

# THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



MAY 2008



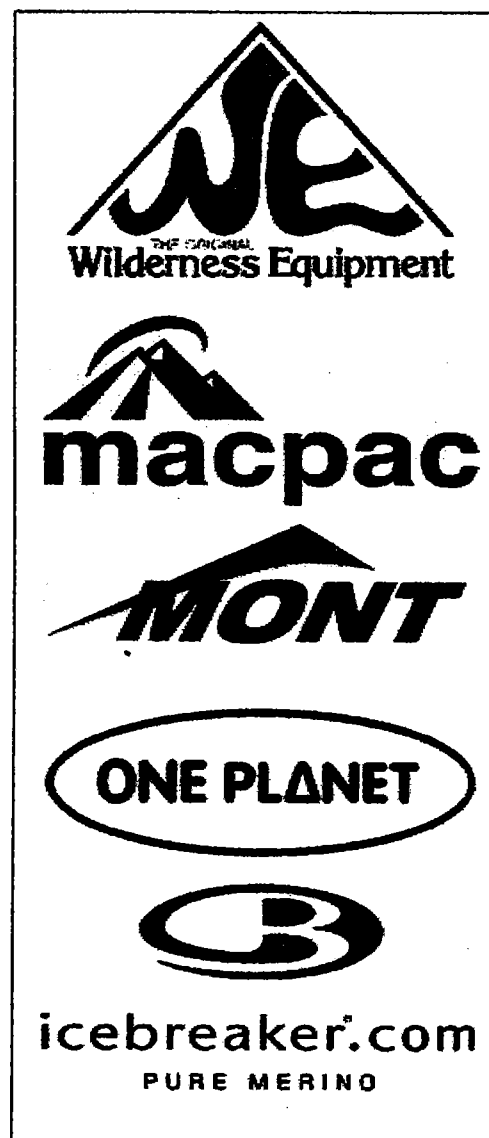
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May 2008, Issue 882

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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 NSW 1565.

**Editor:** Maureen Carter  
**Production Manager:** Stephen Brading  
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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 Program (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 The Snowy Mountains, the Warrumbungles as well as interstate i.e. Victorian Alps

Our meetings start at 8pm and are held on Wednesday evenings (see Social Program) at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli (near Milsons Point Railway Station).

Visitors and prospective members are welcome [www.sbw.org.au](http://www.sbw.org.au)

### Office Bearers

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#### Delegates to Confederation:

**Bill Holland**  
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**Jim Callaway**  
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all around Australia and the world. This is a very strong program and gives plenty for all members to enjoy.

Planning for the new web site has caused some self examination and this has raised concerns about some aspects of the Club's operation, for example, Club finances, walks and social event attendances, cost and effort for the magazine. My principal concerns though is for the Club's image, whether it appears that our primary interest is walking and adventures in the bush and whether we can change with changes in the broad social culture. The Committee has approved the setting up of a Steering Committee to examine some of these issues and make recommendations to the main Committee. This group will include some recent Presidents who understand and care about the Club and to balance the demographic, some young female walking members. The main committee is large and cumbersome; it meets for two hours per month and has trouble examining the big issues to make changes. The structure and size of the committee was set by the Constitution eighty years ago.

The Club's future is with the walking members and should operate for them; we have a strong program of events with many good leaders and a small band of people working hard to keep the Club going. We have most of the requirements of a strong walking club. The magazine and the web site should be orientated toward walking with reports of member's adventures, past and present. It should be colourful with coloured photos and maps and be available on the web site or by email. We can't afford to make coloured hard copies for posting out but most walkers have email and colour printers. One of the discussion subjects of the new steering committee will be whether the magazine should be published less frequently than every month.

I would be glad to hear from any member with opinions on the issues mentioned above.

*David Trinder*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

With this copy of The Sydney Bushwalker you have received the winter walks program. Tony and the leaders have pulled out all stops; there are 77 events on it (an average of about 6 events every week) and 14 advanced notices for extended trips

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Coolana

I support Chris Dowling's recent correspondence on Coolana. There are club members who I admire and respect who are supporters of Coolana, but I do not agree with them on this. Don Finch is right in saying that effort spent on Coolana has been done by those who have volunteered to do so. However, despite the monetary donations made by various people, Coolana is not self-supporting - part of everyone's subscriptions go to supporting Coolana. In this regard, our treasurer has noted "additionally the maintenance costs continue to exceed income for Coolana so the shortfall must be covered from membership fees." This has been one of the reasons for the recommended increase in membership fees.

Gretel Woodward's letter in the March magazine appears to imply, amongst other things, that anyone who criticises Coolana is against the environment and accordingly should leave The Sydney Bush Walkers and join a 4WD club. However there are many ways to be committed to the environment without being committed to Coolana.

The Sydney Bush Walkers is a club of bushwalkers, but Coolana is a place for bush campers. There are only limited opportunities for bushwalking there, which (to me) explains why it is visited so infrequently by the majority of members of the club.

I attended the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and enjoyed catching up and reminiscing with many friends I've walked with since I joined. But an anniversary can be more than a reunion. I know of another club that put on walks to 60 different mountains for its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. That sounds like a great way to celebrate a bushwalking anniversary. I'd support a similar theme for future anniversaries of The Sydney Bush Walkers.

An anniversary can also be a time to think about the future as well as the past. To that end, I'm pleased to see that in addition to the regular leaders there are new leaders on the walks program, leading different, interesting and challenging walks. It is today's new leaders that will be the lifeblood of the club in years to come.

*Ian Thorpe*

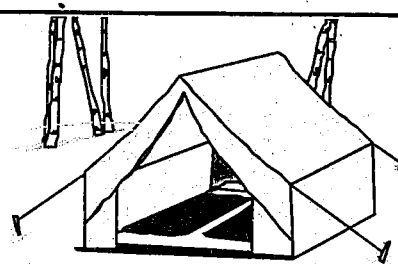
### Social Events & Other Matters

I've just been reading the magazine and like the idea of social events other than in the clubrooms. We always used to meet for dinner before the Wednesday night social evenings. This has fallen by the wayside in recent years. (There have been a few informal arrangements, but nothing advertised in the magazine or in the short notices emails). I'd like to suggest meeting at the Thai Phoon Restaurant, a new place in Fitzroy Street, just across the road from the clubrooms. I've been there, both food and prices agreeable, and it is so convenient. I'd suggest 6pm onwards, that way those of us coming straight from work don't have to fill in time. This could be advertised in the magazine and on the emails, as it used to be.

Another issue raised in the magazine is that overnight walks are becoming less popular. From my own point of view, I enjoy both day walks and extended walks. However, I find the 2-day weekend walks a great rush, as not only is there the packing etc, there is the long drive, either after work on Fridays, or at some ungodly hour on Saturday morning, and then the rush home on Sunday night in order to prepare for work the next day. For this reason, I have always preferred 3-day or longer extended walks.

I didn't mind when I worked part-time, but now as a full-time worker, it's a different kettle of fish. So in my case it's not a change in my interest level, it's just that my life has become busier. Perhaps more overnight walks closer to Sydney?

*Pamela Irving*



### TENT FOR SALE

For the collector of historical bushwalking gear:

A Paddy Made 'Gold' two man walled tent is for sale.

Little used and in very good condition.

Any reasonable offer will be considered.

Please contact Jeffrey Bridger on 9489 5921 (H), 9561 8283 (B) or at [Jeffrey.bridger@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Jeffrey.bridger@det.nsw.edu.au)

## WALKS SECRETARY'S REPORT

Although the days are getting colder, the days are often fine and warm even in the Blue Mountains. If you have the right gear it can be very pleasant walking in the mists with very beautiful views revealing themselves as the day warms up.

If you would like to lead a walk, I have lots of ideas that will help you and lots of leaders willing to give you a helping hand. Speaking of walks, with the price of fuel going up, it is about time we again looked at some of those walks from earlier in the Club's history that were based around public transport.

You will notice in the winter program that the recommended rate for sharing fuels cost in a car has been increased to 60 cents per kilometre. For those of you getting a lift in someone's car, don't forget that they are paying for fuel, insurance, repairs, maintenance and depreciation. I, like many other drivers have had to spend hundreds of dollars to repair damage sustained on a trip.

Winter is nearly here and with it the cold weather. Make sure you pack some warm gear such as waterproof jackets, windproof clothing, thermals, hats and gloves. Be aware of the principles of dressing in layers to regulate your body temperature. Watch for the "umbles" - stumbles, mumbles, fumbles, and grumbles which show changes in motor coordination and levels of consciousness and which may indicate hypothermia.

I will have a separate article on Hypothermia in the June Magazine.

Do you know that SBW has an EPIRB for leaders to borrow. This is great for those more remote and difficult trips. Just contact me if you want to know more.

Have you started thinking about walks to put on the Spring and Summer program. If you have any ideas, suggestions, questions, please contact me.

Looking forward to that next happy hour.

See you on the track ...

**Tony Holgate**

Walk Secretary

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Many thanks to all the contributors to this month's magazine for heeding my pleas for copy. It is particularly satisfying to be able to print several articles on bush walks that members have enjoyed. It is also heartening to receive promises of articles on bush safety and first aid for future magazines.

The 'hot topics' at the moment seem to concern the management of the club and the web site. Whilst I do not want to stifle debate on either of these issues, and I have been a long time supporter of 'freedom of the press', I believe that first priority should be given to articles centred around bushwalking and other outdoor activities, together with social events. I always contact contributors, who have after all put valuable time and effort into writing articles and, I am pleased to say, that they have been happy to have their suggestions put before the committee or relevant sub-committees if they are not published.

I am also aware that some people may perceive particular articles as adding to the body of a healthy debate. However, others, including newer members, or those considering joining the Club, may regard such items as divisive or having too much emphasis on 'politics' rather than walking.

Happy walking  
**Maureen**

### Wentworth Falls Closure

NPWS advise the following:

*Wentworth Falls Picnic Area will be closed to public access from Monday May 12th, for approximately 5 months.*

*This includes all parking areas, road way access, toilet facilities and access to walking tracks and lookouts.*

*The site will be closed 7 days a week, i.e. including weekends and public holidays.*

*N.B. Most walking tracks in the Wentworth Falls Area will remain open, and can still be accessed from the Conservation Hut / Valley of the Waters, or via Darwins Walk. There will be no access to walking tracks from Falls Rd or Wilson St*

## COOLANA REPORT

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May three members and two visitors started work on the weed havens exposed on the Eastern Flat by the spraying program. Enviroquest were just finishing the second part of their spraying contract as we arrived. The fallen wattles were cut stacked and burnt with twenty two small pile burns conducted over the next few days. Two more visitors arrived on Friday and another visitor with a prospective member arriving on Saturday to help over the weekend. The area cleared was on the Eastern Flat in a 50 meter wide strip from the river to the start of the steep slope of the ridge, bounded by AMG grid line 0269600 and 0269650. This strip will be planted out with trees this year given SCA approval.

The policy of using spray on the weeds on the camping flat has combined with the season to have a remarkable effect in that the grass is long and luxurious which in turn dampens weed growth. The general rule of mow weeds not grass has helped too. The mowing hours required has been kept to a minimum with only safe access ways to the river and camping spots needing to be mowed. The grass planted by Shirley and team during March is growing well as is the grass that sprung from seed collected and then planted by Barry on the Eastern Flat.

*Don Finch*

## PROSPECTIVE TRAINING WEEKEND

Six prospectives, *Chassin, Geoff, Jason, John, Lucy and Manny*, together with instructors *Patrick and Bill* spent an enjoyable weekend at Coolana on 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> May. A family group of three also joined us to add to the socialising around the camp fire on Saturday night.

The weather was fine - sunny on Saturday and a misty light shower offering a damp start to Sunday. Coolana was at its best. The grass has grown to counter the weed growth, the fallen trees branches and stumps have been cleared and the river flat at Coolana now presents as a large and ideal camping site. The new composting toilet received much favourable comment. Wombat sighting was an interesting diversion for the younger member of the family group.

The weekend instruction started with Patrick offering first aid advice to the group. Bill followed with navigation instruction, setting out the laminated map on the large table under the trees. This pattern of instruction was followed throughout the weekend.

However, it was not all sitting and listening. The group set out to explore Coolana. On Saturday we went up to the cliffs and indulged in rock scrambling and cave exploration. Then to the western end for compass sighting practice from the Dot Butler lookout across the valley. The afternoon finished with a return via Palm Valley to the campsite for an extended happy hour and evening meal around the campfire.

On Sunday, after looking at, and receiving advice on, appropriate bushwalking gear (tents, sleeping bags, clothing etc) we practiced some more navigation then set out to explore the second creek to the east and the eastern flat before returning for lunch and the self-checking navigation test.



## The SBW Mid-Winter Feast

Wed. 18th June 8:00pm – in the Clubrooms at Kirribilli

This is the annual SBW Mid-Winter Feast "Xmas in June".

Come and enjoy this SBW exclusive event.

This is an opportunity to socialise and catch up with other members in the clubrooms. You supply the "Xmas style" food. The Club provides beverages including wine, beer, soft drinks, tea and coffee and all necessary eating utensils.

If you are good, Santa will bring gluwein!!!!

## From the Committee Room



A report of proceedings at the Committee meeting 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

President David Trinder opened the meeting at 7-05pm..

- The minutes of the meeting on 2nd April 2008 were approved. In matters arising President David advised that he had spoken to Eddie Giacomel about the suggested decentralized management system; Ruth Richter has been added as a signatory to the bank account; emails had been sent to prospectives re expiry of membership; the recommendation from the Electronic Sub Committee has still to be completed - a brief has been circulated; David Carter has emailed a PDF copy of the April magazine to Committee members on a trial basis; Treasurer Margaret had circulated a statement of the Club's financial position.
- Correspondence included a letter from Ian Debert expressing disappointment at lack of Committee presence at the Coolana Reunion; an email had been sent to Confederation advising details of the 2008 Committee; a letter from NPWS re fox baiting will be passed to the Coolana committee.
- President David had earlier circulated his report on the state of the Club and suggested a sub-committee be formed to investigate and make recommendations to the Committee. The Committee resolved that *David Trinder, Bill Holland, Tony Holgate, Eddie Giacomel, Maurice Smith, Rosemary McDougal, Caro Ryan and Jodie Dixon* be members of this sub-committee. .
- He also advised that Gerhard Ruhl has sadly passed away. A card or letter will be sent to his family. Several Committee members mentioned his moving article published earlier this year regarding his experience with cancer.
- Treasurer Margaret Carey reported; that 60% of membership subscriptions had been received;
- Accounts for payment were approved as follows: Coolana expenses \$226; rent \$400; printing materials \$256; Dept Fair Trading \$65; magazine postage \$397(April)and \$400 (March);weed control \$2,425 (covered by grant).
- Don Finch addressed the Committee and provided the following information on Coolana: SBW Inc owns Coolana and is therefore responsible for the bills. Members created an investment fund in 1972 and interest earned from the investment is to be used to assist with maintenance to the extent required. The principal is to remain intact, and any surplus interest is to be added to the principle of the fund. Motions made in 2004 to make it clear to club that this was the purpose of the fund. SBW Inc is responsible for Coolana. The fund just helps to pay expenses.
- Don also asked that Steve Brown be made the 5th member of the Coolana Committee and this was approved by the Committee.

- Tony Holgate presented the draft Winter Walks Programme in a proposed new look A5 format. The Committee agreed that he should pursue this idea. He raised need for easier walks on the program, and more walks to be classified as "qualifying walks". Tony also suggested the recommended contribution for car sharing be raised to 60cents per km, to be divided between the participants of the car (which includes the driver). Some members of the committee raised concerns about the cost of this and that this could deter some people from going on walks. Discretion will still remain with the driver as to what they take from passengers. This new rate has been added to the Winter Program.
- Kathy Gero presented the proposed Winter Social Programme and this was accepted by the Committee.
- The Committee accepted Gill Cape as a full member.
- Editor Maureen Carter advised proposals regarding the future and frequency of the magazine will be circulated before the next Committee meeting.

The meeting closed at 9 pm.

## Treasurer's Report for April 2008

	Current Month	Year to Date
Members Subscriptions	11,023	12,572
Prospective Fees	886	886
Investment - Conservation	86	219
Investment - Coolana	208	532
Investment - General	94	241
Magazine Advertising	90	90
Accrued Advertising	-	370
Donations	50	50
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$12,437</b>	<b>\$14,959</b>
Magazine Printing	256	423
Magazine Postage	397	1,248
Coolana Maintenance	226	226
Rent- Club Rooms	400	1,600
Postage. Phone & Internet	-	663
Administration	71	636
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>\$1,350</b>	<b>\$4,796</b>
<b>Cash Surplus /(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$11,087</b>	<b>\$10,163</b>



## OCTOBER 2007 WALKS NOTES

*Barry Wallace*

Walks notes covering the interval 20 September 2007 to 07 Nov 2007.

Christine McColl led off, with a Sunday 23 September walk in The Royal attended by a party of 15. Conditions were perfect and the day easy.

The weekend of 29, 30 September saw John Pozniak and a group of unknown size out on his walk into Morton National Park from the Mount Bushwalker car park and back. It was a cool blustery weekend but otherwise perfect for walking. The section out to Ngatyang Falls resembled in some respects a session of acupuncture, so it was a great pleasure to stop hurting, have morning tea and take photographs there. Lunch was somewhat truncated due to the wind-chill, but this resulted in an early arrival at camp at Talaterang Creek and a more than usually extended happy hour. Whether it was the days walk or the happy hour, most of the party crashed off to bed before 2100h and so missed the spectacular rise of a huge moon. Sunday's return was also speedy, even with lots of short photo shoots along the way. Arrival at the cars triggered some latent homing instinct and there was a speedy exodus for most of the group. The stalwarts dallied awhile in the quiet ambience of a café in Berry before they too began the long trek home. Taking advantage of the long weekend Ian Rannard led a Monday walk in the upper Blue Mountains from Medlow Bath station to Katoomba station, taking in the sights at Radiata plateau and Megalong trig along the way. All went to program on a warm and windy day. There was some murmuring in the ranks however, as some of the undisclosed number were of the opinion that the walk should have been graded harder than it was.

Bill Holland led a horde of whale watchers out on his walk from Kurnell to Cronulla on Sunday 7 October. It seems the leader acted as historical guide, providing interesting information that stood in some contrast to various plaques along the route that confined themselves to the official version and in consequence were far less interesting. That was not the end of the miss-information either. The wandering NPWS person averred that they would be unlikely to see whales, as they tended to keep well out to sea on the Southern return trip. In view of this they were well pleased to see whales when they reached the "un-manned" (wimp!) observation station. They were further rewarded twice along the way. On arrival at Cronulla at 1531 they rather crowded out the coffee kiosk. Then it was time to take the drivers back to the Kurnell end of the car swap to collect cars.

It was Saturday 13 October when Jim Percy and a party of 9 set out on his qualifying walk out from the National Park track-head at the end of Queens Road Lawson. Conditions started out cool but warmed into a fine day, except for the cool North to Northwest breeze on the ridgelines. They were rewarded with an excellent wild flower display featuring Pink Boronia and Donkey and Flying Duck orchids. The embedded flower spotter took a tumble and jarred her shoulder along the way but was not unmanned; and did not delay things; finishing with just some slight stiffness at the end of the day. Two intending participants experienced difficulties with the location of the North side station carpark and missed the walk entirely. They redeemed the day by doing their own thing at Wentworth Falls.

The party of 11 who came along for Ron Watters' Sunday walk in Morton National Park on 28<sup>th</sup> October experienced humid and sunny conditions and a multicoloured birthday cake in celebration of president David's birthday. The initial ascent to Mount Moollatoo was steep but clear going in open forest. The 180 degree view from a cleared area near the summit was described as brilliant. The causeway from the base of the cliff-line to Mount Carrialoo was a delight with views back to Mount Moollatoo and Westward to Meryla Pass. They had morning tea on the third knoll and then tackled the steep sidle around Carrialoo near the base of cliffs described as interesting, to reach the NW corner at around 1300h. Lunch came half an hour later down on a bench of Turpentine and Cabbage tree palms. In the latter stages of the descent into Yarrunga Creek they came across a striking isolated rock pinnacle with caves. The creek, when they reached it at around 1515h, was flowing well and most pleasant in the afternoon sun.

The President's walk on Saturday 3 November was one of the events held to celebrate the club's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was a re-run of the first walk the club organised back in 1927 out east from Helensburgh station to Garrawarra and Burning Palms. The original return journey was never recorded. It could have come back to Lilyvale station (since removed) or to Helensburgh or Otford. The walk finally went with a party of 10, in fine conditions despite earlier threats of rain. The party found some of what may have been the tracks from the original route and observed that the southern parts of the Royal are more colourful and more like rainforest than the rest of the park. The vegetation was still wet from recent rains; the plants were a vibrant green and the palms and angophoras stunning.

This month's deadline approaches so we will cut and run right about here.

## Kings Tableland to The Oaks (via Erskine Creek) by Caro Ryan

Anzac Day Long Weekend 2008

Party: Leader - Caro (Just a Flesh Wound) Ryan, Rosemary (The Goddess of Fire Making) MacDougal, Tony (the Bulldozer) Holgate, Jodie (of Mt Erskine) Dixon and Ian (Mountain Goat) Wolfe.



Jodie, Tony, Ian, Rosemary – looking north to Mt Bell & Mt Tomah

also had great views as far as Mt Tomah and Mt Bell, helicopter style views down to the lowlands of the plains, great water filled ridge top rock pools and fabulous fungus.

We met at Glenbrook cake shop at 8am for coffee and almond croissants, passing the time until the NPWS gates opened to allow us through at 8.30am. The Barina and 2 Rav's made short work of the trip to the Oaks where we piled back in for the long car shuffle to the start in one Rav. The drive out to the start (roughly 4kms from the end of the road at McMaho's Lookout) was a long one and we didn't start off on the track until 10.15am.

The constant rain of the week meant that the trees were glistening and we knew we'd get wet at some stage.

*"Rocky Knob Ridge / Creek - Ridge line off Erskine Range (ex Kings Tableland) 2km SE from Battleship Tops and extends in a NE direction to above Erskine Creek, Blue Labyrinth. A descriptive name and named after Rocky Knob which is on the south western end of this ridge line, now covered in trees. Named 1961 by Myles Dunphy." Source: Blue Mountains Geographical Dictionary by Brian Fox, 2006.*

The trip started off along the Rocky Knob Ridge firetrail, passing by the Water Board's reminder that we were entering a walker's only area and locked gate. After a couple of kms, the trail starts to show signs of serious lack of use being taken over by undergrowth and fallen trees. We also came across the first sign of our purple fungus that none of us had seen before. Flat, simple and more like a purple moss that grew only on fallen tree trunks in shady spots. We also came across much evidence of past industry and speculated about it being for timber work, including rusty abandoned bulldozer tracks, a logging cart, a 40 gallon drum and several retaining walls that would have served as loading ramps for timber.



Ian and Tony by rusting bulldozer track

There I was, spread out on the lounge room floor with my trusty route planning aids of the Jamison and Penrith (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed) and Cabernet Sauvignon (2004) wondering at the great expanse of green stuff between the southern end of Kings Tableland and The Oaks (Glenbrook, not Neutral Bay) and thinking, 'Hmmm. I wonder why I haven't seen a walk in that area? Terrain looks OK. Some old tracks are marked along obvious ridge lines and names like 'The Massif' and 'Rocky Knob' sound interesting enough. Strange that no-one seems to go there.'

Now we know why.

Not that it was a bad walk. On the contrary, it had a bit of everything. A *bit* of fire trail, a *bit* of a car shuffle, a *bit* of rain, a *bit* of lawyer vine, a *bit* of a high camp, a *bit* of flesh left behind, a *bit* of a fast flowing river and a whole lot of scrub. It



Fabulous Fungus

Lunch was had at around 632503 with views to Mt Tomah and Mt Bell rising like the obvious twins that they are to the north. Storm clouds threatened, so raincoats appeared, only to disappear soon after.

Taking the southern branch at 634506, we travelled further along the ridge where the scrub got steadily thicker and the track got steadily worse, disappearing altogether about a km from the end of the ridgeline at 648507. Thankfully, the bush was fairly soft to push through at this point with She Oaks, Acacia and native Tobacco which started us all coughing and sneezing. At one point it was remarked that God was working overtime on us this weekend with all the 'bless you's' that were had by all.

Emerging from the scrub at the cliff line, the serious work of finding a pass down to the junction of Kiara and Erskine

creeks was an interesting one. Stopping for afternoon tea at the top, we surveyed what looked like quite a precipitous drop. Ian (the Mountain Goat) spied what looked like a ramp of sorts through broken cliffs and went to investigate. A couple of Day-O's later and we were all scrambling / sliding down through the pass

## Kings Tableland to The Oaks (via Erskine Creek) - continued

which Ian named "Cold Rock Dragon Pass" after a rather large and immobile Rock Dragon who was guarding the upper reaches. The lights went dim as we descended into damp Coachwood forest to the sound of fast running water in Kiara Creek. Reaching the bottom just after sunset, a campsite was our priority and after spying a couple of options along Kiara Creek we camped on the NW bank of the junction of the two creeks in a 3.5 star location at 658503.

The damp timber and lack of eucalypt made for a challenge to the fire making skills of Rosemary and Tony. However, not to be outdone by nature; they conquered in the end with a roaring fire that resembled a piece of modern sculpture and soon had us congregating for happy hour.

We had reached our goal for the day and all that lay ahead was yet more of the unknown and the great challenge of getting back up out of the creeks and onto The Massif on Saturday.

*"Massif Ridge - This ridge connects The Massif to Woodford Range, Blue Labyrinth. Named by Myles Dunphy in 1960 and approved by Geographical Names Board 24.5.68. An isolated part of the Blue Labyrinth which only experience bushwalkers should attempt to enter." Source: Blue Mountains Geographical Dictionary by Brian Fox, 2006.*

On the track at 8am (ish) had us descending the couple of metres onto the banks of Erskine Creek. It was obvious that in recent times there has been lot of water pass by this point. The creek had developed its own side branch with lots of undergrowth and trees, fallen branches and scrub. Crossing over the dormant branch we came across the fast flowing waters of Erskine Creek proper. Scrambling and sliding over roots and branches we bum-slid across a fallen tree which made for a wonderful bridge across the waters. Jodie made a particularly sensational head first, rear entry manoeuvre into the flowing waters, giving evidence to her past history as a graceful ballet dancer. The two Casuarina's that she held tight to slowly bowed and gave way to the weight of her pack. Thankfully, it was a dance move that involved plenty of laughter.

We filled our water bottles for the unknown challenge ahead and turned to face the climb ahead of us. Fairly soon we encountered the start of what would bring us to name this 'Wait-a-while Pass'. The ridge from 659503 is made up of several broken cliff lines. We steadily made our way up from cliff line to cliff line, heading steadily north between each one, the last one involving a pack haul and chimney-ing to move increasingly towards Mt Erskine.



Tony, Jodie, Caro after the Lawyer Vine

As we continued, the vines got thicker and thicker. Does 500m in 3 hrs give you an indication of the fun we were having? The key on a trip like this is having a great bunch of people. The walk program requested only those with good sense of humour need apply and I can attest that our group managed to laugh and sing more than we moaned and groaned!

We took turns being out in front, battering down the attacks until we reached Mt Erskine where we emerged to find somewhere for an early lunch, having left several layers of flesh behind as a gift to the carnivorous native snails that we found.

There was a sense of relief knowing that we had made it up the ridge. Looking back across Erskine Creek, we were surprised to see the prominent knoll that we had descended from the previous day and agreed that the route we used, was probably the only one available. From this point, we all felt that it was going to be all down hill from here.

The Massif Ridge lives up to its name. Strong, silent, a sleeping giant - lying

illusively and quietly to the south of all the usual human action. The scrub was constant, but a lot clearer, allowing us to move faster in the afternoon than in the morning. It's one of those ridges that has subtle side ridges leading of it. If you're not careful, it's easy to be drawn down one without even realising it, like at 693535 where we thankfully realised early on and quickly righted ourselves again.

The walk had been advertised as 'come for 2 days, but be prepared for 3'. This gave us a sense of security that you don't get at 4pm on a Sunday, at the end of a weekend when you know you're still 3 hrs walk from the cars, plus a 1.5 hr car shuffle, 1 hr from Sydney.

We were all getting a bit tired and I in particular, had started getting the stumbles (including a nice attempt at pushing my front teeth through my lower lip in a trip), so was very happy to find an open piece of ground that



Rosemary, Tony, Ian, Jodie with Knoll behind

## Tableland to The Oaks (via Erskine Creek) - continued

resembled a UFO landing site around 697543 at 4.30pm. Truth be known, if we had been pressured on a Kings Sunday night, we could have pushed on through the scrub, towards the old fire trail and the cars. However, to be able to stop, set up our tents at a 4 star site, set high above all the surrounding ridges and gullies, gather water facedown from rockpools high on the ridge and watch a sensational sunset before us - was a great relief.

The following day as we started off once again through the scrub (at 7.30am without breakfast whilst discussing our cooked breakfast fantasies from a café in Glenbrook) we agreed that it was the right decision to have stopped. If we had continued there would have been a lot more stumbles and that edgy air of frustration that is expressed through the silence of grumpy walkers.

After about half an hour of the Holgate Bulldozer, we picked up bits and pieces of the old firetrail. Evidence that the track used to travel further down the ridge than it is shown on the map. It's clear, however, that this track that travels south from the Oaks Firetrail at 699564 is one that the NPWS are happy to let nature take over.



Coxs River flowing into Lake Burragorang from  
McMahons L/O

Arriving at the Oaks Firetrail to the bizarre sensation of being able to stretch out, we made fast work of the last leg to the cars. Importantly keeping an ear out for the whiz of mountain bike riders out for their Sunday morning constitutional.

After a wonderful, oversized Breakfast the Café Cee in Glenbrook we retraced our steps to the start at Kings Tableland. On the way, we ticked off one of the 'wish list' items on my list by travelling a bit further out to the amazing McMahons Lookout to look out over Lake Burragorang and see where the Cox's and Butchers Creeks flow into our drinking water. Ahh, to the Recidivists Club - We sent you fond thoughts and maybe we even shared the joy of Grand country with you ... if for only for a short while.

## Kanangra Boyd NP. 19/20 April Navigation Weekend with Don and Rosie Finch.

Being new to bushwalking, I thought the idea of learning how to navigate using map and compass a good idea! So I phoned Don and asked if I could just do the "day only" part of his walk. Of course, I had mis-interpreted the walk description, and Don explained that the walk started Friday night camping at Boyd's Crossing, and then Saturday night near a creek. There was no retreat as Don insisted that any gear I did not have (most things) he would gladly loan, all I had to do was come over for dinner to get the gear! Talk about an offer you can't refuse! Hence my first experience of overnight camping came much sooner than I was planning. In spite of it raining most of Friday night, and otherwise constant drizzle our party of 11 had a wonderful enthusiastic spirit, and all were keen to learn new skills. It was really amazing and empowering to find out that reading a map and navigating with a compass was not really difficult at all. We all took turns leading, being responsible for reading the map and taking bearings. We made to camp, the drizzle held off enough to enjoy a fire and be introduced to the lemon and rum concoction I had heard rumours about. A most pleasant tonic after a day's walk! On the Sunday we re-enforced what we had learnt with more practice, especially anticipating what we should see according to the map. On return to camp we packed up and the group all met in Hartley and gorged ourselves on cake/scones and coffee. What a great weekend. I don't know what I liked the most, gaining new skills, the beauty of the bush, or the spirit of the group. The walk is really a must do for the novice, and I can't imagine a more friendly, willing leader. Thanks Don and Rosie.

*Anthony Andersen*

## SBW VISIT TO YANGA NATIONAL PARK



After nearly 18 months of enquiries Sydney Bush Walkers were given permission last year to visit and report on Yanga National Park. A description of the park is given in an accompanying article. Our visit took place in June 2007 but we were asked to delay publishing this article until near opening date.

This extensive property had only recently been added to the NSW National Park system and required extensive works to be carried out before it could be opened to the general public. We were asked to report back to the NPWS from a bushwalking perspective and make suggestions on what should be done to make the park amenable to visitors such as ourselves.

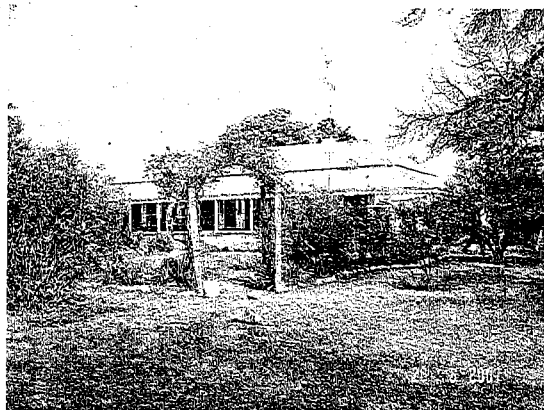
Ten members of the Sydney Bush Walkers Club visited at Yanga at the end of June last year. Most of us arrived on Sunday after

leaving Sydney on Saturday and staying at various locations overnight. We left Yanga on Thursday afternoon, a day earlier than planned, due to unpleasantly strong and cold winds from the south-west; not at all conducive to camping and making the campfire dangerous in such conditions.

Six members (three couples) continued on for a longer trip including Mungo National Park. This makes the long trip from Sydney worthwhile and could be stressed as part of a "tourist package" which would be an encourage visits to Yanga.

Overall, our impressions of Yanga were very positive. Our campsite, located near the old shearing shed was ideal. Adjacent to the river, close to Balranald and with a ready supply of firewood it was very suitable for our purpose. The bushland, featuring extensive red gum growth, offered interesting short walks close to camp but as bushwalkers we would prefer more extensive (a larger area) bushland for longer day walks.

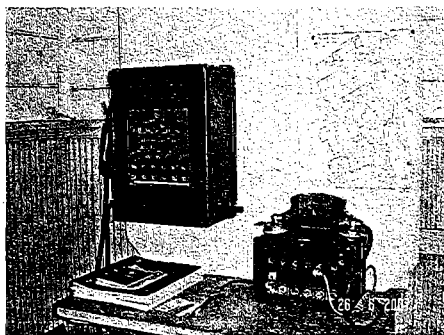
We settled in on Monday and walked in the immediate vicinity along the river and through the bush around our campsite. Marked trails along the river bank in both directions would assist campers and in summer the river would be very tempting for swimming although access down steep banks may prove difficult.



On Tuesday morning we drove some distance to meet our host NPWS Ranger, Narelle. She showed us "The Willows" woolshed. This, we were told, is a great area for bird watching and bushwalking. At this stage it is for day-use only. Toilets, barbecue facilities etc have been set up nearby and there will be a campsite about 500 metres from the shed and next to a bushwalking trail. The access was good and easily accessible although some distance from town.

After "The Willows" we drove to the Yanga Homestead. It was at one stage surrounded by gardens and water and brought home to us the effect of losing the water from the now empty lake. What a difference this has made to the outlook from the buildings! The dry lake bed stretches around the homestead on three sides and must have been a magnificent view in the old days. Later in the week we returned to look at the ruins of old weir that held back the water and created the lake. If only it would consistently rain in the north and send the water down the river. The dry irrigation channels would fill and perhaps make it worthwhile repairing the weir!





We were able to inspect the old homestead. It is over 100 years old and part is now used as the NPWS office. The site comprises several buildings with great heritage value. We particularly enjoyed looking at the old items and records in office area and walking through the furnished rooms. We were told that the wooden telephone exchange still in the office was the first private exchange in Australia.

Next it was a long drive up the Waugorah Road to return to the park, and visit "Piggery Lake" in the red gum forest. This extensive area, part of a dried out floodplain, had a great many apparently dying red gums.

On Wednesday Poona, our guide for the day, gave us a tour of the old shed and shearers quarters adjacent to our campsite.. This was very interesting and while walking around we were able to inspect the old equipment and listen to our Poona's explanation and stories of the days when the sheds were in full use.

The tour of these buildings would be great for school groups and casual visitors - although I understand that the shed at Mungo is larger and older. Being close to the camping ground, and also close to the town, the shearing shed could attract a high visitor rate.

The weather deteriorated on Wednesday evening and we had to be very careful with our campfire when it became very windy. The danger from falling branches from the many red gums in these conditions prompted a couple of shifts in tent locations.

Continuing winds on Thursday morning decided us to leave later that day but in the morning we were able to fit in a drive to another area, closer to our camp. This time our guide was Harry and he took us to a parking spot where we left our cars to have a two hour walk attempting to reach the river. This proved too difficult to reach it in the time available but the area was very good for walking and offered us some interesting sights, not the least being a nest of emu eggs.

In summary, our group found the trip most enjoyable and very interesting. The distance from both Melbourne and Sydney makes Yanga more suitable for people to visit as part of touring trip rather than a specific destination for bushwalking. Our experience was in very dry and very windy conditions and because of this we did not see a great deal of birdlife.

The park is very large and visitors would probably hesitate to drive to all the areas available. Perhaps visits to nominated areas would suit specific interest groups whilst tourists would be content to see just the old homestead and shearing shed close to Balranald. The location close to town is a distinct advantage.

Many thanks to Narelle and the Yanga staff who made this trip easy to organise and added to our understanding of the park and its history.

Bill Holland



## Yanga National Park

*Extract from an article in National parks journal October – November 2005 by Jackie Roberts.  
This extract was originally published in the Sydney Bushwalker in December 2005.*

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 National Park - continued

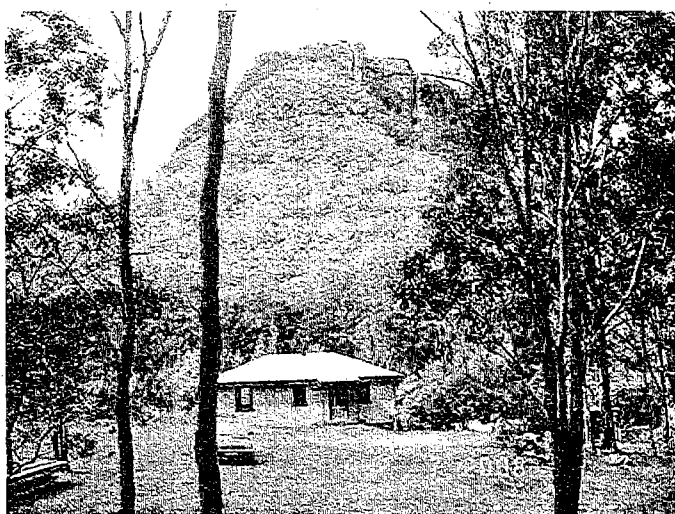
Yanga sits on the Lowbidgee floodplain, which supports some of Australia's largest and most important waterbird breeding colonies and the state's largest known population of the highly endangered Southern Bell Frog. It is in the Riverina bioregion, which has the lowest level of reservations of all the 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 2005, 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.

## MID WEEK WALKERS GO TO NEWNES



Holden and George Mawer arrived on Tuesday.

The old industrial and town ruins have been tidied up and signposted and we did the marked walking track in small groups over a two hour period on Monday afternoon and Tuesday. Some, more energetic than the rest managed other short walks around and above the cabins site whilst Rick and I had a cycle along the washboard road.

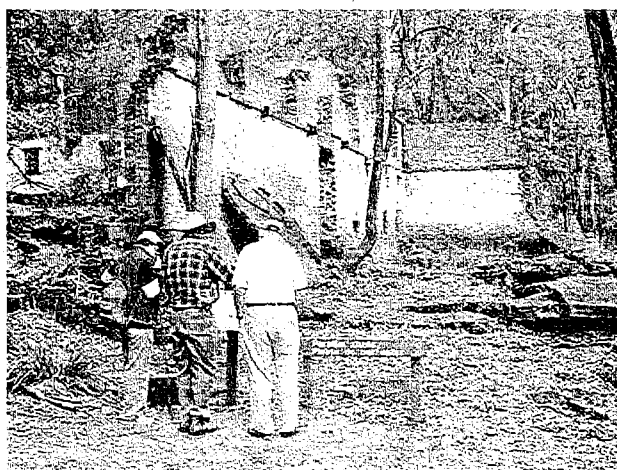
Wednesday was the main group activity with a full day walk along the old railway line, through the Glow Worm Tunnel (lots of glow worms) and return via the Old Coach Road. This was most interesting with old sleepers, track cuttings, some old steel pieces and stone work bringing to mind visions of the old shay rail engine puffing around the bends.



This area had always held a fascination for me. In years past it has served as a base camp for visits to great walking areas and the surrounding sandstone escarpments offer unforgettable photo opportunities.

Still it has been many years since I camped there and the fragile body now insists on a degree of comfort so in company of eleven others we rented Newnes Cabins adjacent to the old Newnes Hotel for five days for Monday 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April. Thomas Ebensoll was our host and although we had only booked two cabins he graciously opened three cabins and a caravan so we could spread ourselves out.

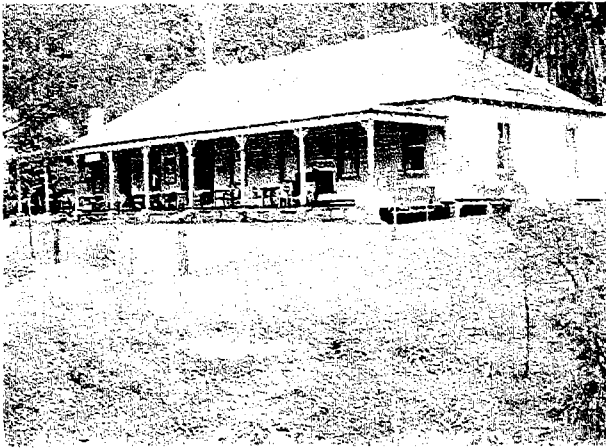
Colin and Jane Putt, myself with Gerry Leitner, Judy and Colin Barnes, Rick Angel with Marian Plaude and Jean Klov Dahl with George arrived on Monday. Brian



Thursday saw George Mawer and Brian return to Sydney, I cycled around the ruins and along the old railway track whilst three of the fitter members tackled the Pipeline Pass to Glen Davis. They had the company of a young man (Glen) for part of the trip and were on hand when he fell from an unstable rock and injured himself. This meant a late near dark return and first aid from our resident nurse.

The evenings were very pleasant indeed. Thomas had supplied us with more than enough timber for a pit fire and barbecues. This gave the opportunity to hear tales of exploration and the old days from Colin Putt and boating stories yarns from Rick and Colin Barnes. I don't think we solved the world's problems but the evening passed in great style until rain drizzled down around 9pm.

Mid Week Walkers Go To Newnes - continued



Gerry and I left early to return to Bathurst on Friday, I hear that Jean, George and Rick climbed Mystery Mountain and the others left to return to Sydney through the morning.

The proprietor of Newnes Cabins, Thomas Ebensoll, deserves a special mention and thanks from the group. He could not have been more helpful - even offering eggs from his chooks and vegetables from his garden. He was a gracious host and I recommend his cabins as very suitable for family or walking groups. His website can be found on [www.lisp.com.au/~newnes](http://www.lisp.com.au/~newnes) or phone (02) 6355-1247.

Talking of walking groups we encountered a group from The Bush Club including a couple of SBW members doing a couple of days of more difficult walking around Newnes.

Bill Holland

Lincoln Hall

Himalayan Mountaineer/Guide/Author - Adventures in Nepal.

Friday 25th July, 7pm,

Tusculum House,

3 Manning St,

Potts Point 2011

Cost per ticket Adult \$35.00

Student/concession/ child \$18.00

\$15.00/ adult ticket is a tax deductible donation to Habitat

\$5.00/ child ticket is a tax deductible donation to Habitat

If you would like to get tickets, register your numbers by email, [astanger@aapt.net.au](mailto:astanger@aapt.net.au) or with [ambientlandscapes@bigpond.com](mailto:ambientlandscapes@bigpond.com) and at [www.ambientlandscapes.com.au](http://www.ambientlandscapes.com.au).

# Cultural

For more than a year senior Kakadu Aboriginal traditional owner Violet Lawson has offered short bush tucker and culture walks near Cooida. We trialed Violet's tour on some of our trips last year. **Everyone who took part thought it was excellent.** Several said it was the one of the highlights of their trip. How could we leave it out?

Violet's tour will now be included on most of our trips that spend the night in Cooida - at no additional charge.

Come and enjoy it with us, and understand more about the landscapes through which you will walk on our Kakadu trips.

Ask us for details or visit our website for more information.

12 Carrington St Millner NT 0810

Email: [walkabout@ais.net.au](mailto:walkabout@ais.net.au)



Phone 08 8985 2134 Fax 08 8985 2355



### VALE BOB NIVEN

Some long term members may be interested to learn that Bob Niven passed away on 18 February, aged 81. For the 8 years of his Club membership Bob walked most weekends, mainly in the Blue Mountains, but also on longer walks in the Snowy and Victorian Alps (including ski trips) and in the Australian Centre and New Zealand, often with fellow members, wife Margaret and son Jeff.

For a time Bob gave time and material sustenance towards the development of Coolana. Following an accident in the Centre about 19 years ago, he was found to have advanced adrenal cancer. He survived an urgent operation to be given less than 6 months to live. However he continued with an active life of daily cycling in Kuringai NP and kayaking on Pittwater. Gradually his health declined and about 3 years ago he endured operations for a hip replacement and heart by-pass and finally a heart operation that offered less than 10% survival prospects. But, for 2 years more he continued to cycle and kayak. Over 17 years Bob heroically endured constant suffering, without complaint and with a resolute will to enjoy life - kayaking up to a few months before his death.

He is survived by 3 daughters, son Jeff and wife Margaret, who is now in a home for advanced Alzheimer's. Towards the end, Bob often spoke with affection and appreciation of the pleasure he derived from his time with the Club and of several walking friends and especially of leaders such as Maurice Bloom, Ray Dargan and Wayne Steele and others.

*Geoff Bradley*

### VALE GERHARD RUHL

You may remember reading in the December issue of the Sydney Bushwalker, a message from Gerhard saying how much he enjoyed his time in the Club, especially Snowy Mountains walks, and that he was suffering from terminal pancreatic cancer.

Sadly, Gerhard passed away on 21 April, but we know that he did appreciate messages of encouragement that members sent him during his illness.

The club was represented at his funeral by Bill Holland.

### REMOTE FIRST AID

Bushwalkers Rescue Squad are organising a Remote First Aid Course for the weekends of 2/3 August and 16/17 August at Camp Coutts near Waterfall. You can book directly through [www.bwrs.org.au](http://www.bwrs.org.au). See next month for full details.

### Advanced Notice:

#### Hiking in the "Fall" in the Rocky Mountains National Park (USA) 27 Sept - 17 October 2008

I have commenced planning a trip to this US Park to enjoy the stupendous yellow and red colours of the "fall" (ie autumn) vegetation. Fly in and out of Denver, Colorado. Main Web site is found at: <http://home.nps.gov/romo/index.htm>.

Visit the Photo Gallery to get a feel for the scenery:

<http://www.nps.gov/romo/photosmultimedia/photogallery.htm>.

Details on the hiking options are found at:

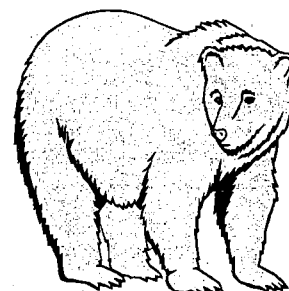
<http://home.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/hiking.htm>

and more details on Backcountry options at:

<http://home.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/backcountry.htm>.

Good thing is that there are no Grizzlies, but there are Black Bears and Pumas in the Park. However, as long as you observe the Protocols (ie sing) these are not a major issue. Trip will probably be a series of long day trips with base camping at Camping Grounds or in low price accommodation in the adjacent towns (based upon my experience in Glacier National Park a few years ago, this approach gives maximum flexibility and maximum "views" for effort. Get to and from by using the Shuttle Buses system. May be some over night trips - issue is that snow falls are possible at this time of year and being caught 2 days out with 4 ft of powder is to be avoided! Also, some potential to visit other Parks in Colorado and potential adjacent States to do some walking - in particular Mesa Verde (which has the Ancestral Pueblo ruins) <http://home.nps.gov/meve/> We would probably have to hire a car for this option. Expressions of interest to [ianmcwolfe@hotmail.com](mailto:ianmcwolfe@hotmail.com) or phone me on 02 99043370 or 0413662370.

Ian Wolfe



## SOCIAL NOTES

Hi Everyone

It seems "strange" to have sunshine in this fair city of ours. Apparently April 2008 was the second wettest in history!! So far, May has been very pleasant. What will winter bring?

In the clubrooms we start off "Winter" with the Mid-Winter Feast / Xmas in June. A purely social occasion where you are invited to bring a plate of delicious and nutritious food to share. SBW supplies all beverages, beer, wine, soft drinks, tea and coffee as well as eating utensils. Diarize the date - Wednesday 18 June at 8.00pm.

Numbers at "social nights" are slipping lately. Please make sure you read the Social Program (at right and attached to the current walks program) and put the relevant dates in your diary.

The "out of clubroom social functions" are evolving. These will eventually be found in the magazine.

Enjoy your walking,  
Kathy

## WINTER SOCIAL PROGRAM

All meetings are held at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre at 8pm unless otherwise indicated.

### JUNE

4 June 7pm **Committee Meeting**  
Observers welcome.

11 June 8pm **New Members Night**  
Introduction to SBW for intending prospectives

18 June 8pm **Mid-Winter Feast / Xmas in June**  
Join your friends for a night of socialising. Just bring a plate of nutritious & yummy food to share. The club provides all beverages.

25 June **New Members Training Night** Please contact New Members Secretary for details and time.

### JULY

2 July 7pm **Committee Meeting**  
Observers welcome.

9 July 8pm **New Members Night**  
Introduction to SBW for intending prospectives

16 July 8pm **Walking in Switzerland, Austria & Italy with 3 SBW Members**  
Kenn Clacher, Neil Hickson & Fran Zochman will fill you with awe as we walk/journey with them from Chamonix to Zermatt (11 days), along the Stuban Hohenway (6 days) and three 3-day walks in the Dolomites

23 July **New Members Training Night** Please contact New Members Secretary for details and time.

### AUGUST

6 August 7pm **Committee Meeting**  
Observers welcome.

13 August 8pm **New Members Night**  
Introduction to SBW for intending prospectives

20 August 8pm **Presentation to be decided**

27 August **New Members Training Night** Please contact New Members Secretary for details and time.

## Oxfam TRAILWALKER 100kms | 48 hrs



"Pootlin Posse"  
Team 52

Caro Ryan, Jodie Dixon and Tony Holgate\* from SBW are participating in the 2008 Oxfam Trailwalker.

Oxfam TRAILWALKER is a great team challenge!

And it's also tough. The challenge is to complete 100kms of rugged bush trail in less than 48 hours as a team of four.

Teams must start together, stick together and finish together.

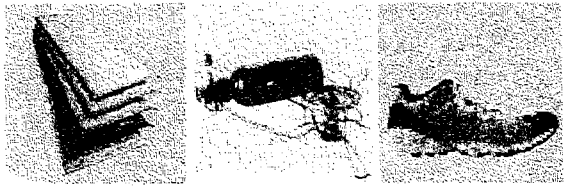
And it's not just physically demanding -

Oxfam TRAILWALKER is also a fundraising challenge.

We have committed to raising at least \$7,500 to help some of the world's poorest people.

To donate (as well as check out our team vibe) go to:  
[www2.oxfam.org.au/trailwalker/sydney/team/52](http://www2.oxfam.org.au/trailwalker/sydney/team/52)

We'll keep you updated in future magazines... so stay tuned.  
\* plus a ring-in from outside!



the bushwalking specialists



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icebreaker  
PURE MERINO

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NEW ZEALAND

berghaus  
COUNTRY TO COUNTRY

KEEN  
ORIGINAL HYBRID FOOTWEAR

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CAMELBAK

Paddy Pallin

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