



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 on any Wednesday.

SBW WEBSITE= www.sbw.org.au

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Jim Callaway
Ian Wolfe
Stephen Ellis

APRIL 2000

Issue No. 785

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The Sydney Bushwalker is printed on recycled paper

IT'S A BOY

Congratulations to Eddy and Jennifer Giacomel who are now the proud parents of a son, Ethan Elio. Born in the RNSH on Wednesday 23rd of March at 5.20am.

Both mother and babe are doing well.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION NOW DUE

The SBW annual subscriptions for the year 2000 were set by the Annual General Meeting on March 9th as:

Single Membership	= \$37
Household membership	= \$61
Non Active Membership	= \$13
Non Active + Magazine	= \$26
Magazine only	= \$13

Subscriptions can be forwarded by cheque to the treasurer at our Milsons Point box number together with the completed form enclosed in the March magazine.

Prompt payment will help reduce the treasurer's workload and ensure that you are covered by club insurance and that you receive the magazine and walks programs.

CHANGE TO DAY WALK

Jim Callaway advises that his day walk in the RNP from Waterfall to Heathcote, programmed for Sunday May 7th has been rescheduled to Saturday May 6th.

REG ALDER MADE AN HONORARY MEMBER OF THE NPA.

Congratulations are extended to long time SBW member Reg Alder who has just been made an Honorary Life Member of the NPA for his active participation in walking and conservation issues in Sydney and Canberra since 1938.

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THE FEBRUARY 2000 GENERAL MEETING

reported by Barry Wallace

There were around 20 members present at about 2013 when the President, presiding, called the meeting to order and began proceedings. There were no apologies.

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

Magazines from other clubs comprised the bulk of inward correspondence, with the only other item being a letter from senator Robert Hill on genetically modified organism (GMO) assessment.

The treasurer's report indicated that we began the period with \$3,244 and closed with \$3,467.

Bill Capon presented the walks reports for the month. There were a number of extended walks that began after, or extended past the date of the last general meeting. These had not previously been reported, so were covered first. Owen Kimberley's walk in the Victorian Alps was truncated for various reasons, not the least of which was a preponderance of the halt and the lame in the party of seven; or so it was described to the meeting. David Trinder's Tasmanian walk involved some complex decisions for the 6 starters due to the persistent rain that turned out to be a feature.

Wilf Hilder led a party of four in lovely weather on his midweek walk on Tuesday.

On Saturday 22nd January John Poleson's trip in Glenbrook Gorge went but we had no other details. Ken Cheng had 25 on his Sunday walk out from Heathcote railway station. The party indulged in several swims along the way and pronounced it enjoyable. Bill Hope postponed his Sunday trip to the Colo River to a date to be determined.

Ian Rannard and the party of 15 on his midweek walk marked the occasion as the first Ian midweek walk without rain for around 18 months.

Bill Hope deferred his weekend walk

scheduled for 29, 30 January to a date to be advised. Wilf Hilder led 13 starters on his Georges River nature reserve trip on the Saturday. Somewhere along the way they must have accumulated a time deficit of 35 seconds for that is the margin by which they missed the train. Maurice Smith cancelled his Sunday Wollongambe lilo trip but Lucy Moore had a party of 13 out on her Glenbrook area walk in hot conditions the same day. The conditions probably had a lot to do with the sighting of a larger than average goanna, described as a giant, along the way. The beer they had at the end of the trip salved both concerns no doubt.

Someone in the party of five on Jan Pieters' Danae Brook trip over the weekend of 5, 6, 7 February sustained a gashed hand but every one of them ended the trip in good order. Phil Newman had five starters on his Six-Foot Track in two days trip. Conditions were hot on the Saturday but Sunday saw some relief, with cooler temperatures. Anne Maguire reported a party of nine and a good trip for her Kanuka Brook trip on the Sunday but the 22 starters on Tony Crichton's Erskine Creek trip the same day encountered temperatures less than optimum for the "plenty of swimming" the program had indicated.

Bill Holland led a party of five on his midweek walk on a hot Tuesday to conclude the walks reports for the month.

There was no conservation report this month. The Conservation secretary was out there somewhere waiting for a tow-truck.

There was no Confederation report as Confederation had not met since our last meeting.

The call for General Business produced no motions for resolution but there was an extended and seemingly passionate debate on the matter of encouraging/retaining new members in the club. It may be someone is writing that up for the magazine.

Announcements came and went and the meeting closed at 2115.

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THE MARCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

reported by Barry Wallace

The long day's inclemency continued unabated outside as the president called the 30 or so members present to order at around 2011 and began the AGM with a call for apologies. These there were for Bill and Fran Holland, Tony Holgate, Jan Roberts, Ken Smith, Greta James, Barbara Bruce, Tony and Gail Crichton, Carol Lubbers, Margaret Sheens and Jim Calloway. There was also an apology from Ron Knightley but your scribe had not retrieved it from voicemail at that time.

New members Susie Cliff and Jacqueline Pearse were called for welcome but were not present at the meeting. New Honorary Active members Don Finch and Wilf Hilder were presented with a certificate to prove the fact. New Honorary member Ron Knightley had allowed discretion to prevail in view of what turned out to be one of Sydney's wildest and wettest days for some time.

The minutes of the 1999 AGM were read and received, with no matters arising.

Correspondence included a letter from Jim Calloway indicating his willingness to stand for the position of Confederation Delegate, from the Hon Auditor, Chris Sonter conveying his approval of the annual accounts and his congratulations to the treasurer on the standard of preparation.

The treasurer's report for the month indicated that we began with a balance of \$3,467 and closed with \$3,267.

The annual reports were taken as read and accepted. The annual financial statements were taken as read and received.

Two procedural motions were passed to establish the methods of counting votes for club positions, and to facilitate the process of voting. Scrutineers Patrick James and Joy Hynes were appointed and the election of club officers began. Last month's magazine will have provided the details by now.

After some debate over the possibility of rounding up, the effects of the GST and one

or two other matters the membership settled on subscriptions rates for the coming year. The notice in last month's magazine will have spelt it all out in detail. Pay now and avoid the terrible business of not noticing you didn't get your magazine until your copy of the walks program expires.

Bill Capon was next up with the walks reports. These began on the weekend of 12, 13 February with Bill Holland and Ian Debert doing their traditional double act on the waters and shores of Lake Yarrunga in a combined canoe trip/walk. Ian led 5 canoeists, Bill led 5 walkers, and Tom Wenman led his party of one Tom Wenman to a navigational imprecision that ended up in a thicket of fairly vicious scrub one or two bays away from the campsite as darkness was falling. A momentary break in the general wassail permitted someone to hear Tom's not-so-plaintive cry for assistance and a canoe rescue dash soon had him snug in the bosom of the tables, gas lamps and happy hour revelry. Now admit it Tom, that scrub wasn't that bad was it? Maurice Smith cancelled his Ettrema Wilderness trip that weekend. Of the day walks, Robin Plumb led a party of four on her Newport to Whale Beach local issues trip on the Saturday in initially wet conditions that improved to a pleasant day, and Phil Newman had nine on his Cox river walk on Sunday.

Ian Rannard reported 13 on his midweek evening walk to the houses and gardens of Balmain. They timed things so that they had afternoon tea at Morrie Ward's place along the way.

The weekend of 19, 20 February turned out to be devoid of overnight walks but there were several day walks. Wilf Hilder had double booked Saturday 19th so he had to cancel his trip from Loftus to Engadine. Ken Cheng had someone in the party of 8 on his Waterfall to Otford trip the same day with foot problems that forced a not-to-plan variation. Sunday 20th turned out to be hotter than usual with all parties remarking on the temperature. Errol Sheedy had 4 on

his trip from Waterfall to Heathcote, Geoff McIntosh passed the leader's baton over to Frank Sandor for the party of three on his walk from Cowan to Berowra and there were no details for Tony Crichton's trip out from Waterfall to Boobera Pool.

Bill Holland reported a pleasant hot day for the party of four on his midweek walk along Berowra Creek on Tuesday the 22nd.

Tony Holgate cancelled his extended SouthWest Tasmania trip that had been scheduled to go from 26th February to 12th March.

The weekend of 26, 27 February was given over to restful pursuits of various kinds at Coolana. Saturday the 26th saw the first of two successive day test walks in the Royal under Tony Manes. Waterfall to Sutherland attracted a party of 10 in hot conditions on the Saturday and the Bundeena to Otford rock hop on Sunday saw 15 starters on a warm day. Judy Jones led a party of 5 on her Eastern Suburbs ramble on the Sunday but there were no other details.

Wilf Hilder led the midweek walk on the Tuesday with a party of eight out on a nice day with no swims for some reason.

March 3, 4, 5 saw no details for Maureen Carter's "weekend at Sussex Inlet" trip and Rosemary MacDougal's Saturday walk from the Basin to Mackerel Head yielded a similar response. Margaret Sheens' Saturday tour of the Chinatown food stores and supermarkets attracted ten starters who knowingly appraised the various offerings before retiring to Macdonalds' golden arches for dinner. That last bit isn't even vaguely based on fact but sounded right to me. The party of 16 on Tony Crichton's Sunday walk from Mountain Lagoon to Tootie Creek experienced a range of weathers, reported as four seasons in the day. Peter Miller bypassed Popran Creek on his Popran Creek walk on the Sunday on the basis that the party of seven all had sufficient imagination to know what thick scratchy scrub was going to continue to be like without actually walking through it. Michael Bickley

reported an OK walk for the seven attendees on his Sunday walk out from Mount Kuring-gai to conclude the walks reports for the month.

There was no conservation report for the month as the conservation secretary was away. Wherever it was it probably beats waiting for a tow-truck hands down.

Confederation report indicated that the latest Newsletter is available.

General Business was devoted to a review of Coolana maintenance matters. The announcements came and went and the meeting closed at 2135, by which time the rain had eased to light showers.

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CLUB COMMITTEE POSITIONS FILLED

Judy O'Connor and Gretel Woodward have kindly agreed to fill the club committee positions of secretary and business manager respectively and Ian Wolfe and Stephen Ellis the remaining two Confederation delegate positions. I hope that they each find the tasks interesting.

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MAY JUNE CONFEDERATION ACTIVITIES

May 16th Confederation meeting Ashfield RSL 7.30pm.

May 27th-28th Senior First Aid training remote area first aid course St Johns Ambulance. 9212 1088.

June Date TBA Paddy Pallin Rogaine at Capertee

June 20th Confederation meeting Ashfield RSL 7.30pm.

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SBW MAY SOCIAL PROGRAM

May 3rd 7pm Committee meeting

May 10th 8pm General meeting

May 17th 6.30pm Pre-meeting Dinner Blues Point Café.

May 17th 8pm. Slides. Nepal. Sev Sternhell

May 17th 8pm. Navigation training.

May 24th 8pm. Slides. Insects & Fungi.

Frank Taeker

May 31st 8pm Safety in Cross Country Skiing. Ian Wolfe

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Explore the unknown!

The exploration of Australia is far from complete!



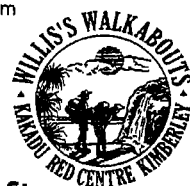
On previous explorer trips we've found pockets of rainforest, Aboriginal art sites, pools, gorges and waterfalls – no hint of which appeared on any map.

These are the kind of trips that let us discover the walking routes we regularly use today.

Our 2000 exploratory trips include walks in the region in and around Gregory National Park in the Top End, walks in the Red Centre, walks in the Charnley and Middle Isdell River regions of the Kimberley and

a walk in the Chichester Range in the Pilbara. We do not expect to offer any of these exact walks in 2001.

If you have ever dreamed of being among the first non-Aboriginals to explore an area, our Explorer trips could be your dream come true.



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Mt. KENYA, A NATURAL GEM

From the end of the line

by **Bob Stewart**

Last month's article 'Fish River Canyon' by Bob Stewart was attributed by me to a mythical 'Bob Edwards'. My sincere apologies are extended to Bob Stewart an SBW member currently based in Singapore. Bob has just returned from a Russell Willis Trip to Baffin Island (advertised in the June 99 mag) and hopes to write an article on that experience which he describes with just one word WOW. Ed

Mt Kenya (5199m) which means Mount of Whiteness in Kikuyu because of its permanent snow cap, is the second highest mountain in Africa after Mt Kilimanjaro (5895m). The first European to climb Mt Kenya was Sir Halford Mackinder in 1899. Ed

"Come back in an hour...if I am not better you need to get two porters and take me down right away! Otherwise, if it is pulmonary oedema, I will be dead in the morning!"

I am sure, at 26, my daughter thought I was exaggerating, but the cough was so bad I could hardly breath. Sure enough I was exaggerating and in an hour the cough was better and I had no other symptoms of HAPE.¹ By morning I was hardly coughing and looking forward to our 20-kilometer hike out of the Mt. Kenya Park. This was especially so with the successful climb of Lenana Peak behind us.

My daughter Elizabeth and I were hiking as members of the Singapore Adventure Club Team on the first leg of the Mt. Kenya/Mt. Kilimanjaro expedition. We had begun four days earlier after a horrific 8-hour drive from Nairobi. The country is falling apart and the tarred national road had disappeared for the last 100 kilometres to Nannuki. The national roads were so bad that the dirt road to Sirimon Gate was a relief. We were hiking the Sirimon Route and finished the day with a 9-kilometre walk to the Old Moses huts. The huts were clean, the toilets were not, but most of us were too tired to worry.

The first night at 3200 metres was not good. Dinner was a disaster. Our guide had obtained fresh Kenya trout and lightly fried them head and all. I watched as the team members gazed back at their fish and one by one got up to go outside and call "RALPH" on the great porcelain telephone. Not a good start. We were all feeling the effect of mountain sickness. I was doing OK with my regime of Diamox and Aspirin. However, Diamox has its own side effect and the lousy toilet facilities was going to be a problem (I lied about the Porcelain Telephone)

Day two, was the magnificent Mckinder Valley, a beautiful valley framing the spectacular Mt. Kenya peaks (Lenana our objective and Batian the technical summit). The trail lies above the tree line and is dry. A variety of grotesque succulents (mostly aloes) stand man size in the sagey bush. Great valley, but a hell of a hike to get to it. The 12 km and 1000m climb to Shipton Camp seemed like a 30km day. Maybe this is not surprising, since at 4,200 metres there isn't much air. We almost lost two members one who struggled into camp after dark and into the sack before being sick. He eventually had to be taken back down. A second member was literally carried in by a porter on each side, dead tired but still in good humour.

Shipton Camp sits at the base of Point Lenana, but day three was an acclimatization day and we practiced the "climb-high-sleep-low" dictum. A three-hour walk took us up another 500 metres, half the height of Point Lenana. It was a beautiful walk with the true peak and point Lenana both in clear view. We got back down to camp to find too many people and too few beds. For a while it looked like beds would be based on who could physically oust the other. Finally a compromise was arranged with the newcomers using our tents and the Singapore team staying in the hut. The huts were lousy so I am not sure who won first prize. In looking for guides - get good

negotiators as the 'over-issue-of-permits' is rampant on Mt. Kenya.

At 3:00am the remaining 8 started for Pt. Lenana. Elizabeth had gone up the day before after our acclimatization hike – (how I hate youth) and one member had retired. It was a three-hour slog but clear and beautiful. At first we could look back down the McKinder Valley, then over the top at Hall Tarn where we would camp that night. Finally the glacier came into view with Batian summit on the other side ... a real panorama. All the way up we could see the grooved massif that stands next to Lenana and in each groove the sun sparkled off hundreds of spikes left in each one of these 'routes'. Eight of us made the summit at about the same time, cold, tired but elated.

The team had decided to descend along the Chogoria Route. Although I was coughing badly the descent to Hall Tarn was glorious despite a couple of hours of scree and boulder hopping. We tented at Hall Tarn that as the name suggests lies near a small lake.

Having survived the night we broke camp and started our descent to the Meru Mt. Kenya Bandas (cabins) where we planned to camp a final night before returning to Nairobi and our Mt. Kilimanjaro challenge. The trail goes through Gorges Valley, which could equally well, be named Gorgeous Valley. The effect is as if you were walking down a ridge with most of Kenya laid out below you. High up you move through a fynbos² of dry plants in incredible bloom. Lower down it's more of a rain forest with the chance of an elephant or buffalo encounter. (The guides entertained us with a story about spending the last night on a previous trip in a tree patrolled by angry buffaloes!).

The early arrivals managed to bargain for half price at the huts and we enjoyed a hot bath and supper around a log fire, followed by stories about our favourite adventures.

Mt. Kenya is a natural gem in the middle of a country that is slowly but surely running down. Our guides pointed out the corruption that prevents money from coming back into the park (although the park fees are relatively high). Over-permitting, rundown huts and disappearing roads are the standard. Even though parties are now required to carry gas there is wide spread forest destruction at the lower levels.

So who are the enemy? Well, the discount for the huts was on the basis of "no-receipt". It is clear that the 'spiking' of every climbing crack is not being done by Kenyans. And it was clear to me that the Shipton over-permit situation arose from a very "aggressive" expedition who weren't bothered by the formalities.

As always we have met the enemy and they are us. At least partially. Until the international trekking community is prepared to play by the rules and to exercise good conservation stewardship, this natural gem will continue to deteriorate.

That's how it looks from the end of the line.

¹ **HAPE** = High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (oedema).

² **fynbos** = a major vegetation type unique to Southern Africa that includes proteas, ericas, and plants found nowhere else.

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NAVARINO ISLAND, THE ISLAND AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD.

by Pamela Irving

I did this trip in the summer of 1995/96 with Willis's Walkabouts. Don Brooks from SBW was also on it.

The plan was to land in Santiago and trek our way south to Chile's most southerly inhabited point, Navarino Island, The Island at the Bottom of the World.

The journey wasn't quite that demanding -- we caught buses, boats and planes between trekking spots. We even had a warm-up en route, five days on Chile's Easter Island, wandering around statues and volcanic craters.

Three days in Santiago were more than enough. They drive on the wrong side of the road there, and drive very fast. I increased my chances of survival by singing (in reverse) the song we sang as school kids:

"Look to the left, then look to the right
As you cross on the busy street."

It worked. We made it to Temuco in Chile's Lake District, and the base for the first of our walks. This area is stunning ---forests of beech and araucania-pine, towering snow-capped mountains, and clear blue lakes to swim in. We even climbed Volcan Villarica, an active volcano where most of the climbing is through snow. We stood on the edge of the crater and watched the brilliant red lava bubbling and erupting in the cauldron below -- it was better than television.

Next came the boat part. We journeyed to Puerto (Port) Montt, further south again, and caught the ferry to Chiloe (pronounced Chee-low-ay), a very large island not far off the coast. We trekked in the rain along the western shore. Indians on horse-back materialised out of the mist, their pack-animals laden with sea-weed. The sea-weed gatherers of Chiloe, I thought. I'd seen sea-weed for sale in the markets. So this was how it got there.

Then a proper boat and a proper sea voyage. The *Puerto Eden* carried us and our tonne of luggage further south past fjords, between islands and out into the open sea. All our warnings about sea-sickness came to nothing -- the sea was as close to a mill-pond as is possible in these southern reaches. We even saw two Killer Whales off the bow.

Our destination, Puerto Natales, was the launching point for two highlights of the trip. The first was the Torres del Paine National Park. We spent 10 days walking through forests, struggling upwards alongside the massive Grey Glacier, and gazing at towering peaks -- the "Torres" (Towers) in the title. The second was an excursion into Argentina, to the Los Glaciares National Park. There we spent six days being blown inside-out by a force 10 gale, but had the most stunning views of Mount Fitzroy, huge vertical towers of rock against a clear blue sky. The nearby Morena Glacier matched Grey Glacier in the "most spectacular stakes. It was about time for another plane ride. Our launching pad was Punta Arenas (Sandy Point), just about the most southerly point of mainland Chile. (Before we left, we fitted in a wander through a Magellanic Penguin colony. (I used up a whole roll of film.) This must be one of the world's most scenic and historic flights. We crossed the Strait of Magellan, flew across Tierra del Fuego and along the Darwin Range, formidable black snow-covered peaks scattered with lakes and glaciers. Then along the Beagle Channel where Darwin sailed in 1831, with Tierra del Fuego on one shore and Navarino Island on the other.

We landed at Port William on Navarino Island, the most southerly town in the world, and just 80km north of Cape Horn. Here we spent four days hiking and camping in the mountains. The view from the mountain tops back across the Beagle Channel to the jagged peaks of Tierra del Fuego was one of the most striking I had ever seen. The channel was like glass. I wondered if Darwin had been so lucky.

Getting off Navarino wasn't so easy. There is an on-going dispute between Chile and Argentina in this part of the world, and our destination was the city of Ushuaia in Argentina, on the southern shore of Tierra del Fuego. At great cost we chartered a yacht from Ushuaia to come and rescue us. A laid-back afternoon was passed sailing across the 40 kms between the most southerly town and the most southerly city in the world. Wolf, the German skipper, even threw in a visit to a sea-lion colony in the middle of the channel, shared with countless cormorants and terns.

Ushuaia was the official end of our journey. It soon became clear that this was where tourist trips to Antarctica began. I ran around sizing up the Russian Ice-Breakers as they came and went, and chatting to people just returned. Somehow we fitted in a final day-walk in the Tierra del Fuego National Park, but my mind was far away, plotting my next trip -- to Antarctica.

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TO TAKE THE HIGH ROAD TO BEN LOMOND ON THE BONNIE BANKS OF LOCK LOMOND

by Ian Wolfe & Louise Verdon

June 97 found Louise and I sitting on the terrace of a castle enjoying the late evening air and looking across the Loch to the towering massif of Ben Lomond. The weather being clear and still we wished up a similar day for the morrow and thus it proved.

So next morn we stood on those bonnie, bonnie banks at Rowardennan and found the high road. As you can imagine this was a very well worn path that wound steeply up through the forests and across a few braes (creeks) to emerge in the heather. By this time we could see that there were about 40 trampers spread out over the track ahead. Soon some of those strange breed of individuals called fell runners passed us at pace and jogged up into the horizon. The cows had the right attitude and disdainfully ignored them.

This section of the walk climbs at a steady pace up the extend flank of the mountain and provides an increasingly extended view up and down the Loch as well across into the southern face of the Highlands. To be sure it was a grand day with a gentle breeze and a clear blue sky and our feet lightly paced upwards (and yes, we did sing the song).

The ascent is about 800 metres over 7km so it takes a few hours to get to the summit with the last section being along a narrowing ridge to a crown summit. Once there you enjoy one of the great views of the world with the magical combination of Loch, fell, forest, and mountain in all directions. So we found a comfortable grassy shelf and sat down and soaked it all up as we had lunch.

In addition, with quiet satisfaction, we contemplated the attainment of our first "Munro". For the uninitiated a Munro is a

Scottish mountain which is over 3000 ft and in the fine tradition of peak bagging many trampers devote themselves to completing the full set of 60+ (problem being that some of them involve rock climbing and have a fairly savage record for becoming hypothermic very quickly). Whilst mulling over the appropriateness of Munroing we were befriended by a Scottish motor bike enthusiast from Glasgow which provided a suitably piquant contrast to our surroundings!

Rather than retrace our steps we departed from the formed route and sought to find a path indicated by light dots on the map. To give you some yardstick this initially looked like it was similar to trying to find the path off Byangee Walls. In short, standing on top of a large cliff line looking at air and a shelf far below and scratching ones head saying "how do we get down there?" Well, after a bit of casting around I found a goat path that looked as though it would "go". With no sense of timing Louise asked "How do you know its not a goat path?" to which I replied, without missing a beat "the English shot them all long ago".

Anyway, we traversed the cliff line which was actually a series of steps close together in a zigzag and emerged on the terrace far below. This gave access to a fine broad ridge down to a knob called the Ptarmigan. The is was wonderful open fell walking with the massif of Ben Lomond on one side and, still far below, the Loch on the other. So we strolled down the path enjoying the delight of the day. Gradually we dropped lower to briefly re-enter the forests before emerging on the banks of the Loch at Ptarmigan Lodge. This is Rob Roy country and is one of the cattle duffing routes he used on a number of occasions.

Then it was back along the banks of the Loch for a few K to get back to the car. Which in turn returned us to our Castle

terrace to once more sit back and watch the light change on the mountain in the remains of the day.

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Tick and Leech protection

From the 'Rainforest Study Group'
Newsletter no. 34

To avoid ticks and other nasties in the bush Vicky Lloyd passes on this recipe to make life easier.

Buy a cheap brand of Hand and Body Lotion (500ml pack), tip a little out and replace with 50ml of Tea Tree Oil (she uses 'Eureka').

Before venturing into the bush, apply the material liberally to neck, waistline, hairline, groin and calves - as well as reducing ticks it is good for leeches, mozzies, flies etc.

An added bonus, SPOUSE often reckons it improves the after effects of a hard days walk!

I would welcome comments from club members who try this suggestion and find it effective or other wise. Ed

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WALKS WANTED URGENTLY

Carol Lubbers is our new walks secretary and she **urgently** requires walks for the new program that goes before the committee on Wednesday May 3rd.

Carol is not on email yet but she has a fax machine and would also take advice of walks over the phone for this next program.

Her phone/fax number is: 02 4758 8791

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COOLANA REVIEW

by Joan Rigby

April 1st marked the fourth anniversary of our commencing control measures on the River Flats at Coolana. During February and March 1996 we slashed narrow tracks through head-high weed growth; cut and burnt numerous fallen Wattles and waited three weeks for the herbicide to take effect. Let me try to describe what the Flats looked like when we started work.

Over most of the Wattles and the fallen wood there was a canopy of Moth Vine. We threaded our way through man-high Scotch Thistles; Cobblers Pegs grew in thickets and Hemlock in flower stood like a forest down the channel. Apart from the Wattles, we found a few struggling Tree Violets, some bare 'stumps' and a single Kangaroo Apple. Even if, at this year's Reunion, the Flats looked less than park-like, the changes have been amazing.

So, let's talk first about the really good bits. **NATIVE REGROWTH!**

Our miracle for 2000 is one of the 'stumps'. For three years it has produced a few sickly leaves; this year it had a head of leaves, flowered and bore a crop of lovely orange seeds. A Koda, a rainforest tree halfway down the flats! It even survived the Acacia which fell on it just before the reunion! Kodas are appearing on the 'Mower Flat' and the lower slopes. Young White Cedars are common; the Tree Violet has been a good pioneer; an occasional Clerodendron and the lovely Scentless Rosewoods are coming on nicely, Kangaroo Apples are almost in plague numbers. Then there are our real pioneers, the grove of Sandpaper Figs, growing strongly despite the carpet of Wandering Jew under them. The survival and growth of all of these are essential for our eventual recovery of the Flats.

On the old hut site - never badly infested with weeds but bare and vulnerable, I counted over 20 young Clerodendrons plus a scattering of other Rainforest seedlings and an occasional Gum. This area and the "Mower Flat" benefit most from regular hand-weeding. It was a wet spring- and the native grass loved it! For the first time we saw grass across most of the flats and up the road. Next year perhaps it will still be flourishing in Autumn.

So, what about the **WEED REGROWTH?**

The interesting observation is how the whole vegetation balance is changing. We have not won yet over any weed but with many we are in control.

Moth Vine is still there; seedlings a few inches high can be found close to the trunks of the old trees; In February I found and destroyed two vines in flower along the creek edge, but it is controllable now; Hemlock is nasty - prolific, unpleasant to be near, hard to mow or pull. Regular early lopping of flower heads has reduced it to scattered plants. Thistles of all kinds are scattered and few - no solid mass of them to cut through. Wandering Jew is a weed, but it is dominant only in the shadier areas, is easy on campers, and seems to allow tree regrowth.

"Cobblers Peg" is still too plentiful and annoys us most, but there is certainly less than in past years. It is an annual and a concerted mowing attack on it this year before it flowers or sets seed should make a great difference. Some weeds have increased in areas where others once flourished. Fleabane, Paddy's Lucerne, Black Berry Nightshade, Purple Top, are amongst these. Since the floods we have found Noogooroo Burr and more Lantana and Blackberry along the banks, but these can be dealt with individually.

So, what do I believe we should do **THIS YEAR?**

- Concentrate on mowing areas where the 'bad' weeds are growing but seed has not yet set. If plants have seeds, then slash, rake, and throw the trash into the pit for burning.
- Hand-weed such areas as Mower Flat, the Hut site the slopes above the lower road, the area between the Hut site and the mower shed and down to the channel in preference to mowing or slashing.
- Keep a vigilant eye out for Moth Vine and Privet around trees and for the dreaded burr along the banks.
- Select a 'pet hate' and search it out. Last summer I chose Turnip Weed and shall continue targeting it this year.

So, what do you **THINK?** Are there better ways? Will you **HELP?**

YOUR COOLANA NEEDS YOU!

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KEY FOUND AT COOLANA

A door key has been found at Coolana and can be retrieved by contacting Joan Rigby at Coolana or by phoning her on (02)6247 2035.

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NO LOGGING FOR CHARCOAL IN PILLIGA AND GOONOO FORESTS

Following a sustained effort by the various conservation groups, Premier Bob Carr announced on March 15th that Pilliga and Goonoo forests will not be logged for charcoal for the Lithgow silicon plant as was originally proposed.

Constant vigilance and action is still required to ensure that both areas are protected for future generations.

A letter to Mr Carr congratulating him on his decision could be used to press for further action on conservation issues particularly on the proposal to convert the 400,000 Pilliga area into pine plantations.

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NEXT MONTH

Bats and Bat People. by Christine Austin.

Kilimanjaro and the Coco Cola route.
by Bob Stewart

Western Tasmania. by David Trinder

AUSTRALIA'S HUT HERITAGE

Many SBW members have camped in or near old huts built by early settlers, stockmen or miners, such as those at Farm Ridge, Colong Station, Oldfields, Wheelers and Old Currango, and have mused on the lives of the people who built and lived in them and of the isolation and hardship they must have experienced.

Peter Dyce has submitted a poem, written by Roderick Williams of Murrurundi, about such a building re-erected in Murrurundi, which Peter visited whilst returning from a trip North.

Mr Williams, who has given permission for his poem to be published in the Bushwalker, will be issuing mid-April, a cassette of himself reading five of his own poems, plus others by well known poets, and four bush song. A CD is to be published later in the year. Interested people can contact Mr Williams at:

35 Liverpool St.

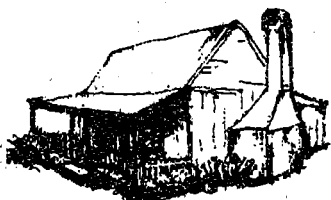
Murrurundi

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I AM SAP AND GRAIN AND SWEAT AND BLOOD.

by Roderick Williams. 1998



Out of the eucalypt forest, from the trunk of
a mighty tree-

through axe and adze and sweat and blood,
that's how I came to be me.

To shelter a settler's family, I was born long
before your time-

I know every heartache and tear that fell, the
laughter, each song and each rhyme.

I fought back fires with my sturdy walls,
while my children were safe within-

I caught the water for you to drink, from my
roof made of galvanized tin.

From my porch you sat and looked at the
sky and dreamed with the stars so bright-
and I guarded you well as you slept in my
womb, kept snug from the chill of the night.

I was all you had in those hellishing droughts
and I helped bear your hunger and pain-
I smiled on you as you danced around, when
finally came the rain.

You sat in my kitchen and made plans again,
to re-crop and re-stock the farm-
holding hands in the yard, you looked back
at me, you knew you were safe from harm.

You whitewashed my walls which gave me
relief, once again, from the blistering sun-
you built a new chimney and mended my
roof, before the new birth had begun-
You played, you clapped, you sang and you
danced, to many a rollicking tune-
and I shone so bright on that joyous night, in
the light of the harvest moon.

As time rolled on I saw famine and feast and
the first and second world war-
families grew and families left, but things
were not as before.

Homes like me were dozed to the ground,
not a thing from the past had they learnt-
synthetics and laminex being the craze, we
were pushed up in piles and burnt.

For I am your past and your life blood too, I
have been abused time and again-
shearing sheds, theatres, hotels and homes,
burnt down for insurance gain.

It has smeared my heritage, broken my heart,
for each senseless and selfish deed.

and for those who gave me such misery, my
heart continues to bleed.

Prosperity saw me deteriorate and I was left
all alone-

uncared for unloved and lonely, I lay as cold
as a creek-bed stone.

A pound for a pound for wool they earned,
but never a cent spent on me-

I thought that I'd be disposed of as well,
become ash from a dead old tree.

One day when I thought that my life was
done, I was picked up and taken to town-

erected once more, in Remembrance Park, I was made the jewel in the crown. Nervous at first and it's hard to explain, but I thank you for choosing this site- and the tears I poured down, on this welcoming ground, were shed for joy and delight.

Those of you here now who welcome me home, have given me strength once again- I'm loved and cared for as never before and it eases most of the pain.

You cook, you sow, you work and you weave, plant flowers to make me smile- you visit and touch me and walk through my doors and sit with me once in a while.

So do not forget to see me again and I wait for your safe return- though I'm happy and cared for and loved once more, for your visits I'll always yearn. Call in on my family around this great land, if you do we will feel we belong- we're your past, your strength and your guiding light- your voice, your heart and your song.

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BILL CAPON'S BLUE BREAKS WALK

Article requested

Club members who were fortunate enough to go on Bill Capon's Blue Breaks walk over Easter would have realised that it was not the car-brake-maintenance trip that I advertised in the March magazine. Sorry Bill.

I would welcome an article from one of the party sharing their experiences of the walk, into that spectacular country, with other members

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Confederation Bush Ball

Possible change of venue

The Confederation Bush Ball will be held on **Friday the thirteenth of October** but there is a possibility that the venue may be changed due to a large increase in the Petersham hall hire charges.

The theme of the ball will still be: '**Friday the thirteenth**' and you are invited by the organisers to attend swathed in bandages, in plaster, on crutches or even on a stretcher but please attend and join in the fun.

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NPWLS KOALA SURVEY

Reports of sightings requested.

As reported in the April NPA journal, recent sightings of Koalas in the Blue Mountains have initiated a comprehensive survey and details of any sightings are requested.

If you have seen a koala in the Blue Mountains or know of genuine sightings, historic or current, please call 02 9962 9996 or visit the webpage:

<http://wildscenes.com.au/koalas>

It is worthwhile reprinting some of the comments on this subject by Chris Allen, President of the South East Forest Conservation Council, for those SBW members who do not receive the NPA journal.

"The Threatened Species unit of the NPWLS is preparing a statewide koala recovery plan.

However because there is such a variation in the ecology and history of the koala and in the local communities that can participate in the program, much of this work needs to be regionally based.

Primarily due to local conservation efforts, the south-east NSW Koala Recovery Team has been established and is developing a recovery plan for this region.

The struggle to save our forest has a diversity of approaches. Probably the conservation movement is at its strongest when it can strengthen and nourish that diversity. Exposing issues concerning the survival and recovery of endangered species, including that of the koala is one approach than can assist other efforts of the conservation movement."

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A BAD START

by Dick Whittington **

It was whilst alpine skiing at Thredbo that I first became aware of cross country ski touring. I observed skiers with large packs returning from the backcountry and I knew I had to sample this experience myself. I was delighted to find that the Sydney Bushwalkers had a ski touring group and assumed that I could simply indicate my desire to accompany them and I would be on my way. I was soon advised by one of the group's leading lights that as an unknown quantity I could not be included. I would have to walk with them in summer to their favoured touring areas, to become familiar with the country, and to provide proof of my physical fitness, stamina and skiing ability. I don't think I did any of this, but by becoming enough of a nuisance, I eventually managed to secure an invitation along with two other hopefuls, to a weekend tour from Kiandra to Broken Dam Hut and return.

Saturday morning was desperately cold as we three novices arrived at the designated meeting place ten minutes late. As the main party was about to leave, the leader spoke one sentence, "don't go out of sight of the township". It was clear that we were not to accompany them. I was never sure if this was due to our late arrival or some misunderstanding. We resolved to do a short day tour anyway, after all it had been a long drive from Sydney and playing around Kiandra all weekend had little appeal, so we would follow their tracks for a short distance and then return for the night.

It was difficult on the hard uneven ice to begin with, but then the cloud base descended and the temperature increased. This was fine until it began to snow and our waxes became unsuitable. Soon we were struggling with up to 10cms of snow built up under our skis. Removing surplus wax meant that we would now make almost no progress

whilst climbing, but would immediately commence an uncontrollably fast slide at the slightest down slope. The going became more difficult and as the tracks before us began to disappear in the new snow, we decided to return to Kiandra. As the day wore on the snow changed to sleet and the visibility diminished. It was raining when we finally acknowledged that we were geographically embarrassed and the compass further confused the issue. (Later I was advised of magnetic anomalies in this area) We continued in various directions into the afternoon when we came across a derelict hut. This hut does not appear on any maps and I have not heard of it, or stumbled across it since. I think we might have sheltered for the night in this hut had we been carrying overnight gear. Darkness was approaching when we came across a road, I was uncertain as to which road it was. If it were the Cabrumurra to Kiandra road then it would be a simple matter to follow it to the right to Kiandra. A passing motorist confirmed our position and offered a lift. I suppose I was clinging to the last vestige of my pride when I refused the lift, an action that has since caused me to speculate upon my mental well being at that time.

Upon reaching Kiandra it was tempting to get in the car and drive straight back to Sydney, but by some perverse logic we decided to spend the night in the derelict Yans Store. As the rain became heavier we became increasingly more aware of the inadequacy of our shelter. In the morning the snow had gone and so we set off for home. Whilst driving home I speculated upon the prospects of the other group carrying their skis all the way back from Broken Dam Hut, and recalled the leaders parting words "don't go out of sight of the township".

Strangely, all three of us came back for more, and more, and more!

** *Nom de Plume*

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