

ALAN P. RICHY

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



AUGUST 2004



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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

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.

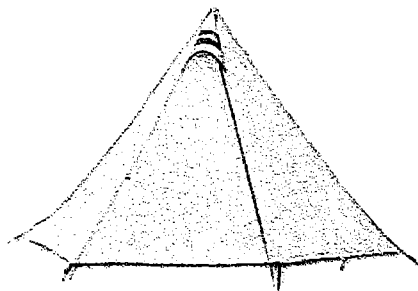
Dual roof vents provide excellent air flow, and the supplied extra guy lines can be used to pitch the leeward side (the side facing away from the wind) well off the ground to increase ventilation. Silite construction and the six-sided shape with extra stake-outs midway along each side add up to an incredibly 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 FLOOR Only

Price: \$ 169.00

WEIGHT

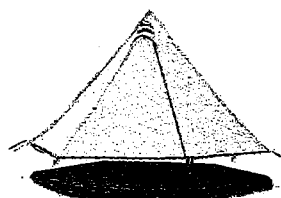
620 g

DESCRIPTION

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

FEATURES

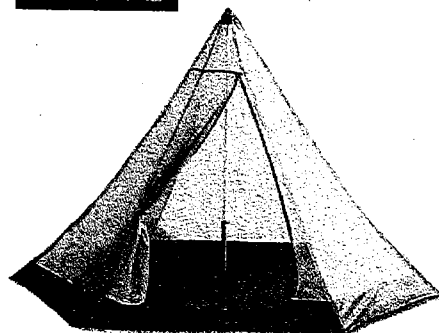
- Clips into Hex 3 canopy at 6 corners
- Abrasion resistant Cordura® centre



pole patch

- 6000 mm waterproof floor
- 4-inch bathtub design

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



AUGUST 2004

Issue No. 837

THIS MONTH INCLUDES

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

General Meeting in September

The Club holds two general meetings each year i.e. the Annual General Meeting in March and a six monthly General Meeting in September.

So on Wednesday 8th September you will have your opportunity to raise matters of importance to you and to other members of the Club.

Although notices of motions are not necessary it would assist the smooth conduct of the meeting if you could advise the Club Secretary Leigh McClintock of any item you would like to be either specified in the agenda or included in general business.

Otherwise just come along and enjoy the evening. Caro, our Social Secretary will ensure that you are well supplied with tea, coffee and other refreshments.

New Members welcome!

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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 on Wednesday evenings (see Social Programme) 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:	Maurice Smith
Vice-President:	Rosemary MacDougall
Treasurer:	Tony Marshall
Secretary:	Leigh McClintock
Walks Secretary:	Peter Love
Social Secretary	Caro Ryan
Membership Secretary	Ron Watters
New Members Secretary:	Grace Martinez
Conservation Secretary:	Pamela Irving
Magazine Editor:	Bill Holland
Committee Member:	
Barry Wallace	Heike Krausse
Delegates to Confederation:	
Jim Callaway	- vacant -

Contact The Committee:

Members are welcome to contact the following officers on Club matters:

President :	Maurice Smith
9587 6325 (h)	mauricethewalker@ihug.com.au
Vice President :	Rosemary MacDougall
9428 5668 (h)	rmacdougall@bigpond.com
Secretary:	Leigh McClintock
8920 2388 (h)	mcclintock@pacific.net.au
Treasurer	Tony Marshall
9713 6985 (h)	tbuilder@bigpond.net.au
Members Secretary:	Ron Watters
0419 617 491	wattersr@bigpond.net.au
New Members Secretary:	Grace Martinez
0405 473 029 (m)	gracie_mar@yahoo.com.au

From The Committee Room - August

A report on proceedings at the Management Committee meeting on 4th August 2004



- The Website Sub-Committee had prepared a paper addressing privacy and security issues involved with a members-only section on the website.

- Committee members had considerable

differences of opinion about what should go on the SBW web-site with some particularly unhappy about putting names and contact details from the walks program or the members data base on the site, regardless of the security system adopted.

- The Committee passed a resolution that the web-site Sub-committee develop a "members only" area of the web-site, accessible by user name and a common password which would be changed half yearly, and advised to members. The area should contain forms for converting prospective membership to full membership, the leaders' handbook, leaders' profiles, the Club constitution, documented walks, information to enable the on-line assembly of draft walks programs, and such other matters as the Committee may direct from time to time.
- Thirty members have not renewed their membership. Five were singled out for further personalized follow-up. The rest were deleted from membership.
- Payments for Coolana rates (\$1054) and magazine (\$420) related expenses were approved.
- The Treasurer was authorised to make specific transfer of funds to the Coolana account consistent with the resolutions passed at the AGM in March.
- The Committee authorised the Coolana Management Committee to spend up to \$500 for the replacement of a worn out lawnmower.
- The Spring Walks Programme and July Social Programme were discussed and approved.

Have You Changed Your Address?

If you have changed your address or phone number recently, please advise:

Members: Ron Watters
Prospectives: Grace Martinez

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.



Treasurer's Report

Seven months ending July 2004

SBW Bank Account

Opening Balance January 04	\$ 6,745
Receipts	29,990
Payments	22,300
Closing Balance July 04	\$ 14,435

Receipts

Membership fees	16,958
Prospective and joining fees	5,953
Miscellaneous Income	388
Donations - General	65
Donations - Coolana	55
Interest - General	646
Interest - Coolana	854
Interest - Conservation	276
Magazine advertising	1,795
Coolana donations - composting toilet	3,000
Total	\$ 29,990

Payments

Rent of club rooms	995
Postage, Telephone & Website	910
Confederation - Affiliation	2,050
Confederation - Liability	3,920
Insurance	
Confederation - Accident	2,546
Magazine materials & supplies	2,307
Magazine postage	2,759
Social & Membership	163
Coolana	1,088
Miscellaneous	792
Equipment - Data projector	1,399
Sydney Catchment Grant - Coolana	3,371
Total	\$ 22,300

Net Increase (Decrease) in cash held **\$ 7,690**

The club remains in a strong financial position. The bank balance will fall as expenditure exceeds income for the remainder of the year. I am in the process of reviewing the club's funds position and existing investments and will present recommendations on these to the September committee meeting.

Tony Marshall

**** The "Spring Walks Programme" is enclosed with this issue ****

Message from President Maurice:

As part of the my monthly column I am taking the time to sing the praises of the heroes who are usually unsung, that is those members who do so much of the behind the scenes work that make our club such an alive organisation.

This month it is the turn of our Walks Secretary, whose efforts we really appreciate every three months when the new edition of the Walks Program arrives. Even though I have participated in the committee's review of the draft program when the final version arrives it is always a feeling of "let me check this edition for walks that I want to highlight and book into early". Even though it would be easy for me to be blasé about the whole process, in some ways it is as if I were a young boy with a new Harry Potter book (yes, I was a book-worm, if ever there was one) and had to read it cover to cover as soon as possible. The Walks Program is like that for me. Our Walks Secretary's name is Peter Love and he has the difficult task of getting leaders to nominate walks and then to try to supply a program that is as balanced as he can make it. So members if the walk that you feel should be on the program isn't there, don't complain, act. Contact Peter and nominate the walk with yourself as leader! A well done to Peter for a difficult job done well.

The Committee has approved the further development of the club's web-site (www.sbw.org.au) with the next step to be a "Members' Only" area. This facility will be open to members in a month or so. Watch for a full announcement of the facilities and how to access this part of our web-site. While the initial facility will be somewhat limited, over the next 12 months or so I expect that lots of other features will be added.

Thank you to a long-standing member for his magnificent donation for the acquisition of a bio-loo (read that to mean a composting toilet of a particular variety) for Coolana. The Coolana sub-committee now have their work cut out for them in jumping through the hoops to obtain approval of the local council.

Congratulations, our 2002-04 New Members Secretary, the lovely Heike Krausse. Heike is to move to Queensland by the end of August to take up a new employment position and to be with the man of her life. We will miss you Heike and wish you well in your new home and role. Also it is a huge thank you for your hard work while New Members Secretary.

That's it from me for the month. See you on the track soon.

Maurice Smith



Letters to the Editor:



George Walton

Many members will remember George Walton, who for many years was an active member of SBW and led numerous rewarding walks.

One year, in the heat of summer his party was caught by a weather change in the Snowy Mountains and had to shelter in their tents from a heavy snowfall.

George was a witty and humorous fishing and boating buddy of mine. He had many thought provoking sayings. One, I remember: "Common sense is not very common".

I regret to report that George has not been very well. He is being cared for and can be visited at Ku-ring-gai Gardens Nursing Home 245 Pacific Highway, Hornsby (Room 33)

Peter Dyce



A Farewell from Erith and John

After some soul-searching, we have decided to lapse our membership of SBW. Unfortunately, we are away from Sydney so much nowadays that we cannot be effective members of the club any longer.

We are still doing quite a bit of walking, and our recent trip to northern NSW took us to some delightful areas. We hope to re-visit the Waterfall Way once there has been some decent rain.

John and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Club for wonderful memories and experiences.

Erith French and John de Couque

[See also letter from Alex Colley on Page 6]

VALE

It is very sad to report the death of two of our members:

Ray Turton

Ray passed away on 5th August, aged 69 years. He joined SBW in 1976 and was an active walker with the club for many years.

Ray will be sadly missed by his family and many friends

Sandy Johnson

We have been advised that Sandy suffered a very severe stroke and passed away on 22nd July. He was aged 79 years.

Although not walking in recent times Sandy was very active in SBW in the 1980/90s, a popular leader and well known to many members.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife Gwen, and family



Editor's Note:

I'm very pleased to feature this month an article given to me by a member of Bernard Peach's family who asked "Would the Club be interested in this tribute to an SBW character from many years ago."

I'm not sure if the writer, Bernie Peach, was a member (I think he was) but he certainly was an enthusiastic walker and a close friend of "Taro".

His very descriptive article about the Narrow Neck Peninsular "Bridge to Beyond", appears on Pages 8 - 10. It is well written, in a style not often seen nowadays.

Then of course we have contemporaneous walk reports including co-incidentally, "Assault on Narrow Neck". Please keep these reports coming in, but not all need to be long articles. Short reports, such as those shown on Page 16 covering day walks are also very welcome.

And other contributions are also welcome. Your letter, photos, poetry, memories of walking in days gone by and jokes.

This reminds me. It appears our Social Secretary has been "blamed" for the jokes included on the Social Notes page. Be assured that these jokes, often contributed by members, are selected by the Editor as a lighter note to finish the serious business of reading your magazine.

Bill Holland

Contact The Editor:



Copy for publishing in the SBW magazine should be received by the editor by the end of the first week of each month.

Letters stating your viewpoint on matters of interest are most welcome.

Please send your submission in by mail (preferably typed), on floppy disc, or by email addressed to The Editor

Telephone: 9484 6636

Email: billholland@bigpond.com

Fax: 9484 6009 (phone 9484 6636 first)

Club Archives:

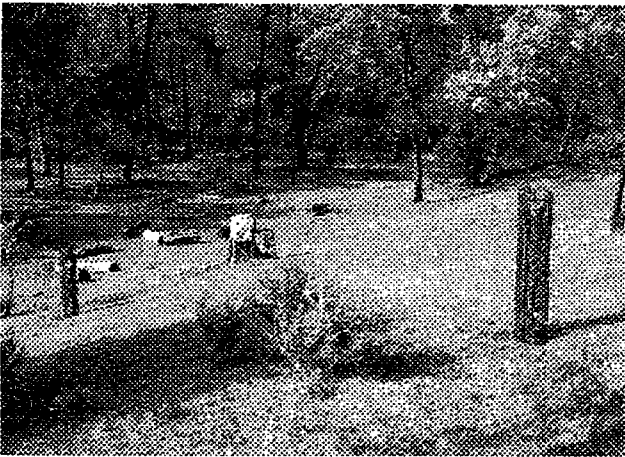
The Club archives are held at the Editor's address and can be accessed at all times by phoning 9484 6636.

They include bound copies of all magazines from inception, financial and membership records and minute books post 1960 (earlier minute books are in the State archives)

My email address has changed

Please note that the Editor's email address has changed to billholland@bigpond.com

NEWS FROM COOLANA



During August the Coolana Committee will be looking at replacing one of the two mowers used at Coolana. The age of the mower with general wear has left us with an unreliable mower that too often will just not go.

There have been several responses to the request for volunteers to go on a mowing roster but we still need more. The general plan is that once a number of people have registered, their personal preferences noted as to whether they prefer to go down week days or weekends and the transport situation taken into account then they will be matched up with the best fit into teams of two or three members. The individual teams will then be asked to go down during a given week or weekend. The exact day can be decided by the members of the mowing teams. Generally the dates will be from early to the middle of the month for the mowing teams. The Coolana maintenance weekends will be put on the program towards the end of the month by the usual people from Coolana Committee or Coolana Carers group. The aim is to have people visiting every two weeks particularly after heavy rain when the weeds are likely to put on a growing spurt. It is the intention that the individual mowing teams will be asked to go down only twice each three months apart during the spring summer growing period. Please contact Don Finch finchros@Bigpond.com or 94523749(H)

The trees from the SCA Grant 2003 are still growing well with only a small number of plants dying, about ten dead out of a total of over three hundred. A lot of effort has gone into weeding and watering the young plants to achieve this result. Anybody with rain making skills is encouraged to go to Coolana ASAP. Of the ninety plants from Milton Landcare Nursery planted on the eastern flat only eight plant remain these were planted without guards in March and are not part of the SCA plants. As of 6/8/04 there was water in the pipe and the tank at the shed. The property is

extremely dry and bushfire is a real threat, clearing of leaves and fallen timber from around the shed is a priority. The wattle is blooming lovely.

Don Finch.

Maintenance And Bush Regeneration

It's a wonderful property but needs some gentle care and maintenance. The weeds start growing in Spring but there are other tasks to be done. Join us on 28th – 29th August or 25th, 26th September for a pleasant weekend of light work and socialising around the evening campfire

Wanted: Do you have a surplus lawnmower to donate to Coolana - must be 4 stroke and in good working order

The Coolana Fund:

Donations to the Coolana Fund are very welcome and will be used to provide income to assist with the maintenance of this wonderful property.

Many thanks to those who have already donated or have indicated an intention to include the Coolana Fund in their wills. Please send in your donation, addressed to

"The Coolana Fund"

*The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc
PO Box 431 Milsons Point 1565*

NSW WILDERNESS TRANSIT

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JENOLAN CAVES. KANANGRA WALLS.

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Departs from Sydney's Campbelltown Railway Station

Via Penrith, Katoomba & Blackheath for

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

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CONSERVATION MATTERS

Our Conservation Secretary Pamela Irving has been away getting a closer look at the natural features of Kakadu. This, plus a computer breakdown, has resulted in no contribution from Pamela this month.

Letter to the Editor



Kosciuszko - The Stakeholders' Park

The purpose of national parks is nature conservation and they should be managed accordingly. Kosciuszko however is managed for the benefit of minority groups, described by the NPWS as "stakeholders," who have no interest in nature conservation but seek profit or recreation, regardless of the damage they cause.

Kosciuszko is not only the state's largest national park. It was created to preserve the Southern Alps, a very precious environment in this mostly flat, hot and arid land. The 120 square kilometres above 1,850 metres is being sacrificed to development interests. These interests are not only Perisher Blue and Lend Lease but well heeled private investors in real estate. In addition to Perisher and Thredbo there are six other sites open to further development. Approval was recently given for 1320 more beds at Perisher, raising the total to over 10,000. There will be 8 buildings of up to 5 storeys and 5,500 car parking spaces and, in order to increase patronage and profitability in the summer months, commercial premises, conference and entertainment facilities, food outlets, shops, professional consulting rooms, helipads and infrastructure facilities. There will be, in fact, a city and suburbs at Perisher and a town at Thredbo.

Other "stakeholders" include four wheel drivers, horse riders and the Snowy Hydro Authority. The off road use of four wheel drives causes deep track channels, leading to erosion, as well as auditory pollution. Horse riding also causes track damage and erosion, as well as necessitating the fencing of holding yards, and leaving manure on the tracks and spreading weeds. The cloud seeding taking place in the park, may or may not provide more snow (it might cause rain), but the Hydro Electric Authority wants more water in its dams.

Resort construction is described as "sustainable development," a description which is itself an oxymoron, since only the natural environment is developed and once it is developed the natural environment is no longer sustained. It is very appropriate that visitor facilities should be provided, but overnight accommodation is unnecessary, as are a plethora of car parking spaces. Following the example of some U.S. parks, accommodation should be

located outside the park and buses (and the ski tube) should replace cars.

I started skiing and walking in Kosciuszko Park in about 1938 and returned nearly every year. When I first went there the only accommodation was the hotel (since burnt down), Foreman's hut and Charlotte Pass hotel. I stayed in Foreman's hut one year and in the Alpine Hut in the northern part of the park twice, but during the rest of my trips, I camped. I have lovely memories of the main range both in winter and summer, the Snowy River, before the road was built, the flat opposite what is now Thredbo and of Sawpit Creek, where Tom Moppet, Arthur Gilroy and I camped near the rubbish tip. And later I camped there with Frances and some of her friends and drove up to the snow every day. It's not necessary to have hotel accommodation on the snowfields to enjoy skiing.

The developers of Perisher city and Thredbo town are politically very influential. Protests against these developments are therefore unlikely to be effective at present, but they could affect the future of the resorts. In response to global warming the snow line has been rising for some 50 years and it may rise rapidly before long. The weather system has probably moved south, leaving NSW in drought but directing cold south west wind onto the alps; hence the recent snowfalls. If the system moves further south the snow line will move up further. As snowfields become smaller and the skiing season shortens the resorts may become unprofitable. Then maybe the establishment will listen to the environmentalists.

Kosciuszko is a big park - 690,000 hectares in all - and a campaign to have the area outside the resorts managed as a park might succeed. The Colong Foundation has nominated two wilderness areas, one at Tabletop and the other an extension of the Jagungal wilderness covering the upper Snowy Valley and the Main Range. Tabletop has been sacrificed to commercial horse riding and the Jagungal extension, nominated to stop the spread of the development blight, refused.

There are 3,000 feral horses in the park. The most humane and effective means of getting rid of them is to shoot them. This has been refused - it is in order to shoot foxes, pigs and wild dogs, but not horses. Instead it is planned to trap the horses and remove them. Many will end up in the knacker.

Alex Colley

Conservation Extracts from Elsewhere

The Wrong Priority - South Coast Escarpment Parks?

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) seems determined to alienate itself from its conservation supporters by allocating NPWS identified wilderness to the 4WD vehicle and horse riding lobby.

Last May a Discussion Paper on Access Management wrongly recommended that provision for horse riding, 4WD vehicles and trail bikes should be the park management priority within the Far South Coast Escarpment Parks outside of declared wilderness, including within extensive areas of identified wilderness that remain unprotected (e.g. the central Deua Valley).

. There are perfectly good, scenic roads outside protected areas for 4WD use; and the demands of high impact users who want to drive in circles through wilderness escarpment parks should be accommodated off-park.

. There are 6,584 km of 4WD roads in the Far South Coast Region.

It is a nonsense for the Department to claim that the majority of roads outside protected areas in the region do not fully provide for all the requirements of vehicle-based recreation.

. There are also proposals for promotion of 4WD tourist roads through the Southern Escarpment Parks as alternative routes to existing west to east routes from the tablelands to the coast,

such as the Kings Highway and the Araluen Road. Promoting park roads as through roads will increase wildlife kills, unnecessarily fragment habitat and cause other significant environmental impacts, such as arson. The experience of Royal National Park, which has lost its big marsupials due to road kills, will be repeated for an increase in 'windscreen tourism'.

*Extracts from The Colong Bulletin No. 204 - July 2004
"DEC's one-eyed vision for Far South Coast Escarpment Parks" by Keith Muir*

Tasmanian Forests - Call for Logging to Tourism Switch

Extract from the Sydney Morning Herald 12/8/04

Tasmania's old growth forests will be "damaged beyond repair" unless the Federal Government intervenes to save them, two environmental groups said yesterday. A plan by the Wilderness Society and the Australian Conservation Foundation aims to rescue some of the oldest, tallest trees in the world from being turned into woodchips and instead generate jobs in tourism and through more efficient timber production. It estimates 320 jobs would be affected. The executive director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Don Henry, said there was a "real opportunity" for either of the main parties to save the forests

Stephanie Peatling

WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

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Today's high pressure lifestyle means that even a week may not be enough time to fully de-stress and relax. You need two or three weeks to do it properly.

Get away from it all. Find yourself a place where there are no phones, no cars, no hassle; a place where every day brings perfect weather, every hour brings another beautiful pool. You relax because you are **enjoying** the moment too much to want to move on.

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

Phone 08 8985 2134 Fax 08 8985 2355

From Out Of The Past - 1967

Bernie Peach was a very close friend of Taro (Walter Tarr) from the early days of SBW. Here Bernie reminisces about a conversation with Taro. This article appeared in "Out of the Blue", journal of The Coast and Mountain Walkers in Dec 1967 and is reproduced here with the kind permission of Bernie's family

The Bridge To Beyond

Bernie Peach

The sibilant whisper of the gas fire might have been the sound of gentle and constant wind in the river oaks along Cocks River.

Taro, the self-styled Duke of Clear Hill, sat; with his long legs stretched to the warmth; a stringy bark man, white thatched, and with a flow of words to match the turbulent outpouring of water at Glenraphael.

W.H.Tarr may be called an eccentric, but any man earns that title for refusing to conform to the common pattern of thought and behaviour. Taro is an individualist, a poet with words, an Australian patriarch when Australianism holds a strangely foreign sound. He is a strong old bridge from the days of Henry Lawson to the brief and dangerous hour of Harold Holt.

"Taro," I said "Tell me something about Narrow Neck."

"Ah," he said and dropped into the silence that haunts Clear Hill on a calm night.

While he was trailing through memory, I could turn my own mind back to the time when only the rutted track led along Narrow Neck from the shelter shed to the pitons before the fire trail, before the tower, before that misguided crackpot painted 'JESUS SAVES' across a fine sandstone surface.

The high world of Narrow Neck peninsular is, or was, a magnificent walking area in its own right; a place of valley, swamp and stream with the finest of mountain outlooks. It is a bridge to the far country of the south, a quick route back to Katoomba for weary walkers. Because of this, few pause on the high span of the bridge simply to stand and stare. There is nothing more blinding than hurry.

The Narrow Neck bridge rests on giant rock pylons, sheer and clean, or grotesquely weathered where wind and water have rubbed eroding fingers against the sandstone. The monolithic supports rise from a green sea where incessant waves of eucalypt beat against impenetrable rock and refuse to recede.

A painter is always at work on the superstructure, on the surface of the broken arc running from north to south that has suffered the beat of hobnailed boots and taken the quiet pad of sandshoes in the dust and mud of the track.

In September the painter scorns the common green of winter and turns to a multitude of colours. The delights of spring shake his hand. The stunted drumsticks and casuarinas are yellow, purple, red and russet brown. Over by Cedar Creek he flips a full brush of pink across the low undergrowth, where the Boronia appears.

Turn southward when the sky is coloured like the Indian Ocean with enough cloud to chase purple shadows across the face of Cloudmaker; turn

southward with enough clouds to pattern the valley 1,000 feet below. They are passing frowns across a pleasant countenance.

The track along the western rim of the neck is putty coloured and slips with startling speed to the valley of Diamond Spray where the water sweeps eagerly into Megalong. A defiant westerly lifts the water in angry hands and hurls it back to curtain the stunted swamp oaks with a thousand tears, frozen in winter, when each shrub becomes a miniature Christmas tree.

It is wise to look deeply into Megalong Valley from this point and across to the main range because some of the finer things of nature must be locked in the mind for the days of dreaming. To the east, beyond the swamp where Diamond Spray collects its water, there is a rock overhang looking out on Mount Solitary and to some of the jutting buttresses of the neck.

Solitary, proud in age and strength, proud of her detachment from Narrow Neck, holds to her own stone fortress across Cedar valley. If one turns back a little, along the eastern rim, there is a long spur that boasts a trig point almost above the Ruined Castle. The figures of walkers scrambling around the crags of the castle are easily seen. They are puppets on a tiny stage.

It may be a mile to Corral Swamp, strange valley of high grass and storm stricken trees; a shallow valley of great beauty when the light is coming or going. It seemed more satisfying before the fire trail cut across the eastern end when the swamp was a first campsite for walkers from Katoomba and torches signalled against the night as the people of the little tents came tramping along the neck.

In this area there is a cave that might have come from the hands of a Gothic architect. The entrance is smoothly curved, the interior so cleanly carved that a man can stand to his full height on the level, sanded floor. The cave looks out on a stand of young grey gums that appear to march towards the fire as night moves in and a rock hewn animal on the opposite rim of the deep little gully grows sinister and tenses to spring into the cave.

Along the western wall of the second narrow neck a host of yesterdays have cut the jutting sandstone into gargoyles and sprites and mythical figures. They are sculptures turned from the crude cutting tools of wind and weather and gently softened in the crucible of years. Some glare with baleful intensity at the intruder, others grace the background of sky with the symmetry of ballet dancers.

The stiff steel of the fire tower is in strange contrast to the rounded cairn of stones at its feet marking Bushwalkers Hill with the adjoining trail to Carlons Head. The head is a parapet held in space and cradled by the sky, the valley and the shade flecked mountains. The chains lead down but a man

would be foolish on this day to climb from the footstool of the gods, from Mouin and Cloudmaker, from the Gangerang and the Wild Dog Mountains, into the more ordinary stuff of nature that must come with the descent.

The western sun beats hotly on the back as an easterly route is taken from Bushwalkers Hill, away from the hakea, the sharp stemmed drumsticks, and through the golden grasses of the swamp to C MW. Head and Cedar Head. The knife edge of Solitary cuts a stark line from these high altars and the deep scar of Cedar Creek recalls known pools of still water along its course where coloured stones lie undisturbed among the drowned gum leaves and sandy silt.

Warragamba Dam is an outstretched hand whose blue fingers push and probe against distant valley walls. An old walker remembers the hand as a single finger; Cocks River, boasting giant she-oaks for a guard of honour and with a company of towering spurs held to attention in the background, remembers coming down from Kings Tableland and camping by Harrys Humpy by the wild lemon tree; remembers broad, grassed banks and campfires, from the bleached driftwood brought down by the floods. He is glad that the men who drowned a valley could not drown his memory of these things.

The gas fire hissed gently through the room. It might have been the sound of a fresh breeze through the low scrub on Clear Hill. "Taro" I said, "Tell me something about Narrow Neck"

"Do you know" he said "I started bushwalking at eight. Used to camp at Kensington with a lump of sacking for a tent."

I could not see his eyes, only the dark lines of his face, thin, bony, in the downward lighting from a reading lamp.

But had I been able to see his eyes, I knew that they would be sharp and bright, looking into the past and at the present with the one gaze, because Taro is no impractical dreamer living in the backwater of time.

"Ah, Glenraphael," Taro said "the sweetest water on the mountains. I think I must hold the record for getting to the glen, I hopped on the bike at dawn, one morning, and was boiling the billy at Glenraphael by 10 am."

Glenraphael, this last deep set creek after the track creeps through the swampy land beyond Carlons turnoff. Glenraphael, with the sweetest water on the mountains, brought Taro firmly to the bridge of Narrow Neck. He stretched his long legs to the warmth and began to talk.

"In 1922, or thereabouts, before O'Sullivan's Ladders, before the fire trail and the tower, before Carlons Chains and the pitons leading from Clear Hill, before the track became a known and popular route, the early explorers who were the base of the bushwalking movement wandered the Narrow Neck Peninsular. Perhaps they saw it as a bridge to beyond. Perhaps they simply loved the bridge.

Myles Dunphy left his mark on Narrow Neck as he has on most of the mountain area. He and his companions used a forty foot length of rope to descend to the valley. That rope is still out there," Taro said. "It's under a ledge below Glenraphael with

a kero tin for water and a box of matches."

Myles Dunphy located the pass that bears his name and is approached by a wide rock parapet below Glen Raphael and leads down to Glenalan where so many walkers have camped on the return journey from the Wild Dog Mountains or coming in from Kanangra country.

In the early years of Narrow Neck exploration, an English walker belonging to the SBW. found a wallaby pad that sidles around the rock walls holding today's pitons. His name was Frank Duncan. The story is told that Frank and his wife, after a particularly gruelling walk, arrived at Central Railway Station ragged and unwashed and resembling derelicts of the great depression. An old lady saw them and felt the call upon her charity. She toddled off to the refreshment kiosk, bought two packets of sandwiches, and pushed them into Frank's hands with tears in her eyes.

The first real attempt to introduce a safe and permanent means of descent from the rocky tip of Clear Hill came from Taro, the Duke of Clear Hill. He made a ladder from ordinary galvanised fencing wire with double links and spaced the foot rests at 18 inches in old and seasoned hardwood. This was put in position at a point well before the location of the present pitons.

Taro took his ladder to the Sydney Technical College for tests as a necessary precaution. It weighed 44 lbs, took a breaking strain of 1200 lbs and Taro still

holds the certificate.

Bushfires are no respecters of nature or of things made by man and the ladder suffered the same fate as tree and bush when a great fire roared across the neck. For decades now, walkers have used the more recently introduced iron pitons in the rock face to leave



the Narrow Neck bridge. These are impervious to fire. And, although you may hear youngsters say "We'll go off the neck by the pitons", the older generation still tends to regard the iron grips as Taros Ladder and frequently use the term when talking about the way down.

Twenty years ago, before Warragamba Dam took so much travelling country away from the feet of today's walkers, it was common for parties to leave Narrow Neck by the pitons, go down Black Dog to Cocks River turn downstream and return to Katoomba by Cedar Creek, Solitary Buttress, or to Wentworth Falls via Kedumba Pass. And Kedumba Pass was not the hideous white scar that it is today but a well camouflaged little trail leading to the creek in Kedumba Valley.- Twenty years have drawn incredible lines across the face of the mountains.

A long time ago, Taro, with typical ingenuity, nailed a "dog" cut from tin to a tree in Medlow Gap. It was painted black and one extended paw pointed the

way down the steep slopes of Black Dog to Cocks River. This was before Medlow Gap became a helicopter landing ground and the area could be confusing as a parting point for so many ways. Taro's black dog went in the fires but not before a lone walker, confused in the thick bush of Medlow Gap at the time, came across Taro's hound, oriented himself, and later sent a donation out of gratitude to Federation.

To talk of Black Dog, Cocks River, Kedumba, is talking away from the Subject, Narrow Neck. Yet all of these places have often come to eager footsteps taking the way of the bridge to beyond, using it as a link in the chain of discovery.

It is impossible in the compass of a few words to discuss other ways of leaving the peninsular, other vantage points for those who mix appreciation with their exercise. It is impossible to talk of sunrise from a camp above the Glenraphael swamp when Mouin sweeps like a black shade out of the morning mist: or to talk of the second sight that comes to a man from slow walking along the western rim of the neck.

And now? Little cars pull up at the fire tower and the drivers ask: "Where's the nearest point of civilisation along this road?" Or, down by Corral Swamp, a young fellow, full of his car and conscious of his flashy dress, eyes the rucksacks and the walkers with cynical amusement and asks. "How far can I get along this trail, mate?" Breathing dust and fumes and remembering the past, you feel like saying, "Right off the end, fellow."

The anger goes and pride moves in. He does not know this place and never will. He might be driving across the Sydney Harbour Bridge seeing vague images of sea and foreshore and heavy images of road and traffic. He will not know the dawn from the Glenraphael rim, the Gothic cave, and the splendour from Cedar Head. He cannot know this bridge as you know it and you hug this satisfaction to yourself as a warm cloak of understanding. In time, others will find the secrets and leave the rubbish and fires.

Taro stretched his long legs to the gas fire, leaned towards me with an impish grin on his face. "Did I ever tell you how I accidentally tipped a mug of tea over Henry Lawson's mother?" he said.

But it was after midnight and Taro and Henry Lawson's mother is another tale.

The writer makes no apology for talking about a place that is commonly known to all walkers. There is too often a tendency to glamorise the distance and forget the beauty in the backyard.

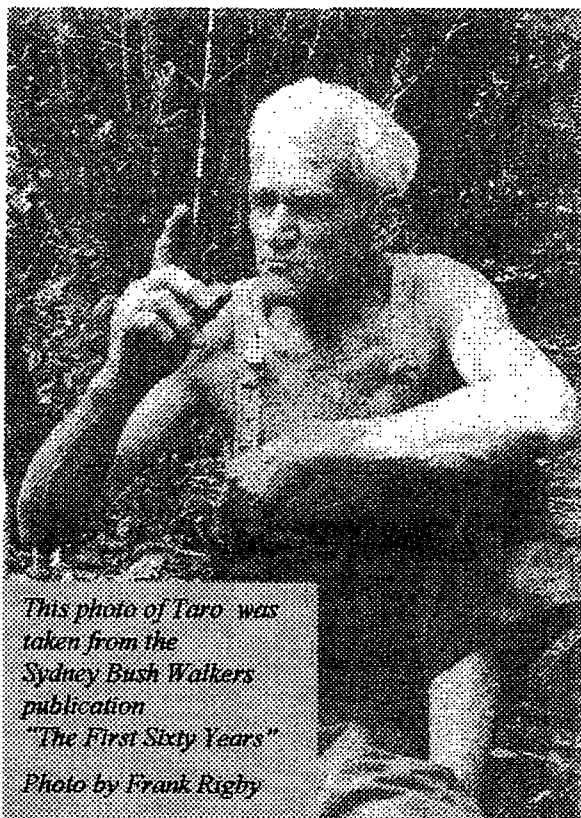
Editor's Note:

Taro, having read this article in "Out of the Blue", wrote a letter to Bernie Peach including the following

"...thank you kind Sir, for your observation and observations....I could return the compliment with a page or two about you... but would it be recognisable, for I am positive the one I see and appreciate is not the one seen by the crowd."

Tribute to an Old Bushwalker -Taro:

Unpublished in his lifetime, this verse was subsequently printed in "Into the Blue", as part of a tribute to Bernard. This deeply felt poem, written shortly after the death of his close friend, Walter Tarr [the legendary "Taro"] might equally serve as an epitaph for Bernard himself.



This photo of Taro was taken from the Sydney Bush Walkers publication "The First Sixty Years" Photo by Frank Rigby

*In him lay all of nature's moods
And his unfettered thought would race
As surely as the river's flow
Swift sounding by his camping place;
Or gently run as quiet breezes
Turn and stir within a space
Held by the she-oaks' needle hands.*

*In him, a toughened pride, the trace
Of pioneer who loved his land
And bore its mark upon his face,
Deep-grained, as old and seasoned wood
Carries the years of time's embrace.*

*In him lay art and music mixed,
Who knew the poet's mind, and let
Each gracious word draw to his eye
The images most men forget;
Who knew the flute-like song of birds,
The line where crowded mountains met,
The opening veil of morning sky.*

*On this clear hill he rests - yet
Is he part of soil and tree
And up thrust rock, a net
Designed to draw him from the stage,
Contented to the final set.*

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THE WALKS PAGES

Walks Notes: 5th May to 8th June

Maurice opened the bidding for this month with his walk out from Yalwal over the weekend of 8, 9 May with a party of 8. The weather was great and so were the views, although the party were uncertain about the view of the two dead (feral) cows on the banks of Danjera Creek. Maurice also expressed some concern at the prospect of the creek becoming contaminated as nature takes its course over the next few weeks. GR 566261, Yalwal sheet is the affected location. No report seems to be available for Wilf's Great North Walk Stages 4 and 5 in reverse scheduled for that weekend. Don Finch had a party of 9 and approval from NPWS for the numbers on his map reading and navigation walk to Queen Pin Gully that weekend. Conditions were cool and mainly fine with the party sharing the map reading and navigation exercise. They came out early so went out to The Walls for the superb afternoon views. Of the day walks Jim Callaway led a party of 9 on his Saturday trip from Waterfall to Heathcote through heath land and littoral rainforest, though I am unsure they found them along the Hacking River. Leigh McClintoch led the Sunday walk that weekend, out from Bundanoon Station to various points of interest, though the party of 6 shortened the walk a bit due to rain and the ensuing popular vote. He also noted that the track from Fairy Bower Falls to Nicholas point is open despite statements to the contrary.

Wilf had a midweek walk scheduled for Thursday 13 May but no report is to hand for this event.

Maurice's weekend qualifying walk over the weekend of 15, 16 May had the 7 starters out in fine but windy weather, with a bit of re-routing when the pass down onto the saddle between Mounts Sturgiss and Elliott proved elusive. Jim Percy's trip out from Mount Hay to seek out fragments of the Engineers Track along the Grose River over that weekend went to program. The 7 starters enjoyed steep scrambling descents and numerous side gully crossings and ended the trip by torch light. The party of 10 who went along on Gail Crichton's Saturday walk out from Carlons Farm to Splendour Rock had beautiful weather and no untoward incidents. Michael Bickley was also out that day, with a party of 7 on his qualifying walk in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. The Sunday qualifying walk into the Nattai near Starlights Trail was led by Ron Watters with a party of 8. Conditions were sunny with a cool wind blowing, and as time fled more quickly than anticipated they re-routed the final sections of the walk to avoid becoming benighted. Dinner at the Tahmoor Hotel brought the days activity to a convivial close. Ken Smith cancelled his Sunday walk down to Cox River from the Explorers Tree and return due to a lack of starters. Steve Dolphin appears to have led a Sunday trip involving riding and walking in Morton National Park with a party of 6.

The mid week walk that week was led by Bill Holland with a party of 6 out from Mountain Lagoon to a ridgetop view of the Colo River Tootie Creek junction. Conditions along the ridges were perhaps

more medium than the described easy but nonetheless they emerged early enough for coffee before driving back to Sydney.

In one of life's lesser mysteries there are no reports for events scheduled for the weekend of 22, 23 May.

The qualifying weekend walk for 28, 29, 30 May saw Carol Lubbers with a party of 10 out in conditions that for the Saturday at least were very cold and windy. They also remarked on the hazardous condition of the passes on the Northern side of Pantoneys Crown due the dry conditions and overuse. John Bradnam led an enthusiastic party of 3 on a trip down to and up from Whalanian Creek in much the same weather that same weekend. Gail Crichton led a party of 10 on a Saturday walk out to Mount Solitary from The Golden Stairs again in extremely cold and windy conditions at first but mellowing to a beautiful day. Sunday saw Nigel Weaver with a party of 17 on his walk in Porpran National Park. It was a pleasant, easygoing day with good views at several locations along the way.

There was no report for Wilf's midweek trip out from Cronulla on Thursday 3 June.

There was a report for Wilf's qualifying walk in Wollemi National Park over the weekend of 5, 6 June however. It indicates that substitute leader John Bradnam led in the absence of Wilf with a party of 8. They visited various points of interest including the cave with the crowbar in it, and went to Hollow Rock for the views. Allan Wells also led an overnight walk that weekend, out from Carlons Farm, with a party of 7 in glorious weather. Of the day walks that weekend, Gail Crichton led a Saturday walk down from Long Point Lookout with a party of 3 with classic Winter walking conditions and magnificent views. Ron Watters had a flock of 20 for his Sunday qualifying walk out from the Robertson pie shop into Macquarie Pass National Park. Conditions were sunny and cool although the winter chill was already setting in as they returned to the cars as they returned to the cars at 1615 hours. The Tahmoor Hotel fed and watered the party to round off the day. Ron recommends the roast pork with 3 veg and crackling for \$9.50. There were two other walks that day, with Nigel Weaver and a party of 11 out in fine and mild conditions for his walk from Woy Woy tip to Little Wobby, and Roger Treagus leading another 11 on what was to have been the final stage of the Great River Walk. Alas the mouth of the Hawkesbury has been changed to North Head so there will now be a final final stage in the Spring program. Conditions were fine, and the views spectacular, and after a champagne lunch several people made funny speeches. They also poured source water into the waters of the mouth as a photo opportunity.

All of which concludes the walks reports for this month.

Barry Wallace

Assault On Narrow Neck

Up Carlon's Head & Down Dunphy's Pass 4th April, 2004

James Cryer

Ian Thorpe, Patrick McNaught, John Badnam, Alan Oakey, James Cryer

The general game plan was simple: a lateral attack on the great jetty, known as Narrowneck, that divides the Jamison Sea from the Megalong Ocean. This great, imposing rampart that is 10 kilometres long, but which averages only half a kilometre in width. This great impregnable battleship, which has sailed through the millennia, unscathed, unconquerable, indefatigable until now, was about to succumb to our depredations.

The assault began in a rather ignominious way, as most assaults do. We awoke at 6.30am, took one look at the view from the Katoomba YHA window, and concluded that it was too wet and inclement to conduct an assault of any kind, let alone on an indefensible mountain range, so we sped off towards Sydney and the attractions of mowing lawns or cleaning out the garage.

Suddenly, someone realised we hadn't turned on the vehicle's de-mister! And, that conditions outside, weren't as bad as we'd feared, and that we could, (with a little effort) actually see more than a few metres ahead. With that, we did a sudden wheelie and arrived down in the Megalong Valley moments later. At precisely 8:15am we leapt out of the vehicles and embarked on our dawn patrol, trekking up the lonely track towards the prominent outcrop that beckoned us, Carlon's Head.

Narrowneck, being the dominant feature in the area, looks down upon its two adjoining valleys (the Jamison and the Megalong) with some disdain. It interacts with them via a series of rather inaccessible passes, designed to keep the denizens of the lower regions firmly in their place. The actual number of these passes is one of those "facts" lost to mythology, but it is somewhere between seven and a dozen. (Most existing on the western, or Megalong side, which was our chosen area of fascination.)

Clambering up the steep scree-slope, we arrived at the first of several "pitches", or stages. Each stage consisted of an exposed, vertical rock face that necessitated climbing by means of a chain, that some kind soul had suspended at the top of each level. These rock-faces varied from two to six meters in height, and were quite daunting, given that it was raining and everything was slippery.

The mind was also focussed, in that because this was on an exposed knife-edge ridge, if you fell, it would not be the two metres or so, it would be the full Monty of several hundred feet back down to where we had come from – and do not pass "Go", and go to gaol!

We finally managed to haul our bodies up the 4 or 5 pitches to admire the fabulous views, which John (our virtual tour-guide) talked us through, while we contemplated the cottonwool in front of our eyes. (John knew this area only too well, having been involuntarily forced to bivouac here overnight, on a previously abortive attempt to descend this pass, in rainy conditions, but that's another saga...)

Having now actually arrived on top of Narrowneck, we proceeded to bush-bash our way to the fire-tower on Bushwalkers Hill, the landmark visible for miles around. (Here, again, we were seduced by John's recollection of a bygone camping trip, when, having come this far, he realised he'd left his tent-pegs behind. He promptly walked all the way back to Katoomba, caught the train back to Sydney, collected his tent-pegs and resumed his trek, as if nothing had happened. This shows the perfectly normal behaviour of the typical bushwalker.)

This kind of unrelenting stoicism and fortitude in the face of adversity was needed in about another 15 minutes, as we went "off-road" and into the most impenetrable scrub known to mankind. For what seemed like ages, we fought against the most inhospitable tangle of thickly matted banksias, punctuated by that most hateful shrub, the hakea, with branches modelled on the general concept of barbed-wire. Cleaning garages, even toilets, was starting to take on a whole new appeal, and we envied those house-husbands dutifully going about their Sunday chores (under the gentle, watchful gaze of their wives), while we thrashed about in some God-forsaken wilderness, with branches raking our arms, in the pouring rain, totally sodden and bedraggled, not to mention cold. Oh, the joys of bush walking!

At that point, after literally crawling on hands and knees through these impenetrable thickets, as if we were anthropomorphic wombats, we came across a welcome sign. Not anything glamorous like a 5-star hotel or resort with saunas and clean rest-rooms, but something equally reassuring ... a pile of rocks, or a "cairn", in technical parlance. This told us that someone else, equally stupid, misguided and depraved, had also been here, and we felt an instant affinity with this unknown artisan of the bush.

We knew at once that we must be somewhere! Imbued with a renewed sense of purpose in life, we suddenly discovered the gully we had been searching for – fruitlessly – for the last hour or so. This "gully" was in fact the top of Dunphy's Pass, named after Milo Dunphy, the great pioneer conservationist, map-maker and prototypical bushwalker, (1891-1985), who visited Narrowneck as early as 1914.

In total contrast to the exposed windswept rock faces of Carlon's Head, we now found ourselves in one of the classic, hidden gorges that gives the Blue Mountains its unique "Gondwana" connection. The habitat of so many of the relict life forms that originated in that great Antarctic super-continent, it is the home of mosses, lichens, palms and ferns that bespeak an earlier era. Forever unknown to the casual tourist, these dark, wet, hidden canyons and gorges are the unique province of the secret marsupials, and raving ratbags like us, that will do anything to escape household duties.

(continued next page)

Assault On Narrowneck

(Continued from previous page)

Down we plunged into the Jurassic depths, every metre peeling away a million years of primordial evolution – ancient ferns thriving in the dank, shady ambience. The rain continued overhead, cascading down through the leafy canopy, which the lichens probably liked, but we mortals were feeling decidedly soggy. Nature intervened, this time beneficently, in the form of a 100 feet high, overhanging cliff.

Seizing the moment, and somebody else seized a box of matches, we soon had a politically incorrect fire raging, which restored the blood back into our extremities. Over a dried biscuit and tuna we reflected on the fact that we had experienced a side of Narrowneck rarely seen by its visitors, who

invariably stick to the thin thread of fire-trail that weaves its way along its length. As with life, the most interesting parts are on the edge, on the margins, and so it is with Narrowneck. A great, flat-topped barge on top, consisting of dry, scrubby sclerophyll and uninteresting heath, it springs to life when you visit its edges, where life takes on wondrous forms as it clings to the gullies and the crevasses and the gorges.

We scampered back down the scree-slope filled with food but also a renewed respect for the diversity of nature that exists – slightly out of sight, but never far away.

(Responsibility for the opinions expressed herein is not necessarily shared by any one of sound mind.)

Night Of The Living Day-O

Andrew Vilder

On The Kanangra Walls-Cloudmaker-Paralyser Loop Walk, 16th - 18th July 2004

Doom and gloom, storms and solid rain was the weekend forecast, best for staying curled up at home watching a good late night horror movie on the telly.

Or for a group of ten SBWs, time to do a 25km walk in Kanangra and experience some real-life haunting!

Hustled out of our tents at Uni-Rover camp at 6 am on Saturday morning by Gail, we emerged into a clear, cold morning. 7.30 saw us galloping north across Kanangra Plateau, at almost K to K speed with happy-hour-laden overnight packs! TC soon had to apply the handbrake as several punters were still dusting off the 'flu, and even worse, TM was going down with the 'flu.

Yet TM ploughed on undaunted – proving that nothing stops a fisherman on his way to a river.

Topping Cloudmaker, a tapestry of rain squalls could be seen everywhere except where we stood and this became the miraculous pattern for the entire weekend. Mark Dabbs' tartan-coloured umbrella would remain his walking stick.

A pleasant sprinkling of 'sago snow' on Mt. Moorilla Maloo gave way to warming sunshine as we staggered down the western side of Strongleg, in search for the reputed four-star campsite on the Kanangra/Whalanian creek junction. As it happened, this site was already occupied by a trio of other walkers who expressed amazement about (a) us being there at all (!) and (b) us having left Kanangra Walls that morning – well, why not? This in turn amazed us, and we backtracked to the much larger level site 200m downstream.

The traditional happy hour or three ensued around a hot and very smoky fire of rotted casuarina wood, which forestalled cooking dinner until about 8pm. Andrew and John meanwhile compared the finer points of Australian and Caribbean rums. Spitting raindrops saw most of us slip away soon afterwards for what we believed would be a restful night...but no. Around ten a shifty wind growled up and pelted bursts of freezing rain at those huddled under open-ended tarps, and soon most were lying uneasily awake, waiting for nature's next move.

We mortals did not realize until midnight, however that this was the Night of the Living DAAAOOO00000000! The blood-curdling cry carved the darkness and sent goose bumps racing down our spines – an SBW in dire distress! Some hapless soul crushed by a fallen tree? Ruptured appendix? Possum attack? Answering DAYOs in rapid succession fired from tents, seeking answers. The response time was truly impressive, even if some like me could only manage a sleepy grunt. Our 'zombie' was John Bradnam, lost in the riverside scrub while trying to get a late night drink of water – very much un-dead except for his head-torch which had conked out. In due course he was 'rescued' back into camp, but our nerves remained somewhat on edge until morning broke.

The inevitable grind up Paralyser began at 8am and was mercifully over by 10.30. We agreed that the north-east ridge onto this feared peak was relatively easy on the legs, made almost enjoyable by the sparkling blue sky above and the mini chocolate bars frequently dispensed by Mark Patteson and Jenny.

On top we had another pleasant surprise – three inches of white stuff on the ground from last night. Several snow fights broke out – usually centered around TC – and continued throughout the afternoon as the group cruised back to the road along Thurat Ridge.

Numbed out by waiting for the car-shuffle in 1 degree Celsius ambient temperature, then surviving the sheet-iced curves of Jenolan Caves' back road, it was a welcome pit-stop indeed at the Mad Austrian's Hampton hattery/eatery. Bolstered by lashings of hot coffee and ghoulish (sorry, had to get that one in), we reflected on a weekend of beautiful weather, excellent walking company and scenery, and an encounter with an almost-real zombie.

Walkers: Tony Crichton (TC) – leader, Gail Crichton, Tony Manes (TM), Mark Dabbs, Jenny Paton, Kellie Rees, Margaret Rosea, Mark Patteson, John Bradnam, Andrew Vilder.

Leigh McClintock's Warrumbungles Walk, 12th -14th June, 2004

Attendees: Leigh McClintock (our fearless leader) Stephen Bradbury Richard Darke (your scribe) Pamela Irving John McClintock & Melinda, Mark Patterson.

We all converged on Coonabarabran, 6 hours and 450km NW of Sydney, and thence the final 65 km into the dramatic landscape of Warrumbungle National Park, on a gloriously mild winter Saturday afternoon. Dot Butler and other SBW members were early visitors to this park, attracted by its outstanding walking and rock climbing opportunities. As for us, we were most interested in walking, enjoying the remarkable scenery and sighting animals not often seen. We were immediately rewarded, because as soon as we got to our campsite at Camp Pincham, we were greeted by 3 koalas in the trees around the car park – a great start to a trip during which we saw scores of kangaroos, a number of wedge tailed eagles, and, on the last day, some emus. Look out for the photos on the club website.

Leigh cracked the whip soon after our arrival, and had us galloping up the 1,000 steps and 200m climb to Fan's Horizon. Here we were greeted with a panorama of the extensive and impressive volcanic plugs and peaks, which make up the Grand High Tops where we were to walk the next day. This must be one of the most scenic and dramatic mountain settings in mainland Australia – certainly the only area with real pointy mountains! Hence Dot's interest no doubt.

Then it was back down to the campsite, setting up tents in the lowering sunlight, and a three hour Happy Hour. Firewood may not be gathered in the park, but we had found sacks of hardwood blocks for sale on the way, so a good fire was soon underway. The Weekend Herald careers section was the first to go in getting the fire started. Who wanted to think of the realities of the job market in the outside world?

Next morning, it was evident who did not have the hangover, with your scribe up at crack of dawn to get the fire going. Not a sound from the others for another hour. The sunrise was spectacular; there was crunchy frost underfoot, and mist shrouding the lower valley. There must have been 30 or so Eastern Grey roos around the camp, which provided wonderful photo ops, and which we took advantage of.

Our fearless leader had a bit of trouble rounding up the troops, but once camp was struck, and overnight packs filled and shouldered by the grog frogs, we were off at a merry pace up the Yellow Brick Road of Pincham Trail to Balor Hut, 300 metres higher in elevation and which we reached 1 ½ hours later. Each bend in the steep track took us closer to the big peaks, and even better views. However, conversation lagged as we tackled the final 241 steps the NPWS has thoughtfully installed just below the hut. I should mention here that in fact we had three different countings of the number of steps climbed, all with different results, which does not throw a good light on the basic counting skills or the sobriety of either your scribe or Mark Patterson!

Once we had dropped off our packs at the hut, we got back on the trail. We enjoyed spectacular views while walking in warm sunshine around the dramatic stone blade of The Breadknife volcanic dyke, and then

up another couple of hundred metres into the Grand High Tops. We took lots of photos from Lugh's Throne (at 960m) towards nearby Beloungery Spire, Crater Bluff and back down to the Breadknife.

Then it was onwards again, down 150m, only to find ourselves facing another steep climb, this time a 350m ascent to the top of Bluff Mountain's lava dome (1,200m). On the way up we passed ancient, exceptionally tall grass trees, and impressive volcanic cliffs. At the top the wind howled, but what a 360 degree view to reward us, looking out over the flat western plains, and back towards 1,500m Mt. Kaputar and the Great Divide, as well as over the many other peaks of the Warrumbungles! Wedge-tailed eagles soared majestically around us. It was hard to have to leave this dramatic spot for the journey back down.

Once back down to the Dows High Tops track, Mark, Pamela and your correspondent took a diversion to take in a series of fantastically-shaped pyroclastic outcrops which provide great lookouts, and a view of the dramatic west face of Bluff Mountain, with its 500+m sheer drop. Our turnaround spot at Point Wilderness overlooked the Western High Tops and 1,206m Mount Exmouth, and prompted a determination to return next year to explore this section of the park we could not get to this time around.

Then it was back to Balor's Hut for a shorter Happy Hour than the night before (the booze had almost run out), and dinner under the stars around the fire, then a warm night's sleep, and breakfast before the commencement of our return journey.

Perennial prospective member but nonetheless keen and experienced walker Steve was even keener to get going so he could watch England get beaten by France in the Euro '04 soccer competition, which for some reason best known to himself he had decided to catch some 3 hours' drive away at Lithgow Workers Club. For the rest of us, it was a more leisurely start, Leigh, John and Melinda going directly back to the cars at Camp Pincham. The rest of us (after being sternly lectured on the fact that our departure meant the end of SBW formal involvement in the walk) elected to detour via Gould's Circuit. This meant more uphill work with overnight packs over Macha Tor (no golden arches at the top through), which provided the reward of more great views back to the High Tops.

Thus ended a wonderful introduction to the Warrumbungles, which must rate as one of the most spectacular walks in Australia. Some of us went on to visit the 50m tall ANU Observatory at Siding Spring on the way out. We will be back – in fact Mark and Richard plan to put on a series of jointly-led walks under the heading "Come and climb a volcano". Stage 1 will be Mt Canobolas (and nearby wineries at Orange) in October, followed by Stages 2 & 3 to Mt Kaputar, and the Warrumbungles again (perhaps Anzac 2005 weekend? – watch out for an advance notice in the Walks Programme), and a possible stage 4 being Mt Macedon in Victoria at a later date.

Richard Darke

Maureen Carter's Walk - Royal NP

Otford to Otford via Burning Palms - Sun 18th July. The wild, windy weather caused 7 people to withdraw from the walk but the remaining 7 enjoyed a cold but worthwhile day without rain. The branches littering Lady Wakehurst Parkway made me consider the safety of the party and I wondered about cancelling the walk before I had reached the start. However, consensus prevailed throughout the day and seven brave souls walked a shortened route through a sheltered Palm Jungle; along windswept Burning Palms beach assisted by the southerly; picked sand from our sandwiches; exited up Mid Era Ridge instead of Thelma Ridge; and, once safely back at Otford polished off a mountain of apple pie with our hot drinks.
Maureen Carter

The Beauty of Suburban Bushland

Our party of 22 walked along Berowra Creek from Pennant Hills to Hornsby with a lunchtime stop at Westleigh. Many in the party were first time walkers with SBW relishing the opportunity of an easy grade walk.

We started at the station; through the streets to the track leading to the upper part of Berowra Creek. From here we followed the Great North Walk through rainforest and other diverse vegetation groups. Lunch was at the Hollands before continuing along the Blue Gum track down the Valley and up and up to Hornsby station.

Fine weather and an interesting walk. For our new walkers it was a good introduction to SBW

Bill Holland

Advice To Leaders - Park Closures

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. The latest advice on park closures may be found at the NPWS website: www.npws.nsw.gov.au or by phoning 9542 0648

Notice - Camp Fires and Stoves

All members are advised to check the restrictions on lighting fires in intended camping areas. Due to dry conditions the bush fire danger season throughout NSW has been advanced to 1st August. This means that fires in the open are restricted and may only be used under certain conditions eg a camp fire for cooking purposes.

Mid - Week Walking Group:



There is a group of members with time available to participate in mid-week activities. The second half of the year is always our busiest for mid-week extended walking as the warmer months slowly emerge. You are welcome to join us.

First of all here are some mid-week day walks for next month. Contact details are in the "Spring Walks Programme".

Thursday 2nd Sept: Georges River
Warwick Farm to Georges River then scenic parks and places long the way to Casula Station. See the scenic middle of the Georges River

Thursday 23rd Sept: Eastern Suburbs
Circular Quay - Ferry - Double Bay to Malabar
An historical crossing of the Eastern Suburbs; rub shoulders with the tombstones of the rich and famous in Waverley Cemetery.

Tuesday 28th Sept: Mid Week Beach Walk
Bondi to Coogee and perhaps further south.
A coastal walk with possible ice cream stops and swimming in bracing ocean on-shore currents. 10 am start at Bondi.

Then there are the extended walks in the coming months:

Mon 6th - Wed 8th Sept Blue Mountains N P.
Normally a two day walk but spread over three days for our mid week walkers

Wed 15th - Fri 17th Sept - Bicycle Ride from Robyn's Farm near Bathurst (option of extending into the weekend)

Sun 9th to Sat 23rd Oct Great South West Walk
The medium grade walk starts and finishes at Portland (Victoria) with a food drop at the halfway point. Participants can join or leave the walk at the halfway point at Nelson.

Mon 25th - Fri 29th Oct River Murray Houseboat
Departing from Mildura. We now have a couple of vacancies..

Mon 8th - Fri 12th Nov Moonan Brook Cottage
Comfortable accommodation near Barrington Tops with day walks in the rainforest

Mon 29th Nov - Fri 3rd Dec: Berrara Beach
Holiday Cottage on the South Coast with beach walks, canoeing on the lagoon and river, cycling beachside and forest roads or just easy bushwalks.

Carry Water!

Leaders and walk participants should take care to carry adequate water for the day. Many areas are still experiencing dry conditions and normal water bearing creeks may be dry.



NEW MEMBERS

Training Weekend at Coolana 14th 15th August

Sixteen new members attended the training weekend at Coolana with Patrick, Tony and Bill. An instructive and very pleasant time was had by all. Judy and Colin Barnes joined us for happy hour and dinner.



Some of our new members (plus Tony at the back) enjoying a break in the rain forest creek at Coolana

Recommended Walks for New Members

The following walks are classed as Easy and suitable for those who have recently joined the Club. Full details and contacts can be found in the Spring Walks Programme.



Sunday 5th Sept: Parramatta Dam

Take the River Cat to Parramatta for an easy walk. Suitable for New Members doing their first walk and great chance to meet and socialise with other club members and talk about future walks.

Saturday 11th Sept Blue Labyrinth

The Oaks - Woodford Range - Wheel Gully - Kanuka Brook - Red Hands Ridge. Some off track. Beautiful pools. Party limit. 14 km

Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon

SBW has purchased an EPIRB So, Leaders, if you would like to take it for a walk give Leigh a ring on 8920 2386 and arrange to collect it.

Saturday 11th Sept Mt York in Blue Mtns

Walk in the steps of Governor Macquarie. This walk is loaded with history and suitable for New Members and those wanting a reasonably paced easy walk.

The next one is more difficult but is a good preparation for a qualifying walk.

Saturday 25th Sept: Gordon to Narrabeen

Gordon Station - St Ives - Middle Harbour Creek - Belrose - Deep Creek - Elanora Heights - Narrabeen Lagoon & beach for buses. Finish 5.00 pm. Get to know your city - be surprised at the extent of attractive bush, with scenic lookouts, all within urban surroundings. The perfect preparatory walk for a Q walk!

Weekend Walking Gear for Hire

The club now has a small pool of weekend walking equipment available for hire at reasonable rates..

Contact: Geoff McIntosh 9419 4619

SOCIAL NOTES - September Blurb

Hi Everyone,

OK, so my great secret has been found out. The joys of deadlines and the magic of the printed word has forced me to reveal the great mystery that is how I write my social blurb saying how great an event was, before it actually happens! Alas, as they say, 'the truth is out there.'

So for something completely different, this month I'm not going to say how great the games night was in August, how we all sat around competing against each other (but heck, SBW aren't a competitive lot!... but by the way, what's your fastest time up Blackhorse??). Neither am I going to say how nice the wine, port or chocolate was or who was daring enough to call Open Misere (just to try a different spelling this month...the right one!) in the 500 playoffs, or even how many people turned up... or didn't!

Rather, I'm going to use this month to say keep an eye peeled for the Spring Social program with a VERY special guest speaker, a theatre night at the clubrooms (suggestions welcome) and an environmental update!

Also, I'm going to use this month to settle the record (and answer a few queries from fellow walkers) that no, I lay no claim or responsibility for the other content on this page, i.e. the jokes. [OK Caro I'll accept responsibility for the jokesEd]

So take care out there guys, look after each other and I hope to see you at a social night real soon. Cheers

Caro

Social Programme - September:

- Wed 1st 7pm **Committee Meeting**
Committee members and observers welcome
- Wed 8th 7 pm **Biennial General Meeting**
SBW is YOUR club. Come along and hear what's been happening in the club over the last 6 months. Get involved!
- Wed 8th 8pm **Introduction to SBW**
Learn all the important information needed to join the club.
- Wed 15th 8 pm **Special Guest Speaker - SUE FEAR**
Mountaineer, Adventurer & 1st Australian Woman to climb Everest. This is a night to remember! Not only will you have the opportunity to hear a great speaker share about her adventurous life and see some dramatic images, but you will also hear how you can join her on the trip of a lifetime in 2005!

AND LAST OF ALL !

Figure This Out:



At Phoenix Sky Harbour Airport today a man, later discovered to be a public school teacher was arrested trying to board a flight while in possession of a ruler, a protractor, a setsquare, a slide rule, and a calculator. At a morning press conference, Attorney General John Ashcroft said he believes the man is a member of the notorious al-gebra movement. He is being charged by the FBI with carrying weapons of math instruction.

"Al-gebra is a fearsome cult," Ashcroft said. "They desire average solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on tangents in a search of absolute value. They use secret code names like 'x' and 'y' and refer to themselves as 'unknowns', but we have determined they belong to a common denominator of the axis of medieval with coordinates in every country. As the Greek philanderer Isosceles used to say, 'there are 3 sides to every triangle'.

When asked to comment on the arrest, President Bush said, "If God had wanted us to have better weapons of math instruction, He would have given us more fingers and toes."

True Love?



A man came down with the flu and was forced to stay home one day. He was glad for the interlude, because it taught him how much his wife loved him.

She was so thrilled to have him around, that when the mailman arrived, she ran out and yelled, "My husband's home! My husband's home!"

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.

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.

Fax: 9980 6009 (phone 9484 6636 first)
billholland@bigpond.com

Closing date for submissions to the September issue of themagazine is Monday 13th September

“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

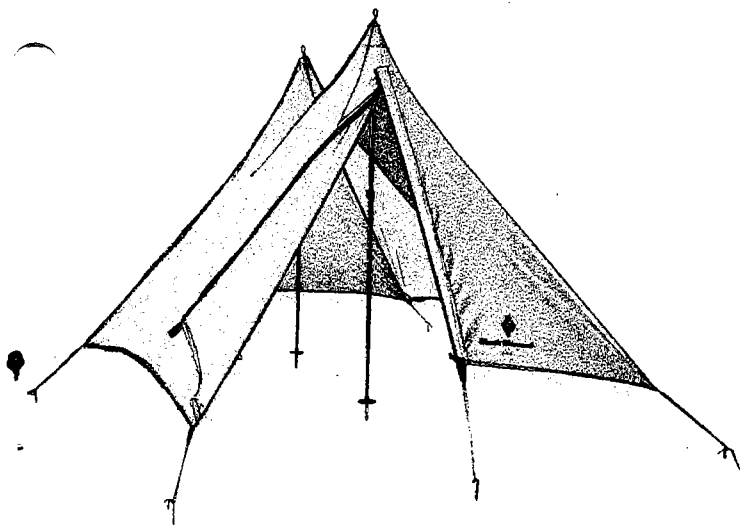
then move up to **Black Diamond**, exclusive to **Paddy Pallin**.



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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