



THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



DECEMBER 2003



Print Post Approved PP 235723/01270



1045 Victoria Rd
West Ryde 9858 5844

Come in and see one of the best lightweight and roomy bush walking tents currently available. It sleeps 3 and weighs in at only **2340** grams complete (with the mesh inner tent and pegs.) Or just **1260** grams fly, pole and pegs.

GOLITE HEX 3 or 4 SEASON SHELTER

USES

3 or 4 season hiking or backpacking, winter camping, mountaineering

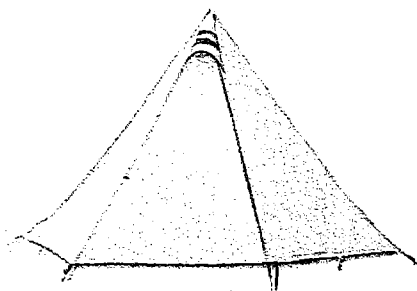
Price: \$ 599.00

WEIGHT

800 g canopy + 370 g pole + 90 g pegs and sack

DESCRIPTION

This 4-season, extremely versatile, roomy 3-person, canopy-style shelter is bound to become your favourite all-year home-away-from-home. Unlike a tent, which essentially



HEX 3 FLOOR Only

Price: \$ 169.00

WEIGHT

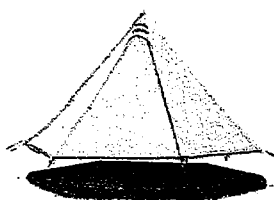
620 g

DESCRIPTION

Perfect for those who want a waterproof floor, but don't need full bug protection.

FEATURES

- Clips into Hex 3 canopy at 6 corners
- Abrasion resistant Cordura® centre



pole patch

- 6000 mm waterproof floor
- 4-inch bathtub design

requires you to use poles, inner tent with floor and fly whenever you pitch it, the Hex 3 is a component system: You can use just the canopy with or without a floor, or just the bug net inner tent, or the canopy with the bug net. And you can pitch the Hex (canopy or Nest) over a paddle on a canoe trip, or over a ski pole on a ski-tour. Or hang the canopy via its top loop from a branch or a line suspended between trees. You can dig a snow pit under it and increase the amount of usable space; you can pitch it over rocks; and you can put it up quickly by yourself in the nastiest weather. How's that for versatility.

Dual roof vents provide excellent air flow, and the supplied extra guy lines can be used to pitch the leeward side (the side facing away from the wind) well off the ground to increase ventilation. SiLite construction and the six-sided shape with extra stake-outs midway along each side add up to an incredibly wind-stable, weatherproof shelter. Functional details include reflective, adjustable guy points: the adjustability ensures a good, taut pitch, while the reflective strips simplify pitching the Hex in the dark (and mean that it's much easier to find your Hex when returning to camp after dusk - and less likely that you'll trip over a corner once you have...)

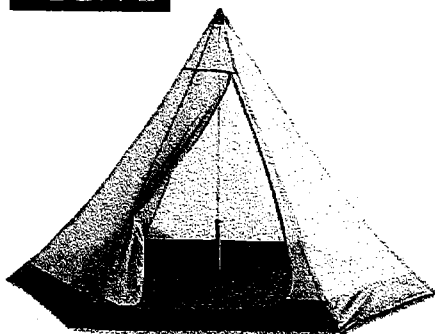
Available in Sun for people who want to be seen, and Forest for those who don't.

For even more versatility, there will be a new trekking pole extender that will enable you to leave the Hex 3 pole at home and use any standard trekking pole to pitch the Hex 3! Available soon

FEATURES

- SiLite™ silicone-impregnated rip stop nylon
- Hexagonal shape sheds elements superbly
- Adjustable aluminium centre pole (also available as a separate item)
- Top loop
- 2 large roof vents
- 2-way door zipper
- Reflective adjustable stake out loops
- 9 Y-stakes
- Floorless design
- 4-season palace for 2 or home for 3
- Stake sack, SiLite™ stow sack included

HEX 3 NEST (No pole)



Price: \$259.00

WEIGHT

1080 g net + 90 g pegs
(if you already have the shelter then you won't need to take 2 lots of pegs and keep the weight down)

DESCRIPTION

The perfect companion to the Hex 3 shelter when you're heading into mosquito or insect-laden adventures. Can be pitched separately when desert camping.

FEATURES

- No-see-um mesh canopy
- Full length 2-way C-shaped door zipper
- Foam cone pole seat at apex Pole Only Pole Only
- Abrasion resistant Cordura® centre pole patch
- 6000 mm waterproof floor
- 4-inch bathtub design
- Stow sack

Pole Only

Price: \$85.00

Weight 370 g



DECEMBER 2003

Issue No. 829

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER is the monthly bulletin of matters of interest to members of

The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc

PO Box 431 Milsons Point 1565.

Editor: Bill Holland
Production Manager: Frances Holland
Printers: Kenn Clacher, Barrie Murdoch,
 Tom Wenman Don Brooks Fran Holland



And Now For Something Different !

January:

Thurs 1st New Years Day on the river:

A day out with a boating picnic and things aquatic

Tue 13th Evening Walk (6pm)

Bondi to Coogee and return. Fish and chips and a glass of wine.

24th - 26th Triathlon weekend - Coolana

Day 1: Cycling riverside back country roads with minor undulations

Day 2: Kayaking down the river

Day 3: Walking, swimming, relaxing

See Summer Walks Programme for full details

Highlights from the Social Programme:

December:

Wed 17th Club Christmas Party (from 7 pm)

In the clubrooms at

January:

Wed 7th Club Evening Picnic (from 6pm)

South end of Balmoral Beach

See Social Notes on Page 18

Are you on the SBW Email List?

Once a month, we send out a friendly email to SBW Members and Prospectives.

The email acts as a reminder of the upcoming social event for the month, along with a short note on something of interest to our members. If you'd like to be added to the list, simply send an email to: social@sbw.org.au

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The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc.

Our Club was formed in 1927 for the purpose of bringing bushwalkers together; enabling them to appreciate the great outdoors; establishing a regard for conservation and promoting social activities.

The Club's main activity is bushwalking but includes other activities such as cycling, canoeing and social events.

Our Walks Programme (published quarterly) features day walks on most Saturdays and Sundays, some mid week walks and overnight weekend walks.

Extended walks are organised in areas such as Lamington, Snowy Mountains etc as well as interstate.

Our meetings are held every third Wednesday evening at 8 pm at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli (near Milsons Point Railway Station).

Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

General Enquiries: Phone 0500 500 729

SBW Website www.sbw.org.au

Office Bearers

President:	Rosemary MacDougal
Vice-President:	Wilf Hilder
Public Officer:	Maurice Smith
Treasurer:	Maurice Smith
Secretary:	Leigh McClintock
Walks Secretary:	Peter Love
Social Secretary	Caro Ryan
Membership Secretary	Pam Morrison
New Members Secretary:	Heike Krausse
Conservation Secretary:	David Trinder
Magazine Editor:	Bill Holland
Committee Member:	
Barry Wallace	Pamela Irving
Delegates to Confederation:	
Jim Callaway	Wilf Hilder

Contact The Committee:

Members are welcome to contact the following officers with questions on Club management and other matters.

President: Rosemary MacDougal
9428 5668 (h) rmacdougal@bigpond.com

Treasurer: Maurice Smith
9587 6325 (h) or mauricethewalker@ihug.com.au

Members Secretary: Pam Morrison
0418 463 923 or at pamm@unsw.edu.au

Vice President: Wilf Hilder
9587 8912

New Members Secretary: Heike Krausse
For prospective membership enquiries phone 9998 0587 and leave a message

President's Report:

It is looking good for our summer walks with the rain thundering down in Sydney as I write this report. Let's hope it keeps coming down so that we don't have the summer that we had last year.

There is not much to report after a very busy and full and successful year.

As noted by your magazine Editor and Treasurer they are retiring at the AGM in March as will I. A turnover of office holders is important for the health and well being of the club and so I urge you to think of standing for any committee position to take it forward over the next few years.

If elected I would stay on the committee to ensure the smooth hand over to the new team.

It has been a lot of fun and a big thank you to the committee members. And a big thank you to you who support the club in so many different ways. There seems to have been a resurgence in interest in walking so we must be getting something right.

Have a merry Christmas and safe and happy New Year. See you on the track.

Rosemary MacDougal

Whither or Wither the NPWS ?

In late September, Minister for the Environment Bob Debus announced the biggest change to the National Park and Wildlife Service since it was created in 1967.

The functions of NPWS have been absorbed into a new and large Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). This is an amalgamation of NPWS, Environment Protection Agency (EPA) Royal Botanic Gardens and Resources NSW - all reporting to the Minister through its Director - General, Lisa Corbyn.

A Parks Service Division, headed by Tony Fleming, will focus on management of the State's more than 500 national parks and reserves, with off-park wildlife responsibilities split between a new Policy and Science Division and a Regulatory and Enforcement Division.

Details of the structure will be finalised by the end of the year. [NPA Journal December 2003]

Kosciuszko Plan of Management:

The Draft Plan Of Management (PoMP) for Kosciuszko National Park is expected to be released towards the end of January 2004. The consultation phase will take approximately three months and passage through the advisory Council will add some months to this timetable.

[NPA Journal December 2003]

SBW members are encouraged to make submissions on the Kosciuszko Plan of Management and/or the NPWS restructure to Minister Bob Debus



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

Treasurer's Report - November:

Just a brief reminder that I will not be standing for re-election as Treasurer at the March 2004 Annual General Meeting.

So if you have the necessary accounting skill sets and the desire to assist our wonderful club then it is time to put up your hand and volunteer. The following is my report on the club's finances which are in a healthy state.

Set out below are the figures for November.

Bank Balance 1st November \$8,991

Income Received

Membership Fees	226
Total Receipts	226

Expenses Paid

Magazine postage	414
New members expenses	95
Coolana rates	253
Coolana expenses	155
Other	100
Total payments	1,017
Bank Balance 30 th November	\$8,200

Coolana - \$4,400 Grant Received

In October the club received the sum of \$4,500 from the Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) in relation to our property in the Kangaroo Valley. The conditions of the grant are such that we are obliged to use the funds over the next 12 months for various nominated purposes such as weed control and tree replacement.

Due to the nature of the grant it has not been recorded as income, rather it has been recorded as a liability. As we spend the grant money on the various projects at Coolana our liability to repay the unspent grant will be reduced.

Maurice Smith - Treasurer



Finalising the Membership List?

We are about to print the 2004 Membership List. If you have changed your address or phone

number recently and would like to have your details correctly printed for next year, please advise:

Members: Pam Morrison

Prospectives: Heike Krausse

The advice should be in writing directed to the Club's postal address. This will ensure that our records show your current address and prevent delay in receiving the magazine each month.

Editor's Note:

The end of year creeps up then suddenly we are in party mode and full of festive spirit again. My mail this week included catalogues urging me to shop, shop, shop but there was something else that made me stop and think.

It was a plea to contribute to a nature conservation organisation to assist them in overcoming a cut in funding from the Federal Government.

And they were not alone. Other bodies have had similar experiences, perhaps because their public positions are sometimes seen to be in conflict with government policy.

SBW as an organisation, and its members individually, has for a long time (over 70 years) supported the nature conservation movement. So if you receive a request to help please think about the wilderness and national parks you walk in; think about the species under threat and think about what you can do to help.

Which brings us to this month's magazine. Two notices appear on the opposite page - one concerning the restructure of the National Park and Wild Life Service and other advising of the draft Plan of Management for Kosciuszko National Park.

The National Parks Association (NPA) sees the NPWS changes as a positive move with advantages of building a strong and coordinated environmental department. What do you think?

The management proposals for Kosciuszko NP were the subject of active debate in this magazine earlier this year. Why not take a little time to study the proposals and contribute your thoughts. NPA offers a submission guide aimed at protecting the many values of KNP (phone 9299 0000).

Two articles also refer to conservation matters - see pages 6 and 7 - whilst financing our own little touch of paradise (Coolana) receives a mention on page 8.

And we have articles contributed by old and new members including a message of caution from Rigby

By the way, our new printer is proving to be very satisfactory particularly in presenting photos, maps and drawings. So a photo of a bush scene or of people would be most welcome when you submit your articles for publication

See you at the Christmas Party next Wednesday

Bill Holland



Letters to the Editor:

✉ Rubbish Disposal in the Bush

Thank you Pamela for opening another "can-of-worms". I have also been disturbed by the amount of plastic (including hard plastic containers) and food (whilst I was still cooking dinner!) being burnt on campfires.

I believe we are privileged to visit wilderness areas and have a moral responsibility to care for them. I like the motto adopted by many Ecotourism operators "Take only photos, leave only footprints".

Yes, I admit I was challenged about discretely burning feminine hygiene products on the campfire. I did this because we saw evidence of same being dug up and strewn around the area and because I didn't know any better.

Ladies it's easy, a small sealed container with aspirin to absorb the smell is all you need. If we all do our bit we can leave the bush better than we found it!

With regards to burying food my studies in wildlife ecology and wildlife management show that animals will dig up food scraps. Our diet is not suitable for native animals and can lead to disease, reliance on humans, in some cases aggression. Digging can also increase erosion risk.

Thanks to the National Parks Association and the National Outdoor Leadership School I was fortunate to recently attend the second Leave No Trace Masters training course in Australia held in the Blue Mountains. Leave No Trace is a worldwide programme which has been translated into eight languages. The programme is based on seven principles-

- plan ahead and prepare
- travel and camp on durable surfaces
- dispose of waste properly
- leave what you find
- minimise campfire impacts
- respect wildlife
- be considerate to other visitors

I will be training NPA leaders to go out and train walkers and would be willing to do the same for SBW if the committee would like me to. I also plan to write articles for NPA on each of the seven principles which I can make available to SBW.

Carole Beales

More info about the National Outdoor Leadership School can be found at <http://www.nols.edu> in the short term. The Australian site should be up and running in early 2004

* The Management Committee has reviewed Carole's letter, endorses the principles of the Leave No Trace programme and will follow up Carole's offer.

✉ Assisting Prospective Members

There has been some discussion this year on how to increase the continuation of new prospective members to move on to full membership.

The conversion of new (prospective members) to full membership has consistently been around 18%. I am not sure if the attrition rate is similar but what in fact is our aim? Do we want to actively increase the club size or are we content at stable numbers?

What is often heard is "I'd like to walk a bit more but at the moment just can't see that I'll manage the medium walks and whenever I do have the time there are no walks available."

To be supportive of those who need a length of time to qualify then SBW members must get behind new members in a way that is most helpful.

The biggest concerns of inexperienced new members are the difficulties of the walks. They have to have the facility to be able to do several easy walks to get their fitness up (as we encourage) before trying the Mediums, however this is a problem if there are a limited number of easy walks on a programme. We all have pressures on our time, this was the factor that lead to extension of the prospective membership period to 1 year, but still the complaint is not enough easy walks/easy overnights. Some may say well then try another club (particularly if it becomes "This wasn't easy enough"!!). Are we willing to be more supportive?

In consideration of this apparent need we have to increase the number of easy walks that are available, ideally this would be 2 easy walks most weekends one on a Saturday and one on a Sunday. For this we require more walks leaders who are prepared to take easy walks. This could be our problem are we are so caught up in our "elite" standards that few wish to lead easy walks? However, as all leaders are volunteers naturally they wish to walk in areas and to a standard they themselves enjoy best.... So we come to the option of encouraging of new members to lead walks at a standard they feel more comfortable with but this then would require mentors and in the past several members have offered to be available. (Please be just as welcoming to potential new male leaders, females tend to get a more enthusiastic response). Would it be possible for there to be a published list of those who are happy to be a mentor for perhaps their favourite area so that those keen but lacking in confidence to lead their first walk can give a mentor of their choice/their favourite area a call?

Heike Krausse



Book Review

Patrick James

Hiking for Health - Explore Manly, French's Forest & Warringah

Hiking for Health is a facsimile edition of a 1936 hiking guide which came to light during literature searches for an oral history project which in turn sought to capture memories of the 1930s and the depression in Mosman and Sydney's northern beaches.

Hiking for Health is a pocket-sized guide listing thirteen individual day walks stretching across the peninsula from The Spit to Palm Beach. The publication was written and mapped for The Port Jackson & Manly Steam Ship Company Limited by E. Caines Phillips - an experienced bushwalker (and music teacher).

The charm of the guide lies not only in the physical shape and feel of the original booklet but in the language construction and the description of the route and terrain of each tour. Even if unfamiliar with the area, the reader tramps along and has a ready sense of the grandeur and scale of the landscape and vegetation along the way.

Hiking clubs were already established in the 1800s and a number of clubs were formed in the 1920s. However, hiking became a craze in the early 1930s with trains and ferries encouraging hikers to join mystery rides from the city and newspapers offering advice on everything from foot potions to consumables and suburban walks for the hiker. There was an emphasis on the health benefits of leaving city woes behind and relaxing in the vigour of bush walks.

Thousands of hikers made front page news in July 1932 when twelve trains were needed to deliver 7,800 hikers to Hornsby for their walk to Kangaroo Point. These thousands who hurled themselves out of suburban Sydney were scarcely seasoned hikers and dressed in an extraordinary mix of outfits. There were boys in boxing boots, elderly women dressed in black carrying thermos and currant loaf, a large perspiring man carrying a small parcel, a girl in high heels who resorted to her pink bedroom slippers, an Assyrian and a Chinese man in a panama hat.

This facsimile edition sets the original text of the 1936 guide within the context of the history of the hiking and bushwalking movement, growing environmental awareness and the community's concern for preservation of public spaces. It explores the promotion of the peninsula as a landscape of health and escape from the city and draws on the memories of people who lived here in the 1930s to illustrate the enduring presence of the physical landscape

and their affinity to it.

Hiking for Health is - published by Manly Pittwater & Warringah Council s2003. Copies may be purchased from Manly Library for \$10 Phone 9976 1722

*** Advice To Leaders ***

Some tracks and areas in NSW National Parks are closed due to fire damage and restoration work. Closures can be temporary (a few days) or for many months.

All leaders are advised to check on park closures before leading parties in national parks.

Failure to keep to park regulations could place the insurance cover for their walk at risk and lead to personal liability.

The latest advice on park and track closures may be found at the NPWS website:

www.npws.nsw.gov.au/news/firenews_closures or by phoning 9542 0648

Leaders !

Please complete and mail your Walks Report as soon as possible after completing your walk.

Your Magazine Editor would also appreciate receiving a report of your walk for inclusion in The Walks Pages

NSW WILDERNESS TRANSIT

BUS TO 

JENOLAN CAVES. KANANGRA WALLS.

YERRANDERIE GHOST TOWN

STARLIGHTS TRACK. BUNGONIA CAVES.

WOG WOG. NERRIGA

Departs from Sydney's Campbelltown Railway Station

Via Penrith, Katoomba & Blackheath for

Kanangra Walls Mon & Wed at 11am. Frid at 7am

Returns 4pm Mon, Wed, Frid.

Via Starlights, Mittagong & Marulan for

Wog Wog-Nerriga Tues. & Thurs & Sun at 11am

Returns 4 pm Tues, Thurs, Sun.

Yerranderie Ghost Town first Saturday in each

month, returns Sun at 1 pm (any Friday min 6)

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A WILDERNESS PARK

Clio

This month marks the 70th anniversary of a benchmark in Australian environmental history.

Garawarra was one of the earliest campaigns waged by the Mountain Trails Club (MTC), the Sydney Bush Walkers, and the NSW Federation (now Confederation) of Bush Walking Clubs. The plan was to declare some two thousand hectares and ten kilometres of coastline, roughly in the shape of a triangle extending from the then southern (Royal) National Park boundary, opposite Garie beach, southwards with the apex at Bald Hill where the hang gliders now play. The western boundary was the South Coast Railway Line.

In March 1925 the Secretary of the MTC, Myles Dunphy, wrote to the Secretary for Lands suggesting (in part) that this area, including the last remaining stretch of coastal jungle near Sydney, be added to National Park, to protect it from various abuses caused by cattlemen and shooters.

When the Under-Secretary replied that no further extension to National Park or the acquisition of freehold would occur the MTC appears to have allowed the matter to rest. (Interestingly three years later several letters appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* calling for park extensions though from the motorist's perspective).

Early in 1929 a prospectus was released to subdivide and generally develop an area of about 120 hectares, with the potential of establishing a country club and -golf course. This entailed acquiring the Gara Estate (freehold) that covered the northern portion of the coastline between Burning Palms to North Era beaches.

The MTC decided to protest this alienation. To raise support Dunphy took a series of lantern slides round to the bushwalking clubs showing how the coastal scenery from Marley south to Stanwell Tops had changed over the preceding twenty years. But it was the worsening economic conditions that prevented this float from proceeding.

Garawarra next appears in the records in April 1931 when the MTC moved to co-operate with the Sydney Bush Walkers in the matter of the Garawarra reservation. (Here it is unclear whether the SBW had already initiated their own campaign).

About this time no one had paid any heed to an unemployed camp set up on upper Bola Creek near the track to the coast from Helensburgh. (This was about a kilometre outside the southern Park boundary). Eventually four men took out leases in this area and used the unemployed in clearing their lots.

In December 1932 Dunphy outlined his park

proposals to the recently formed Federation. It was resolved that the Federation would officially adopt this scheme and Dunphy would work with the Federation to pursue this goal. Dunphy suggested the suitable name for this scheme was GARAWARRA - matching Cambewarra and Illawarra, and meaning the Gara or Garie end of Illawarra.

By mid 1933 two of those lessees, Messrs Maynard and Gray, moved to have their holdings converted to freehold. Not only had Maynard cleared the vegetation, re-routing the old Helensburgh Track round his property, but also had erected a cowshed within 20 metres of Bola Creek.

At the Lands Court the bushwalkers' representatives gave evidence that, in part, due to the paucity of water along the coast, a dam on Bola Creek could provide the necessary water supply. Despite these arguments the lessees won their application.

An approach to the Under-Secretary for Lands failed to reverse the decision though a stay of proceedings for thirty days was granted. A petition was quickly drawn up calling for a Garawarra Primitive-Area Park. Over the next four weeks. Over 4,500 signatures were gathered from walkers, picnickers and locals. (These numbers were significant enough for government to take notice).

Although this action failed the Minister for Lands, Mr Buttenshaw, indicated that he was willing to dedicate an area for Public Recreation. Early in December 1933 the Minister officially announced 527 hectares were to be preserved. (Garawarra Park was gazetted in April 1934).

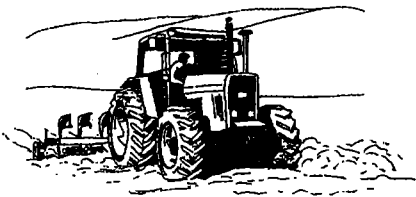
Round 1930 Dunphy was introduced to the American concept of 'primitive areas' (a term used officially in the U.S. after 1929). He envisaged the Garawarra Primitive Area Park open to the public, without constructions, remaining roadless and administered by a Trust endowed with bushwalker's philosophy.

Today we take 'primitive areas' or wilderness almost for granted. Early concepts by some of the public equated primitive areas with mixed nude bathing. The Bulli Shire Council objected to 'Primitive Area' since it could be construed as primitive conditions of life and morals.

Garawarra (now absorbed in Royal National Park) was a brave effort to change society's approach to national parks but failed, in part, because society had other issues on its mind. Much of those lands originally identified are now included in Royal National Park.

Clio

Land Clearing Campaigns



Queensland

Queensland's Premier Beattie has made a pledge that he will pass new laws to protect up to 20 million hectares of bushland from the bulldozers. He said the state would provide landholders with \$75 million to help them manage their land more sustainably. The Federal Government is expected to contribute another \$75 million. This move should control clearing and protect rivers, farms and wildlife for future generations.

The pledge came six months after the two Governments put forward a "joint proposal" to control clearing. Since that proposal pressure from the cattle industry has caused delays by the Federal Government, but the action by Queensland should encourage the feds to pay up.

Around half a million hectares of bushland is cleared each year in Queensland, causing the spread of dry land salinity and killing of millions of native animals. Most clearing is done to create more paddocks for cattle grazing. The bushland is cleared and then burnt or left to rot.

Tasmania

I have written articles and letters to political leaders in the past about the Styx Valley in Tasmania. The Eucalyptus Regnans trees in the Styx are over eighty metres high, the tallest flowering plant on earth and the Tasmanian Government wants to chop them down.

On November 12th 2003, Greenpeace and the Wilderness Society launched an international campaign to save the Styx. Activists have set up camp on a tree platform 65 metres (equivalent to 20 storeys) above the ground. They call the tree "Reg" because of its botanical name and the team at the site is called the Global Rescue Station (GRS). There are walking tracks and picnic areas so tourists can see these giant trees and it is inconceivable that the Government would want to clear them.

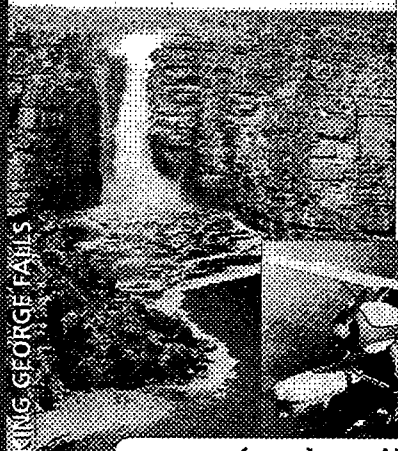
Many tourists come to visit the tree, there is an information box at the base of the tree with letters for people to sign and send to three Japanese paper companies telling them of the beauty of the trees and asking them to protect the trees.

David Trinder

WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

Kimberley Coast Explorer

21 March – 1 May



For the first time since 2000, the Kimberley Coast Explorer is a **guaranteed departure**. This will be the first time we have visited the area east of the Berkeley River;

the first time we have walked all the way through to Kalumburu, the first time we have done the full six weeks.

Too long? The trip is divided into four sections any of which can be done on its own.

This could be **your trip of a lifetime**. Put it off and you may miss out. We can't be sure when we'll again have the bookings we need to guarantee departure, nor continue to obtain all the necessary permissions.

www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au



Willis's Walkabouts 12 Carrington St Millner NT 0810 Email: walkabout@ais.net.au

Phone 08 8985 2134 Fax 08 8985 2355

Coolana



Activities at Coolana over the last few months have included the continuing job of weed control by hand weeding and poison spraying. Maintaining the access ways on the eastern river flat by mowing and fallen tree removal. The chain saw was busy with some of the fallen trees and some standing dead trees that were deemed safer on the ground. Two wattle trees that were over hanging the shelter shed have also been removed. The area around the shelter shed has been cleared of sticks and leaves blown clear with a petrol blower to improve the chance of surviving a bush fire. Some wire tree guards have been pushed in by determined animals with loss or damage to the protected trees as a result.

The fence, which was severally damaged by tree falls has been dismantled and the materials marked for other uses. A trial of the plastic mesh tree guards is to be conducted using the salvaged pickets. The digging and carting of gravel for further road works was continued until the participants were worn out. Clearing and maintenance of the walking tracks was also done.

One job that could be done is the purchase of a new water pipe to replace the old pipe from the shelter shed to the flat. The pipe needs to be buried. Any volunteers?

Coolana Financing - Motions for AGM

Below are the motions regarding Coolana financing that Spiro and I have asked to be put on the agenda for the AGM 2004, with some notes.

(All motions to be moved by Don Finch and seconded Spiro Hajinakitas)

Motion 1: *that the principal of the Coolana Fund is not used to pay any costs of SBW Inc.*

Note: The intention is so that people who donate to the Coolana fund can do so with confidence in knowing that the fund is intended to be in perpetuity.

Motion 2: *That the interest earned by the Coolana Fund in any given year be used only to pay for rates and maintenance costs of Coolana in that year, with any surplus for that year to be reinvested as principal in the Coolana fund.*

Note: If in any year the interest earned by the Coolana Fund is not sufficient to cover costs then the difference is to be covered by general funds.

Motion 3: *That the Treasurer and Committee assign to the Coolana Maintenance Committee an annual budget for maintenance costs.*

Note: By assigning a budget for maintenance at Coolana the Treasurer can better determine what the annual fees should be to cover all of SBW costs.

Motion 4: *That the Coolana Fund be reimbursed from general funds for the principal used during 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003.*

Note: The people who donated to the Coolana Fund deserve better than to have their donations eroded away to nothing. Inflation will do the damage fast enough but to spend the inheritance is uncaring.

General Notes

The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc. owns Coolana and is responsible for all of the costs of Coolana.

The Coolana fund for thirty odd years had been able to cover the costs of Coolana this is no longer the case. For thirty years there has been no component of annual fees required for Coolana costs this can no longer be the case.

The intention of the people who have donated to the Coolana Fund has always been to help pay the costs of Coolana by using the interest generated by the fund, and not to use the principal. There have never been any motions to the contrary.

Part of the reason to restate the basis of the Coolana Fund is that the original people involved are getting thin on the ground the recounting of the stories is getting less and less. The result is that new members just do not know what the Coolana fund is really about. By restating it there will be a benchmark that future generations of SBW members can use to keep faith with the past.

On the issue of a trust I think that provided we keep doing the telling of the origins of the Coolana fund then a trust is unnecessary. The 'trust' really is in the members of SBW to do the right thing. It could happen that some major conservation issue or addition to Coolana other unforeseen event may require that the fund or part of it be spent. As long as the use of the fund is in keeping with the basic ideals of SBW and the members who have donated then a trust is not required.

Spiro and Don reserve the right to amend these motions; please see your AGM agenda when issued for the final draft. As discussed during the September general meeting it is the intention that these motions get the greatest possible airing among the members of SBW. *Don Finch*

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Don't Let This Happen To You *Frank Rigby*

Austria and Switzerland! Mountains, mountains, mountains! Mountains like we just don't have in Australia! How I remembered that exhilarating six-day hut-to-hut walk on the Stubai Hohenweg in 1995! How I remembered those two days of glorious sunshine on the lower slopes of the Monte Rosa and the Matterhorn in 1963! Nostalgia with a capital N had gripped me, I must go back while I still had the physical strength. Innsbruck and Zermatt, those two places were to be the magic destinations for Joan and me in 2003. It would be like a second coming.

Such were the musings of an optimist, a dreamer, in the comfortable and familiar surroundings of his lounge room. The theory was flawless.

"Joan, where's my shoulder bag?" "I don't know, you were carrying it". Oh no! I could see this holiday exploding into a catastrophe before it had even begun! We had ridden a bus from the airport into the centre of Innsbruck. Exhausted after the interminable flights from Australia and trying to cope with a strange city I realised, too late, that I had left my bag on the bus. Have you ever experienced that humble sinking feeling that overwhelms you at moments like this? You see, inside that bag was my passport, the airline tickets for both of us, itineraries, vital insurance documents with telephone numbers plus lots of other papers and things intended for the success of our trip. Inexcusable? Yes, because the passport, tickets and telephone numbers should have been in a security pouch I wore around my neck. Excusable? Yes, because I am but a fallible human being.

Never mind, the optimist rationalised, the responsible person who found the bag will hand it in to some proper place. But they never did! There began a saga which was to dog us until the day of our departure from Europe.

After a couple of days of phone calls, reporting to the police and visiting various lost property offices (with all the trauma of not speaking the language, of finding places in an old city with a pattern of chaotic streets) it dawned on the optimist that he would never see his bag again. What to do? I certainly could not return home without both passport and tickets. The nearest Australian embassy was in Vienna, five hours away by train; of course, one must front up in person. So there went a whole day with a long train ride, taxis in Vienna but a helpful embassy which produced a temporary passport in the space of an hour. The cost? 122 euros (about A\$208) for the passport plus the transport. That lapse of concentration was already proving expensive in both money and time.

The airline tickets proved more difficult. We were flying different sectors by Qantas and KLM, a complication, and no help was forthcoming from our travel agent at home. We managed to locate a KLM agent in Innsbruck

and over the course of a week, step by step, (I had to telephone their office once from a mountain hut) we were issued with replacement tickets at a cost of 65 euros (A\$110) per ticket. However, there was no way that KLM could reissue the Qantas tickets; so much for modern whizz-bang commerce and the wonderful world of computers! Don't believe all the rhetoric. It took several phone calls and the despatch and return of indemnity papers before a Qantas representative in Zurich - could reissue the Qantas tickets, cost SFr50 (A\$57) per ticket. We eventually collected them at Zurich airport at the time of our departure from Switzerland. Phew!

What about the Austrian Alps and the Stubai Hohenweg, just an hour's bus ride from Innsbruck? Well, we saw much less of them than what we would have liked. But as it happened we had picked a bad season. The European summer heatwave of 2003 had completely cleared the mountains of snow below about 3,500 metres; the only white patches to be seen were the glaciers. The alpine meadows had turned brown and not a wildflower was to be seen. We returned to the city to tramp the frustrating trail of the elusive shoulder bag. What a holiday!

But not quite all was lost. I savour that last day in Zermatt, that day of clear blue skies when we ascended to the Klein Matterhorn at 3,883 metres (12,739 feet). No, we did not climb to this summit but reached it by using a series of three cable cars; hang the expense! Wow, what a panorama, perhaps the finest in the European Alps: thirty peaks above 4,000 metres, the massive Breithorn looming up above us nearby...an unfamiliar Matterhorn from this new angle and impressive glaciers and skifields (yes, all-year skiing) at our feet. These were the mountains I had travelled 16,000 kilometres to see.

I sometimes wonder what happened to that bag. What did the finder do with my passport, with the air tick~ and all the rest? Why did he/she not hand it in? Where is it now? Pointless questions, because there are no answers.

Frank Rigby

THE WALKS PAGES

Walks Notes: Period 9th Oct to 31st Oct

Maureen Carter had had a mid-week walk on the program for Wednesday 8 October but was forced to cancel due to illness.

Things were a bit quiet for the weekend following the October long weekend but Wayne Steele had a party of 5 for his Saturday start qualifying weekend roller coaster walk out from Carlons Farm to some of the local high spots. Weather conditions were excellent, and the party, rather than the track, was fast. Despite the speed the embedded bird watcher identified some 36 species of bird along the way. The dingo that followed the party up Merrigal Ridge was not one of them. For the day walks, Peter Love had 11 out on the Saturday for his walk from Wentworth Falls to The Golden Stairs and Roger Treagus led a party of 24 on stage 15 of the Great River Walk. The weather was cool and cloudy as the walk finally reached the saltwater estuary. The party were unimpressed at the kangaroos conscripted to decorate the "common" of a new housing estate.

Bill Holland's midweek walk on Tuesday the 18th attracted 10 walkers for an energetic day of walking and socialising. That is, the walking on local sections of the Great North Walk was energetic, between a morning coffee break, lunch and an evening barbecue.

There does not seem to be a report for Tony Manes' walk in the Gardens of Stone National Park over the weekend of 18, 19 October. Jim Percy led a party of 10 on his Saturday walk to "four heads, a cave and two mines" in the Blue Mountains National Park. Conditions were fine until around 1500 hours when the heavens opened, delivering heavy rain for 10 minutes followed by hail for another 5 minutes. After

that it fined up again.

There were two Sunday walks that weekend. Carol Lubbers had the party of 8 on her walk out from Mount Hay into the Grose River escarpment admiring the prolific wildflower regrowth and expansive views following the bushfires. Nigel Weaver had 16 starters and great camaraderie on his walk in The Royal from Heathcote to Sutherland in fine and warm conditions.

Maurice Smith holds to the belief that his party of 6, out over the weekend of 25, 26 October for his walk in Morton National Park, actually attained Blue Yodel Pass. Conditions were so wet on Saturday afternoon they were forced to sit around the campfire to prevent being subjected to some fate which is rendered obscure to me by Maurice's block printing. Michael Bickley and the party of 11 on his Saturday walk in Marra-Marra National Park also experienced interesting weather, with an extreme hailstorm. There is no report for Tony Manes' qualifying walk in Morton National Park that weekend, but Errol Sheedy's Sunday walk in The Royal from Waterfall to Heathcote attracted 11 starters in fine and mild conditions. There was even time for the two prospectives to do some map reading over morning tea along the way.

Bill Holland had a party of 13 on his cottage stay in New England National Park over the period 27th to 31st October.

Apart from a report for Leigh McClintoch's walk out from Blackheath on Sunday 2nd November there is a dearth of walks reports beyond this point. I will try to cover this and any other entries in next month's report.

Barry Wallace



Walks Over Australia Day Weekend

The holiday season is an ideal time for extended walks in the high country or along the beaches. There is extended daylight in the evenings for enjoying the meal and around the campfire. The extra days provides time to access the more difficult or remote areas. The SBW walks for the January Long Weekend are shown below. Please refer to the Summer Walks Programme for details of leaders and contact numbers.

24th - 26th January: Morong Deep Uni Rover Trail - Boyd Falls - Kowmung River - Megalith Ridge - Hanrahans Creek - Uni Rover Trail. Wet, compulsory swims, beautiful campsites and isolated wilderness. Party limit. Grade: Medium / Hard

24th - 26th January: Wollemi NP Newnes - Zobels Gully - Constance Gorge - Deanes Creek - Rocky Creek - Wolgan River - Newnes. Beautiful but very rugged rainforest creek to negotiate - scrub, wet feet, slippery rocks, climbing over and under fallen trees. Party limit. Grade Medium 25 km

24th - 26th January: Triathlon Weekend - Coolana

Day 1: Cycling glorious riverside back country roads with minor undulations.

Day 2: Kayaking down the scenic Shoalhaven river.

Day 3: Your choice - relax in the Coolana environs, walk the trails, swim

Bush to Beach - Frenches Forest to NarrabeenSat 8th Nov: *Leader: Zol Bodlay*

Saturday morning dawned with a dark and ominous sky but improved dramatically as the day progressed. It was an early start with a car shuffle organised between Narrabeen and Bantry Bay. Our group of 15 headed off at 8am - a mix of members and new members (four on their very first walk with SBW) ensuring much lively conversation and a real taste for the first time walkers of what a unique experience an SBW walk can be.

It was a day of great variety, starting with a viewing of Aboriginal rock carvings at Bantry Bay (including handouts and a discussion on the significance of the figures depicted). We then entered the Manly Dam Reserve, walking along tracks lined with flannel flowers. After making our way to the dam we had morning tea and some brave souls swam in the rather chilly water!

The day was warming up nicely as we made our way towards "Mermaid Pool" where local conservationists are attempting to induce the mermaids back by restoring this once beautiful swimming hole back to some of its former glory. After crossing Condamine Street in Manly Vale we wandered along the lovely track bordering Manly Vale Creek that runs to Queenscliff Beach. A short clamber around the rocks at the north end of the beach led us to the "Wormhole", a fantastic tunnel carved through the rock headland to allow fishermen access when the tides are high.

We then continued around the rocky headland to Harbord Beach following the beach and around the next headland onto Curl Curl Beach. The northern corner of Curl Curl Beach was our next stop for a swim in the ocean and lunch. Though decidedly "bracing" the water was delightfully refreshing and after a leisurely lunch we headed off again over the top of the headland towards Dee Why with stunning views up and down the coast.

At Dee Why Beach we indulged in ice-creams and another swim before heading towards Narrabeen. Cutting across to Narrabeen Lake and wandering along the path following the lake in the late afternoon sun was a great ending to our day.

Lovely weather, beautiful and varied surroundings, non-stop conversation (thanks to Rosemary Mc & Sue A) and excellent company all combined to make a great day for all. It was

almost a disappointment to finish and certainly a surprise to most to realise we had in fact covered 22 kms on our walk. A car shuffle brought us back to Bantry Bay to conclude by 5.30pm.

*Sarah Bodlay***Mt Victoria**Tues 18th Nov *Leader: Bill Holland*

Only four of us set off from Mt. Victoria for a cloudy start but the day brightened to offer some great views over Kanimbla Valley. We walked to Pulpit Rock for great views to the west, then down the old zig-zag road paying a visit to Bushrager Cave. Turned left to follow the marked walking track across woodland to the beautiful rain-forested gully that leads up to Reinets Pass. Here we had lunch then made our way around the cliffs to Witches Glen and exited to Mt Piddington having decided to give Horne Point a miss.

Back to Mt Victoria for coffee at 3 pm, then the return drive to the city

Mid Week Walks Next Month:Frid 26th Dec Boxing Day

Kuringai Chase NP Bobbin Head - Sphinx - Bobbin Head Then day out boating picnic & things aquatic approx 9.30-6.30. Bring appropriate boating/picnic goodies.

Thur: 1st Jan: New Years Day

A repeat of the above and perhaps an opportunity to recover from New Year celebrations.

Tues: Jan 13: Midweek Walk (Evening)

Bondi Beach (6-00 pm) - Clovelly etc to Coogee with optional return. An easy walk on a summer's evening along the coastal pathway followed by dinner (fish and chips or BYO) in a beachside reserve.

Wed Jan 7: Evening Walk and Club Picnic

Meet at Balmoral Beach at 4pm for walk of adjacent beaches finishing at Balmoral Beach in time for the picnic on the beach - see below

Club Evening Picnic: From 6 pm at the southern end of Balmoral Beach. BYO food and drinks. Fish and chips available nearby. Please phone if coming on walk

Thur: 15th Jan: Blue Mountains NP

Faulconbridge - Numantia Creek and Falls - Sassafras Gully - Glenbrook Creek - Magdala Creek and Falls - Springwood. Rock hopping and scrub in Numantia Creek. A cool shady walk with swims.



Forgotten Something ? Leaders - don't forget to send in your Walk Report forms

A Walk In The Transylvanian Alps *John Mapps*

No one told us about the vicious dogs. No mention of snarling canines in the glossy tourist brochure. Yet here we are, a group of six trekkers, in the wilds of Romania metres away from five of the most savage-looking dogs we'd ever seen. And they're big, too, Alsatian size.

"They're sheep dogs, bred to be nasty," explains Tudor our local guide, in a matter-of-fact way. He adds unnecessarily, "Don't touch them." Armed with rocks, and with Tudor cursing in Romanian, we pass the snapping animals warily, and sprawl in a sunny field to recover.

It's the third day of a seven-day walking tour in the southern Transylvanian Alps, part of the Carpathian mountain range, which stretches through much of Romania in a great arc. The dogs are here because the local bears like to eat the occasional sheep in the summer months when shepherds bring their flocks to the alpine meadows. Defending a flock from a bear is no job for a mild-mannered corgi, hence the large size and bad temper of these mutts.

The brochure *did* mention the bears—the mountains are home to more than a third of Europe's brown bear population—as well as Vlad the Impaler, the 15th-century Transylvanian-born prince on whom Dracula was based. But it was the scenery that drew us here. The craggy limestone peaks of the Transylvanian Alps soar up to 2500 metres above thousands of hectares of virgin forest and verdant farming country. This is one of the most beautiful—and unknown—parts of Europe.

We had started out from Zarnesti, a town north of Brasov, Romania's second-largest city. The plan is to walk along the Piatra Craiului and Bucegi—two massifs of the Transylvanian Alps—to reach the old resort town of Sinaia, some 40 kilometres to the south. It doesn't sound that far, but we're carrying fairly heavy packs and there are a lot of ups and downs on the way.

In fact, it's pretty tough-going in a few places. On one day, we ascend 800 metres to the highest mountain hut in Romania, at Omu (2500 metres), have a hearty lunch there, and walk 800 metres down again. On another day, we walk into an area of jumbled limestone rock and scree before climbing almost vertically for 30 metres clinging to a cable fixed to a cliff face. "Just hold onto the cable. Keep three points of attachment at all times," Tudor cautions. Easily said.

But there are also days of easy walking on gentle tracks. When we descend from the Piatra Craiului, for example, we enter rolling farmland studded with conical hay ricks. This is a largely unmechanised world. The locals are in the fields harvesting, making rhythmic swishing sounds as they mow hay with scythes. We watch as a horse-drawn cart pulls up and willing hands fork the hay aboard. As we pass through a village, we notice a man in his yard butchering a pig. His young daughter conscientiously hoses away the animal's blood.

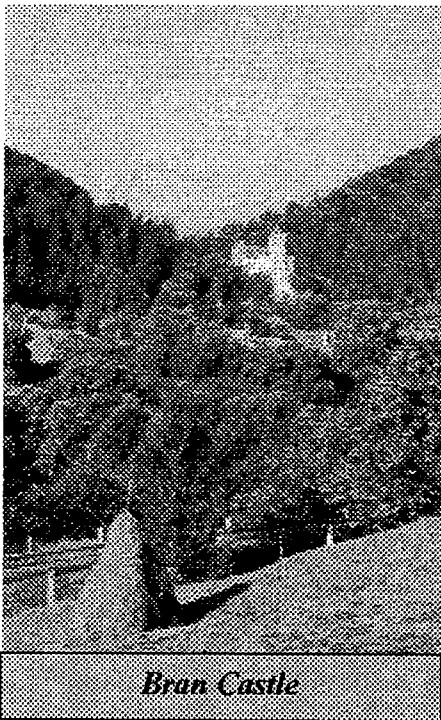
As we walk, the talk ranges from life under the Communist dictator Ceausescu to the country's current problems as it makes the painful transition to democracy and a market economy. The fact is that Romania is desperately poor. Our tour is a welcome source of extra income for Tudor, who otherwise works as a forester. At Bran, the halfway mark, we re-enter civilisation, and luxuriate in the showers and privacy of our hotel rooms. The town's main claim to fame is its castle—billed as Dracula's castle in tourist brochures because of a tenuous link with Vlad the Impaler.

Perched on a rocky bluff above the main road, it looks suitably Gothic, with its turrets and stone battlements, but the hoopla associated with it has put the town on coach tour packages.

Next day, back in the mountains, a sense of wilderness quickly returns. Often, the only sign of humanity is a jet's vapour trail. And, of course, there are the dogs and shepherds.

For the weary walker the most welcome sign of human life is the occasional cabana (mountain hut). We're staying mostly in cabane run by the local Salvamont (mountain rescue service). These places are generally closed to the public, although other cabane are open to all walkers. Each cabana has its own character. Curmatura cabana lacks electricity and running water but is clean and cosy, warmed by a traditional wood-fired ceramic stove. Malaiesti cabana is more modern and has electricity (courtesy of a generator). Open to the public, Caraiman cabana, high above Sinaia, has the feel of a well-run backpackers' hostel; the owner looks like he was a roadie for Deep Purple. Whatever the atmosphere, two factors are constant: a warm welcome and good food. At Malaiesti cabana, I eat the freshest lamb I've ever had—hours earlier a shepherd had made a gift of the animal to the Salvamont people to pay off his bar bill.

Food, drink and conversation fill the evenings. Moaning about sore muscles is compulsory, as is talk of bears and dogs. At Malaiesti, tired after an all-day hike, we go to bed early like a group of sleepy children. And that's why we missed the commotion: as we slept, a hungry bear loomed out of the darkness towards the cabana before those damned dogs chased it away.



Bran Castle

Note: This walking tour was organised through a British company, Waymark, which specialises in walking holidays in Europe (brochures can be ordered through their website: www.waymarkholidays.com). Unfortunately, they no longer offer this Romanian tour, but Exodus does something similar.

"Sev's Mt. Owen Walk Plus A Bit" Sue Arnott

24th - 26th . October Morton N.P.

"It's a boy! Breach delivery and some bruising but all is well" cried Susie the midwife as the blue backpack bounced into her arms and knocked her backwards to the rock which stood between her and the void. There'd been some anxious moments earlier as the tape had tangled around the shoulder straps, but assisting nurse Ted, perched in a tree twenty or so metres further up the birth slot, had disentangled the new arrival and sent it hurtling on its way to Ro who'd helped it to its final destination, 100-odd metres straight down Mount Owen from where Ian and Neil had pushed it off a precipice to begin its journey.

After some hours, the 9 members of the SBW (Safe Births in the Wilderness) team had delivered three gorgeous girls and six bellowing boys, then manoeuvred themselves down the dreaded Mt Owen slot, shouldered their bundles of joy, and continued on their way. They battled onward down the mighty mountain. They followed "track" invisible to this Safe Birther but which leader Tony followed thanks to prodigious efforts of memory ('turn left at Eagle Rock') and observations from high outcrops. Sure enough, at 5pm, the group arrived safely back at the cars in the Castle car park.

Of course, to be descending on Sunday, we must have ascended on Saturday! Indeed we did. After arriving late Friday night at the designated car camping spot (we detoured for dinner to Ulladulla, Milton having died after 8pm!), we awoke next morning to find all members of our group present and accounted for – Neil eventually arriving with "the rope"! We set off in cloudy conditions straight up to join the track along Kalianna Ridge towards the Castle. The craggy outcrop loomed above us as we toiled up rock faces and well-constructed steps through a profusion of purple pea flower (I think!) and delicate yellow and white stars and bells glistening as the hot morning sun broke through the clouds. We paused often to (puff and) take in stunning views of escarpments and rugged mountains stretching away to Pigeon House Mountain in the south-east.

After squeezing through the crevice known as "the Tunnel", we shed our packs for the final assault on the summit, encountering our first "exposure" as we hauled ourselves up, to be rewarded with the sight of the ridge to Meakin's Pass below us lit by the sun – the last we'd see for quite a while! By the time we'd crossed the

heath on the top of the Castle and found our lunch spot, the atmosphere was "seriously Mordor". We ate quickly as the wind intensified, black clouds rolled in, and distant thunder came closer. We scurried back across the top, down the "exposure" (experts by now!) and reached our packs and a rock overhang just as the heavens opened. Janet left us at this point, striding out purposefully into the storm to head back to her car (she made it, but not without a few anxious moments!)

Sitting in a cave watching rain become hail, and knowing that sooner or later you've got to go out into it to reach your camp spot before nightfall, is not everyone's idea of how to spend a perfect Saturday afternoon. However we remained cheerfully optimistic (particularly those of us who'd brought rain pants!) and sure enough, once we'd accepted that we really couldn't stay put any longer, and set off again, the rain eased. However the sudden deluge had turned trickling waterfalls into roaring cascades, and tiny, easily-straddled creeks into wide rivers with quagmires for banks. The hail on the ground looked like snow and lay oddly amongst the sub-tropical tree ferns and grass trees, in places remaining till well into the next day. We clambered up into the dripping Monolith Valley as the sky lightened to reveal the outcrops which give the area its name. We posed for a photo before "Camel Rock", after which two things happened. First, we finally gave up any pretence of keeping our boots dry and began to wade through the knee-deep ponds, and second, Neil met a swarm of bees. Of course, Neil is the one member of the party who is allergic to them (Murphy's Law applies even out here in the wilds), but urgent medical attention by Kay in the form of anti-histamines saved the day, and although we all watched nervously for a while, Neil suffered no further ill-effects.

The Green Room showed off its mossy walls and ferns, the Seven Gods Pinnacles jutted majestically against the grey sky, and the Natural Arch watched over our afternoon tea. We noted them all, but briefly, our chief (secret) concern by now being just how dry would be the rock overhang Tony had promised us on the side of Mt Cole, and how many more slippery rocks and sodden bogs lay between us and our home for the (rapidly approaching) night.

Oh ye of little faith!! Not two kilometres later we reached it, nestled behind a waterfall thundering with recent rain. Two other walkers already in residence, but we found enough nooks

and crannies for all of us to sleep in reasonable comfort and, importantly, escape any drips. Collecting water from the aforesaid roaring cascade was, well, exciting (bottles certainly filled fast!), and lighting a fire from damp twigs was, yes, interesting (toilet paper and cigarette lighter in the hands of our fearless leader did the trick after my futile efforts), but in no time we sat warm in our thermals, dry socks inside plastic bags inside wet boots (*merci, Maurice for that Ettrema Creek tip*), enjoying the ambience of Happy Hour around a very respectable fire. Although we did have to shout to be heard over the waterfall!

Peering out from our warm sleeping bags during the night we saw the black treetops buffeted by wind against a dark sky dotted with stars. At dawn the lyrebird (imitating a kookaburra) heralded a beautiful day, sky blue and clear, with the waterfall reduced to a (much quieter) fraction of its former swollen self. We set off at a civilised hour, the onset of Daylight Saving being irrelevant in our circumstances, and enjoyed the fresh clean smell of the bush in the sunlight which we suspected (correctly) would not last. We scrambled up a rock face for views right down Monolith Valley, thankful for the dry as Kay told us of the drizzling rain which had featured on Sev's walk here two years ago.



Then we crossed heath land adorned with wildflowers of orange, red, purple, yellow, blue and white, then the bush became steadily thicker and more impassable as we headed for the summit of Mt Owen. Here we munched morning tea and gazed out at cliffs and valleys spread out around us. We spotted the road leading in and Mike swore he could see our car parked under a tree (I couldn't). By now, clouds had just about covered the morning's blue sky, and we wondered nervously if yesterday's storm would be repeated for our descent down the "Mt Owen slot". Tony disappeared down the sheer rock face with the tapes while Alec positioned himself comfortably in a tree straddling a precipice to begin the proceedings.

Luckily for us, the rain held off, and two hours later all bodies and packs had descended safely. Continuing our descent, we (well, I) stumbled over slippery rocks and boulders, battled through thick stands of Mountain Devil, Banksia and Hakea, fell into muddy holes and sinks. During lunch on a sunny rock surrounded by looming black clouds, we sang "The Pearl Fishers" and made the most of what we thought would be our last dry moments, but only a few drops fell as we fought through the last of the thick scrub.

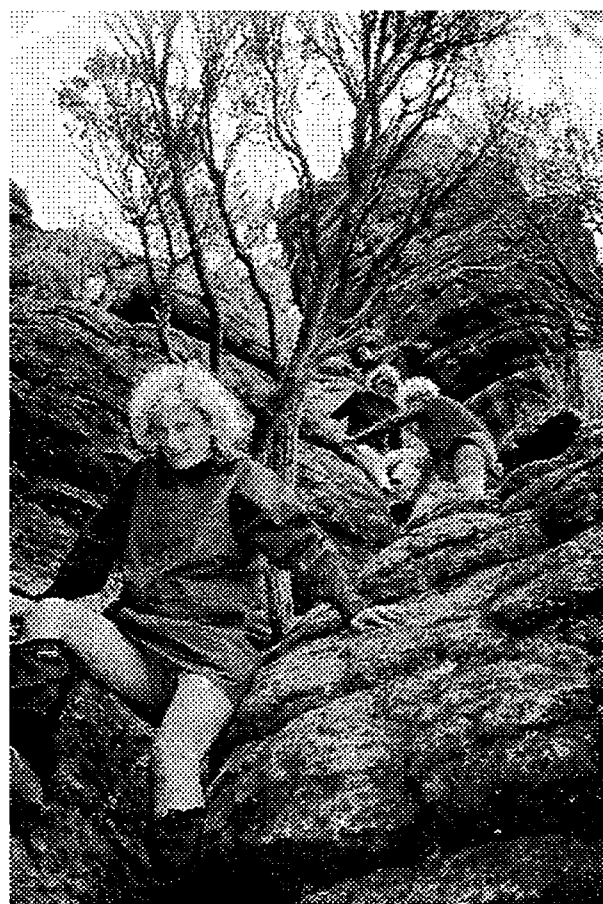
We reached the fire trail which led back to the cars. We turned and looked back, up to the mighty mountain we had climbed. Only then did the rain begin. Mt Owen had shown mercy!

Thanks to Tony for his magnificent navigation and leadership, and to Kay for always waiting, and to rest of the SBW team for all the laughs and companionship. Oh, and best photo has to be the one I took of the Castle from the warm dry car as we drove out in the late afternoon sun and all shouted "We climbed that!"

Susie Arnott.

Leader : Tony Manes

Participants : Kay Chan, Ian Thorpe, Ro McDonald, Janet Sinclair (Saturday only), Susie and Mike Arnott, Neil Hickson, Aleksander Popovski, Ted Nixon.



A First Time Experience

Peter Love

"On each side I saw the mighty walls and huge battlements of the Jamison Valley. Remember I had never seen such a scene before. Consequently the scene left a vivid impression on my mind..."

A similar sense of 'doing it for the first time' was part of my decision to join Caro's exploratory circumnavigation of Narrow Neck. I like exploratory walks, nobody on the walk knows what we will find. Sure we are better informed than Myles was in 1910, but still there is an edge. Add to this the fact, that this would be Caro's first overnight trip as a leader and you have a real first time experience.

Let's go back a bit. I had read it when the programme first came out and hadn't rushed to book. Some walks you need to book-in early or you end up on a waiting list. I felt this would not be one of them.

Several weeks out and I was still ambivalent. Narrow Neck conjured up memories of the 10km fire trail. I knew this walk didn't use this fire trail, still the words Narrow Neck had a dampening effect.

Three weeks out, on a walk over Mt Solitary, whilst looking into Cedar Creek, I was listening to Caro point out the proposed route. It looked rugged and green without a flat 10 metres, let alone 10 kms. Maybe I would tag along.

Caro's preparation email was extensive, with names and phone numbers, quotes from Myles Dunphy, routes, exits options, times and a little history. The names were intriguing, Devil's Hole, Cedar Creek, Ruined Castle. It was very well prepared and informative.

I decided to pack light. You never know - it could end up a very hard walk. However my 10 metres of climbing tape got a place near the top. So did the club's EPIRB and my GPS. I decided to use a fly and forgo the red wine, although rum and lemon barley was essential.

After a short car shuffle, we headed down the Golden Stairs towards the Ruined Castle. There is a lot of history surrounding this area and Caro's research came to the fore as she gave us some insight into bygone years.

From The Ruined Castle it was a navigation exercise down a couple of ridges to Cedar Creek. The five party members all had map and compass and an opinion. An exploratory tends to bring out this sort of teamwork. Caro always decided on the direction and pace.

We reached Cedar Creek for morning tea and what a delightful spot. Cool, pristine and somehow remote, even though we were only a few hours to the car. I congratulated myself on choosing to come; the morning tea spot, alone, was worth the effort.

We had about 4kms down Cedar Creek before turning right (WSW) into Bunba Yaka Creek and the way out to a fire trail. It was a straightforward creek walk down a very pretty creek.

"I hate it when they go between your legs!"

It happened in Cedar Creek sometime in the afternoon. I was third behind Phil. The first walker woke it up. Phil held his breath and I watched. Phil breathed, at last "I hate it when they go between your legs!" It was a very frightened Red Belly Black snake. We swapped snake stories for the next ten minutes while enjoying the creek walking.

Bunba Yaka Creek was a little harder than Cedar. There was a waterfall or two and a bolder choke we needed to get around. This involved a serious scramble up a scree slope followed by a bush-bash with the usual dose of lawyer vine.

Afternoon tea was spent discussing the best option to get out of Bunba Yaka Creek. Caro decided on the ridge between a couple of side creeks. A good choice, it got us out, after skirting around a steep rocky knob.

One thing I try to avoid is carrying water to a high camp. I like high camps. I just don't like carrying water up to them. We looked at the map and discussed it but we couldn't take the chance, so an extra 4kg was added to our packs. The climb out was long and hot.

Camp was in a flat, leafy area on the ridge. Happy hour was extended by popular choice. Some party members didn't even cook their mains. I was the first into bed; it had been a long hard day. Isn't bushwalking great?

Sunday was mostly on easy, interesting fire trails or bush bashing to cut corners. We climbed over Cedar Gap and had morning tea at Breakfast Creek. It looked like being an easy day, but I was no longer looking at the map. In the end it was a longish walk with interesting views looking at the Narrow Neck Plateau from the Megalong valley.

It was late afternoon and raining (after some hail and sunshine previously... four seasons in one day!) when we started the climb out via the Devil's Hole, what a great name and a very pretty walk. By the time we were back at the cars, Caro was almost out of decisions. "The Grandview for dinner," was finally announced.

I'm not a big fan of fancy dinners after a walk but I really enjoyed the beer, meal and company as we settled into the satisfying discomfort of finishing a hard, enjoyable walk, especially one done for the first time.

I'm glad I did it. I would definitely like to visit Cedar Creek again. Maybe a day walk and exit via Walls Pass.

Leader: Caro Ryan

Party: Ian Thorpe, Ted Nixon, Phil Worledge and Peter Love

* Myles Dunphy (Journal No. 1) Christmas 1910 (first trip to the Blue Mountains)

OF INTEREST TO NEW MEMBERS

Heike Krausse

Hello from Heike

There have been a few grumbles and observations recently of walkers on overnight trips whose fellow "happy campers" have not been so happy because of packs that were unsuitably packed/over packed. The discomfort and difficulty they experience impacts on the whole group. The probability for the walk to be slowed up/delayed increases, as does the potential for injury, stressed ankles, knees, back and neck muscles or painful shoulders.

It is a recurring theme and dare I spend more time on it? Pack lighter, pack lighter, essentials only, essentials only, decant, decant,.....(Can be sung as a round.....)

I carry a 56L capacity pack for overnights and can fit full equipment needs ie; tent, stove, fuel, food etc for the longest trip I have done of seven days (Kakadu was longer but no tent required... big difference..). How people fill bigger packs I do not know. Ms Pussycat Iceberg here does not like getting wet or cold either so can also have raincoat and warmer gear in too (plus my princess slippers!) basically if I can do it anyone can.

So what the hell are people carrying?

Books, big cameras, daily changes of clothes, make up kits, cans, too much food....are some of the things I have observed.

A few suggestions:

- Every new member gets a booklet that lists essentials for day walks and the extras required for overnight walks. It is valuable information, designed to be helpful. Read it every time you pack your pack. If it's not on the list leave it out.
- Take a trip to Coolana on the quarterly training weekend, treat it as a test overnight walk not a car camp and see how your packing goes, the members there will be happy to go through your gear with you and make suggestions for lighter alternatives.
- Ring up your friendly new members or walks secretary/leader of your last walk/leader of the overnight walk and ask about good foods to carry and how to lighten things up.
- Ask to meet the leader 20 mins earlier before the walk so you can go through your gear together and lighten up if necessary. We like to help!
- Decant everything into light plastic containers/zip lock bags/film canisters and take no fluids except water (and a shrunk soft drink bottle with your happy hour tipple).

Everyone has their own favourite dehydrated dinner mix, ask around and build up your own

recipe book; it's amazing what can be done from your local supermarket shelves. Individually for a 1 night trip the small carton milk for breakfast, canned tuna for lunch, fruit snack-pack and defrosting steak for dinner doesn't sound much but it will be considerably heavier than powdered, packet, dried and dehydrated.

Another mistake that can be made is to try on the pack with all but the food and water added (the last things to go in usually). Believe me it will feel light even with tent, 4 season bag and raincoat but *do not* be tempted to add in that little extra. Food (even when chosen with care) and water is heavy, very heavy and when added will make the significant difference.

After you have enjoyed a few walks experiencing the lightness of being, and feel you can cope with more weight then add a luxury, your camera, an extra 200mls wine, extra pair socks. But to go on your initial walks with too much weight is just setting yourself up to loathe the experience and vow never to do it again and thus in my opinion miss out on what could be the most marvellous, magical experiences of your life.

Please welcome on your next walk: Mae Mak.

Coolana Training Weekend

The next training weekend will be held on the Club's property at Coolana in the beautiful Kangaroo Valley on the weekend of 21st, 22nd February. This is your opportunity to obtain map reading, first aid and bushcraft skills.

Weekend Walking Gear for Hire

The club now has a small pool of weekend walking equipment available for hire. The rates for weekly hire are:

Weekend pack: \$15

Sleeping bag: \$15

(For hygiene reasons you must provide and use your own sleeping bag liner)

Sleeping mat: \$5

Ground sheet: \$2

Tent: \$20

Complete kit \$50

Equivalent refundable deposit required.

Contact: Geoff McIntosh 9419 4619



First Aid Certificates

To encourage leaders and members to get their St John's First Aid Certificate, the Club will subsidise the cost of gaining an accredited Senior First Aid Certificate up to \$50 and if combined with an accredited Remote Area First Aid, up to \$80.

SOCIAL NOTES

Social Blurb For December:

So all my raving about Trevor Kloeden's slides from his trip to Everest was not in exaggeration. The November social night saw over 40 people cram into the clubrooms for a visual treat, along with Trevor's humorous and entertaining presentation as he told of the many highs and the lows of his trip in May this year. If you missed out on the night, you can check out his shots on his website at <http://trevor.kloeden.com>. Special thanks go to both Trevor and Pam Morrison for their contribution on the night.

We've had some really positive response from members who received their Summer Walks & Social Programs by email in Adobe Acrobat format in November. I understand that several members had some difficulty opening the document, so please rest assured that this will be addressed before the Autumn program goes out. *(I think it had something to do with the security level that I set for the document - oops!)*

I look forward to seeing you all at the Christmas party. Take care over the Christmas / New Year period and I hope to see you all at another slide night in January at the Clubrooms featuring this year's Kakadu trip. Why not come along and get inspired to join in 2004's trip back to the same area?

Cheers Caro ☺

Key Dates From Our Social Programme:

December:

Wed 17th Christmas Party from 7pm

Ho ho ho (& a bottle of rum?!) - Get me Christmas fare in my tum!!

Come on down to the Clubrooms for the traditional Christmas Party. Everyone to bring a plate/dish - drinks to be provided.

(Helpers to set up & clean up needed too!)

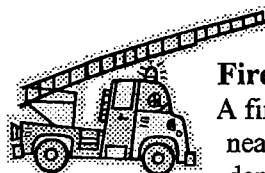
January:

Wed 7th Beachside Bash @ Balmoral

As a fresh start to the year - we're getting together again at the *south end* of Balmoral Beach from 6 pm. BYO food & drinks. Fish n' chips are available nearby.

Wed 21st Kakadu National Park

Come along and see some of the most breathtaking country of the top end. A group of SBWers went to Kakadu in July/August this year for a trip of contrasts starting in Koolpin Gorge and taking in the sights of Twin Falls and Jim Jim Falls creeks. Many fun stories and adventures!



Fire !

A fire started on some grasslands near a farm. The country fire department was called to put out the fire. The fire was more than the country fire department could handle.

Someone suggested that a nearby volunteer bunch be called. Despite some doubt that the volunteer outfit would be of any assistance, the call was made.

The volunteers arrived in a dilapidated old fire truck. They rumbled straight toward the fire, drove right into the middle of the flames and stopped! The firemen jumped off the truck and frantically started spraying water in all directions.

Soon they had snuffed out the centre of the fire, breaking the blaze into two easily-controlled parts.

Watching all this, the farmer was so impressed with the volunteer fire department's work and was so grateful that his farm had been spared, that right there on the spot he presented the volunteers with a cheque for \$1,000.

A local news reporter asked the volunteer fire captain what the department planned to do with the funds. "That oughtta be obvious," he responded, wiping ashes off his coat. "The first thing we're gonna do is get the brakes fixed on that truck!"

Contributed by George Mawer



Key to a Happy Life

A woman walked up to a little old man rocking in a chair on his porch.

"I couldn't help noticing how happy you look," she said. "What's your secret for a long happy life?"

"I smoke three packs of cigarettes a day," he said. "I also drink a case of whiskey a week, eat fatty foods, and never exercise."

"That's amazing," the woman said. "How old are you?"

"Twenty-six," he said.

Contributions Welcome:

Members' contributions to this magazine are very welcome. Send in your interesting stories of recent walks, letters, notices, jokes etc by mail (preferably typed), on floppy disc, by fax or by email addressed to The Editor. Email: billholt@hotmail.net.au Fax: 9980 5476 (phone 9484 6636 first)

“We have to use with skill what simple equipment we can
carry on our backs to achieve shelter,
prepare food and have a night's rest”

If you really want to get the best
out of what you carry with you,

Paddy Pallin, 1900-1991

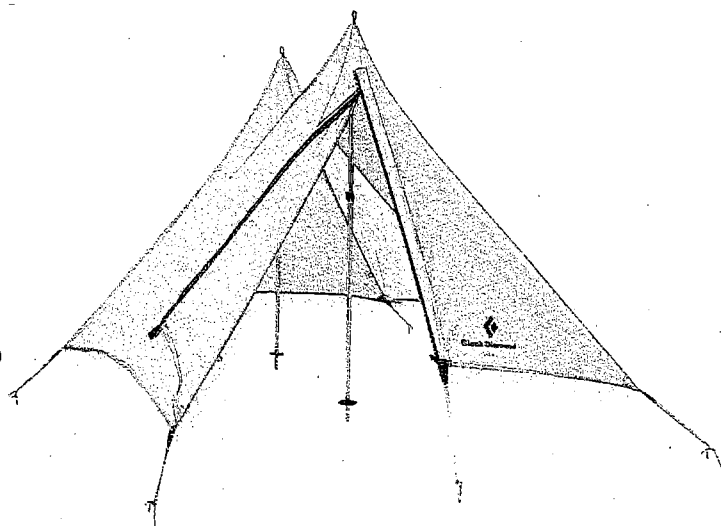
then move up to **Black Diamond**, exclusive to **Paddy Pallin**.



Black Diamond Moonlight Headtorch: Constantly frustrated with replacing your torch battery? Then the Moonlight is for you. With 4 ultra bright, energy efficient LED bulbs, it provides 70 hours of constant light. It weighs a mere 90g (without batteries) so you'll hardly know you're carrying it. Ideal for night walking, cooking and reading.



Black Diamond Contour Trekking Pole: Trekking poles don't just improve your balance and reduce the strain on your lower limbs; they help re-distribute the load to your upper limbs as well, meaning you can keep going for longer. The Contour, featured, is ideal for comfort over long periods of walking with an ergonomic 15 degree correction angle in the upper shaft and soft dual density hand grip. It also features a unique NEW adjustment system, making these the most easily adjusted poles on the market.



Black Diamond Betamid Tent: When you want to go ultra-light or you need extra storage space, the Betamid has you covered. This compact, floorless tent will go anywhere and pitches using a pair of trekking poles! Weighing in at a fraction over 1kg, it sleeps two and stands strong against the elements. (Optional, detachable tub floor is also available.)

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