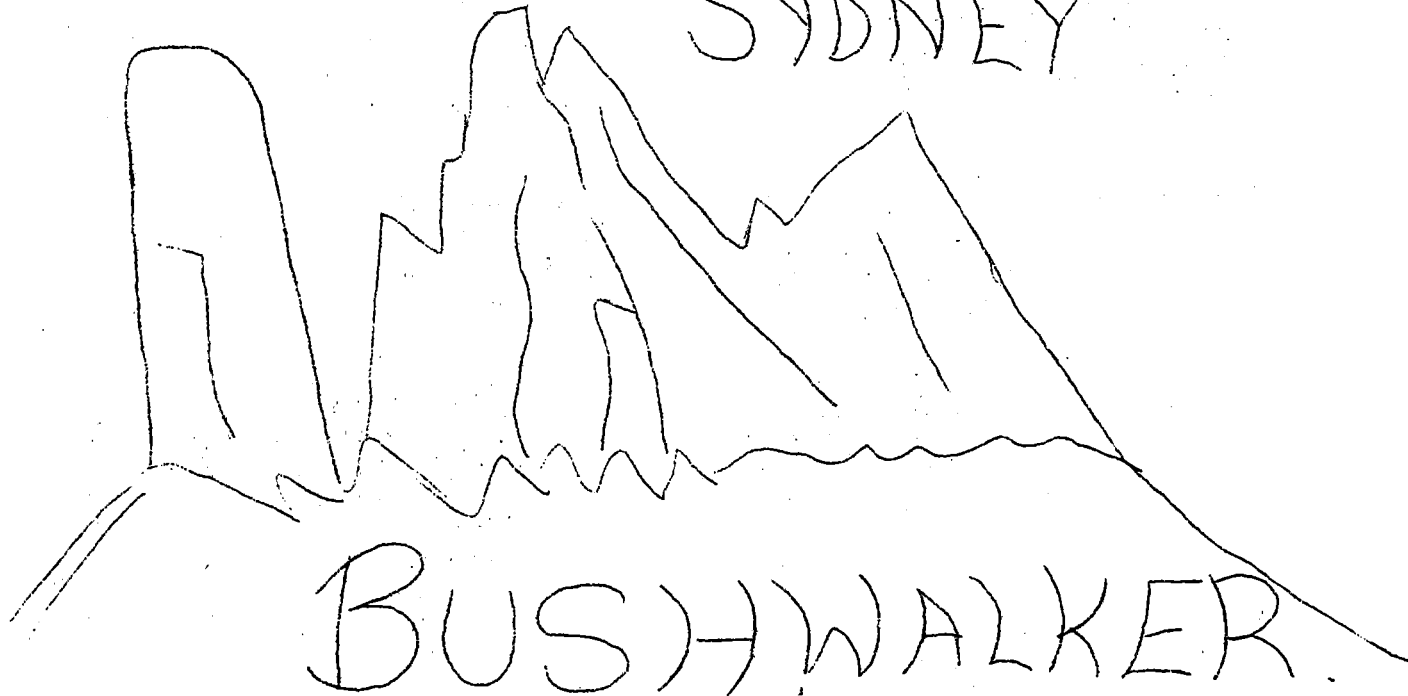


THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



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WOLLANGAMBIE WANDERINGS.

Pat Harrison.

The mere mention of Wollangambe Creek is enough to bring up an image of an interesting bushwalking trip, but when the words "car swop" are added to the description you have the ingredients necessary to keep you in doubt about the outcome until you are actually home and hosed. By the way, the Wollangambe is a classic example of the haphazard naming of our streams - Ettreme Creek is another one -, for the Wollangambe is a river or it is nothing.

The leaders had not been able to glen^A much information about our route; in fact, nothing more explicit than that it would be rough: hence we would be traversing unknown country, and most of us came prepared to swim deep pools flanked by impassable cliffs. However, we were able to go all the way without getting our feet wet.

The Friday-night rendezvous was at Wheeny Creek on the road to Upper Colo, and when Bill Burke arrived about 10 p.m. with Ross Hughes, Wilf Deck, Shirley Dean and yours truly we found Doone Wyborn, Dave Ricketts, Peter McIntosh and Ramon U'Brien already there and rolled out in their bags. The night being still early, a cup of tea (the first of the many during the weekend) was called for. Firewood is as scarce as hen's teeth in this well-used area and we had to fossick around a lot for it, but the fire was well and truly alight before the remaining two cars arrived. Our Party of 17 was now completed by Margaret and Ross Wyborn, Joan and Frank Rigby, David Russell, Don Finch, Roger Lockwood and Victor Poulsons.

We awoke on Saturday morning to a pleasant scene - gigantic Blue Gums, Wattle in bloom, the creek winding around the bend, and the attractive sandstone formations and vegetation that are usual in the Hawkesbury country. We broke camp at Wheeny Creek at 7.25 a.m., two cars going to Drip Rock off the Putty Road and two to Itchenstoke at Mount Tootie. Our leg was Mount Tootie and the party was Joan, Shirley, Frank, Bill, Ross, Roger, Ramon, Wilf and me. A bitter west wind was blowing as we left the cars at the start of the long driveway and scurried up to the home near the top of Tootie. This property has been much beautified with Old World trees which were just bursting into life again while underneath them masses of Daffodills had already peered forth to show that Spring had come.

Beyond Little Tootie at GR509674 we left the road and followed a good ridge to Bowen's Creek at GR505707. There was very little scrub on this ridge and thus we were able to admire the Boronias and Granny's Bonnets and Grevilleas and Wedding Bush that bloomed along the way. The bushland this year has been particularly beautiful with Boronia. There were also clumps of Christmas Bush that put to shame the poor miserable things that pass for such in suburban gardens.

The few final feet above the creek interposed the expected cliff, but we negotiated this obstacle by traversing a little way back into the side creek. Bowen's Creek carries a lot of water (I'd hate to do it in a season of average rainfall) and at this stage I was reconciled to frequent and cold immersions during the afternoon. Away we went, rock-hopping and dodging in, out and around the Water Gums which grew everywhere and which were, as everyone knows, as strong as canes. Even those long dead resist any attempt to break them. From time to time there were fine Turpentine, and occasionally Myrtles and Blueberry Ash, but the abiding memory is of Water Gums all the way, in the rocks, on the rocks, and through the rocks.

Where Bowen's Creek has a pronounced bend at GR524737 the rocks of the gorge begin to look impressive, culminating at the Wollangambe junction in a tremendous sheer wall of rock hundreds of feet high. The Wollangambe is a big stream - much more water than Bowen's - and at the junction there was one of those deep still pools so common to this river.

Camp sites had been few and far between on Bowen's, and Joan had decreed that we camp at the first suitable spot on or after the junction. Well, it was 4.45 p.m. when we reached the Wollangambe, there was a splendid camp site with unlimited firewood and a three-forked cliff-line around us, so that was it for the day. Some of the men had a plunge in the refrigerator, but the ladies had far too much sense to indulge in such nonsense at that time and place.

We were up at 5.30 a.m. and away at 7.10 a.m. on Sunday, dancing our way over the clean large boulders which littered the bed of the river. The Wollangambe hereabouts is really a very obliging stream, for those great boulders were placed just right to keep our feet dry. We passed many good campsites and at 8.10 a.m. came upon the other leg still having breakfast, clustered around an untidy fire. Bush hospitality was not extended to us in the form of a cup of tea - nay, on the contrary, we were besought to provide them with bread. Anyway, half an hour soon went by before we jogged off again to reach the really magnificent Colo junction at 9.40 a.m.

Sand beaches, a great towering cliff, the river as big as a lake, flowering gums perched among the cliffs, a swim, a fire and a cup of tea, and an hour had passed away. Then down the Colo, hopping over boulders and through the Water Gums, to cross about an hour later near the foot of the spur which goes up to Island Trig. I somehow think we were lucky on this trip, for it has been a very dry season and many of the smaller rocks that gave us a dry crossing would disappear with another few inches of water, the level of which seemed to be about a foot down.

It is 1,600 feet up to Island Trig; it is a steep rocky scramble for about 900 feet; and when the Mountain Holly ceased to plague us the Mountain Devils took over, to say nothing of such minor annoyances as Dillwynia and Prickly Moses: but the view was worth it, and it is only from such vantage points as this that any idea is really gained of the overall rugged nature of the Wollangambe - Colo country.

We descended in a northerly direction over the saddle, around the next bump, then down into Boo-Book Creek. There was one place on the descent where the rocks became an arete and we had to hand the packs down. It would also be better to drop straight down into the creek from the saddle, for we followed the dry stream down to the good pool at the junction at GR589784. This pool is permanent and apparently is fed by the eastern arm. There is suitable camping near this water, and there is also a cairned route up through the rocks to the east, but we lost it halfway up and were at an impasse for a while; however, after some illuminating dialogue we found it again and were on top at 5 p.m.

The next hour was a scratchy walk to the fire trail, and another hour later at 7 p.m. we were back at the cars, having sauntered along in the gloaming with the white road gleaming ahead of us and the thronging blossoms of yellow Dillwynia acting as guide lines on each side.

One indisputable fact emerged from this trip - Roger Lockwood has the largest Drinking Bowl (I couldn't call it by the usual but less polite name given to such utensils, for witness the way Roger met everyone with a drink of Apple juice as they hauled themselves up on to Island Trig) ever seen. It is big enough to put your head into.

WOLLANGAMBIE WALLOWINGS. (The Other Story).

by "Lyrebird".

Wheeny Creek crossing was the Friday night meeting place for the two parties in the Car Swop Trip. The two leaders, Fon-Don and Joan Rigby agreed upon their midway rendezvous which was to be the Colo-Wollongambie junction on Saturday night. None of us thought it would be possible, highly improbable I'd say!

Saturday morning found us swopping cars and piling ourselves in these strange cars. Three others and myself jumped into Bill Burke's automatic. She went like a beauty on tarred road, but on dirt road - hopeless! Arriving at the end of the road, we parked the cars and started off along a fire trail from Dripping Rock. Two hundred yards further, "Is this the right ridge?" "Looks like it." "Its big enough." Doone started to climb a tree as our leader came into view. "Onwards!" This is not the ridge you blunderers."

Four hundred yards later we scrambled down a much smaller ridge (70° type) and ended up in a choked up creek with lawyer vines and other unmentionable scrub. Grumbles and groans were heard as one of the party found a very old fire trail alongside the creek.

Angowarra Creek is an easy creek to walk along; large rock shelves, few bushes in the creek itself with a wee bit of boulder hopping. It was hot fun, being at least 80°F in between the shade and the sun. But the huge pools must have been a glorious 33°F.

Lunch was declared on the Colo-Angowarra Creek junction. A perfect lunch spot. It included 2 flat, hot rocks to lay on, a two foot deep pool at your feet and a cliff for wind protection, and lots of sand.

"Moving off in $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes" the leader yelled. We jumped up to attention and packed up. The Colo is a very slow going river for walking at this point. Huge pools (as in the Shoalhaven Blockup) edged in by cliffs, at the base of which are boulders, held together by that infuriating tea tree, that always points the wrong way. Took us $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours to do two miles.

Not meeting the other half at the Colo-Wollangambe Creek junction we moved upstream, continuously boulder hopping. Most of us felt very energetic whereas we managed to scramble for another hour ($1\frac{1}{2}$ miles) before we picked a sand and rock campsite. Fon Don having plenty of spare energy, dawdled upstream to see if he could find the other team. He did not find them. Having forgotten our meat and most of our other food we managed to bludge some off that new prospective. Now here is a hint to light weight walkers. Take this chap along as he usually brings at least 40 lb pack stacked with tins of all sorts, and he only eats half of it, e.g. sweetened condensed milk, fresh eggs, bread, tins and tins of meat etc., are easily bludged from him. After eating an unforgettable meal, we sang the night away.

Next day after breakfast we were just about to move off when these jokers from the other tribe arrived. Of course we sat down and started to eat and talk to them. We finally moved off after that pleasant meeting (bludging, exchanging news of how difficult the terrain was to be etc.) at 9 a.m. An hour later we walked up Bowan Creek.

More boulder hopping. The scrub was really pointing our way here. I poked an eye twice, and couldn't see for the next ten minutes. Must remember to wear my glasses next time I go up that Colo type scrub. A pool plus 4 flat rocks were sighted and lunch was declared before the leader came into sight. Some one built a fire and other bods just flaked out on pointy looking rocks. And they stayed flaked out.

"Well lad", a read head said, "don't just lay there. Haven't you got any food to eat?" "Yes," "Well, share it around then!" Words from a well-known bludger.

As the sun slowly sank in the west we continued boulder hopping up and through the bushes. We left Bowan Creek and started walking up a side creek in order to reach the road (4 wheeler) in double quick time. We all ended up going up too early in the creek and reaching a cliff line which loomed above us. Ross and Doone moved on to find a way up. Ross who was within ear shot said that he had found a way up. A rope was needed as a safety line for some as it was a break in the cliff.

Ten minutes later Doone came from above and said he had walked up. So much for that effort. Even though we could have walked up to the top of the ridge, the rock scramble made the trip extra exciting. On top of the ridge we had a sit down. Two of us sat in a corner, opened a huge tin of pineapple and Orange juice and guzzled it down. Thank goodness no-one saw us. All those bludgers are a problem!

far
We didn't have to walk/as we saw a flagpole with a white flag tied onto it. (The Army has been here too!) We soon found a four wheel drive track. At 8.30 p.m. we all arrived at the two cars after getting ourselves lost on the circular roads of Mt. Tootie. We all jumped into the cars in a hurry and rushed off to the nearest Chinese choppers.

THE HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING.

Jim Brown.

In a meeting at which matters of considerable weight were to be considered, we set out with a very small crew - about 30 - at 7.50 p.m. Later the gathering appreciated, but probably did not exceed 50 financial members at any time.

Brian Griffiths was welcomed, the Minutes for August were confirmed, and we broke straight into Inward Correspondence, which contained a letter from National Parks Assocn, seeking to form a bush fire fighting organisation, advice from the Australian Conservation Foundation regarding its annual meeting in October, and from the Nature Conservation Council concerning its agenda for the Conference on 21st September.

The President said at least two items from the N.C.C. agenda had some controversial aspects. One motion opposed the taking of any animal or fish from reserves except under the control of the Parks and Wild Life Authority. The other authorised the Executive to admit hunting and fishing bodies to membership if satisfied they supported preservation of wild creatures and their habitats.

Alex Colley promptly moved in opposition to both proposals, saying that the allowance of even controlled hunting would diminish the prospects of securing areas where complete protection existed. Other speakers felt, however, that both resolutions were reasonable, and that admission of hunting clubs to the N.C.C. would assist marksmen to appreciate conservation and control of wild life. Finally both items as outlined in the agenda were supported by the Club's vote.

The Treasurer reported that about 60 subscriptions were unpaid, including 40 for active (I) members, and the current account stood at \$608

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at 31st August. He drew attention to the Magazine account and the fact that unfinancial members had received issues over six months, and the magazine may show a loss over the year's operations. Frank Ashdown considered unfinancial members were being treated too liberally in this direction.

Don Finch recorded that Roger Lockwood's trip out from Yalwal had 12 people plus violent, windy weather: that Alex Colley's Gunyah Bay trip on 8th August was reasonably well attended, while a car-swap Instructional trip run by Snow Brown and himself in the Corang River country brought out 26 starters. Bill Gillam's Snow Instructional struck very turbulent weather, resulting in an early return, and Ivy Painter's trip in the Era-Polona Brook country had three prospectives. Joan Rigby did some pioneering in Allum River, with a party of 11, but one member suffered a heavy fall, which caused some alteration of plans. Esme Biddulph had car parking bother on a trip in Kuringgai Chase (West Head area).

Frank Ashdown pointed out that, by lighting of luncheon fires in Kuringgai Chase and parking cars in forbidden areas we were getting a bad reputation, and should mend our ways.

There was no Federation Report, and only one site (Woods Creek) proposed for the Annual Reunion. For the Convenor, Bob Younger was appointed. Going on to other appointments, Nan Bourke became Auditor, Jack Gentle volunteered for Substitute Federation Delegate, and Phil Hall was elected delegate to the Nature Conservation Council.

So to Constitutional Amendments, and in the words of Omar Khayyan "Nor all thy piety nor wit, shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all thy tears wash out a word of it."

First Phil Butt occupied the Chair while President Frank Rigby moved that a simple majority should suffice to amend the Constitution. This was opposed by Gordon Redmond, who quoted from the Company's Act to show that the basic rules of a Company required a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority for change. Nan Bourke suggested a company, which seldom had a general meeting of shareholders, was on somewhat different grounds to the Club. Jack Gentle said the high proportion of votes needed for an amendment made for a desirable stability in Club legislation. However it was Jess Martin who threw the bombshell, by asking if the Charitable Collections Act, under which the Club is registered, required a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority. No one could say, and the amendment was lost.

Don Finch put forward a good case for two overnight test walks, and found quite a lot of support, but, in the absence of a simple majority verdict, the amendment was lost 23 to 11.

Next Brian Harvey submitted that the finance part of the Constitution should be varied so that unfinancial members were crossed off after two months, without allowing discretion to Committee. Even the

Treasurer felt this was rather strong medicine while opinion generally favoured allowing Committee to consider individual cases, and preferred that members should not be deleted and later re-admitted with twice the work. Lost.

However, there was completely universal support for elimination of the "Half" yearly audit. (Subsequently your reporter discovered some evidence - supported by Jess Martin - that the offending word "half" was deleted several years ago, but reprinted in error in the present copy of the Constitution).

The next item called for a "complete audit" of the Club finances whenever any officer handling the Club's funds vacated office. After some initial debate, Kath Brown asked if this meant that a full audit would have to be done if an officer in possession of a small advance quitted. It appeared that this was not really the intention of the mover or the seconder (the Treasurer) and the motion was withdrawn to be re-shaped and presented in proper phrasing at a later date.

Finally to the "Bylaws" motion, of which only subsection (a), providing that resolutions of continuing effect be treated as bylaws, was presented. After some discussion, which adduced the fact that resolutions of some permanency were being extracted from the Minute books, the motion was lost and the rest of the sub-clauses lapsed.

Now a resolution was carried that, in addition to our contribution to the Colong Fund, we subscribed to the aims of the Committee to resist limestone mining. In answer to Betty Farquhar's enquiry whether a children's treat was to be part of the 1969 Reunion, the President pointed out that the Reunion Committee had only just got off the ground, but some decisions should be available shortly.

Lon Scotland was concerned as to the future of the old railway dam near Brooklyn and the rumour that Kuring-gai Chase would inherit it, and the Conservation Secretary indicated some enquiries would be made. Finally, there was a motion that, since the Dungalla Club was understood to be a derivative in some respects of the S.B.W., the Club should seek advice of its constitution and office-bearers. By the time this was carried, and announcements made, it was high time for our meeting to be closed, which it was, at 10.28 p.m.

LILLO ON THE COLO - NOV. 15-16-17.

Bush fires permitting, this should be as good a chance to get sunburnt and scratched as you'll find on the current programme. After leaving the fire trail there is about a mile and half of scrub-bashing but, to avoid the worser stuff on Island Trig, the party will then go down the un-named creek to the Colo. First hand reports describe this as reasonable scrambling with two good waterfalls (if it rains). Then about five miles of the Colo - and certainly the middle of the river is the most attractive route. Make sure you can swim, bring your sunburn cream, lilo patches and eel-line and come along. JOAN RIGBY. 392741 (H).

"A SLING OFF".

"Sydneyite".

When I finally received the September edition of the S.B.W. Magazine, after the folks at home had read it, I thought perhaps you would like to hear of my weekend camping trip with the Melbourne Bushwalkers.

The Federal Weekend was held at Anakie, 18 miles this side of Geelong. To celebrate this weekend a barn-dance was arranged. At 5 p.m. Saturday afternoon, two of us were picked up at Batman Avenue in the city. Instead of going straight to the campsite, we had to make a detour to the Dandenongs. One of the passengers had to pick up a sleeping bag which was left at home. After discovering that the driver was a little vague on the direction to Anakie, we meandered into the deserted spot at ten o'clock. Needless to say the barn dance was in full swing, but we felt we could not stay and swing because our strength had to be preserved in order to erect our tent.

The actual campsite was 2 miles from the hall. Missing the Sydney Bushwalkers help in these circumstances, we erected the tent without anyone offering assistance. In the morning the two of us overheard our driver say, "That tent over there, has a definite sag." Refraining from "spitting in his eye" we made for the fire to cook breakfast. Only twenty-five of the M.B.W.'s were at the camp, which was a complete contrast from a day walk I went on when thirty-one attended.

An organised walk was planned at ten o'clock but the two of us wanted to take a look at Geelong, so we were dropped off at the nearest cross-roads where the walk was. We hitched 18 miles to Geelong and I can understand why people call it "The Sleepy Hollow". It was mid-day when we arrived there in a ute. After discovering that we missed a train back to Melbourne by five hours, and did not want to wait around for another train, we decided to hitch back. Only three trains ran into Melbourne that day, Sunday, and we didn't sight a bus. By two o'clock and 44 miles later we arrived in Melbourne, after gaining a lift straight through. Then we caught a train home.

The day walk I went on to Healesville was a 10 miler and as I stated before, was attended by thirty-one walkers, was a very pleasant stroll.

In order to get out to the Healesville area, 47 miles from the city, we all boarded a hired furniture van at Batman Avenue. Two weeks before, we paid \$1 deposit and a further 70 cents at the end of the walk, visitors, like me, paid an extra ten cents. The reason for the hire of a van, is because the trains don't start running until 9.00 a.m. on Sunday, which is a bit late for a walk, and trams only go a certain distance in the metropolitan area. The Victorian countryside is indeed picturesque (even after the drought they suffered) but the N.S.W. countryside is by far the best in my mind.

I was very surprised to hear that no first-aid or mapping tests are made to complete membership, maybe they already know it?!

(S.B.W.'s name is withheld).

October, 1968

The Sydney Bushwalker

11.

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TWO FIRES

Bill Gillam.

Part I. Uloom Swamp.

There had been a clear sky while they walked out and then, at sunset, low clouds heavy above the horizon so that with the true glow of the fire ahead and the last light a long way round to the south, Nick had thought at one time that there was fire all round him. It had taken them fifty minutes to walk out, say something over two miles. The fire was burning in Kangaroo Creek, across the swamp and then slowly down the ridge towards the rain forest. Two miles of front. Give or take. It would be give, Nick thought. With Nine men. A truck could come this far but with searching for a track and then turning in the trees it would take twice as long as walking. And if the truck was stuck? The Old Man, the FCO, Fire Control Officer, exalted by statutory authority, didn't like trucks to be burnt; Nick had seen one burnt, the tyres still flickering black obscurities, hours afterwards, the alloy of the pump motor soft powdery ash, the chassis around the petrol tank failed and deflected from the intense heat. The swamp, the track and the dry land where the trees began would barely be wide enough. A truck could well and truly become stuck.

They sat now along the track in the clean sweet air. Nick lay in the springy heath of the swamp with his head cradled by his helmet. The wind might freshen now, he thought, blowing off the warm land to the sea. If the predicted change came it would be all right. Weak with some showers. The change was somewhere around. In the low clouds he had seen? In the static on the Civil Defense radio. With a drop in temperature and some rain, or even dew after the hot afternoon the fire would die down. Enough to step through the fire and work from the burnt ground with hand tools. They hadn't done that in a long time. Awful work, but safe if you discounted the smoke and the blistered foot and the glowing twigs that went straight through clothing. The others wouldn't worry about snakes on that side of the fire.

That swamp growth is damn near man high, Nick marvelled. And burning as steadily, as evenly and as fiercely, as completely as a furnace - like a man painting black over white. Or over green. We can't cut it. Not with a hundred men could we cut it. With a lot of men we could snuff it piece by piece across the swamp and find a cliff line on either side. From the pool there were cliff lines all around. I won't let anyone go over the cliff in the dark. Someone can come out in the morning and go down the cliff line. The Park patrol, perhaps. We'll wait. That's all we can do. We'll wait. For the predicted change. For the dew. For some more men to come out and then we will go across the swamp.

Nick said to the radio operator - "I'll tell the Old Man." He spoke slowly and clearly, listening to the Civil Defense radio repeating his report, sentence by sentence, to the F.C.O. on the other radio. The CD sets were light and powerful and weren't restricted to line of sight as the walkie talkies were. When the report was made and he had the FCO's grudging assent to wait for more men the radio operator listened to other CD organisation up and down the coast. They were having a busy night. Nick lay back in the heath and watched the fire.

There were a lot of spring flowers out. Native rose back on the rocky ridge and now all the cricas and opacris of the swamp were open. Very often the others would bring flowers or odd leaves and seed cases for Nick to identify. Thelymitras and Diurus, the ground orchids, Eriostemons and boronias, many Grevilleas and Pulteneas. Once in the Park, he had found a large patch of Styphelia, the "five corners", and they had forgotten the fire while they filled their pockets with the sweet fruit. Sometimes he took the seed cases home, germinated the seeds and gave the plants back to whoever had given him the seeds. He had taken home a lot of native rose, but the cuttings had never struck. Neither had any mint bush. Banksias and Gynea lilies grew easily from seed. Now they all burnt up slowly and steadily and still too hot to fight.

Now and then Nick walked over towards the fire but each time he couldn't approach with the hoe-shaped hand tool. They moved back steadily just keeping out of the smoke and the falling cinders. The radio reported more men coming out along the track. When they were due Nick hung a red flashing torch in a tree. About nine o'clock a dozen men came laughing and stumbling down the track. They had once-hot pies and sandwiches with them. While the food was being attacked the sky clouded over and a few drops of rain fell. The wind had stopped.

Nick stood up and stretched. Quickly they ran through the flames and stood in the burnt ground. It was very hot. They began beating the fire down with the flat of the hand tools. When the burning heath was pushed down and stamped on, it didn't re-ignite. They walked slowly along the front waiting where it was fierce for a moment then stamping the flames out, resting often, working on a small area then leapfrogging through the burnt area to stamp out more.

Just after midnight they came onto dry ground and worked more quickly in the thinner scrub. Then, magically, the fire was all out, the fierce bright light gone. They walked on to the cliff line and looked down into Kangaroo Creek. The fire burnt slowly, in pockets, a few old dead trees glowed and dropped fire-flies. In the dark the cliff line was menacing. The fire wouldn't come round it. Not until the heat of the day. Someone else can worry then, Nick thought. - Tell the Old Man we are coming out. And to send a shiny bright Headquarters truck to carry us.

PART II. GREYS POINT.

The truck slid down the trail with the drive pumping the fading brakes. In the dim headlights the shadows of rocks and the broken trail were enormous. Shattering. Nick/the driver hit the roof, the doors and the dash of the cabin. A frantic tide of reports flooded the radio.

Nick said - Pull up when you can. Stop. They jumped a nut and skidded, wheels locked, then the driver swung into the bush, the truck whipping saplings out of sight. They stopped. Nick found the trail marked on the map

and ran his finger along its length. His eyes, smarting from eight hours of smoke, flinched in the hand bright lead - light from the dash. Nick turned down the hysterical radio.

- The Old Man's got the twitches tonight. We're not on the right trail. The trail, Florence Drive I've never heard of it until now, goes along a ridge. This one is in a gully. We missed the right one somewhere, probably when we filled Loftus tender. They wouldn't tell you if you're -- was on fire. Its their territory. I'll run ahead and check it out. White light came on slowly, blinking red to stop. Take it easy and no one on the truck. Nick jumped down and called the others from the truck. They were spashed and cold. Water was running freely from the front filling patch. Small cinders drifted past and larger ones settled in the undergrowth. Behind them there was a huge glow and at the head of the gully there were flames in the tops of trees and whole trees going up. He ran down the trail.

Away from the truck and the radio noise he could think more clearly. It was a part of the park he had never been in. The radio said it was ten, eleven years since it had been burnt. If this wasn't the trail, and obviously it wasn't, what was it? It could be blind, petering out in a tangled mess of pushed over trees ahead of them or deliberately obstructed to stop traffic. Assuming they didn't blow something. The truck had scraped and almost rolled already and the trail looked steeper ahead. A fork. Nick signalled to stop and the truck answered with blinking light. He ran along the right fork, the uphill side. The track finished against a rock face. There was household rubbish dumped among fallen trees, a stripped motor body, tyres. As he ran back to the fork the motor body, bare and ugly where it was lying, stuck in his mind.

The glow was closer now and to the south it had swept past him and there were trees burning in spot fires in the gully almost down to the truck. The rubbish and the car means something, Nick thought. He signalled the truck to come down slowly. It came on slowly and hesitantly, crabbing with the weight of water. The headlights shone in great cones of smoke, rarely focussing on the track. What does the garbage mean? We need to get out of this quick. Of course. That people can drive this far from the bitumen, in their cars and little trailers; the capacity to dump rubbish carefully balanced against possible damage to their shiny cars. Nick waved the truck down. It came on more quickly. When it stopped he counted heads knowing he should have done this hours before. Seven on the back, two in the cab. Nick said to the driver - Cars can come this far; it should be easier. They are houselights just ahead but they might still be on dirt roads. When you come to them, start the klaxon but don't stop. We have to go to Angle Road and the school. Do you know where that is?

- No. Never been here.

- The map shows it at the end of the fire trail, the true fire trail, so it must be on our right. The fire is well ahead of us there. At the

school there is an oval. We should be first there despite this and we'll drive straight across the oval to where the fire is closest to the school. Start pumping and a Board tanker will pump into us. I'll be on the nozzle, you'll stay on the radio and yell for the tanker. We'll pull out hose and then you can back up in case we have to go in a hurry. That's likely. Got all that.

- Yes, what if it gets among the houses.

- Every brigade in the Shire will be there by then. It won't get among the houses. They were on the bitumen with the klaxon piercing the night, the siren screaming, falling, rising, echoing from houses, from trees, echoing in his own head, screaming above the screaming engine. The road twisted and climbed always towards the glow. On the narrow road the siren cowered cars against the curve. The wheel spun in the driver's hands. Ahead a cluster of flashing police lights, a blinking red light on a headquarters jeep, a signboard on which Nick read "Angl --" before it swept past, the bulk of the school building with the glow coming through every window, an ambulance, already Nick thought, a clear smoke filled area that's the oval and then flames. Immense, solid flames. Fierce, rolling like surf, pulsating, jumping, liquid horrible flames. Driving at them, fascinated, the heat coming through the windscreen, beginning to crack lips, door open, stop, jump, get the nozzle, pull out a long loop of live hose, water, lie down, everyone lie down, more hose. Up and run in closer. Lips cracked, eyes crying, skin stretching, helmet in front of face, lie down. Who's with me. Good. Wave it round a bit, the spray coming back hot, ash-heavy and bitter, the oval's wide. Everything's sweet.

- That was a rough track, Smokey.

- Were we lost?

- Hopelessly. They call it delayed.

They could hear a siren, then other sirens. Nick looked over his shoulder and saw red flashing lights come to the edge of the oval. He said to no one in particular.

- My stomach's growling. I hope we get a feed.

THE COLONG CAVES.

The caves are of limestone origin, and the outcrop extends over a distance of five miles, being about 500 ft. in width and resembling Jenolan. Numerous fossil corals found there lead one to the theory that they were part of a barrier reef, of which Jenolan and Wombeyan would also be part. Scientists tell us that it has undergone many changes since those days of the Silurian age, sometimes being under the sea and sometimes above it, each age leaving its covering of sediment.

These caves were first reported by a Mr. Oliver Trickett in 1899, and were named after Mount Colong, a large mountain a mile distant. There are many beautiful caves, but they can be seen only by those daring enough to climb about and wriggle along narrow passages, sometimes only wide enough for a man to squeeze through.

Lannigan's Cave, which is situated above a large entrance cavern called the Arch Cave, is remarkable for its "Torch and Candle" and perfectly folded and grained shawl. A narrow squeeze hole leads to King Solomon's Temple, which contains five large fluted and terraced columns about forty feet high, whilst beneath one group is a glorious crystalline amber-tinted stalagmite called The Alter. Overhead a sparkling white stalactitic group combines to make a grandly inspiring scene. The Water Cave, next to this one, is of entrancing beauty.

Hosts of stalagmites can be seen in the bed of the river, whose waters are of the palest green. Passing on to the Terraces, one finds a series of crystalline basins edged with delicate frilled rims; viewed from below they seem to be marble steps leading up to a showcase beyond, whilst above are magnificent shawls hanging like curtains drawn back to reveal the stage beyond. These basins extend back for 80 feet. The Onslow Cave, which is entered by a narrow tunnel-like passage thirty feet above the creek, is noted for its gorgeous shawls. These massive formations, hanging twelve feet down from the roof, sparkle and glitter like jewels. Passing through the squeeze-hole, almost blocked by a cluster of tinted stalactites, one comes to the main cave, whose floor is composed of petrified glacier.

The most beautiful formation of the caves is the Hot House. Glittering shawls hang from the roof; a massive formation of stalagmites, some terraced with a mass of basins, resembles a garden of clipped shrubs, which surround one perfect white stalagmite in the centre called the White Rose of York. This marvellous chamber is decorated for its entire length, some 200 feet, with alluring shawls and stalactites. There are also many "mystery" formations of delicate structure and wax-like appearance, clinging to the roof like a network of frozen roots.

The Mystery Cave contains a delicate formation with a network of sprays that are quite oval in shape. The Coral Cave is ornamented with coral-like growths, and the Red Cave contains pretty crystalline formations tinted red. There are many caves not yet explored, and it is to be hoped that some day these caves will be opened up and their beauties unfolded to the public. They are only 90 miles from Sydney, and are set amidst a galaxy of scenic wonders.

As published in "The Sydney Mail" 1964, submitted by Nancye Alderson.

October, 1968

The Sydney Bushwalker

1(a).

THE NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES
APPLICATION FORM FOR VOLUNTEERS TO FIRE FIGHTING FORCE

Volunteers are badly needed to fight fires in National and State Parks, Nature Reserves and other natural bushland, both near Sydney and beyond. The N.P.A. is conducting a drive to recruit these, and place them at the disposal of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, or other Authorities concerned with bushfires.

We want YOUR name on the list, as one who intends helping when he or she can. (This does not carry an obligation to attend fires).

In the event of a bushfire at which our help is needed, key members of the organisation will be notified. These will set in motion a contacting system which is designed to alert large numbers of volunteers quickly. The member list will be divided into regions and those living in the region of a fire will usually be phoned first. Transport, rendezvous etc. are arranged then.

Fire fighting is hard work, and volunteers should be in good health and reasonable fitness. Those who cannot or do not wish to fight fires directly can be of valuable service in the Support Force. This body backs up fire fighters by preparing food and drink, providing first aid, transport etc. These members may also care to volunteer for patrolling.

(For fuller details, read the circular "A New Bushfire Fighting Force" on the SBW Clubroom Notice Board).

Please enter me on the N.P.A.'s List of Volunteers

Fire Fighting/ Support Force (cross out which is inapplicable).

NAME (Mr, Mrs, Miss)

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBERS: HOME WORK

AGE (optional).....HAVE YOU ANY SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS(c.g. nursing, first-aid, radio etc?

AREA YOU WISH TO SERVE IN

TIMES YOU MAY BE AVAILABLE(unlimited or restricted --- week-ends, week days, nights?)

HAVE YOU A CAR?WHAT SIZE AND TYPE?

WILL YOU GIVE LIFTS TO FIRES?LICENCE CLASSIFICATION?.....

ANY EXPERIENCE IN FIRE FIGHTING?

ANY EXPERIENCE IN BUSHWALKING?

PLEASE SEND TO: Mr A. Catford, 21 Kingsford Avenue,
(Phone 449-1658) SOUTH TURRAMURRA, N.S.W. 2074.

A NOTE FROM YOUR PRESIDENTBUSHFIRES

The annual bushfire season is with us again. Already, serious fires have occurred in the Royal, Brisbane Waters and Kuringai - Chase National Parks and there is every indication that this spring and summer will carry an extremely high fire risk.

For the bushwalker particularly, there is nothing more depressing than to see our beautiful wilderness areas reduced to black ashes. Of course, prevention is always better than cure and I would hate to think that any bushwalker ever bore the responsibility for starting a bushfire. However, we live in a community where careless attitudes towards the preservation of our bushland are all too frequent; given these attitudes and our climate in combination, bushfires will be inevitable.

While we cannot always prevent such fires, at least we can assist in extinguishing or controlling them. It is very much in our own interests to do so. To this end, The National Parks Association is organising a volunteer Fire Fighting Force, details of which are given in the circular accompanying this magazine. I strongly urge all members, if they care for their natural heritage at all, to support this scheme by filling up the form and sending it along as requested. Your help is needed badly.

Meanwhile, we must be careful to keep our own house in order. Each year, from October 1st to March 31st, certain restrictions automatically apply to the lighting of fires in the open. The Chief Secretary's Department lists relevant restrictions as follows:

1. Camp fires are to be lit in a properly-constructed fireplace.
 2. There must be at least five feet of cleared ground all around the fire.
 3. Fires must never be lit within fifteen feet of a log or stump.
- (1. is mainly intended for the general public; bushwalkers may construct fireplaces if they can and wish, but in our case the Department's interpretation is that common sense and caution should be the important considerations).

I could also add plenty of water should always be handy before lighting your fire, the fire should never be left unattended and before leaving camp, make thoroughly sure that the fire has been put out completely with water and that the ashes are cold.

Frank Rigby,
President.

TWELVE WAYS TO RUIN A MEETING

(With acknowledgements to "The COUNTRY WOMAN" and expressing our thanks for permission to reprint).

1. Don't come to the meetings, but if you do, come late, and if the weather doesn't suit, don't think of coming.
2. If you do attend the meetings, find fault with the work of the officers and other members.
3. Never accept office - it is easier to grouse than do things.
4. Nevertheless, get cross if you are not elected to the Committee; but if you are, do not attend the Committee meetings.
5. If asked by the President to give your opinion on some important matter, have nothing to say.
6. After the meeting tell everyone how things ought to be done.
7. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary, but when other members willingly use their ability to help things along, say the Club is run by a clique.
8. Sit at the back and chat throughout the business, then ask to have various items repeated.
9. Don't bother getting new members or talking to them - let the Membership Secretary do that.
10. When you have anything to say, address your remarks to your neighbour instead of the Chair.
11. Chain-smoke, and bring your knitting.
12. If you fail to carry out your obligations, blame the Committee and say the Club is no good.

Don Matthews, Geoff Wagg and Frank Rigby recently did their first fair-dinkum ski tour - watch for their story next month; who's cooking up an exciting talk about an exciting walk for the Social Programme? should be any amount of scope there - November 20th is the date; did you know the Editor and Margaret spent their honeymoon in Pine Valley and at Frenchman's Cap in Tassie - never a moment wasted in enjoying the great outdoors, but of course it was winter time.

HOW LONG IS IT SINCE YOU PUT A WALK ON THE PROGRAMME? Refer to No. 12 above and then see or write to DON FINCH or DOONE WYBORN WITHOUT DELAY. THE DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 6TH.
