



THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER is a monthly bulletin of matters of interest to members of The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc  
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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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## THE MITCHELL RIVER. KIMBERLEY

13 June to 23 June 1999

by *Wayne Steele*

After some years of promises and talk it was finally decided that 1999 was the year to walk in the Mitchell Plateau area of The Kimberley, Western Australia. So it came about that four members, and one ex-member (now living in Canberra), of the Sydney Bushwalkers' Club went on an eleven day walk through the Mitchell River area.

The walkers were; Wendy Lippiatt, Patrick McBride, Bob Milne, Tony Marshall, Wayne Steele (Leader).

Our packs weighed in at about 18 kg each which included 5.4 kg of communal food and equipment for dinners and breakfasts and of course no long trip is complete without the OP rum and lemon barley for the evening hot toddy.

We wore boots and gaiters to cope with the rocky terrain and spinifex, and long-sleeved shirts. Wendy and Patrick wore long pants, the others shorts. We drank water from all the streams with no ill effects although the taste was sometimes musty like moss vegetation. Firewood burned readily with a hot flame and was always plentiful.

The walk started and finished at the Mitchell Plateau airstrip. A local light aircraft company was employed to deliver us and our rucksacks at the airstrip and hopefully, not forget to pick us up 11 days later. The Mitchell Plateau airfield consists of two landing strips located on a flat featureless plateau surrounded by savannah woodland of Acacia and Eucalyptus trees, Livistonia palms and 1.5-2.0 metres tall spear grass.

Our first priority was to get off the plateau in order to find water and navigate to our initial goal of Surveyor's Pool. Running water was found surprisingly early in the upper reaches of a small creek. We followed this small creek through recently burned open grassland offering little shelter from the sun. The fire had destroyed most of the dry spear grass but left ashy and dusty conditions

to walk through. Throughout the duration of the walk the evening temperatures were wonderfully cool at about 18° C, followed by warming mid morning temperatures of 26° C, and rising to a hot 32° C by 11:30 am. The temperature remained high until about 3:30 pm. Because of the hot middays we soon fell into the daily routine of lighting the fire at 4:30 am (still dark), eating breakfast at 5:30 am (first light), and walking by 6:30 am. We then stopped at a shady spot, preferably with a pool, by 11:00 am and lazed around and explored the environs until late afternoon when we would move on a short distance to our camp site.

We were aware that both salt water and freshwater crocodiles are present in the area but we were not expecting to see any above the first waterfalls at Surveyors Pool nor in small creeks. However we surprised a freshwater croc on our second day whilst still relatively high in the catchment area of our small creek. A couple of days later we encountered another two freshies, again high in the catchment area of a small creek. We were not concerned with finding freshies in our drinking water, after all they had squatter's rights. However we were impressed that they were able to travel across some quite difficult terrain, even when considering the additional water in the wet season. Once in saltwater crocodile country we limited our swimming to small shallow pools.

Our camp above Surveyors Pool was on the water-smoothed rock ledge of the wet season waterfall. A wonderful sight and sound. We were able to sit on the cliff edge and watch the two waterfalls flowing over the water-polished rocks and crashing into dark still waters of the Surveyors Pool. The pool is surrounded by vertical, dissected sandstone cliffs with the outflow through a gorge to the open plains. As with all the remaining campsites, sunset and sunrise were the best times to witness the attractive colour changes on the cliffs, rock sentinels and in the water reflections.

Each night we slept under the stars. Although we carried mosquito nets we were fortunate in that we encountered almost no mosquitoes or flies and so bed was the ground sheet on the softest selected stone slab with a light covering against the 18° C night. From this horizontal position one could gaze at a night sky brilliant with innumerable stars, and our planetary companions of Mercury, Venus, and Mars. We were rewarded nightly with a display from at least one meteorite entering the earth's atmosphere.

From the Surveyors Pool catchment we then travelled two days overland to the Mitchell River. This country was ruggedly magnificent with many sandstone ridges and outliers eroded into beautifully shaped tors, sentinels and gullies. Where there were pools of water these were surrounded by groves of pandanus and paperbark trees. There were remains of Aboriginal paintings under many overhangs and sheltered positions. The isolation was reinforced by that all one could see to the horizon in all directions was the continuation of rugged sandstone outcroppings.

The Lower Mitchell River cuts its way through the sandstone plateau and we did not obtain a clear view until we reached the cliff overlooking the tidal reaches on the river. From the vantage point we were directly above the famous rock bar which is known for the spectacular sight during the tidal changes. Unfortunately we arrived at the turning of the low tide and so missed the tidal race over the bar, however the low tide was a benefit in that it enabled us to negotiate the exposed mangrove beds and rock ledges to gain access along the gorge to the higher fresh water reaches of the Mitchell. We had seen a salt water crocodile in the gorge and crossing the mangrove beds required keeping a wary eye open for crocodile drag marks in the mud.

Amongst the rocks bordering the river we saw, out first bettong, a possum-sized hopping marsupial with a tuft of hair on the tip of the tail. During the rest of the trip we saw three more of them, all in daylight.

Bettongs are now extinct in most parts of Australia and we had never seen them before in the wild. We also sighted three bandicoots which bounded away almost from underfoot.

We encountered a number of relatively low height waterfalls whilst walking upstream. Even though these waterfalls were not great in height they were all impressive as a result of the attractive rock ledges and rock formations in the vicinity. Evidence of the high wet season water levels can be gauged by the remains of timber in high ledges, sometimes several metres above the present water level. The falls must be very spectacular in the wet season. The Mitchell River flows generally through flat sandstone country from the main Mitchell Falls, and there are many long deep reaches along which to walk and camp. Tall paperbarks provide dappled shade. These reaches are perfect settings to sit in the evening with a rum and lemon barley drink in hand and watch the colours change as the sun sets, and listen to the calls of cockatoos and other birds as they settle for the night.

It was at one of these Lower Mitchell waterfalls camps that we met a Willis' Tour group party of 9 who were spending one or two days going downstream and then being picked up by helicopter. The leader appeared to be rather surprised to have met anyone on this part of the Mitchell River. We were equally surprised when one of the Willis' party approached us and asked if we were members of the Sydney Bush Walkers' Club. It appears that he had met a party of Sydney Bush Walkers' in Kakadu a couple of years ago when we helped a member of his group recover from hyperthermia and noted that we all wore neckerchiefs. Small world!

On Day 8 we camped in the large amphitheatre at the base of the main waterfalls of the Mitchell and Merton rivers. The rewards of bushwalking can include camping alongside of a lovely river bordered with paperbarks and pandanus and completely surrounded by rugged sandstone cliffs and the sight of waterfalls cascading into deep black pools. Unfortunately during the day the ambiance was somewhat

shattered as helicopters ferry tourists over the falls from the tourist camp site about 2 kilometres away.

Exploration of the amphitheatre led to a very narrow and steep rocky gorge that ended in a pool at the base of the Merton River waterfall. Further round we were able to walk along a ledge behind the main Mitchell waterfall and sit in the cool moist recesses of the cliff looking out onto the heat saturated amphitheatre as the waterfall tumbled noisily in front of us.

On the last two days we followed up Merton Creek to gain access to the Mitchell Plateau. The creeks run mostly through flat slightly rising country with scattered eucalyptus trees and groves of pandanus adjacent to the water holes. We were fortunate that the creek has a good flow of water almost to the top of the plateau. After waiting at the airstrip for a couple of nervous hours we finally welcomed the arrival, ahead of scheduled time, of an empty light aircraft that was to return us to the soft beds in Kununurra. Unfortunately we cannot see the stars or hear the dingoes calling whilst lying on the soft beds. I think I prefer the rock ledges.

The most satisfying aspect of this walk and indeed of all extended walks is that we are able to use the skills learnt through bushwalking, such as light weight packing, navigation, walking in difficult terrain, trust in your companions' skills, to venture into new country and experience the tranquility and wonder of remote wilderness.

An excellent bushwalk and I am looking forward to the next trip to the Kimberley.

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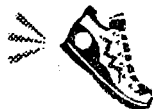
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## KNOW THEM BY THEIR WORDS

*by Henry Gold*

I am answering a reply by Peter Stitt and Garth Coulter in the July issue to my earlier article in the April issue. Peter and Garth claim that their party, the Outdoor Recreation Party (ORP), is a conservation minded and wilderness friendly organisation.

Here is an extract from the ORP's Website Newsletter No 9, Spring 1998, Volume 1, in response to some wilderness nominations by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

*"16 new wilderness areas have been identified, mostly in the New England area. There will be a line of wilderness along the Great Dividing Range 280 kms long, when all this is eventually declared. Horse riders may have to say goodbye forever to the concept of the Bi-Centenary Trail.*

*We must as clubs, and individuals protest against these proposals, otherwise the NPWS will simply assume that there is no opposition to wilderness, and be able to prove through lack of protest letters that their argument is valid.*

*An area in the centre of Yengo National Park is also being prepared to be identified as wilderness. This area will clearly have addition after addition added to it, making a huge "no go" area in no time. In previous newsletters we have telegraphed the Central Coast branch of NPWS's intention of creating wilderness in Yengo. So if we don't fight, say goodbye to Heartbreak Hill and Fred's Hill. Motorcyclists especially will be badly disadvantaged."*

Peter and Garth deny that the ORP is not a political front for the Public Land Users Alliance (PLUA) but the ORP and PLUA have held numerous combined public meetings throughout NSW. If two organisations hold joint meetings, one must conclude that they at least share each other's views.

The following are some responses by the PLUA to wilderness nominations, as they are stated in the Journal of the PLUA, February 1996.

*"Many of these nominations have come from extreme groups such as: The Wilderness Society, The Colong Foundation, the Australian Conservation Foundation and several Bushwalking clubs, organisations who through their publications have shown themselves to be anti-horses, anti-vehicles, anti-social and the consequences of their lock-up-and-leave it mentality shows them to be anti-environment."*

*We propose a three day rally at Parliament House in Sydney, in conjunction with our friends from the mining, forestry and agricultural industries."*

Instructions to members, taken from the June 1996 issue.

*"You have until the end of this month (June 96) to write a letter of opposition to these new nominated wilderness areas. Please make the first sentence very clear as to your opposition to wilderness and then state your reasons why."*

Here is one more statement from the ORP Website Newsletter No 19, Spring 1998, Volume 1. Readers should keep in mind that this is meant to be serious.

*"Our intelligence sources who closely watch and listen to the Green movement, and have a perfect record in predicting what can be expected next from our opponents predict that recreational fishing is the next target on the Green's hit list. This will be an attempt to merge with Animal Liberation to bolster flagging support. So all our members who like to "wet a line" be warned."*

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## COOLANA BARN DANCE

Don't forget the  
'Hootenanny'  
November 5.6.7



Consult the walks program for details

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

## The Kimberley Coast — Something New

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This trip will not be offered in 2001. We may not be able to get permission to offer it again.  
Ask for the trip notes.

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## Yerranderie Walking

by Ray Hookway

Maps. Bindook 1-25 000. Yerranderie 1-25 000

*Three walks in the Yerranderie area appear on the Spring 1999 walks program, one to be led by Wayne Steele on Oct 22/24, has been labelled by Bill Capon an SBW classic. I have done this walk several times in past years and a few comments may engender some interest in this historic and spectacular area.*

*The view from the top of Yerranderie Peak, overlooking the old silver mining town of Yerranderie is a high point of a walk packed with interest.*

*Before the closure of the Warragamba Dam, and the flooding of the magnificent Burragorang Valley, Yerranderie was a bus trip from Camden and was a popular starting point for walkers, but now access is normally restricted to the old stock route from Oberon via Shooters Hill and Mt Werong. This interesting though long road 'substantially follows the old Aboriginal route' ① and this is the way Wayne will approach the start of his walk. Luckily the Civil Aviation Department has built an aircraft beacon on top of Nyanga Mountain, and, to ensure all-weather access to this important facility, they maintain the long dirt road in reasonable condition.*

*The walk commences and ends at Batsh Camp (Bindook 321177) a spot reputedly used as a base camp by people collecting bat droppings from the nearby Colong caves but possibly only named in jest by cavers.*

*Wayne's route is then south along the edge of Bent Hook swamp Skirting Kooragang Mt. that forms the southern end of Roaring Wind Mt. ② which is separated from Mt Colong by the narrow Colong Causeway.*

*On one early walk in this area I remember a club member, Dot Noble, stepping into a dingo trap set by the local landowner but luckily, the jaws caught the heel of her Volley sandshoe and no injury was sustained. Bushwalkers earned a deal of ill-will from graziers for allegedly setting off these traps,*

*and when one considers that the grazier had probably lost dozens of sheep in a night to marauding dogs, one can be sympathetic whilst still finding the traps abhorrent.*

*Wayne then heads northeast skirting the eastern side of Myanga Mt. and out on to Mt. Meier via Baralliers Pass. Experts still argue about Barallier's route whilst seeking a way over the mountains in 1802. Surveyor R.H. Cabbage favoured this route. ③*

*The view from Meier Mt. gives the first good look at the magnificent country the walk covers. To the southeast is Square Rock, (Little Rick to the locals, Mt Colong was Big Rick) an isolated Mesa. Jim Barrett tells the story that the 'first' party to climb the 'unclimbable' Square Rock in 1970 were surprised to find a plaque having the names of a party who had actually climbed it in 1938! ④*

*Further ahead in the distance looms the Mootik Wall running north and south and your destination for the lunch stop, Colong Gap. Mootik was a native of the Gundungurra tribe that roamed the area between Katoomba and Goulburn when Barralier passed through in 1802.*

*Below you is the site of the former Colong Station first officially established by Edward Moore in 1867 but Samuel Blackman grazed cattle on rented land in the area in 1827. ⑤ On a visit a few years ago, the ruins of a homestead were still standing and the nearby quince trees were fully laden. We loaded our packs with ripe quinces which we stewed with blackberries, picked from vines at Yerranderie. What a delicious evening meal. Next time we passed that way the ruins and the trees were gone. Now, the site is ploughed and has a new owner.*

*The route skirts this property, crosses the Mt Armour fire trail which heads north toward Mt Armour and Church Creek, ⑥ passes Square Rock, and heads up toward a bay in the Mootik wall (Bindook 403197), crossing Byrnes Swamp en route.*

*The top of the Wall is reached by a rough horse trail that once linked Colong Station and other properties in the valley with*

Yerranderie. Traces of an old single fencing wire telephone line may be seen hanging from insulators on tree trunks, as you skirt 'Little Rick'. Water for lunch on the Mootik Wall is usually collected from Byrnes Swamp and it is an easy walk up onto the Gap.

The view from the top is spectacular in most directions across the Tonalli Valley, with its unique mountain shapes and cliff lines. (*Bill Capon will be leading an interesting walk from Yerranderie up on to the Tonalli Tableland next Easter.*)

The surrounding country has not changed much since the coming of the Europeans and you are seeing it as Barrallier and his party saw it in 1802. One theory is that Barallier passed through Byrnes Gap but Ross Brownscombe<sup>④</sup> believes that his route was via Kowmung Gap, which can also be seen slightly to the west.

The horse track crosses the narrow wall and skirts down its eastern side to meet the Yerranderie-Mt Armour road and on into Yerranderie.

After lunch, Wayne's walk heads south, climbing slightly along the wall until you

drop down to a narrow section at 416199. A little local knowledge is needed here to find the best route up the northern side of the ridge, on to the next section leading to Yerranderie Peak, and it is necessary to do some easy rock scrambling.

The ridge is followed along, slightly below the summit on its southern side, until the Peak is reached and a quick scramble takes you to the top where the view is spectacular. The interesting route down into Yerranderie is clearly evident as it is well worn by day visitors to Yerranderie. The face of rocky Bartlett Head, passed on the left as you descend, is a marvellous textbook picture of the geology of the area spanning millions of years of the earth's history.

Galena was discovered in Yerranderie in 1871 by Billy Russell (Werri Berri), reputedly the last king of the Burraborang Aborigines, and great quantities of silver, lead and gold to a total value of about \$48M in today's terms, were taken out between 1899-1936. Underground mining actually ceased in 1928 following a miners' strike.<sup>①</sup>

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The history of Yerranderie and of the whole Burragorang Valley makes interesting reading and Glenbrook bush walker Jim Barrett has covered both areas very well in his series of books on the Blue Mountains. These books are available directly from him or from bushwalking shops.

People once camped in the Catholic church but it is now locked and leased by a school. The courthouse and police station have also been used on occasions but they are now in use by Sydney Water. Over the years most other buildings of the old town have slowly crumbled or have been removed except for those preserved or restored by Val Lhuede who uses the restored Post Office as a guest house.

The remains of the town and the ruins of the Silver Peak mine and its giant mullock heaps are inspected before continuing along the dirt road, built in the 1950's for limestone mining investigation, to the evening campsite probably on the Tonalli River at 402212.

Next day the walk proceeds west along this road skirting the Mootik Wall and through Tonalli Gap to again meet the Mt Armour fire trail.

The route then skirts the northern side of Mt Colong crossing the Colong saddle and keeping at roughly the same level around the edges of several steep ridges and gulleys until it meets Billy's Ridge, the way favoured by Spiro on his annual pilgrimage to Mt Colong from Kanangra.

A few metres down Billy's Ridge is the start of Green Gully running off to the south west and here again care is needed to find the start of the gully which was marked with a small cairn. Green Gully emerges onto Caves Creek and just a few metres up the creek are the well known Colong Caves the terminus of the Rover Trail from Kanangra Walls.

The caves have been a popular spot for cavers for nearly 100 years but would probably have become the site of a large limestone mine after the proposed Mt Armour open cut mine and then the Church Creek caves were eventually depleted. There would also have been a dam on the

Kowmung River, feeding a limestone slurry pipeline to Marulan, if not for the persistence of keen conservationists who ran an ongoing campaign against the mining company, Blue Circle. The story of the campaign is one that is worth repeating if only to show what can be achieved and a good calendar of events is detailed in Patrick Thompson's book on Myles Dunphy ②.

Stoke up well at this rest spot because the way out is via the short but steep Acetylene Spur. At the top of the spur a 4WD track is followed skirting Mt Moogan on the west until the Bent Hook Swamp is met again and the cars are reached at Batsh Camp.

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① Yerranderie. The story of a Ghost Town. Jim Barrett. 1995

② Myles Dunphy. Selected Writings. Compiled by Patrick Thompson. 1986. pp39-42

③ Peter Miller will probably use this road to Colong Creek on his walk on October 2<sup>nd</sup>

④ Baralliers Blue Mts. Expedition 1802. "Clearing the matter up" Brownscombe. R JRAHS Vol 78.2 1992

⑤ Barallier's Blue Mts expeditions. Cambage R.H. JRAHS 13.2 pp11-25 1920.

⑥ Possibly named by Cambage because of comments made by Barallier in his journal of his explorations.

◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇

Other interesting references to Baralliers exploration in this area are:

1. Baralliers exploration of Christy's Creek. Moxley. E. JRAHS Vol 41-2 pp80-87. 1955

2. Baralliers Blue Mts expedition. Else Mitchell. R. JRAHS Vol 24-4 pp291-313. 1938

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# ✉ Letter to the editor

from Frank Rigby

I realise that many words about Coolana have been written in recent months but Elwyn Morris' negative, slanted letter (August issue) demands a reply. I will address Elwyn's comments point by point.

## **VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION AREA AGREEMENT:**

This question is far from settled but an agreement covering only part of Coolana sounds messy. In my view there is much to be said for the Club keeping full control over its own property.

**OWNERSHIP OF RIVERFRONT:** In 30 years there has been no problem with Sydney Water's ownership of this strip and the Club's licence to use it. If Elwyn knows about some impending change of policy she does not say so.

**ANIMAL PROOF FENCE.** Is this Elwyns' idea. Forget it

**NEVER-ENDING WORK** (her heading):

Elwyn should not look a gift horse in the mouth. It so happens that some members enjoy Coolana so much that they are happy to volunteer their time and labour for maintenance work. These members deserve recognition. In any case, now that the work is well-advanced, the amount of maintenance required is decreasing with time.

**EXPENSES:** If the Coolana Fund stands at \$23,338, as Elwyn states, then the Club should not hesitate to spend some money on maintenance or improvements. Apart from the rates, what else is the Fund for? Her "maintenance up to \$2,000" is misleading (does she mean annually?). This sum was allocated about three years ago but I would be surprised if the Club has spent that amount on maintenance during this period. If the Fund is earning low interest, then perhaps it's time to try to improve this situation.

**LACK OF USE:** IF it is true that "only a small proportion of club members regularly use Coolana" (neither Elwyn nor anyone else can supply reliable numbers) then that is largely the fault of those who stay away; it seems that many members have not even bothered to find out for themselves what they are missing!

**TRANSPORT and DISTANCE:** Yes, Coolana does require private transport, but where would the Club's Walks Programmes be without private transport, either? What

may be needed is a Coolana transport officer with whom those driving to Coolana can register their intent. Thus those without transport may be able to share the ride and the costs. So Coolana is 2 hours driving time from Sydney. Is that so bad? Where else, Elwyn, could we own such a large, superb piece of bushland

**ACCESS.** The access from the car parking area to the river flats camping area is NOT difficult at all. It takes 15 minutes at most and most club members would find this quite easy. One could fairly question whether anyone who cannot manage this access should be in the bush at all. Reunions do NOT require a 4WD to carry gear. The access to the river itself from the camping area is reasonable but could be improved with a little work.

**NOISE:** Occasionally there has been obtrusive noise from the Bendeela campground across the river. Better policing is the answer.

**BUSHWALKING:** Coolana was never intended to be a starting point for walks outside the property. It is, or could be, an entity in itself. The Club's Coolana policy needs to be more imaginative, particularly with respect to developing a few strategic trails, possibly with educational and interpretive aids. This would no doubt encourage more members to visit and add to their enjoyment of Coolana. Of course Coolana isn't a weekend walk, there are plenty of those already on the Programme. However, many members often just want a pleasant place to base-camp, to enjoy short rambles in the bush and the wonderful birds and wildflowers; and certainly NO ONE, whether member or prospective, is under any compulsion to do any maintenance whatsoever.

**FARM CAMPS, CARAVAN PARKS, ON-SITE VANS, HOT SHOWERS, QUAKER CABINS:** Whatever is Elwyn talking about? Are these supposed to be alternatives? Coolana is a place for quiet, free bush camping away from civilisation, not a resort with creature comforts. If anyone expected a "cabin" at Coolana, as she suggests, they must be naive. On the contrary, the hut with its concrete floor, fireplace and open side is an excellent emergency shelter. Nothing else is necessary. However, the toilet question must be addressed and money spent if necessary.

**ALTERNATIVES:** I hope we will hear no more about this absurd notion of buying a house in the Blue Mountains. It is not an alternative to Coolana at all and will achieve none of the objectives stated by Elwyn. For a bushwalking club to own a piece of natural bush to use and enjoy seems, to me, a reasonable proposition, but to own a house anywhere, **NO, NO, NO!**

□ □ □ □ □ □

#### **An historical note.**

*Regarding the proposal that the club build or acquire a house in the mountains for use by members.*

*In 1951 there was a proposal that the club build a ski lodge. All of the investigation and planning for the project was done by interested qualified members but when the project reached the implementation stage it was pointed out that a booking manager would be required. There were no volunteers for the position and so the project immediately lapsed.*

*The moral of the story is: Before commencing on a similar project the club should appoint (or hire) a manager to ensure that the asset acquired will be **always** managed and maintained in a satisfactory manner. Ed.*

□ □ □ □ □ □

#### **Social Notes**

We were sorry to hear the news that Peter Stitt suffered a broken leg whilst ferrying a ski club member to his lodge on the club skidoo.

This makes a pigeon pair as Peter told me that he broke the other leg, whilst skiing, 43 years ago.

Mend well, Peter.

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### **LATE NEWS FROM CONFEDERATION ABOUT THE NOWRA – BRAIDWOOD ROAD CLOSURE**

Construction will be carried out with one way traffic access for approximately 32 of the 37 kms between the Endrick River and the Turpentine road.

There will be some delays of up to one hour depending upon traffic density and pattern.

In other areas there will be some delays of up to 5 hours.

Relative dates are between September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Contact.** Rossane Moore at the contractors, Duke Energy, for further details on:

(02) 4261 0542.



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## Letter To The Editor

### COOLANA - SOME ANSWERS

from Wilf Hilder

I was very surprised to read Elwyn Morris's letter "Some problems with Coolana" in the August issue of "The Sydney Bushwalker"-particularly the suggested market value of the property. Every bushwalker knows that the real value of bushland cannot be measured in dollars. Every accountant knows that some assets have an intangible value.

Dealing with the alleged "problems" with Coolana in the order she presented them:

#### 1. Ownership of the River Flats:

We have a licence from Sydney Water to use the river flats, granted when the land was resumed by them some years ago. It seems most unlikely that Sydney Water would cancel all licences along the Kangaroo River and open the whole riverfront to the public.

As a matter of interest, this area is not the most attractive part - it's a pleasant camping ground. Elwyn should visit the rain forest in the creeks and the beautiful rocky cliffs.

#### 2. Conservation:

I believe that Coolana is and has been our major conservation area for the last thirty years. It forms a natural wildlife corridor for birds and animals.

Our members' views on conservation are enshrined in the Club's Constitution. In SBW, we have put our money and effort into supporting conservation principles rather than selling these principles to the highest bidder.

#### 3. Never-ending Work:

The weeds along the river flat are not a burden unique to our club. Every property owner is well aware that some effort is required to maintain an asset in working order. Thanks to our dedicated voluntary maintenance effort we can continue to enjoy the Coolana bushland at its best.

#### 4. Expenses:

I think Elwyn has overstated the expenses side of Coolana and understated the income. Our national Bushwalking Treasure - Dot Butler, and others, set up the Coolana Fund many years ago so that the expenses of Coolana would never be a burden on our club. A simple analysis of the accounts shows that the interest on this Fund's investments, and other income has not only covered Coolana expenses (rates etc), but over the years has generated surplus funds.

#### 5. Lack of Use:

Increasing the use of Coolana is a challenge for all of us but I could not find any answers in Elwyn's rather negative comments. In any case, the area is used by a reasonable number of members, over one hundred a year.

- (a) I can't see that proximity to public transport or a distance from Sydney is a problem. Many of our club's walks take place in areas remote from public transport.  
eg. Budawangs, Kanangra, Colo.
- (b) The state of the access road has deteriorated due to recent flooding and repairs will be required. With proper drainage control however there will be no need for bitumen on a 4WD management access road. The repairs need not be a burden on the club's finances as they could be funded from the Coolana account.
- (c) Our access to the river is good but it is more convenient to launch our canoes from the public launching ramp across the river.
- (d) The noise from the downstream public campground was a problem in the past but has now eased considerably due to regular police/ranger patrols.
- (e) It is surprising that only a few walks are done from Coolana. There are many within easy driving distance and a few from Coolana itself. The fact that most members only use

Coolana as a campsite is a clear indication that other campsites in the area have drawbacks.

- (f) There are other public campsites in the Upper Kangaroo River area but these are sometimes closed by NPWS due to fire risk and pollution.
- (g) There is a pit toilet on our upper campsite only 100 metres from the shed.
- (h) I cannot agree that Prospective Weekends should be made into weekend walks just because one or two prospectives may expect one. The navigation, bushcraft and first aid instruction is extensive and cannot be catered for on a normal weekend walk.

#### ALTERNATIVES:

Elwyn's letter did not address the challenges facing us if we sold Coolana and invested in the accommodation industry in Oberon, Carlons Farm or upper Blue Mountains. I am surprised that the economic rationalists have not suggested a more businesslike investment such as buying on the outskirts of Sydney or investing in the stockmarket. She has forgotten that cheap accommodation close to the railway station is already available in the Blue Mountains.

#### REUNIONS:

Elwyn has overlooked this important annual event, but I suppose if we sold Coolana we could rent a caravan park, country hotel or perhaps a farmer's bull paddock.

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*Editors comment.*

*As Frank Rigby said at the beginning of his letter: "many words have been written about Coolana. I have published all that I have received because I consider that the matter is important and has raised some emotion in the club, but now, I would appreciate that any future letters on the subject be short. Thank you. Ed*

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#### **CHANGE OF DATE OF WALK**

##### **Early risers please note**

The date of Margaret Sheen's early morning **Balmoral Beach** walk has been changed from Saturday October 16<sup>th</sup> to Saturday October 9<sup>th</sup>


For details phone Margaret on 9953 7300(h)

### **SBW PHOTOGRAPH AND SLIDE COMPETITION**

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 1999. \$300 total prize value**

For full details see page 6 of Winter or Spring Walks each category, kindly donated



the May 1999 Magazine or the  rear page of the programs. There will be a \$50 gift voucher, for the winner of by the following bushwalking shops:

<b>ALPSPORT</b> 1045 VICTORIA ROAD WEST RYDE NSW 2114 Phone 9858 5844	<b>EASTWOOD CAMPING</b> 3 TRELAWNEY STREET EASTWOOD NSW 2112 Phone 9858 3833	<b>KATHMANDU</b> Cnr KENT & BATHURST St SYDNEY NSW 2000 Phone 9261 8901
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## The August 1999 General Meeting.

*Reported by Barry Wallace*

Around 24 members were present when the president called the meeting to order at around 2015 and got things underway. The call for apologies brought these forth for Greta James and Gretel Woodward. New members Kate Jones, Peter Love and Jan Lovgren were welcomed to the club in the usual way.

Foreshadowed motions relating to Coolana have been withdrawn from consideration. The minutes of the July general meeting were read and received as true and correct, with no matters arising.

The meeting was informed that Greg Bridge had passed away recently.

Correspondence included a letter from Wilf Hilder proposing that a suitable memorial site at Coolana be dedicated to Kath and Jim Brown, a Notice Of Meeting from Natural Areas Limited, and several commercial entreaties.

The treasurer's report indicated that we began the previous month with a balance of \$14,179 and closed with a balance of \$14,323.

Bill Capon's presentation of the walks' reports was prefaced by Bill's thanks to those who have stood in for him over recent weeks when he was unable to be present at the meetings. The first weekend covered, 16, 17, 18 July, saw Jan Pieters and the party on his Ettrema walk encountering some problems with road access to the area near Blaydon's Pass. The remainder of the walks for that weekend were day walks, with Rosemary MacDougal leading a party of 10 on her walk from Berowra to Cowan on the Saturday. The walk was described as a terrific walk. Craig Austin conducted a party of 5 through the passes and pleasures of the Colo on his Sunday walk. Geoff Dowsett's walk in the Wollemi was scrubbed due to transport problems.

Wilf Hilder led the midweek walk on Thursday with a party of 4; claiming a

pleasant day and yet another exceptional natural arch. The woods are full of them you know!

Bill Holland indicated that his extended trip in the Daintree area north of Cairns had been cool and wet. Further details will have to wait the publication of a more detailed report promised for these very pages.

Things were looking up the following weekend, with Tony Manes leading a bird watching trip out from Newnes. The party of 18 reported a dry trip and insisted it wasn't really a bird watching trip. No point in having a poetic license if you don't use it occasionally. There was no information available to the meeting for Alan Doherty's Saturday start walk out from Carlons. Kenn Clacher had arranged near perfect weather for the 12 starters on his two-day ski tour out from Dead Horse Gap, fine, mild and calm. There were no details for Peter Miller's Saturday walk to The Pinnacles. Anne Maguire reported changeable weather for the party of 13 on her Sunday walk out from Mount Victoria. Patrick James had a party size that varied from 12 to 11 to 10 and then back to 12 as the various access points came and went on his historical review Sunday walk along the Great North Road. They had a nice day and indulged in a spot of foot washing along the way.

Tony Manes' walk out from Mount Bushwalker over the weekend of July 30, 31, August 1 attracted a party of 8 in perfect conditions. Bill Hope cancelled his trip to the Nattai River due to a dearth of takers. Nigel Weaver had 9 people and a persistent stray dog on his Saturday walk in Marramarra National Park. Jim Callaway led a party of 13 through scrubby conditions on his Sunday walk in the Royal and Geoff Dowsett had 6 on his cycle trip in the vicinity of Thirlmere Lakes. Alex Colley celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday that Sunday with a party attended by around 120 well wishers. You will have seen the report no doubt.

The midweek walk went on Tuesday under the baton of Ian Rannard. The walk, with a party of 9, went well.

Phil Newman's walk over the weekend of 6, 7, 8 August was scrubbed due to a lack of starters. Rosemary MacDougal led the party of 6 on her trip out to Mount Cloudmaker and back through mild conditions with the rain holding off until near the end of the walk. Zoi Bodlay cancelled his Saturday walk in Marramarra National Park. Errol Sheedy's Sunday walk in the Royal went, with Geoff Macintosh as substitute leader and a party of 13. The trip was described as a pleasant medium grade walk. There were no details for Tony Manes Sunday walk to Bluegum Forest. Not only that, it brought the walks reports to a close for the month.

Confederation report brought further advice of the proposed closure of the Braidwood to Nerriga road during September and October to facilitate the installation of a natural gas pipeline. Negotiations are underway to obtain an access through surrounding properties to Bonnum Pic. Packhorses have been reported at the Jenolan River Cox River junction. A motion that we write protesting at funding cuts to NPWS budget was modified such that we will write seeking further details in an attempt to determine the exact legerdemain involved. Announcements came and went, and the meeting closed at around 2123.

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#### **A correction and apology.**

Somehow I mislaid a few evocative lines of Christine Austin's article in the August magazine. 'Taking Teenagers Walking' Sorry Christine.

Readers please insert the following at the top of page 13. Ed.

'Saturday, and reluctant daughter surged up Roots Ridge, driven by the lure of home and accumulated fitness. At the coal seam cave we met our first people for days. Raindrops on a casuarina backlit by low sunlight shone with the full spectrum of colours - a Bush Christmas Tree.'

## **Club Insurance Policies**

*by Rosemary MacDougal*

At the June 1999 General Meeting the Club voted (unanimously) to take out personal injury insurance for all members (including prospective members) and the compulsory public liability policy which provides cover for the club as a legal entity for an amount of \$10 mil through the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW.

### **Personal Injury**

Persons under the age of 80 are covered for injuries that arise in the course of a club activity. It does not provide cover for medical emergencies arising during a club activity.

This cover is for the individual club members, rather than the club as a legal entity in its own right. This means that members now have injury coverage while walking with our club or any other club affiliated with Confederation.

The injury cover operates for just about all club activities and it starts from the moment that you leave home until the moment that you arrive back home. So you are covered even when travelling to and from a club activity, although the level of cover is reduced, because other cover, such as motor vehicle third party cover applies.

The policy requires that you claim first against Medicare and any private health insurance fund of which you are a member. Firstly you should be aware that if you are injured on a club activity you won't get rich. The national Medicare insurance legislation does not allow any insurance policy to provide cover for the Medicare gap. The major benefits that the policy provides is that it covers for items that Medicare doesn't cover, for example, physiotherapy and emergency transport (for example, land ambulance or helicopter rescue).

The personal cover also provides for death, permanent disability benefits and temporary disability benefits, although we hope that there is never any need to make a claim at this level.

The following activities are covered under this policy - bushwalking, bicycle touring, canoeing, canyoning, cascading, caving,

cross country and downhill skiing, mountaineering, rafting, rock climbing, swimming, track clearing, abseiling, scouting, reckies and previewing trips, leadership and navigation courses. This cover also applies to social and fundraising activities. The cover is world-wide except for USA and Canada.

In recent years, for members of clubs affiliated with Confederation, claims under this type of policy have been reasonably common. Typically, the claims have been as a result of falls sustained on a club activity.

#### **Public liability**

The NSW Associations Incorporation Act, under which SBW is incorporated, requires every incorporated body to have \$2 million public liability cover. This type of policy covers the club, its officers, its members and visitors in the event of becoming legally liable to pay compensation for Personal Injury, Property Damage or Advertising Liability arising out of legal actions taken against clubs or their members. It also covers Coolana, the club's property.

The Confederation level of cover is \$10 million worldwide. The cover applies to the club as a legal entity in its own right, the club's officers, the club's members and to club visitors. Typically, such claims will result in a court case before payment is made. The procedures for making a claim are set out in an article by Maurice Smith on this page of the magazine.

In addition to notifying the insurer you should also notify a committee member so that the club can keep a record of the incident.

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#### **HELP SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF VH-MDX**

The Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue (BWR) are organizing what they hope will be the final search at Barrington Tops for the Cessna plane which crashed in the area on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1981.

The search will take place between October 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 1999

For further information contact John Tonitto on 9789 2527

#### **Personal Injury Insurance Cover**

*by Maurice Smith*

Readers may remember the recent good news that SBW now provides its members, including prospective members, with personal injury cover while they are participating in most club activities.

Now we all know that there are rocks, logs and other parts of the inanimate landscape out there in the bush just waiting to ambush us, to trip us up, impale us, drop upon us and so on, when we aren't too wary. Other dangers can also be animals, such as, club member eating snakes, crocodiles, leeches, Tasmanian terrorists (see David Trinder's article in an earlier issue of this year's magazine), and so on.

Fortunately, our club members are generally alert to the physical and psychological dangers that await us in the bush. However, in the event that you are injured as a result of an accident while participating in a club activity here is what you need to know and what you need to do.

First, the cover is for injury only. It does not provide for medical emergencies, such as, heart attack, severe asthma or similar. Second, you are required to notify our insurance broker within **30 days** of the incident as a result of which you sustained an injury. If you notify the broker after the 30 day period your claim may be rejected. Third, if you are injured then you telephone the insurance broker directly on the telephone number **1 800 679 096**. Advise the insurance broker that you have been injured and want to make a claim on policy number **009326**, which is the national personal injury insurance policy for bushwalkers. The insurance broker will send you by mail the relevant forms and will guide you through the claim process.

Fourth, if you are injured, please don't think that you have won lotto. You won't get rich by receiving money from this policy. But, it will help with some of the pain in the hip pocket nerve. You are required to first claim against Medicare and any personal health insurance. Due to the Federal Health



Insurance scheme (known to you as Medicare) the 'gap' isn't covered under this policy. Neither we, nor Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs who organise this cover can do anything about this fact, much as we might like to change it.

Remember also, because the club has insured all of its members, then visitors on club activities are also automatically covered for personal injury, as well. However, the visitor will wear out his or her welcome for insurance purposes if they attend more than five club activities

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### Apology and thanks to Bill Burke

In my list of the names of people who helped with Alex Colley's birthday celebration there were several names that I overlooked but I feel one omission must be rectified. Despite his desire to remain anonymous I must mention long time member Bill Burke who, with the club as equal financial sponsors, made the whole thing possible.

Thank you Bill and thanks to the club.

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of the Blue Mountains ....

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## Bushwalkers Tetanus Quiz

supplied by Geoff McIntosh

### Test your preparedness

(Answers are given below)

1. Is your tetanus immunisation up to date?

**YES / NO / DON'T KNOW**

2. Tetanus bacteria is prevalent in the bush and rural areas. It is found in soil and dust and spread by animal and human faeces.

**TRUE / FALSE ?**

3. The organism can enter the body through a break in the skin, especially from scratches, splinters or insect bites, and Tetanus immunisation is good for:

**10 / 15 Years?**

4. If you are likely to suffer broken skin whilst in the bush, you should have a booster every:

**5 or 20 Years ?**

5. The tetanus bacteria attacks the central nervous system. The first indication of infection is usually:

- a. Frothing at the mouth, or
- b. Stiffness of the jaw ?

6. Other early signs are:

- a. Difficulty swallowing
- b. Crankiness
- c. Headache
- d. Chills & Fever
- e. Convulsions
- f. All of the above
- g. A craving for Chocolate

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## Bushwalkers Tetanus Quiz

### Answers to Questions

1. Yes = Excellent  
No = Make an appointment for a tetanus shot NOW  
Don't know + Find out.
2. True
3. 10 years
4. 5 years
5. b. Stiff jaw.
6. f. All of the above

### Facts about Tetanus

Tetanus has an incubation period of from two weeks to several months. The first symptoms are usually headache and difficulty in swallowing and in moving the jaws.

Tetanus kills. Over 50% of cases prove fatal so if you are not immunized or if your booster shots are not up to date.

**DO IT NOW**

## Lightening the load

by George Mawer

It has been reported that on several walks in recent times it has been necessary to lighten the pack of one of the party. This is unquestionably the thing to do when one of the group has fallen victim to accident or illness as it decreases the risks of the victim's condition deteriorating further. However it does raise the question of the relevant fairness of any party member starting out with an excessively heavy pack

It's simply not fair on the rest of the party for you to be loaded up to your maximum. Quite apart from the fact that you increase your risk of injury by being heavily laden, you don't have any spare capacity to help out in an emergency. Also, if you happen to be the victim, there is the question of what to do with the contents of your heavy pack.

So what is a heavy pack? The answer will of course be different for different people but as a 'rule of thumb' guide, the maximum weight that the average fit person will be able to carry all day without exhaustion is somewhere between 9 and 14kg. (20-30 pounds). No doubt there are some very strong and 'bushwalking-fit' people who can carry more and find it no problem, but such people are exceptional. The vast majority of us would prefer to carry less than our maximum. The less the better!

I'm not really the person to be writing this article as I never seem to get my pack weight down to within my capabilities. I start packing with the best of intentions, and it always feels ok when I start out, but usually by mid afternoon on the first day I know I've failed again. Then when I get back home and check what's left and what was not needed I resolve to do better next time. Ha! (Exclamation of disgust).

Nowadays, even with the availability of lightweight gear and food there seems to be

a trend towards over-equipping and over-catering. This is noticeable with people new to bushwalking and is cause for concern as it increases the possibility that the person will quickly become disenchanted with bushwalking and abandon an activity that might give them lifelong pleasure and satisfaction.

A heavy pack is a curse, but can lightweight backpacking be taught or is it something you learn from experience? There are lots of good reasons for packing light and very few for being heavily laden and it's amazing how little you can make do with 'if necessary' for a few days or even a week. I am still amazed at how much extra weight some people carry all the time for a very short-time benefit.

What if you had the opportunity to go on a three day trip which started with a helicopter drop off, and where you are permitted to carry not more than 9.0kg, which includes 500mls of water (plus 1kg if you are male). The time of year is Easter and the place is the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, both nights will be spent in the open and the weather forecast is 'no rain'. You must board the helicopter wearing only your minimum walking clothes. You desperately want to do this trip. Could you guarantee the weight? What would you pack?

Make out your list and send it to the Editor. Three lists will be published.

*The person judged to have submitted the best list will receive a lightweight (empty) wineskin for carrying water. Ed.*

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## Next Month

Budawang's Walk. August 1999. by Bob Duncan.

Kosciusko Christmas 1943. by Anice Duncan.

EPIRB's by Tony Holgate

GPS Receiver use information.

## STOP PRESS

*This information was received after the magazine was ready for printing but as Russell Willis has many friends in the SBW and as the next magazine may be too late for people to organise attending the function, we have added an extra page. Ed*

### **\*\* INVITATION TO DINNER \*\***

Join us at our house for dinner with Russell Willis (of Willis's Walkabouts) on **Thursday November 4th**. Russell will renew acquaintance with old friends and show slides of highlights of recent trips.

**The address is:** 216C Quarter Sessions Rd  
Westleigh 2120

**There is no charge but please phone in advance and bring a contribution to the table.**

Frances and Bill Holland 9484 6636

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### **The "Toothless Tigers"**

Here is an update on the activities of the The "Toothless Tigers" otherwise known as the Mid-Week Walkers' group of SBW. Membership of this illustrious group is unrestricted as are the activities we indulge in. Our members include the retired, the idle, those taking leave from work or indulging in a fortuitous "sickie".

We walk on Tuesdays or Thursdays and have the occasional extended activity, such as in August when we enjoyed a stay at the Currawong Beach cottages for four days. It was very successful attracting 12 stayers and one day visitor. A great time was had with day walks around the West Head area and much socialising. We had use of the large house and three cottages. The group cooking served up to the large dining table and afterwards the gathering around the log fire made a pleasant end to each day. And of course there was an extended happy hour!

Our next activity has not been shown on the Walks Programme. It came about from an offer we made to host a dinner for Russell Willis at our house. Now we plan to extend this into a residential four day mid-week activity. There will be walks around the area; extended bicycle rides for those interested, swimming and barbecue and things we haven't yet thought of.

Mark these dates in your calendar Tuesday 2nd November to Friday 5th November. All are welcome to join us for the four days, for one day, or for just the Thursday night dinner. For further information, please phone Frances or Bill Holland 9484 6636.

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