

THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers,
14 Atchison Street, St. Leonards.

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Meetings at the Club Rooms on Wednesday evenings after 7.30 p.m.

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DECEMBER, 1973.

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THE NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING.

by Jim Brown.

Call it an average roll-up in these days of mainly low-key, non-abrasive General Meetings - about 30 on deck when President Bob Younger summoned the crowd to business and started with a welcome to Barbara Wells. Another recent admission, Helen Boyton, was not present.

October's minutes were agreed to, and as a matter arising, Wilf Hilder mentioned that the summer walks programme, which had to go to press very soon, was still deplorably weak in day walks and trips over the long holiday week-ends.

Correspondence contained a request by Bill Myles to go non-active, but otherwise only routine items.

The Treasurer's statement indicated an increase in working capital from \$920 to \$1012 during October, mostly due no doubt to the final flurry of previously unpaid subscriptions. A Federation Report was not available, and Social Secretary Elaine Brown took a show of hands on whether the Club's Christmas get-together should be simply grog and chatter or should include some planned entertainment. It was an almost even vote, so wait and see.

Came to Walks activity, commencing with Jim Vatiliotis' "non walk" at Kanangra, when it was raining so savagely that "no one would get up" on Saturday morning. The same weather put paid to Alan Pike's projected Mt. Hay jaunt, but in finer conditions the two Sunday trips sallied forth, one led by Carl Bock in the Brisbane Water National Park, which embraced 11 people and an echidna, while Meryl Watman had a similar number in National Park. Swollen streams were reported, but the trip went pretty much as planned from Waterfall to Engadine.

The following week-end included, of course, the opening date of the Opera House, and this may have contributed to lack of starters which led to cancellation of Geoff Mattingley's Nattai walk. Rod Peters mustered 8 on a journey to the Bungonia area, where deep crossings of the Shoalhaven were experienced. Sam Hinde had a team of 14 for his day walk, first on a ridge out from Cowan, then down a scrubby creek to Jerusalem Bay.

On the concluding week-end in October Wilf's planned trip from Glen Davis was postponed, and it was reported that Rosemary Edmond's Syncarpia walk brought out 8. John Holley had a mystery walk, which turned out to be in the Wondabyne region, where trails are being developed and it seems possible motorists will be admitted, at least as far as Myron Brook.

Came in November with Frank Taeker's party of 3 headed out from Linden to the Grose and back to Faulconbridge, and having an encounter with bush rats at the Saturday night camp. It was not known whether David Cotton's Bee Study was held, while the Mt. Wilson joint venture by Gladys Roberts and Roger Gowing had a partial success, some passing

up the trip because of heavy showers, while Roger and 2 others were understood to have used shelter sheds and had a pleasant time after the weather improved. Again there were two day walks, Joe Marton's team of 15 doing the long coastal stage from Bundeena to Otford and being a little dislocated when one member became separated. Your reporter had a group of 7 on the hills behind Coal Cliff, where spoil from local mine shafts is being formed into substantial roadways.

The last weekend reported covered Mike Short's Mt. Jellore- Nattai trip (six starters). The main recollection of those attending seemed to be the rain that fell after they had turned in without putting up tents on Friday night. Bill Hall's camp at Marley attracted six comers, while another half-dozen made it the target for an unscheduled Sunday trip. Also unscheduled was a jaunt by Wilf and one companion to trace the line of the old flying-fox cable across Jamison Valley.

Owing to Geoff Mattingley's return to his home town of Melbourne, a replacement Membership Secretary was sought and found in Barry Wallace. Sam Hinde proposed we organise an exchange of magazines with the Newcastle Bushwalkers whose sphere of activities generally overlapped our own and then it was an end to the meeting, quite early, at 9.10 p.m.

I SAW A STRANGE LAND.

by Marion Lloyd.

I first saw those conglomeration of domes clearly, rising up out of the vast flat land and surrounding sandhills from the summit of that mammoth boulder, Ayres Rock.

I was now sitting having breakfast and gazing at the western Olgas. For the first time in days the sky was blue and the day warm. A thick white cloud in the form of a waterfall was wisping its way over the apex of Mt. Olga and gently cascading down the other side into the Wind Gorge. All through the day, particularly at sunrise and sunset, the Olgas presented many moods and changing colour.

The Olgas were known by the aborigines in this area as Katajuta (kata = head, juta = many). The highest tor is Mt. Olga (Ngunarra) which is 3507 ft. above sea level and 1790 ft. above the ground. The group covers $13\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. It was first sighted by Giles on 22nd October and named by him after "Olga, a Grand Duchess of Russia who married the King of Greece and who was therefore Queen of Greece and not of Spain as incorrectly appears in some publications". Giles was the first white man to sight Mt. Olga and Ayres Rock.

Gosse was the first white man to reach both places. He reached Ayres Rock on 19th July 1873. He climbed it and named it after Sir Henry Ayres, Governor of South Australia. He also sighted and named Mt. Connor 18th July, 1873. Gosse attempted to climb Mt. Olga "up which I scrambled 900 ft. and

could have reached the top, but I was not so sure about being able to get down again". Gosse old boy, I know how you felt!

Geologically, quoting D. R. Wooley, "Mt. Olga is one of a number of hills composed of conglomerate which was formed by the erosion of mountains raised during the Cambrian earth movements. The bedding is almost flat and there are two sets of vertical joint planes at right angles, in which individual joints are very widely spaced. These joints have acted as zones of weakness to erosional processes, so that deep narrow valleys have formed along them. This has left the prominent small hills separated by steep narrow valleys characteristic of the Olgas. The range is, like Ayres Rock, a residual rock mass left standing above the surrounding sand plain."

These weird and wonderful formations I was gazing at must surely be regarded as one of the great natural wonders of the world, there couldn't be anything else like them anywhere.

As I sat there I pondered not only on this strange mountain's shape and beauty but how I was going to climb it, it seemed insurmountable. From our camping spot and indeed at the base of this very large monolith with its impressive acutely sloping exposed sides I wondered how it could be climbed, but it has been and if "they" can do it so could I. All I wanted other than to see the view was to sign the visitors book and to find out how many females have blazed their way to the top. We spent some time mentally mapping out the route as it is a bit tricky and picking the right spur important. The climb is attempted from Mt. Olga's western face. It has been said that the only reason why the Katajuta group are climbable is because of the rough conglomerate surface, as someone remarked "just as if a giant hand had been let loose with a concrete mixer". However Ayres Rock is not as easy to climb as it is sandstone with a smooth rounded surface caused by weathering which makes it difficult for climbing. ("Contrary to popular opinion Ayres Rock is not an enormous pebble. It is a large hill composed of feldspar-rich sandstone called arkose, deposited during the Cambrian period.")

At 10 a.m. we commenced. It was an easy start but as one gets about quarter way up it becomes dramatically steep and exposed. It took time to plot out the route as we went up and to carefully examine every foothold. It is better to use indentations rather than projections because the rocks and pebbles are liable to break away from the cement-pebble-like surface. Almost to the top it was finger and toe climbing. Occasionally we followed rock cairns but they would disappear when most needed.

John who is also a rock-climber and knew the tricks of climbing found it a bit of a cinch, but to an inexperienced non-rockclimber like me it was hair-raising and was accentuated by the feeling of exposure. Many a time I had to bawl out to John to save me. Sometimes when the going was particularly terrifying my bleatings came out as a squeak. He told me to stop dithering and do something, because I couldn't stay there hanging on to the rock like an acrobat. Remembering the Ranger's words, "Climb at your own risk, we are not responsible for sending out rescue parties", I would proceed with quivering ganglions and trembling jelly legs to the

next obstacle. Nearing the top, the dome flattens a little and spinifex and small bushes make their appearance. From here it is easy walking to the top.

The view is well worth the effort. Below, forty or more huge copper-stained cupolas of Katajuta projected above the plain like stupas. To the east in the immediate foreground were the eastern Olgas. We spotted the two bumps we had climbed the day before. Twenty miles away was Ayres Rock and 70 miles to far east the flat topped Mt. Connor. The western and eastern Olgas enclose a somewhat horseshoe shaped valley scattered with baby humps and bumps. At the extreme north end of the western Olgas is the mysterious Valley of the Winds, to the far north is Lake Amadeus and to the south are the Musgrave, Mann and Petermann Ranges.

Separating Mt. Olga from its neighbouring northern dome is the Walpa or Wind Gorge. "The aborigines believed that the wind, which is almost always blowing in the gorge, is the breath of Wanambi (enormous snake). When the Wanambi becomes annoyed over the infringement of some tribal law his breath, now a wind of hurricane force, pours out of the mouth of the gorge." Every natural feature in this area had a mythical significance to the aborigines.

This place is just so fantastic in its silence, strangeness and immensity. Mountford aptly described this feeling - "It reminded me of a primordial world. I felt I had stepped backwards into some earlier age, when wide-winged pterodactyls soared among the summits and giant dinosaurs lumbered over the plain at their bases." (The anthropologist C. P. Mountford has written much on the legends and way of life of the aborigines of Ayres Rock and the Olgas.)

The most important part of the summit was the cairn. I nearly went berserk when I couldn't find the visitors' book. I knew there was one somewhere. I was circumnavigating the cairn for the umpteenth time when I spied an arrow made of rocks leading to a small cairn and here was the visitors' book in a rusted biscuit tin.

We were the 57th group to have climbed Mt. Olga and about the third party this year. About an average of 12 parties climb it every year, but judging by the book the numbers are increasing. The female tally was well represented. Unfortunately we couldn't check up on other S.B.W.s who had reached the top because their names were in a previous visitors' book. (I think the previous visitors' books are in safe keeping with the Ranger at Ayres Rock.)

The most interesting aspect about the book were the comments after the almost emotional and religious descriptions of being there and seeing the view, was the question of how to get down again. There were many elaborate suggestions.

So finally contented I lay down to take in this wonderful feeling of being on top of the world in such a strange land. And very soon I drifted back into the dreamtime..... (To be continued).

* * * * *

ROCK-HOPPING FOR HEALTH.

by Jim Brown.

Under a story title "Man not made for level paths - lecturer", the Sydney Morning Herald of Saturday November, 3rd published:-

"Many people had bad backs because man was not made for walking on pavements, a visiting Swiss chiropractor, Dr. Fred Illi, said yesterday.

"Early man had walked over rough, uneven ground and modern man had, in many cases adapted poorly to walking on symmetrical surfaces, Dr. Illi said.

"Man today does not have symmetrical kinetics. In adapting himself he puts torsion on the body which may produce deviation of the spine. Two or three vertebrae may become blocked - may cease to move - and that means another four or five have to do the job. Rheumatism, neuritis and neuralgia come from these spinal deviations'.

"Dr. Illi said about 80 per cent of people lost the movement of the sacroiliac joint through sitting in cars and general sedentary living."

Very interesting. It seems to indicate that bushwalkers, by some process akin to instinct, have realised what is good for them. Why, they not only favour uneven surfaces, but speak disparagingly of the paved ways ("It's just a roadbash." "You could ride your bicycle all the way.")

Look at the ammunition it affords us. When a member of a party complains bitterly of the roughness or steepness of the going, we need no longer feel abashed and apologetic. The leader (or a deputy, if the leader is too exhausted) can say loftily, "But think of the good it's doing to your sacroiliac! This is worth a couple of hundred dollars of chiropractic treatment - possibly more if the doctors have their way!"

I can see it being beneficial to my own state of mind. Whereas, by the time I had crawled up from Konangaroo to the Moorrilla tops a couple of months ago, the only phrase going round and round in my mind was, "Bloody non-stop hill, bloody non-stop hill," I should now be able to say, "Take that, vertebrae! Can't you feel it doing you good?" And even if the answer is "No," I shall be able to say sharply, "You're a liar."

Do you remember the old gag about the absent-minded professor walking with one foot in the gutter? I forget now what the punch line was, but in light of this latest theory he could retort with dignity, "I'm exercising my sacroiliac joint." Of course the same gag could apply to an absent-minded bushwalker, with the answer, "Good God, I thought I was still sidling 'round under Mount Cole!"

Of course walking clubs have never really indulged in promiscuous advertising for new members. And perhaps that's as well. The attractions we have to offer are not for the many. Let them get their vertebrae all

all seized up sitting in cars or watching television. However if over we did want to lure newcomers to the ranks, we have another ready-made bit of propaganda. "Give your sacroiliac a treat! Tone up your vertebrae! Get back to Nature's way! The Rough Way is the Healthy Way!" Why, we could make as big a thing out of it as the Health Food people! For those who can't for any reason get out to the bush we could install rough garden paths, inclined tracks alongside of fences, steep gradients of concrete studded with projecting boulders, so you can do it yourself with a regular training canter around your own backyard. Old disused picture theatres or bowling alleys could be converted to exercise courses where - for a moderate fee- people could get all the beneficial effects of climbing mountains, sidling and rock-hopping without leaving the City.

Of course, then will come along another medical expert who will claim, with just as much assurance as Dr. Illi, that carrying a pack for hours at a time, day in and day out, is very damaging to the vertebrae, and especially the sacroiliac!

FEDERATION NOTES, OCTOBER & NOVEMBER, 1973.

by Rosemary Edmunds.

The Water Board is clamping down on everyone in regard to access to Medlow Gap. People apparently have been prosecuted for camping within the two mile limit.

In connection with access to the Northern Section of the Budawangs, it seems that there is a public right of entry except when the area is in use, and as no satisfactory response has been received from the Army, Federation has decided to drop the matter.

On the subject of controlled burning in areas of bushland, which was raised by the N.P.A. in September, the general view of clubs is that they need more information about the effects of controlled burning on a long term basis before they could support or oppose the practice. Federation cannot support it in its present form, mainly because there is no assurance that adequate safety measures are taken, and there are fears that the experimental staff are not properly qualified. As far as bushwalking is concerned, the effects of large infrequent fires are preferable because trees get to a reasonable size, thus the growth of grass, brambles, stinging nettles, etc. is inhibited.

The Conservation representative reported that in correspondence with Mr. Lewis, the Minister for Lands, about Bouddi Park, he had discovered that the Minister could not approve of any sewerage pipeline through the National Park.

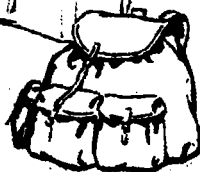
The Federation Ball held in September was attended by 395 people. The raffle for camping equipment was won by a Mr. Frompton (2126) and

**BUNYIP RUCKSACK**

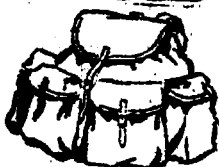
This 'shaped' rucksack is excellent for children. Useful day pack.
Weight 14ozs

**SENIOR RUCKSACK**

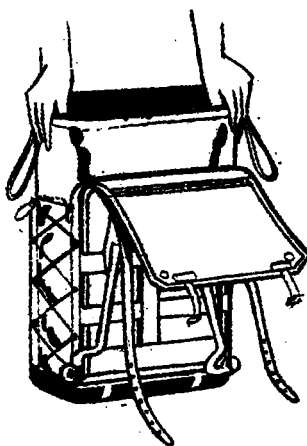
A single pocket, shaped rucksack. Suitable for overnight camping.
Weight 1½lbs

**BUSHMAN RUCKSACKS**

Have sewn-in curved bottom for extra comfort in carrying. Will hold 30 lbs.
2 pocket model 1½lbs
3 pocket model 1½lbs

**PIONEER RUCKSACK**

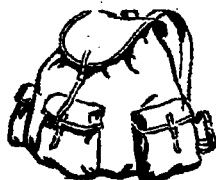
is an extra large bag with four external pockets and will carry about 40lbs of camp gear.
Weight 2½lbs

**MOUNTAINEER DE LUXE**

Can carry 70lbs or more. Tough lightweight terylene/cotton, proofed fabric with special P.V.C. reinforced base. 20" x 17" x 9" proofed nylon extension throat with double draw cord for positive closure. Flap has full sized zip pocket of waterproof nylon. Outside pocket. Bag is easily detached from the frame to form a 3' sleeping bag cover for cold, wet conditions.
Weight 6lbs

MOUNTAINEER

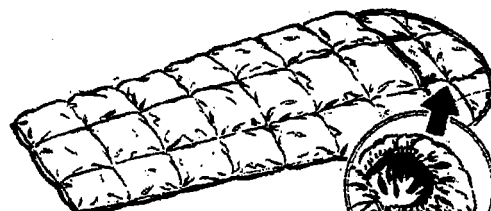
Same features as de luxe model except for P.V.C. bottom reinforcing.
Weight 5½lbs

**TRAMPER FRAME RUCKSACK**

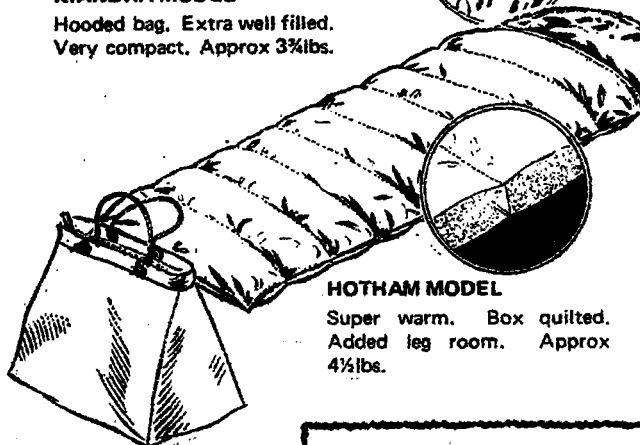
Young people and ladies will find this pack a good one. It will carry sufficient camping equipment and food for 3 or 4 days or more. Has 3 pockets, capacity about 30 lbs.
Weight 4lbs.

Paddy made

Lightweight bushwalking and camp gear

**KIANDRA MODEL**

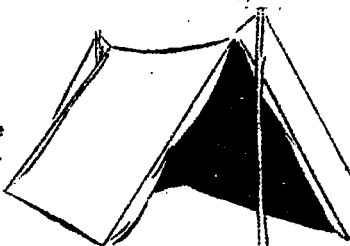
Hooded bag. Extra well filled. Very compact. Approx 3½lbs.

**HOTHAM MODEL**

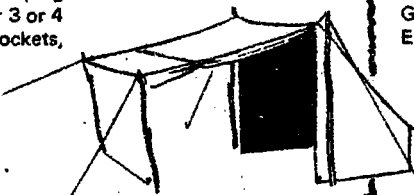
Super warm. Box quilted. Added leg room. Approx 4½lbs.

CARRYING BAGS

P.V.C. or nylon.

**'A' TENTS**

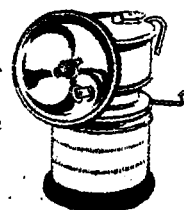
One, two or three man.
From 2½ to 3½lbs

**WALL TENTS**

Two, three or four man.
From 3½ to 4½lbs



Compasses dry, oil filled or wrist types.
Maps. Large range.
Bushwalking books.
Freeze dried and dehydrated foods.
Stoves and lamps.
Aluminium cook ware.
Ground sheets.
Everything for the bushwalker.



Paddy Pallen

69 LIVERPOOL ST., SYDNEY 26-2686, 61-7215

second prize went to Mr. T. S. Haleston (2484). The raffle raised about \$600 to go towards the purchase of new equipment for Search & Rescue. The Petersham Town Hall is being booked for the next year's ball to be held on Friday, September 20th.

Four new 1/25,000 maps have been published. They are Mt. Pomaney, Breakfast Creek, Widden and Taloooby, and are dyeline maps from the N.S.W. Lands department. Also a 2" map of the Katoomba rain forest. All contain inaccuracies, and should be treated with caution.

The date for the 1974 Federation Re-union has been set for 30/31st March.

The National Parks & Wildlife Service has informed Federation that it has banned airdrops in certain areas in Tasmania - notably the Western and Eastern Arthurs, and the Mt. Anne area.

2,000 MILES OUT WEST - SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 1973.

by Dot Butler.

This was a three-week trip, organised by a recently retired officer of the Western Lands Division. Its purpose was to visit State Forests and declared Sanctuaries along the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Darling to check on bird life, especially water birds. It would be nice to say we walked the whole two thousand miles but honesty impels me to admit that we used a car to cover the great outback distances. We spent at least every second day NOT on wheels, so it was a bushwalk to that extent. As I had never been further west in N.S.W. than the Warrumbungles it was all new country to me. September/October is the best season to see this country as all the birds are about and nesting and the wildflowers are at their best. As a special bonus, this year has been the best season for rain in almost half a century.

On Wednesday, 5th September, I left home at 6 a.m., picked up my passenger George Davison at Beecroft, then headed off through the typical coastal and mountain country that bushwalkers know till we got over the range, then through Orange and Cudol to Forbes on the Lachlan, through white and yellow box country - honey country - bee country, cleared for wheat and lucerne but with the original huge river gums down the watercourses.

Mid afternoon found us at Marsdon, on Lake Cowell, and I had had my first view of Belar and the beautiful drooping wattle called Acacia Pendula (also called Drooping Myall or Boreo) growing on the grey clay country on the way to the lake. Lots of aquatic birds were nesting on the lake. The main part of Lake Cowell is a rather small circular basin about 10' - 15' deep, filled by an intake creek from the Lachlan. In the Wet it extends out to the limit of the surrounding lignum swamp. When evaporated to about one foot deep a westerly wind will blow the whole contents of water to the

opposite side of the lake exposing water-couch grass, which is good feed for cattle, and later on for sheep.

The thought of mosquitoes drove us from the lake to seek higher ground and we continued on to camp for the night on red ground amongst the lovely Callitris pines in the Boxall State Forest.

Next day we climbed through incredibly golden wattles to the top of the stony range to the west for a magnificent view. Everything green as far as the eye could see.

Early Friday morning we packed up our tent fly and gear and departed towards Condobolin where we were to spend the night with Joe Carey, one of the old settlers. We were now into the Mallee country. Once the Mallee was so thick with honey-eaters that the air vibrated with their singing like it does on a hot day when a plague of cicadas are all chanting at once. Now it has been cleared for oats and wheat. The Mallee that still remains by the sides of the road give an idea of what the whole country used to be like. The Mallee is shallow-rooted. It is pulled up by rolling over it with strong chains which pull it up. It is then left to dry, then burnt. Then follows "picking-up", i.e. collecting the unburnt stuff, stacking it on the butts of the tree trunks and burning again; this kills the suckers which will otherwise follow.

Now the ground is ploughed for the first time - a shallow ploughing, only 8" deep, and it is never ploughed again, merely run over with a cultivator after a shower of rain. This cultivating is very effective. Crops have been grown (as much as 4 or 5 bags to the acre) after NO rain for that season - all done on last year's rain. Besides getting rid of the stumps the shallow ploughing consolidates the bottom, making a waterproof seed-bed 8" deep. The Mallee soil is very deep, and without this consolidating process the water would just run away through it like through sand. Wheat is planted. Suckers will come up through the wheat. The grain is harvested the first year and the suckers are burnt with the stubble; this second burning completes the clearing. Finis to the Mallee - and the hundreds of thousands of honey-eaters!

The method of bringing the Mallee country under cultivation was worked out in the Wimmera - the Mallee country of Western Victoria. It is called the "Wimmera Rotation":- Wheat-Oats-Fallow, Wheat-Oats-Fallow. After the Big Clearing the Mallee stumps were stacked up, then trucked down to Melbourne for firewood. One enterprising settler made more from firewood than from wheat in his first year. It was also made into charcoal during the War years for use in charcoal burners for motor vehicles. Everyone was making his own charcoal and the fire danger was tremendous. Eventually the Forestry Dept. took over the monopoly of charcoal-making and the threat to crops from sparks was removed.

We stopped off for petrol at Wyalong, an old gold mining town. A member of a survey party, while digging a lockspitz (i.e. a direction trench at the corners of adjacent properties) dug up some blue quartz richly

studded with gold. It was not long before the exciting news got around and started the gold rush.

Now on the way to Burcher through tremendous dry swamps of lignum, which looks like a kind of cane. This is low rainfall country - 11" or 12". Through the cleared Mallee, gradually merging into box, oak, wilga, yarran and berrigan (also called rosewood or boonery). We had lunch beside a great Bimble Box. This is one of the most outstanding trees of the red country. It is sometimes called the Shiny-leafed Box. It has a darker bark and leaf than the yellow or white box. Its leaf is heavily waxed and the whole tree twinkles continuously high up in the wind. The Bimble Box is not useful for timber but was used by settlers for fence posts. It is a good honey tree. Also in the red ground is the Bull Oak with its stiff upright habit. This belongs to the family Casuarina and so has "needles". The actual leaves are the tiny points at the base of each segment of the needle. The different types of Casuarina are distinguished according to the difference in shape and number of these tiny leaves.

We reached Condobolin in the afternoon and hunted up Joe Carey, at whose place we spent the night. Next day he took us on a guided tour of the township and we saw all the houses built by his son Conrad who was killed with four other aviators in a plane crash at an Air Pageant a couple of years ago. Condobolin is a fine town; it has progressed remarkably in the past 20 years since wool went up in the 1950's - up-to-date shops and buildings, hospital, magnificent high school, bowling green, racecourse and swimming pool. Joe gave us a detailed history of the lot. We were also taken to visit all his relatives - a fine show of outback hospitality.

Eventually we prised ourselves away. North of Condobolin, on the way to Melrose, we passed Trig Station Peak on the east side of the road. This is approximately the centre of N.S.W. On a granite range N.W. of Melrose is a deep aboriginal well cut into the living rock and covered with a stone to prevent evaporation and contamination. Down this the local stockmen and boundary riders used to lower their quart pots on their whips or bridles to get water.

On the river near Kiakatoo Weir were two historic marked aboriginal trees (mentioned by the explorer Oxley in his Diary of his Explorations). These trees marked the site of the grave of the chief of the Calare tribe who was drowned while attempting to cross the Lachlan at that point. An early surveyor found the site of the trees (only one remaining at that time) and his field-book story about it is now in the Lands Dept. Staff Surveyor Gombert was instructed to remove the tree and it is now in the Sydney Museum. Facsimiles of the two trees were erected on the original site, together with a monument giving a history of the event. In the vicinity is a tree marked G.D. 1889 (Gipps and Darling common corner). By a strange coincidence this is the birth year of George Davison, my surveyor companion.

At length we arrived at Lake Cargellico. There were great flocks of water birds there, floating above their reflections - waterhens, ducks, swans and cygnets.

M O U N T A I N

E Q U I P M E N T

* * * * *

IF YOU ARE -

BUYING OR HIRING
 BUYING OR HIRING

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GEAR FOR

WALKING	CAMPING	CLIMBING	CANOEING
WALKING	CAMPING	CLIMBING	CANOEING

THINK OF -

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT

17 Alexander Street, Crow's Nest 2065.

(On the corner of Falcon Street)

Telephone 439-3454.

- - - - -

for

FAIRYDOWN SLEEPING BAGS

HIGH LOAD PACKS (Weight 3 lb.10 oz.)

AND ALL THE OTHER THINGS YOU COULD POSSIBLY NEED

* * * * *

The shores of these inland lakes are generally too marshy for camping so we headed for higher country and made camp in the Brewer State Forest, another lovely *Callitris* pine forest. Next day I climbed the higher peak of the double-humped hill for a very good view. There was a rough shelter wall of rocks erected near the summit around a huge kurrajong tree. A mighty camp spot. You find kurrajongs all through the Mallee country. The leaseholders are forbidden to cut them down as they are good fodder trees in drought time. In assessing the value of the leases, \$5 is added to the value for every kurrajong on it.

As I climbed the red rocky hillside I saw a fox with a white tip to its tail digging out ground spiders. A large percentage of their food is spiders as can be ascertained by opening their stomachs after they have been shot. The fox also eats a large cockroach-type beetle 4" long by 2" wide which comes out after the rain in the pine country. Foxes eat the contents of the stomachs of other killed foxes and as many as three foxes have been taken in succession with the one poison bait. Now that the rabbit is becoming scarce the foxes are playing up with the local birds. We saw a lot of different fauna that day. There were frilled lizards (or Jew lizards) and shingle backs, a species of the coastal blue-tongued lizard, kangaroos, and lots of birds I had never seen before - the gentle little peaceful doves, and the Pine hoppers or Bally Joes (their call is "Bally Joe! Bally Joe!"), while the Grey-crowned Babbler's call served to identify him.

One of the most spectacular artificial lakes obtained from Lachlan water is Lake Brewster. Here we stayed for some time observing the myriads of water birds - swans and cygnets, grey herons, black herons, cormorants, and many types of ducks including the strange-looking musk duck with a balloon under his bill which he puffs up as he skids over the water in the mating season. This grotesque head rushing along the water makes him look like some weird animal and gave rise to the bunyip tales of the inland.

We could have stayed days at Lake Brewster, certainly one of the finest lakes in the West. But we had to move on if we were to see all we had on our schedule. We crossed the Lachlan at Willandra Bridge and went on to Mt. Hope for petrol - one of the first things you learn in this land of long distances is not to let your petrol tank run low. We saw lots of small grey kangaroos with black tails and black gloves feeding by the roadside borrow-pits.

The garage man at Mt. Hope told us where to search for quondongs on the road out. The quondong has an edible fruit with one beautifully marked seed which was very much sought after by the early settlers for decorative purposes. During the last war the seeds were used in Army recreational rooms as counters in card games. When every able-bodied male was either called up into the army or manpowered into industry some men were actually given the job of collecting quondong seeds. The easiest way to find these was to look for emu droppings, as the emu was very fond of eating the quondong fruits. Consequently the men were called "Emu-chasers". Just goes to show that there are many ways in which one can win a war!

Well, despite long and arduous searching, we didn't manage to find

a single quondong tree amongst the mallee. We moved on, to camp just off the road about 5 miles out of Goolgowi. Cattle in a paddock nearby came to the fence to stare at us in the dark with their luminous eyes.

Next day we headed for Hay across the Hay Plains covered with rank herbage after the rains and millions of yellow and white daisies making a coloured sea to the horizon. Two miles out of Hay, adjacent to the Hay Irrigation Channel, is the property of Shirley Bevan and her mother. We camped on their property on the banks of the 'Bidgee under the huge river gums for two nights, and spent the days wandering along the river banks. Some of the biggest trees on the river are there and each one an individual. Floods and dry seasons come and go but the trees seem to go on for ever. They must be hundreds of years old.

At Hay we got an entry permit to visit two Faunal Protection Areas, Nap Nap and Toupra. The road is only negotiable in fine weather into these two beautiful station properties, and as bad weather seemed to be threatening we didn't stay too long looking at the aquatic birds but came out that same afternoon. We went back a bit, then on to Oxley at the head of the Oxley Swamps. The swamps are the termination of the Lachlan River, stagnant, with no current. They empty into the Murrumbidgee River. This is where the explorer Oxley stopped, thinking he had arrived at the Inland Sea and so he missed seeing the Murrumbidgee. The swamps are very extensive - 4 miles wide - infested with pigs and short thick brown snakes like death adders in the rushes and reeds. The pigs eat the snakes.

We had now traversed the whole of the Lachlan from Forbes to Oxley. Next day we followed down the Murrumbidgee to Balranald through a most spectacular storm coming up from Victoria. The country was green to the far distance, billowing with huge storm clouds which opened up from time to time to let us through. For an hour we drove towards the most gorgeous double rainbow I have ever seen, stretching across the road in a double arch; it resembled the proscenium of a stage - an astonishing theatrical effect. As an entracte a little sucker pig ran across the road followed by an anxious old sow with a white stripe across her shoulder.

We reached Hay at dusk. Shirley was out, but we camped in her hay shed in the orchard. All the fruit trees were in blossom and there were lots of ripe walnuts under the trees.

Friday 14th. Show Day at Hay. Left for Booligal ("Hay, Hell and Booligal"). All the country was covered with daisies and purple pea flowers. On the road to Hell we met a girl and a man droving cattle. Hell is now called One Tree, but the one single tree has gone; some clown lit a fire under it and burned it out. One square chain around the tree was a declared Forest Reserve. It had the reputation for being the smallest Forestry Reserve in N.S.W. - possibly a joke on the part of the District Surveyor, but there it was. On the banks of the river a boy was cleaning a fair sized fish. He must have been lucky because all the outback fishermen declare that you don't fish on a rising river, and certainly the river was coming up.

Heading now for Ivanhoe across the plain. We camped at Yallock, en route to Cobar, bumping over the borrow pits by the side of the road to get in and find a campspot under trees. There was a small soak and pond nearby and we stayed there two days. Mr. D. said people get lost in the Mallee as it is completely featureless, like in a pine forest. To test out this theory I did a 3 mile walk due north by compass into the thick of the Mallee, and then turned and came back 3 miles due south. I was only one chain out in my reckoning. When I come to think of it now, this was a ruddy risky thing for a person like me to do - it's a wonder my bones aren't now mould-ering in the Mulga. I had a bath in the roadside soak and had to bolt into the daisies when the only car for days came by.

Next day across the plains bright with purple peas and daisies, with emus strutting over the landscape, to Cobar for petrol. It was getting late and we didn't fancy camping at Cobar so we carried on for another 80 miles to camp at Louth in a beaut reserve on the Darling. This day was the only day we had any complaint about traffic. There was lots of dust on the unsurfaced roads and lots of traffic (meaning about 6 cars). Everything is relative.

We stayed at this beaut camp for several days. The Darling was running at about 2 miles an hour between its steep mud or clay banks, discoloured from floods on the Namoi, Bogan and Gwyder. Up river one day and down river the next gave us a good sampling of what the Darling has to offer. There were many birds nesting and calling - the Willy Wagtail piped up day and night, the Happy Jacks quarrelled in the nesting trees, ducks in flocks flew low to the water keeping out of sight of enemies, and other nameless birds kept up a continual chatter until the cawing of the crows silenced them.

It was now time to move on to Bourke. I noticed the car was beginning to lose power when changing gear. Limped in to Bourke at 30 m.p.h. and spent all day looking over the town while the garage man renewed the clutch plates (\$70). Left in the late afternoon for Nyngan planning to camp in the wilga by the river but the only camping place was occupied by half a dozen sheep and cattle transports and stank so we continued on and camped at Duralambone.

We are now on the homeward run, and as the return trip is not all that different from the forward trip I won't go into any more detail. Home via Dubbo, Wellington, Gulgong, Mudgee. Last camp up a side road 41½ miles out of Lithgow. Home in the early afternoon.

To someone who has seen most other countries of the world it was really something to see a bit more of her own country, and you can take my word for it that it is one of the best places on the globe.

OVERSEAS FOR XMAS. Pauline Brown has gone off to Holland to visit her daughter Leslie and son-in-law Neville Page who have been living there for most of this year. They'll have to do their sight-seeing on foot or by push bike (or public transport?) but this should suit three bushwalkers.

WALKS SECRETARY'S NOTES FOR JANUARY, 1974.

by Wilf Hilder.

1974

- Sunday 6th - West Head with Barry Zieren on this easy Sunday ramble to White Horse Beach and Hungry Beach. Good tracks, glorious scenery and plenty of swimming in this popular area. Fires are prohibited so bring a salad and a thermos.
- 11, 12, 13 - A weekend test walk to the Budawangs. Alastair Battye carries the S.B.W. banner. Good tracks from Wog Wog Station to the Castle. Exceptional views on this scenic walk. Saturday night's camp is in the famous Monolith Valley - and a more scenic campsite would be hard to find. Some exposed scrambling is to be found on Meekins Pass onto The Castle. Book early for this popular area.
- 12, 13th - Private transport on ye lower Mountains walk led by El Presidente. Steep path from Pisgah Rock to Monkey Ropes Creek and Erskine River. Some scrambling along south bank of Erskine to Dadder Cave (with visitors book). Plenty of swimming in the pretty pools of the Erskine. This walk is Saturday midday start.
- Sunday 13 - Burning Palms for a relaxing day - Kath Brown leads this ever popular medium walk. Train transport - 8.46 a.m. Country Platform train with Special Excursion Tickets to Lilyvale. Surfing, sunning, swimming and talking on Burning Palms beach. Tracks all the way.
- 18, 19, 20 - Barry Wallace is your leader for this weekend test walk to Barralier. Spectacular scenery from the plateau on this popular walk. Easy going up Murruin Creek with graded bridle track and longish climb up Bindook Mountain. The famous Tomat Falls drop over a massive cliff and are a most impressive view. Good tracks along the 'Dilly back to the vehicles.
- 18, 19, 20 - Rod Peters heads north on this medium to hard weekend walk from Newnes. Good tracks downstream from Newnes to Rocky Creek junction. Slow going upstream to Constance Gorge. Much better going thru the Gorge to Mt. Wolgan Station which still has some rolling stock in a siding of the famed Newnes Railway. The railway formation will be followed past the new coal mines to the Newnes Hostelry. Magnificent scenery in Wolgan Canyon with its numerous swimming holes.
- 19, 20th - A Saturday morning start on this lower Mountains trip led by Hans Beck from Faulconbridge to Lapstone along Glenbrook Creek. The first part of this trip is on the Victory Track to Sassafras Gully. Then along good tracks to just past Martins Lookout. Rockhopping and wading along the southern bank of Glenbrook Creek right thru the magnificent gorge to Lapstone Station.

- 1974
- Sunday 20th - Carl Bock's going back to Brisbane Water National Park. A pleasant ferry trip to Patonga across "the Rhine of Australia" - better known as the Hawkesbury. Then some scrub and mudflats along Patonga Creek to its headwaters and good tracks to Wondabyne Station. Very nice views on this medium walk - with fresh oysters as a sideline.
- January
- Long Weekend - Plenty of hunble pie for Wilf on his alpine gallop thru 25th to 28th the snowgrass meadows of the Alps. Jagungal is the "high point" of this trip, which is also a reccy for ski-touring trips from Eucumbene. Super optimists may bring their skis - pessimists will bring running shoes. Glorious alpine scenery and wildflowers, and lush campsites will be provided by the leader. Please book early.
- Long Weekend - Up north Ray Hookway keeps them moving on this medium to 25th to 28th hard trip from Newnes to Newnes via the Wolgan and Capertee Rivers. Outstanding canyon scenery and cool mountain pools on this classic trip. Tracks for about half the way with a steep climb over Greens Pass from Glen Davis to Newnes. Standard - harder than test walk. Early bookings please.
- Sunday 27th - It's INCREDIBLE! - but true. A walk - a hard test walk - on a holiday weekend! Who is the keen leader of this National Park test walk from Bundeena to Otford - yes, Joe Marton (bless his broad shoulders) has come to the rescue of the programme. Single ticket to Cronulla on the 7.47 a.m. train which meets the first ferry to Bundeena. Tracks most of the way with splendid ocean views and a fair amount of hill climbing during the day. Return journey from Otford will be by a late train (about 7.20 p.m.).

BON VOYAGE.

On 22nd December a party of five S.B.W. members is departing for four week's holiday in Ceylon and India. Owen Marks is the chief organiser, and knowing Owen's capacity for arranging interesting and inexpensive trips in foreign countries, we'll be keen to hear on their return whether they did manage to live on about 5 cents each per day.

As Frank Taeker is also in the party we should later on see some good slides of the trip.

Helen and George Gray and Marion Lloyd are the other three members going along.

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S T O P P R E S SWALK this Sunday - 16th December - NOT ON PROGRAMME.

Sunday 16th - BILL HALL is leading a walk from OTFORD - Otford Gap -
December Werrong - Coastal Rocks - Figure 8 Pool - Burning Palms -
 Bob Liddle's Track (Palm Jungle) - Otford.

Train transport is 8.46 a.m. train from Country Platform section Central Railway, with special excursion tickets to Otford. Bill's phone number is 57-5145 (H). The walk is 11 kilometres (7 miles) - MEDIUM - with a total ascent of 305 metres (1000 ft.) Maps required are Port Hacking Tourist (Lands Dept) and one inch to mile (1:63,360). Army map of Port Hacking.

Good tracks on this walk from Otford Station to Otford Gap with magnificent views down the coast towards Port Kembla. A branch track leaves the main track near the ridge top to descend to Werrong which is a beautiful secluded beach, but there is often a strong rip and so only a dip is recommended. Some nifty footwork is needed rock-hopping around the coast to Figure 8 Pool and Burning Palms (swimming). Scenery is really outstanding along this part of the park. The Bob Liddle Track thru the Palm Jungle is well marked and passes thru a fine stand of coastal rainforest while climbing up to Werrong Point Lookout and then across the moorland to the main track back to Otford Gap and Otford Station.

Wilf Hilder.

SOCIAL SECRETARY'S NOTES.

by Elaine Brown.

The Christmas Party is on Wednesday, 19th December, at the club rooms. Don't forget to bring a plate of party food, and a glass for drinking.

The club rooms will be closed on 26th December and 2nd January next, but will be open as usual on 9th January for the first Committee Meeting of the New Year, followed on the same evening by the first General Meeting.

On 16th January Ian Stevens will give his long awaited slide showing on Indonesia. This had to be cancelled some months ago owing to Ian being in hospital.

On 23rd January George Dibley will give a talk and show slides on birds.

After reading the interesting articles by Dorothy and Alan Pike on their trip overseas I am sure everyone will be keen to see their slides on 30th January.

Merry Xmas and Happy New Year to all our readers! (Editor)