

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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

POSTAL ADDRESS: Box 4476, GPO, Sydney, NSW 2001.

Meetings at the Club Rooms on Wednesday evenings after 7.30 pm.

Enquiries regarding the Club — Mrs Marcia Shappert, Tel: 30-2028.

* * * * *

AUGUST, 1974

Editor: Spiro Ketas, 104/10 Wylde Street, Pott's Point, 2011.
Tel. 357-1381 (Home)
Typist: Kath Brown
Duplication: Frank Taeker
Business Manager: Bill Burke, 3 Coral Tree Drive, Carlingford, 2118.

IN THIS ISSUE:

The July General Meeting	by Jim Brown	Page 2
Chronicles of Tasmania '74 (Part 3)	Kath Stuart	2
Paddy Pallin advertisement		6
Central India	Helen Gray	8
Walks Secretary's Notes for September	Bob Hodgson	10
Mountain Equipment advertisement		12
Notice of Half-yearly General Meeting		13
Walk report: one of SBW's tougher ones!	Frank Taeker	14

THE JULY GENERAL MEETING.

by Jim Brown.

Possibly in tribute to the shortness of winter days the July meeting had a duration of just 16 mins. 23.4 seconds, almost, but not quite, an all time record for brevity. With President Barry Wallace away in the snow country, Spiro occupied the chair and went back to the elevated position in the "pulpit".

New members Louise Rowen and Peter Scandrett were welcomed, and the unremarkable minutes for June accepted as a correct record, with nothing arising. Correspondence likewise contained nothing of sufficient moment to bring comment. The Treasurer was able to report a smallish increase to \$1,183 in the current funds, but capped it with the rather glum intelligence that almost 130 members had still to settle their annual subscriptions.

There was a singular dearth of reports - none regarding Federation affairs, apart from reference to the venue for the Annual Ball at Petersham Town Hall. And, since Walks Secretary Bob Hodgson was recuperating from a bout of influenza, we had no account of walking activity over the previous four weeks.

In fact, the meeting would have ended then and there, except that the Treasurer Frank Roberts foreshadowed a Constitutional Amendment he proposed to put before the half yearly meeting. The purpose of the amendment would be a modification of the membership qualifications, eliminating the need to carry out an overnight test walk. Of this, no doubt the August issue of the magazine will contain formal notice.

Thus, Spiro was able to lay down the Bone at 8.33 p.m.

CHRONICLES OF TASMANIA '74.Part 3.

by Kath Stuart.

Sunday, 24th Feb. - Left 7.30 and tracked across the plain to Lousy Bay, where the track trickled us across the stones and concentrated liquid scunge back into the damp shady rainforest. Perhaps it wasn't rainforest, but it was certainly wet (and dark and gloomy to boot) and a variety of shades of green.

For once the track did not follow the coast: it turned inland very ostent atiously at the top of a ridge, where there was a hole in the vegetation on the seaward side, thus affording yet more grandiose views. Very convenient this, as the natural (?) lookout came just in the right place for the first breather - after the first 5 or 10 minutes of climb. Although the rainforest was impenetrable to sunlight I did notice a small patch down there on the ocean - a warning? - it was the last sun we were to

see for several hours, even after attaining the relatively denuded heights. This was basically because lunch at High Camp was amongst some overgrown bushes, supposedly more protected from the wind or drizzle or something, so that our eagle-eyed lookouts' vision was obscured by branches.

To get back to the climb up: once it had properly commenced it was easy enough - you just kept shifting gear (of necessity!) till the lowest was reached, and then nothing could stop you. At any rate, the pace could hardly have been termed exhaustive. The gradient, too, became an asset to the climber rather than a liability, when approached with a suitably imaginative attitude. Upper limbs (human) could be brought into play with no change in posture, and besides the rocks immediately in front of one there were all kinds of trees and bushes crowding along, just the right diameter for grasping and pulling oneself up on. However, pressure had to be exerted with discretion, since either the sapling or the "ground" (moss, usually) beneath it would give way, and you'd be back where you started, turtling on your back half a mile down the waterway, which constituted the normal state of this track at all except the most harshly drought-stricken times.

Slow and dautious ascent was further assured, as most of the graspable trees, stumps, etc. remained ungrasped: nobody wanted to disturb the layer of sodden moss tenuously rooted in thick slime and harbouring, like as not, a horde of sweet little leeches who had been dying (of 5-year appetites) to meet them.

My source here states "cold on exposed parts"; whether "parts" refers to terrain or the individual is uncertain, but either would apply. Towards the top of the ridge the scrub began to thin out and the track emerged onto biting gale force winds. Any "exposed parts" not already wet were dampened by the sea-spray which could be tasted in the air even at this incredible height. Merely turning around to look at the ocean required a good sense of balance - perhaps it was the curvature of the hill as well as the wind, but the old vestibular system really freaked.

High Camp was reached by the vanguard at 11.30 and by the rearguard somewhat later. The mud was spread with groundsheets and raincoats, and on these a sumptuous repast of dry biscuits and vegemite. A smoky fire was conjured up and soup all round brightened the outlook and lightened the load. The trek was resumed at 1.00, just in time to prevent some of us (me anyway) from freezing solid. Up to the saddle it was variations on the same old theme - the mud was liquid clay this time. Once there, packs were dumped and everyone hared off towards the cantle, mostly wandering themselves into a literally impenetrable thicket of stiff, scratchy, waist-high bushes; no joke for those in shorts. It was more comfortable to lift one's foot right out for each step and tread down on the branches, than to wade through 10 ft of the damn things. To fail at this after a rigorous training session worming between the proliferation of branches of a thorn-bush colony - depths of humiliation hitherto unplumbed! Finally caught up with everyone at a "plateau" on the ridge (about 5 ft across). They were all gesturing at the scenery and mouthing at each other like fish and getting blown over by the wind. There is even a photo of somebody (?) praying - or something.

Getting down was mountain-goat's play by comparison. For one thing, one could spy out the terrain ahead from a more vantageous point. The only pitfalls were upon the top just at the beginning, where EVERYTHING was covered by a layer of scrubby vegetation to the same level: the trouble was picking the thin layers (with rocks underneath) from the thicker layers covering the unfathomed (hopefully) depths and chasms. The best idea proved to be following as exactly as possible in the footsteps of the person apparently leaping from bush to bush ahead, neck craned well forward in an attempt to perceive feldspar-flecked grey granite underneath green/grey foliage. It was no good looking for the next rock before you jumped: apart from the exhausting loss of momentum, you'd never see a rock unless you were practically on top of it anyway. Besides, the period of elevation during each jump allowed the general direction of travel to be predetermined according to availability of the scattered points of contact which became visible then.

As we reached the packs again the sun, which had been playing hide and peek since late morning, changed to watery everpresence. Coupled with our antecedent soaking, the unfortunate result was poached brains (with all due respect to our leaders). It was decided to save us a couple of miles of button-grass by dropping straight down to Louisa Bay through a convenient break in the cliffs (on the map) which the track (too cautiously for some) circumnavigated. So we scuttled mindlessly along one side of a razorback, sliding into gaps between 2 ft. dumps of grass, scaling great dobs of granite with hand-and-foot-hold size pebbles. Eventually nearly everyone had elegantly subsided and the hillside was littered with prone, unmoving bodies - except for a few gazelle-like creatures in baggy overpants leaping effortlessly from blob to blob and gazing toward the distant Beach in impeccable frontier-scout fashion. We were back at the track only an hour after leaving it.

The misleaders dashed judiciously to the fore and away, as per usual. From here it was downhill all the way, so I just put my shock absorbers on and propped all the way to the bottom. The descent-side of the range was startlingly dry (and so were the descenders, now subjected to the untempered glare of the afternoon sun). After the tinkling rivulet negotiated in the morning the difference was especially noticeable. Instead of rainforest we now had short scrubby grass (no trees) and a quartz-gravel track, with an effect similar to marbles on the steeper slopes. The gradients of these tributary ridges were stupendous, and the proportions monumental, although the sultry afternoon haze eerily highlighting the landscape added an unquantifiable dimension which made it difficult to assess their absolute size. From above the track could be seen gleaming palely as it wound into the distance, dipping and curving along the top of the ridge like the ramparts of a Great Wall. Finally it plunged precipitously down one side and developing abruptly, at the bottom, into a muddy delta which directed its followers through the familiar jostling, head-high bushes before suddenly spilling them 10 ft. into Louisa River.

No amount of ingenuity or axe-work would have enabled us to pitch tents on a 45° slope (although Peter and Theo came close enough to it to get the brinkmanship award), so for once we didn't have our full quota.

The tentless four slept wedged in amongst the bushes or on the path (the only ground approximating the horizontal). Arrangements as to who should crawl into whose tent in the case of rain occasioned only the most obligatory of ribaldries: everyone was preoccupied with dinner, the unwonted exercise having put an edge on our jaded appetites. My notes go so far (horrors!) as to call something or other "delicious" - must have been referring to dessert (apricots and brown rice), since in the wildest delusions no-one could have applied it to our staple of beans and dehyd's. Up until now our Q.M.'s culinary ingenuity had known no bounds, but I balked at tumeric beans for breakfast the next day.

When I woke it was sprinkly and misty, the rain proper beginning just as we shouldered our packs (our subconscious planning coming to the fore, no doubt) sometime between 8.30 and 9.00. We crossed the river and paddled along the track parallel to the beach, our curious assortment of wet weather gear immediately revealing us to the discerning uninitiated as the title role in some D-grade horror movie like "Attack of the Giant Leeches". Larry however outshone us all in his ensemble of pale green poncho and overpants. The poncho was a splendid affair indeed; when in ordinary use the extra length at the back was rolled up like a blind and fastened with little tapes and press-studs. Although everyone with raincoats covering their packs looked like a combination camel/manta-ray (especially the faster walkers who got quite an undulation going), Larry, with his high-rise pack, had the added distinction of an alternative comparison to the hunchback of Notre Dame.

Midway between Louisa River and Louisa Creek our little snake of camels (to mix metaphors) turned sharp left and struck out (an unpleasant tendency of snakes) for the beach. If anything, the scrub was an improvement on the track, since it was quite short, and not as sloshy underfoot - only scratchy. Acting on information supplied by an unidentified bushwalker, authorities in the Exclusive Hides tanning industry are investigating the advantages of flaying crocodiles and pigs with specially imported scrub. Results so far have been encouraging.

Every so often the snake would appear, from afar, to have dipped below the surface of the ground. In fact, it was the ground that was dipping, and the level (as opposed to height) of the bushes which remained unchanged, so that you'd get the occasional hollow filled with tall bushes (and usually a creek in the middle to fall into) in the midst of the scrubby flat. When the descent to the beach was reached (angle of depression 60°) this tendency became particularly marked. The entire hillside was densely forested, although bushes and undergrowth petered out to a minimum after an initial thicket only 20 ft. deep. Getting down that hill was a matter of lowering yourself from one tree trunk till you could reach the next with your foot, taking care not to tread on anyone's hands, or get yours trodden on, in the process. When you suddenly saw, past the tree trunks directly below you, a patch of sand with footprints in it, you realised the end was in sight. It was like looking down a leafy well, with the sand on the bottom, and the sides either the 'floor' of the forest or the branches of the trees. You jumped the last five feet or so (making some interesting patterns in the sand yourself),

Paddy made

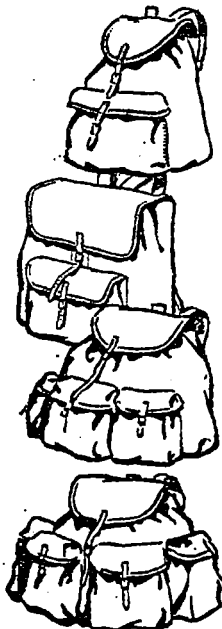
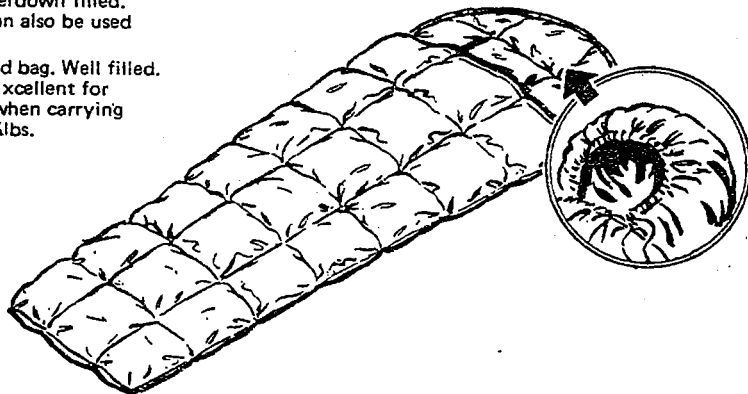
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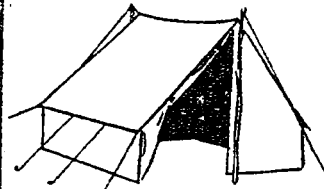
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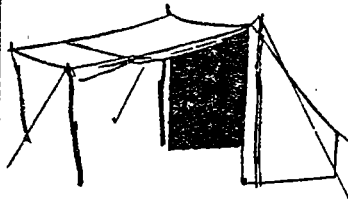
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'A' TENTS

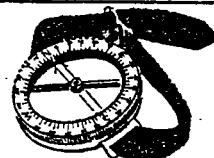
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Paddy Pullin

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because of an overhang at the bottom.

The 'campsite' (i.e. where the last person had built a fire) was disappointingly small; the fire seemed to be built on the only patch of level ground, and without shifting it, or having it right in the doorway, it would have been difficult to pitch even one tent there. This was on top of a single, continuous dune which ran halfway along the beach. Behind it, after an abrupt drop to beach level again, a short person could walk around upright under an unbroken canopy of branches, provided he/she could get through the tangle of trees/roots/bushes which barred the way. Most of the tents were pitched under here, wedged into odd spots where the branches were high enough above the ground; somebody found room on the top of the dune and camped on the (damp) moss there; another tent was pitched under a tree on the sand. Peter and Theo (always the dare-devils) opted out and slept in a cave with mozzies and sandflies, despite dire warnings of being ousted in the dead of night by the tide, sandslides, the previous occupant, etc. It may be significant that Peter had a li-lo; Theo can perhaps be rationalised as being too trusting. He now has a mug with a round bottom and an oval top - saw some bods sterilising their boil-proof mugs and decided to do the same.

At 1.00, $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours after arriving, we first realised that nobody had seen George since plunging into the scrub at the top of the hill. His absence was noted almost immediately, it is true, when the water-getters required his large billy, but was not further remarked on than as an inconvenience. The enormity of the situation was only brought home at lunchtime, when the search for the cheese was more persistent than that for a conveniently-sized billy. A search party was sent out, but apart from a couple of footprints in a nearby cove, no traces were found. We had come down to the beach on one side of a rocky outcrop of coves and inlets which divided it into two - perhaps he had turned the wrong way at the top of the descent and ended up on the other side of the outcrop. A belated lunch was eaten while we formulated a plan of action, concern for George's well-being gradually replacing concern for the whereabouts of the cheese. A single white cockatoo perched on a dead tree halfway up the hill was investigated as a possible omen, but nothing eventuated. Someone produced a whistle, blew it, and received an answer (or an echo) from the top of the ridge, half a mile away - this was also investigated, but was written off as only a bird. As a last resort, piles and piles of green leaves were chucked on the fire to make it smoke, then a full team was fielded to begin searching where George had last been seen, up on the plain. There were mutters, as people racked their brains as to the possible course of events, of "Not George, he's so experienced". At the top of the hill we sat and waited for 10 minutes - ostensibly for some purpose of organisation, but actually, I suspect, to give George a chance to turn up before we began a long, tiresome, methodical search. We could not even see the smoke from the fire, ourselves.

At 4 o'clock we waited no longer, spaced ourselves at regular intervals within voice contact, and plunged into the midst of the thick scrub. I confess my thoughts became a trifle uncharitable towards poor George at this stage - after all, he didn't really get lost on purpose. The "ground"

began to give way beneath my feet - my last foothold was at eyelevel, and I was now standing on some swordgrass. It was impossible to see whether there was ground beneath it, or whether it was growing out of the mountain-side. Nor could I see far enough over the top of the saplings to tell at what angle below me the land met the sea. Was I hanging on the edge of a cliff, or could I get down further still? The mutterings in my brain changed to "He wouldn't have gone down here; not George". Rebuking myself for rationalising, I called out in the direction of breaking twigs at one side that I couldn't go any further, and what do we do now? I was beginning to feel for George, struggling through this kind of terrain for 5 hours, with a pack and a heavy cheese to boot.

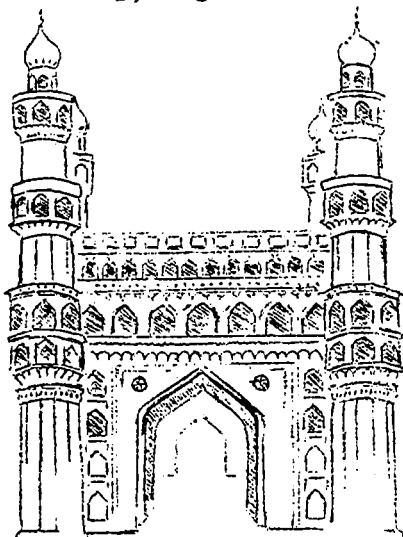
(To be continued ...)

FROM CENTRAL TO SOUTHERN INDIA.

by Helen Gray.

After visiting magnificent Ellore, we travelled back to Aurangabad and at the railway we bought our 3rd Class tickets for Hyderabad, 11½ hours journey away. The train arrived at 10.30 p.m. on time - we were now out of the area affected by strikes - and as we pushed and fought our way into the crowded carriage with its slatted seats, we mentally prepared ourselves for yet another sleepless night. We were relieved to find the dirty floor not entirely occupied, with room for us to lie down between the seats.

I was woken up by Frank's fidgeting. He's not built for small cramped spaces and had slept little. It was morning and the scenery was spectacular; from the flat cultivated fields of corn and yellow-flowering mustard, there rose steep, high hills covered in immense boulders.



The Arc de Triomphe of the East"
- Hyderabad's Char Minar.

That part of India around Hyderabad has seen almost constant fighting from about 230 B.C. until 1713 when the first Nizam came to power. The Nizams (Moslems) continued to rule the mostly Hindu population 'til Independence in 1949, the last Nizam having the reputation of being the world's richest man. Hyderabad, none the less, had as much poverty as any other city we saw.

It was Sunday in Hyderabad, but the airline office was open, so we would, we thought, be able to confirm our plane booking for the next day. (The booking had been made, and paid for, in Sydney.) The man on duty said he couldn't confirm bookings on Sunday, but he could let us know

tomorrow. We explained - 100 times at least, first patiently, then in anger - that we only wanted to know if we had a booking so that, if we didn't, we could catch a train tonight. His answer, "You can find out tomorrow", remained the same.

We caught the train.

This time we had an 18½ hour journey to Bangalore, but at last we were able to go 1st Class, with a 4 berth sleeping compartment to ourselves; fans and reading lamps and space to spread our junk and 8 hours sleep.

The two talking, smiling men, Ragharan and Bhasker, who woke us in the morning were our companions for the rest of the day. Ragharan was of the Brahmin, or priestly class; he showed us the cord strung diagonally across his chest which he must always wear. He was, he told us, not allowed to eat spicy food as this caused hot temper, but he was encouraged to eat onions because this increased his sexual potency. Bhasker, on the other hand, was allowed to eat spices, making him hot-tempered as befitted the warrior caste to which he belonged. We talked about the customs of our countries. Our friends said how lucky we were to be able to travel together as friends without having to worry about offending friends and families. Rhagaran said that if he saw his own sister out in the street he could not talk to her, as other people, not knowing they were brother and sister, might think she was a loose woman. If he went to his married sister's house and her husband was not home, he could not enter for the same reason.

There were two other people in the carriage, a member of the Jain religion and his wife. She never addressed a word to anyone but her husband. No Indian woman ever expressed an opinion in our presence. Women, married ones especially, must lead a lonely life. Quite often a man would say to Frank, "Is she your wife?", and I would immediately reply "No, I am not!" The questioner would ignore my answer and wait for Frank's reply! On one bumpy bus ride a sturdy middle-aged Muslim sat on the seat, while his pregnant wife sat in the filth on the floor at his feet.

I was with George, Owen and Frank one hot day, sitting near Frank's feet. (He was casting the biggest shadow.) An Indian said to Frank, "She is your wife, of course". I had a few words to say on that occasion.



Our long day ended with a 3 hour bus journey to Mysore city. It was still the 31st December, and we had until the next afternoon to meet the other three. We had travelled over 3,000 km. (well over half of that distance in the last 4 days) since arriving in Delhi. Despite all the transport problems and lack of sleep and some discomfort, we'd seen all we'd planned to and were in high spirits.

.

The first of January, 1974, was spent leisurely at the nearby Somnathpur village, where there is a fantastic temple made of soapstone (built 800 years ago). This tiny temple had the most beautiful and intricate carving we had seen or were to see. On the outer walls of this star-shaped temple there are friezes only 12", or less, in height, with elephants, galloping horses, thousands of figures, mythological beasts. Two friezes illustrated two of the great Hindu epics; one could spend a day crawling around the temple "reading" them. We spent a long time looking at the larger figures above the friezes, trying to find just one which had not been defaced, literally, by the Muslims of the 13th Century. We didn't find one.

Back in Mysore in the late afternoon, we were crossing a road when we noticed three slim, brown Europeans in front of us, hardly recognisable as George, Owen and Marion. There was a lot of talking and laughing THAT night.

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(Helen advises that "great hunks" of this article were taken from Frank's diary. The illustrations, however, are all Helen's.)

WALKS SECRETARY'S NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

by Bob Hodgson.

- Sept. 6-7-8 - Come and see the mighty Colo from the comfort of your own walking shoes. Good tracks for day 1, mighty views for day 2 from the summits of Island and Parr south.
- Sunday 8th See Commodore Heights the "romantic!" way, by the old ferry to Great Mackerel. Breathtaking views of Broken Bay as Alistayre Battye prods you along so that you won't miss the last ferry home.
- Sunday 8th Margaret Roid will be your guide on this very popular walk up Campfire Creek, a really beautiful area.
- Sept. 13-14-15 David Rostron is off to pound that pimple Guouogang, the mountain which has always had a strange luring effect on bushwalkers. Also included in David's recipe is Splendour Rock and a stroll down the serenely green Coxs river.
- Sept. 13-14-15 Ray Hookway is going to do some cheating. After having conquered Potoney's Crown on the Saturday he is going to drive across the valley to slaughter Tyon Pic.
- Sunday 15th Another ferry trip in Broken Bay; this time it's Carl Bock off to Patonga and up on to the tops commanding panoramic views of Broken Bay and Brisbane Waters.

- Sunday 15th Spring must be with us. John Holly has emerged to lead a wild flower walk from Wondabyne. John informs us that he is not going far but promises the best array of wild flowers on the coast.
- Sept. 13-14-15 Wilf Hilder and Rod Peters will be in pursuit of the snow to the bitter end with their Nordic skis. Weekend ski tours are not shown on the spring program as they become so hopelessly out of step with the program during the winter, due to both adverse and favourable conditions. Ski tours will be run at least fortnightly whilst the snow conditions remain good. For the current state of the ski touring scene telephone either Rod Peters at 632 0171 (B) or Wilf Hilder at 622 3353 (H) or 20579 x 410 (B).
- Sept. 20-21-22 Barry Wallace leads the ubiquitous Carlons, Splendour Rock, Cocks river trip. There must be good reason why this particular trip is done time and time again. Better go and find out.
- Sept. 20-21-22 An assault on the mighty Currockbilly with Peter Scandrett in the fore. Book early for this exciting Budawang's trip.
- Sunday 22nd Come and peruse the wild flowers of Porto Bay with Jim Brown. Easy fire trail walk all the way back to Brooklyn from the big cutting.
- Sept. 27-28-29 Rip, rack, roar and rumble your way up Cloudmaker with Alan Pike on the prodder, then down to that bushwalkers' dream river, the Kowmung — a must for your itinerary, to visit or revisit.
- Sept. 27-28-29 With a shifty bit of car ferrying, Frank Roberts will take you in a "straight line" trip, slipping down Pierce's Pass into the Grose, to climb out again up the Grand Canyon.
- Sunday 29th Native rose in abundance on Elaine Brown's Salvation Creek wild flower walk. With the ferry trip and the walk Elaine has planned, it should be a very pleasant day.
- Sunday 29th Barry Wallace, our illustrious president, is leading the only day test walk of the month after camping at Victoria Falls by the cars.

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E Q U I P M E N T

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THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS(Founded 1927)

Notice is hereby given that the Half-yearly General Meeting of The Sydney Bush Walkers will be held at the Wireless Institute of Australia, 14 Atchison Street, St Leonards, on Wednesday 11th September 1974, 8 pm.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Welcome to new members
3. Minutes of the August General Meeting held on Wednesday, 14th August, 1974.
4. Correspondence
5. Reports:
 - (a) Treasurer's Report
 - (b) Walks Report
 - (c) Social Report or Announcements
 - (d) Federation Report
6. Election of female committee member, following the resignation of Rosemary Edmunds at the Committee Meeting on 7th August 1974.
7. Constitutional Amendments: raised by Frank Roberts.
 - (a) Clause 5 be amended by deleting the words "...and one weekend walk" from "... that he has satisfactorily completed two day walks and one weekend walk..."
 - (b) Another sub-clause be added to Clause 5: "If the applicant for membership has, within the preceding year, been an active walker, then on application to the Committee to dispense with the requirements in Clause 5(e), they will consider such application and, if satisfied that the applicant has the interests of the Club at heart, they may resolve that such applicant be admitted without completing such test walks".
8. Selection of site for the 1975 Annual Reunion.
9. General Business and Announcements.

* * * * *

Helen Gray (Hon. Sec.)

Walk Report

Walk: Leura, Mt. Hay, Shaw Gully, Grose River, Faulconbridge Track, Faulconbridge

Leader: Frank Taeker Distance 35 miles Date 29/31 March 1974

Considerable difficulty in contacting the leader was encountered by intending starters, because of an incorrectly printed phone number on the walks programme.

The walk was intended to go as a private transport trip, leaving cars at either end, to minimise road walking. But because of an industrial dispute and severe petrol shortage the walk was changed to a public transport trip.

The 6.00 p.m. train from Central arrived in Leura a little late, soon after 8.00 p.m. A taxi was found to take us along the Mt. Hay Road, but would go no further than Fairmarch, about two miles from Leura, for fear of getting bogged. The taxi driver's fears seem to have been unfounded as we walked the next $7\frac{3}{4}$ miles that night and saw no place where a car would have been bogged. Camp was made by the water tank below Mt. Hay.

Next morning, the party set off at 8.00 a.m. and was up at the trig by 8.30. The view from the top was completely obscured by a thick cover of low trees and shrubs. Proceeding in a north-easterly direction, we pushed through a dense tangle of shrubs, grass, raspberry, blackberry and lawyer vine growing over basalt boulders, until coming to a flat rock section above a cliff. From here, a clear view was at last obtained of Boorong Crags. It was easy to find a way down from here to the very narrow ridge which leads over towards the first crag. Skirting around the base of the first crag was easy going over open grassland, but coming round the second crag thick scrub once again slowed progress. An easterly ridge was followed for some distance, but when this swung north-east we continued east, plunging down through the scrub until a creek was reached. This creek was followed right into the fork of Y creek and then down into Shaw Gully, the top of which was reached at 12.45 p.m.

Lunch was taken on the Grose at the junction of Y creek from 1.15-2.40. The Grose was running at about normal level and quite clear, in spite of recent heavy rain. Carmarthen Junction was reached at 4.45; there is a good cave here, big enough for about ten. At 5.00 p.m. a fast running creek was crossed and soon afterwards a very large cave was passed. A few hundred yards further along the river it started to rain so, as it was very nearly dusk anyway, we headed back to the last cave for the night.

Next morning, Sunday, the party set off at 7.15 a.m. Gadara Creek was passed at 7.40 a.m., Luminous Creek at 9.50 a.m. All the side creeks were flowing well. The track varied from good to non-existent. In many places the track was overgrown with ferns and shrubs. There were some first class swimming pools where the river was wide, deep and calm. In one of these we stopped twenty minutes for a swim. Soon afterwards we stopped a another 20 minutes for morning tea at a side creek. Hungerfords Creek was

passed at 11.45 a.m. and lunch was eaten at a side creek. This section of the river had many aromatic mint bushes (*Prostanthera* sp.) in flower, also Honey Flowers (*Lambertia formosa*) and countless thousands of tiny white epiphyte orchids (*Bulbophyllum* sp.) smothering the trunks of many trees. A five foot diamond snake was seen on the track and two large fish in the river.

Wentworth Cave was reached at 4.25 p.m. Wentworth Creek was flowing fast, but at the junction was slow, as wide as the Grose and deep. Two of the party had no trouble at all in swimming across the creek at this point, while the other three waded across further upstream where the water came halfway up their shorts. Linden Creek was reached at 5.35 p.m. and two of the party decided to stop in the cave for a good night's sleep. The other three, including the leader, left them, hoping to catch the last train home that night. Fast time was made while the light lasted, but then progress slowed down considerably. We reached the big south bend in the river as the light faded to zero at 6.45 p.m. After a 15-minute rest, the one useful torch was switched on and we proceeded slowly, clambering over and around rocks along the river. The lower end of Faulconbridge track was located and it was decided to go up this rather than attempt to clamber up the creek, which is easier, but would be very hard to follow in the dark. The lower end of the track proved to be quite awkward in the dark, where rock walls had to be scrambled up with only one torch. At the place where the track crosses a creek, we stopped for supper. Our stomachs were growling, and we had obviously missed the last train. Another diamond python, about six feet long, was persuaded to leave the track by our jumping up and down nearby.

The top of Faulconbridge track was reached at 12.00 midnight. A second twenty-minute supper was eaten by the telephone box in Faulconbridge, and the station reached at 2.40 a.m. on Monday morning. The first train of the day arrived at 4.52 a.m. and got us home in time for breakfast and a shower before going off to work. The other two members of the party, who had chosen to spend Sunday night in the cave at Linden Creek, reached Faulconbridge about midday.

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* NEW FINCH FOR THE NEST *

* Congratulations to Heather and Don Finch on the *

* birth of their first daughter, Melina Susan, on *

* Friday August 16. The Editor's spies report *

* that Father Finch has now finally found a per- *

* manent position. His hitherto enviably casual *

* employment may now be a thing of the past. *

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