



December 1996

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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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Foundation member Enid Rigby looking forward to 1997 celebrations

by Peter Miller

One of the foundation members of The Sydney Bushwalkers still takes an active interest in the club and is eagerly looking forward to the Seventieth Anniversary celebrations next year. Enid Rigby rang me to discuss the activities of the club and agreed to be interviewed and have some of her sketches printed in the magazine. We all know of the fine artistry of her late husband, Alan Rigby.

Enid has well preserved photographs of herself as a bright-eyed 14-year-old in 1921 on horseback trip through the Burratorang Valley with her father. They stayed at a Guest House at Bimlow owned by a Michael Maxwell who was also the local magistrate. When the weather took a turn for the worse they sheltered in Bran Jan hut and Enid recalls that the leather leggings she wore stained her legs so badly it took six weeks for the stain disappear. They were on their way to Jenolan Caves where they stayed for a week. Travelling in the service car on the way home they were joined by two bushwalkers; Alan Rigby and his cousin Jack Gillespie. Little did young Enid know what would later come of that chance meeting.

Enid had been drawing from a very early age and her first job was in a commercial artist's studio in Bond Street, Sydney, starting on a wage of five shillings a week (50¢). When she had finished her apprenticeship Enid made a successful career as a freelance fashion artist finding it wryly amusing that she was working in the world of haute couture during the week and happily donning a pair of old shorts to go off sketching in the bush at the weekends.

One of the walkers she had met on the way home from her horse riding trip to Jenolan Caves came to work at the studio; her future husband Alan Rigby. They soon started bushwalking and some of

their first trips were in the Lady Carrington Drive and Bola Creek area. They often went to Burning Palms and Era, where camping was then allowed, as well as going on more extended walks and horse riding trips. They were both original members of the club, joining in 1927, and remained active for many years. (I hope to publish an article on Alan Rigby in a later edition of *The Sydney Bushwalker*.)



Enid Rigby

Enid and Alan were married in 1931 and Enid's walking days were curtailed by the birth of three sons, Roger, Byron and Jeff, who are all active in a variety of outdoor pursuits. Enid and Alan both followed their separate artistic careers and spent time in the bush together sketching and photographing. Enid was keener on drawing buildings and people while Alan concentrated on the natural environment. (A photograph of Blue Gum Forest taken by Alan in the 1930s is shown on the front cover of this issue of the magazine.)

Enid joined the National Parks Association in 1960 and was their Social Secretary for four years. This gave her the opportunity to travel all over the State while

engaged in conservation matters. She has since travelled extensively in Europe including a two-and-a-half month trip to Greece.

In 1992 Enid was one of the special guests celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of preservation of Blue Gum Forest. She was thrilled by the helicopter ride from Medlow Bath down to the forest which she had first visited in the 1930s and was not expecting to see again. At Blue Gum she was pleased to meet many old friends and reminisce about the past. Her three sons walked in and Roger was one of the speakers.

Enid now spends her time listening to music, gardening, going visiting and attending exhibitions and concerts. She lives in a comfortable unit surrounded by mementos of her active past and is cared for by her very attentive family.

The club wishes Enid well for the future and we all look forward to meeting her at the Seventieth Anniversary dinner in 1997.

On the subject of the magazine cover Enid feels that it is "understandable" that there is a move for a change after more than 60 years with one design but she feels that it would be better to go for a completely new cover rather than altering Alan's illustration. ■

Omission

Page 16 of the November '96 issue of the magazine contained information on tick-born Lyme disease.

Part of the article was to include identification sketches of the progressive development stages of the Ixodes Tick. The sketches were omitted. You can draw in the sketches yourself under each appropriate heading, as follows:

lava
nymphs
adults
engorged adult
Thanks Ed. ■

A letter to: The Planning Officer, Kakadu National Park, Kakadu Draft Plan of Management

by Alex Colley 27th Nov., 1996

Section 3 states that the traditional owners are proud to share parts of their country with park visitors. However the restrictions placed on bushwalking belie this statement.

The reasons for this contradiction are given in section 30 and the Campbell and Black Report, which states that there is a distinct lack of understanding by Aboriginal peoples as to why bushwalkers should wish to trudge around the country. Although Aboriginals have "tolerated" bushwalking they do not wish to encourage it and some have suggested it would be better to ban it completely. This stems from their disregard of wilderness (section 25). Wilderness is regarded as "a way of thinking." Wilderness is a clear concept. It consists of the last substantial remnants of the natural environment and the first requirement of park management

is to protect the wilderness quality of the park.

The Aboriginal disregard of bushwalking and wilderness is the reason for the system of permits and the restriction of bushwalking to designated routes. This means in effect that 99% of the park is denied to all but Aboriginals.

The park will therefore be managed no differently to privately owned rural land. No such restrictions apply in NSW parks where park usage is infinitely greater. Three million people visit the Royal National Park in a year and some 44% of them do some walking. It is probable that the number of visitors to the Blue Mountains parks is even greater and the number of walkers may well be a million or more.

The restriction of bushwalking contrasts with the desire to encourage the commercial

development of the park, the expansion of Jabiru and the facilities to be provided for motorised visitors. There is no clear policy of keeping vehicles to designated routes and the Aboriginals will be allowed to drive to their hunting grounds wherever they may be. The 1981 report of the NSW State Pollution Control Commissions Inquiry into the Off-road Use of Recreational Vehicles describes the damage caused by off-road vehicles in scathing terms.

Bushwalkers are the backbone of the nature conservation movement. They cause no damage to the environment and it is unacceptable that they should be relegated to the status of unwanted visitors.

The Management Plan will be incomplete until zones are designated. Given zoning, places of particular significance to the Aboriginals could be protected. ■

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From The End Of The Line

by Bob Stewart

'From The End Of The Line'

This is the title of a series of articles I thought I would write for the magazine some day, sort of an Alister Cook effort for the SBW. However finishing my 5 year assignment in 23 months took me by surprise! More from the end of the line later.

I should have known! Only one outfitter offered a Cradle Mountain trip in mid September. I should have known! My three fellow walkers were there by accident. (Victims of Hobart conference with only one available Cradle trip). The weather report (storm coming), the sky (overcast), the jump off (snow on the ground), all should have told me . . . but this was my last chance to walk Cradle Mountain.

With our guides Eric and Paul we set out from the Waldheim Chalet on a cloudy, cold Wednesday morning anticipating five days including Cradle, Mt Ossa and the overland track in between.

By noon we were leaning into a blizzard . . . at lookouts Paul carefully described what was behind the grey sleet and we marvelled at the spectacular views we were missing. As we struggled up to Kitchen Hut, I saw myself in the mould of Mawson and other Antarctic explorers . . . parka hood drawn tight, snowy eyebrows, blue lips, determined chin line and shorts . . . actually the shorts may have been the wrong gear.

The sleet was mostly blowing (as opposed to fresh fall) and we had the boardwalk and trail markers. We pushed on. By 3:00 pm as we passed over the narrow Cradle Crique Ridge we were losing the markers and boardwalk and in fact couldn't stand up so well because of the wind. It was only the warmth of Waterfall Valley Hut (by then the closest port) that kept us struggling on.

We made the hut before dark. (It was dark all day so we actually made it before "darker".) It's good

that this was a new big hut. It's bad that there was no gas for the stove. They helicopter cylinders in at the start of summer and the gas has always gone by the end of summer. They say that users have to leave the doors open due to the stove heat during the summer. (This sounds a bit peculiar and not at all how we do things in Oklahoma but my "living abroad" course taught me to be respectful of local customs)

Next day looked better (not a high threshold). We reconnoitred our proposed trail. No one had broken snow past the hut and the boardwalk was alternately covered with snow or at the bottom of shallow lakes. We returned to the hut just as it began to snow for a day in the bag, reconciled to returning the way we had come the next morning.

Uh! Oh! Now the snow was falling, really falling and blowing, really blowing. Back up on Cradle Crique Ridge, things were nasty. No markers. No boardwalk. No visibility. But the plan prevailed and by walking on the tops of bushes (visible above the snow) and holding each other up we made it to the descent to Scott Kilvert Memorial Hut. The plan was to walk back "under" the mountain to the boardwalk around Dove Lake via the closest hut. In theory, it was more sheltered, others would have already broken the snow and not as much snow would have fallen . . . you'd have thought we would get at least one right!

A brief period of sun showed a wonderland valley of pristine snow . . . but no trail and no markers. For several hours we careened down the slope taking the "line of least resistance" . . . sometimes sledding (on rear ends), sometimes breaking deep snow and sometimes falling. "There should be ladders here some place". We must have been pretty successful staying on trail because after nine weary hours we found the hut just as "darkest" fell. The hut is named after two members of

a party who died in a snow storm in this valley. Cheerful thought.

The sign outside the hut said "Rangers Hut - 1 Hour" and on our third morning we set off early for our final day. My single hardest day of walking . . . ever! Drifts over four feet, forget markers, no bush tops to walk on, and cold, cold, cold.

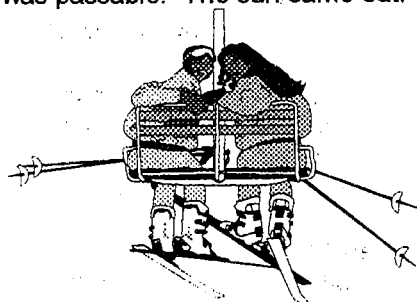
When you are leading and fall into a drift, take off the pack and roll out . . . if you still have the strength . . . if you don't your friends can help roll you. Crawling on hands and knees spreads the weight better but still only works where the snow is hard. Sometimes breaking while dragging the pack helps.

When all this failed we broke trail by first crawling, followed by tramping down (without packs), followed by moving on with packs. It's slow going when you have to make three passes. Breaking snow wears you down quick and you can only lead for 15 to 30 minute shifts. Just before dark on this "one hour" walk, we spotted the tent of three walkers who'd given up and spent two days stranded. They were really glad to see us. (Why?). We tramped down squares, trenched them and pitched tents near our new members. By some miracle Paul got a billy going for soup (our first meal since breakfast). We turned in warm and proud of our snow camping skills and hopeful of finishing the next day.

The rain storm melted the snow enough for the tent stakes to pull out. The wind blew the fly away. The tents were down by midnight. About 10:00 am Eric had ominously suggested we get fully dressed and so we sat up till dawn inside the tent, backs against the windward side, holding it up with our arms. The therm-a-rests kept us out of the water running down the tent floor. We sat there holding the tent and listening to the gusts of wind roar around the mountain. >

< .. waiting for them to hit us. We talked about a lot of stuff but not about the coming day. By dawn the down bags and gear were soaked and there was no more shelter.

The rain softened snow broke easier but the trails were deep streams of ice water and slush. At the Ranger Hut, we found two more walkers who had been trying to get out over Hanson Pass for two days. Eric led the eleven of us through the "short cut" (a.k.a. roaring stream) down to Dove Lake. The plan began to work. The boardwalk around the lake was passable. The sun came out.



By the time we made Dove Lake parking lot, the road had been opened and we were greeted by Sunday tourists in their four wheel drives.

The American nature writer Ed Abbey believed that the wilderness experience includes the thrill of not being entirely in control and I guess he's right. The rush came not so much from thinking you were going to die as much as from not being in control of staying alive. What a rush! The adrenalin was so high, I didn't start aching for two days.

A super walk as have been all my walks with the Sydney Bush Walkers over the last 23 months. You can judge a society by how it treats the "least" able of its members and I reckon the same is true of any group. I have often been the least able at the end of the line (remember the John Wayne speech "go on and leave me behind" along the Colo...Eddie). You have honoured my determination with your help and patience. I thank you. It demonstrates the greatness of SBW. Keep it up. That's how it looks from the end of the line. ■

The November 1996 General Meeting.

by Barry Wallace

The 18 or so members present lapsed slowly into a near approximation of silence when the president, presiding, called the meeting to order at around 2013. There was only a single apology when these were called, and that for Denise Shaw. The call for new members brought forth both Ute Foster and Petra Henniger for welcome in the usual way.

The minutes of the October general meeting were read and received with the only matter arising being comment that the gate had been obtained and erected at Coolana.

Correspondence was comprised of a letter from NPWS regarding their intention to establish a track usage monitoring system for their busier tracks, from Robin Plum advising us of some of the pleasures of walking the Top End, from Andy McQueen requesting permission to use some of the poems which have appeared in earlier issues of The Sydney Bushwalker, from Careflight bringing our attention to moves to remove funding for their operation, and from Patrick James proposing changes at Coolana. This latter item had already been deferred by committee to the following month due in part to workload on the night it was presented, and in part to provide time for consideration of the issues involved. There were two outgoing letters, to our new members.

The treasurer was away on holidays but had left a report for presentation. This revealed that we received income of \$910, spent \$2,076 and closed with a balance of \$4,282.

The walks reports began with the president appraising us of the features of his extended trip into the National Parks of north western NSW. Apart from a bit of curious weather the trip went well and was perhaps best described as relaxed.

There was no report for Paul McCann's October 11 to 13 walk in Monga State Forest. Alan Wells's Kowmung walk is generally believed to have gone but there were no details available to the meeting. Greg Bridge reported very windy conditions for the party of 21 who went on his Lockleys Pylon, Fortress Gorge Saturday walk. Despite this the walk was described as good. There was no report for Geoff Dowsett's Sunday walk on the Shoalhaven River or for David Trinder's Katoomba walk the same day. Maurie Bloom's cycling trip to Mulgoa for Devonshire Tea on the Sunday had 8 cyclists out on a good day. It seems the trip was extended for some reason but not all the participants thought this added to the pleasure. The leisured classes were out doing it on the Tuesday with Bill Holland and a party of 4 enjoying splendid displays of Waratahs on his Pierces Pass to Bluegum Forest and return trip.

The weekend of 18, 19, 20 October saw Peter Miller leading 6 starters on his Splendour Rock trip. The sunrise from the Rock was hidden by fog, and conditions were cold. Don Brooks had 19 on his Saturday walk around Brisbane Waters. Carole Beales' Saturday walk from Evans Lookout went, but there were no details. Kenn Clacher obviously had people keeping an eye on the weather for his Sunday abseiling instructional, as the number of starters dropped from 24 to 12 over Saturday night. Despite a rainy morning it cleared to a fine day. Anne Maguire encountered a similar rate of attrition for her Blue Mountains Sunday walk, ending up with 11 starters. Here again it cleared to a beautiful day. Wilf was out again circumwhatevering Port Jackson on the Sunday or so we are told. There were no details. Geoff Dowsett had 3 on his Sunday cycling trip from Thirlmere Lakes. The trip was described as delightful. Wilf was out again the

following Friday, leading a party of 5 on his flexiday walk from Waterfall to Stanwell Park. October 25, 26, 27 was also the reunion weekend. Conditions were somewhat damp but those who attended, some 38 adults and 13 children, had an enjoyable time. Maurice Smith led 8 on his Ettrema walk over the weekend. Conditions were wet on the Sunday so they rerouted the walk somewhat to compensate. There was no report for either Tony Manes' weekend trip out to Talaterang Mountain or Morag Ryder's Saturday walk from Glenbrook. Frank Sander had 16 on his Lane Cove Park walk on the Sunday but there were no other details.

Bill Holland led a walk out from Lindfield on Tuesday 29 October with a party of 8. It was described as a good day.



There was no report for David Rostron's ski touring trip from 18 to 23 October, nor was there any for Ian Wolfe's cross country ski trip from 31 October to 3 November. Bill Capon had 11 on his Budawang's walk over the weekend of 1, 2, 3 November. The walk was described as hard with extensive engagements with thick scrub. David Carter reported 9 enjoying a good weekend on his Kowmung River walk. There was no report for Rosemary MacDougall's Saturday walk around Brisbane Waters. Wilf's bicycle trip from Parramatta to Tempe attracted a party of 7 who enjoyed lots of food and a pleasant day. There was no report for Wilf's stage 13 of the aforesaid circumwhatever on the Sunday or for Nuri Chorvat's Heathcote National Park walk the same day. Eddy reported 9 on his Megalong Valley walk on the Sunday,

enjoying fine weather and nettles in Breakfast Creek. They reported the Cox River as being unusually low.

The weekend of 8, 9, 10 November saw the postponement of Tony Manes' walk to Mount Dawson in the Newnes area. Jim Rivers wasn't doing a whole lot better, with no report for his "top campsite" trip out from Little Forest Plateau. Perhaps it was so good they couldn't tear themselves away. Maureen Carter's Saturday walk out from Heathcote had a party of 8 enjoying the walk on a sunny day. Zol Bodlay's Marramarra fish story walk that day was reported as a nice relaxed day with several swims for the party of 12. Peter Miller had 11 on his walk to Cogra Point from Wondabyne Station. The day was uncommonly warm, and dry. Peter developed cramps along the way and was reported to have been possibly the only person hobbling a little due to this, and blistered feet, at the Opera House that evening. There was no report for Ken Cheng's backyard walk on the Sunday but the abseiling practice weekend had 12 participants under the watchful eye of Kenn Clacher. Laurie Bore led 16 on his woods and beaches trip out from Woy Woy on a fine sunny day with strong southerly breezes at lunch time. They started the walk by going through the Woy Woy tip but redeemed this by returning along Woy Woy promenade past flocks of dozing pelicans. All of which seems an appropriately bucolic way of ending the walks reports.

Conservation report indicated that most of the NSW wilderness declarations have been made, with some old growth forest areas deferred for decision at a later date. The draft plan of management released for Kakadu National Park focuses on tourist type activities to the exclusion of off track activities. Protests continue over the Hinchinbrook development. The Dunphy fund has been established. As a result of discussion arising from the report it was resolved that Alex should write protesting at the

proposed Kakadu restrictions on off track walking.

Confederation report brought news of the continuing activities of ORCA/NORLID, of a proposed Channel 7 outdoor expo which appears to distinguish itself mainly by the high price of participation and the resultant lack of interest, in walking circles at least.

From there it was just a matter of general business, announcements, and the meeting closed at approximately 2124 with not a gong to be heard. ■

Why "The Golden Stairs?"

by Ron Knightly

As you walk out or homeward Along the Narrore Peninsula near Katoomba, you may notice a sign proclaiming that you are passing the top of "The Golden Stairs". And, if you have ever walked up or down them, you are certain to wonder, "How in heavens name did they ever earn such a euphemistic label?" Unless you are already in the know, that is. Now, for those who are not, read on.

In the latter 1800's there were established in the Jamison Valley two townlets. One, for the coal miners, somewhat below the present day Scenic Railway, the other near the Ruined Castle, for the kerosene shale miners. They were linked by a level track for horse drawn trams. This track will be familiar to you if you have "done" Solitary.

Over in the Megalong Valley another mining Town was established. Linked to their mines by another horse drawn tramway. Anyone who has taken part in a Redledge - Mitchell's Pass walk will know its remnants.

As there was already a passable road into the Megalong Valley from Blackheath, a hotel also graced the Megalong community. In later times, ►

< Its location would become a much used Friday night campsite for bushwalkers.

Now, the existence of this hotel riled the Jamison crowd somewhat. Whereas the Megalong mob cold stake their collective thirst at weekends, the Jamison men just got thirstier and thirstier. However, being action-orientated rather than contemplative, they soon set about creating a remedy.

They carved a set of steps up the causeway and, down the Megalong side, established a set of iron ladders known as "Dixon's Ladders" (they were later renamed by the Water Board and unromantically known as "The Water Board Ladders" thereafter.) Thus, the Jamison miners could, in a matter of two hours after downing their working tools for the weekend, be carousing in the Megalong pub.

Be Sunsmart One Life, One Skin - Why Risk It

Unverified tradition has it that, climbing up the Jamison side, they used to sing a Salvation Army song, "Climbing Up The Golden Stairs To Heaven". Their "Heaven" was of course, that Megalong Valley pub.

As a post script, I would add that, subsequently, a tram tunnel was punched right through The Causeway, linking the two tramways - - - and, fortuitously, shortening the miners rout to Heaven. There is still at least an airway through that old tunnel (well I can vouch for winter '95), which can be simply verified. About 20 to 30 minutes' walk from the foot of the Stairs towards Katoomba, a little runnel of rusty water crosses the track, confined by two pieces of wood. Some metres to the left two fallen boulders form a squeeze way beyond which is the tunnel entry. If a westerly is blowing, you will feel quite a breeze on your face as you peer into the darkness.

Thank you for producing and forwarding my copy of the October issue of THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER.

As one of the team who helped produce the first "BUSHWALKER" in its own cover in January 1938, I was devastated, on opening the journal, to be confronted with a black-and-white reproduction of a scene having a post-and-rail fence in the foreground. What relation does this scene bear to bushwalking? After 58 years of the original cover surely something else of equal pictorial value could be found. Preferably a scene with mountains in the background.

Similarly the white frontispiece is unattractive so I suggest, for the convenience of production, that at least buff paper be utilised to impart some character.

The quality of the paper as used is quite satisfactory but if heavy recycled paper is used, difficulty will be found in folding for postal purposes.

I consider the inclusion of the occasional black and white makes the journal more attractive. I have not the faintest idea what desk top production is all about. I must state that I am "print blind" and therefor require printed material to be read to me, though I endeavour to type using one eye and peripheral vision.

I spent 18 years on the physical production of the magazine, in broken periods, on a manual duplicator in the days of typed stencils and in some years combined with the position of magazine business manager.

It was not until sometime, fairly post-war, that the magazine was POSTED to all members. Early on it was sold in the clubroom or members could subscribe (separately to the clubs annual sub) when a copy bearing the subscribers name was held in the cupboard until it was picked up or by paying a little more sub it was posted.

Later I am sending you a photocopy of the magazine annual

subscription form with a covering (brilliant!) article explaining that the magazine sold for the cost price, including the printed coloured cover, for three pence or today's two cents. And we had to elect a magazine subscription manager!

In the olden days, pre war, we held an Annual Sports Carnival, being a combined weekend camp and Sunday walk, at a borrowed paddock near the bank of the Nepean, a short way downstream from Emu Plains Station - all to be snuffed out by the war, as was our Annual Ball, a black tie affair at a city ball-room. Of course today nobody would know how to fox-trot or do an old fashioned waltz nor the Canadian three step! Tickets were 7/5d or today's 75 cents! with supper.

Yes, I could go on but I won't. Times change.

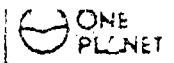
And of course I also founded the somewhat despised DUNGALLA CLUB in 1968 for those members and past members whose walking days were long over and for whom the club supplied absolutely nothing. A sort of bushwalkers R.S.L. ! Still going strong.

It has occurred to me that if heavy recycled paper is utilised, the folded thickness may exceed the Regulation 5 mm thickness. Likewise the 70th anniversary special will in any case be thick and may have to be posted in an envelope at standard postal charges.

Yours sincerely
Brian Harvey ■

Brian is 84 years old and still going strong - relatively speaking. "Not bad for an old bloke". (His own words)

As previously explained, we use recycled paper - not because it's cheaper - (it actually costs more than new paper) but because it uses less trees. Ed



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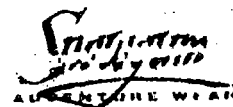
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Regarding The Cover Of The SBW Magazine

I could hardly believe it when I heard it rumoured that the cover of the Sydney Bush Walker magazine was to be changed and the long-standing illustration originally drawn by Alan Rigby was to be dropped.

That scraperboard drawing is really a sort of ikon in that it expresses the very character of those times when the conservation movement began, but more than that it is a brilliant work of art in a

technique that is hardly ever seen today.

It is a technique derived from the nineteenth century platemakers, where illustrations were drawn onto metal plates then were acid etched by hand. Later, with the advent of photography, original drawings could be imaged onto plates and etched ready for the printer.

It could be said that Alan was one of Australia's top scraperboard illustrators in his day, and that one

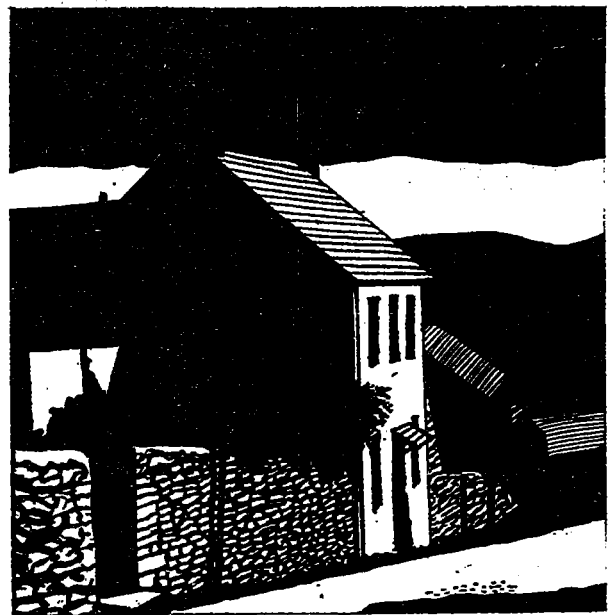
of his best works - done with great feeling - is that which graced the cover of the SBW magazine for some half century.

The illustrations herewith may show the high degree of craftsmanship which goes into scraperboard illustration and hopefully engender a higher appreciation of Alan's work.

Dennis Gittoes



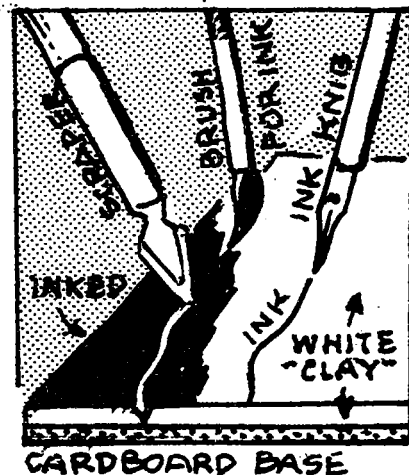
1 Scene pencilled onto scraper board



2 Dark areas inked in



3 Lines scraped into dark areas



4 Scraperboard is a layer of fine semi-hard white clay on a cardboard backing. ■

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Quo Vadis

The Sydney Bushwalker?

by Peter Miller

Judging by the intemperate tones of some of the letters published in answer to my query "Quo Vadis *The Sydney Bushwalker*?" it appears that some members are in danger of losing their sense of proportion (and their sense of humour) on the subject of the magazine and its cover.

The cover.

To some members the cover is sacred and cannot be touched. To others it is repetitious, dull and boring and bears little resemblance to the Blue Gum Forest which we all know as a place of sunshine and light. The idea of offering a new cover was to show that we could have a different and exciting photograph or high quality drawing in that space each month and offer the members the chance to show their artistic talents by having their best work displayed on the front page. Covers are the most distinctive part of any magazine and it is a pity to use the same cover when, in the opinion of many, it is time for a change. We could also offer the members the opportunity to design a new cover if the October layout does not meet with general approval.

Layout.

The club should purchase a desk top publishing program to lay out the magazine. Except for the August and October issues the magazine is laid out using Word which is a word processing program only and not suited to the more sophisticated finish that can be obtained with desk top publishing software.

Drawings and photographs We can produce good quality line drawings and photographs, which many members have indicated they want in the magazine, only if we sell the present unsatisfactory printer and replace it with a good quality photo copier. An examination of the November issue will point up the deficiencies in our printer. On my copy pages two, three, five, 11, 13 and 18 are smudged with ink from the

previous page and the scanned Willis Walkabout advertisement on page 10 is barely legible. A comparison of pages three, four and five of the October issue shows the difference between photo copied and a printed pages. I had pages three and four photo copied because our printer will not satisfactorily print scanned images. Our printer only prints in a shade of grey and misses out on the sharp definition that is necessary for a good quality page. This is not meant as a criticism of the printers, who like myself are all volunteers, but unless we provide them with the right equipment we cannot expect them to do a good job. Having pages commercially photo copied is expensive and time consuming for the editor and we should have the equipment to do the work ourselves.

The artwork on pages seven and eight of the November issue is of particularly poor quality and we should ask the advertisers to submit new copy.

The position of Editor

George Mawer has indicated to the Committee that he will not be standing for the position of Editor at the next Annual General Meeting in March 1997. It will be up to the members to then decide what sort of magazine they require.

I will be standing for the position of editor with the intention of offering the following:

- a) a new cover each month.
- b) a magazine laid out with sophisticated desk top publishing software.
- c) the replacement of our present printer with a good quality photo copier which will allow us to print our own covers and artwork.
- d) delivery of the magazine on the second Monday in the month with fixed cut off time for contributions. (The magazine would be delivered on the third Monday when we print the walks program).
- e) quality scanned photographs and line drawings as a regular feature.

- f) the careful editing of articles, poems and notices so that we present the best possible image and give our members the encouragement to contribute material.
- g) the formulation of an editorial policy (in consultation with the members).

Other magazine positions

All those associated with the production and distribution of the magazine should have deputies. We should have a deputy editor, printer and collator so that the magazine can stick to a predetermined timetable and not be late when people are away on holidays. Also, with the editorial policy formulated and the position of deputy editor decided at the Annual General Meeting you won't get any upstarts like myself of only 24 years standing coming up with new ideas will you?

See you all at the next AGM.

From the Walks Secretary

1. May you have a wonderful Christmas and enjoy whatever you get up or down to.
2. May "St Nick bring you whatever you ask.
3. May you have a happy new year.
4. May 1997 bring you good fortune and happiness.
5. May you not forget the Autumn 1997 Walks Program closing date (Friday 24 January). Reefer to walks program last page.
6. May you not be short of ideas for walks.

Eddy

Ah, what a breath of fresh air!

At last, someone in the Club prepared to suggest and trial improvement in the Club for the purpose of keeping up with the times. But at what cost for it appears from discussion that I have had with some members and as evidenced from some letters to the editor (Nov.'96 issue), that there may be dissension among Club members and committee position holders.

Yes, the trial change certainly stirred up sentiment and traditionalist views and it appears in one case, even opened up old wounds from many years ago.

Whilst supportive of reviewing and implementing change which may improve processes and outputs within the Club, it disappoints me to see the negativity and the way in which the opposing views is being so openly displayed. Surely the long time member in the middle of this controversy (Peter Miller), has the Club's interest at heart. Let's not create an image of "power building" amongst the upper ranks.

It would appear to me that certain comments made by several of the writers in the Nov. Issue have been based on emotion. With comments like "losing a member of the family", "Amateurish unattractive cover", "Shades of a past incident", and "Shame", some of television's soapies may begin to look somewhat timid in comparison to the proportion that this issue is starting to take on.

Perhaps the last two comments of those mentioned above may have been better left to rest. After all, let's not start hitting below the belt but rather maintain strong leadership and cooperation based on teamwork, particularly among the committee members.

Of the letters published, the comments and views of Geoff Bradley probably expresses the most objective case for

considering change within the Club - well done!

Peter, you have my support. During the 20 years during which I have been a member of the Club there has been little change. It is refreshing to see improvements now being considered and trialed.

After all, should change not be successful, it is always possible to revert back to the way it used to be. Above all, let us all become supporters of worthwhile change which in turn encourages the Club to grow and improve, whilst also allowing meaningful debate to be part of this process.

Hans Stichter. ■

Your Name, Address & 'phone Numbers

The SBW listing for 1997 is closing now. Please check your entry and if it's wrong advise Barry Wallace promptly. You must do this before the end of this year (1996) or you will be too late.

Barry Wallace
1/20 Elfrida Street
Mosman 2088.

Do it now

WANTED Magazine Copy

We are forever in need of stories and items for this magazine.

You like reading about what someone else did don't you? Well someone else would like to read about what you did. Or what happened and how it turned into a disaster or maybe something wonderful.

We all need to know what's happening to you - the good and the bad. Gossip? - There is almost nothing reported and yet there must be a lot of juicy interesting things to blab about. There's no need to quote actual names - (SBW members are pretty good at putting two and two together.)

If you don't have something to tell, perhaps you want to know something about bushwalking or rock climbing or abseiling or some other aspect of our activities.

Or maybe you want to sell or buy something. Let's have it.

Ed ■

Seasons Greetings

Well, it's that time of the year again. A time of goodwill. A time for giving and forgiving. A time for being grateful for the good things that came to us in the past year, and looking forward with optimism, expecting good things to come. Best wishes to everyone.

My thanks to all who gave some of their time and energy to help with the production of the magazine. The editorial assistants, the dedicated small band of printers and collators, the advertisers, and especially those who submitted stories and letters (whether you were printed or not). And the ideas and constructive criticisms.

The magazine is very much a joint effort and every contribution, no matter how big or small has helped make the production just that much easier.

My sincere thanks, Ed. ■

Gear-checks

For all those intending to do an extended walk over the big break, now is the time for that final checkup.

Have a thorough and critical look at your footwear. Will they hold together for at least twice times the trip you are planning?

You tent seam sealing and proofing. Ropes, poles and pegs. Same with your rain coat and over-pants. Your back pack - Stitching and straps. Waterproofing. Zips.

Take a strong needle and thread - just in case

*** MAIL and NOTICES ***

I would like to respond to Maurice Smith's article on "Excesses" (The Sydney Bushwalker November, 1996).

Firstly, **CROWD CONTROL** - having participated in or led numerous weekend walks with 10 plus walkers I have rarely experienced communications problems. By making announcements at appropriate times eg. before leaving the vehicles, at morning tea, lunch, etc. - supplying track notes and having proper planning, communication problems should hardly ever arise.

Secondly, **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT** - many areas, including The Snowy Mountains, have large open spaces suitable for accommodating camping groups in excess of 10 with minimal impact. Most impact problems arise through selection of unsuitable camp sites, non use of stoves or inappropriate positioning of camp fire(s); improper hygiene habits and lack of toilet training.

Thirdly, **SOCIALISING** - I have rarely found lack of socialising a problem and often many of the participants already know each other. Socialising is more an individual thing. At the end of extended trips I have often seen a dozen or more contented people happy with their wilderness experience.

For those people who wish to walk in smaller parties - great. There should always be that opportunity. If a particular area is likely to suffer adverse environmental impact I would expect that any responsible leader would always take this into account. In respect to the notion that Club Guidelines should impose a blanket limit of 10 walkers on any weekend walk, I regard this as too ludicrous to discuss. The number of people participating on a club walk should be at the discretion of the leader and the prerogative of those who wish to take part.

MAURIE BLOOM. ■

EDITORS COMMENT

Referring to Maurie Bloom's comments on the impact of improper bush hygiene habits and lack of toilet training:

Regrettably one sees too much evidence that this is very true. There are still (and always will be) lots of people who need training in these simple skills.

Leaders should not assume that everyone on their walk knows how to shit in the bush and how not to pollute streams with soap, toothpaste and urine.

Maurie also mentions the use of stoves. You are really safer and more self reliant when you pack a stove. The tribal campfire, in use for many thousands of years, is a wonderful multi-functional tool and just the thing on a cold night. But it's also a wonderful way to denude the surrounding area of vast amounts of dry wood and (over time) deprive existing vegetation of essential recyclable nutrients.

Fallen timber serves a multitude of environmental purposes. Let's conserve it.

Ed. ■

I would like to put an alternative point of view to the opinions expressed by Maurice Smith in his article headed "Excesses" in the November 1996 issue of The Sydney Bushwalker.

Contrary to Maurice's assertions, SBW walks with over 10 walkers can be very enjoyable experiences for all participants. Many people feel more comfortable in relatively large walking groups (say 15 - 20 people) than in small groups. They like the variety of company, they are able to avoid group members they don't feel comfortable with, they feel safer, and they feel more secure because they know that in large groups there is a better chance there will be someone slower than themselves.

Maurie exaggerates the degree of difficulty involved in organising

and managing larger groups compared to smaller groups. He cites the difficulty in communicating accurately, the amount of pre-walk organisation, how to ensure no walker gets separated from the group, etc. What is critical here is how these issues are handled, not the group size. They can be handled just as badly in small groups as in larger ones. How well they are handled is determined by the competence, knowledge and experience of the leader and other key members of the group. It doesn't follow that a group will be better managed because it is fewer than 10, or poorly managed because it is larger than 10.

Maurie states that "Larger groups usually mean a larger impact on the bush ... especially ... around the campsite". This is a difficult and emotive issue. Whenever we walk in the bush we have an impact. The issue is whether or not that impact will be damaging and lasting. Will 2 groups of 10 walkers do less damage than one group of 20 walkers? Surely the appearance of an over-used campsite (bare earth, stone circled fireplaces, the absence of fallen dead timber) is caused by the intensity of its use, ie, the total number of people and their camping practices, who have camped there over a given time period, rather than the size of a particular group? If we, in small or large groups, use dispersed campsites whenever possible the traces of our overnight stay disappear relatively quickly.

Maurie asks "How can there be a genuine wilderness experience if the group has over 20 people?" Well, not all weekend walks are held in designated wilderness areas. For example in the Myall Lakes National Park walkers can expect to meet vehicles, boats, fishermen, family groups, etc on the beaches and lakes. It's not wilderness but still a good place to walk. Similarly walks in state forests, SRA's, on the Six Foot Track, Hume and Hovel Track, >

or the trails in Barrington Tops couldn't be called wilderness experiences. Placing a mandatory group size of 10 in these and many of our other walk areas would be a nonsense. In the SBW our leaders mostly don't take large groups into wilderness areas for the obvious reasons of difficult terrain and restricted campsites. These are in-built controls.

Maurice's third contentious point is that "socialising is ... very difficult in large groups". This generalisation just doesn't seem true for many SBW members. On weekend walks there is time for talk and companionable silence. Groups become more cohesive through sharing the pleasures and discomforts of the walk. After listening on many walks to the happy chatter of voices on the final fire trail, the murmur of voices in the camp on long summer evenings in the high country, observing spirited debates around the campfire, the jokes, the singing, it seems to me that "socialising" is a relatively easy thing to do, if one wishes it, on a weekend walk. Unfortunately the difficulties Maurice describes do seem to occur on some day walks when the group is large.

On the issue of park policy, NPWS restrictions on group size where they now apply are directed at reducing the total numbers of walkers in an area at any one time, sharing the available places among applicants.

We don't all come out of the same walking mould. Some of us like walking in small groups, some in large groups, some in both. Our walks program offers many graded walks for most weekends which helps to spread numbers and so prevent excessively large groups forming. Implementing rules and regulations that unnecessarily restrict our group sizes is not in the best interests of our club.
IAN RANNARD. ■

WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

Mary Perry, the visitor to our club from London earlier this year, has written to the club and sends her regards to all. She has

included a five page itinerary of her trek to the Himalayas / Pakistan.

She also included a copy of "Strider", the journal of the Long Distance Walkers Association. 100 pages of what appears to be a combination magazine and walks program. It has colour photographs, including one showing dogs on a walk! And it has a crossword puzzle!!

Anyone wishing to view these should contact Eddy Giacomel on 9477 6475.

Mary's new address is:
155 Andrewes House
Barbican
London EC2Y 8BA UK.

Bob Stewart, the American Caltex executive has moved from Sydney to Singapore. His new postal address is:

Bob Stewart
c/- Caltex Singapore
PO Box 646
Singapore 901246
Phone 0011 65 533 3000.

John O'Shea has moved from Goulburn to Sydney. His new postal address is

John O'Shea
Christian Brothers
Private Bag 154
Balmain NSW 2041. ■

1. SBW magazine.

I agree that the layout of the articles and news items need to be presented in more of a desktop manner. Since George Mawer took over the editorship the presentation has slowly become more easy to read. I would like to congratulate George in his endeavours as the skills of layout via the computer was something he learnt on the way. Personally now that the technology is cheaper we could do with photographs (professionally printed) of various walking activities and scenery. Even photographs in the magazine. (Photographs printed in

the Colong Bulletin cost \$30 per page).

However on the way to having the smartest presentation of articles etc. I believe it is important to **preserve** the identity of the SBW magazine. It is not necessary to smarten up the cover. Allan Rigby's woodcut stands the test of time both from an artistic point of view, as well as keeping the historical identity of the magazine. Let's not change for change sake.

1. 70th Anniversary.

Congratulations to the forward thinking sub-committee on their early work towards a great event. As a long standing (walking) member I look forward to participating in all the celebrations. I am somewhat concerned however at the prospect of paying \$70 for the dinner. And at an out of town venue as well. Maybe the committee might rethink the amount and the location of the dinner so that people on lower incomes could be included.

SHIRLEY DEAN ■

Kedumba Creek

Do not drink Kedumba Creek!
When you're thirsty, elsewhere seek.

A thousand demons therein lie,
Awaiting fools like you and I.
Pollution harbours in this sink,
Do not Drink! Do not Drink!

Crystal clear the water seems,
But with hateful life it teems.
For it stems from Leura's drains,
And Katoomba's streets and lanes.
Avoid these waters as if ink,
Do not Drink! Do not Drink!

Recall the fate of Kev O'Neill,
Drank the water with his meal,
Then Kedumba Pass ascended,
Raving like a soul demented.
Let this be clear to all who think,
Do not Drink! Do not Drink!

Ivor tried its fateful lure,
Drank the stream that was not pure.
Now his views are widely known,
Leave Kedumba creek alone!
Next time you cross, then at it wink
But do not drink! Do not Drink!

Jim Barrett. The Waysider 1952 ■