guard dogs waiting on the other side.

So, it was with some surprise, and not inconsiderable awe, that I found Wilf surpassed himself on his recent flexiday walk from Waterfall to Otford. It completely dispelled my association of flexidays with rest, relaxation, spoiling oneself, the luxury of a day off, etc.

Six of us took off for what turned out to be an experience straight out

of the "X Files" (for those who don't understand take a look at channel 10 on Wednesday nights). Its true the walks program said something about a tunnel or two and its true I only spoke to Wilf via answer machines and its true I thought he was joking when he said 'bring a torch', but I never thought we'd be doing a sort of combination 'great railways of the world/great disused tunnels of the world' tour over 22 km of the south coast. Silly me. I'm sure the clues were there if I'd been clever enough to switch to "Wilf alert" mode.



The eccentric tone of the day started when we met at Central railway and one of our civic minded members turned up with a swag of glossy magazines s/he (no clues) had retrieved from a recycling bin and proceeded to give them away to puzzled peak hour commuters.

Within a few minutes of embarking at Waterfall, we were on our way, rock hopping at a fast pace. But not in the conventional way. No ordinary river rocks for Wilf, these were continuous rows of gravel rocks that hold up the railway sleepers on the main railway line to Otford. Some of the older members (no names) said they suddenly understood how the railway workers who used to stand by the side of speeding trains waving their arms and yelling out for the daily papers must have felt.

Soon we hit the high spot - the tunnels. Altogether we entered the dark, damp and chilled interior of six separate disused train tunnels, all offering their own particular delights - sloshy mud, running streams, unexpected jugular-height coils of wire, broken bricks, glass, holes, musty air, eerie echoes and heaven knows what unseen creepy crawlies.

Walking through them was not as bad as it sounds, the worst part was getting to the end and finding the exits were blocked up and having to brave the walk back. They say the journey home is always shorter, but, believe me, they weren't talking about tunnels.

But the pinnacle of them all was the 'X File' tunnel. No movie director could hope to create such an atmospheric set: to approach the tunnel we slipped through silent expanses of paddocks littered with rusted machinery, disused equipment and broken fences. Everything was old and run-down. A series of open sided sheds led up to the tunnel which was approached via an ancient, narrow track that once shuttled coal into the depths of the tunnel. Makeshift open drainage spilt polluted water around corners and onto uneven levels of earth, ingrained with countless layers of metal and stones.

Smells were everywhere, but there was a particular indescribable earthy odour that needed a clothespeg on the nose to avoid. As we didn't have any, we tried to stop breathing which only turned our faces bright red and intensified the smell when we inevitably had to gulp in huge mouthfuls of oxygen moments later. ▸

◁ There was a loud humming noise coming from some unidentifiable piece of vibrating machinery in the last shed we passed, which showed strange signs of recent habitation. Lights were on, bench spaces looked used and even a noticeboard had a few scribbled messages. But there was not a single sign of human presence. It was pure ghost town-ville. The 'X Files' tunnel was long and illuminated by a few sparse bare light bulbs which dotted its length until the eyes could no longer focus. Jumbo size clear plastic tubing hung from the ceiling of the tunnel, like a huge transparent sausage pulsating with a life of its own, as it laboriously pumped air or some sort of gas, to somewhere in the hidden blackness of the tunnel. Rickety scaffolding

leaned against the walls in the distance. Obviously something was going on, some sort of operation, but what? Again, not a single human being was anywhere to be seen. Had they all been beamed up to an overhead satellite from some foreign and hostile planet for which this celestial backblock was home? What sinister schemes and secrets were being planned and plotted by the aliens in the depths of the tunnel? Was the clear plastic tubing pumping some sort of life support breathing gas to them?

We attacked the problem by doing what all bushwalkers do - we turned our bewildered faces to the leader and asked him. With a look that clearly did not invite follow-up questions, Wilf declared they were

growing mushrooms. As for the people, well, they were probably on a flexiday, he said.

We trudged on, past deserted scenic depots full of sky-high mountains of jet black coal (we breathed a sign of relief when Wilf didn't insist we walk over them), more railway lines, sidings, a deserted railway platform and two barking dogs protecting their swimming pool (I swear Wilf was eyeing the backyard off for lunch).

Coming home on the train, Wilf became wistful and confided there was, in fact, a seventh tunnel which we hadn't had time to explore. Its always good to be left wanting more...■



# NITMILU

**Aboriginal Land.**

In combination with Maryalakuk Aboriginal Cultural Tours, we are proud to offer you the chance to experience a small part of their culture combined with a walk through the Katherine Gorge system, visiting places that the average tourist can never see.

The first day and a half is spent with Aboriginal guides. They will show you the bush tucker and medicines that are in season. They will show you their art, both ancient and modern, and tell you some of their stories. You spend the next five days carrying a pack as you follow the gorge for its full length, stopping to explore some of the cool and shady side gorges along the way.

**Help preserve a park.**

Introduced weed species cannot be controlled unless they are first properly mapped. This mapping is best done during the wet season. Our February trip offers you the chance to assist the park by helping us continue the mapping we began last year.

**Please ask for our bushwalking holiday brochure.**



12 Carrington St. Milner NT 0810

Phone 081 8985 2134 Fax 081 8985 2355

## The October 1996 General Meeting

by Barry Wallace

The October long weekend saw Maurice Smith and 6 others on his part exploratory walk in the Ettrema Wilderness. They enjoyed the pleasures of thick scrub, covering 9 km over 8 hours at one stage. This retarded progress forced a rerouting of the walk. They also reported encountering large numbers of snakes along Ettrema Creek but no one mentioned feet this time. Bill Capon relocated his programmed walk from Hilltop to Kanangra and went to the Ettrema area instead. The weather was poor but they managed to find Moore Creek and Manning Saddle along the way. There was no report for Paul McCann's Wollemi trip and although Jim Rivers' Ettrema traverse went there were no details available to the meeting. Ian Rannard's walk in Murrumbidgee National Park went, and was truncated for some reason, but we know no more. Ian Debert's cycle trip around Canberra went with 9 starters. Conditions were fine on Saturday and the party managed to dodge most of the showers on the Sunday. Monday was spent doing tourist things.

### Be Sunsmart

*Your Skin Never Forgets a Dose Of Sunburn, Even If You Do...*

The minutes of the September general meeting were read and received with no matters arising.

Correspondence included letters from Geoff Bradley, from the Commonwealth Bank regarding password access to our account, and from Ku-ring-gai Chase

council, seeking information for inclusion in a community information register.

The treasurer's report began the reports to the meeting, indicating that we began with a balance of \$6,699, received income of \$1,761, spent \$3,011 and closed with a balance of \$5,488.

The walks report began at the weekend of 13, 14, 15 September with no details for Kenn Clacher's cross country ski touring trip. Ian Debert's Wollemi glow worms trip was devoured by the worms and cancelled. Maurice Smith's limited numbers 4 star base camp trip in the same area went to program with a party of 7 in windy conditions.

### Be Sunsmart

*Sunscreen used alone is not an adequate means of protection against skin cancer. When outdoors it is important that people wear a broad brimmed hat and long sleeved shirts in addition to sunscreen.*

The K to K scramble went, in windy conditions, with a core party of 8 plus numerous supporters in two groups. Nancye Alderson led her Saturday trip from Woodford to Hazelbrook with a party of 14. They visited various points of historic interest at Woodford Academy, enjoyed bird calls and waterfalls in moderation, and even had to shoo a 1 metre brown snake from the track at one point. Nancye actually described it as a *three foot* snake but we know our snakes better than to fall for that old story. (Hen's teeth next, you mark my words.) The weather must have been pleasant for they

did not mention it. There was no report to tell us whether Wilf Hilder has persisted in his allegedly perverse circumnavigation of Port Jackson but Frank Sandor's sortie from the wilds of Turramurra golf course went, with no details available to the meeting.

### A WORLD RECORD

*2 out of 3 Australians will develop skin cancer in their life - its a world record.*

Over the weekend of 20, 21, 22 September Dick Weston's three day walk out to Mt Guougang from Carlons Farm did not go. There was no report for Morag Ryder's Katoomba to Leura ramble on the Saturday but at least Alan Mewett was able to report a party of 8 on his Patonga to Pearl Beach and return trip that day. Tony Holgate's Blue Labyrinth easy medium walk on Sunday wasn't quite as some expected. The party was slower than average and finished the walk at around 2030. Bill Holland had 15 on his Wahroonga to Mount Ku-ring-gai trip that day in delightful conditions with nine of the party choosing the option of walking on to Berowra station. Geoff Dowsett's one day combined cycle and bushwalk out from Carlons was cancelled.

Wayne Steele's trip in the Budawangs over the weekend of 27, 28, 29 September attracted a party of 11. Conditions were wet, with a storm on the Sunday so they truncated the walk somewhat. The postponed Six Foot Track gallop went on the Saturday with a party of 11, travelling well despite some rain during the afternoon. >

◁ There was no report for Lynne Yeaman's Ku-ring-gai Chase walk on the Saturday. Bronny Niemeyer led a party of 7 on her Loftus to Waterfall trip on the Sunday with no further details. Jim Calloway had a party of 2 on his Engadine to Waterfall walk which went despite the rain. Jim even managed to have a couple of swims along the way.

You sort of got an idea of what was to come when Michele, rising to provide a report on Eddy's part exploratory Colo River trip, started out by questioning the marital status of his parents and saying that the *good news* about the trip, was that the cars were not vandalised. It was a carefully measured hatchet job all the way from there. It seems that at one stage the party was able to cover only 1 kilometre during a seven hour period of great effort. At 1500 on Sunday they were still 22 kilometres from the cars and spent some time circling in the white out that prevailed before camping for the night. They reached the cars at around 1600 Monday. Well, the program *did* say part exploratory!

Tony Holgate's walk to the Warrumbungles, Kaputar, Pilliga, and Coolah Tops National Parks was still out there somewhere watching sunsets from the tops. At least it never rains in the Nandewars! Errol Sheedy's Sunday test walk in the Royal went, with a party of 21, plus Jim Calloway, making a brief guest appearance before vanishing back into the undergrowth. They reported cool wet conditions, which Errol asserts were good for walking, and saw spectacular displays of Waratahs along the way. There was no report for Ken Cheng's day walk on the Monday.

Jan Mohandas' walk in Lamington National park over the 17 to 24

September went, with a party that ranged around a mean of 23 over the period.

There were no reports for Confederation or conservation.

General business saw passage of a motion approving the purchase of a gate to be erected at the road entrance to Coolana. The meeting closed at around 2117. ■



## BOOK REVIEW

By Pat Harrison

### "THE FIRST BUSHWALKER"

This is the title of the latest book by Jim Barrett, historian of the Cox, the Kowmung, the Old Burragorang, and Yerranderie.

The contents of *The First Bushwalker* are myth dispelling, for they amend the hitherto-accepted dates for the beginnings of bushwalking in the Blue Mountains and elsewhere.

Jim's researches into his favourite bushwalking areas led him, through the records of the McMahon family who were pioneers on a part of the Cox now under Lake Burragorang, to the surviving diaries of Morton Frederick EDEN who married Mary Theresa McMAHON in 1908. Fred was born in Switzerland in 1865 and died there in 1948. He was related to Sir Anthony EDEN, a former prime minister of Britain, the EDEN family being part of the aristocracy.

Fred, who was a great bushwalker and kept detailed diaries of his

walks, lived in Australia from 1889 to 1914 and acquired 1750 acres at the headwaters of the Kowmung River slightly west of the Jenolan Caves-Kanangra Walls Road. He named his home "GLEN EDEN" but it was destroyed in the bush fires of 1914-15 as was, probably, the majority of his diaries. However the diaries of his walks from Melbourne to Sydney in 1891 and in the Blue Mountains survive, but what treasures were lost in the burnt diaries! During his walk from Melbourne to Sydney he crossed the Victorian mountains from MATLOCK to GIPPSLAND and tried to cross HOTHAM in an October snow storm.

He loved the Blue Mountains and Jim has identified places now well-known on NARROW NECK where Fred roamed and camped, such as Diamond Falls, Red Ledge Pass, Corral Swamp, and The Devil's Hole.

His diary also contains touching words of his memory of his father, the death of the little dog, the characters and rough diamonds with whom he walked for a few days, the lonely habitations he encountered on his way, and even an apt comment on what he learnt in his bushwalking about equipping infantry for action. A true walker. Just try to imagine the gear he used!

It seems to me having read *THE FIRST BUSHWALKER* and learnt the location of 'GLEN EDEN' that FRED EDEN was the inspiration, origin, source, call it what you will, of bushwalking in the Blue Mountains, for I find it impossible to believe that he lived as an island unto himself and that his walking activities were not passed on.

Jim's address is  
65 Brook Road Glenbrook 2773.  
Telephone 047 391 005. ■

## National Park and Wilderness Decisions

### From The Minister For The Environment New South Wales

I am pleased to advise you of the Government's historic decisions today to protect wilderness and high conservation forests as a result of the Interim Forest Assessment (IFA).

Since March 1995 the Carr Government's forestry package and conservation decisions have now protected over half a million hectares of wilderness and created 37 new National Parks.

In the Government's decision today, twelve areas, mostly from State Forests, will be declared as wilderness totalling 153,230 hectares. A further 16,480 ha of state forests which are not contiguous with wilderness boundaries will be protected as national park. These areas of 'wilderness in waiting' could be declared wilderness later as strategic leasehold lands are acquired.

The government will establish the Dunphy Wilderness Fund of \$5 million over five years to acquire and declare suitable leasehold lands on offer from within identified wilderness. The Dunphy Fund can also accept donations from the public to boost its buying capacity.

The Government's historic forestry reform package delivers ten new National Parks and reserves and defers approximately 671,000 ha from logging pending its assessment for inclusion in a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system. The deferred area is based on the Conservation Criteria outcome in the IFA report.

*The Australian said of this decision:*

*"Carr's Forestry Package Hailed as National Blueprint."*

120,000 ha has been identified in the South-East Forest National Park - 90,000 ha to be reserved immediately and the rest to be confirmed through the six month Comprehensive Regional Assessment. This exceeds the Government's election promise and preserves the highly contested south-east forest forever.

A further nine new areas will be reserved to protect core high conservation value areas identified by the IFA. The new national parks are Nymboi Binderay, North Brother, Bellinger River, Chaelundi, Dungirr, Richmond Range, Mt Royal, Fortis Creek, and the new nature reserve is Mt Boss.

A map showing both wilderness and new parks in our latest decision is overleaf.

As well, \$500,000 has been allocated for the collection and evaluation of data which will serve as a basis for assessment of the Western Region of the State. This will provide a firm basis for future conservation decisions and redress the under-representation of the west in the national parks estate.

Today's decisions protect over twice the area reserved in the Wran Government's landmark rainforest decision of 1984. Labor has guaranteed the best conservation gains ever achieved in NSW and ensures a process is established bringing peace to our forests for the first time.

**Pam Allan MP 23/09/96. ■**



## 70TH ANNIVERSARY CHRONIC OPERAS

The **CHRONIC OPERAS** were a dynamic part of the Club's past. They were written, performed and sung by members, many of whom had great talent in an era when singing around a piano, telling yarns and making your own fun were the only forms of entertainment available.

Some of the **CHRONIC OPERAS** were so good they were performed in public to raise money for the club. The club would like to compile an oral history of this unique part of our history and would be pleased to hear from ANYONE with knowledge and/or memories of these musical extravaganzas.

**For more information or if you have something to tell contact:**

Judy O'Connor  
Phone: 9929 8629

Peter Miller  
Phone: 9456 5326 ■

**THE UV COCKTAIL- Sun Water Snow High Altitude- SERVED ON THE ROCKS****Beware the 'Ultraviolet Hangover'.  
Skin cancer - who is at risk?**

Everyone under the sun. Two out of three people who live their lives in Australia will require treatment for at least one type of skin cancer during their lifetime. This is the highest rate in the world. The good news is that most skin cancer can be prevented.

**What causes skin cancer?**

The major cause of skin cancer is exposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun.

**What is ultraviolet radiation?**

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is produced by the sun and includes the rays UVA, UVB and UVC. UVA leads to wrinkling and premature ageing of the skin. UVA together with UVB causes skin damage which leads to skin cancer. UVB causes sunburn and skin damage which leads to skin cancer. UVC is reflected and absorbed by the atmosphere so very little reaches the earth.

UV radiation is not related to heat and you can't see it or feel it. Although the level of UV radiation decreases during winter, it can still damage your skin. You need to protect your skin all year round.

**What factors increase your exposure to UV radiation?**

Special risk factors for UV radiation exposure include increases in altitude and reflection. These need to be considered when planning your outdoor activities in both summer and winter.

**Does UV radiation increase at higher altitudes?**

Yes. For every 1000 metres rise above sea level UV radiation increases by approximately 15%. The risk of skin damage is greater in the mountains because there is

less atmosphere to filter out the harmful rays of the sun.

**Is UV radiation reflected?**

Yes. UV radiation is reflected from a number of surfaces such as water, snow, concrete or shiny surfaces on boats. Reflected UV radiation increases your total exposure particularly during snow and water sports. You can protect yourself from the damaging effects of the sun by following the simple course of action recommended by the Cancer Council.

How can I protect myself from UV radiation?

**Time**

Try to stay out of the sun when UV radiation is at its most intense. That is between the hours of 10.00am and 2.00pm (11.00am and 3.00pm daylight saving time). When you can, plan your outdoor activities at other times.

**Shade**

Make use of the shade provided by trees and shelters. Remember that UV radiation reflects off many surfaces, such as water, concrete and snow, so shade should not be the only form of protection you use.

**Clothing**

Clothing provides good protection from UV radiation. Remember to choose clothing with sleeves and a collar or polo neck. Scarves are useful for extra neck protection. Fabrics should have a close weave and cast a dark shadow when held up to the light.

**Sunscreens**

Sunscreens are part of total protection and should be used in combination with the other methods described in this brochure.

Sunscreens should not be the only form of protection you use.

Select a sunscreen that is SPF15+, Broad Spectrum and water resistant. *(Important! check the expiry date)*

Apply sunscreen liberally to cool, clean, dry skin 15 minutes before exposure to the sun.

SPF15+ sunscreens provide approximately two hours protection. The second application is not as effective as the first. It is therefore recommended that people make use of alternative skin protection methods as described in this brochure.

**Hats**

Choose a hat that shades the head, face, neck and ears. A broad brimmed hat (8-10 centimetres) or legionaire style cap is most effective. At the snow fields a balaclava and peak cap combination may be more appropriate.

**Sunglasses**

For maximum protection from UV radiation sunglasses must:

Comply with Australian standard 1016 (1990)

Offer 99% protection from UV radiation.

Be a close fitting wrap around style.

Be worn from childhood throughout life

Colour tinting of lenses alters the level of visible light (ie glare) that reaches the eyes. It does not alter the level of UV radiation. This is why it is important to check that sunglasses (or goggles when skiing) comply with Australian standard 1067.

For more information contact the Cancer Council PO Kings Cross 2011. ■

## Tullyangela Extremities

by Maurice Smith

There is a mental illness known as the obsession compulsive disorder. Some time ago a brand new member of the club jokingly, at least I think so, said that I exhibited the signs of the disorder. This walk was to be my sixth into the Ettrema Wilderness in the last year. You see doctor I just love this part of Morton National Park.

We spent the three days of the October long weekend on a walk in the Ettrema Wilderness, covering only about thirty kilometres. Our average speed for the trip was little more than one kph. Yet, the other six members in the group all said that they enjoyed themselves. That being the case, at least six other club members may also be showing early signs of the disorder.

The grand plan for day one was to do a full traverse of Tullyangela Creek. Then over the next two days we were to walk up Ettrema Creek and make an exit by Myall Creek.

By lunch time Saturday it was already apparent that we were well behind schedule. At that stage we had walked from our cars descending into the upper reaches of the Tullyangela. The walking was just plain slow going, in quite difficult scrub and in very warm weather. To make up time we agreed to leave the creek and cut across country for two kilometres. That way we would cut off quite a few kilometres of the creek as it makes a large loop. There was, of course, a catch. As the creek loops it starts to descend and the map was showing some significant cliff lines where we wanted to rejoin the creek. We had to hope that we

could find a break in the cliffs to get back into the creek.

However, the nature of the terrain and vegetation was such that the two kilometres took us over two hours. By the time we reached the southern edge of the escarpment and looked down into the middle section of Tullyangela we again revised our plans significantly. It was evident that our hope of finding an easy entry into the creek that day was very low. As campsites were non-existent we found a rocky platform that was reasonably flat and large enough, and also was close to a tiny creek.

The rain and wind that arrived just as we retired for the night saw a number of us scampering around in the heavy rain searching for some heavier rocks to hold down our fly sheets. The rain left off during the night but started again shortly before daybreak and was to be with us until early Sunday afternoon. Because of the slippery conditions we agreed that to try to descend to the creek by finding a break in the cliff lines was fraught with danger and likely to take too long. So we then headed along the escarpment to the east to find Howards Pass. Along the way we managed to obtain occasional views across Tullyangela Creek through the fog, mist and cloud. After numerous excursions inland to get around deep gullies that contained creeks destined to fall over the escarpment, we arrived at the north-east end of the plateau.

Fortunately, through some information imparted to Geoff Oxley we knew that Howards Pass was not located as shown on the map. We found it several hundred

metres further south where a small creek flows to the east. After lunching in an overhang out of the rain we found the pass and made our way down. In transit we passed a spectacular formation called Barrons Crown. Then began a treacherous descent down a very steep slippery slope arriving in Tullyangela Creek about 200 metres before its junction with Ettrema. The time was now 3.30 Sunday afternoon and we were where I had wanted to be for our campsite for Saturday night. After making our way up Ettrema we found a magnificent camp site that surpassed all expectations and made up for some of the tribulations.

Monday morning saw us enjoying the frequent sunny breaks as we walked up Ettrema Creek to the base of Transportation Spur. From there on it was a solid climb and then across country back to our cars.

By way of interest, during the weekend we saw six snakes, comprising two black snakes, one Red Bellied black snake, one Tiger snake and two small snakes of unknown variety.

My obsession with the Ettrema Wilderness is such that preliminary plans are being formed for a return trip to Tullyangela Creek to walk the section between the extremities that I have now seen.

Fellow sufferers were Frank Grennan, Sue Hailstone, Rosemary MacDougal, Anne Maguire, Michele Morgan and Geoff Oxley.



## **TICK ALERT**

### **HOW TO REMOVE A TICK - A TICK IN TIME PREVENTS LYME!**

#### **REMOVAL**

1. Remove the attached tick with fine point tweezers or a tick remover by grasping the tick behind its head as close to the skin as possible.
2. Gently pull the tick straight out with steady pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick.
3. Wash your hands. Disinfect the tweezers and the bite.
4. Do not attempt to kill the tick before removal by applying methylated spirits, alcohol, nail polish remover, petroleum jelly or other substances as this causes the tick to inject more toxins and bacteria.
5. Save the tick in a sealed jar in alcohol or methylated spirits and label with the date it was removed. This can be identified later if you develop illness, especially in the following four weeks.
6. Adults should have someone else remove attached ticks. Children should be told to seek adult help for proper tick removal.
7. Mass infestation of tiny (nymph stage) ticks are best removed by soaking for 20 minutes in a deep, warm bath with one cup bicarb soda added.

#### **TIPS FOR PREVENTION**

1. Ticks occur in bushy areas and gardens and may attach to your clothing or body as you brush past bushes or overhanging branches.
2. When outdoors, dress appropriately to avoid tick bites. Wear a hat, long sleeved shirt and long pants tucked into socks. Light coloured clothes are better as it is easier to see the ticks crawling.
3. When outdoors use an insect repellent containing DEET (diethyl toluamide) but be careful when using them on children. Spraying your hat and clothes will increase protection. (Ask your doctor or chemist).
4. Brush off clothing and thoroughly check pets before entering the house.
5. Always do a tick check of the entire family and pets after being outdoors. Undressed is best, paying particular attention to behind the ears, scalp, groin, armpits and back of knees.
6. Ticks prefer damp, moist areas in your garden such as woodpiles and rock walls. Keeping your garden neat and grass mowed will aid in prevention of tick bites.

*Ixodes ticks primarily transmit lyme disease*

lava   nymphs   adults   engorged adult

#### **LYME DISEASE SYMPTOMS**

After proper tick removal, and talking to your health care provider, watch for the following symptoms.

If you experience any of these see a doctor. To obtain more information for you or your doctor contact us.

#### **EARLY INFECTION**

**Flue-like symptoms** - headache, fever, muscle or joint pain, unusual tiredness, loss of appetite or swollen glands.

**Skin** - rash at the bite site or other places. About 50% of infected people do not get a rash. This rash occurs in many shapes and colours. It appears as red or purplish on light skin and as a bruise on dark skin. Discolouration of the skin at the bite site within hours of tick removal may be skin irritation and not disease.

**Eye** - conjunctivitis.

#### **DISSEMINATED INFECTION**

**General** - fatigue, loss of appetite, vomiting.

**Brain** - severe headaches, cranial nerve paralysis (eg. facial droop, light sensitivity), loss of reflexes, radiating sensations, memory problems, stroke(rare), inflammation of the spinal chord, brain or nerves.

**Eye** - inflammation of various parts of optic nerve, retinal detachments, double vision.

**Skin** - single or multiple rashes (per bite) occurring over the body, benign skin tumours.

**Joint and muscle** - pain, mild to severe &/or migratory, inflammation, loss of tone.

**Heart** - irregular beats, heart block, inflammation.

**Liver** - hepatitis, elevated liver enzymes.

#### **CHRONIC INFECTION**

**General** - chronic fatigue.

**Brain** - cognitive or behavioural changes, disorders of the peripheral nerves, demyelinating-like symptoms, severe headaches, inflammation of the brain.

**Eyes** - loss of vision.

**Skin** - degeneration of the skin on the hands or feet, recurring rash(es).

**Joints** - disabling pain, intermittent or chronic.

#### **PREGNANCY**

The Lyme bacterium can cross the placenta and infect the unborn. Reported potential complications include miscarriage, stillbirth, and death after birth. Any woman who is pregnant and has Lyme disease should contact us. We have information that can help.

For further information and leaflets send your details plus 4 x 45c stamps to T.A.G.S (Tick Alert Group Support) Inc. PO Box 1551 Dee Why 2099. Donations accepted: all proceeds going to support research into tick borne diseases.



## Widden Wanderings

by Paul McCann

The area around upper Widden Brook & its tributaries has always been of interest to me since the 1970's. I had some trip notes from various NPA trips in the 1970's. I managed to convert the old GR's to the newer maps & led a few walks in the upper reaches of Widden Brook with the Wilderness Society and the NPA. This walk was postponed from the SBW August program & took place over the recent October long weekend.

After a few last minute cancellations and the Friday night drive to Dunn's Swamp east of Rylstone (near Mudgee) we set off with a party of six, five being prospectives. We followed an old overgrown logging track following a tributary of Never Never Creek to a saddle. This saddle marks the Great Dividing Range separating the Cudgegong-Macquarie catchment (Murray-Darling) from the catchment of Widden Brook which flows into the Hunter River. We descended down a steep gully into Widden Brook and followed the stream downstream past lovely coachwood trees, tree ferns and towering sandstone cliffs above us. In several places the stream cuts into the base of the sandstone cliffs creating interesting overhangs. Progress was slower than planned due to the higher water level in the creek. We tried to keep the boots dry, however as we progressed downstream we eventually took to wading through the creek. We reached the intended lunch stop at about 3.30 pm. I decided not to proceed any further for the day as there were no campsites for the next few hours. We set up camp on a flat near the creek under the rainforest canopy. We had a fire between some large boulders which offered perfect seats and backrests. As the evening progressed I noticed

the sky becoming overcast with high cloud building up. After happy hour and dinner we all went to bed early to catch up on some sleep. The sound of the trickling water in the creek was very relaxing.

About 3.30 am next morning I was awoken by the first drops of rain dripping from the canopy above. After wetting the tents, the rain stopped during breakfast and breaking camp, but started again before we set off. We followed the base of the cliffs around the wide valley where Widden Brook meets Coricudgy Creek. The rain soon made everything slippery and made for slow going. The rain and mist cleared occasionally revealing the views of the valley and cliffs through the trees. We had lunch under an overhang which was big enough to sleep in with a little levelling. After lunch we continued following the cliffs and dropped into Razorback Creek. Several large boulders initially blocked our way up the creek but once we passed these obstacles we came to a flat section with some lovely campsites. We continued on for about a kilometre and camped at a point where three side creeks join Razorback Creek together. We cleared a few tent sites and gathered the plentiful supply of firewood available. We erected a fly to sit under and like magic this action caused the rain to stop for the evening. We soon had a fire going and enjoyed some happy hour. After dinner, out came the wet clothes to be gently smoked over the fire.

The rain had stopped next morning as we followed a side creek for about a kilometre. The going was good at first but the vegetation soon forced a rethink as to the route we should take. After some recognisance we found an easy way

up onto the cliffs above a large overhang. We enjoyed morning tea with a view of the surrounding countryside. We continued on up the ridge to the Great Dividing Range and followed this for a short distance. We had lunch before descending down to Never Never Creek. It was at this point I discovered a major error in the Coricudgy 1:25,000 map. There is a large and very obvious hill at GR 425695 which has been omitted from the map. In fact the map shows a large flat area at this point. The adjoining Olinda 1:25,000 map shows part of this hill, but the contours don't continue onto the Coricudgy sheet. The hill is a useful landmark in the otherwise flat valley of Never Never Creek. We arrived back at the vehicle at 4.00 pm and after changing into some clean clothes we headed for Lithgow where we enjoyed a well made pizza. We arrived back in Sydney about 9.00 pm.

Despite the four hour drive from Sydney the area is well worth a visit. I intend to lead another three day walk over the next Anzac Day weekend in April. The walk will consist of two days carrying packs with a day walk on the middle day. Further details will be provided in the Autumn program. Please note that there will be a limit of eight on this walk due to the small campsites.

Everyone on the walk handled the rough and slippery conditions very well and I have no hesitation in recommending them to full membership. The group details are: Members - Paul McCann (leader); Prospective members- Sally Croker, Petra Henniger, Rick Jones, Andrew Parker and Phil Prentice. Thanks to all the participants who made the walk happen. ■

## EXCESSES

by Maurice Smith

In recent months club members have reported on walks that, in my view, indicate excessive numbers of members participate in some weekend walks.

How can a walk with over, say, 10 walkers be enjoyable for all the participants?

This is the way that I see the issues.

Firstly, a large number of walkers means the leader is more of a crowd control marshal than a true leader. It cannot be enjoyable for the leader to have to repeat the same instructions many times. Almost inevitably someone doesn't get the message or doesn't properly understand the message. The result may be an annoyed walker and annoyed leader. In extreme cases it might result in the need for the walk to be changed with other consequences for the rest of the group. The logistics of organising and managing 20+ members for a weekend walk is formidable. Having to frequently count heads to ensure that all members are present in a large group is annoying for the leader and frustrating for most of the party. If a member is missing is it because they have dropped behind for a comfort break or has the group actually misplaced a group member. If so, who is missing and where was (s)he last seen? And so on and so on.

Secondly, large groups usually mean a large impact on the bush that we are out there to enjoy. Even if every member in the large group each rigorously follows the minimal impact bushwalking practice, the impact of 20+ members versus less than half that, is profound. Most bushwalkers are ardent conservationists. So how can we

possibly, in all clear conscience, enjoy the bush knowing that in enjoying it in such large numbers we are having a profound impact on it? This is especially true around the camp site. The need for tent sites, camp fires, toileting and so on has a major impact. If we do not take care, large groups will surely love the bush to death. How can we possibly ensure that the walkers who follow us will not be aware that we have preceded them? This is so regardless of whether the walk was all on a track or totally off track. How can there be a genuine wilderness experience if the group has over 20 people present? The noise they make will scare all wildlife for kilometres around.

Thirdly, the socialising that is so much part of bushwalking is very difficult in large groups. The opportunity to get to know other members is restricted because the sub-groups are constantly reforming. How many times have you been on a walk with a large number of people? You will not have had the chance to talk much with lots of the other group members because there were so many people present and they had different speeds of travel.

So I would like to see the club committee adopt a guideline that the maximum number of walkers on a weekend walk. I suggest that the maximum not exceed 10 members and at the leader's discretion this may be reduced but not increased. Likewise, as I am sure you will realise there will be those leaders who might be tempted to ignore the guideline. When such information reaches the committee the recalcitrant leader should be asked to appear before the committee to justify their actions.



If bushwalking clubs don't take action to limit our impact there may shortly come the day when NPWS impose limits on party size because of the impact that large groups have on our walking areas.

The other consequence of what I propose is that some members will be very disappointed because they missed out on a weekend walk. How do they avoid this? The answer is quite simple. Contact the club's walks secretary and organise to lead your own walk to your favourite area, there are plenty of members in the club who will want to walk. ■

