

ALAN P. RICHY

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



OCTOBER 2005



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OCTOBER 2005

Issue No. 851

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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.

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Opinions expressed in this magazine are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc.

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About Our Club

The Sydney Bush Walkers 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

Website www.sbw.org.au

Office Bearers

President:	Maurice Smith
Vice-President:	Rosemary MacDougal
Treasurer:	Tony Marshall
Secretary:	Leigh McClintock
Walks Secretary:	Ian Thorpe
Social Secretary	Kathy Gero
Membership Secretary	Ron Watters
New Members Secretary:	Grace Martinez
Conservation Secretary:	Bill Holland
Magazine Editor:	Bill Holland
Committee Members	
	Caro Ryan Peter Love
Delegate to Confederation:	
	Jim Callaway Pam Campbell

Contact the Committee:

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8920 2388 (h)	mcclintock@pacific.net.au
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Members Secretary:	Ron Watters
0419 617 491	wattersr@bigpond.net.au
New Members Secretary:	Grace Martinez
9948 6238	g.martinez@bigpond.com

Vale Pat Harrison

Former SBW member Pat Harrison died in Sydney on August 11th after a short illness.

Ray Hookway pays tribute to Pat Harrison on Page 5.

The Half Yearly General Meeting.

The meeting began at around 2000 with Maurice in the chair and around 17 members present. Apologies were tendered for Don Finch, Ray Hookway and Helen and George Gray.

The minutes of the previous meeting were not available, so Maurice promised an appropriate grovel in propitiation for the oversight. The jury is still out on that one. Reasonably enough, there were no matters arising from the minutes. No items of correspondence were presented to the meeting.

The two motions on notice were put to the vote. The one seeking to add the Secretary of the Communication sub-Committee to the Management Committee was lost with relatively little debate. The one to raise the minimum age for membership to 18 years was passed.

The Treasurer's report to end August indicated that we have received income of \$26,814, spent \$23,471, and are on budget.

The meeting was then thrown open to general debate and the first topic turned out to be walks grading systems. The debate seemed to go along the usual lines, with people who were either familiar with, or had an interest in, a particular system arguing it's merits and reporting the difficulties they experienced with the alternative system. Ron Watters even revealed a fondness for a somewhat more complex, and precise, system but fortunately did not push it. There was one opinion that listing a long string of detail in the walk description, including the number of cappuccino stops was really a bit over the top. We even drifted over to the mention of pattern test walks and the various attempts to define the minimum requirements for these but this did not really lead anywhere.

Ron Watters advised the meeting that George Mawer has proposed a mentoring system for new leaders. Ron also provided information on the activities of the electronic communications sub-committee. One is a proposal to merge the various databases used within the club into a single database and locate this on an ISP (Internet Service Provider) server to improve security by controlling access. The committee intends to make a presentation regarding this proposal to users in late October, though their definition of users seems unclearly defined at this time.

Gretel Woodward provided information regarding a grant application that would involve conservation volunteers in the re-vegetation of the river flats. Details of this will have appeared elsewhere in the magazine. A development application for the installation of a composting toilet at Coolana is expected to be lodged within a month.

There was also some debate on the merits and costs of the present personal accident insurance policy. Bill Holland maintained that the total costs of the scheme have increased significantly and that the club needs to review possible alternatives. Wilf, on the other hand, holds the view that the Confederation policy represents good value.

If there was any general business I guess that must have been it. The meeting closed at 2132. *BarryWallace*

Letter to the Editor

Energetic Walking

I found the attached interesting article in the 'Science' periodical *. I wonder when someone will attempt to put a device in shoes to create stored electricity in some way. After all our feet not only swing along but there is a certain amount of pressure exerted on the sole as each foot takes our entire body weight when we move along. Anyway the energy could be used to power torches, communications or cooking apparatus. There is always someone with a better idea but that idea may need a spark to set it off.

This maybe something you could include in instalments for our magazine.

Regards

Karen Simpson

* *The lengthy and interesting article appeared in "Science" magazine and due to copyright limitations cannot be reproduced in full in this magazine. However, the full article can be found on the web at www.sciencemag.org. The introduction to the article is shown below Ed*

Generating Electricity While Walking with Loads

Lawrence C. Rome, Louis Flynn, Evan M. Goldman,
Taeseung D. Yoo

We have developed the suspended-load backpack which converts mechanical energy from the vertical movement of carried loads (weighing 20 to 38 kilograms) to electricity during normal walking [generating up to 7.4 watts, or a 300-fold increase over previous shoe devices (20 milliwatts).

Unexpectedly, little extra metabolic energy (as compared to that expended carrying a rigid back-pack) is required during electricity generation. This is probably due to a compensatory change in gait or loading regime, which reduces the metabolic power required for walking. This electricity generation can help give field scientists, exzplorers, and disaster-relief workers freedom from the heavy weight of replacement batteries and thereby extend their ability to operate in remote areas.

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. Photos should be of good resolution suitable for black and white reproduction.

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

Telephone: 9484 6636 Email:

billholland@bigpond.com

Editors Note



The magazine this month reflects an earlier than normal finish as your Editor packs his bags and disappears into the twilight, on holidays. So, there are some regular features missing; such as "From the Committee Room" (the Committee meeting has yet to take place at time of writing) Don Finch's "Coolana Notes", the Confederation Report, the usual welcome to New Member and the Social comments.

And, Barry Wallace's Walk Notes are missing. I believe he received the leaders walk reports after some delay but it was too late to meet my closing deadline.

Still there is some consolation in the number of walk reports and the return of Barry's meeting notes; if only to cover the six monthly meeting.

I attended the Mid-Week Walkers gathering in Queensland and had the opportunity to meet some old SBW friends who have relocated to a warmer climate. It brought to mind one of the major benefits of a club like SBW. Good times and good walking companions are not forgotten as the years roll by and even if our older members can no longer walk the wild bush, the great memories remain.

Gordon and Serala Lee, Ian Debert and Joy Hynes pass on their best wished to all club members.

Finally, you may notice that the font size is slightly reduced throughout the magazine. I am interested in your reaction to this - after all, it is your magazine.

Bill Holland

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: Treasurer's Report

Receipts and Payments to September

Receipts

Members Subscriptions	17,251
Prospective Fees	7,025
Interest – Conservation	383
Interest – Coolana	1,140
Interest – General	649
Magazine Advertising	1,200
Donations – Coolana	155
Donations – General	13
Other	232
Investment redemption	15,000
Total	43,047

Payments

Magazine Production	2,121
Magazine Postage	3,742
Magazine Equipment	566
Coolana Rates & Occupancy	1,317
Coolana Maintenance	389
Coolana Equipment	385
Rent – Club Rooms	4,262
Insurance – Public Liability	3,861
Insurance – Personal Accident	2,508
Affiliation – Confederation	2,255
Postage, Phone & Internet	1,744
Administration	2,051
Transfer to investments	15,000
Total	40,231

Cash surplus **2,816**

Closing Bank balance **14,419**

Tony Marshall

Gordon's Maps - Make an Offer !

Gordon Lee is recovering from a knee operation and during a recent visit he admitted that in his 80th year his walking days may well and truly be over, at least in his favourite walking areas in NSW.

So Gordon passed his collection of 1:25000 CMA maps to me and asked that any proceeds from sale of these maps be donated to Coolana.

What an opportunity!

All you have to do is make an offer - the highest reasonable offer gets approx 50 maps; they include the popular areas around Sydney, Central Coast, Kosciuszko, and New Zealand.

Send in your offer to me by email to billholland@bigpond.com or phone on 9484 6636.

Are you on the SBW Email List?

Once a month, we send out a friendly email to SBW Members and Prospectives highlighting current social events and reminders etc

If you'd like to be added to the list, simply send an email to: social@sbw.org.au. If you have changed your email address please let us know.



Message from President Maurice

Well the September 2005 six monthly general meeting has come and gone. This meeting had two parts to it. The first part dealt with two proposals to change the club's constitution.

The first proposal was to add the web-master or Electronic Communications Secretary to the club's management committee. This proposal was lost, I think more than anything because there are already too many management committee positions, adding this one would not improve the management of the club.

The proposed change to the constitution dealt with the minimum age at which a person may become a full member of the club, as distinct from a prospective member. The proposal was accepted and the minimum age for full membership is now 18 years. However, people younger than 18 may still participate in club activities, but only as visitors. Visitors less than 18 years of age may continue to participate in club activities with the consent of the activity leader and provided that they are directly supervised by their parent or guardian.

Due to the Magazine Editor's holiday schedule (how come he can have holidays) this column was written before the October 2005 committee meeting so there is not a lot to talk about except for the special meeting to be held on 26 October by the Electronic Communications Sub-Committee (ECS). When we formed the ECS earlier this year one of the principal objectives for it was to reform the databases that are used in the management of the club. The management committee has approved in principle a proposal from the ECS to consolidate those databases. It is expected by the ECS that the proposed consolidation will in the medium term significantly improve the administration of the club. The purpose of the meeting is to consult with all the club's officers and leaders and anyone else who either may be impacted by the proposed developments or else who has an interest in the subject. Watch your email inbox for further details of the meeting on 26 October.

That's it for me for this month.

Maurice Smith



**Don't Miss a Great Night
16th November**

**"Food Groups for Extended Walks"
Maybe a Christmas Walk**

What are "Food Groups" all about ?

Ever been invited into a food group and were unsure what to prepare? Looking to enhance your wilderness experience with an interesting, wholesome easy to prepare and light weight evening meal?

The November social is your chance to discuss meal preparation with three experienced wilderness cooks. And taste the result of a meal they will cook on the evening.

Bring some happy hour nibbles to share. The club will provide red and white wine.

Memories Of Pat Harrison.

Roma Patrick "Pat" Harrison.

19/07/1916-11/08/2005

Former SBW member Pat Harrison died in Sydney on September 11th after a short illness.

Pat's love of the bush developed during his childhood in Coraki in Northern NSW and on moving to Sydney he made many private walks prior to joining the CBC, the Kamerukas and then the SBW.

Pat had a deep interest in the early history of Bushwalking and with Wilf Hilder re-formed one of the early Sydney walking clubs, the Warragamba.

Pat's walks were always in interesting country and were well planned, many being in areas not often frequented at the time such as on the Tonali tableland.

On becoming Walks Secretary he would fill the empty spaces on the program with challenging walks, find people who he was sure could lead them and convince them that they could and should.

Pat loved maps and would buy two copies of each, one to be folded for regular use and one carefully stored in its pristine state at home, to be pored over as he planned future walks. Pat's ability to visualise the country that he planned to walk over was phenomenal. On a trip that he led in the Cross Cut Saw area of Victoria, which he had been dreaming of doing for years, he didn't require maps and when there he was as familiar with the country as with his local suburb. Pat treated his maps like jewels and on walks put them away frustratingly carefully after each reference.

A photo was shown in a Power Point presentation at his funeral, of Pat heavy pack on back, being piggy backed across the Capertee River by Don Finch. Don was the

leader of the walk and had forgotten his map. The piggy-back was to negotiate a look at Pat's map - some price to pay, Pat being no light weight.

Don featured in another memorable car-swap walk along the Capertee. Both parties were supposed to meet at the junction of the Capertee and the Wolgan for a common camp. Don and Snow Brown, delayed leaving Sydney on Friday night and were to join Pat's group on the Saturday but decided to camp with the other party Saturday night. They never caught us up and were forced to hurry back to Newnes via the pipe line pass, still managing to arrive there before the other party, who had wandered up Annie Rowan creek en route up the Wolgan.

Pat had a wide knowledge of native flora and would collect samples of any plant he did not recognise and take it to the Botanic Gardens for identification.

Pat also had an excellent knowledge of Classical Literature and Australian prose and poetry. He could always find an appropriate quotation to cover a situation when walking, or when writing his many articles for the SBW or Federation Bushwalker magazines. He was a man of principle and although in a protected industry, (PMG telegraphist), when war broke out in the Pacific he wanted to 'do his bit', resigned, and as an infantryman, saw active service in various Pacific areas.

I treasure the memories of the many walks and fishing trips I shared with Pat and I enjoyed visiting him at his home. His interest in Bushwalking remained to the end. Farewell Pat.

Ray Hookway

WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

Wet, wild and wonderful

Calling all adventurers

Local bushwalkers know that summer is the best time to enjoy the **wild rivers, gentle creeks, thundering waterfalls, carpets of flowers and spectacular storms** for which our region is famous. They know that warm rain and cosy rock shelters mean that comfort is never far away.

Our wet season used to bring us groups of adventurers keen to see and experience the best that our region has to offer. Times change. Other places came into fashion. One of the best wilderness experiences the world has to offer remains almost unknown.

We love it and we want to take you there. We offer everything from trips with full accommodation to major expeditions. We give you the tropical summer the way it was meant to be experienced — on foot.

Visit our website or ask us for more information.

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



Conservation Notes

This month brought home to me the importance of the world's environment and its effect on our daily lives. Hurricane Katrina and its sister Rita wreaked havoc in the southern United States and we have been warned that tropical storms in Australia will become more severe as a result of global warming. Our summers will be warmer, winters dryer. Snow cover retreat.

And yet our Federal Government continues its ostrich-like stance and pretends it really is just not happening. We don't need to sign off on the Kyoto Agreement (at least not until we are told to by George W) and the earth is not really warming up, and the drought isn't happening and if it is, it has happened before etc etc.

Somehow, concerns about the environment and conservation just don't matter any more. At least that's the impression gained from the actions of our Federal Government. Having cut the level of funding assistance to conservation bodies they now are considering changing the tax deductibility status of donations to these bodies if they undertake what the government perceives to be any form of "political activity".. Presumably, protesting about governmental failures to protect woodlands, old growth forest and coastal environments would be seen as "political activity".

Bill Holland

Conservation News

Tri-State Alps Park for NSW

News release 29th September from NPA

Today the NSW Minister for the Environment was presented with a plan to unify the alpine and sub-alpine national parks of Victoria, NSW and ACT as a single Australian Alps National Park.

The New South Wales, Victorian and ACT National Parks Associations presented a limited edition volume to Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus, today. The volume presents a compelling case for a proposed Australian Alps National Park with stunning pictures and evocative words.

'The existing national parks cover almost all of the alpine and sub-alpine environments of mainland Australia, and this proposal would unify protected areas of international significance and profile,' said Andrew Cox, Executive Officer of NPA of NSW.

'It's important that good national park management doesn't stop at state borders. There needs to be a greater willingness to solve problems without these artificial barriers. Visitor management, fire management and weed and feral animal control will all benefit from treating the area as one great Australian Alps National Park.'

'An Australian Alps National Park would include Kosciuszko and Brindabella national parks in NSW, Snowy River and Alpine national parks in Victoria and Namadgi National Park in ACT,' said Mr Cox.

Coalition flip-flops on Brigalow Decision

(NPA News release)

The Coalition's commitment to overturn the historic Brigalow decision marks a serious policy back flip for the NSW Opposition. In a statement released yesterday, Shadow Primary Industries, Minister Duncan Gay, stated that the coalition would overturn the decision to create new national parks in the Brigalow region.

This comes just weeks after Shadow Environment Spokesperson, Michael Richardson, reassured the National Parks Association's AGM on 6 August, that the Coalition is not going to undo any existing national parks if elected.

"The Coalition have been like Jekyll and Hyde on this issue. They have one position for environmentalists and another for the National Party constituency. How can a party be trusted when they make such wildly conflicting statements" said Andrew Cox, Executive Officer of the National Parks Association of NSW.

"It is alarming that the Liberal Party is allowing the Nationals to dictate Coalition environmental policy. The National Party's position on land clearing, threatened species and revoking national parks will leave the Coalition's environmental credibility in tatters" he said.

"It is important that the Coalition comes clean on this issue. The public deserves to know whether the Coalition is a party that supports genuine environmental protection or the revoking and destruction of our precious national parks", said Andrew Cox

Horse riders Seek Access To Degrade Kosciuszko

As the closing date for public submissions on the draft plan for Kosciuszko National Park nears, environment groups are concerned that the push for more horseriding in the park has ignored many important facts.

"Horse riders make up just 5 per cent of the park's users but they are one of the main causes of damage to the park", said Keith Muir director of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness

"Between October 2001 to April 2002 there were 1,140 commercial and private horse parties using the Northern Plains of the park. These levels are high enough to cause unacceptable damage to the natural environment. Horse camps, such as those around Mackeys and Cooimbil huts have replaced native grasslands with exotic weeds, such as oat grass and clover", said Mr Muir.

"Pinch River horse camp, in the south of the Park, is a total mess of weeds and camping filth. The camp assists illegal access into the adjoining Pilot wilderness. Wilderness is protected under the NSW Wilderness Act because it represents the state's last remaining most pristine environments. It should not be subjected to the environmental degradation arising from horse riding," Mr Muir said.

Coolana



A shortage of time, with the Editor advancing the deadline, meant that Don Finch could not prepare his report on Coolana this month.

Bush Regeneration:

Are you interested in bush care and plant regeneration? We have a group of people doing a fantastic job of returning degraded former grazing land to its natural state. This is at Coolana, on the grassy flat used for camping, in the rain forested creeks and on the currently

overgrown eastern flat. Our efforts are recognised by grants and assistance provided by the Sydney Catchment Authority.

If you have an interest in plant identification and bush regeneration and would like to join with other interested club members in a social and rewarding day or two (midweek or weekends) please contact Gretel Woodward 9587 8912 or email walkingwilfgretel@bigpond.com.au

Maintenance at Coolana

Are you able to help maintain our wonderful property in the Kangaroo Valley. It needs some gentle care and maintenance. The camping flat and others areas are looking good but we must not let the weeds get out of control in the warmer months ahead. The trees are doing fine but need some supporting attention.

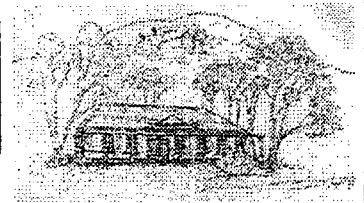
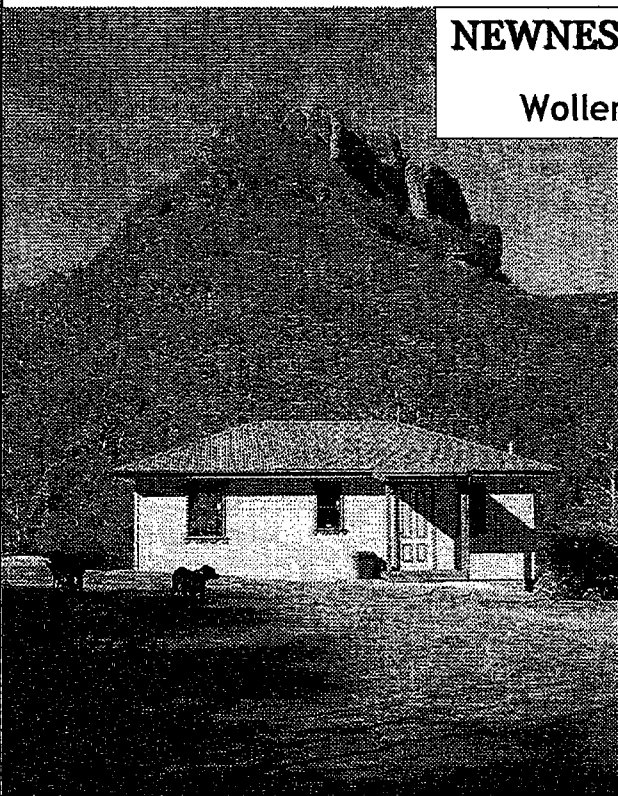
There are other tasks to be done as well. Perhaps you have some skills or just the will to help us. But it's not all work - there is ample time to socialise and enjoy the evening campfire. You family and friends are welcome as well. Weekdays or weekends.

We need to organise mowing teams (use our on-site mowers say one weekend every month or so) and get the road and site ready for our new toilet.

The next maintenance weekend is scheduled for 12th, 13th November. If you can assist please phone Don Finch (m) 0418 417 593 or email finchros@bigpond.com

NEWNES HOTEL CABINS

Wollemi National Park



Surrounded by the wilderness of Wollemi National Park, spectacular sandstone cliffs and the historic ruins of the former shale oil mining town, **Newnes Hotel Cabins** invite you to stay in their newly completed cabin which offers spectacular views of Mystery Mountain from the front verandah.

This is the ideal base for numerous bushwalks in the area.

Our cabin can accommodate up to 6 people and is equipped with a modern kitchen, bathroom, 1 bedroom with a queen sized bed, and four single beds that double as comfortable seats during the day. Built with ecologically sustainable goals in mind, this spacious cabin also suits the requirements of disabled guests.

We also offer accommodation in our on-site caravan and campground.

Visit us at our website at www.lisp.com.au/~newnes or give us a ring on Ph.: (02) 63 551 247

NEW MEMBERS NEWS

Congratulations To Our New Full Members: Terence Biggs and Sue Bucknell

5th, 6th November Coolana Training Weekend

Training in Navigation, First Aid and Bushcraft

This weekend is ideal for New Members. It offers a pleasant social weekend at Coolana in the beautiful Kangaroo Valley.

As you can see from this photo there are ample opportunities to relax and enjoy the bush surroundings.

We can assist with tents and other camping gear and there is a shelter on site. SBW members are also encouraged to attend and assist with training and social activities around the campfire on Saturday evening. Activities start on Saturday morning and finish about 4pm on Sunday.

Phone:

Bill Holland 9484 6636 (m) 0418 210290

billholland@bigpond.com

Patrick James 95679998 pjames@idx.com.au



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

Sleeping mat: \$5 Ground sheet: \$2

Tent: \$20 Complete kit \$50

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

Equivalent refundable deposit required

Contact: Ron Watters 0419 617 491

Car Costs:



With petrol prices currently very high, and getting higher, the advantages of sharing transport costs become more obvious. Passengers should check with driver and be prepared to contribute to the cost of getting to and from a walk.

Water Is Very Important !



Please remember that walking in summer requires ample intake of water. In these drought conditions good quality water may be very scarce. Consumption on a hot day walk is between 3 - 4 litres. Much more if you are carrying a heavy week-end pack.

EPIRB – Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon



SBW has an EPIRB for use by club members, in particular walks leaders.

The GME Electrophone MT310 is a self contained radio transmitter, which transmits an internationally recognised distress signal on the aviation emergency frequencies for a minimum of 48 hours. These frequencies are monitored not only by commercial and military aircraft but also by the COSPAS/SARSAT satellite systems. Weight 185g

The Club Secretary, Leigh McClintock will manage the EPIRB. So if you would like to take the EPIRB for a walk give Leigh a ring on 8920 2386 and arrange to collect it.

Camp Fires and Stoves



All members are advised to check the restrictions on lighting fires in intended camping areas. Be aware that in coming months high to extreme bush fire danger will be experienced throughout much of NSW. This means that fires in the open are restricted and may only be used under certain conditions eg. a camp fire for cooking purposes. However, most national parks, reserves and forest areas around Sydney have Local Fire Bans which mean no fires of any nature are permitted.

Total Fire Bans may be declared on days of extreme fire danger and fires in the open, including cooking and camp fires, are totally prohibited for the period of the ban.

Lighting any fire in the open on a day of "Total Fire Ban" may lead to a fine of \$5,000 and six months imprisonment. This applies to any naked flame including camp fires and camping stoves.

THE WALKS PAGES

Due to the early close this month Barry Wallace's **Walk Notes** are not included. Barry received the details of leader's walk reports too late to meet the editor's deadline.

Walk Notices:

Week Long pre-Christmas Walk.

10th to 17th December (Saturday To Saturday)

Starting from Cradle Mountain (the northern end) walking to Lake St. Clair (the southern end).

Barn Bluff, Lake Will, d'Alton and Fergusson Falls, Hartnett Falls, The Acropolis and the Labyrinth, and optional summit Cradle Mountain and/or Mount Ossa!

A chance to complete this famous trek in (Tassie) summer conditions before the Christmas hordes descend. An eight day itinerary to give time to explore not only the track itself but also most of its spectacular side trips (dependent of course on weather conditions).

Direct flights are available from Sydney to Launceston on the Friday evening and out again from Hobart to Sydney on the Sunday or Monday. The bus connections to and from the walk fit in with these times.

Leader : Susie Arnott 9955 1759 (leave message if unattended) Group size strictly limited so get in early!!

Blue Mountains National Park

There is restricted access to walking tracks in Wentworth Falls area, due to work on National Pass

This week, and until further notice, contractors are working at the eastern end of National Pass, at the top of the Grand Staircase. Work at this site will affect access to the base of Wentworth Falls, Rocket Point, National Pass and Wentworth Pass. In the interests of public safety, access to walkers will be closed for varying periods each day while the contractors are working.

Monday - Friday, the worksite can only be crossed at the following times:

Before 7.00am Between 10.00 - 10.15 am, 11.30 - 11.40 am , 1.00 - 1.30pm, 2.30 - 2.40pm , after 4.00pm
Access restrictions will not apply weekends and public holidays.



Mid Week Walkers:

The weather was warm and the Glass House Mountain beckoned us. Seven of us made the trip to Queensland in late September and it was very worthwhile. Joy Hynes and Ian Debert were excellent hosts and it was nice to see Gordon Lee and Serala again after so many years.

We walked each day in the Glass House Mountains (nothing too adventurous) and returned to happy hour, a swim and dinner at Joy and Ian's home.

This was our last extended activity for the year. The summer months are nearly here and our good intentions of organising more midweek activities have been overtaken by planning for family and festive season occasions.

So we are looking ahead to next year. A few days at Berrara Beach at the end of the school holidays and a week in Lord Howe island comes to mind. Bookings are being finalised and if you would like to join us please advise your interest now so we can include you in our planning.

The Mid-Week walkers are an informal group in SBW who have time to spare for mid-week activities; most of which are shown in the Walks programmes but some are organised at short notice and advised by a monthly newsletter to those who have expressed interest.

If you would like to be included on our mailing list or participate in the activities shown below please phone me on 9484 6636 or send an email to billholland@bigpond.com

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Returns 4pm Mon, Wed, Frid.

Via Starlights, Mittagong & Marulan for

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

Returns 4 pm Tues, Thurs, Sun.

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McDonnell Ranges 2005 (Part 2)

James Swinton

Last month James told us of flying into Alice Springs and driving by bus to start the David Rostron's walk at Ellery Big Hole. This month James tells us about Day 7 to Day 10 where the walk finished at Standley Chasm



Day 7: Spiro and Henry made the porridge and a late rising David proffered advice, later taking over. Concerned that the porridge was not cooked and added more water, so the final product was sloppy. Various speculations ensued about the water quality, the porridges quality, the stirring direction, but Wayne finally revealed the truth: it was David who wrecked breakfast. The rain returned and we scattered and packed up. Proceeded out of the gorge, and turned east over a saddle, with views of Mt. Conway and for the first time walked through live mulga and joined a cattle track expressway. In the morning light I could see a stream of sparkling flies like a fairy trail streaming behind Wayne walking ahead of me. Along the route we counted 15 rocks placed in trees, marking someone's trail.

We stopped briefly at a large pool (157781). The walls were faceted by water that once flowed from the narrow gorge behind. It is so dry now, staggering to contemplate how long that took to form! Later, we stopped for morning tea in a large dry pool (175778). There was a gorge behind whose stream would at times feed the now dry pool. All that remained was a small puddle fed by a trickle from a gorge behind. There was a series of pools up this gorge and we walked up to find a delightful pool covered in duckweed, tasty. Wayne expressed interest in staying longer as the gorge country was intricate and worth exploring. He pondered the possibility of a walking route starting at last night's camp and looping north crossing a saddle and joining this system, ending here.

My back went on me while lifting my pack up. The group had departed and it took me some time to mobilise. Thank God for drugs! Strapped my pack on tight and got going stiffly. The road marked on the map did not exist. Ahead were views of Paisley Bluff. Wayne came back to find me and I rejoined the others. After a short break David asked "every body happy" code for time to go, some retorted "No". "Hugh gorge for lunch...mush you sloths". Groan! Met a couple of Rangers fixing signposts.

One had no hat and the other a baseball cap!! Didn't have much advice about water or route. David promised a swimming hole for lunch "If you follow me". We followed our Moses into the Promised Land. We came across the water tank at the entrance to Hugh Gorge. We passed several reedy dirty pools, not appealing for a swim; the gorge was very wide here. The walls gradually rose to distant vertical walls of red quartzite. Further up the vertical walls came closer, forming a sandy floor valley with river gums. Stopped for a dry lunch in what was once a large pool with vertical rocky walls on one side. Some of us imagined swimming in our promised swimming pool. We imagined lunching in the water, visualised our heads bobbing above the waterline on the distant wall.

Two walkers appeared up the gorge. They stopped and talked, hailed from Melbourne walking from Standley Chasm to Mount Sonder. One had just had heart surgery and the other a very earnest middle aged man with a gear belt holding a GPS, a knife and an EPERB and an old pack like mine. I joked you could pull the transmit button as you fell over a cliff. Noted an incongruous aluminium snow peg on his pack, used as a toilet digger, he retorted.

They informed us of water up stream, which raised our spirits. Said there was little water between here and Standley Chasm. A few hundred meters on we came to a shallow pool, which David promptly swam in. There was a nearby sandy area. David's swim had put us off that pool as a water supply. Peter went further up the narrowing gorge and found a small reedy pool and further a shallow one. Between which we camped (236801). The weather was overcast and the wind rising. We dropped our packs and made our way to Hugh Gorge. The valley widened and our passage up the sandy stony valley floor was easy without our packs. The gorge narrowed and the walls steepened to a drop of 100 meters. Entry to the gorge entailed rock hopping the floor littered with boulders. A sandy foreshore led to the 30-meter long pool filling the gorge. Up there was a group of young people on a climbing tour and a walker from Hobart. Peter scaled the near vertical wall easily and passed over the pool. David and Ken gave a good demonstration of thrutching the wall. The evening was punctuated by concern of rain.

The wind change direction and the gorge became a wind tunnel. Henry's boots were repaired with glue; Grace's toe laceration was irrigated and dressed. She had cut it last night when she got under the tarp with the rain. Kenn's foot infection was improving. By some miracle, my back had completely settled with wearing a pack and walking on uneven surfaces. Greta says bushwalking cures most things. Bob prepared soyaroni pasta and tuna

Day 8: Rotten night for me. I was under the tarp with Grace and Peter; the ground was so irregular I couldn't settle. I was on the windward open side of the fly and got

wet. I dropped the fly to stay dry, I couldn't sleep and by midnight it had cleared and I went outside. I could see Kenn in the distance under his groundsheet. It hosed again and I went back under the tarp for an unpleasant snooze until 0430, when it cleared and I once again departed for the comfort of my prepared sandy bed until, "porridge" was called.

I was the subject of a deal of stick from David on waking, too noisy apparently. I had sat next to him in the rain and he seemed soundly asleep. Should have poured cold water on him while asleep. Henry recounted a story of camping in a sandy creek bed in the MacDonnell's and waking to calls at two in the morning. His friend was calling out that he was wet. It was not raining. Water had percolated up through the sand and was a foot deep.

We proceeded along the very indistinct Larapinta trail when we turned right into the first east valley. We made our way up to Rocky Saddle and rested after the steep climb. Joked about Wayne's newly patched (torn shorts) bum. "Off your arses, let go" David spurred us off down the long descent from the saddle. Here the Larapinta Trail proceeds east to the second main north-south valley Spencer Gorge.

We proceeded down the first such valley much more interesting David informed us, like a Blue Mountains Gully. Found some water for a welcome extended morning tea of fifteen minutes! The day was cool and clear, as it should have been all week. Wayne was finding it hard to forgive David for two days of boring plains walking. Perhaps God will forgive him, as his venerability makes him closer to Him than the rest of us. David retorted that venerability means great experience. Yes, making the same mistakes again and again with practiced alacrity. We could hear Dingos making calls in the distance, and David suggested we sacrifice Wayne and Grace as they were carrying the "most flesh". Up the valley a gorge formed and we passed a huge expanse of drift wood that gave an impression of how much water must pass this way at times.

The gorge narrowed to a four-metre wide slot and we clambered over huge boulders down to what was a dry pool. David and Wayne couldn't recall their prior experience here, thinking it was full then.

Down further was a huge rock fall and a 30-metre long pool at the bottom of the slot. I stripped and swam, as did David, Grace and Wayne, the others went for a climb over the tops on the east side. The water was a pleasant temperature. Wayne declared that this was as prior and David could not remember (venerability). Over the other side we found two lilos and a pump.

We unpacked and sprawled our drying gear and found the matches wet and finally lit a fire and realised the tea and soup was with Spiro. Peter arrived presently. The others took too long and Wayne went looking and after several "dayos", they gradually appeared from three different directions. Had a long and pleasant lunch near the reedy creek until the inevitable... made our way south onto the plain and began trudging in dense mulga. The day had warmed to 26 degrees and progress was slow and

tedious. After a time David decided to cut SE to the road. The route was longer but easier and we were soon at Birthday Waterhole. Dry of course. And made our way to the tank. This was a road head and the area looked like a sandy car park. At the tank we met a solid man from Lismore carrying a 30 kg. pack on his way to Mt. Sonder. He told us that only 37 mm of rain had fallen since May last year. David was keen to get to Mint Bush Spring two or three k's away. Most wanted to stay here. We found a pleasant sandy camp on the creek bank near the road. Kenn did his famous prawn laksa

Day 9: Dewy night, damp bags. A high camp was proposed on Brinkley Bluff for tonight. Sunrise would be a spectacle. Several logistic concerns had to be addressed. Carrying a six-litre water bladder 7 or 8 km from Mint Bush Spring had less appeal. Concern about limited firewood on top. Concern about the changeable weather. Another option was to explore the broken rock bars to the SE of Brinkley Bluff and an adjacent southern valley, and try to find water closer to the Bluff.

Mint Bush Spring was an easy find, a rare trickle of water crossing the track. Turning off the track we found a minor stream trickling down from muddy pools. Cattle had stomped the stream to mud and there was very little level ground. Last night's campsite was far preferable to this unpleasant slot. Worked upstream through scrub to find a tiny pool near the cliff and found a few sprigs of mint! We continued further east along the Larapinta Trail to a point adjacent to our exit point to the south where we cross the plain below Brinkley Bluff and rise into a rocky series of bars to the distant valley.

The day was overcast and a pleasant 20 degrees. Most of us left our packs and proceeded east along the track with impressive views of Brinkley Bluff to the right. David had an interest in revisiting a route up Brinkley around on the north aspect, which was an interesting climb and had water fifteen years ago. Walking along the trail we observed magnificent river gums. The valley narrowed to a gorge, the floor of which was a graveyard. We passed a dead horse and three decaying cattle. Proceeded along the route, but found no water nor did we locate the gorge approach to Brinkley Bluff as David could recall it. Found more cattle damaged mulga, their being so little feed. The views of Brinkley Bluff were magnificent and Henry and I took pictures and being the last to return we were confronted with a three-minute departure call from David, which I stretched, to fifteen minutes. We cut south across the adjacent plain and began a rocky, scrubby ascent up a large gap in the rock.

The weather was looking threatening and I passed a comment about proofing our packs, which I thought might carry more weight given my post-dinner observation earlier in the trip. We followed our venerable leader up the rocky valley through three rocky bars much as Moses led the Israelites to the Promised Land. The land of milk and honey, with promised lunchtime swimming hole, was the valley over the next ridge. A gradual long ascent up the rocky Spinifex valley led us to a lunchtime stop on a rocky saddle. The view to the east while

magnificent, failed to conjure notions of paradise. The foreground was covered with dry Spinifex looking like massive echidnas covering the floor into the distance. On the left was a red east west range forming the north wall of the valley, being transected by three gorges in which David was hoping to find water. Cloud had enveloped the high peaks and rain threatened, so camping on Brinkley Bluff was off. The prospect of not finding water and making our way back to Mint Bush Spring was not a welcome one. We descended the spiky valley in gentle rain to a rocky creek and followed it to the valley floor. On approaching the first gap in the range we came across telltale animal tracks, green and growing trees so water must be near. We found several pools of water under a lot of leaf litter and rubbish but further up to the wall there was no pool to be found. Moses had not delivered a lunchtime swim. We set up camp (361760) and collected firewood and water during which it began to rain quite heavily. A group of hearty souls stood around the fire in the rain. Presumably the rate of evaporation exceeded the rainfall. The weather waxed and waned while Kenn prepared RLB and Wayne did a vegetable pasta dish, then Rosie her colourful speckled fruit. Dinner was a particularly luxurious affair as Wayne graciously brought dinner to our tarps and took away the dishes as the rain was bucketing down. Even collected runoff water in billies to supplement our supplies. The weather came and went and a pleasant evening was had around the fire.

Day 10: It rained most of the night and it blows when it rains. I stayed mostly dry with my feet in Graces Qantas plastic pack bag and a jacket over me. The weather was extremely changeable making it difficult to plan our trip up to Brinkley Bluff. Overcast conditions would obscure the views. After porridge we made our way east down the valley.

After breaking camp we proceeded east down the valley through the usual scrub and made our way up a creek which became more luxuriously vegetated as we approached the third gap in the east-west range known as Gerries Canyon. We proceeded 200 meters up the creek to a wooded gorge containing a few pools, though no lunch time swim, as promised. The sky was still cloudy and David had not decided where to go from here. There was no obvious campsite at hand, so those who wanted to rest stayed here and the remainder proceeded to climb Gerries Canyon and make our way to Brinkley Bluff. David was ahead of the group declaring not to take lunch; I took time to collect mine. Why not savour the views, as the weather may clear! The climb up the canyon was the trickiest so far. David demonstrated the art of thrutching during several of the stages while paying particular attention to tutoring Grace. I am getting better with practice, learning from a grand master thrutcher. He wondered how they got the late Bill Caskey up here with a pack on during his first ever bush walk. Quite a climb!

We proceeded north across the intervening valley and climbed up onto the east-west spur to carry us up to Brinkley Bluff. On top the day had completely cleared to spectacular views in all directions. The route was (an

indistinct, as usual) part of Larapinta Trail running along the spur towards the Bluff obscured in the distance by intervening hills. Stopping to take in the views delayed David's plan of a rapid ascent as the evolving spectacle had to be savoured. The view to the east was reminiscent of a red, dry, spinifexed southwest Tasmania. A twisting tilted mountain range rising abruptly from the plains. Brinkley Bluff (1209m.) was a large mound as we approached. On top was a large cairn reminiscent of Mount Bogongs. There we met two walkers from WA, who were walking from Mt. Sonder to Alice Springs, via an Ellery Big Hole food drop, with 30 kg. packs!

Spent several hours watching the changing valley light. Shared my lunch and returned behind the others with Kenn. I slipped descending a steep slope and fell into a Spinifex. Stopped to remove spikes from my shirt and arms. Later I had missed my watch, back tracked, couldn't find the spot! We made a one star camp further along the dry creek (384765). Carried in water. The only appeal was a red cliff sunset. Special thanks to Kenn for carrying olives, nuts and nibbles and to Wendy for cashews to have with RLB. Welcome on a long trip. Kenn's feet were improving, reglued Henrys boots, Wendy's allergic conjunctivitis and eye swelling was settling.

Day 11: Dewy night. Dried my bag in front of the fire, before bed. Covered it with a plastic and jacket to no avail, fortunately a breeze sprang up during the night and dried it. Only Bob put up his fly. Some chose to exit the valley up the spinifexed hills, a few went up the creek at the east end of the valley. This turned into a treat of rocky falls and turns. We continued to climb up to the rocky spur we ascended yesterday thinking the Larapinta Trail was on top! From the high vantage point we could easily see the trail below and yelled to those below to turn right. In this section it had dropped off the ridge. Various regrouped for morning tea and a dry out. I began talking to the spinifex. Rosemary said I need civilisation, only six kilometres away.

Interesting to hear about the walker's lives: Greta was going to run for Parliament and how Wayne had topped the state in Engineering. Made our way to Bridle Path Lookout for an early lunch. Once a horse trail ran up here from Standley Chasm.

Grace and Peter left us there. The call of meat pies was too strong! We made our way down a long valley and then followed its creek along until we joined the sealed road to Standley Chasm where the walk finished. The café had no pies! Only Kenn went into the Chasm. You pay a fee to local Aborigines who administer the site, incidentally outside the National Park.

The group wish to extend a vote of thanks to David for organising the walk and for leading a large group of people safely through such inhospitable conditions. Finding water was fundamental to the trips success. Wayne and David worked well together navigating and Wayne was prepared to follow a map to be certain of our location.

The Club must foster the tradition of long trips.

James Swinton

SBW Kimberley Stroll 29/5/05-12/6/05

Richard Darke

Participants: Rosemary McDonald (*Inspirational Leader*), Mike (*the diver*) & Susie (*aquacruiser*) Arnott, Col (*Fireman*) Atkinson, Richard (*5 course dinner*) Darke, Bryn (*tick removal specialist and snakespert*) & Kathy (*swamp swimmer*) Lynar, Marie (*Doc*) Rose, Janet (*Thespian and mediator*) Sinclair, Rick (*Herr Professor Rockologist*) Symons, and, last but by no means least, local leaders John & Ann (*never lost with us*) Storey

With 24 hours to go before the flight to Darwin & on to Kununurra, many of us were still in a desperate last minute panic, finishing food dehydrating, and squeezing gear into our packs. Excitement at the big adventure about to begin was high. We were blessed with a terrific group which clicked from day 1, plus blue skies, starkly, ruggedly beautiful scenery; and altogether it turned out to be a top notch trip.

Rather than carry food for 12 nights, we chose the best of both worlds by splitting the walk into two seven-day excursions, the first to the Carr-Boyd Range, just outside Kununurra, and the second an hour's drive west onto the Gibb River Road, in the formidable looking Cockburn Range with its massive escarpments. Between the two trips, we over-nighted back in Kununurra, with the comfort of showers, cold beer, and supermarkets for restocking.

But before starting the walk, we played tourists, enjoying a 6 hour boat trip 55 km up the bountiful, year round Ord River to the Argyle Irrigation Dam, and back to Kununurra. A very cruisy introduction to the Kimberley!

The Carr-Boys

At 7.00 next morning, we gathered at the airport for the 15 minute helicopter shuttle into the Carr-Boys. From the air, the 350m high range looks forbiddingly parched and rocky, thinly treed, with little indication of the gorges, cliff-lines, waterfalls and crystal-clear, rainforest-fringed pools beneath. No hint either of the spinifex covered loose rocks and tricky footing we were to face while balancing full packs, on the ground below. But what a dramatic way to start a wilderness walk! As the choppers thudded off into the distance, we shouldered our 18 kg packs, excitedly chattering at the prospect of adventures to come. We were blessed with 26 degree weather, low humidity, and a cooling southerly breeze. Perfect walking weather.

Thus started 6 days of what can only be described as leisurely-paced walking. I think the maximum daily distance was 7 km, and the total distance over the 7 days around 30km, so we had ample time to jump into every swimming hole we passed. There is not a lot of rock art in the Carr-Boys, but we saw some the first day, along with evidence of stone tool manufacture. Camp 1 was a series of rock platforms surrounding pools and a set of rapids. That evening was cool enough for thermals, giving your scribe the opportunity to model his newly-acquired garishly-bright yellow, red, blue and black striped thermals (I still can't

believe they were so cheap in that sale). A highlight of dinner was camembert cheese rounds stuffed with apricot jam and heated in foil in the fire, then served on crackers. Heavenly with port! Then to bed under the stars, with a wonderful cool breeze and the need for just an unzipped summer weight bag. Then up at first light at 5.00, to the dawn chorus of unseen birds, the crackle of the fire started by Fireman Col, and the singing of the morning billy

Day 2 was the Day of the Lost Glasses (Bryn's and Richard's – by the way I have the map reference to locate mine, I know exactly where they are, so the next party going into the Carr-Boys, would you kindly retrieve them for me?), and the start of a daily litany of "whose stolen my...has anyone seen my...oh, here it is" comments relating to many other items which seemed to be repeated daily! Camp 2 was above a series of 3 high waterfalls and deep pools which we were able to explore without packs. Dinner was Ro's lamb curry, followed by marshmallows, and the last of the wine.

Day 3 we staggered, wait for it, 5 km to Camp 3, which was perched high on top of dramatic 200m cliffs, at the spot where John and Ann were married 3 years ago. What a romantic spot! The red cliffs turned to burnished copper in the dying sun. And a walk to the bottom of the escarpment led to John and Ann's secret Princess Pool, exact location not to be disclosed, and rarely visited. It was a very beautiful spot, with considerable ambience, the water crystal clear, with a green tinge, fed by hot springs and surrounded by luxuriant vegetation. It had a rock platform perfect for Mike to show off his diving skills. The sort of spot which, closer to civilisation, would be a national park, with a road going in, and totally ruined. We were privileged to be shown such a place.

The evenings around the fire were characterised by trivia



quizzes, mind puzzles, riddles, jokes and card games. Nevertheless, it got dark at 5.15pm, and most of us were asleep by 8.00 each night.

Day 4 was a gruelling 7 km. We actually came across some footprints – whose could they be? Much speculation. Ro was showing off her navigation skills today (“It’s OK, we’re not lost”). What does all that green shading on the map mean?” Her leadership skills to the fore: “Right. Ready in 2 minutes” (chatter, chatter). “OK, we really must go in 3 minutes”. “Everybody ready? We are leaving in 3 seconds”. That’s what we needed. Discipline. Decisive leadership. Trouble was, a certain person (she knows who she is) can’t hear, because she is still talking, gaiters off, pack contents still strewn over the rocks!

Camp 4 was Camp Mutiny. John having cracked the whip for a full-on 7km day, we got to a beautiful creek, at which point the tail end of the group decided this was where they were going to stop for the night. Having downed packs, it took determined persuasion by John, to convince them that around the corner was an even better campsite. He was right of course, the only trouble with this site being the water leeches in the creek. Yes, leeches (or that’s what we thought they were at the time. OK, so they weren’t in fact leeches, but boy did they wiggle). When your scribe got out of the water, and found himself covered by hundreds of them, he conducted what can only be described as a frantic leech dance. They were lodged in the most embarrassing of places, but there was no shortage of help to get them off!

And so one day merged pleasantly into the next. A highlight of Day 6 was another of John’s secret special places – The Playground. This was a 5 star series of pools, falls and natural water slides in a narrow, smooth-walled canyon. We had a happy time jumping and diving in, sliding down rapids and over small falls. A very photogenic spot too. It was hard to tear ourselves away to finish the 6km journey to Camp 6.

We had a hilarious creek crossing along the way, after Janet had fallen in. Kath proudly informed Janet that while her (Kath’s) boots had got wet on the crossing, she had managed to keep the rest of her dry. The rest of the party, who had already negotiated the hidden swamp Kath was now approaching, neglected to warn her of what was coming, and watched in fascination and anticipation as she tumbled in, still talking, and cried tears of mirth at her predicament! Such a closely-knit group were we!

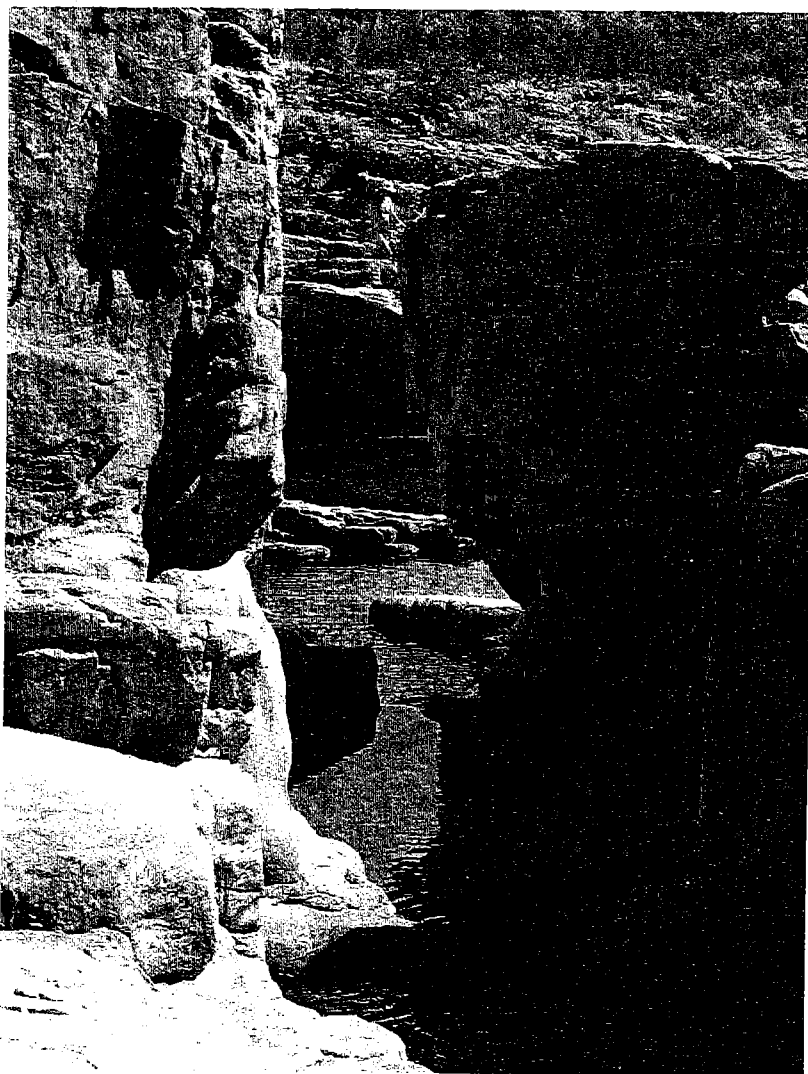
Camp 6 ‘Camp Thespian’, and our last night in the Carr-Boys. This was one of the few rock platforms in this area not to have been devastated by Cyclone Ingrid. Another

good campsite. This was the night of Marie and Rick’s Japanese Cheese Cake. Sensational! Followed by ‘The Review’. Very funny rhymes and stories, including Mike’s rendition of the Wagner classic “Tired Little Teddy Bears”; and the highlight, from Janet, who had carried with her all the way a Hot Little Number in the form of a black negligee in which to perform her song! Also, riddles from John; an acrobatic stick manoeuvring competition; and games of Animal Snap. Great fun. If the world could have seen and heard us!

Finally, Day 7 and a 4km walk out to the 4WD for the ride back in to Kununurra, the pub, showers, laundry, and real beds to sleep on. A great walk. Thanks so much to John and Ann who could not join us for week 2. We were however able to welcome Susie Arnott, who had come up from Sydney that day.

The Cockburn Range

Next morning, Ann drove us in the 4WD 75 km to the



Gibb River Road (next petrol 300km) and Emma Gorge, which was the departure point for the second stage of our adventure. Approaching the Cockburns, the fortress like cliff-line surrounding the 500m plateau is quite intimidating. Here we were picked up by helicopter and ferried in 3 shuttle flights north across the plateau which was heavily dissected by deep, narrow gorges. A dramatic

and beautiful preview of where we were about to walk. It was much hotter here than in the Carr-Boyd's, being close to the coast at Wyndham. Close enough in fact, that I wondered what stops the salties from venturing into the creek system. Probably not enough food when we are not around! We would be walking mainly in deep, narrow canyons in contrast to the previous week when we spent most of the time on top of the plateau. Again, the pace was pretty cruisy – only 25km over the 7 days.

After the chopper left, within an hour we were in the first pool. From hereon in, Cyclone Ingrid's full impact became clear. The Cockburns took the full brunt of it, with Emma Gorge's rain gauge overflowing at 600ml. The creek system was a jumble of twisted trees, sand bars ripped out, and huge boulders flung around. So it was just as well we only had to walk 3 ½ km today. A lecture from Leader Ro for scouts Col and Richard for scouting a new area, and forgetting to come back for the rest of the group. Oh well, we were just doing our best! The highlight today was a series of pack floats, the longest being around 300m, and some of us proved more skilled than others at waterproofing our packs. It's a skill your scribe has never properly learned!

So here we were, apparently totally isolated, and just arriving at our chosen campsite, when a loud noise overhead announced the arrival of an El Questro resort helicopter with some high-paying customers wanting to camp at the same spot. How could this happen with the whole of the Kimberley to choose from? Richard's indignation surfaced, and it took that smooth operator, our resident Rockologist, to convince the pilot to take his guests elsewhere – anywhere! It worked, and off they flew, chewing up bits of tree with the rotors as they took off!

Some excitement tinged with fear at Camp 2 (Camp Derek). We had been warned of death adders in the Cockburns, and it turned out for good reason. Bryn found one slithering past Ro's tent, just before dusk. We followed it down to the billabong where we were swimming and washing. It took a drink, had a swim itself, and then disappeared back in the direction of Ro's tent. Thenceforth it was christened Derek the Death Adder. Everyone made sure they were secure in their mossie nets that night. Where 4 stones to hold it down normally sufficed, your scribe felt the need for at least a dozen that night to keep Derek, Darlene and all their family and friends at bay!

Next morning we set off without packs to explore neighbouring gorges, caves and pools. Saw a beautifully coloured yellow tree snake, the only other snake we came across in two weeks.

Then came the 1½ km trip to Camp 3, where we stayed two nights. We entered a complex series of canyons known as The Maze. Another pack float, and then the campsite, impressively located on a rock platform above an 80m waterfall, with swimming hole beneath. Above the

platform in turn, 120m cliffs towered further up on each side. A specky spot, with wonderful views back down into The Maze. Here Kath and Bryn, who had to leave early, were picked up by helicopter in a most dramatic manoeuvre.

The chopper had to land on the narrow platform, not much wider than its rotors, with little margin for error on each side, and the risk of downdrafts and air pockets above the drop down the falls. A seemingly impossible arrival, which must have tested the pilot's skills. A bit of a scary way for Kath and Bryn to make their exit. The rest of us stayed on and explored more specky gorges, pools and cliffs, and enjoyed the crystal clear water below the falls, with natural hot showers emanating from springs part way up the cliff. Satellite and shooting star spotting after dinner. Another day thus ended, only 3km walked, all without packs. Was this a cruisy trip or not? A real holiday for sure.

Day 5, and we had saved the best campsite for the last two nights. It provided us with spectacular views down into Emma Gorge; particularly nice pools to swim in; and individual rock platforms for each of our sleeping mats. No need for mossie nets here, we slept under the stars, cooled by a gentle breeze. Rick and Marie even provided naan bread with dinner tonight. Then a spare day (Day 6) was spent exploring, and 'aquatouring' up the creek to find other 5 star camp sites for possible future reference, and prospecting the route out over the escarpment.

The last day, Day 7, it took us 4 hours to get down to the El Questro Resort at the bottom of Emma Gorge, which had been badly damaged by Cyclone Ingrid 2 months before. Just as well it was just before the start of the tourist season, or surely some guests would not have survived the flood damage. At noon Ann arrived with the 4WD to pick us up, armed with ICE CREAMS! Cries of delight all round. Then it was back to Kununurra, a celebration BBQ that night, and the next night another meal out in Darwin, followed by the Outdoor cinema. Then the red eye flight back to Sydney, arrival at 6.00 am and yes, for many of us, straight to work.

How does the Kimberley, based on our experiences, compare with Kakadu? For me, while I noted fewer 5 star campsites, harder footing because of the prevailing loose rocks hidden by spinifex, and less rock art (in this area at least), at least there were no green ants! What's more, we had specky swimming holes, and more dramatic scenery, especially in the Cockburns. By not trying to make a marathon of it, and allowing time to enjoy the surroundings to the full, we could cope with the rough footing combined with heavy packs, and take back with us to Sydney's winter lots of good memories. Thank you Ro for your good humour, organisational skills, and John and Ann for leading Week One and for making us so welcome. For all of us, I know this was one of the best groups to walk with. *Richard Darke*



Please extinguish your campfires before retiring to your tents

A Walk in the Blue Mountains

Rick Angel

Date: 6th – 8th September 2004 (Mon – Wed)

Weather: Cloudy but nice some misted rain, heavier while sleeping, as required.

Party: Jim Percy (leader) Paul Mc Cann and Rick.

Route: Mount Hay, Mount Hay Range, Kolonga Walls, Shaw Gully. Descent to Grose Gorge/ Gully, Crossed Grose River found Garrard Gulch Creek. Returning north of the River over the Lake to Zobel Gully then crossed the river on to the Engineers Track. Here we followed the Grose River to the Lockley Track. Up the Du Faur Buttress, and along the track to The Pinnacles.

In 1839 Paul Strzelecki, inspired by the views from Mount Hay, Banks, and Tornah is noted as saying in the Introduction to "Back from the Brink" by Andy McQueen *"Between these ranges lie yawning chasms, deep and winding gorges and frightful precipices. Narrow gloomy and profound, these stupendous rents in the bosom of the earth are enclosed between gigantic walls of sandstone rock, sometimes receding from, sometimes frightfully overhanging the dark bed of the ravines and its black silent eddies or its flowing torrents of water. Everywhere the descent into the deep recess is full of danger and the issue almost impracticable."*

There being only three of us in our party we left Leura and followed the Mount Hay Road to the Pinnacles. Parked the Volvo and shuttled with Jim in his vehicle to the Mount Hay Car Park. A short but slow drive along the Mount Hay Range, this is a hairy road for the uninitiated.

(0930hrs) Out of the car immediate gratification as we looked out over 360° a magnificent view saved for the very few. With Mounts Caley, Strzelecki and Dixon over our left shoulder we moved along the Mount Hay Range first, passing Boorong Crags and then into Shaw Gully and a scenic lunch at, GR 620789. After lunch we moved N.East to a gap the Kolonga Walls which becomes Byles Pass, and started our final 200-metre descent from GR 623789. The scramble was not too far, but the bracken covered rocks below the pass on the steep slope, kept back our pace until we reached the river. A cool drink was now of heightened interest. I had allowed myself only a litre of water to porter in my effort to keep weight to a minimum. This was only the third time I had carried a rucksack in earnest and the terrain in which I was moving presented a whole new ball game. Once through the actual cliff face, descending the talus-slope, ankles needed to be kept intact and healthy and bracken-covering bone snapping rocks, impelled the need for prudence.

Eventually boots came off for the river crossing at the bottom of our descent. A total of 540 metres in 2 km. our campsite by one of the few good water creeks was, as we anticipated, not too far away. Garrard Gulch was now above us, not marked on the Topo, but on Jim's map from Andy McQueen's book mentioned earlier. As it turned out our useable water source was a very small creek in thick scrub, but it produced beautiful water. We had come far enough, this was to be the end of our first days travel at 15-45, GR 616793

Next we elbowed back the scrub and nettles for a tent site each and settled in. It would have to do, not quite up to my normal National Park standard I still had to manicure my nest to be rid of some thorny invaders. Jim as usual put together a good little fire at dusk (early down

here) we happy-houred and had our meal.

By 7pm. Paul was yawning and stretching. He persevered to be social until 7.30 before retiring and was asleep in ten minutes. Jim followed an hour later and I was left in charge of the fire to contemplate the day and the place. We were 300 metres below and across the river from where we had lunch that day, tucked now in the bosom of the Grose Valley. A few stars poked their way through the small hole in the wooded canopy to wish me good night.

Of course we found a better place to have camped after moving out the next morning, should we have been surprised? Anyway we had all slept well and were looking forward to the day. Our objective was to examine more closely the small lake that we had observed from above during yesterdays lunch. Why was it there? Of what did it consist? And it was on our way anyway. Alas we passed it on the wrong contour but the going was a lot easier than the previous afternoon. Paul was taking plenty of photos as we proceeded SW above the river and below the impressive Explorers Wall.

We lunched at Zobel's Gully with good water. Jim had come down the gully previously and pointed out the remains of Williamson's prospector's camp, this now quiet glen that had been the site of much mining activity. The heavily wooded gully above us had hid the difficult terrain involved in its slope when we looked down at it yesterday. From above it looked to be the natural way down this northern wall however its passage according to Jim was not that easy.

It was from this point that we re-crossed the Grose River GR 594784. and met up with the Engineer's Track laid down in 1865. There is a story behind the Engineer's Track, which is too long a tale to be narrated here but it involved a lot of work and initiative that was to fall far short of success, although it was always intended to be a survey track for the possibility that the railway would take this route to cross the Blue Mountains. (If it had, it would be one of the great train journeys of the world) Its memory could be displayed in the pioneer's work when you looked very carefully underfoot, but only then in a very few places.

The tracks condition alternated between fair to little trace. But after beating through yesterdays bush we had now the facility for more heads up viewing until we arrived at our next campsite by Rocky Points Creek at 14-45, GR 574769.

Lots of elbow room here, but also plenty of signs of the trees inhospitably as they were shedding limbs. There was plenty of grass and water a good place to re-hydrate.

Rain started to fall. I looked at the ground and felt

confident that I would not be flooded. We had for company a resident crow and the signs of horses occupying the area. Huey was good to us and kept misting the rain until we had finished our meal about 8 pm then it became a little heavier so all the gentleman retired for the evening.

At. 08-30, nice day, on the track again and I am on point. Fortunately for me a party had been through a few days previously and so the track read from good to the occasional piece of bent grass. While walking through one of the grassed areas we spotted two beautiful horses looking very well conditioned with glossy black coats. They were looking at us in a most interested way; they were so well matched one of them must have been a prodigy. Then they lifted their heads high and wheeled away at a gallop. Five minutes later they were there again, now behind us being curious and their flicking tails and pointed ears managed to split them from their cover in the growth, there in the little wood as we passed by.

By 1045 we were at the junction of Govetts Creek and the Grose River which was pooling nicely, we were now by the famed Blue Gum Forest and Lockley Track which was to take us by DuFaur's Buttress, a 500 metre ascent.

We left with a litre of water each to get us through the two-hour trip to the Buttress. Jim had the previous week, stashed a wineskin of water at the place where we were to break for lunch. The ascent started with a ladder like scramble. I could not help but think that one day there will be a set of galvanized steps in that place. The track beneath our feet had been used since 1930 it was well trodden underfoot and beautifully scenic.

The journey up was slow but steady and the panoramas that continued to open up as we climbed gave ample opportunity to suck in a few breaths and gulps from the water bottle. For those who have not had the opportunity to climb this ridge the track is narrow and has accumulated 75 years of wear. In some places it appears that nobody has cared for it but in the scrambles that count on the face you will find that the chisel has been used well enough to evoke a mumble of gratitude.

When DuFaur's Head is reached you are looking northwest up the gorge to where the Grose flows from below Mt Victoria with side creeks including Surveyors Creek, from the Darling Causeway and Koombanda Brook from the general direction of Bell, it then bends at your feet and heads East towards its eventual goal, the Nepean River.

That cache of water put away by Jim. Do you think that it may have been left at the summit of our climb for a fresh drink as we reached the top? No such luck, Jim had a plan that we should drop down into another gully to the East and scramble up a rock face wearing our rucksacks of course, to our lunch place, Yardley Cave. This place is deemed to be of some privacy and so and so I will leave

out its location. (SBW business) However it has a cliff overhang with a history and a view, as well as a long awaited refill of water, a good lunch spot and a chance to read some notes from previous SBW members. There is also an easier (but longer) entrance than the one we had the privilege of climbing.

After that it was back along the Lockley Track to the car via the Lockley Pylon and Mount Stead with a view of the city of Sydney, this time, behind our left shoulder. A memorable walk thank you Jim.

"Even if it might only be a line, a paragraph, a page or a note. Writing it down can only add to your experience and enjoyment of your walks with SBW".

My thanks to my leader for his helpful input, in my endeavour to be accurate." *Rick Angel*

Unseen Narrabeen

Seventeen happy knapsackers turned up on Sunday 18 September by the historic 1913 Narrabeen tram shed for the 9am "Unseen Narrabeen" walk in perfect sunny, 19C conditions. So round the lake, via the Jamison Park waterless waterfall and up 135m to Narrabeen Hill for morning tea, with clear views to St. Pat's Manly. Then back down to the Deep Creek lace cap waterfall for photos and onto its reserve to check out 1934-1939 Nazi camp and their rock carvings, as well as another waterfall. Lunch was 70m higher at Woorara lookout for a birds-eye view of the lagoon. Up and over Elanora

Hts. into the Mullet Creek catchment. We trailed down this rainforested creek and its waterfalls down to the wetlands boardwalks, then across to the historic lakeside caravan park to observe a big raptors nest high on a Norfolk Island pine by the Ocean St. bridge. We traversed Narrabeen headland where the first flight in Australia took off 15.12.1909-a 28 foot engineless bi plane. We were an hour past low tide by then so a speedy rock/boulder hop, scramble around the base of Turimetta head past multi coloured cliff outcrops with convoluted eroded shapes/formations Unfortunately some of us missed a whale breach. There were 2 short rope climbs from the infamous 'Blowhole' before a visit to the tip of Turimetta head with its special views to Bangally head, Avalon and Manly. Unfortunately no more whale sights. Along Turimetta beach and around the base of Narrabeen headland to the rock pool, but no takers for a dip not even Rosemary McDonald who brought her costume. Somebody asked, "Where did D.H. Lawrence skinny dip"? Finally it was a shoe swap with Richard 'hot foot' Darke for the last 1.5ks to the Alkoven Café for coffee/refreshments, and lake views of the setting sun at 16.50 and 22k's.

Well done prospectives Karen Simson, Kathy Lynar and Ali Barrett and did you find any ticks when you got home?

John Pozniac

Summer Walks Programme.



HURRY It's a little late but our Walks Secretary will still accept your walk for this Summer Programme

SOCIAL NOTES

Hi Everyone,

This is not your Social Secretary, Kathy, she's away. In fact there is nobody to write the social notes at the time the editor reached his earlier than usual deadline. Here are the social events for the coming weeks

Social Programme

October:

26th Oct 8 pm **The SBW Database Proposal**
A meeting inform and consult with all the club's officers and leaders and anyone else who either may be impacted by the proposed developments or else who has an interest in the subject

November:

2nd Nov 7 pm **Committee Meeting**
Observers welcome

9th Nov 8 pm **New Members Night.**
Introduction to SBW for intending prospective members

16th Nov 8 pm **Cooking Demo and Tasting**
Three wilderness chefs will prepare dishes suitable for camp dining. Please bring some happy hour nibbles to nibble whilst watching. The Club will provide refreshments.

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

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, or by email addressed to The Editor. billholland@bigpond.com



Mary Ellen

A man is sitting reading his newspaper when his wife sneaks up and whacks him really hard on the head with a frying pan.

"What was that for?" he asks.

"That was for the piece of paper in your trousers pocket with the name of Mary Ellen written on it" she replies.

"Don't be silly," he says, "Two weeks ago when I went to the races, Mary Ellen was the name of one of the horses I bet on."

She seems satisfied at this and apologizes.

Three days later, he is again sitting in his chair reading when she nails him with an even bigger frying pan, instantly knocking him out cold.

When he comes around he asks: "What was that for?"

"Your horse phoned!"



Work for the Devil

A man dies and goes to Hell.

The Devil meets him at the gate and says

"Alright, you have died and come to hell.

You will spend eternity here, but you get to choose how to spend it. You may choose one of these three doorways. Once you choose a door, you may not change it. So let's get started."

The Devil opens Door One. The man looks in and sees a couple of people standing on their heads on a concrete floor. The man says, "No way, let's move on."

The Devil opens Door Two. The man sees a few more people standing on their heads on a wooden floor. The man says, "No way, let's move on."

The Devil opens Door Three. The man sees a bunch of people standing knee-deep in cow manure drinking coffee.

The man says, "Great, this is the one I will chose." The Devil says, "OK, wait right here, I will get you some coffee."

The man settles in with his coffee thinking that this isn't so bad. What's the big deal? After about 10 minutes a voice comes over the loud speaker saying, "Coffee break's over. Back on your heads!"

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. Please note that the club is legally required to add Coolana donations to the Coolana Fund and not use these for general purposes

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, with cheques made out to "Sydney Bush Walkers Inc", addressed

"The Coolana Fund"

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

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