



**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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# DECEMBER 2000

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## WORLD HERITAGE LISTING FOR THE GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS

The front page of the Sydney Morning Herald, Nov 30<sup>th</sup> announced the heritage listing of the Greater Blue Mountains. This article was accompanied by a marvellous colour photo of Alex Colley and Dot Butler against a Mount Solitary background.

Heritage listing could be said to be the culmination of a campaign that started with Myles Dunphy back in the late 1920s and progressed through the Colong limestone mining fight, (which resulted in the formation of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness), and the fight against the Kanangra-Boyd pine forest proposals.

Keith Muir, Tom Widdup and Alex Colley of the Colong Foundation, who have concentrated on this proposal for the last 17 years, deserve the special thanks and congratulations of all who support conservation. Thank you gentlemen. (Ring 9299 7341 to join the Foundation if you are not already a member.)

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## THE NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

*reported by Barry Wallace*

There was an initial false start at 2002, with the president drumming the gong for a time then losing concentration and drifting off to talk to various people before returning to the matter at hand again at around 2006.

The 16 or so members present came to order and apologies were tendered for Fran Holland, Greta James and Frank Grennan. The welcome of new members was deferred until later in the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted as correct. There were no matters arising.

Ray Hookway has written to the club proposing that we call for nominations for club office bearers through the magazine well before the AGM. We have received a copy of the minutes of the most recent Confederation meeting. This included a

copy of a letter from the Scripture Union Bushwalkers proposing that a television station or producer be approached with a suggestion for a short TV series on "The Bushwalkers". The purpose of distributing the correspondence was to determine the level of support from member organisations. An e-mail has been received from Eddie Giacomel advising us of a meeting to present information on "growth, renewal, and re-energizing a mature organization". We also sent letters out to our new members.

The treasurer's report indicated that we began the month with a balance of \$13,239, received income of \$537, spent \$191, and closed with \$14,517 in hand. Some of this surplus will be transferred to an account with a higher rate of interest next month.

The walks reports, with Carol presenting, began with George Mawer's extended walk over the period of 9 to 13 October in the vicinity of Tallaterang Mountain. There were 6 starters but the walk was adapted somewhat to circumstances as found, with a bit of driving around and a later retreat to Brian Holden's place.

Maureen Carter had a party of 8, good weather, and wildflowers for her mid week walk on Wednesday 11 October.

Jim Percy's day 2 of the Blue Mountains Crossing epic on Saturday 14 October had 10 starters and was also adapted somewhat from the programmed details. Charlie Montross led a party of 2 on his quiet walk in Lane Cove National Park the same day. Sunday saw Anne Maguire leading a party of 14 on her trip out to Fortress Creek. The day was beautiful but the water in the creek was a touch cold. Greg Bray's walk from the Golden Stairs out to Mount Solitary and back went well, in fine and windy conditions with a party of six.

Bill Holland led the midweek walk to Mount Piddington in cloud and rain. They made an early escape back to a log fire in the cafe at the end of the trip.

Frank Grennan led a party of 6 on his trip into the upper reaches of Crater Creek over the weekend of 21, 22 October. The

weather was pleasant but recent high waters in the creek made the rocks slippery. Erith Hamilton had the 17 starters on her Saturday walk along the Benowie Track moving along at a solid pace in overcast conditions. Eddie Giacomel led his Canoe Creek/Colo River trip on the Sunday with a party of six. No report was available for Brian Holden's Bulli to Wollongong cycle trip, and Ron Watter's scheduled six-foot track walk was cancelled. John Poleson reported a party of 5, a spectacular walk, and encounters with numerous overseas tourists as the dominant features of his midweek Valley Of The Waters walk.

Kenn Clacher's ski touring trip for all standards over the weekend of 27, 28, 29 October went, with a party of five, some snow, and scattered areas of scrub. Stage two of the Great River Walk along the Wollondilly River also went that weekend with a party of four and numerous fences.

We anticipate the fence crossings were accomplished with style rather than stiles. Charlie Montross led a party of 4 on his Saturday walk out from Wentworth Falls on a beautiful but cold day. There were three walks on the Sunday, with Michael Bickley reporting an OK walk for the 12 starters on his walk along the Benowie Track and Bill Holland accomplished the trip out to Mount Piddington with a team of six in more clement conditions this time. Carole Beales and Peter Miller stood in as leaders for the party of seven who went on Tony Crichton's walk to Merroo Trig and the Colo River.

Wilf Hilder led the midweek walk with 8 starters on Stage 8 of the re-circumnavigation of Port Jackson. They were reported as a good team, conditions were cloudy but fine and there were wildflowers.

Over the weekend of 4, 5 November Wilf deferred his scheduled walk out from Bell to attend the Bush Music weekend at Coolana. Gail Crichton had 6 walkers and numerous leeches on her Sassafras Creek walk on the Saturday and Zol Bodlay had 5 starters on his Ku-Ring-Gai Chase Gourmet walk the same day. Peter Kaye's Mount Solitary walk on the Sunday saw the party of five

enduring a rather full day with changeable weather conditions. There was no report available to the meeting for Errol Sheedy's programmed trip out from Bundeena but Maureen Carter's Glenbrook walk set a solid pace for the 9 starters and also ended the walks reports for the month.

Conservation report indicated that the NSW opposition has released a policy document on conservation. They appear to have limited their community consultation process to John Wamsley, Mike Archer and the 4WD fraternity with results that show a leaning toward replacing NPWLS with private business interests and to managing catchment areas for access by 4WDs and horseriders. The 4WD representatives and NPWLS are reported to have completed a memorandum of understanding.

The Confederation report brought news that the Colong Foundation has released its "Wilderness 2006" document. There has been little response to requests for volunteers to carry out tracks and access works in National Parks areas. Wilderness rescue group participated in a recent search in the Budawangs.

The Nature Conservation Council has voiced concern at the trade off of urban bushland for use as cycle tracks.

New Members Bob Smythe and Stephen Adams were welcomed to membership in the usual way.

There was no general business, so after the announcements the meeting closed at 2129.

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#### AWARD FOR ALEX COLLEY.

Further congratulations are in order for **Alex Colley OAM** who joined five other "exceptional people" at Sydney's Government House on October 19<sup>th</sup> to receive a National Australia Day Council Senior Australian of the Year Award from the State Governor Gordon Samuels

The award was in recognition of Alex's outstanding Conservation activities.

Alex, at 91, still spends most weekdays working at the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, of which he is a director, as he has done for the last 36 years.

Keep up the good work Alex.

## CORSICA

by *Brian Hart*

The SBS program was titled *The Rise of Terrorism in Corsica*. As I had just paid a rather large sum for a walking trip in the Mediterranean island, I watched the program with more than common interest. But I needn't have worried - Corsica turned out to be calm and friendly, safer in fact than the George Street theatre strip on an average Saturday night.

The trip involved a 14-15 day walk through the northern part of Corsica, using local and village tracks and staying each night in pension-type establishments (gites) and small hotels. The UK tour company, Explore provided a truck to carry baggage from point to point, so only day packs were needed, with aperitifs, hot showers and excellent meals and beds at the end of each day.

Luxury, you might say, but the walking was at least in the SBW medium range. Most days, we climbed (and descended) about 2000 feet (600 to 700 metres in the less precise measure), making a total of at least 20,000 feet up and down. The temperatures were up to 35 degrees in the shade and, as we were walking about half the time in bare granite top country, sometimes another five degrees above that. One walker broke an ankle, another was out of action with a bad sprain and at least six went down for varying periods with heat/stomach symptoms.

The exceptionally mountainous nature of the country surprised me. We started off from an idyllic beach house overlooking a glorious coastline and were soon in rugged ravine country with granite pinnacles rising more than 1000 feet above the blue Mediterranean, then down to a picturesque town with a hilltop fort built by the Genoese several hundred years ago. The night saw us in the lovely little village of Ota, perched on a hillside among olive groves. An excellent French-Italian meal followed, with the usual regional wine in abundance.

And so it went for the better part of a fortnight. We climbed at various times up to

about 7500 feet, through ravines and gorges, splendid chestnut woodlands planted by the Genoese, and cool pine forests. All the time it was warm to hot, but with lots of swimming opportunities in the granite gorges. At one point we crossed a beautiful Genoese footbridge and walked a road that the Romans had managed to construct through incredibly hostile terrain.

On another day, a fairly demanding climb took us to a glacial lake partly fed by a small and rapidly diminishing snowfield. Towards the end of the trip we walked to high upland pastures with scattered bergeries (traditional cheese making cottages) and back down through spectacular gorge country - 16 miles in all, followed by a few vinos and yet another excellent meal.

For the more spartan walker, the GR20 beckons. This is a walking track running through the same mountain country, but much tougher. The total climbs and descents are about 33,000 feet, with refuges and camp sites available at the end of each day for a trip which is quite accurately described as physically demanding; I saw a few walkers who looked just about all in. Reservations cannot be made at the refuges and meals are not available, but provisions can be obtained at some mountain passes and nearby villages. Camping 'au sauvage' is forbidden.

Our party made the trip in August, at the height of summer - spring or autumn would probably be a little less arduous, as far as heat is concerned. The group consisted of 15 walkers and a leader, with the agreeable ratio (for me) of five males and 11 females. The age range was 27 to the late sixties, with the average age 35 to 40.

The cost? Well, it would have been a lot cheaper on the GR20, but then the GR20 doesn't have vine covered restaurants, hot showers and truck transport for the boring bits. The charge was \$A1230 to \$A1360, depending on the season. This covered all meals, accommodation and other bits and pieces for the first week, with accommodation and breakfast only for the second week. Other expenses - restaurants,

food, phone calls, train fares, films, extra vino and so on - could easily add another \$500 or more. In my case, more. Well, with 11 women in the party, what would you expect?

I made my way to Corsica by way of various countries including Argentina, which has some wonderful waterfall and rainforest walking country in the far north. Buenos Aires was fascinating, but if you go there, a word of advice - doing the tango in Blundstone boots is fraught with difficulty.

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## **PLBs, EPIRBs & GPS RECEIVERS**

*Compiled by Ray Hookway*

There has been much discussion recently in bushwalking circles about the desirability of carrying an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) (properly called a Personal Locating Beacons (PLB)), and some clubs have purchased such devices for emergency use by club members on bush walks.

There also appears to be some confusion about how these devices operate and how they relate to the increasingly popular GPS receivers. (Refer SBW Bushwalker Nov.99)

It is important that potential users should be very clear of the basic operation and limitations of the PLB.

The US Defence Department Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system presently consists of 24 satellites in 6 orbits, each orbit containing 4 satellites. These Satellites transmit signals that a GPS receiver can use to calculate its latitude and longitude, extremely accurately anywhere in the world. The Russians have a similar system in operation.

### **The GPS Satellites cannot receive distress signals.**

The COSPAS-SARSAT 121.5mhz emergency location system currently consists of 7 satellites, in 4 polar orbits at an altitude of about 1000kms, that only receive signals transmitted by a PLB/EPIRB and relay them to a Rescue Co-ordination Centre. (RCC). More than 10,000 people have been rescued

world wide with the assistance of the Cospas-Sarsat system including a woman bitten by a snake in SW Tasmania in Xmas 1999 and a man attacked by a croc in Sherburn Bay NT in August 1999.

*The SA police are currently investigating why the 121.5/243 EPIRB/PLB in a wrecked abalone divers' boat did not alert the distress authorities. It is believed that the unit's aerial was broken*

When activated, the popular pocket sized PLB units, carried by bushwalkers, transmit a low power analogue emergency signal continuously on the aircraft distress frequencies of 121.5mhz and 243mhz for up to 48 hours on an internal battery.

All aircraft monitor the 121.5mhz distress frequency and the likelihood of the transmitted signal being received by one of the many commercial aircraft flying over the popular NSW bushwalking areas is quite high.

The pilot who receives such a signal passes the relevant information to the Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC), operated by AMSA (The Australian Maritime Safety Authority) in Canberra who organize a search.

Once a search is under way and the searching fixed wing aircraft or helicopter reaches the search area, it can use the transmitted PLB/EPIRB distress signal to 'home in'.

If the transmitted signal is received by a COSPAS satellite it will relay it to the nearest ground Local User Terminal (LUT) which will relay the signal to the RCC at Canberra

The distress PLB/EPIRB and the LUT must each be in sight of the satellite at the same time for the signal to be relayed to the LUT. (The effective coverage of each LUT is within a 3000kms radius.)

Australian LUTs are located at Albany WA and Bundaberg Qld. The NZ LUT located in Wellington also relays distress signals to the Canberra RCC.

It requires two satellite passes to accurately determine the position of the distress beacon, which it does by means of the 'Doppler shift' of the transmitted signal, but due to congestion on the frequency, several more passes may be required and

notification of a distress could take up to 12 hours. The accuracy of the plotted position can be within 20kms

Some EPIRBs transmit signals on 406mhz and some of these more sophisticated EPIRBs contain GPS receivers enabling a unit to transmit its position.

The 406mhz frequency is also monitored by the geostationary Inmarsat satellites which also relay distress signals to the RCC.

These EPIRBs, which are designed for use by ships, are registered and transmit their registration number allowing the Canberra RCC to immediately identify them. Because of their size, cost and weight, some such units are not normally practical for personal use. There are 406mhz PLBs on the Australian market which can be registered with AMSA. One, the US 'GyPSI' unit (which weigh 527gms and costs \$2,640) can be connected to your GPS receiver and your exact position can be downloaded into it for transmission to the satellite.)

EPIRB registration permits AMSA to contact the registered owner's phone number and determine whether it was a genuine emergency and obtain details of the user.

**Note** *The Jindabyne NP&WLS hire out 121.5 mhz PLB/EPIRBs to park users in the KNP for a flat fee of \$10-00.*

*The Jindabyne police who own the PLB/EPIRBs have a handheld direction finding receiver which they can use to locate the source of the emergency transmission when advised by AMSA of its the reception.*

#### **To sum up.**

The 121.5/243mhz PLB/EPIRB only transmits a simple low power distress signal to an aircraft or COSPAS-SARSAT satellite and does not transmit any position information or identification.

Detection of the signal could be swift if the incident occurs in an area where there are many commercial aircraft movements but could take many hours if only detected by satellite and if the distress frequency is congested. As I reported in the October Bushwalker, AMSA was investigating up to 300 incidents a month at that time and most

of those were false alarms. This situation has not changed and about 98% of 121.5mhz signals received world-wide are false alarms.

**In October 1999 it was decided to phase out the Satellite processing of the analogue 121.5mhz emergency signals by 2008, and to encourage users to switch to the 406mhz units. Aircraft will continue to monitor the 121.5mhz distress frequency after that date although they must be fitted with a 406 EPIRB by 2005.**

The PLB/EPIRB should not be relied on for quick rescue. Weather at the time of the incident may be bad thus not permitting the use of helicopters.

The transmitted signal on 121.5mhz and 243mhz radiates in a 'line of sight' and in a deep canyon may not be received by either an aircraft or a satellite. If used in such a situation an attempt should be made to get the PLB/EPIRB as high as possible and clear of dense trees, particularly wet trees.

A PLB/EPIRB could be very useful in an emergency particularly once the rescue authorities are aware that someone is hurt or lost, but it is no substitute for good preparation, careful walking and good navigation skills. As Tony Holgate concluded in his EPIRB article in the October 1999 Bushwalker: "No piece of gear or technology is a substitute for carefully managing the risks out in the bush.

Even with all the latest gear you can still get hurt. So walk safely".

Refer to [www.cospas-sarsat.org](http://www.cospas-sarsat.org) for further information  
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#### **NEW SERIES 3. 1- 25 000 MAP**

More information from the NSW LPI (Land and Property Information Unit) re the Series 3. 1-25 000 map list printed in the November Sydney Bushwalker magazine.

<u>MAP</u>	<u>MAP NUMBER</u>
YANKEES GAP	8824-4N
PICTON	9029-4S
SNOWBALL	8826-3S
PUEN BUEN	8825-3S

## DINING OUT IN PROVENCE

by Tom Wenman

It had been a hard morning's cycling uphill from the blue waters of the Lac de Ste Croix into which the equally blue waters of the Gorge du Verdon flowed. Uphill and against the wind. The wind was not exactly right in front of me more, in naval terms, on my port bow. However the road twisted and turned so much that it was never less than a few points directly against me. Fully loaded with all my camping and touring gear it proved a long, hard, hot struggle.

Eventually I arrived just outside Aups, a provincial market town that had been noted as an intermediary campsite if I had trouble with meeting the planned distance for today. It was just about midday and it seemed to me a visit was appropriate. Gliding down through the narrow medieval streets I came to a stop in front of a cafe, its tables and chairs completely covering the pavement. Across the narrow street another cafe did the same.

There were people everywhere and not far away a market place gave evidence that this was in fact market day. I settled myself outside the cafe under a convenient shade umbrella and ordered a beer. This was holidaying, I thought, as I watched with interest the people and an occasional car wend their way through the street.

The rest and refreshment put new heart into me and I departed uphill out of the town and now westwards towards my destination. Someway out of Aups and the ascent to another town completed, I found myself on a level if not slightly downhill road. My direction now being westward instead of southward the wind was now, in naval terms, on my port quarter. Which being translated means more or less behind me. The road was straight and bordered by a forest of short trees, averaging about fifteen feet high. These were interspersed with cherry orchards and subsequently gave way to olive groves.

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My speed along the road was phenomenal as with great ease it seemed I pedalled quite furiously. 'This is the life', I sang to myself - well it's very difficult to sing to any one else on a bicycle!

And so it continued with the occasional dip in the road to prove me wrong, but in remarkably short time, it seemed, I was in Vinon.

At first sight Vinon was a bit depressing. Not here the delicious French square with a picturesque church and quaint narrow winding streets, but a rather plain square being used as a car park and nothing much else besides. True there were the delightful Plane trees which on a sunny day provide a pleasant dappled shade, and there was a bar with tables set out under an awning, but it was not really charming, possessing more of a practical appearance. Then the sun went in and a very heavy shower of rain completed the gloomy aspect.

All this should I suppose have warned me, but I had cycled as far as I had planned to cycle, and notwithstanding the early hour was obstinately disinclined to go further.

After a beer I decided to inspect the campsite and followed the arrowed directions to a municipal camping ground by the river, pleasantly sheltered it seemed by some large trees.

On closer inspection the site proved somewhat rougher than at first sight however I selected a reasonably grassy and smooth location a little higher than the surrounds, and without the vehicle wheel grooves which seemed to afflict so much of the area, and which should have given me cause for reflection. My original intention had been to dine at home, and the local épicerie would, I had determined, provide me with all my provisions. More rain however changed this plan and I decided to eat at the local cafe that I had observed whilst having a beer.

Having showered I decided in view of the inclement weather and my fairly ordinary choice of eatery not to change and thus retained my somewhat sweat impregnated

cycling garments of the day and I do believe the previous day, and so casually attired ventured into town.

Alas, upon enquiry it transpired that the ei-cheapo cafe didn't serve meals in the evening. By some incredible fluke of translation I got the message that the place to go was along the road and by a roundabout. On the way there I passed another well-recommended restaurant which however I had decided earlier suited neither my clothes, demeanour or pocket. No other restaurants seemed to exist and I proceeded confidently to my appointed destiny.

In the gloomy dusk of evening I located the place and it looked quite inoffensive really. I pushed open the door.

Waiting in the foyer was the head waiter and his assistant.

I felt rather as though I had stumbled into the tomb of Tutenkamen, so out of place was I. Like all good bushwalkers however, I wouldn't give in once begun, and anyway I was hungry!

"A table for one", I stumbled in a grotesque caricature of the French language.

Any ordinary waiter, any ordinary head waiter, would have at least blinked at my appearance - would have looked uneasy at my demand, let alone the nature of its expression.

This was no ordinary head waiter however. What he was doing in a God forsaken spot like Vinon I don't know. He was however there, and I felt slightly more at ease.

I offered him my parka. The revelation of my cycling/bushwalking gear should have produced a reaction, let alone the honest manly odour that no doubt emanated from them. But, they did not. He courteously showed me to a table in a fairly discreet position - I was feeling anything but discreet - cleared the other covers away and handed me the menu.

This I realised when I opened it was going to be the hard part.

My unease had not only inhibited my verbal French but had severely diminished my vague grasp of the written variety.



For starters I seized upon soup. I wasn't quite sure what kind of soup but at least I would recognise it and knew how to handle it, I thought! The main course was a bit of a problem. Something with lamb I identified and I decided against lamb. Something else appeared to involve fish and I didn't feel like fish, which was a bit of a pity really as I hadn't a clue what the rest of the menu was composed of.

I picked up the wine list. The prices gave me the shakes. I was rapidly disappearing into an awful hole - or wished I could.

I don't know quite how long I sat there pretending to study the menu and the wine list. Obviously it was long enough. The head waiter appeared at my elbow.

I endeavoured to enquire about the various dishes and quite a studious conversation developed with me making various understanding sounds and uttering 'mercy' at intervals, and meaning it. The wine list also came into discussion and at long last the menu was decided.

All I had to do was to wait and see what on earth I had ordered.

A glass of white wine arrived and solved part of the mystery. Some time later the soup appeared, delivered in a large dish resting in a plate, around the edge of which were several small dishes containing, to me, various obscure items with small spoons in them. Some small slices of toasted bread completed the collection. An unexpected complication.

Well I knew what to do with the toast and broke it up into small pieces which I cast upon the surface of the soup. As to the rest I had some idea that a small spoonful of each in the soup would fit the bill, and then I was up and running with the meal, so to speak. The soup tasted suspiciously fishy but good and there was plenty of it. I was feeling better by the minute. A sip or two of wine and I began to relax, a casual bon viveur, away from home.

Some time later, the soup dishes having been cleared away the main course arrived. It was fish! It was delicious, and of course well partnered by the white wine I had somehow managed to order.

I was feeling pretty good by the time the young assistant waiter came to clear the main course dishes away. He asked me about the cheese. Well I was on top of the situation now and I was not going to be sold short.

"I'll have a sweet first", I said, "and then some coffee and perhaps some cheese." Even my French was improving.

A look of unmitigated horror passed over his young face. He stopped in his tracks rather than paused. I had a dreadful feeling that I had crashed at the final hurdle.

Looking unbelievably at me, he enquired, "Sweet before the cheese?" Obviously this was something quite out of his experience. I said nothing, but felt a lot. "M'sr", he explained as carefully as possible to this strange heathen, "always the cheese then the sweet, then the coffee."

I was finished. "Oh but of course" I replied. The cheese was just right, the sweet was delicious and the coffee an excellent conclusion to a splendid dinner.

I paid and left as soon as I decently could.

During my period at the restaurant the rain outside had reached a savage intensity, but as I walked home it had dwindled to a light rain.

I reached the campsite and made my way to my tent. The campsite was flooded and the water was about six inches from my tent pegs.

This I could handle. I unzipped the tent fly, climbed inside and into my sleeping bag. What a splendid dinner I had had.

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## THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

I recently walked down Frank Rigby's 'Bypass' track to the river flats at Coolana for the first time. (I usually take a more direct route to our favourite camping spot)

Frank has certainly done a marvellous job in making such a magnificent area of the club's land accessible to all, and it brought home to me more forcibly how lucky we are to have such a treasure as Coolana to enjoy at any time.

Congratulations and thanks to Frank and to all those who have worked on improving our land. *Ed.*

## COLD

### A Summer day in Rocky Creek Canyon

by Dick Whittington \*\*

After my article 'Less than Cool'<sup>1</sup> several people have asked me what happened in Rocky Creek Canyon. The party included only the leader, Spike and myself, and as stated it was summer so we did not bring wet suits. The Rocky Creek Canyon is very enclosed, not as spectacularly so as Claustal Canyon, but still almost no light penetrates to the deep pools at the bottom. It was therefore with some apprehension that I viewed the inky blackness of the water of the first compulsory swim. My worst fears were confirmed as I tentatively immersed one foot.

My first reaction was to suggest that it was a bad idea and we should retreat and do something else instead. I then recalled that Spike, a bushwalker of vast experience and ability, a man respected by all, had one Achilles' heel; he hated deep cold water! It was obvious that Spike would make this suggestion, and then I would not lose face or be accused of 'white-anting' the trip. I was therefore dismayed when both Spike and the leader began to disrobe. At least I thought; Spike will renege after the first pool, and then we can go back to the plateau and explore in the sunshine.

That first swim was unpleasant, I bashed my shins on a submerged rock, an experience that is always more painful in cold water. After scrambling out it was only a few metres before we were again confronted by a compulsory swim, this time rather longer. Strangely, Spike had made no comment, he just looked rather blankly at the next pool. I noticed the leader looking at Spike, but this evoked no reaction from him. The second swim was desperate, my hands and feet felt as though they would fall off and my strength began to dissipate. I emerged a shivering wreck.

We again moved on only a few metres before being confronted by another and longer compulsory swim. At this point I felt

that the trip must definitely be aborted. It was clear that Spike needed some prompting; I danced around the subject of retreat, speculating that we might have a dozen or more swims before us. The leader again looked long and hard at Spike but he remained mute. We immersed ourselves again. I had not regained my strength from the previous swim and I floundered, barely keeping my head above water. On reaching the end of the pool I found that I had not the strength to pull myself out. After some desperate struggling I eventually hauled myself onto a rock platform, hoping that my companions had not noticed this inept performance.

I suppose if there had been a hundred metres of walking or scrambling before the next pool then things might have been different, it was the immediacy of the next swim that caused me to weaken; I blurted out my feelings 'Perhaps we should go back'. Never to my knowledge has a suggestion of this kind been received with such undisguised enthusiasm, this was especially surprising given the three swims to be reversed.

\*\* A Nom de plume

<sup>1</sup> See August 2000 Bushwalker

□□□□□

### VICTORIAN ALPS WALK

Ian Rannard is leading a classic walk to one of Victoria's most spectacular areas over the New Year week in what Ian truthfully describes as "some of Victoria's best walking country". High hills, tall timber and spectacular mountain scenery make this area a desirable destination at any time.

### RECUPERATE AT COOLANA

Gemma Gagne has programmed a relaxing weekend at Coolana for people to recover from the Christmas festivities. Dec 28<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup>.

Why not join her?

# Problems solved

This is the new backpack from WE. The NEW RIVER. As you would expect, it is unmistakably Wilderness Equipment. Every detail has had to earn its keep in a development process spanning 20 years. If the picture could be turned around you'd be looking at the most comfortable and durable harness system there is. Which, of course, is a good reason not to make more than one or two subtle changes.

So what is really new? Look down the list of special features. We've brought into play unique ideas we've been carrying around for some time. They solve outstanding problems, ones you will quickly recognise from your own mountain and wilderness travels.

Come and see the NEW RIVER and get an expert fitting at:

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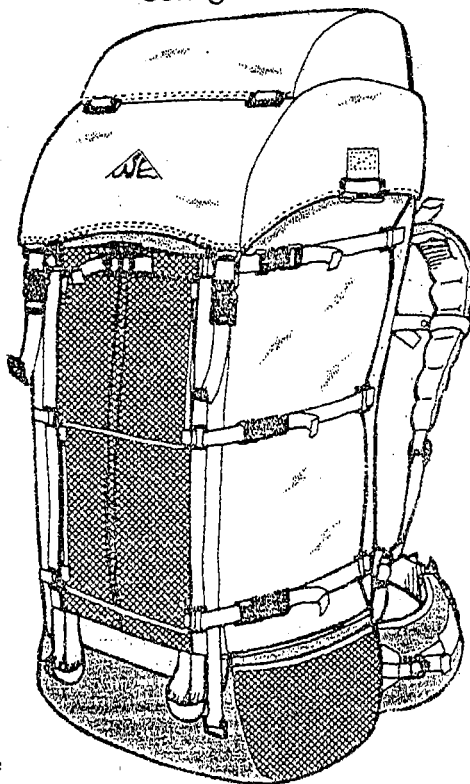
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Eastwood

**Telephone: 9858 3833**



## NEW RIVER

An expedition-capacity pack available in the full range of WE sizes and harness configurations.



### Features:

Detachable top cover teams with the hip-harness waist-strap to carry it as a comfortable twin-compartment bum-bag.

Main canvas bag extends to a dry-bag type roll top with two compression straps over. You can swim and raft with this pack, or use it in bivies.

Leave the top cover and base behind for absolute lightweight.

Separate zip access into the expanding interior space of the top cover.

Readily accessible flat pocket for laminated maps (comes with a thin PE cutting-board insert)

Canvas back-pocket modules available.

Nothing but canvas fabric in the seams of the bag. No webbing, no touch-tape, no leakage pathways and simply zero stress points.

Quick-release or standard side compression straps, all removable. Position the buckles where you wish.

We've gone back to a simple touch-tape strap closure on the hip-harness. Unbreakable, durable and absolutely zero creep.

Subtle shoulder harness suspension. Soaks up the phase difference between hip and shoulder dynamics, tunable to the pack weight.

Close fitting, removable base reinforcing attaching front and back. Leakage pathways in the main-bag seams eliminated; easy repair.



## CATS

by Alex (Dog) Colley



The cat family includes animals ranging from the domestic pussy to lions and tigers. They are variously coloured from black to white and a range of other colours, excluding blue red and green. Some are spotted, others striped. The big ones roar and growl, the little ones meow and yowl. Some can climb trees, others can't, but despite the variety of size and colour they all have soft fur, the same measured stealthy tread and, except one, long tails.

There are, or were, several species of native cats, but they don't belong to the genus *felis catus*. They are marsupials of the genus *dasyuros* and are related to the Quoll. They are brown with white spots and heads shaped more like a dog than a cat. Because of their fondness for poultry they were rated as pests. The tiger cat can measure nearly four feet from nose to tip of tail. There have however been numerous reports of the sighting of large cats in Australia. Some have proved to be dogs, or even pigs. There was nevertheless one sighting that excited my interest. My work mate Bob Brain, when a transportation consultant doing a road survey for the Alice Springs Council, drove along the Gap road north of the Alice. About 70 miles from the Alice, where the road crosses the Tropic of Capricorn, a striped animal of over 3 feet body length and with a tail curved upwards crossed the road in front of him. Bob got out of his car to look for footprints, but soon got back in because he didn't want to "tangle with" such a big animal.

The description fitted that of the thylacine.

Although the thylacine is extinct in Tasmania it was well known to the Aborigines, and in his book "Furred Animals of Australia," Troughton describes several sightings, one of them by Ion Idriess. Its habitat according to Troughton, is the dense rainforests of North Queensland, but the "New Scientist" of April 1986 published photographs of a thylacine in Western

Australia and a carcass of one was found near Eucla in South Australia. In the run of good seasons in Queensland and the Northern Territory between 1968 and 1974 a thylacine would have found plenty of water, food and cover in a journey from North Queensland to Alice Springs.

An ABC program on alien big cats, shown in September, was therefore a matter of considerable interest to me. Over 20 people interviewed claimed to have seen large black cats, or panthers, over a foot high with footprints reported to be bigger than a man's hand, in areas such as the Grampians, Strathbogie Ranges and Wilsons Promontory and domestic animals had been killed but the Grampian National Park Ranger had an open mind on the subject.

I have seen only one cat of any sort in the bush, though I have seen feral cats in the vicinity of rabbit burrows in cleared areas. The cat I saw was on the banks of Coopers Creek. It was over a foot high and about 3 feet from nose to tail. But why don't we see cats, native or feral, in the bush? My belief is that together with the small native animals, they have been practically wiped out by foxes. There is a theory that the big cats have evolved from feral cats. But why don't the well fed domestic pussies grow ever larger? It has been reported that American servicemen introduced the big cats during World War 2. They are large enough to match a fox.

In 1992 Professor Pettigrew (Dot Butler's son in law) Director of the Vision and Hearing Centre of the University of Queensland, led 9 expeditions to Davenport Downs in Central Queensland to study the vision of birds. A grant from the Australian Research Council enabled him to study Bilby, feral cat and Dingo numbers. The Dingoes disappeared, probably shot for the bounty, but the feral cats thrived. By July 1992 creeks in the area were so densely populated with cats that a spotlight shone at dusk, just before the cats go hunting on the plains, made a creek appear as if it had been decorated with Christmas lights. Back in

Brisbane Professor Pettigrew initiated a campaign to preserve the Bilbies.

The Queensland cats may well become a bigger threat to wildlife than the foxes. No doubt they would relish lambs and chooks. It is known that foxes and dingoes don't coexist. The same may well apply to cats. All the native fauna existing in 1788 coexisted with the dingo which is just as much of our wild life heritage as the bilbies, native cats, wallabies and other native fauna destroyed by foxes and probably threatened by cats. Perhaps if we stopped killing dingoes these animals would be seen in the bush again. It is many years since I have heard the howl of a dingo.

□□□□□

*Official NP&WLS figures give the estimated feral cat population of Australia as 12 million and of those about 400,000 live in NSW.*

*They also estimate that 37% of households keep at least one cat. Cats eat approximately 5% to 8% of their body weight each day and even well-fed domestic cats will prey on and kill native wildlife because of their natural hunting instincts. Native animals killed by domestic cats include possums, bandicoots, birds, lizards, snakes, skinks, geckos, bats, native rats and marsupial mice. Domestic cats can kill, on average, about 30 native animals per year. Due to bacteria in the mouths of cats, wildlife injured by them rarely survive. Under the 'Companion Animals Act' all cats sold for the last two years must have been registered and fitted with an implanted microchip for identification. It costs more to register an un-neutered cat than a neutered one.*

*Un-chipped cats caught by councils, following complaints from residents, are "Euthanised". Ed.*

□□□□□

✉ Letter to the editor.

It was very gratifying to see such a good attendance of members at Elysabeth Leigh's talk, on 'Growth, Renewal and Re-energising a mature Organization', at Kirribilli on Tuesday November 28<sup>th</sup>.

It was reassuring to hear her telling us that, for the club to have survived for 73 years, we must have been doing something right. When she proposed time limits for tenure of committee positions – a subject investigated thoroughly by the present SBW committee – she was unable to answer the obvious question of how you make such time limits work if you cannot get sufficient volunteers to stand for committee.

Due to time constraints discussion was limited and practical suggestions for improving the club's activities were not aired.

For the third time I plead with you to put your suggestions – not complaints – in writing and submit them to the committee for circulation and discussion so that the club can benefit from your ideas.

Thank you for your co-operation.

**Wilf Hilder**  
President.

### FOR SALE

**SCARPA "Lady Trek" boots**  
Italian Leather Bushwalking Boots: Size 37.

Tread as new. Stitching perfect

Used on a few dozen day walks only

PRICE: \$150

Contact Merrilyn on 9710 0444 (business hours)

### CHANGE TO SUNDAY WALK

Jim Callaway regrets to advise that his NP walk programmed for Sunday December 17<sup>th</sup> has been transferred to Tuesday December 26<sup>th</sup>.

### SOCIAL JOTTINGS.

Reading the Canberra Bushwalking Club magazine IT, I noted that **Bob Hodgson** has become a full member of that club.

Congratulations on managing to pass your mapping test Bob.

□□□□□

## GROWTH, RENEWAL, AND RE-ENERGIZING A MATURE ORGANIZATION

The information/discussion evening with Elysabeth Leigh, arranged by Eddy Giacomel on Tuesday 28 November at the clubrooms.

*reported by Eddy Giacomel.*

About 30 members attended the evening. Elysabeth began by describing Australians as a nation of volunteers, i.e. even in a formal employment situation, the management style that works best is to consider the employees as volunteers. The overwhelming success of the volunteers who supported the recent Sydney Olympic Games bears testament to this. ①

Elysabeth noted that there are very few volunteer organizations in the world that have survived as long as the SBW, i.e. for 73 years. While we therefore must be doing something good, we should not be complacent about the future of the club.

An early topic was the personal roles in groups. This was distinguished from official roles. Elysabeth noted that the groups that function best are those in which members can perform their natural roles, e.g. leader, finisher, detailer (this reporter has used some different terms as the "official" terms may require explanation).

One point of discussion was the club's objective(s). A member of the audience questioned whether we should aim to be a weekend walking club, a day walking club or a gardening club. Elysabeth suggested that focusing on only one aspect may not be in the best interests for the club's future and that it may be wise for the club to aim for both weekend walks and day walks. The president advised that the committee had recently decided that the club's objective would be to aim for both day and weekend walks and that this objective would be communicated to members.

The discussion about people working together in groups noted the following:

- Elysabeth had been asked to investigate an instance (in the world of banking) of a project team performing far better than had been expected. The cause of the improved performance was put down to the effective withdrawal from the team of two leading members. With them gone, the remaining members took much more active roles. ②
- Attempts to get bushwalkers to agree was compared to the herding of cats. Elysabeth mentioned that she is a member of a committee in which she can only serve for 6 years and must then have a compulsory year off irrespective of how good her performance has been. ③
- While the structure of management of various organizations may have been appropriate in the past it may not be appropriate today. It may be necessary to consider alternative methods if the organization wishes to survive and prosper.
- Committees can have a tendency to deal with issues with which they are familiar and feel comfortable with, build mountains out of molehills and ignore important issues. An example was given of the hour long board meeting in post war Britain that spent 45 minutes deciding on the layout for the managers' bicycle shed and 15 minutes deciding in which country in the Middle East they should build their new factory. (This is reputed to be a true story). Elysabeth suggested that anyone who complained about the way the club was managed should be prepared to stand for a committee position. She has asked people in the past to stand for various committees and found that they become silent. ⑤ A member of the audience asked whether the current SBW committee should be more encouraging towards newer members. This reporter (who has some experience of the SBW committee) suggested newer members might be deterred from the committee because the amount of red tape that is sometimes generated could make Sir Humphrey

Appleby (a character from the TV series "Yes Prime Minister") turn green with envy.

- The issue of younger members was raised and a member of the audience questioned whether the current membership would be accepting of a group of members on average 20 years younger than the current membership. ⑥

- Tension within a group is not necessarily bad for its performance. The Olympic Games were quoted as an example. The tension within SOCOG before the games was intense, however, the organization of the games turned out to be resounding success. ⑦

The evening raised many questions. Elysabeth left us with one more question:

"Imagine the year is 2027 and the club is celebrating its centenary. The then members are looking back at this time in the club's history. What did the members do in 2000 to ensure the club's survival?"

Elysabeth has said that she will be available for further input if required.

□□□□

#### Editors notes

⑦ Recent newspaper reports revealed that SOCOG had many problems caused by many volunteers not turning up.

② See ⑤ Before "getting rid of" any committee members to improve the working of the committee it would be wise to ensure that the work carried out by those committee members would be carried out as well by the other members left on committee.

③ If this practice was adopted in the SBW my past observations would indicate that we would very soon have no committee. Elysabeth agreed with this. See. ⑤

⑥ I am sure that the present membership would welcome an influx of younger member but see my note re CMW membership on this page. Ed.

□□□□

#### Comment

I attended the discussion and was disappointed that it seemed to be largely based on the premise that the club committee was the problem and that if that were to be improved the club would be regenerated.

Every member of the club has been asked for their views on what is wrong with their club and have been asked for ideas on how the club can be improved. The response has been minimal which could be interpreted that most members are happy or that they don't care or don't know.

Election for a new committee will be held in March 2001 and a committee membership nomination form

for that election has been sent to every club member.

If any members feels strongly enough about the club and think that they or other members can do a better job than the present committee, they should fill in that form and return it ASAP. They should also turn up at the clubrooms on the night of the general meeting and help elect their committee. Ed

□□□□

### CLUB GROWTH AND RENEWAL. CMW CLUB AGE STATISTICS

My local Artarmon Boy Scout group is being disbanded after six years of poor support.

This appears to be the trend in the Scouting movement and in various other organizations including walking clubs. It is possibly partially due to increased affluence and the availability of a greater range of recreational and other activities for young people.

With all of the current discussion about club growth and renewal it is interesting to know how other walking organizations are faring and reading the age statistics of CMW members published in the August issue of their magazine 'Into The Blue' gives one view.

Out of a total membership of 319:

\*\*Average age of committee members. = ~50

Number of members below the age of 25 = 2

Number of members below the age of 34 = 17

Number of members below the age of 44 = 72

\*\*Not on magazine list

	<u>Average Age</u>	
	<u>2000</u>	<u>1989</u>
People on 1 or more walks	= 48	39
Most active 50 walkers	= 52	42
Leaders	= 50	43
Club members	= 51	
Prospectives	= 41	

Except for walks leaders, the change in the average age of active members in the CMW appears to have kept pace with time. Ed.

#### **NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO ADDRESS AND/OR PHONE NUMBERS**

The club membership list is maintained by the membership secretary Barry Wallace.

To ensure that the list is as accurate as possible and that you do not miss out on the magazine, the walks program and other club documents, Barry requests that you send advice of any alterations or corrections of your address and/or phone number directly to him. Letters can be sent to Barry at our mail box



## SBW DEC-JAN-FEB SOCIAL PROGRAM

\*\*\*Refer to the walks programs  
for full details

### DECEMBER

Wed 20<sup>th</sup> 8pm Christmas party at  
6-30 club. Bring a plate of  
food. Drinks provided

Wed 27<sup>th</sup> CLUB CLOSED

### JANUARY

Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> CLUB CLOSED

6pm Picnic @ Balmoral  
Beach. Southern end  
BYO everything  
contact Bill Holland  
9484 6636 \*\*\*

Wed 10<sup>th</sup> Rocks Pub Crawl \*\*\*  
6.30 at Club rooms or  
7pm at Lord Nelson hotel  
Millers Point

Wed 17<sup>th</sup> 6.30pm Committee meeting  
followed by

8pm General meeting  
Wed 24<sup>th</sup> 8pm K2K/2K Talk  
& Slides by Phil  
Newman & Andrew  
Vilder.

Sat 27<sup>th</sup> from Pool Party &  
6pm Barbeque @ Alex  
Colley's Home\*\*\*  
BYO Everything

Wed 31<sup>st</sup> 8pm Christmas Trip Slide  
Show \*\*\*

### FEBRUARY

Wed 7<sup>th</sup> 8pm Committee meeting.  
Observers Welcome.  
How to Pack a Pack.

Wed 14<sup>th</sup> 8pm General Meeting &  
walks report.

Wed 21<sup>st</sup> 8pm SBW Annual Photo  
Competition\*\*\*

Wed 28<sup>th</sup> 8pm GPS presentation by  
Silva or Magellan

Do you have any suggestions for future  
Social Programs? If so please contact  
Andrew Vilder on 9331 4530.

## THE GREAT GOD, CAR

The September issue of the American  
Worldwatch Magazine, under a headline  
'Matters of Scale', stated that 70% of the  
land area of Los Angeles is dedicated in  
some way to the automobile (roads, parking  
lots etc). By contrast, the proportion  
devoted to parks and open space is 5%.  
What would the same calculations reveal for  
Sydney?

*Reprinted from the Artarmon Gazette.*

### MAGAZINE DEADLINES\*\*\*

Copy for publishing in the SBW magazine should be  
received by the editor by the second Monday of each  
month.

The deadline for last-minute urgent items is the  
second Wednesday of each month as the magazine is  
usually printed on the following Thursday.

Copy can be sent to me by email at  
[rreymond@ozemail.com.au](mailto:rreymond@ozemail.com.au) or on a 3½" PC floppy  
or as plain copy using any common word processing  
program. Ed.

### NEXT MONTH

Gardens of Stone by *Oliver Crawford*  
Ku-ring-Gai rambling by *Phil Cohen*  
Mt Barney by *Dick Whittington*  
Kero Lamps by *Patrick James*  
Kossie to Corryong 1945 by *Jim Somerville*

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### FUTURE ARTICLES

Bicycling by *Brian Holden*  
A Damp Walk by *Christopher Dowling*  
A Walk to Wallabadah. by *Pat Harrison*  
The Saga of Two Nomads by *Ian Debert*  
The walk article YOU are writing.

### EMERGENCY RESCUES

#### A request for information

I am seeking information from anyone who  
has been associated with an emergency where  
a 125-5/243mhz PLB/PIRB was used.

I would also like to know the name of anyone  
outside of the SBW who has been associated  
with an emergency incident where the use of a  
PLB/EPIRB was involved.

Phone Ray Hookway on 9411 1873  
or email [rreymond@ozemail.com.au](mailto:rreymond@ozemail.com.au) Ed.