



THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



DECEMBER 2005



Print Post Approved PP 235723/01270



1045 Victoria Rd West Ryde NSW 2114 Tel **9858 5844**

Parking at rear of shop

- Tents
- Bushwalking Packs
- Travel Packs
- Travel ware
- Sleeping Bags
- Rainwear
- Icebreaker Merino
- Snow wear
- Bushwalking boots
- Sleeping mats
- Climbing Equipment
- Cookware
- Water filters
- GPS
- Books & DVD's
- Family Tents
- Tarps
- Camping tables & chairs



icebreaker.com
PURE MERINO

alpsport@optusnet.com.au



DECEMBER 2005

Issue No. 853

THIS MONTH INCLUDES

REGULAR FEATURES

- 2 Message from President Maurice
- 3 Treasurer's Report
- 3 Editor's Note
- 18 Social Notes and Other Items

SPECIAL FEATURES

- 8 Meeting an Old Friend at Lawn Hill
Don Cornell and Jenny have a surprise when they return to camp.
- 9 A Letter from the Snowy Mountains
Peter Dyce remembers the 1940's and finds he has not lost his walking skills.

CONSERVATION

- 4,5 Conservation Notes and News
A new national park, considered to be the most important single acquisition in recent history is featured this month. Also more news on Tallowa Dam and bad news about bio-fuels

- 6,7 Coolana Report
A very lengthy report from Don Finch and he has good news about progress at Coolana.

ADVERTISERS

Alpsport	Front cover
Paddy Pallin	Back cover
Wilderness Transport	9
Wild Asia	8
Willis's Walkabouts	5

THE WALKS PAGES

- 10 Walk Notices and Track Notes
Notices and some Track Notes supplied by Wilf Hilder.
- 11 Walk Notes
Barry Wallace reports on your walks
- 12 The Silent Series #3
Alan Sauran quietly tells how he tiptoed through the bush
- 13,14 Yalwal Bushwalk – 1972
30 years ago Gerry Sizig wrote an account in his journal of a memorable bushwalk.
- 15-17 The Nandi Devi Trip
Jeanne Klovdahl tells of an SBW trip to India organised by Sue Fear of World Expeditions.

MARK THESE DATES:



Christmas Party: Wed 21st Dec
Join us for a Christmas feast at **McMahons Point Community Centre**. From 6pm. Bring a plate of Christmas food. The Club will provide drinks. Meet old SBW friends
(Note: Not at the Kirribilli Clubrooms)



Evening Picnic - Wed 4th Jan
At **Balmoral Beach** from 6 pm –
To start the year – we're getting together again at the south end of Balmoral Beach. BYO food & drinks. Fish n' chips are available nearby

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:

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

President :	Maurice Smith
9587 6325 (h)	mauricethewalker@ihug.com.au
Vice President :	Rosemary MacDougal
9428 5668 (h)	rmacdougal@bigpond.com
Secretary:	Leigh McClintock
8920 2388	mcclintock@pacific.net.au
Treasurer	Tony Marshall
4784 3203 (h)	tbuilder@bigpond.net.au
Members Secretary:	Ron Watters
0419 617 491	wattersr@bigpond.net.au
New Members Secretary:	Grace Martinez
9948 6238	g.martinez@bigpond.com

2006 Membership List Closing This Month!

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

President's Report

By the time this magazine is in your hands the festive season will be very close. **On behalf of the Management Committee I wish you all a safe and enjoyable festive season** to be celebrated in the manner you consider appropriate.

Along with some dozen other members I shall be heading down south to undertake an extended walk, in my case, it will be in the Snowy Mountains. As this will be the first time we have had an extended walk, as distinct from cross-country ski trips, in the Snowies since the truly awful bushfires of early 2003 it will be an interesting walk to see how well the park is recovering.

Over the past year or so I have become very conscious of the need to ensure that we have new trip leaders who are encouraged and guided as they build their experience. My concern is motivated by the need to ensure that we don't rely on the same trip leaders to do everything. Trip leaders are like everyone else, they do have lives outside the club and they do become "tired" of always leading. One of the reasons I like to go on other trip leaders' trips is that I don't have to do as much work as the trip leader; I can really relax, in a mental if not physical sense. Without trip leaders there will be no trips and the club's reason for existence will fall away. This has happened with other Sydney based walking clubs. To ensure our continued success as Sydney's oldest surviving (and in my humble opinion) most successful walking club we cannot pat ourselves on the back and relax and say to ourselves "we have been great for the past 78 years, it will always be so". To do so is a recipe for failure instead.

To ensure that we have new trip leaders a small group of committee members and interested members have been working on how we can become more pro-active in recruiting and mentoring new trip leaders. In addition they are also looking at how we can better assist trip leaders in their critical role.

If you are a member (as distinct from a prospective member) and don't lead walks, consider the benefits; you get to go where you want to go and other members want to go with you. You will get a real buzz out of that and the club will benefit as well. If you are interested in becoming a trip leader, we will help you in numerous ways. Just contact Ron Watters (one of the Management Committee members working on developing trip leaders) on 9419 2507.

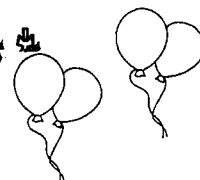
Next year when the membership subscriptions are due you will be able to pay them by electronic funds transfer into the club's bank account. Watch the magazine for further details.

Lastly for this month, our Walks Secretary is introducing a Short Notice Walks process. If a trip leader wants to put on a walk within the current walk program period but only provides the details after the walks program has been printed, the walk details will be emailed to all email enabled members. That's it from me for this month. See you out in the bush soon.

Maurice Smith



* * A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS SBW * *

**Treasurer's Report****Receipts and Payments to November****Receipts**

Members Subscriptions	17,296
Prospective Fees	7,813
Interest - Conservation	455
Interest - Coolana	1354
Interest - General	779
Magazine Advertising	1,200
Donations - Coolana	155
Other	280
Investment redemption	15,000
Total	\$44,331

Payments

Magazine Production	3,327
Magazine Postage	4,527
Magazine Equipment	566
Coolana Rates & Occupancy	1,317
Coolana Equipment	385
Rent - Club Rooms	5,532
Donations - Conservation	550
Insurance - Public Liability	3,861
Insurance - Personal Accident	2,508
Affiliation - Confederation	2,255
Postage, Phone & Internet	1,805
Administration	2,389
Transfer to investments	23,000
Total	\$52,556

Cash surplus (deficit) (8,225)

Closing Bank balance \$3,378

During November cash donations were made to the Wilderness Society (\$200) and the Lake Yarrunga Task force (\$100). Donations of printing and materials to the Colong Foundation valued at \$250 were taken up in the accounts.

Tony Marshall

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

**Editors Note:**

Well so far, no reply to my request last month for assistance, and probable replacement as Editor. The situation is not desperate, I could go on forever putting this magazine together but a fresh approach from new scribe with new ideas may of benefit to the club.

And speaking of the magazine, it has been suggested once more by a few members that the magazine should be produced in an electronic format and sent out by email rather than by post, or perhaps placed on the web-site.

There are some clear advantages in an electronic format as far as style and presentation are concerned. Colour photos and pictures can be presented; maps can be shown with the ability to enlarge the map on screen for more detail and shaded backgrounds, coloured text and graphic headlining can be used. Also, electronic archiving with subject indexing could be developed.

But converting the magazine to a readable electronic format will require additional computer skills.

How should we distribute an electronic version? The magazine will lose its impact if simply placed in its current format as an attachment to an email (PDF or MS word) and sent out to members. The format is too wide, paging not suitable and fonts not ideal for easy reading on the screen.

I receive many investment articles, daily newsletters and company reports by email. The ones I tend to read and absorb are professionally produced and specially designed for email and ease of reading on screen - not just presented in the same format as the printed issue. Of course company reports are dull reading anyway and perhaps not designed to be read. The PC magazines, professional journals and most monthly issues are designed to be read and these come to me by post.

Emailing the magazine as an attachment is a better alternative than placing the magazine on a section of the Club website. When used as an attachment to an email it is "pushed" to members who may feel prompted to open the attachment and read at least part whereas the web-site requires a conscious effort to seek out the magazine by clicking on a section of the website etc.

I am interested in your opinion. How would you like to receive 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. Photos should be of good resolution suitable for black and white reproduction.

Please send your submission in by mail (preferably typed), or by email addressed to: "The Editor"

Tel: 9484 6636 Email: billholland@bigpond.com

Conservation Notes

This month we give details about a new national park (see below) which as well as offering good conservation value also suggests good walking and camping areas. Perhaps a little distant for weekend walking but perhaps suitable for an extended trip during cooler months.

The latest news from the last Monday's meeting of concerned Kangaroo Valley residents with Minister Bob Debus adds further confusion about the State Government's plans for raising the height of Tallowa Dam. During the past month I wrote a letter on behalf of the Club and a personal letter as well, stating our concerns both as a local landowner and as regular visitors to the area. It is worth mentioning that in addition to the problem of rising waters in the valley there will be a loss of camping areas and bushland in Ettrema Creek and along the Shoalhaven River.

Showing support for the Lake Yarrunga Task Force, the club gave a \$100 donation to assist their efforts, also \$200 to The Wilderness Society and \$250 to the Colong Foundation. The club has a Conservation Investment Fund yielding \$400 -500 interest each year and we use this income to assist conservation organisations.

When writing these notes I remembered that there is an International Climate Conference being held this week and as usual Australia holds firmly to its position of opposing sensible enforceable targets and refusing to sign the Kyoto Protocol. Naturally the Environment Minister is in full spin control assuring us this is a positive move and Australia is targeting a reduction in the rate of increase in our greenhouse gas emissions.

Bill Holland

Yanga National Park

Extract from an article in National parks journal October – November 2005 by Jackie Roberts,

In what is considered to be the most important single acquisition in the recent history of national parks in NSW, the magnificent 80,000 hectare outback property Yanga, which is home to the largest privately held River Red Gum forest in Australia, will become the state's next national park.

Yanga is on the Sturt Highway about five kilometres from Balranald and enjoys a frontage of 150 kilometres to the Murrumbidgee River, along which winds a spectacular Red Gum forest.

Originally owned by William Charles Wentworth in the 1830s, the property is rich in natural, but also European and Aboriginal, cultural heritage.

The former owners, the Black family, had a strong environmental ethos and wanted to keep the natural and cultural heritage of Yanga preserved for future generations. Despite a family association with Yanga since 1919, they decided to offer the property for sale to the government.

The new national park includes a 17,000 hectare River Red Gum forest (second in size only to the World Heritage listed Barmah forest), the Yanga Lake, an 1860s drop-log homestead, a huge, well preserved, nineteenth century woolshed on the banks of the Murrumbidgee, and countless historic artefacts.

Yanga sits on the Lowbidgee floodplain, which supports some of Australia's largest and most important waterbird breeding colonies and the state's largest known population of the highly endangered Southern Bell Frog. It is in the Riverina bioregion, which has the lowest level of reservations of all the 17 bioregions in NSW.

The spectacular natural and cultural features will be protected and showcased in the new national park. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) gained ownership of Yanga in October, with future plans including accommodation and a visitors' centre to ensure the new park becomes an important attraction for south-western NSW.

Yanga will join the nearby world heritage listed Mungo National Park to become part of a must-see tourist circuit, providing economic benefits to the town of Balranald.



Conservation News

Dam Plan Delayed

It was a small venue for a big issue. More than 250 people crammed into the Kangaroo Valley Hall on Monday night for a public meeting to hear about the Sydney Catchment Authority's proposal to raise the Tallowa Dam wall by 7 metres. From the outset those in attendance were given an assurance from the NSW Environment Minister Bob Debus that a decision to proceed with the dam raising had not been made.

SCA general manager Graeme Head and the SCA's general manager bulk water Ian Tanner also addressed the meeting. Mr Tanner outlined the SCA's plans for the dam raising and why the 21 radial gates were chosen. However, the SCA's estimation that the dam would raise water levels at the township and the bridge by just 20mm was greeted with disbelief by many.

By the end of the meeting most in attendance were relieved to hear that the government was keeping an open mind on the proposal, while others were more cynical suggesting a suspension of the proposal didn't necessarily mean changes would be made.

South Coast Register 30/11/05

Threat to Tourism

Native forest logging threatens Tasmania's reputation as one of the world's best ecotourism destinations, the US National Geographic Society says. Tasmania is a better place for sustainable tourism than Uluru or The Great Barrier Reef *National Geographic Traveller* magazine says, its rating will probably fall if logging issues continued in the state. *SMH 29/5/05*

Forests Paying The Price For Biofuels

The drive for "green energy" in the developed world is having the perverse effect of encouraging the destruction of tropical rainforests. From the orang-utan reserves of Borneo to the Brazilian Amazon, virgin forest is being razed to grow palm oil and soybeans to fuel cars and power stations in Europe and North America. And surging prices are likely to accelerate the destruction.


The rush to make energy from vegetable oils is being driven in part by European Union laws requiring conventional fuels to be blended with biofuels, and by subsidies equivalent to 20 pence a litre. Last week, the British government announced a target for biofuels to make up 5 per cent of transport fuels by 2010. The aim is to help meet Kyoto protocol targets for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions.

Rising demand for green energy has led to a surge in the international price of palm oil, with potentially damaging consequences. "The expansion of palm oil production is one of the leading causes of rainforest destruction in south-east Asia. It is one of the most environmentally damaging commodities on the planet," says Simon Counsell, director of the UK-based Rainforest Foundation. "Once again it appears we are trying to solve our environmental problems by dumping them in developing countries, where they have devastating effects on local people." *22 November 2005 NewScientist.com news service*

WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

dare to dream

...adventure awaits...



De-stress relax


www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au

Tired? Stressed? You need a real holiday.
 Imagine a place where there are no phones, no cars, no people, no hassle, a place where you can swim in clear, tropical pools, camp under the most amazing star show on earth and relax the evening away by the campfire. Explore and enjoy the beauty of the Australian bush.

Sound good? If so, Willis's Walkabouts is for you.
 We have been offering walking adventures in northern Australia for 20 years. No one knows it better. No one else offers tours where traditional Aboriginal guides walk with you for weeks, showing you the wonders of their country and culture. No one else will take you beyond the 4WD tracks into the remotest parts of Kakadu, the Kimberley, Pilbara and central Australia.

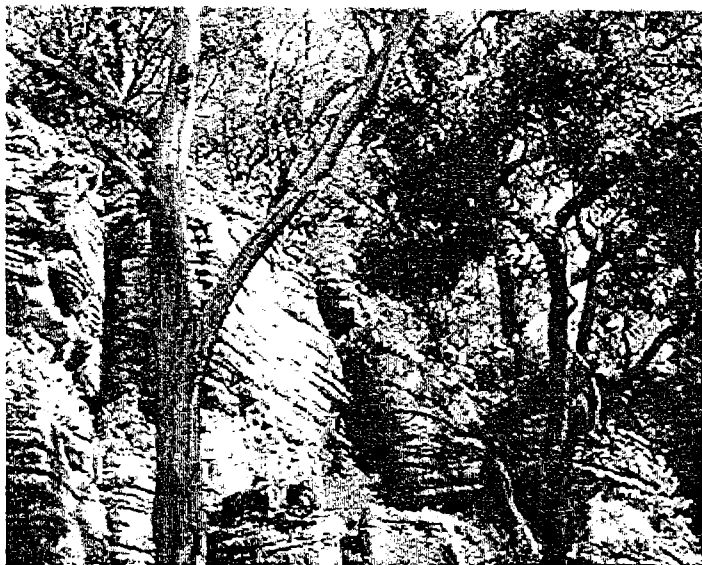
Check out our website and share our dream. Join us and make the dream your own.

12 Carrington St. Millner NT 0810
 Email walkabout@ais.net.au
 Fax 08 8985 2355



Phone 08 8985 2134

Coolana Report - October 2005. *Don Finch*



The most recent Coolana bush care maintenance weekend was held on 10-13th November 2005. Gretel and I headed down early on Thursday via Bomaderry to collect the mower with the bent shaft which had been left with Tractors Plus. It had been fitted with a new motor at a cost of \$275. A new 22" blade was also supplied and paid for with an SBW cheque.

On arrival at Coolana camps were set up and the work begun. Gretel was busy weeding and attending to the SCA trees which are generally growing at a fast rate. Depending on the requirements of the particular tree they were weeded, had guards removed, had extra support post fitted, tied up with stocking or retied. Some had bugs or grubs removed. Some star posts were removed and some trees had all support removed and left to grow. Hand weeding in all areas of the flat is a constant job that Gretel (thankfully!) never tires of.

Rick and Dennis had been down for a couple of days and had sorted out the problems with the water supply.

The mowers were worked on, the new 22" blade was fitted to the newest 4.5hp mower delivered in August, the under deck metal plate was reattached by drilling and pop riveting. Air filter was serviced sump oil changed mower cleaned and tested OK.

The old 3.5hp/20" mower supplied 1996 was next, the top cover had been worked on in Forestville several new pieces of plate were attached to provide mounting holes where originals had broken away. A new spark plug from stock was fitted the oil changed the filter serviced the mower tested ok. So we had two mowers ready to go and it was only Thursday.

I started to get the chainsaw ready and realised I had left the fuel and the bar lubricant at home. Used engine oil for the bar and had left some mixing oil in the shed for just such an occasion. There is now a five litre drum under the bench marked chainsaw fuel mix. Cut up the last of the logs near the tool shed and then started on the flat working around near the edge of the creek where several more trees had fallen.

On Friday it was more weeds for Gretel and sawing and stacking logs for me until Eric Zarella arrived at 10.30am. The discussion with Eric was to develop a plan for the SRCMA grant that we have applied for but not actually got as yet (yes I know a bit premature). There are three main areas of concern around the camping flat, firstly, the area to the north of the Marie Byles' tree which is relatively open and is subject to heavy weed growth. Secondly, the area around the tool shed where the last of the acacias are dying off leaving on open sky with no canopy and some weed infestation. This area is by no means out of control but in need of more tree canopy. There is also section along the river bank that is well treed but constantly gets overgrown with weeds.

However, the main focus of the SRCMA sponsored efforts would be along the creek both sides and down the middle. There are still some privet and wild tobacco in the creek area (along with all the other weeds!). The hope is that the canopy of the remnant rain forest can be improved to completely cover the creek and extended out onto the eastern side. Eric will be making an un-accompanied trip to Coolana in December to collect seeds. He will also be bringing along Damian Sterling, the organiser of the volunteer conservation group, for an assessment at a convenient time. Shirley had mentioned during the year that she had some 40 Koda trees which she had successfully propagated at Rozelle Nursery from Coolana seed. This was mentioned to Eric in the event that he can fit in with or assist Shirley with her plans to plant her trees.

There is a plan to get the Volunteer Conservation Association (VCA) team in for a few days before the Christmas period to start killing weeds before there is another seeding by the weeds. The main work would need to be done later in the new year at a suitable planting time. All of this is contingent on the results of the SRCMA grant application. An inspection of the Eastern flat revealed a large crop of scotch thistles and a large area of Patterson's curse in flower, Eric pointed out that if these could be cut down this weekend it would save a lot of weed seeds getting away.

On Saturday morning I went into Bomaderry to pick up the repaired mower, five litres of engine oil, a spark plug, throttle cable and Wilf. The mower was ready but Wilf was missing. Fuel and chain saw bar lubricant was picked up in Kangaroo Valley. A total of 45 litres of ULP was delivered to Coolana over the weekend. Chris and Mae arrived mid morning closely followed by Glenn, Jim and Jo, then Steve Brown with Annemarie, Chris and baby John. Then Wilf arrived having caught the late train bringing our head count to 12.

We did a final clean up around the tool shed which also involved the stacking of many logs. This area is now looking a lot better with easy access through the area for weeding and a reduced fire threat with the logs positioned well away from the shed.

Then the boys and girls got going with the mowers and

with three operating they made short work of the camping flat. Chris has, for most of the year been concentrating on removing mowing obstacles from around the flat this has made it quicker and easier to get the job done. Meanwhile Gretel and Jo were cutting and pasting with Round-Up the Paddy's Lucerne above the water tap. Wilf's priority was to rake and clear tracks and road drains so that is what he did all weekend.

On Sunday a rock hiding in the bracken was hit by the 4.5hp/22" new mower, the blade was bent and the motor shaft bent a little. Glenn was sent off with a sledge hammer and he reduced the rock to sand. The blade was removed and straightened the bent shaft was assessed as not to severe, the motor speed was reduced and the vibration level noted. Steve then took this mower over to the eastern flat and made a start on the ways and the thistles it was operated for the rest of the day with no further trouble. Don took the mower with the new motor over to the eastern flat and also hit a rock this bent the blade but not the shaft. The blade was the old 22" one and had been straightened several times previously it was not able to be straightened again. The old worn 20" blade was fitted and the mower used for the rest of the day with out any trouble. About 90 per cent of the Patterson's Curse and 70 per cent of the scotch thistle was mown on the Eastern Flat. With the access ways mown on the eastern flat Gretel and Glenn were able to get to the SCA trees and do what was required.

On Saturday two new 20" blades were picked up from Tractors Plus Bomaderry. One blade was fitted to the mower purchased August 2004, a bolt missing from the fuel tank support was borrowed bolt from the old mower, the sump was filled with 300ml engine oil, and the mower tested ok.

The one year old mower was next, the misalignment of blade due to bent shaft was measured at 1.1mm at the end of the blade. At the car park one end of blade was ground down by approx 1.1mm. The blade was fitted to mower, oil checked and test run ok vibration level comfortable. A new bolt was fitted to the fuel tank on the old mower oil checked, motor slowed up and mower test run ok.

Filled all holes at end of flat and used 10" post hole borer to dig a new one the soil was damp all the way to the clay horizon.

After lunch I took the new 4.5hp/now 20" mower with ground and balanced blade across to the Eastern Flat. There was no trouble with the mower and jam ups were minimal and generally non abrupt, i.e. the surmise of less damage by using 20" blades appears to be correct. The last of the stands of the scotch thistle were mown and the way Bill had cleared along the middle of the flat last year was re opened.

The last of the stands of Patterson's Curse were also mown. A large number of thistles that could not be got at with the mower were cut with the bow saw it worked very well. There are still some individual plants standing but

most have been cut down. After a big day I camped on the flat and as I left early the next morning saw a small sugar glider dead on the road just up from the shelter shed.

I will not be able to go to Coolana again until February. All the mowers are going and fitted with 20" blades and the brush cutter is going. Just about everything that needs mowing has been done. There is 40 litres of ULP and 4 litres engine oil in the shed.

Experience has shown that during the summer months if there is moisture in the soil we have to mow every three weeks to keep in front of the weeds.

A big thank you to everyone who has been down at Coolana during the month helping to maintain and improve it. Every little bit helps!

Don Finch

Maintenance and Bush Regeneration:

It's a wonderful property but needs some gentle care and maintenance. The trees are doing fine but need some supporting attention and there is mowing to be done.

There are other tasks to be done as well. But it's not all work - there is ample time to socialise and enjoy the evening campfire. The next maintenance weekend is scheduled for 14th, 15th January

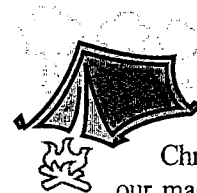
Composting Toilet at Coolana

A Statement of Environmental Effects incorporating a Water Cycle Management Study has been completed. The next stage is to finish the plans (drawings). Once these are finished then the Statement, Study and plans together with a Development Application form and the SBW cheque for the Development Application fee will be lodged with Shoalhaven City Council.

We will be able to build the toilet once we have development consent from Shoalhaven City Council. The granting of development consent is subject to Council's assessment and approval of the Application and the concurrence to the development by the Sydney Catchment Authority; thus a couple of major hurdles to be crossed. On the basis that such a toilet will be an enhancement on the current system of sewage management practiced at Coolana it seems reasonable that approval will be given.

Patrick James

Christmas Camping at Coolana:



All members, prospective members and their families may visit and stay at Coolana at any time. There is no need to book.

Christmas/New Year is a great time to enjoy our magnificent property. There is no need to book just come and join the social scene.

Please do not camp under the wattle trees as they are unstable in high winds. And take care with fires

Meeting an Old Friend At Lawn Hill



It was about 30 years ago when Jenny and I first visited Lawn Hill Gorge in north western Queensland. At that time there was large, fairly level area, with many shrubs and plenty of space. We erected our Paddy Pallin car-camper tent which had earlier withstood the gale-force winds at Tibbooburra. There was one other couple there busily photographing native plants for a book they later published. They had a large van fitted out with a dark room and didn't bother us.

We were able to explore the area and climb the nearby cliffs, returning to blow up our air-mattresses and enjoy paddling up and down the gorge. Fishing proved hopeless as there were many tortoise but no fish.

Then, early this year we decided to return to Lawn Hill Gorge to camp, enjoy the walking and we each had an air-mattress. We were disappointed – there was a large car parking area, many people, marked out walking tracks and a man hiring out canoes. Lawn Hill Gorge had lost its remoteness and become civilized.

Returning from a walk, who should we meet but John Hogan, who had just driven in with a group of tourists. On emerging from the big OKA four-wheel drive vehicle, they said they were grateful they didn't have to drive these remote dirt roads in their own car. Meantime, John told us it is possible the company will swap the OKA for a more comfortable coach and instead of camping out (which many tourists are not comfortable with), they will stay in hotels or motels overnight.

John sends his regards to all his friends in SBW. Meantime, Jenny and I will continue our winter excursions into remote areas and the opportunity of camping out in the bush while it remains possible

Don Cornell

Memories of Pat Harrison

In the October magazine Ray Hookway commented:

"A photo was shown 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."

Here is that photo with Pat waving his hat and a "young" Don Finch carrying the load.



wild **asia** mountain adventures | beyond the Silk Road

Wild Asia offer unique and innovative trekking holidays in Central Asia. Trek in the following mountain ranges & view peaks from base camps of former Soviet States & China. Experience famous Samarkand, Osh and Kashgar.

- Pamir Mountains
- K2 (Chinese side)
- Peak Communism
- Kun Lun Range
- Muztagh Ata
- Peak Lenin
- Tien Shan Range
- Kongur Peak
- Khan Tengri Peak
- Fan Mountains

Experience legendary Silk Road Passes, such as the Tarugart & Irkeshtam and the ancient cultures of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan & Western China.

Itineraries allow you to 'link' a number of the treks, to create your own adventure through Central Asia. Trips include full trek service, local guides and experienced Western Leaders.

For brochures and further information call (03) 9672 5372

(ABN 11 005 066 148, Lic Number 30093)



A Letter From The Snowy Mountains *Peter Dyce*

When I was a teenager in the 1940's I drove my parents in the family car, a Desoto, on a tour of the Snowy Mountains. In those days Jindabyne was a sleepy hamlet with a bridge that rattled when we drove across the Snowy River. In my 20's I stayed at Charlotte Pass where I met a Sydney doctor who invited me to join him trout fishing at Spencers Creek. I have fished for trout ever since, usually in March and November and skied in Winter, and have developed a great love for the Snowy Mountains high country. The clean air, invigorating climate, incredibly starry skies, the wonderful sunset, spectacular cloud formations and beautiful reflections from lakes and streams attract me to the Snowies year after year.

On 20th November 2005, which also happened to be our 53rd wedding anniversary, my wife and I with our Jack Russell dog "Lucky" picked up our friend, Keith Docherty at his abode in Mittagong. The heights above Jindabyne as always provided us with an enjoyable view of the lake, clouds and mountains.

The next day we spent quietly relaxing with our fishing rods. I was lucky to land an Atlantic Salmon which rose to a mud eye suspended from a float in the quiet arm of the lake.

Over 20 years ago, with one of my sons I walked to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko starting at Charlotte Pass. While we were away, my wife stayed behind in the car reading a book. She was surprised when a fox sat down next to her open car door. She held out a biscuit which the fox took from her hand, ate with enjoyment and proceeded to eat every biscuit in the packet. It's a story that the grandchildren never tire of hearing.

When I suggested to Keith that we attempt the Kosi summit walk we were both a little dubious. Keith had a sore knee, I had heart surgery not long ago and have since attempted nothing harder than walking the dog near where I live.

When we arrived at Thredbo Chair lift I asked a fit looking local man about the Summit Walk. "Easy" he said. What was easy for him for me in my late 70's proved to be far from easy.

After alighting from the chairlift we had to overcome a lengthy, very steep climb to the top where the track commenced. It was then that I had my doubts whether to continue or just do what others of my vintage do, stay there and enjoy the view of the mountains and picturesque Thredbo Village nestling in the valley below. However, like stalwart bushwalkers with a reputation to uphold, we overcame our hesitation and continued the walk up the mountain.

The scenery was spectacular, rushing streams fed by melting snow, dramatic rocky crags and, finally, the summit of Mt. Kosciuszko with its cairn of stones marking the highest point in Australia. From there I used my mobile phone to call family and friends to boast facetiously that "I have attained the highest position in the land"

The views from the summit of the Main Range and back

into Victoria are most rewarding. Much snow remained though it was late in November.

A small number of snow drifts covered the track. These we crossed with caution as the snow was icy and very slippery, especially in our rubber soled footwear.

The total distance from the start of our walk to the finish was in the vicinity of 15 kilometres. The complete absence of litter was commendable, not an orange peel or discarded wrapper to be seen on the track or summit.

It was a most enjoyable walk and a long soak in a hot bath back at the lodgings helped to soothe tired muscles.

I was pleased to achieve the Kosi summit again in my senior years. A SBW member I much respect, a man who was much older than I, told me many years ago: "When you become older continue doing what you have always done, only a little slower".

Good advice indeed!

I write this from Jindabyne. I hope to catch another fish or two and paddle the kayak I brought with me from Sydney. Best wishes to all

Peter Dyce

NSW WILDERNESS TRANSIT

Bus To

JENOLAN CAVES. KANANGRA WALLS.

YERRANDERIE GHOST TOWN

STARLIGHTS TRACK. BUNGONIA CAVES.

WOG WOG. NERRIGA

Departs from Sydney's Campbelltown Railway Station

Via Penrith, Katoomba & Blackheath for

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

Returns 4pm Mon, Wed, Frid.

Via Starlights, Mittagong & Marulan for

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

Returns 4 pm Tues, Thurs, Sun.

Yerranderie Ghost Town first Saturday in each

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

Group booking discounts or charter service

Tel 0246 832 344 Mob 0428 832 344

www.wildernesstransit.com.au

THE WALKS PAGES

Notices

Walks Attendance Forms

Please send in your signed Walks Attendance forms and Activity Report.. Send to:

Walks Recorder- Sydney Bush Walkers

PO Box 431 Milsons Point NSW 1565

There are a number of reasons for sending in the walks attendance forms:

- The hard copies of the walks attendance forms, with participants' signatures, are necessary for insurance purposes and should be kept in one place.
- Furthermore, they also provide data for the data base, now under development.
- The activity reports are used by Barry Wallace to prepare walks reports for the magazine.

Expressions of Interest Required

1st Feb – 20th Feb (approx.)

Stewart Island NZ - Northern & Southern Circuits - each approx. 9 days with food drop to hut - could do one or both. Grade: M323

Margaret Rozea ph 9521 5997; mrozea@bigpond.com

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

Track Reports

(Extracts from Wilf Hilder's November Confederation Track Report)

Blue Mountains. Bruces Walk (Bullaburra to Medlow Bath), originally from Lawson to Blackheath - part of the Lawson section is now privately owned and the Greaves Creek section, east of Blackheath was flooded by a dam in 1942. It is now under control of Sydney Water and the trespassing fine is \$11,000. The section of Bruces Walk from Wentworth Falls to the Mt. Hay Road across Wentworth Creek is overgrown in places and therefore not easy to follow. The next section from the Mt. Hay Road, to Henson Glen (Govett Creek) is well used. The steep section across Katoomba Creek Gorge is also overgrown in places and requires careful navigation, as Bruces Walk is not shown on the current topographic maps.

South Coast. Keith Maxwell (President BWRS) reports that the Bulli Lookout track from the Austimer Scout Camp to Bulli Lookout on the escarpment is closed. I have previously reported that the very steep Sublime Point Lookout from Foothills Road, Austimer is closed. Perhaps the NPWS expect us to walk up or down the Bulli Pass road instead.

Long Distance Walk – Walcha To Coffs Harbour. This proposal was first promoted some two or three years ago by

tourist interests in Armidale, but it was only a concept and on the ground detail was not available. The walk is now being promoted by the New England Ecotourism Society and the Armidale Bushwalking Club. Recently two CMW's were joined by a third member of the party who walked the pilot trip. This was featured in the ABC's "Stateline" TV programme. I look forward to getting the full details of the walking route and the campsites in this challenging route.

Carlons Farm has been a popular bushwalkers honeymoon and holiday destination since the early 1930's until the 1960's. The guesthouse was a tiny cottage of unique construction – pise (rammed earth) covered with weatherboard, now reduced to ruins. It was built by the Tolhursts of Megalong Valley who still have a similar building on their farm. In 1908 Bernard Carlon purchased the Tyrol (later Green Gully) property from the Tolhursts, for his son Norbert who was 24 years of age. The Carlons thus acquired this unique homestead and in later years the hospitality of Alice and Norbert Carlon became legendary amongst bushwalkers. Thanks to Jim Barrett and Jack Tolhurst for this information.

**EPIRB – Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon**

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

The GME Electraphone 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 If you would like to take the EPIRB for a walk phone Leigh Mc Clintoch 8920 2386 and arrange to collect it

Walks Notes

Barry Wallace

Period 4th August to 12th September 2005.

The weekend of 13, 14 August had Jim Rivers out with a party of 6 enjoying good weather for his walk in Dharug National Park. Jim says it's a great area to walk, with nice creeks and easy, undulating ridge tops. Not sure which of those two got Rick Angel's ankle on the Saturday but my money would have to be on the nice creek, although ankle sprains are somewhat fluky at best. He was able to soldier on and complete the walk however, after first aid treatment by Gretel James. Tony Crichton had a party of 8 on his Sunday walk out from Carlons farm. It was described as great preparation for the 6 foot track so what Ken Smith was doing turning up after a double pass along the 6 foot track the previous day we do not know. Sufficient to say he suffered somewhat on the two large climbs but finished the walk OK. Ron Watters was also out that day, with the 2 parties of 12 on his walk in the Nattai National Park operating in contra-rotation around the loop. Conditions were sunny and cool with the party puzzling over a series of (perhaps man-made?) channels up to 4 metres deep that were found criss-crossing a ridge at the hidden entrance to the Nattai River. They also reported a delightful mini canyon in Flora Gully. It was all over in good time for celebration at Mittagong RSL club afterward.

Wilf Hilder cancelled his overnight walk down to the Kowmung from Kanangra Walls, scheduled for 20, 21 August, due to a dearth of starters. Ian Thorpe's Sunday walk down to the Wollangambe River/Bell Creek junction that weekend attracted a party of 6 in cool, windy conditions. After a luxurious morning tea at a site with marvelous views down into Du Fours Creek the pace was slowed somewhat by an unmarked, at least on the map, cliff-line. This resulted in a later than expected arrival out at the cars, although 1800 hours is hardly late by some standards. Ian even noted some interesting rock formations worthy of a future visit with more time to explore. Apart from a slight weariness in some quarters the party enjoyed the walk.

The K to K in a day walk went on Saturday 3 September with Tony Crichton as leader and 10 active participants. A detailed report has previously appeared in this magazine. Richard Darke's qualifying walk on Sunday 4 September was dogged by foul weather after an extended spell of fine weekends. The party of 15 set off in cold, wet and foggy conditions on an overgrown track with fallen trees across it in what was described as leech heaven. After climbing 450 metres in the first 4 km the track became even more indistinct in fog and

rain. The party were all chilled and wet by this time so discretion prevailed and they turned about and went whence they had come, not even stopping for lunch. They finished in good spirits and repaired to a new patisserie next to the pub in Jamberoo to sample the pies, salads, rolls, coffee and cakes. Thus refreshed they went on their way home removing the occasional leech from their boots as they drove. To make matters worse the weather cleared as they drove.

Just one week later Ron Watters was back in the area at Macquarie Pass National Park with a party of 19 on his qualifying walk to aptly named Goose Pimple Pool. It was McAndrew Falls that was judged to be the highlight of the day however. On the descent of the ridge one of the prospectives slipped in the muddy going and sprained an ankle not far from the bottom. It was strapped and she continued the walk. Ron re-routed the walk to emerge on the Clover Hill. Here they met 2 army personnel who offered to drive the injured member back to the cars. Dinner at Albion Park services club provided an enjoyable close to the day.

All of which brings this episode of the walks reports to a close.

Free Maps Available on the Web

Geoscience Australia's 1:250,000 scale national topographic data, TOPO-250K RASTER, is now available free online. It forms the backbone of our NATMAP Raster products which are popular in the recreational and commercial markets.

This much anticipated release will be of significant benefit to GIS users across a wide range of applications, such as regional planning, agriculture, emergency management, environment, tourism and map based presentations.

Commercial map makers will also benefit, with the data (an alternative to vector data) allowing for the development of commercial map products for tourism and other markets.

TOPO-250K RASTER is made available free online as part of the Australian Government's Spatial Data Access and Pricing Policy. The TOPO-250K RASTER data is a raster version of Geoscience

Australia's GEODATA TOPO-250K Series 2 national fundamental vector data. The TOPO-250K RASTER data can be downloaded free as individual mapsheets by visiting our Free Downloads page and searching on topography. Users are required to complete a simple registration process and use the data in accordance with the licence provisions.

Details at www.ga.gov.au/news/index.jsp#raster

Walk in the Cool of the Evening (see Walks Programme)

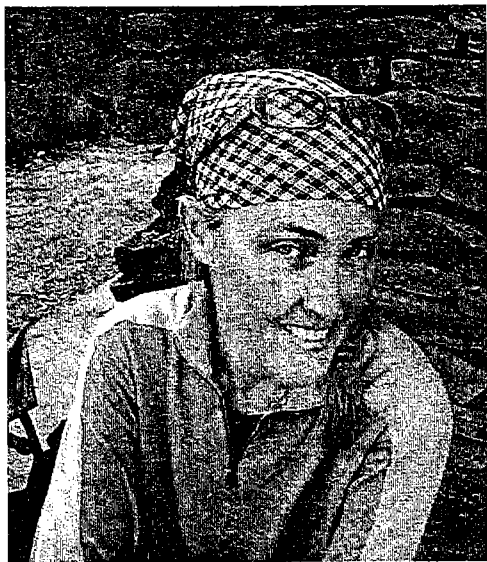
Wednesday 4th January 4pm – 6pm: From Balmoral Beach returning in time for the Club Beach Barbecue

Tuesday 17th January 6pm – 8pm From Bondi Beach for dinner in the park at Coogee.

The Silent Series #3 *Alan Sauran*

We were only three. Rainy weather and an abundance of scheduled SBW walks on the weekend of 5th, 6th November saw a highly select group of three starters (leader Caro, Suzanne and Alan) for Silent Series walk #3, from Mount Victoria Falls lookout to Perry's Lookdown, via Little Blue Gum (camp) and Blue Gum forest. The aim of the Silent Series is "reflection, contemplation, thinking and listening to the sounds of nature". The smaller the group, the greater the opportunity for silence, so we were off to a good start.

After a short car shuffle, made slightly more difficult by the need to keep the engine revs down, we were in position at Victoria Falls lookout at about 9 am on the Saturday. Caro explained the rules. Look, listen and enjoy. It was as simple as that. The walk started.



Caro, the walk leader, thinking silently

At about 4 pm on the Sunday, we reached the top of Blackheath Walls at Perrys Lookdown and the walk ended. We had seen, heard and enjoyed shy orange yabbies in rock pools, shamelessly inquisitive leeches noiselessly exploring our private places, a secretive lone orange tree in fruit hiding by the banks of the Grose River, and deafeningly melodious bellbirds breaking all the rules. Over Happy Hour and dinner, using sign language, we had discussed subjects as diverse as trekking in the India Himalayas, volunteer work in developing countries and the Qantas frequent flyer scheme.

And all the while, the enormous mute Sydney blue gums had watched us impassively and said nothing.

That night, for the first time in decades, I did not snore

Alan Sauran

Footnote: While we were meditating before dinner, a crow tiptoed up stealthily and pecked uninvited at Caro's dehydrated dinner reconstituting in a plastic bag, but it rustled the bag and rudely disturbed our thoughts. If the wildlife cannot follow the rules, they will not be invited on any future silent walks

Erskine Creek –Nepean River Circuit Sunday 13th November

Near the Big Crater Creek junction there is a delightful pool fed by a small waterfall with sandy beach. A perfect morning tea stop and swim for our party of 13. Water temperature is just right.

The ascent is only 200 metres. But is it tough! I think they should call it Jack Evans Pass, not track. A series of big leg stretches to ledges connected by chimneys.

On top a gentle up hill walk on track to Erskine Knoll then through fields of Flannel flowers to lunch on a shady unnamed creek.

Perfect navigation by Maurice brought us out on Wallaby Knoll and on to a narrow fire trail to the Nepean.

After cooling off in the river we set off downstream to Erskine Creek Junction. Rough and slow I had been told but what an understatement. Spider webs of lantana interspersed with lawyer vine. Cliffs above prevented us from getting above the maze. The other side of the river was no better.

On hour later and 600 metres on we conferred. Six opted to accompany me on a 2.5k swim and float to Erskine Creek. The other 7 with Maurice would stick to the bank.

There was a slight current and a following wind so the swimmers bobbed along at a k ph separating into 3

groups of two. Water deep but pleasantly warm

Robyn and I brought up the rear. But the last shall be first for along came a speedboat. The driver smiled down and said "do you want a lift" Too right we chorused. Zoom and we landed at Erskine Creek in ten minutes at 1645. Our kind driver doubled back and collected the other four mariners.

From on high enmeshed in the terrible scrub the seven could not believe their eyes.

So the six waited an hour at Erskine junction and then left notes in prominent places saying we had gone to Nepean Lookout and the cars parked a short distance further on. But alas all the car keys were with our landlubber friends. So we decided to walk to Glenbrook and bring the cars parked outside the Park to the locked gate so we could at least drive them home or hopefully arrange for the gate to be opened.

So we reeled off 10 of the 14km along the road. Ah the sound of engines and soon we were reunited. But how to get out? Technology saved the day. A mobile call paved the way for an ace negotiator to prevail upon the security company to let us all out for a reasonable fee. Now 2130, some went off to McDonalds at Eastern Creek and the rest took their weary souls home.

Ron Watters

Yalwal Bushwalk – 1972

Gerry Sinzig

Introduction: *An old bushwalking friend Gerry Sinzig who has lived in Canada for the last 30 years, recently found the SBW web site. He found a mention of myself and then sent an email I have been talking to him and he sent this trip account from his bushwalking journal.* Don Finch

13/May/1972 (Saturday)

The alarm rings at 4:00 am and 17 minutes later I am driving off into the darkness, headed south from Windsor. It is a cold, clear night - unusual after weeks of crawling to work through heavy fog. At this hour the road is almost devoid of traffic and as the grey dawn gives way to full daylight (around 6:00 am), I am already south of Wollongong. A dense brown pall of smoke hangs over Port Kembla.

A short distance past Nowra I turn off onto the Nerriga road to Tomerong. The road is still dirt surfaced, but for the first 10 to 12 miles is quite smooth. I'm probably running a little early, so make a brief stop at Tianjara Falls which I have not seen before. The fall itself is little more than a trickle today, but the 200 ft (or so) high cliff over which it spills and the expansive view into the valley beyond are quite impressive. The wind is icy, so lingering here is unpleasant and I'm soon back in the car to cover the last few miles to Sassafras, which comes into view as a dense cluster of trees crowding the top of a prominent hill. I pull up at an old shack, our meeting place at 8:00 am.

Don Finch's mob is still having breakfast in front of a cozy log fire in one of the cabins, while Major Sturgess, who is residing here for a few days rambles on with early reminiscences about this area. Spiro Ketas, always on the lookout for literary talent, collars him to write a contribution for the SBW magazine. Just as everybody finishes eating, Doone and Leslie roll in from Canberra and as they have not yet had breakfast, the eating business starts all over again, while the satiated ones stand around and shiver. Finally, with Doone still gulping down muesli, we pile into the cars for the remaining 3 to 4 mile drive to the fire-road.

It is 9:30 am by the time we start walking, with me reflecting resentfully that I could have had another 1½ hours in bed!! Apart from Doone and Leslie, our party consists of Don Finch, our late-rising leader, Heather, Spiro, Nora, Jim Vatiliotis, Barry Wallace, Bill Burke and John Campbell. Despite the cold, we soon warm up as Don is setting a brisk pace to make up for lost time. Nora is a little taken aback, as she had expected an easy walk. A few miles down the road the girls produce a big block of chocolate from their packs and settle down beside the track by way of protest. To retaliate, we hide behind a bushy knoll a few yards further along and wait until they wander past us. Following behind, we are soon discovered though, for, says Leslie, Don must have tried this "original" little prank of his at least 50 times by now.

The trail forks and we take the right-hand branch which we hope will lead us to a pass near Point Possibility. This is unspectacular yet pleasant country to walk through. Expansive green swampy meadows

interspersed with loose clusters of a white-barked species of gum tree cover the gently undulating topography. Here and there a huge kangaroo bounds off into the scrub as we approach. The trail is almost obliterated in places by moist swamp land which can quickly erase the scars created by man. We settle down to lunch beside a little stream and light a fire to make tea and keep warm. Soon clouds drift over and it begins to drizzle intermittently. This is destined to be the weather pattern for the remainder of the weekend.

After lunch the trail becomes better defined as it wends its way through thicker bushland. Quite unexpectedly a gap in the trees to our left reveals a large chasm ringed by huge, vertical cliffs. We are gazing into the head of the short steep valley which will take us into Ettrema Gorge. From our cliff-edge vantage point the scenery presents itself in rugged grandeur and is somewhat reminiscent of the Kanangra area, especially Thurat Spires. We descend below the cliff-line by a well used pass formed by a 2 foot wide crack between a huge boulder and the main cliff face.

A visitors' book placed by scouts marks the top of the crack. We push on through heavy scrub at first and then follow a rocky gully where the going is much easier. After descending about 1000 ft, this gully merges with the main creek at a lovely rock pool filled with incredibly clear water tinged a slightly greenish hue. It looks very inviting and would beckon me for a swim if it were not so cold. By now Nora is very tired and dragging herself along, while Leslie is suffering from a sore knee she sprained during a previous trip. About a mile down this creek, just short of the Ettrema junction, we make camp at 5:30 pm. The party had become spread out and by the time the tail-enders drift in, it's totally dark.

We soon have a big fire blazing and hoe into our tucker. The camp spot is none too flat and littered with boulders, but between these the ground is padded with soft leaves which promise a comfortable bed. I brought a tent, but cannot be bothered pitching it. Off to bed at 10:00 pm on a very comfortable sleeping spot. During the night the stars are out much of the time, but every now and then it drizzles a little.

14/May/1972 (Sunday)

In view of our slow party, Don decreed an 7:30 am start before retreating into his sleeping bag last night. Ambitious words, but as we have all come to expect, not to be taken too seriously when uttered by Don. Sure enough, although we are halfway through breakfast by 7:00 am, Don Finch still lies lifeless, pretending to be deeply immersed in dreamland. However, John Campbell is equal to this situation.

Armed with 3 full water bags, he descends on the Finch campsite. Our crafty leader has no doubt come to

expect an attack of some sort and has probably been watching through one corner of his eyes, for his response is instant. Unfortunately he is too late. As he springs out of bed, a flurry of water engulfs the entire bedsite and both assailant and assailed emerge drenched to the skin. Even poor Heather, who has been slumbering peacefully nearby, is caught up in the deluge.

Thanks to John Campbell, we move off at 8:00 am. Just upstream of the junction the Ettrema forms a beautiful long pool. The water is incredibly clear and there is a slight greenish deposit on the bottom (some kind of algae perhaps?) which imparts a delightful greenish tint to the water that is so characteristic of the Ettrema.

The river is easy going - we find it is best to stay in the river bed itself, where rock hopping is pleasant. In spite of the easy terrain our progress is slow. A few miles upstream it becomes apparent that Barry Wallace and Jim Vatiliotis are not ahead, even though they had left camp before us. Don speculates that they may have erred up Dynamite Creek. At our rate of progress we cannot afford to wait, so press on in the hope that our missing companions will realise their mistake and catch up to us.

At 1:00 pm we stop for lunch at the Jones Creek junction, having taken 5 hours to cover 6 easy miles from our campsite. Not too good. Prudently, Doone relieves Nora of her pack. Shortly after we stop, Barry and Jim stomp onto the scene, the former venting his criticism of our leader's lousy instructions. Apparently they had strayed up a wrong creek for half an hour before realising their mistake.

Off again at 2:15 pm in steady drizzle. The first Jones Creek swimming hole looks terribly inviting, despite the indifferent weather. At a second pool we skirt a steep cliff by traversing onto the scrub above the true left bank. A second day of these tantalising pools has worn down my resistance, so at the top of the cliff I strip off and leap into the clear water. Then it's on to the mine and the high waterfall.

On a previous trip Doone and I had climbed the broken up cliff on the left side of the waterfall. Today it looks formidably steep and in any case, the rock is too wet this time, so we join the others up the rudimentary geologists' trail on the opposite bank. It's getting late and we are beginning to have doubts about making it back today. Doone and Don race ahead to locate our pass through the cliffs before darkness overtakes us. I arrive at the pass a little later at 5:30 pm. Gradually the others drift in, Heather and Jim, the last two, in complete darkness.

The road is only a mile away, but it is a dark night, and we will have to follow a compass bearing. We set off in close-knit procession at 6:15 pm on a heading 40° to east of magnetic north. Above us the stars flicker brilliantly, but soon thin clouds drift over and light rain begins to fall. Our

torches are rather inadequate and progress is painfully slow.

The growth gets denser and our progress slower. By 7:30 pm we are still stumbling through the scrub in a ragged file behind Doone. We are now walking on an easterly heading. Just after 8:00 pm we reach the road. Another 5 miles of road bashing lies between us and the cars, so we light a big fire and eat the last of our food. Thus fortified, we set off once more at 9:15 pm with Leslie skipping down the trail singing at the top of her voice - her sore knee completely forgotten. More testimony to the potency of "red-death" (the bushies nickname for Parke-Davis Capsilon, which can work wonders on sprained joints).

The road is vague and difficult to follow in the dark, so we stay close together, pausing here and there to investigate the way ahead before proceeding. What a fantastic night to be striding through the bush! The rain has eased and here and there a star flickers through thin cloud. Suddenly I am overcome by a feeling of complete detachment from the real world. As we walk on into the darkness, the shadowy landscape appears to glide by as if in a dream. Faint stars in ever increasing numbers fill the heavens and I get the illusion of having entered a land of fantasy! Reality returns when we reach the trail junction where we had branched off yesterday morning. From here on the road is more clearly defined and quite easy to follow without torches. We begin to spread out as the faster ones forge ahead.

Poor Nora is really footsore by now. The walks programme had promised an easy 15 miles and despite Don's warning that it would actually be further, she had not bargained for this. Admirably though, she plods on without the slightest complaint. About 1 mile short of the cars, Don arrives in his heap - he had raced ahead and is now driving back to pick up the stragglers.

Leslie and I walk on and arrive at the cars by 12:30 am. A quick change of clothes and we are on our way without further delay as the rain sets in again. The last two days of intermittent drizzle have transformed the unpaved Nerriga Road into a treacherous quagmire. In places the car slithers from side to side which demands finger-tip control. The steep descent from Sassafras is interesting, to say the least - I soon find that the best way to avoid a slide into the ditch is to drive right down the centre of the road since the surface is so slippery that the camber on the sides causes the car to slide towards the embankment. With mud like this, who needs snow?!

By Tomerong, my once white car is covered in brown sludge. After a brief stop to wash the windscreen and headlights, I press on. Fortunately an all-night service station just south of Nowra is open. It is a good run to Wollongong, but then I get drowsy and I'm glad to be back home in Windsor by which time it is 4:40 am. Off to bed and to hell with work - I'll take a day off. So Finch's reputation for late trips remains preserved. As he once remarked, "All good walks end in the dark!". Well, he has really surpassed himself this time!

The Nanda Devi (World Expeditions) Trip 4th-26th/October 05

Leader – Sue Fear; Members - Peter Blackband, Pam Campbell, Geoff Kelly, Owen Kimberley, Jeanne Klov Dahl, Rosemary MacDougal, Cath Mullane, Michelle Powell, Jan Roberts, Marianne Watt.

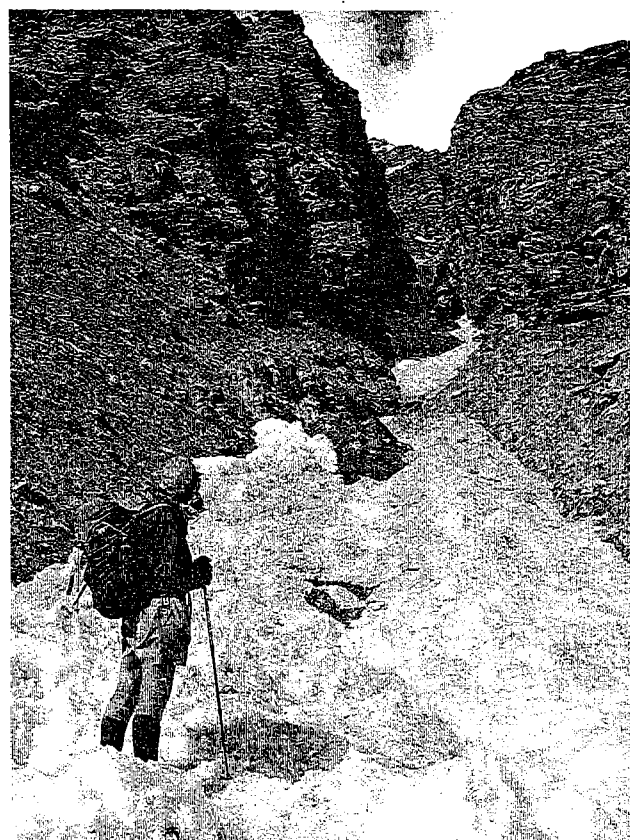
India! -- what to say about it. A few people I've talked to have asked how it could be summarised in a short statement. Sarah MacDonald, in her recent book 'Holy Cow', put it this way: *"India is beyond statement. For anything you say, the opposite is also true. It's rich and poor, spiritual and material, cruel and kind, angry but peaceful, ugly and beautiful...It's all the extremes. India defies understanding [it's] loud, intrusive [and] confronting"* (pp. 110 & 168).

I could only add that from the moment of arrival it's an assault on the senses – a smorgasbord of sights, sounds and smells. Extreme poverty is evident everywhere, particularly in such places as roadways and train stations. Cattle and scrawny dogs wander at will, monkeys have free run of streets and footpaths, human activity never ceases, traffic is constant and make-do technology has to be seen to be believed. As someone commented after the trip, "You can't come back from India unchanged."

Our arrival at the Indira Gandhi International airport on the evening of 4th October gave us a foretaste of impressions to come. The terminal was anything but sophisticated, especially compared to the one in Singapore. Its general appearance was somewhat down in the heels, procedures were inefficient and delays frustrating. We had been warned: the pre-travel literature clearly stated, "Bring your sense of humour and leave your watch at home!"

We were put up in an elegant hotel, though – the 'Nikko' – right in Delhi's central Connaught Place. The next day an amiable guide named Sunil took the group on a tour of New and Old Delhi: Parliament House and other seat of government buildings, India Gate (commemorating India's involvement in World War I), Purana Qila (old fort), Raj Ghat (memorial flame to Mahatma Gandhi), Jama Masjid (largest mosque in India), the little Taj (model for the Taj Mahal), and finally an unannounced stop at a shop of Kashmir carpets – the latter not a sensible choice for a group of trekkers! Sunil also boasted that Delhi has TWO cricket grounds. That evening we were transferred to the Old Delhi train station – an experience in itself – where we took an overnight sleeper to Kathgodam (269km from Delhi). We learned the next morning that a Canadian traveller in the next compartment had had his case stolen during the few minutes that he went to the loo.

By 6th October we were on our way to Almora by bus, some 86km from Kathgodam. During stops in villages along the way we observed, close up, goat carcasses hanging in butchers' shops, dozing cattle generally getting in the way of things, trades people stooped in cramped quarters, children going to school, all scrubbed up and impeccably dressed. When we reached Almora, some signs of affluence, such as electrical equipment in the shops, were in evidence. Compared to Australia, there was a noticeable absence of pubs! Roadways by this time were becoming quite precipitous, and Peter, who was peering sideways out the bus window, kept muttering "Struth!" The next day we went on to Munsyari (223kms from Almora), the starting point of the trek. Accommodation there was decidedly



simpler, to prepare us for tent living for the next sixteen days. By then some of us were beginning to feel the altitude difference, at just over 3200m.

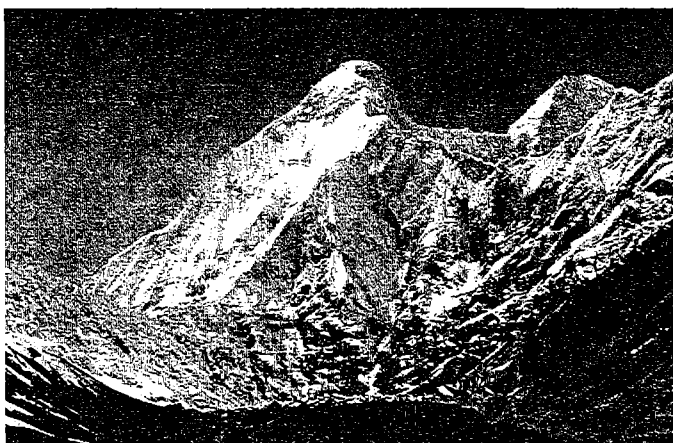
Early Saturday morning on the 8th we started out in a misty rain, on a fairly short walk to Lilam. We had nearly thirty porters with us, all from Munsyari, plus four cooking staff: Indra, Arjan, Rahul and Guru(sp?). Two chooks, carried in a basket arrangement, were turned loose on arrival. Cath promptly named them Gertrude and Agnes, and we quietly wondered how long they'd be with us before the inevitable! We had a relaxing afternoon that day, but were in for a rude shock the next morning, to find that three tents had been slashed and three pairs of boots stolen – Sue's, Jan's and Owen's! Our Indian guide Almas Kahn decided to walk all the way back to Munsyari to report the loss, and that night all the porters arrived at the next campsite (Bodgwar) after dark, with most of our gear and all the cooking equipment. Also, one of our members had sustained an injury, so the start of the trip was rather shaky to say the least. Not to be defeated, however, the expedition continued, and most things did improve after that. That day, the 9th, was actually one of the most memorable, because an entire village was moving down from a higher spot for the winter with their donkeys, ponies, cattle and goats carrying heavy loads of rice, potatoes, seeds, poultry in buckets, cement, kerosene, etc. Most of the animals wore bells, and stepped obediently along, some with young ones at foot. People were very interesting, too – mostly quite dark and small with weathered faces, possibly of Tibetan and/or Nepalese descent. The women, wearing bright colours, encouraged their children to say

"Naameste" (a combined blessing and greeting), as we made our way past them on the narrow track. All the while the Gori Ganga River rushed and churned far below us, and the animals' loads were wide! Also, along the trackside were small Hindu temples, containing incense, ribbons with prayers, offerings and statues of the gods Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver) and Shiva (destroyer). What a change from our first impressions of India a few days earlier!

On to Raikot, on the 10th. By now the group was into a routine, so there was 'down' time in the late afternoons for cards, reading, afternoon tea and resting. Cath usually got the ball rolling with '500' or 'Rickety Kate!' Meals were quite delicious and varied, too. As the trek progressed the cooks continued to trot out potatoes, pasta, dahl, local vegetables, beans, and even birthday cakes, pies, fruit jelly and puddings. How they managed to do this day after day remains a mystery to me! By the 11th we passed through a village called Martoli, at the confluence of the Gori Ganga and the Lwanl Gad. It's virtually deserted now, particularly in the colder months. This, and many other derelict but well-constructed villages we saw from here up to Milam, once thrived with shops, houses and schools. They had been on a major trade route to western Tibet, but trade ceased in 1962 when China overtook that country. Some still serve as rest and eating places for a few locals and passers-by. A stone temple dedicated to Nanda Devi still exists at Martoli, with bells to placate the goddess of the high mountains. At various checkpoints, usually in shanty huts, we were asked to show our passports to the ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police), which could be quite a serious and time-consuming business.

After leaving Martoli, and pushing on to Lawanl, the tracks had deteriorated due to recent rains and only occasional use by shepherds and animals. On the 12th and 13th we camped near the Nanda Devi East base camp, as by then the temperatures had dropped down to -10° Celsius, and it was thought that the base camp could be even colder. We were well above the tree line by now, leaving behind such vegetation as horse chestnut, holly, juniper, birch, chir (pine), rhododendron and oak. The scenery was spectacular, though, as the snow-topped peaks were now in sight. The base camp was our destination on the 13th.

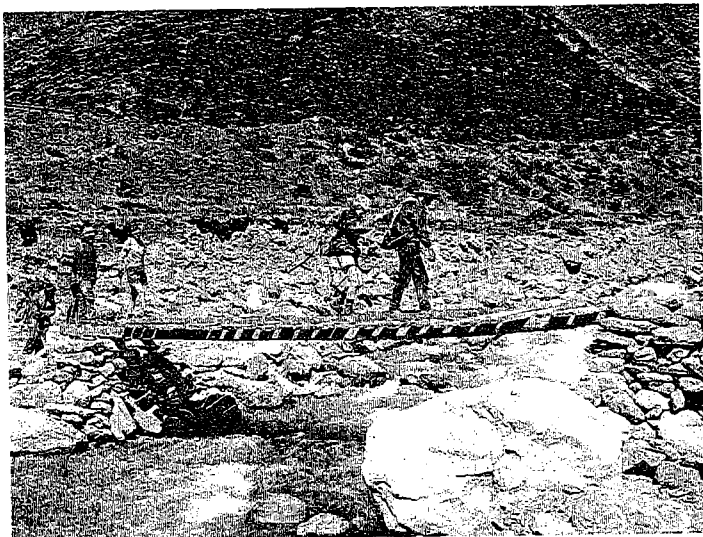
Nanda Devi is known as the consort of the destroyer/recreator. Indians of the Hindu religion consider it the most sacred mountain in the world, after Kailash. It is the highest peak in the Indian Garhwal Himalaya, and has two summits: the main one (over 7800m) and Nanda Devi East (7434m). Surrounded by a ring of nineteen peaks, all ca. 6,000m high, it is a particularly difficult mountain to access. This formation, known as the Nanda Devi Sanctuary, resembles a vast amphitheatre, over 100km in circumference. In 1934 two trekkers, Shipton and Tilman, were the first to forge their way to the Sanctuary. Then in August 1936 Tilman and Odell summited Nanda Devi, reaching the highest point achieved by man up until then. It is still thought that this is the finest mountaineering feat



ever achieved in the Himalayas, and that no lifetime would ever be long enough to take in the wonder of the region. At that time the area was home to such endangered animals as the snow leopard, Asiatic black bear, brown bear, blue sheep, the Himalayan musk deer and the Bharal. It is still relatively unspoiled, with alpine grazing meadows, high passes, feeder streams and shepherds' camps. Almas pointed out that Nanda Khat, Nanda Kot, Changuch, Longstaff Col, Traills Pass and Panchu can all be seen from just beyond the base camp. The crisp outlines of stark white mountaintops against the deep blue sky is a sight none of us could forget. Also, we did see some wildlife, but nothing especially rare: marmots, brown squirrels, langur monkeys, lizards, golden eagles, chats, choughs, ravens, magpies and drongos.

By the 14th we were camped at Lawan again, and on the 15th and 16th at Ganaghar. It was about then that a Himalayan mountain dog befriended us, and became our mascot for a few days. Everyone (almost!) warmed to him, as he was very gregarious, and amused himself tossing around bits of dry cow dung! But at Milam (on the 20th) he disappeared as mysteriously as he appeared, maybe finding more worthwhile conditions there. Milam was just a military outpost, but it was worthwhile to see. Customs inspections was unusually laborious, as the clerk painstakingly ruled his pages before getting on with the job! The only time we saw someone actually riding a horse was a portly officer or two being led by underlings sporting Walkmans – an incongruous sight in this remote and crumbling military outpost. It was curious, though, that as long as we could exchange a few words with anyone en route, we could find out the latest score in the Australia vs Rest of the World test cricket match!

On the 17th we were at Tola, at the base of the Ralam glacier (3648m), which we tackled until it got too slippery. Jan was sorely missing her boots and found the going pretty rough in the joggers she borrowed from Cath. The remaining several days (18th to the 23rd) were mainly spent going back the way we came with one special day spent seeing the twin peak profile from opposite Panchu, from Martoli. Peter thought that was the highlight of the trip, because the weather was perfect that day, and the group had also witnessed an avalanche. In fact, we were very



fortunate with good weather most of the time, in this post-monsoon period.

We'd had some short drizzles and some snow flurries, but nothing heavy or long-lasting. Subtle autumn colours added to the experience as well. There were moments of occasional landslips and makeshift bridges that offered some zest at times. The porters impressed us all with their amazing dexterity and sure-footedness, carrying huge loads over narrow tracks, tippy rocks and wobbly bridges, either barefoot or in thongs.

By the 23rd we were back in Munsyari taking showers, washing clothes and drinking beer. It was very good to

sleep in real beds again, too, hard as they were! On the 24th we went from Munsyari to Naini Tal, where Almas lives. The journey of 288 kms took twelve hours, due mainly to steep and windy roads. The 25th was spent in Naini Tal, an attractive resort town set around a lake, complete with many shops and attractions. I opted for the zoo, because I wanted to see a snow leopard, if not in the wild, then in captivity. They are beautiful animals, something like a light-coloured cheetah with a bushy tail. Many people bought gifts in Naini Tal because they were going back to Sydney the next night. Our last day – the 26th – was extremely long because there were bad traffic jams on the way back to Delhi. The drive of 303kms took another twelve hours, but people arrived back in plenty of time to catch flights.

Mostly, people were quiet on the way back, probably in part reflecting back on the trek. I couldn't help but notice the women labouring in a number of manual jobs and carrying heavy loads of sticks and straw on their backs. Also, I noticed how men invariably gather around to solve traffic problems, all chattering loudly at once! I then reflected back on the peace of a week earlier, hearing nothing from the outside world but a droning prop plane, from miles and miles away. What might a young American tourist say at this point – "TOTALLY AWESOME"? I'd just like to say to the Sydney Bushies, World Expeditions and Sue Fear – "Dhanyavad."

Jeanne Klov Dahl November 2005

Barren Grounds, Illawarra Escarpment 3rd December 2005

Route: : Fox Ridge – Fox Trig – Saddleback Trig – Paddy's Pass – Jamberoo Mtn. Road.

Started 9.30 am. 15 starters in glorious sunshine, and strong gusty westerly winds. Plenty of leeches in the rainforest sections following an overnight storm!

We climbed 600m up Fox Trig to the Barren Grounds escarpment. Some of it off-track, as the old trail has now been completely overgrown towards the top, and the route is tricky for the uninitiated. Then, after morning tea at 11.00, it was off-track across the Barren Grounds, which have also become quite overgrown, with some dense bush to struggle through, including hakea in places.

Got to where the 1957 aircraft wreckage is located by 12.00 noon, but it took us 1 ½ hours to find it, because of the increase in vegetation cover. Just as we were giving up, Bryn and Ian spotted it, about 200m further south than we were expecting. We had fun poking around the site, with the wreckage remarkably intact after almost 50 years. Lunched at Fox Trig itself. Took some photos.

Then it was on through more thick bush to the Drawing Room Rocks – Saddleback Trig fire trail. Some of us (notably the leader) were suffering hamstring cramps from the effort, so it was a relief to get onto the fire trail.

Afternoon tea at Saddleback Trig. Then we found that the 2 km 'track' from the trig across Noorinan Mountain towards Hoddle's Track and the planned finish at Saddleback Mtn. has completely disappeared due to overgrown bush. In light of the cramps some of us were experiencing, we therefore opted to exit via Paddy's Pass down to Misty Lance, and thence to Ben Rickett's at 4.00 pm. There we were lucky to have access to one car, which ferried 6 of us to Saddleback Mtn., the original planned end of the walk, for a complicated re-shuffling of the cars which took almost 2 hours!

A great day out in perfect weather, and with some adventure. Although the route had to be modified, so that the distance was only around 16 km, the extensive off-track and the 600m climb up Fox Trig justified the Q walk rating.

Richard Darke

Send Your Walk Reports to the Editor

The Editor welcomes reports on interesting day walks (such as Richard's, and Ron's on Page 12). These should be emailed direct to billholland@bigpond.com after completing and mailing your report forms.



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!

SOCIAL NOTES

Hi Everyone,

Season's Greetings from the Social Secretary and the whole SBW Committee. To commemorate this festive period it would be great to see you at the XMAS PARTY on Wednesday 21st December at a different venue - The McMahon's Point Community Centre which is quite near North Sydney Station. Please bring a plate of food to share and the Club will provide all beverages, cutlery, cups and plates. What could be easier!? We 'kick off' at 6:00pm.

In November we had a most successful and different kind of social night - a Food / Cooking Demonstration relating to Food Groups on extended walking trips. Peter Love organized this in his usual excellent style, providing lots of tips, copies of recipes and of course tastings - the highlight of which was tiramisu with port.

In January, we have two social activities. Firstly, on Wednesday 4th, is the annual Balmoral Picnic. One needs to BYO everything and "Mother Nature" provides the venue and weather. Bill Holland is the contact person. Then on Wednesday 18th, after the Committee meeting, there is a 'Digital Camera for Dummies' evening. You DO NOT need to be a novice to attend as you will be able to increase your knowledge and /or help others.

For all those whose are going on extended trips, I wish you a great time. There are plenty of walks on the program to keep everyone else busy if you are in Sydney.

I am off to Vietnam and a few days in Cambodia.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Xmas Party. *Kathy*

Social Programme January:

Wed 4th Club Room Closed (*Committee meets on 18th!*)

Wed 4th Balmoral Beach Picnic

6pm Bring your own food (or buy fish and chips) and drink for an evening of relaxation under the trees at the south end of the beach -from 6m.

(If you're feeling a bit energetic, join Bill Holland at 4pm for a jaunt around Mosman locale, before finishing up at Balmoral Beach. See the walks program for more details.)

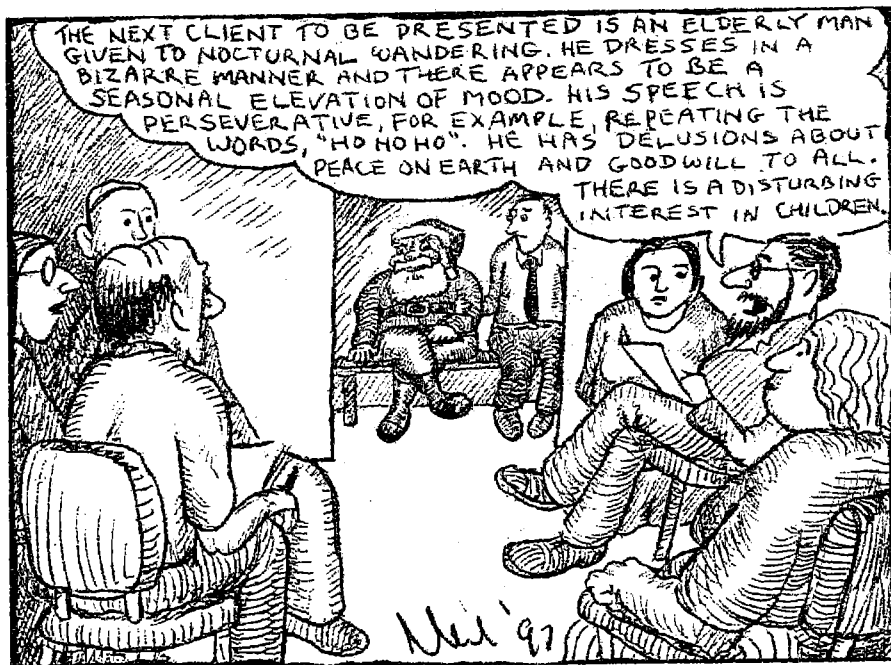
Wed 11th Club Room Closed (*New Members team are on holidays!!*)

Wed 18th Committee Meeting

7pm A short meeting. Observers welcome. .

Wed 18th Bushwalking with a Digital Camera

8pm Dummies Night" You will have the opportunity to learn how to use your digital camera for better bushwalking photographs. Some tips on taking photos, enhancing, printing and computer archiving.



CHRISTMAS AT THE CLINIC

This drawing is reproduced with the kind permission of Neil Philips. Please note unauthorised reproduction is not permitted

 cloudveil

PALLIN



HERE IS NO SUCH THING
AS BAD WEATHER
ONLY INAPPROPRIATE CLOTHING

discover

Paddy Pallin

FOR YOUR NEAREST STORE, CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INFORMATION
PHONE 1800 805 398 OR VISIT www.paddypallin.com.au