



THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER is a monthly bulletin of matters of interest to members of The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc PO Box 431 Milsons Point 1565. To advertise in this magazine, please contact the Business Manager.

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

SBW WEBSITE= www.sbw.org.au

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JANUARY 2000

Issue No. 782

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Editorial

This is the first Sydney Bushwalker magazine of the final year of the 20th century.

At the annual general meeting on March 8th a new committee will be elected that will guide the club into the third millennium and all members but particularly the younger members, should take the time to consider what role they can play in shaping the club's future.

Outgoing President Eddy Giacomel has addressed the relevant issues in an article on page 5. All committee positions will be declared vacant although some people will stand for re-election and in the February issue I will publish a précis of what each position entails.

In the meantime I ask all members to – **think about it.**

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Club February Social Program

Wednesday Feb 2nd

7pm. Committee meeting

Wednesday Feb 9th

8pm. General Meeting and Walks
Report

Wednesday Feb 16th

8pm. Song and Dance Adventures
NT Slide show - Aboriginal Culture

by Richard O'Neil

8pm. Navigation Training for
prospective members.

Pre-dinner meeting at Blues Point Café,
McMahons Point, from 6pm

Enquiries Judy O'Connor 9929 8629

Wednesday Feb 23rd

Alaska

Presentation by Ross Brownscombe

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Vale Rae Page

by Alex Colley

Rae Page passed away peacefully, at the age of 97, on the morning of Monday January 10th.

Rae and her husband, Peter, joined the club in the early thirties. They took a very active part in club affairs and led many walks.

Soon after the war they decided to leave their city jobs and make their living with a cabin rental resort. This was a courageous venture. Both had steady jobs, Peter as a bank clerk and Rae as an accountant. They looked at several sites not to their liking and I suggested that they look at Ben Ricketts on the Jamberoo Mountain road, which belonged to a distant relative. They did and immediately fell in love with the place, which they were able to buy.

At first they lived in a small cottage belonging to Reid and Tilley Colley on Roy Colley's land nearby. Then they built the house on their own land, pulled down the old cottage and built cabins to house their paying guests, who had previously occupied army tents.

About this time Frank Duncan bought land over the road and built a cabin. Then several other SBW members bought land. Today this land is occupied by the Pallins, the Nobles and the Deans. Peter and Rae had in effect pioneered an SBW colony.

Although their early clientele was mainly bushwalkers it soon increased to include many other lovers of the outdoors including a number of New Australians. The social centre of the cabin colony was the Page's house. Regular morning teas and evening parties brought everyone together.

Rae was a keen gardener and a lover of goats, which supplied milk for the guests. On Peter's death Rae carried on on her own, until joined by Barry Duncan on his retirement.

Rae will be sadly missed by her very wide circle of friends and admirers, but Ben Ricketts will carry on under Barry's capable management.

CHANGES TO WALKS PROGRAM

Due to a sudden overseas trip Bill Hope advises that the dates for his following two Wollemi N.P. walks have been changed.

1. Sun Jan 23rd has been reprogrammed to Sun Feb.6th ***
2. Jan 29/30 has been reprogrammed to Feb 12/13th

*** The route of this walk is not as shown in the program. Refer p.2 of the December magazine for details. Ed.

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HOUSE BOAT ON MYALL LAKES

Due to a last minute cancellation there are now two vacancies for Bill Holland's Myall Lakes houseboat trip.

- Mon March 6th - Fri March 11th

Five days of cruising in a large houseboat cruiser. A combination of cruising, swimming, walking and rest. Boat hire cost is \$180 per person for the five days and there is a limit of eight people.

A \$60 share of deposit is required with your booking.

Note: We can make arrangements to share transport from Sydney.

Please contact: Bill Holland 9484 6636
(email billholl@hotmail.net.au)

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SBW RE-UNION

The last SBW reunion of the second millennium will be held on the club property Coolana over the weekend of

March 11th and March 12th 2000.

Full details will be published in the February magazine but mark your calendar and keep the weekend free.

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SBW WEBSITE NEWS

The SBW website (www.sbw.org.au) has been updated. Amongst other changes, a members-only section has been added. Feedback from members will be appreciated. This can be by email to:

webmanager@sbw.org.au

Eddy Giacomel

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

IAN'S 'KANANGRA MAIN' EVENT

(17,18,19 December 1999)

by *Elizabeth Harrington*.

Leader *Ian Wolfe*

Because of its topicality this article by Libby replaces the one mentioned last month which will be published in February.

The big one---the canyon everyone mentions as awesome and when is one too old to do such things? During the weeks before the canyon, Christmas parties were cancelled and replaced by practice abseiling sessions on Barrenjoey for those who had become a little rusty on technique. Ian had said that he had turned away from the top three times before so I said my prayers as he looked over the falls. The water levels and weather just had to be perfect on the day....and they were.

"OK, gear on", the adrenalin rush, clanging hardware and the anticipation of what lay ahead. This first cliff face was achieved in three sections of approximately 50-60 metres each section. Ian had chosen the dry part of the cliff face rather than the "Slot", and I was pleased as we watched another party shivering down the narrow wet section which was creating a wild vortex of wind and water. We descended to the last very slippery section of this first cliff where we viewed a wall plaque in memory of a girl who came to grief there and I could understand why.

We had survived the first section and I began to enjoy the canyon in all its glory, a part of the world that only a few crazy people manage to view. The sun shone, casting shadows on sandstone cliffs which surrounded the myriad of pools that we clambered around and swam through, between the canyon walls which grew as we descended over more cliffs and waterfalls.

There were ten in our group which is probably considered too many however we all worked well as a team having at least five

ropes which we kept in motion between abseils as we moved steadily through the canyon with the aid of the occasional rush of adrenalin.

The second last abseil was over and through the most majestic waterfall that tested the strength of some as the ropes were saturated and the fall vertical. Two 60 metre ropes were used which had to be lifted and forced through the descenders at the top, however once in motion down the fall line, the abseil was one of the best, through the falls beside a fern covered rock face into the freezing pool beneath. This particular waterfall is pictured in the Jan/Mar 2000 edition of the *Australian Geographic*.

Unfortunately what goes down also goes up, and Murdering Gully was an aptly named challenge straight up to the awaiting vehicles and Ian's 40th birthday party. We were greeted by those less crazy who just came to party in the bush, Champagne, whistles, party poppers, copious quantities of food and an exceptional cake.

Sunday dawned with sore muscles and sore heads and a few too many prospective canyoners who did not feel up to the challenge of 'Kalang'. A meeting was convened and a unanimous decision to do 'Dione Dell', a half day pleasant little stroll compared to Kanangra Main.

Happy Birthday Ian, and I look forward to your 50th challenge.

Libby Harrington

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SBW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Remember the annual general meeting of the SBW will be held at the Kirribilli Neighborhood Centre on March 8th.

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Reflections

by Eddy Giacomel

Last year's Republican Referendum highlighted that many Australians don't know how the federal government functions. It has caused me to wonder how many members of SBW are fully aware of how the club is managed.

All the work to operate the club is performed by volunteers. This includes producing, typing, printing and collating the Walks Program and the magazine, organising the social program, washing cups, keeping the accounts, keeping track of members' addresses, advising the new members, leading walks, etc, etc, etc. No one is paid and volunteers are not exempt from membership fees. The club is not only very fortunate to have volunteers, the very existence of the club depends on these volunteers.

Some positions require 4 or more hours per week, adding up to more than 200 hours (5 x 40 hour weeks) per year. Some positions require less than an average of 4 hours per week and some may require more. Volunteers fill 15 committee positions and up to 10 or more non-committee positions. We also have a number of unofficial positions, e.g. the magazine collating team. This is before we consider our main reason for existence i.e. walking, and count our volunteer walks leaders.

We can't force volunteers to do more than what they offer to do. Motions passed at meetings can be ignored. Unlike the legal system we have no power of enforcement. The club's minute books contain many motions passed over the years that in a strict "legal" sense are binding. No one has bothered to collate these and even if we collated them they could be ignored. It is generally difficult to find volunteers. Some motions and heated debates carry the danger that volunteers will quit all or part of their efforts or take their efforts elsewhere, e.g. to other bushwalking clubs.

Volunteers' only rewards are the satisfaction of working with others and doing things their way, exploring and testing their methods. Hence, within reason, we should be encouraging their ideas. This also applies to club management. This is not an argument for accepting every idea. Some ideas should be rejected, but it is an argument to be more accepting of ideas, especially those of newer members.

Are our traditions under threat? The only traditions that will survive are those that serve the club. We cannot sell the club to new or existing members on the basis of traditions to be served.

Should we be concerned that members with ideas that may be different to ours will take over the club? We should probably be more concerned that they won't!

How does "democracy" fit in? We can only request volunteers to act, we cannot instruct them. SBW is run not according to what the majority *want*, rather it runs according to what a minority *do*. Or perhaps more correctly, according to what a number of minorities *do*. The club is a collection of minorities, including "tiger" walkers, those who enjoy a picnic paced stroll, those who serve on committee, those who print and collate the walks program and this magazine, those who ski, those who abseil, etc. Unlike other types of minorities, members are welcome, subject to their suitability and acceptance, to be "members" of as many minorities as they can handle.

Attempts to control the club, even if it is by majority rules, run the risk of alienating some of the minorities. Alienate enough minorities and the club will be destroyed. It may be possible to take "control" of the club, but any such control would be a Pyrrhic victory.

We could think of SBW being in the business of "hosting" these minorities. We want them to use SBW for their activities. We don't want them to go to another club. Apart from safety and other important considerations, they don't need to know what the majority of the club thinks.

Last year, like most years, some dissatisfaction was expressed. Some expressed concern that not enough was being done for new members. A valid concern. Over the past year, in addition to the Coolana training weekends, the club has offered clubroom training in navigation and how to pack for an overnight walk. These have been about once every 3 months on a Wednesday night, timed to coincide with the monthly dinners to provide prospective members the opportunity to mix with club members. Advertisements were placed in "The Back Page" of last year's winter and the spring walks programs requesting volunteers to assist with these training programs. While we now have a navigation training program, the position is still vacant for someone who wishes to train prospective members in correctly packing for a walk. What we need to do is to take those "expressing concern" and others and get them to act. They could think of alternative schemes to entice newer members to become active in the club, they need not be limited by the ideas already put forward. While discussion of an issue is important, it is no substitute for action. Those that remain dissatisfied should note that SBW is not there to satisfy you but it is there for you to provide a means to satisfy yourself.

One of the most significant issues facing the club is the lack of participation by newer, not necessarily younger, members in leading walks and on the committee. The newest member on the committee has been in the club 6 years. The average length of club membership of the 15 committee members is around 19 years. Newer members are hardly ever seen at club meetings. We should not be running the club for newer members, we should be training them to run it for themselves.

When I think back to my days as a newer member, I recall being attracted to the club by the activities it provided. I was interested in activity, not debate. I followed (and cursed) leaders to places I'd never been. It's

no surprise that our newer members avoid club politics. They joined the club to walk. We need to focus (*and act!*) on issues in a manner that is constructive, not adversarial. We are not going to entice newer members to participate by elevating the temperature of club politics.

Anyone with suggestions for the club should consider *who* is going to do the work. Volunteers won't buy the argument that it is a good idea but you don't want to do it and therefore they should.

We can adapt the quote from John F Kennedy to suit SBW – think not what your club can do for you, think what you can do for your club. SBW needs your action, not only your discussions. Your assistance is required in filling committee and other positions at the AGM on Wednesday 8th March. Give me a call (9144 5095) if you are interested in standing for a committee position. Upcoming vacancies include walks secretary, social secretary, secretary, president and perhaps a few more.

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THE END OF CENTURY OPTIONS TRIP ***

A Christmas / New Year walk in the
Kosciuszko National Park
by Jo Van Sommers

Strange things are said to happen at the end of a millennium. Although we did not hear the Last Trump, the graves did not open under our feet, we saw no hosts of seraphim trailing clouds of glory from the sky, we did experience enough natural phenomena to make this walk memorable.

First, it rained all the way from Sydney to Adaminaby as we travelled down on December 27. The early arrivals were sheltering under the covered BBQ beside the Big Trout. As more people arrived we moved under the shelter of the deserted shops' verandah, where Ian presented us with the first set of options in what turned out to be a whole gaggle of options. One: Proceed as planned by bus to Round Mountain and throw ourselves on the mercy of the elements. Two: Go home. Three: Stay overnight in Adaminaby and set off on the following day.

Those who had been with Ian at Easter (rain) June long weekend (rain) October long weekend (rain) sympathised with the unlucky leader. We plumped for the comfort of the Tanderra Motel, well known to the regulars on Maurie Bloom's Christmas walks, and settled in for a cheap, cheerful and comfortable night in front of the fire. The rain hissed, pissed, and missed us. Ian and Glad felt obliged to stay at the other motel because their management had been so helpful, but appeared at 7am while we were consuming a magnificent cooked breakfast. Ian announced a second set of options. Remember it is still raining. One: Get bus to Round Mountain, make up the lost ground, and complete the original walk. (Greeted with silence). Two: Go home (ditto). Three: Modify the trip by driving our own cars to Mt.Selwyn, thus ensuring we would still have an option to come out to

the cars rather than be committed to walking through the whole period to meet the bus. This last we decided to do.

Thus we arrived at Mt. Selwyn, parked and walked off in the drizzle, Some very venerable members were seen under umbrellas ignoring the pert remarks of the wetter members of the party. We followed Tabletop Mountain fire-trail past Nine-Mile diggings. At lunch we sat above the great scar of the open-cut and now abandoned Empress Mine and were pleased to see Rosemary and her party out on a day walk. They reported surviving the wet night and managing to keep their fire going. I asked Tom to sing extra loud on New Year's Eve, thinking that they would still be at their base camp near Three Mile Dam, and we could enjoy the strains floating down the valley and over the hills to Broken Dam where we thought we were going to be, but when he said he'd be back in Sydney by then, I had to agree that was a bit much to ask of a voice, even Tom's.

It was now cold, but not raining as we strode to the base of Tabletop. Our plan now was to do a big loop and come back to Tabletop, climbing it on our way out when there might be some chance of a view. As we were dropping our packs for a rest, Pat stepped through some fallen timber and drove a jagged stake into her shin. The wound was painful and nasty, but after appropriate first-aid she elected to continue. We left the Tabletop fire-trail at 383149(c) and descended steeply through the snow-gums towards Happy's Hut, a welcome sight indeed. Ian got the fire going inside just as the rains came and some very speedy tent erection was witnessed. It was amazing how 16 people cooked a dinner using only one hut fireplace, but it was achieved by some starting very early and some starting very late. The despised umbrellas were left in the woodshed and put to good use by all who scurried between tent and hut.

Next morning, we were offered Series Three of the End of Century Options. One: Stay at Happy's Hut and do a long day walk. (Thoughtful silence). Two: Go home. (Ditto). Three: Pack up, walk until lunchtime towards Mackey's hut and decide then whether to continue that way, and pick up some of our original route, or complete a loop back to Brooks' hut, depending on the weather and the condition of the party. This last we decided to do.

At lunchtime, it wasn't actually raining, we sat in a lovely spot with flowers, granite boulders, soft blue snowgrass and wonderful gnarled snowgums showing salmon grey and burgundy streaks. But the sky was whirling with ominous clouds and we were travelling slowly, so we took the option to double-back to Brooks. Once again we cooked inside the hut, sheltering more from the piercing icy wind than from actual rain. Brooks' is neat and clean but rather small. Four people could sit in the hotseats beside the fire, and perhaps eight could crowd along the bottom tier of the double sleeping platform.

We took it in turns to be outside, where those who were still up at 8.30 enjoyed a great red sunset. Although we knew it was freezing, it was still a surprise to wake to a thick coating of frost, with ice in the billies and frozen stiff fly-sheets. A cold December indeed!

We left a good supply of wood in the woodshed, swept and cleaned the hut, thanking the volunteers of the Kosciuszko Huts Association for the work they do in maintaining the huts of the high country. A cheerful mob set off up Arsenic Ridge as the mists started to clear. When we rejoined the Tabletop Mountain fire trail we had a sub-set of options. One: We could climb Tabletop and then walk out straight to the cars. Two: Pat could walk out directly accompanied by Jenny, who was in the same car. Three: We could climb Tabletop and then go to Broken Dam to camp. We all decided to climb the mountain (the weather was fine!) and then Pat and Jenny would walk out and the rest of us would continue to Broken Dam.

Arnhem Land Success!

**Jawoyn
Explorer:
14 May
– 3 June**

The Jawoyn Association, which represents the traditional owners of the region near Katherine, has given us permission to repeat our 1999 trip to the headwaters of the Katherine River in the south-east corner of Kakadu and the south-west corner of Arnhem Land. Both areas are normally out of bounds to bushwalkers.

We will be accompanied by an Aboriginal guide and/or member of the Jawoyn Association staff. We will have a helicopter food drop at the halfway point.

We cannot be sure we will be allowed to run this trip again.

It took us more than ten years to get permission for the first trip. That trip was a resounding success, but the traditional owners have stressed that we cannot take continued access for granted. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Where else can you spend three weeks walking through the bush with an Aboriginal guide? If you want to find out more, please ask for the trip notes.

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The view from Tabletop was superb. The ground was covered in Billy Buttons, purple, yellow, red flowering Peas, and masses of golden moth orchids (*Diuris* sp.) Birds sang, little nests with speckled eggs were found in low bushes, the sun shone on the 360degree view. We finished this beautiful day by dropping down to camp beside the fire-destroyed Broken Dam hut, where only the detached dunny survives.

Now here we are next morning, what are we going to do to make an interesting day? Again, our resourceful leader has lots of ideas. One: Take the easy track to Four Mile Hut, camp early and have a good rest before celebrating New Years' Eve. Two: Go home. Three: Be adventurous and walk out via the old water race, or across country if that became too overgrown or obscure; find the old Elaine Mine, and thence to Four Mile Hut to camp. We chose the latter. First we explored the Broken Dam downstream, then picked up the old water-race from it which contours around the mountainside. The old Elaine mine is off the beaten track, and was interesting even to those who are not normally rivetted by old mining machinery, tailing dumps and mine tunnels. The site gave the impression of having been suddenly abandoned, like a sinking ship. Large piles of sleepers leaned at a dangerous angle. The heavy equipment, so laboriously dragged in, was left where it stood, except for the steam engine, which was discovered in the scrub part-way up the steep hill into which the tunnel had been driven in a vain search for gold.

We continued around the race and had lunch on the narrow top of a well-constructed stone wall which formed a water-storage area higher than the mine. The gash of the Bloomfield open-cut mine could be seen below us. The race now became badly overgrown, so we cut across country to the valley where Four Mile hut stands and made camp well above it in a wide glade of snow-gums. That emus are in the area was proven

by the two eggs found in the grass, bleached white on the upper surface but still their typical brilliant blue underneath. The area was also good for flowers, and ground-hugging purple hooded orchids.

The site for the celebration of New Years' Eve was near an ancient curled snow-gum, looking at least a century old. We expected rain for the evening, but it held off, although Ian held us on a tight rein. Happy Hour - 6 o'clock. Evening meal - 7 o'clock. Performance of Play - 7.30. Contributions to entertainment - 8 o'clock. Auld Lang Syne - 9 o'clock. Bed - 9.01 (only joking!)

The Play. Ian: author, scriptwriter, narrator; producer, director, stage manager and best boy; musical director and principal actor.

Ray: We knew he was interested in gold-digging, so he was perfectly cast as an old miner, but the man's a comic too. Ray's a laugh.

Don: As the gear-freak (typecast). Such feeling, such emotion! "Would you like to play a round?"

Jo: As Jezebel. Again. About time I spoke to Central Casting.

Songs were sung. Songs to match people. For the most patient whipper-in ever:

Glad: "I'm heading for the last round-up"

Jim: None other than the Purple People Eater, but no cute boys in short shorts this year.

Carol: that Christmas favourite "Oh come, all ye merry gentlemen"

Wilf: educating us in his wilful ways: the old song about the water board warden chasing the bushwalkers.

Jacqui read a ditty about the bindweed and the honeysuckle.

Jan read his beautiful allegory about the dolphins who dared too much.

Stories were told. Words to match people. The award for the most unlikely joke goes to Frank for his story about the bushwalker in heaven. To Liz for honesty: "I read this play

before and if there was anywhere else to go I'd be there (but we saw her laugh). To Bill for philosophy: "I'm better off out here missing the Christmas sales and handing over the harbour view of the fireworks to the offspring". He was rewarded at 1.30 with flashing lights travelling across the sky. To Gretel for rhythmic repetition "I'm never coming on a long walk again". We remembered the words of our absent friends: Jenny's story of encouraging a lagging teenager by betting her fifty dollars she could beat her up the hill, whereupon the child steamed off and couldn't be caught - Jenny says she'll never do that again! And Pat with the big white bandage saying "No it's not getting any better but I'll stay as long as I can!"

The brilliant stars blazed for those who disobeyed and stayed up later than 9.01. Next morning the clouds had returned but there was only one option anyway: walk out. We avoided the pitted multi-channelled valley floor and followed the Tabletop

Mountain fire-trail until we picked up the snowpole line to Mt. Selwyn. Photographs, hugs and kisses, thanks to the leader, and it was back to Sydney. The first news broadcast we picked up was a bit of an anticlimax - no disasters, riots, rampages or power failures - but we were still glad not to have been amongst a million people celebrating in Sydney, just a few happy people entertaining themselves around a campfire in the bush.

Leader: Ian Rannard. Participants: Glad Rannard, Jim Percy, Jo van Sommers, Don Wills, Elizabeth Miller, Wilf Hilder, Gretel Woodward, Carole Lubbers, Bill Smallwood, Pat Bickley, Jenny Paton, Jan Mohandas, Ray Turton, Jacqui Calandra, Frank Sander. (16 people).

**** The opinions expressed, in the above article, regarding the end of the century and the beginning of the new millennium, are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Editor. Ed.*

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New members problems

from Rob Millans

The letter from Brian Holden in the December issue struck a chord with me. I joined the club in 1994 for two reasons. First, my regular bushwalking companions had all moved away from Sydney and second, I was preparing myself for a trip to the Andes. Rather than do all my walking alone I decided it would be good to join up with other walkers and do some organised walks. SBW seemed like it fitted the bill.

My two strongest memories from my time as a prospective were regrettably not positive ones. The cliquishness that Brian Holden referred to was very obvious to me. I am no shrinking violet but I found it hard nevertheless to make headway with members who quite simply appeared uninterested in talking with new people. This is human nature to a certain extent but nevertheless frustrating for those "on the outer". In the end like Brian I gave up and have been to a club night only once or twice in the last 4 years.

My second memory was that on the whole the style of bushwalking favoured by club members was the "burn up head down, let's see how quickly we can get there" approach. On one walk I pointed out to the leader a particularly good view to which he commented "gosh I've done this walk 8 times but have never noticed that before" – no wonder! To be fair, not all members appeared to want to walk this way but it did seem very common.

Since 1994 I have continued to enjoy the monthly bulletin of the club and have been involved in a variety of walking activities with friends. Occasionally I think it would be good to do a club walk but my memories of those earlier days still linger and I have yet to take the plunge.

It is easy to criticise but in making my comments I would like to make two suggestions. First, it is the responsibility of the committee to work hard at club nights to integrate newer members and prospectives. The New Member Secretary is generally busy with enquiries and administrative matters for new members so why not appoint at least one committee person at each meeting to "work the room" to ensure prospectives and newer members are not left out.

My second suggestion is to consider some guidance being given in respect of each walk as to the likely pace. The "Easy/Medium/Hard" description may not adequately cover this so perhaps the leader could give a "Leisurely/ Reasonable/Brisk" or similar guide as to the likely pace. A hard walk does not have to be a fast walk. Nor does a slow one have to be easy. There is more to it than that.

So there it is. My two cents' worth.

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The article 'Reflections', from Eddy Giacomel, on page 5 was received before Rob's letter but it covers the areas raised by both Brian and Rob. It is an important subject that is not unique to the SBW.

We would welcome further correspondence particularly if it offers constructive suggestions but possibly the best response is to consider joining the next committee to be elected on March 8th. Ed.

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SBW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Remember the new committee will be elected by the members present at the annual general meeting of the SBW to be held at the Kirribilli Neighborhood Centre on March 8th at 8pm.

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BOOK REVIEW

BATTLE FOR THE BUSH

The Blue Mountains, the Australian Alps and the origin of the wilderness movement.

by Dr. Geoff Mosley.

Published by: Colong

Foundation/Envirobook. 174 Pages.

Recommended retail price \$24.95

reviewed by Alex Colley

Geoff Mosley, author of 'Blue Mountains for World Heritage', a member during most of the eighties of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), and a member of the World Commission on Protected Areas, is eminently qualified to write this book. It is of particular interest to SBW members because he attributes the genesis of the wilderness conservation movement in Australia to the bushwalking movement, which originated with the Mountain Trails Club and the SBW. On the first page he quotes from The Sydney Bushwalkers, 'The First Sixty Years,' Myles Dunphy's view that:

"The great results of bushwalking - how it affects the bushwalker and his environment - lie forward in the future. When trailers, bush trackers and bushwalkers have ceased to exist as active social entities and propagandists, the tangible results of their social, constructive and long sighted planning will everywhere remind people that these un-desecrated parklands were secured as environment for living by clear-headed idealists who had both feet on the ground."

Chapter 2 describes the 19th century origins of the bushwalker movement, the formation of the MTC and the SBW and Myles Dunphy's leadership of the growing conservation movement

Chapter 3 describes Myles' proposal for a Greater Blue Mountains National Park, an objective later achieved in fact, though not in name, under the leadership of his son Milo. How this was achieved is described in chapter six, which covers the battles for

Colong Caves and the Boyd, the campaign for Wollemi, the successful opposition to the proposed Wollongambe gas pipe line and the raising of the Warragamba Dam and the addition of Nattai and the Gardens of Stone.

Chapter 5 describes the struggle for the Alpine parks and the southeast forests. The story of Kosciuszko, proposed by Myles Dunphy and achieved by Sir William McKell, is well known in NSW but not the long and difficult campaign for the Victorian alpine parks, in which Geoff was heavily involved. The park system lacked a comprehensive plan and is still fragmented and subject to logging and grazing.

The book contains historic photographs of early bushwalkers and conservationists, together with seven of Henry Gold's magnificent scenic photographs and also maps drafted by George Elliot that clarify the often complex progress of conservation. The book is available from the Colong Foundation, level 2, 362 Kent St. at the recommended retail price (\$24.95) postage free.

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FORESTS IN THE FURNACE

(From the Colong Bulletin)

The NSW government has passed the provision in the Natural Resources Legislation Amendment (Rural Environmental Services) Act allowing for the logging of native forests for *electricity production*.

The implications of this move by the government include a massive expansion in native forest woodchipping and a disaster for genuine sources of renewable energy.

The Colong Foundation will be taking on this campaign.

For more information and copies of guide letters, check out the Colong Foundation website. On:

www.colongwilderness.org.au

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Snow Caves, CO₂ and CO.

by Ray Hookway

The tragic death of the four Sydney snowboarders on the Ramshead Range last August has highlighted the dangers inherent in snow caving.

Whilst an inquest into their death has not occurred at the time of writing it appears from media reports that the boys died in their sleep.

A party of five Newcastle scouts who built two linked snow caves a short distance away, against the North Ramshead, on the same day as the snow boarders, fared better. Their leader, Graham Smith, a Scouting Alpine instructor, was well aware of the dangers and made sure that they located the caves correctly and took the necessary precautions, cooking in the cave entrance hole and regularly clearing the ventilation holes. They had the extra security that one of their party stayed in his tent adjacent to the two snow caves and eventually helped to dig them out from the exceptionally heavy snow cover.

Two of the dangers which can be experienced in snow caving are an excess of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and/or Carbon Monoxide (CO).

Excess Carbon Dioxide, a colourless, odourless gas, which is normally present in the atmosphere in low concentration, can cause death by suffocation if inhaled in large amounts. At least one of the scouting party was reported to have suffered from a bout of *hyperpnoea*, an excess of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), that apparently first causes 'abnormally rapid and deep breathing' which woke him up.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) which is also colourless and odourless, is the product of incomplete combustion and its effect is apparently more insidious. Carbon Monoxide (CO) combines with the haemoglobin in your blood preventing the absorption of Oxygen, first causing 'mild headaches, fatigue to the point of sleepiness, vomiting, confusion and

a loss of consciousness and even brain damage and death'.

Reference sources state that a concentration of Carbon Monoxide (CO) of less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of 1% may cause death within 30 minutes but prolonged exposure to even smaller levels can cause long-term health effects.

The ability of CO to combine with the haemoglobin in the blood is much easier than that of oxygen by a large factor and as smokers already have absorbed CO present in their blood it possibly makes them more susceptible to CO poisoning.

The immediate response to apparent CO₂ or CO poisoning is to get the patient into fresh air as quickly as possible. Reference sources state that 5½ hours breathing fresh air will reduce the CO in the blood by ½.

Breathing pure oxygen will hasten this process.

The main lesson to be learned from the August tragedy is that snow caving can be very dangerous and the practice should be treated as such.

The cave should be dug horizontally into a hill to reduce the risk of collapse and of snow falling into, and thus blocking, the entrance hole.

TV footage of the snowboarders cave appeared to show that it may have been dug in gently sloping ground.

Ventilation holes should be kept clear at all times and a ski stock should be kept in the cave for this purpose.

Cooking should be done in the open entrance tunnel and candles used with caution.

Many cross-country skiers would possibly only dig a snow cave in an emergency in bad weather conditions but if one goes out with the intention of digging a cave perhaps a small alarm clock could be taken to ensure that the party wakes up at 1 or 2 hour intervals to check the ventilation holes.

Snow caving can be dangerous and should be treated with great respect.

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SANTIAGO (Part 2.)

Walking the pilgrim path from Pamplona to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

What awaits the pilgrim in Santiago?

by *Almis Simankevicius*

Continued from p20 of the December issue.

The church in Villa Franca has the *Puerta del Pardon* - door of forgiveness, which if you can walk through, you receive the same religious indulgences as you would, had you continued the walk through to Santiago. This custom dates from medieval times when the Church authorities used "Indulgences" as an ecclesiastical form of currency. The belief was: since mankind was already in sin, everyone needed to accumulate a certain amount of good points in order to reach heaven when they died. Some rich and powerful folk were even able to purchase indulgences by paying others to go on the pilgrimage in their place.

Alas, when we arrived at the church in Villa Franca, the door was firmly closed, so we had no option but to continue.

This challenge was to walk up a mountain to O Cebreiro, an ancient Celtiberian village, a highlight of the pilgrimage. It had now been sixteen days and 360km of walking since we had left Pamplona and our bodies had become well and truly adjusted to the rigours of the walk. Even so, the climb was tough. Finally, through the mists we emerged into the other worldly settlement of O Cebreiro.

We had made it to Galicia, the Celtic part of Spain, with wet drizzling rain and wonderfully verdant valleys and hills. This was the province of Spain least touched by the twentieth century. We passed through small rural hamlets and forests of oaks and eucalypts. Onwards we trudged towards our destination. Every day presented us with various trials.

We were getting closer to Santiago de Compostela every day. What was waiting for us there?

The desire to reach Santiago grew and created much tension between us. It was touch and go if we would make it on time. The path wended through more forests, fields and hamlets, over rivers and hills.

At last. There in the distance was the Holy City. We had arrived, but not in the joyous frame of mind that we had anticipated.

However, Santiago is a marvelous city that we explored over a few days. The Cathedral being the shrine to St James, is spectacular and the coffer containing his remains is located in the silent crypt. We attended the pilgrims' mass where newly arrived pilgrims were mentioned and were pleased to hear that two Australians (us) had officially completed the pilgrimage.

Enduring tiredness, early morning starts, encounters with dogs, sore backs and thirst, we often re-examined our motives for making the journey. In return we experienced Spanish culture, epicurean food and wine, medieval villages with cows, legends and stories of miracles.

We walked on Roman roads worn smooth by the feet of countless pilgrims. The various experiences on the road to Santiago certainly tested our resolve to complete the journey. The five hundred kilometres that we walked had produced a wonderful feeling of true participation in the pilgrimage.

It was a magnificent journey.

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People interested in reading a more detailed account of Carol and Almis's journey should read their book which was reviewed by Owen Marks in the December issue. The book is currently only on sale in a few bookshops but can be obtained directly from Almis. Phone. 9498 8995

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CORRECTIONS TO THE SBW FIRST AID NOTES

by **Patrick James**

Patrick would like members and prospectives to make the following changes to section 9 of the SBW First Aid Notes.

The changes are shown in *Italics*.

9. INSECT BITE

Red-back spiders, funnel-web spiders, ticks, leeches, bees, hornets, wasps, ants, mosquitoes and sandflies can and do bite, (*usually not all at once.*)

Signs & Symptoms. These vary depending on the insect and the patient's response to the bite. Some people can have a severe allergic reaction called anaphylactic shock, (*see Shock*) to insect bites.

Treatment Assume spider bites are venomous and treat as for snake bite.

Ticks can be removed by first *applying insect-repellent containing DEET for 10 to 15 minutes*, and then removing the ticks with tweezers. Be sure that the whole of the tick is removed, do not leave the tick's head in the skin.

(*NB The use of kero, teatree oil, antiseptic cream, etc. to encourage the tick to disengage can cause the disgorgement of the tick's gut contents into the patient.*) Leeches can be removed with salt, insect repellent, or with a small flame. The best way is with methylated spirit. Fill (and label) a new or recycled eyedropper container with methylated spirit. This can be kept handy in a pocket. One or two drops of metho will make a leech let go. Bee (hornets and wasps) stings should be removed by scraping away with the blade of a knife or a long fingernail. Ant bites can be considered as bee stings. For all bites and stings, except spider bites, apply a cold compress to the affected area, rest the casualty, apply soothing cream if available. Keep the patient

under observation for anaphylactic shock. If bitten near the mouth, throat or neck be prepared for transfer to hospital. (Allergic reaction could cause swelling and blockage of the airway.) For mosquito and sand fly bites use a soothing cream **Stingose** if applied immediately to a venomous bite, before the venom has been absorbed into the skin, may help to detoxify the venom.

Prevention is better: use an insect repellent (*containing DEET*) and minimise the amount of exposed skin. A good coating of a cream insect repellent (e.g. **RID** cream) on shoes will deter leeches effectively. Reapply if shoes get wet or after a few hours.

For full details see **TICKS: FOES OR FRIENDS?** By Stephen Doggett in The Sydney Bushwalker, January 1998.

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Next Month

Committee Position Duties.

A Breathtaking View

by *Bill Midson*

Beyond the comfort Zone

by *Libby Harrington*

Mt Townsend – Bob Turners Track

by *Craig Austin*

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A REQUEST FOR ARTICLES FOR THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

Articles for the magazine on subjects relevant to Bushwalking are always welcome and can be submitted as typed copy, on a PC floppy disk or via email on:

rreymond@ozemail.com.au

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