

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



JULY 2008



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July 2008, Issue 884

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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.

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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

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Unfortunately David has missed the deadline for getting the magazine to the printers this month. A double dose will appear next month.

Sorry David. *Ed.*

"Walking in Australia's Tropics"



Escape Sydney's cold wintery weather for an evening while enjoying the sun and swimming in pristine pools in our tropical north. Tony Holgate and friends will give a presentation on recent walks in Australia's north. 8pm, 20 August at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

George Mawer - new mobile number

George lost his mobile and his replacement includes a new number, so ignore that in the members' list.

He can now be contacted on:

0447 262 903

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

We were delighted to receive a copy of "Coolana" admirably compiled by Shirley Dean which spelt out the difficult task that Dot Butler undertook, with many enthusiastic helpers, in procuring this rare area of land fronting the Kangaroo River.

Also it was good to see mention of the many club members who, over the years, have voluntarily given their time and effort in building, improving and maintaining Coolana and making it such a pleasant and relaxing place for members to enjoy. The mention of the Barn Dance and Hootenanny reminds Jenny and I of the happy times we had there 30 years ago.

Congratulations Shirley.

Don Cornell

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

I have just returned from spending 20 of the last 33 days in the bush, with a flight to Coolangatta and a drive home to Sydney, in between. Exhausted, is the word that comes to mind. I enjoyed all my experiences including a rugged long weekend in Newnes, and an article on that will appear soon. Tony Holgate's walk in Kakadu was a personal challenge for me, with the hot weather and all that relaxed swimming, and Rory Fagan has agreed to write that trip up for you. Finally, I have survived four freezing days in the Blue Mountain with a group of young women doing their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Test. Back to the magazine - this month's walks articles include more on Wadbilliga from Christine Austin; Stephen Brading on his walk in the McKeown Valley; Cath Mullane and Morella Hogan's, sometimes hilarious, trip to Tasmania's Port Davey Track; and, Bill Holland reports on his mid-week walks and their successful whale watching.

I hope that you also enjoy reading Lucy Moore's article on BWRS and all the usual features that make up your magazine. Keep those articles on interesting walks rolling in!

Happy walking

Maureen

TRIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Well we are past the winter solstice - the days are finally getting longer. Not too long and we can look forward to Spring, Summer, the heat and swimming at beaches, in creeks and down canyons. In the meantime keep the warm hat and gloves handy.

I have just returned from Kakadu. It is so beautiful, if you have not been go as soon as you can. We had a great walk and you should see an article soon in the magazine. 13 days and 12 nights sitting around a campfire is a great way to get to know others. Don't forget that there will be a presentation on walking in the tropics at the clubrooms in August.

Do you enjoy meeting others on the track or rather the splendid isolation of off-track walking without seeing anyone else? Whatever way you enjoy your walking, spare a thought for the leader. They put in a lot of effort behind the scenes to enable the walk to happen. Support their efforts. If you are critical about how a walk is organised, I encourage you to organise your own.

Have you started thinking about walks to put on the Spring and Summer program. Do not forget the long weekend in October and possible extended summer walks. If you have any ideas, suggestions, questions, please contact me. Do we need more training walks or activities?

Looking forward to the warmer weather.

See you on the track ...

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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

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

From the Committee Room

A report of proceedings at the Committee meeting 2 July 2008



The attractions of a warm Kakadu in winter far outweighed the attractions of a Committee meeting in the cold room at Kirribilli for three of our members so attendance at this meeting suffered. In total, seven members were present.

Following up on the minutes from June:

- Caro Ryan has provided answers to questions regarding the host for our proposed new website. A Letter of Understanding is being prepared.
- The Steering Committee will prepare an action plan for changing the magazine from monthly to the quarterly distribution.

Correspondence included:

- A letter from the Wilderness Society seeking a donation to help in the fight against the effects of climate change. The Committee approved a donation of \$200.
- A letter from SCA re the grant for Coolana and raising a question of GST was forwarded to Don Finch for reply.

The Steering Committee reported on its first meeting in June and the following were raised as matters requiring further consideration:

- Improving the level of participation in walks and social events.
- Converting the magazine to an electronic version and implementing the change to a quarterly issue.
- Improving the content and operation of the Club's website.
- The Club's finances are sound but can they withstand the possible impact of future changes to the Club's operations?
- Review the Committee and management structure.
- Determine actions to correct a perceived imbalance in our walks programmes and encourage more easy to medium walks.

Questionnaires asking about levels of participation and interest in club activities will be emailed to members and prospectives.

The Steering Committee had also discussed the future of in-club room and Coolana training for prospective members.

And, in response to questions about the cost of financing Coolana and past transfers from General Fund to Coolana Fund, a statement had been circulated to the Steering Committee. It showed that the net cost of Coolana is \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year and the relatively minor transfers between funds were to correct past misunderstandings of how the Coolana Fund should operate.

The Treasurer's Report (see below) included the following payments for the month:

- Bank Charges \$31; first aid subsidy \$100; flowers \$60; Social expenses \$68; magazine and social expenses \$470; Rent \$400; printing materials \$88.

The Mid-Winter Feast at the clubrooms on 18th June was attended by 23 people. Although numbers were lower than previous years the night was very successful. The Committee considered that social events could be promoted more effectively by placing a notice towards the front of the magazine.

An apparent breakdown in communication had resulted in eight new members coming to the clubrooms for training on 25th June and no member was present to give the training programme. An apology will be made to the people affected.

The Electronic Steering Committee had discussions with Caro Ryan about her proposal to sponsor a new website. An action plan will be prepared covering the implementation of the website and the club's participation during the coming months. It was noted that another member had offered to sponsor the preparation of a consolidated data base for membership records.

In discussion about our participation in NSW Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs, concern was expressed about the high cost of affiliation considering that annual surpluses have resulted in a build up of Confederation reserves to an unnecessarily high level. SBW pays \$2,400 each year and derives little benefit other than access to insurance cover. The Committee resolved to keep the status quo for the present but investigate the cost of alternative insurance.

Treasurer's Report - As at June 2008

	Current Month	Year to Date
Cash Receipts		
Members Subscriptions	991	17,419
Prospective Fees	497	1,583
Investment - Conservation	0	235
Investment - Coolana	0	570
Investment - General	0	258
Magazine Advertising	180	270
Accrued Advertising	0	370
Donations - Coolana	50	100
Donations - Other	201	201
Total Receipts	\$1,919	\$21,005
Cash Payments		
Magazine Printing	32	455
Magazine Postage	409	2,057
Coolana Maintenance	0	226
Rent- Club Rooms	400	2,400
Postage. Phone & Internet	0	663
1st Aid Certificate	100	100
Administration	235	955
Coolana Grant	0	2,426
Total Payments	\$1,175	\$9,281
Cash Surplus /(Deficit)	\$744	\$11,724

DECEMBER 2007 WALKS NOTES

Barry Wallace

Walks notes covering the interval 09 December 2007 to 16 January 2008.

In the realm of unfinished business; Nigel Weaver led a qualifying walk out from Little Wobby on Sunday 9th December. The party of 15 caught the Brooklyn ferry over to Little Wobby in overcast conditions, then climbed the steep hill up to the cliff-top track where they paused to draw breath under the guise of enjoying the great views to be had there from the lookout above the Hawkesbury River. From there they went on to Little Patonga Beach, passing by the National Fitness Camp, then going on to Pacific Head where they lunched at a spot with pleasant views over Broken Bay. Lunch done, they made their way back toward Little Wobby, following a series of progressively more vestigial tracks that eventually delivered them to about 1 km of off-track experience through cliff-lines and medium density scrub. All this ended when they regained the track, made their way down to Spring Beach and arrived at Little Wobby in time to catch the ferry. A little to the South East of there a fleet of kayaks, crewed by a total of 8 paddlers and under the leadership of Ron Watters, set out from Narrabeen Lakes kayak hire that same day to explore Narrabeen Lakes and Deep Creek. There was some light rain early in the day but otherwise it remained fine as they took advantage of the high tide to reach the mouth of the lake and enjoy the delights of Deep Creek. They even found a pleasant lunch spot; for lunch. Whether it was sound for Patrick to ascribe political affiliation to a vessel that persistently veered to the right I cannot say but it is reported he did stalwart service in rowing the leader to the port. I think that's what they meant! All participants enjoyed a lakeside afternoon tea at the end of the voyage.

Saturday 15 December saw Francis Hartigan leading a party of 3 out from Hazelbrook Station on a day tour of variously named waterfalls in the area. The weather was generally good, but Frank vaguely recalls some rain along the way at some time or other. All the falls had lots of water, so were impressive as they visited Adelina Falls and Junction Falls, then down the ridge on an old track for lunch on an old camp site near Willawong Pool at the junction of Cataract Creek and Bedford Creek. From there they went past Bedford Pool and up again to Victor Falls and Terrence Falls.

The following Saturday, 22nd December, was the Summer Solstice and it was then that Patrick McNaught led a party of 11 on his afternoon/evening Sydney Harbour National Park walk from the North end of Spit Bridge through to Forty Baskets Beach. There they dined on fish and chips from the Boatshed and watched the brilliant Harbour views. It was rated as a good walk despite some rain at the start.

It appears that Nigel Weaver re-scheduled his Wodi-Wodi track walk from Sunday 23rd December to Sunday 6th January in the new year, 2008. Nonetheless there was a party of 10 out on the walk in conditions that started out fine and became hot in the afternoon. They left Stanwell Park railway station and took the Wodi-Wodi track through the rainforest south of the station. Conditions were wet because of previous rainy weather and the leeches were numerous; and hungry, so they (the party) were glad when they attained the dryer reaches of the forest south of the Stanwell Park basin. Here there were no leeches and they had lunch at a great lookout at the top of the escarpment, with views over Stanwell Park and up the coast toward Garie. Lunch over they descended from the escarpment to the beach and repaired to the kiosk for some well-earned coffees and milkshakes on what was by now a quite hot summer afternoon. From there it was just a 1 km trip up to the station for the train home.

Just a week later Nigel was out again, leading a party of 6 on a li-lo trip into Du Fours and Wollongambe canyons on Sunday 13th January. Starting out from Mount Wilson in fine and warm conditions they headed down the track to Joes Canyon which is narrow and twisty and picturesque. From there they got into Du Fours canyon which afforded numerous opportunities for floating along on the li-los, sometimes between sheer cliffs that ranged up to 30 or 40 metres high. A truly beautiful canyon! The spectacular scenery continued through Bell Creek and Wollongambe Canyon where they did a side trip up to the mouth of Geronimo Canyon. They dried off at the exit point, changed clothes and made their way up to Mount Wilson. Overall it was a great trip, full of spectacular scenery.

That must be a perfectly acceptable point to break this narrative until the next instalment.

"Train hard, rescue easy"

by Lucy Moore

For a fast-paced, hands-on learning experience you can't go past the four-day Remote Area First Aid course organised by the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad. Conducted over two camping weekends, the course uses the natural environment as the setting for a series of all-weather simulated injury management and evacuation exercises.

Trainer

The trainer David Sheppard is a former Australian Army Red Beret paratrooper with extensive experience in first aid, navigation and outdoor instruction. He enlivens the material by sharing his storehouse of dramatic anecdotes and facilitates learning through helpful mnemonics. Our group of 11 comprised experienced bushwalkers, cross-country skiers and rescue personnel. Over 40 hours of training we built confidence in thinking clearly and prioritising tasks in high-pressure scenarios which typically involve unstable terrain, adverse weather, casualty relocation, emergency first aid, on-going injury management, evacuation planning and emotional distress.



Participants displaying their certificates - Trainer Dave Sheppard on left

Content

The course covers major injuries including fractures, bleeding, shock, penetration wounds, bites and stings, overexposure to heat and cold, amputation, head and spinal injury, unconsciousness and death in the field. More common conditions such as blisters, asthma, skin and gastro-intestinal disorders are also addressed. A lot of time is devoted to the effective management and documentation of severe injury when resources are limited and medical help is delayed. We also practiced moving and transporting casualties and communication and handover protocols when transferring care to rescue personnel.

Principles

A number of principles are stressed throughout the course:

Personal safety

Following an injury the safety of first aiders and other bushwalking party members is paramount. This is achieved through establishing site safety before intervention and using personal protection equipment to prevent contact with the casualty's bodily fluids.

Personal responsibility

Leaders need to promote the importance of individual responsibility and stress that ill-prepared members can jeopardise the party's safety. Party members can demonstrate their preparation by:

- Realistically assessing their personal fitness for a proposed trip.

Train hard, rescue easy (continued)

- Discussing pre-existing health conditions in advance with the party's first aiders to enable them to help the casualty manage their symptoms should they arise.
- Carrying a customised first aid kit on every walk.
- Carrying adequate supplies of personal medication and first aid provisions in case of delayed return
- Practicing good personal hygiene to prevent an outbreak of gastro-enteritis
- Being mindful of the importance of the party's skill mix in case of injury to key personnel such as first aiders.

First aider boundaries and first aid kits

First aiders are trained to treat symptoms pending the availability of medical treatment. They are not trained to diagnose conditions nor to prescribe medication. Each member's first aid kit should therefore be customised to their personal requirements and include medication for known or anticipated conditions which are prescribed for them by their own treating doctor.

Kits should be stored at the top of packs for fast access. In case of injury or illness, first aiders should use supplies from the casualty's own kit. This becomes especially important in cases of helicopter evacuation when the casualty's pack will sometimes be flown out as well. If the first aider has used their own first aid supplies they may be left short for the remainder of the trip.

Overall the course was memorable and engaging. The training is intensive, the simulated exercises don't stop when the weather caves in and evidence of competency is demanded through practical and written assessments. But just remember, a casualty may one day thank you for your ability to think rationally and act calmly under pressure. As David Sheppard says, *train hard, rescue easy*.

Editor's note: For details of upcoming Remote Area First Aid courses through the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS) please refer to First Aid Courses on the BWRS website <http://www.bwrs.org.au>.

FIRST URBAN BIOBLITZ FOR SYDNEY CITY

Imagine peering into bat traps, hunting for reptiles under rocks and logs or searching by torchlight for possums and gliders high in the tree tops.

On 28 September 2008, National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) through its community participation Program *NatureKeepers*, will be giving the local community the opportunity to participate in their first urban biodiversity study event, *BioBlitz08*, and encouraging them to 'get in touch with their greener side'.

"The City of Sydney is pleased to support this first of its kind community environment initiative," said Lord Mayor Clover Moore.

"The BioBlitz will engage residents in an entertaining way to learn more about our urban biodiversity and the importance of properly managing our green spaces," said Ms. Moore. "The data collected at the BioBlitz will lend itself to the City's annual environmental report and will provide a baseline to build on from year to year," continued Ms. Moore.

BioBlitz08 will be a free annual event designed to bring the local community together with scientists and specialists experienced in Plants, Mammals, Spiders and Insects, Birds, Reptiles and Frogs, in a series of simple hands-on surveys to identify and record as many species of plants and animals over a 24 hour period.

BioBlitz08 will be based out of five specially selected Sydney City urban parks - Sydney Park, Glebe Foreshore Parks, Centennial Park, Observatory Park Hill and Sydney Olympic Park, offering a wealth of natural habitats such as wetlands, grasslands, mangroves, woodlands and salt marshes to explore. Survey sessions have been programmed 2-hourly throughout the day and people will have the option of choosing their preferred park and type of species or session they would like to survey.

"They can choose one or stay for the whole day! By being directly and actively involved in a 'hands-on learn, explore, discover and record' approach, working alongside scientific experts, awareness of the importance of protecting the natural environment is heightened." said Andrew Cox, NPA Executive Officer.

Register online www.bioblitz.org.au by 12 September or contact the National Parks Association of NSW
BioBlitz team on (02) 9290 2503 for a brochure.

A TOUCH OF UNCERTAINTY IN THE WADBILLIGA NP

by Christine Austin

(Continued from June)

Tues 29: Judy and Dave, who were returning to Canberra, set off east along the firetrail whilst the rest of us left in the opposite direction to seek the southerly ridge leading to the Brogo. A belt of banksia, reinforced by prickly hakea, teatree and nana slowed our progress dramatically. Sometimes, crawling on hands and knees, we followed wombat tunnels through the unyielding scrub. As the ridge descended the scrub gradually eased and the going became unusually leisurely. The beauty of the Upper Brogo caused us to pause for awhile upon arrival. On the right bank was a tiny campsite used by two friends many years ago. Tall eucalypts, ferns and a variety of creepers lined the south flowing banks. When the river changed direction we had small cliffs to negotiate and a few rough sidles. For fear of not finding anything else, we elected to camp about 4:15 on an enclosed area which was made habitable by extensive gardening and hacking at the lawyer vines. Marion cooked us Mexican chicken and our campsite felt comfortable and cosy.

Wed 30: Another beautiful day! On this long day walking downstream we had occasional pauses to photograph rock orchids. Dangling from cliffs, hugging crevices, they were everywhere. When flowering during spring, they would be spectacular. After several hours, a tributary from the north west entered a large attractive flat covered with tall white eucalypts. Steep cliffs could be seen making exit points scarce. One disappointment was the presence of willows which I had not noticed in 1997. Once again a rare campsite was spotted at about 4:30 and a GPS reading confirmed that the ridge opposite might lead to the Tuross. After a dinner of rice and vegetables Marion agreed to wake us at 6 and we retired early.

Thur 1 May: "Six o'clock!" called Marion. "Why do I have to get up? I am retired!" But another long day loomed. Craig reconfirmed our position and we commenced climbing the narrow, steep and rocky ridge which proved both straightforward and scenic. Beautiful views of wild sinuous ridges, some with rocky ramparts, extended to the north and south of the Brogo wilderness. As far as the eye could see, there was not a hint of habitation. Towards the top a maze of fallen timber impeded our way but we were soon through it and eating a well deserved lunch.

In the afternoon our old foe nana appeared on the ridge like an advancing army. Trying to focus on its colourful aspects, for the afternoon light revealed its subtle shades of reds and oranges, we struggled through its tenacious growth towards the Tuross. Kydra Peak and the Kybean range appeared in the west. At last we saw some eucalypts far below, their ghost like shapes morphing into something which might be a campsite. And there by the upper reaches of the Tuross was a clearing with plenty of wood. Kenn's Laksa that night tasted wonderful.

Fri 2: Six o'clock again. Craig and Kenn had the fire alight and what a comforting sight it was on a chilly morning. Walking downstream we jumped from bank to bank avoiding nana where possible. As the valley widened, we were delighted to see open woodland - plenty of campsites to be had this time! Occasionally we crossed boggy patches covered with helichrysums and gentians. Soon farms and fences appeared and we arrived early afternoon at Two Creek Plain where Back River flowed into the Tuross. Too early to camp and with water collected from Back River, we played over and under with numerous fences for a few more hours. After skirting one paddock a car arrived bumping over the rocks. The shooters, as indeed they were, informed us in a friendly manner that they were shooting rabbits and foxes that evening. At least they were aware of our existence so from our sheltered campsite that night the gunshots were not so alarming. Tonight I cooked the leftover food which tasted fine after an energetic day.

Sat 3: Everyone was keen to be away and the 6am rising was becoming routine. Aiming to reach the cars parked at Cascades by 10 am, we were thwarted once again by our old foe nana and a navigational oops which landed us above the Tuross too far downstream requiring an extra 20 minutes of traversing scrub filled gullies. Accumulated tiredness seemed to be taking over, but happily it vanished when the granite boulders near the Cascades appeared. We said goodbye to Kenn and Edith and drove home with Marion.

The long days of frustratingly thick scrub and the slight uncertainties inherent in this area were behind us. But there were many enjoyable moments, thanks to a great party!

Post Script:

We have since received a response from the ranger thanking us for reporting the willows. An eradication program commenced in 1999 and is continuing with an on ground treatment program in spring this year.

Two girls and a dingy!

by Cath Mullane

This is the story of two 50 something year old women undertaking a walk in South West Tasmania earlier this year. Cath and Marella have had great adventures exploring the Tasmanian wilderness over the past few years, but this has always been in the company of competent navigators, pack haulers and walk leaders, i.e. blokes. This year - 2008 - we were not so lucky and if we were to have an adventure, this time it would be on our own! We planned to walk for ten days - it was tight, as Cath was then heading off to London straight afterwards. We flew from Sydney/Hobart/Melaleuca and set out walking the Port Davey Track all in one day carrying 20 kilo packs. This was new territory for both of us but with cool weather and some intent to reach the Narrows on Bathurst Harbour, we were in good spirits. Although the two of us are good mates, we weren't totally sure how the domestic relationship would ensue over the next ten days. With the usual stress of coping with Bill Capon on other walks, one usually has a hissy-fit while the other is constantly stressed. So we were both on good behavior, walking across the button grass hills with good views of Mt Beattie. One of us was stuffed as the afternoon wore on, and camp was found early on, long before the Bathurst Narrows would be reached.

Next morning as we packed, we had the pleasure of meeting a ranger who was a bog expert - only in Tassie! It was somewhat alarming, given that we were expecting extensive mud opportunities as part of our wilderness experience. But, so far so good, the track was relatively dry and in good condition. Up and away - sidling around the hills and dropping down to Joan Point. The weather was cool with a strong wind blowing. Little did Cath realize, but her partner had developed a severe rowing phobia, allegedly due to criticism on an earlier trip. Anyway, Joan Point is where it all happens. We heaved and pulled a dingy down to the water, put the packs in and tried to push off. Two yachts cruised past as we struggled to get out into the current. The wind was blowing and the waves were a little fierce. We went around in circles for some time, until someone figured that there was no co-ordination with the rowing and no team work. Captain Cath had to bark instructions but to no avail, since the first mate suffers from an inability to tell right from left. So that we could actually get off the rocks and attempt to cross the Narrows, Captain Cath had the relative luxury of a seat in the boat, while the first mate, who had donned sandals, was relegated to the pushing role until the boat had permanently left the rocks behind. Cath rowed and Marella did what she could to assist progress, which amounted to very little. As we returned to Joan Point with the replacement dinghy, the First Mate was heard to curse in a very un-lady-like fashion, "We forgot the **\$#@*!!! oars!" so we ended up doing five trips. It was a long afternoon, and once again we were stuffed and had no drinking water. Farrell Point (northern side of the narrows) was Camp #2. Anyone planning this trip should note that fresh water at Camp Farrell is pretty lousy. A good night's sleep spurred us on (also driving us was that we had only completed 12 kms and had a long way to go).

Day 3 was a warmer day and we were aiming for Spring River - 10kms. We had great views of Bathurst Harbour and Mt Rugby. The track stays up high on the slopes- with little protection from the sun (yes this is SW Tassie, and it was bloody hot). The track remained pretty dry and in good condition. Descending to the river was somewhat arduous, with the button grass now interspersed with side creek crossings and at times impenetrable scrub. The view of the river was somewhat ominous with it carving a giant swathe through the valley floor. Given the hot weather, the first camp site was welcomed (on the first river bend), even though we had been advised to push on further to a larger spot. A cool dip, wash and boil up saw the old ducks bounce back and plan the next few days of walking. Access points along this river were limited due to the thick undergrowth and flooding detritus.

An early start on Day 4 to walk out of the river valley and push on to the Lost World Plateau - another hot day with no cover. The views are not as spectacular now but the wide open vista reminds us of the track's history - imagining the escape passage for shipwrecked sailors off the rugged West Coast walking from Joe Page Bay



to Maydena (the long march!). While the weather is unbelievably kind to us on our little adventure, the landscape suggests that it could also be very unkind, if not harsh. Back to the heat - we had to rest in a creek bed for a couple of hours so to walk without being fried. Finally arrived at Watershed Camp - a dark, slightly poxy site but we gratefully booked in. Couldn't believe the fabulous weather and no mud!

Our walking days were becoming progressively short and the next day we were at Crossing River by lunchtime. We didn't complain, as the button grass plain and hill-sidling was becoming somewhat repetitive. Crossing River is a delightful spot, with white sand and easy water access. Our wits were tested by a juicy big tiger snake hissing (mainly at Marella), who was suitably frightened. Our

Two girls and a dinghy (continued)

friend, the snake, determined that we camped on the other side of the river. We were getting slightly excited now as we still had four days to go and a distinct possibility of touching the Western Arthurs.

We moved out of the river system towards Junction Creek, aptly named as it is the junction for Western Arthurs, Arthurs Plain and Sotts Peak Dam. The weather was telling us something - wispy mares tails blowing into the western sky. With lighter packs and a bounce in our step we moved along the track quickly anxious to see our first glimpse of the Arthurs. The track edges around the western edge of the Arthurs as we came upon the back of the range. Lost count of how many small creeks were crossed, which normally involved a steep drop down through low, spindly tress and thick scrub belts, a quick flowing water course and clamber out of the creek bed and back onto button grass interspersed with poorly drained wet and muddy track walking. This next section appeared to have been recently burnt (from a fire off the slopes of the western end of the range) so the scrub had that added attraction of charcoal brushing.

Junction Creek camp is busy - a shock for us. We had come across few other walkers so far and had the previous campsites to ourselves. Not so now. The weather finally came in with lots of noise (more bravado, than actual rain). The Arthurs could not be seen - shrouded in cloud and mist. We were now quickly re-considering options as we were not silly enough to climb in bad weather and no visibility. Disappointed but pragmatic we retired for the evening. Day 7 dawned clear and sunny - would we go?? Yes we were off, back up the track to Moraine A Junction. By early lunch we were up on the tops (1200m). Easy walking through the Capella Crag led us to Lake Cygnus, a beautiful large tarn with good camping platforms (which were soon all filled).

The next 24 hours were to test our gear and show us the folly of our way. The huff and puff of yesterday's weather front was just the tease. The real weather was up on the tops. We were camping with only two tent flies and not enough clothing to be warm (if it remained dry). It blew and howled and then it rained and then it sleeted. No sleep, more rocks needed to anchor the tent sites, more dry clothes (but none to be had). Instead of frolicking and exploring the tops, we were holed up for the day being somewhat bitterly cold. This was the real adventure!

We safely retreated on Day 9, back down Moraine A and out to Scotts Peak Dam (a bit of a slog) but great to reach Huon Creek camp. Sick of the food but feeling fit and a real buzz about having done the walk as planned. We will be back to do more of the Western Arthurs next summer!

A Whale of a Time at Kurnell *Bill Holland*



The whale watching walks on Tuesday 17 and Sunday 29 July went very well. The whales cooperated with spectacular displays on both days. We had seven attending the Tuesday walk and a large group of twenty-four on the Sunday.

On Tuesday we had a very special viewing of humpback whales. As we approached our lunch spot two whales a short distance off-shore launched themselves out of the water displaying a great part of their massive bodies (similar to the whale shown in this photo). They followed this with a series of tail-slapping, the sound carrying across to the cliffs.

We also witnessed a good display on the Sunday walk, not quite up to the standard of Tuesday but nevertheless impressive. It occurred shortly after leaving our lunch spot and when we looked back we could see a sight nearly missed. Two

whales were playing around with some breaching and leaping. Other whales had been sighted earlier but they were distant spouts of water with binoculars giving a shadowy shape under the water.

The Sunday group included several members new to SBW and three visitors. They all enjoyed the walk along the spectacular cliffs on the Kurnell peninsular and the extensive beach walk to North Cronulla. This style of relaxed walking is well suited as an introduction to SBW.

McKeown Valley Circuit Walk - Blue Mountains NP & Jenolan Karst Reserve:

by Stephen Brading

Saturday 14 June 2008 --

Six Foot Track Crossing of Jenolan Caves Rd - Six Foot Track to Jenolan Caves - McKeown Valley - Fire Trail to return to cars.

On the wet Wednesday night it seemed that the first SBW McKeown Valley circuit walk was probably dead. One member expressed interest in attending and the weather, price of petrol, and the long weekend a couple of days before appeared to be putting everyone off. However what a difference a day makes. Thursday was fine and on Thursday night my phone and email went into meltdown mode.

The end result was that at 9am nine walkers including two who joined the club on Wednesday night, met at the Six Foot track crossing point of the Jenolan Rd. Sunshine and fresh conditions were the order of the day with ice in the puddles next to the cars and a measured air temperature of 4 degrees at the start of the walk.

Maybe it was the fresh conditions or the lure of coffee which resulted in the walk to the Jenolan Caves coffee shop being completed far quicker than I anticipated. Once there, we purchased morning tea and settled down on the verandah in the sunshine for an extended break. A couple of crimson rosellas decided to pretend they were cats by getting stuck in to a saucer of cream.

We eventually decided that we should do the walk partly prompted by a cave guide who would have rather joined us in the sunshine instead of paying troll for the day. So through the Grand Arch and the Devils Coach house we walked retracing the first route used by visitors to the caves. This brought us out into a canyon above the underground Jenolan River which is the start of McKeowns Valley. A really good tourist path makes walking through the canyon easy. Inside the vertical cliff wall to our left were the Imerial and Jubilee caves. The path passed a captive wallby breeding enclosure and playing fields with a disused cricket pitch used by early visitors where the valley widens. There are plenty of troughs to water your horse.

Further on a spot is marked a Mammoth Flat. There used to be a spring here where up until the 1980's visiting speleologists would camp. A footpad takes you through the next narrow section of the valley. As the valley widened again a faint set of four wheel drive tracks are found. They were followed to the end of the valley with stops to look at a ruin circa 1880 and a sheltered sunny spot for lunch.

After leaving the valley vehicle and foot tracks took us back to the cars. We were early enough to make a coffee stop (a pattern is developing) at the Wattle Cafe in Blackheath. A very pleasant way to spend a sunny Saturday.

Work for Willis's

Willis's Walkabouts has a limited number of guides and an incredibly concentrated peak season.

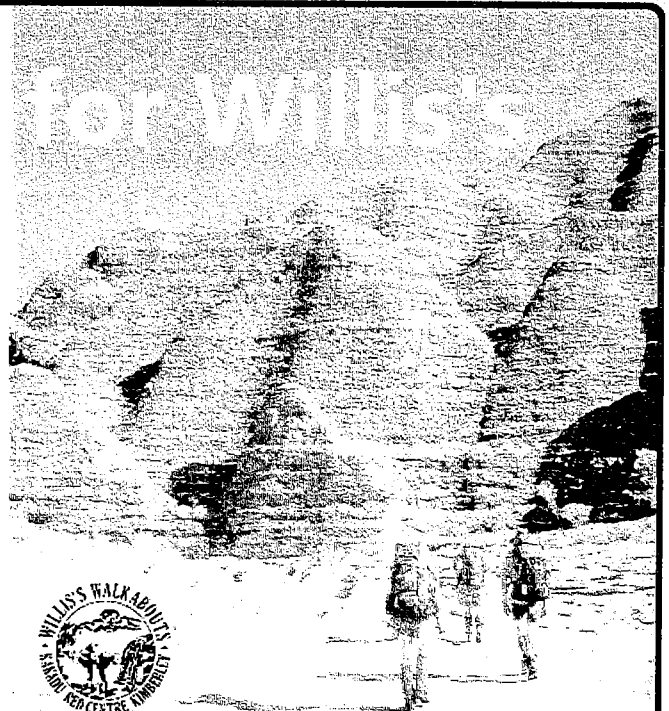
We need more guides. Our guides need to:

- be highly experienced bushwalkers
- have walked in the north before
- have a remote or wilderness first aid qualification
- be happy to lead only one or two trips per year
- be good bush cooks
- enjoy working with mixed groups of different ages and levels of experience.

Not absolutely essential but very helpful are:

- being able to take on a trip at short notice
- having a commercial (passenger for hire) driver's license.

If you are interested and think you qualify, please contact Russell Willis at ...



12 Carrington St Millner NT 0810 walkabout@ais.net.au

www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au

Phone 08 8985 2134 Fax 08 8985 2355

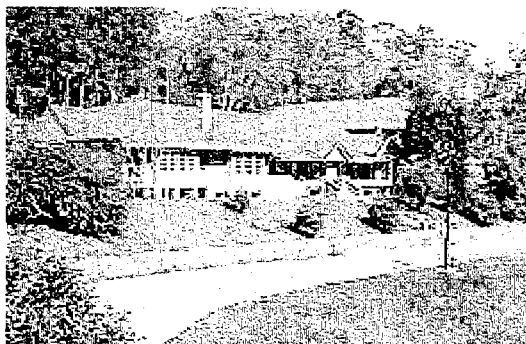
The Mid-Week Walkers

by Bill Holland

Each month I send out an emailed newsletter to a group of members (about 50 members) informally identified as "The Mid-Week Walkers". These are people who have time to spare for mid-week activities, some of which are shown on the Walks Programme and some organised at short notice. The purpose of this newsletter is to remind these members about coming mid-week activities, especially the extended mid-week stays that require advance bookings. Although these are included in the Club's three monthly walks programmes a monthly reminder serves as a necessary backup to ensure adequate participation. This newsletter is directed to members who have notified me of their interest and an excerpt is also included in the club magazine to see if other members are interested in joining in with us.

The SBW Management Committee's decision to change the frequency of the magazine from the traditional monthly publication to quarterly makes this monthly newsletter even more important if our mid-week activities are to continue to be successful. Admittedly, the Committee intends to supplement the quarterly magazine with an electronic newsletter (no mail-out) but this of necessity may be a very brief document without much room to actively promote activities such as ours. If you are interested in being added to our mailing list, please let me know.

Now looking ahead for the Mid-Week Walkers for next two months.



In August (Mon 18 - Fri 22) we will visit Yarrangobilly Caves staying at the re-opened Caves House *see photo). Eight people have now paid their deposit and we have booked the East Wing (sleeps 9). I can accept more bookings subject to rooms being available in the West Wing.

In September (Mon 22 - Fri 26) a member has offered his house at Stanwell Park as a base for walks etc in the nearby Royal National Park or cycling along the beaches. Perhaps you may just want to come for the day or



number of days. Please let me know

If you would like more details of the above, or wish to join us for all or some of these days please contact me either by phone (9484 6636) or by email billholland@bigpond.com.

Now here are some midweek and easier style walks scheduled for the next few weeks. Leader's contact and other details can be found in the Winter Walks programme.

Sunday 27 July: Botany Bay National Park

Maroubra Beach - Magic Point - Long Bay - Cape Banks - La Perouse. Spectacular coastal views. Mainly heathland foot-tracks, also golf courses. See a shipwreck and old military fortifications. Finishes at a snake pit! Grade: Easy M112, 13 kms

Tuesday 5 August: Blue Mountains Byways

Coxs Rd and Lockyers Rd are just two of the old roads west, down from the top of the mountains at Mt Victoria. They now provide a pleasant ramble, with fine views from Mt York, and historical reminders all the way. Grade: Easy M121, 12 km,

Sunday 24 August: The Wolgan Railway and the Glow Worm Tunnel

This is a walk full of history. We walk down "The Old Coach Road" to meet the abandoned Wolgan Railway Track and return via the Glow Worm Tunnel. Along the way we will see pagoda rock formations. Bring water for all day and a torch for the Glow Worm Tunnel.

Grade: Medium 20km

Tuesday 26 August: Blue Mountains MP

Pierces Pass - Grose River - Little Blue Gum - Pierces Pass. A very scenic approach to the Grose River, spectacular views down and along the river. A fair way down and then up but it will be at a relaxed pace. Grade: Easy/Medium, 20km.



Coolana Training Weekend:

The next new members training weekend will be held on 9th, 10th August at Coolana on the beautiful Kangaroo River.

This weekend offers an opportunity for new members to gain practical experience in navigation, first aid and bush craft. It is a very sociable weekend where you can meet other newcomers and gain from the experience of older members.

See the Winter Walks Programme for more details and contact numbers.

Maintenance and Bush Regeneration 30th, 31st August.



It's a wonderful property but needs some gentle care and maintenance. The trees are doing fine but need some supporting attention. 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. Wine and cheese, family and friends welcome.

The Coolana Fund:

The Coolana Fund was established to provide an income to assist with the maintenance of the Club's property at Coolana. Donations to the Coolana Fund are very welcome.

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

"The Coolana Fund"
The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc

Trek in Ethiopia 2009

- presentation and talk -

Ethiopia is a country steeped in history from some of the earliest remains of humanity and ancient civilisations to the Great Rift Valley and mountains over 4500 metres. It is home to many unknown treasures and will overwhelm you with its majestic landscapes. Ethiopia is a perfect haven for those wanting to trek in dramatic mountain scenery that receives only a few visitors. Contrary to popular perceptions that Ethiopia is predominantly desert, its elevated central plateau covers half of the country's area. While the deserts do exist (Danakil Depression), they are thinly populated and not frequently visited by tourists. Instead, on this special trip organised by World Expeditions *exclusively* for **Sydney Bush Walkers**, we will walk in the fertile highland plateau of Ethiopia; the Simien Mountains. Our trekking through the Simien Mountains takes us through the small villages and terraced fields of the lower valleys before reaching a series of dramatic cliffs and escarpments. We then descend into the lowlands to gain an amazing perspective of scale of these mountains and another opportunity to interact with locals in the villages below. The Simien Mountains are home to many endemic species, such as gelada baboon, walia ibex and Simien fox, that you may encounter on the trek.

Highlights of this exclusive departure include:

- A spectacular 10 day trek in the Simien Mountains
- Traversing the escarpment to gain views of the spectacular Geech Abyss
- Spotting the array of wildlife including the gelada baboon & the Walia Ibex
- The views from the summit of Ras Dashen
- Exploring Addis Ababa
- Taking a boat trip on Lake Tana to the island monastery Ura Kidane Mehret
- Visiting the magnificent Blue Nile Falls
- Touring the Royal Enclosure in Gondar

Trip departure - April 2009

To find out more ...

Join Chris Buykx from World Expeditions to hear all about this amazing trip on

17 Sept, 2008 at the clubrooms, 8pm

Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16-18 Fitzroy Street, KIRRIBILLI

Dinner beforehand from 6pm at the Kirribilli Hotel

Club contact Tony Holgate - tholgate@optusnet.com.au

SOCIAL NOTES

Hi Everyone,

So far, except for today (13° max) we have had a rather mild winter which has been most pleasant for walking. AND, last weekend I noticed a plethora of wildflowers in the area between Berowra and Cowan. It seemed as if spring had come early.

Our mid-winter Feast/Xmas in June attracted 23 people. There was a copious quantity of food and gluwain and a great time was had by all. If you missed the occasion, there is always the SBW actual Xmas party in December.

In August, the social evening will feature Tony Holgate's (our Walk's secretary) trip north where he spent time walking in the tropics. This is sure to be a great evening especially since SBW has not ventured to this area very often.

Have you ever thought about sharing your favourite holiday/trip/area with other members???? Since the social evening for November needs a presenter then this is your 'golden opportunity'. Please contact me on 91307263 or e-mail Kathygero@aol.com.

Enjoy your walking and come join fellow members for a fun time at our Social Nights.

Kathy

Book Review

"A Long Walk in the Australian Bush" by William J. Lines, published by Uni of NSW Press, 1998.

I recently read this excellent book and would like to recommend it to members. It is a delightful and most interesting book describing in great detail a long pack-walk, lasting several weeks, undertaken by the author and his partner Carol along the famous Bibbulmun Track in South West Western Australia. It has some very thoughtful observations about the adverse affects of human's "development" in that beautiful part of Western Australia.

It should find wide appeal amongst bushwalkers concerned about environmental degradation and you will learn more about this beautiful long-distance walking track.

Rudolf Dezelin

Along with his book review, Rudy sends greetings to his old friends in SBW. He walked with the Club from 1976 until the 1990's and is now resident in Ulverstone, Tasmania. *Ed.*

WINTER SOCIAL PROGRAM

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

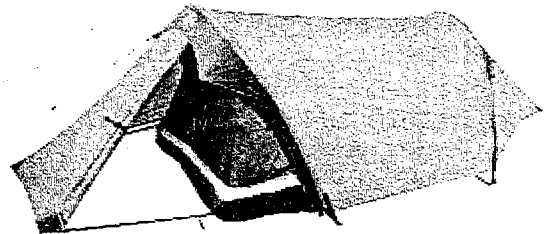
23 July **New Members Training Night** Please contact New Members Secretary for details and time.

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

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

20 August **Walking in Australia's Tropics**
8pm Tony Holgate and friends will give a presentation on recent walks in Australia's north.

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



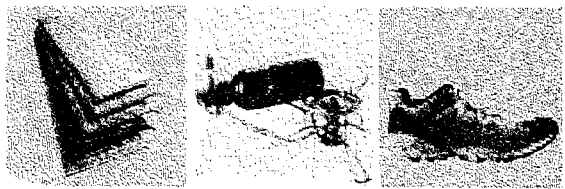
ABOVE TENT FOR SALE

Wilderness Equipment 'Second Arrow'
2 person expedition grade backpacking tent
in "as new" condition.
Double skinned with good flow-through ventilation
make it excellent for snow or tropical conditions.

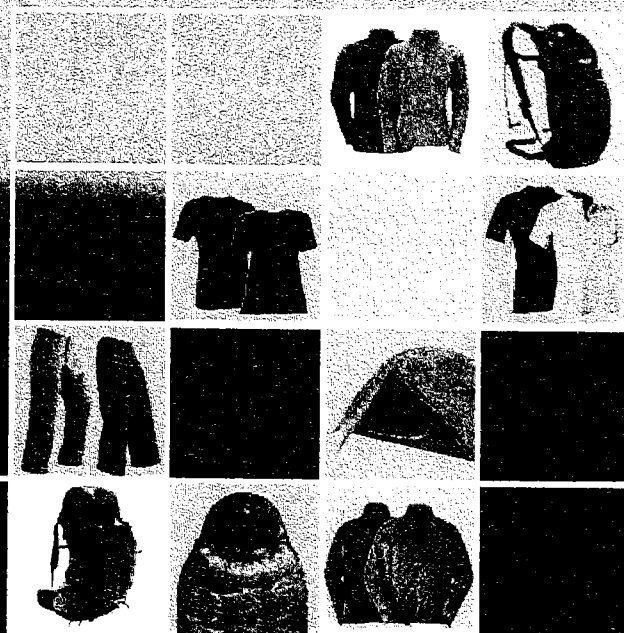
Details can be found at:
<http://www.seatosummit.com.au/showdetail.php?Code-WE2ACOMSIL>

Originally cost \$600 - for sale for \$300

Contact: John Doherty
john.doherty@epa.qld.gov.au
Phone: 07 4069 7908



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