

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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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NOVEMBER, 1974.

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THE OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING.

by Jim Brown.

There was a tally of just over 30 at the beginning of the October meeting, when new members Margaret White and Doug Carlson were made welcome, and numbers increased by a few more during the course of business.

Minutes produced no stir, but that usually placid item of business, Correspondence, brought a certain amount of discussion, particularly a draft proposal prepared by Federation for consideration of member clubs and outlining what it suggested as a policy for camping in National Parks and Reserves. It was agreed the draft should be published in the magazine (see last month's issue). Ray Hookway pointed out one of the proposed items in particular - that permits for camping in reserves should be made out only in the leader's name, so eliminating the almost impossible task of specifying each visitor far in advance.

Also in correspondence was a rather remarkable letter from the National Bureau of Roads inviting comment on the Hume Highway between Goulburn and Wodonga. Since the time for reply had been limited, Secretary Helen Gray explained that it had to be left unanswered. The Ausventure people had advised their tenure of Coolana (previously arranged) would be from Jan. 4th - 11th. Outward mailings included two letters prepared on behalf of the Club by Conservation Secretary Alex Colley, one to the Minister for Lands supporting a proposal for a Deua/Tuross National Park, and the other to National Parks & Wildlife Service outlining our views on control of bushfires in reserves: the Club endorsed the letter as a matter of policy and agreed to its subsequent publication in the magazine.

The Treasurer told us working funds at the end of September stood at \$1,536 and in answer to a question about the deletion of unfinancial members, the President said that crossings-off were still in progress, while some unpaid members were being "operated on" before the parting shot was fired.

Federation Delegate Frank Malloy reminded all of the approaching S. & R. Practice and Ray Hookway told us the Federation Ball had been quite successful with about 450 present, but few if any S.B.W.

Thus we came to the Walks Report, and a negative statement that it was unknown if David Rostron's trip from Medlow Gap to Guouogang set down for Sept. 13/14/15 had actually gone. That weekend, however, Ray Hookway's party of 6 climbed Pantoney's Crown and Tayar, two of the isolated mountains in the Capertee Valley: Ray advised long pants and gloves as protection against dense growth on the slopes of Tayar (Tyan Pic) and said the vegetation thereabouts was dangerously dry. The day walks were Carl Bock's (actually led by Alan Fall) from Patonga, with about 20 starters, while John Holly's 21 people did a wild flower garden jaunt around Wondabyne. There was also a ski tour with 6 starters that weekend in the Kiandra area: 3 of the party who stayed in the "4-mile Hut" found its walls plastered with 1936 newspapers. Care was needed in skiing owing to shallow snow and numerous abandoned water races from the old mining days.

The following weekend 20-22 Sept. there was a trip originally to have been led by Barry Wallace, inherited by Rosemary Edmunds, and finally taken over by Bob Younger, who conducted a team of 5 over the intended route from Carlons to Konangaroo Clearing and back. The other weekend trip was cancelled, and on the Sunday 31 (no - finally 32) trekked from Hawkesbury River Station to the same place via Porto Bay with some rather prickly scrub en route.

Alan Pike seemed reluctant to give any account beyond "it was all right" for his Kanangra - Kowmung trip of 27-29 Sept. After some coaxing it was elicited there were 13 travellers, "3 spurs leading off Ti-Willa", and because of one minor injury the return from the Kowmung was made by two parties, one via Gingra Creek and one over the ridge. Frank Roberts' Grose River party numbered 4, a pleasant trip going as planned. The two day walks both went, but details were not to hand of Elaine Brown's West Head party. Barry Wallace had 14 on the jaunt from Victoria Falls, camping Saturday night near Mt. Victoria. The pass into the valley was found to be badly washed out and needing care to negotiate.

The final journey to report was Helen Gray's Widden Brook venture over the holiday weekend, with 27 (later discovered to be 28) starters. The water supply below Pomany was seedy, and a successful descent to the valley made on Sunday: some rain at night when "Bob Hodgson played his mouth-organ till midnight". Out via Hoolenboy Creek and spur on Monday. To complete the recital of trips, Gordon Broome commented on two skiing weekends which were not programmed: one included 17 people, both experienced and otherwise and was centred on the area north of Munyang: the sight of the weekend was the skier with evening suit and top hat near Albina. The other journey over the holiday weekend was in the Dicky Cooper country, with poor weather on Saturday, but a glorious Sunday when good visibility compensated for a series of rather murky weekends at the snowfields.

It was approaching 9.30 p.m. when the President, unable still to get a Federation delegate, asked us to "try to coerce someone" to make up our representation and then closed the October meeting.

TEN DAYS IN THE HIGH SIERRAS.

by Dot Butler.

About 300 miles north of Los Angeles, hence 300 miles north of the Los Angeles smog, is the Sierra National Forest. Despite the fact that great trailers of hewn logs charge along its narrow roads at regular intervals, logging is only one of the professed multiple usages of the Forest - it is also a declared recreational area. It abuts on the Kings Canyon National Park and the John Muir Wilderness, the whole making up one of the biggest walking/climbing/skiing/fishing areas in California.

Rona's Jack had just gone off at short notice to a medical conference in Munich - one of the attractive perks of a research professor in the U.S. as compared with his counterpart in Australia. Rona and I accordingly next day got into a borrowed car and with ten days' supplies of home-made bread, butter and cheese, nuts, dried fruits and milk powder (the basic requirements of proteins, fats and carbohydrates), plus an orange a day and a jar of Marmite to look after the vitamins, and headed for the Sierras.

A 5-hour drive along the fantastic Californian freeways that would make Sydney motorists gnash their teeth with envy and we were at Courtright Reservoir. This is a structure that dams lots of small creeks and is owned by the P.G. & E. (Pacific Gas and Electricity), built by, or similar to, structures built by the Army Corps of Engineers who range all over the country building canals and bridges and dams (some for flood control which result in worse floods than ever), and turn the whole topography of the country upside down. The Army Corps of Engineers is the pet hate of the Conservationists. "Put a bulldozer and several kegs of dynamite into the hands of an A.C.E. man," said an admiring Yank, "and he'll do ANYTHING!" (The Conservationists have to be all the time vigilant to see that he doesn't do it in National Parks.)

All walkers in American National Parks are expected to leave their names and addresses and proposed itinerary with the Park Ranger. This is not, as I supposed, for the safety of walkers in the event of a possible search and rescue, but in order that the authorities may make an assessment of the number of people using the Park, with a view to excluding other walkers if the traffic appears to be getting too heavy. As our 100 mile trip was for the main part "overland", Rona and I didn't contribute greatly to the wearing out of the "maintained" tracks.

We reached the Ranger's Headquarters at 10 past 5, 10 minutes too late to register that night, so we drove on up a logging road and camped for the night on a great heap of sawdust in a recently logged area. Already it had been replanted and little foot-high pines were springing up everywhere. Still, it hurts to see the great trees cut down; Rona counted the rings in one of the stumps - 310 years old! It started life as a seedling in 1664, over a hundred years before Australian history began. Rona says that is nothing - they are cutting down Redwoods three thousand years old. But that's the way the cookie crumbles if you must have your redwood dining table and outdoor furniture, although one would hope they would spare the giants and use the smaller trees, especially as the Redwood

has been found to be a reasonably fast-growing tree.

Next morning we fulfilled our obligations at the Ranger's office and drove on to the Reservoir where we left the car parked with its nose into a downhill run (wise precaution!) and headed off down a track winding among granite outcrops in cool pine and spruce forest. Grey squirrels raced and jerked up and down the trees and across the track, and bright yellow butterflies fluttered over the marshy areas by the meadows and creeks. After the end of July burros are allowed to graze in the meadows. Many walkers use these pleasant little pack animals in the hot summer months - how often have S.B.W's. sighed for some such when toiling up the White Dog track with the temperature 100 degrees plus in the shade.

We camped that night in open grassland with no tent so we could watch the unusual sight of the Northern hemisphere stars. Jupiter, huge and splendid, dominated all the stars of lesser illumination; nothing in our southern sky looks so bright. We awoke in the morning to find our sleeping bags white with frost. After that we slept under pine or fir trees or put up a tent fly and could still sleep with our heads out to watch the stars.

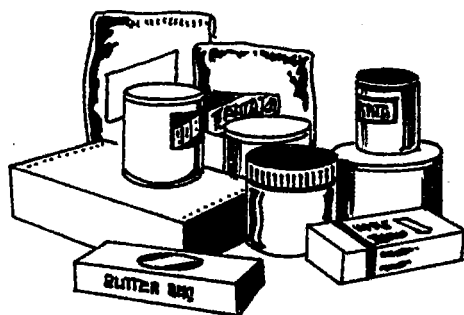
Still following a track we crossed over a ridge and thence down a creek to the north fork of the Kings River. By this time we had left other hikers behind and for the rest of the trip we had the country almost to ourselves. It is now Autumn (September), with the risk of sudden snowstorms in the high country, hence the number of summer foot tourists drops off considerably. A climb brought us up the Bench Valley to a number of little lakes sparkling like emeralds under the brilliant blue sky. There must have been rough goings-on when they received their names: 6-Shooter Lake, Bullet Lake, Holster Lake, Wahhoo Lake. Little marmots, so plump they could hardly waddle, tried to race us up the mountainside. They are fattening up for their winter hibernation.

The whole of the Sierras are granite. Huge white and grey jagged peaks rise to 12,000/14,000' on both sides of the valleys. The tree line is very high - 10,000 to 10,500'; above that height are torn and jagged battlements cut by hollow scree slides of rattling grey stones and massive avalanche chutes caused by enormous masses of powder snow coursing down in the winter time, sometimes uprooting great forest trees whose bodies the spring thaw will reveal piled up in the valley below. We camped at Horsehead Lake, at 10,500', in high and regal isolation, monarchs of all we surveyed. It was a time of no moon and the stars and Milky Way made a glorious display in the dark sky.

When we crossed over the Leconte Divide into the head of the Goddard Canyon we were into the King's Canyon National Park. This part is a high plateau dotted with unexpected lakes - an untracked wilderness of stones and water and sky and millions of cubic feet of crystal air. We were aware of the attenuated air as we set up our camp on the shores of a lake at 11,500' - less than half the oxygen one would be getting at sea level. Covering this area we watched the map pretty closely, watching contour lines as we wound our way amongst the lakes and jumbled mass of peaks. The days spent up here were easily the most exciting of the trip, but at least we

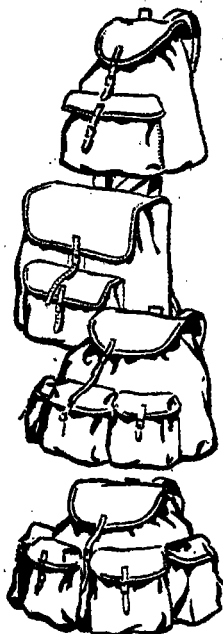
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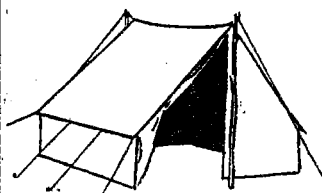
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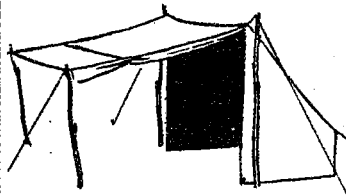
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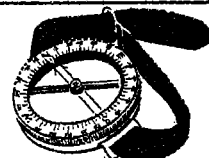
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were spared the excitement of having black bears drop in on our camp - they do not come so high. Lower down in the valleys you hang your food up a tree at night out of reach of bears. Some friends of Rona and Jack had all their food eaten by bears on a trip when still a long way from their destination. They were feeling remarkably thin when they eventually reached their car five days later.

From the high lakes we headed down in Evolution Valley. The fathers of the theory of evolution are honoured in the great peaks along the east side of the valley, the highest, Mt. Darwin (approx. 14,000') still draped with patches of last year's snow; Mt. Mendel, Mt. Haeckel, Mt. Wallace, all over 13,000'. Evolution Valley is a botanist's paradise. Judging by the great number of seeding plants, the past summer season must have been spectacular, and many were still flowering in this high altitude: red and orange Indian paintbrush, blue gentians, yellow daisies, purple lupins and a type of purple mint bush. Patches of various little alpine flowers and moss made an attractive ground cover among the white boulders. And let me not forget the berries! We gathered mugfuls of blueberries and red currants and tiny but gloriously flavoured wild strawberries. These helped to break the monotony of bread-and-cheese for two meals of the three each day. Mashed up with the daily ration of 5 dates each, a cupful of red currants looked quite a substantial dish.

We camped by Evolution Lake and in the early evening watched the trout rising to catch the unwary flies. We had no fishing lines so fish was not on our menu (sob, sob).

We had now met up with a track again which we followed through pleasant forests of pinion pine, ponderosa pine and redwoods and a few majestic red firs, and of course the ever present spruce and quivering aspens. (The aspen is a type of poplar, botanic name: *populus tremuloides*.) We lunched in a cool green meadow. Here I left Rona reading a book on the Social History of the Americans (she'll soon know more about the Americans than they do about themselves, which wouldn't be hard), while I wandered off to gather blueberries and red currants. In a shallow drying-up pool of a creek were seven small trout 3 or 4 inches long, and closely watching them from the muddy bank was a slim striped garter snake about 2 ft. long. When I startled it it glided off. Apparently they are harmless. With a bit of ingenuity I could have caught the fish, but they seemed too small to take from their mothers. Back to the bread and cheese!

Dropping steeply down the Evolution Valley - the track drops suddenly at Evolution Lake - we came to the fork of the Goddard Canyon up which we plodded for an hour to camp in the late afternoon on a heap of pine needles, under huge trees. The trunks are straight as a ship's mast, and we watched the myriads of stars tangled in their upper branches before falling asleep to the constant sound of falling waters.

Next day's itinerary was to take us over Hell For Sure Pass. This involved an 8-mile walk following a track which went 4 miles in one direction then reversed itself in a hairpin loop and retraced its route on a slightly higher level. By climbing vertically up through high granite

terraces we were able to knock off 6 unnecessary miles. The climb was exhilarating and we were rewarded by the sight of a rare golden eagle planing down the high wind currents. Although it is the American National Emblem, the golden eagle is now very rare in the U.S., except in Alaska. There are probably more of them in Canada than in the U.S.

A few hundred feet below the Pass we met up with the track. On it a short way ahead was a party of six walkers who seemed astounded that anyone should dream of leaving a well made track to climb up an "unmarked" cliff face.

The pass is at 11,300' and goes through a narrow defile beside Red Peak, one of the few mountains that is not granite - the rock looked like iron-impregnated sandstone. In a pleasant little high meadow on the opposite side of the pass we lay in the grass among the alpine flowers by a crystal brook and ate our bread and cheese and slept for a couple of hours in the sun. Suddenly we heard voices and over the pass came two boys, Tom and Tom. They stopped for a sociable mug of orange juice (theirs) and after swapping yarns we went on to camp together at shallow Disappointment Lake in Red Mountain Basin. Tom and Tom went off to fish and our mouths were watering at the thought of trout for tea but they came back empty handed so out came the bread and cheese again. That night little chipmunks and ground squirrels scurried around our camp looking for crumbs. Tom and Tom made some onion soup and offered us some. The new moon showed a thin silver scimitar above the peaks and we realised that our trip was almost over - only two more days to go.

We left the boys next morning and wandered over the hills to camp at a secluded little lake. Here we had a bath and washed our hair and clothes, being careful that all soaping up was done on the bank and all soap washed off by sluicings from the Paddy water bucket before we plunged into the lake. People here are much more conscious than they are in Australia of polluting their waterways.

And now it's our last day. We made the most of it, dawdling along and collecting berries all along the route. We had been overgenerous in our donation of bread to Tom and Tom in exchange for their onion soup and now had nothing left but 6 nuts each, 5 dates, 4 spoonfuls of milk powder and a scraping of marmite. We eked out this latter by making it up into a brew, adding it to hot water which we boiled up in an empty beer can we found (if you're living on bread and cheese you're not carrying any cooking utensils). We camped hungry that night down along the Reservoir and watched fishermen out in their motorboats pulling in trout. The waters are stocked with trout as often as every week during the season so that the fishermen may have the pleasure of pulling them out again.

At 8 a.m. we boiled up our beer can (twice), added each our two spoonful of milk powder, tightened up our belts and climbed up to the car. It was (wisely) parked on a downhill run but - you've guessed? - even that was not enough to start it. We had to wander across to some campers half a mile away for help. A local farmer with a dune buggy came and towed us till the motor turned over and we got on our way. Three hours later we reached our first shops. Food! Rona headed straight for the cheese counter.

* * * * *

S.B.W. POLICY ON FIRE CONTROL

(As recommended by Alex Colley, Conservation Secretary, and endorsed by the Club at the October General Meeting.)

The S.B.W., although in agreement with many of the recommendations of the National Parks Association, believes that the recommendations show no appreciation of the central issue, which is the use of natural areas for the provision of fire breaks. We believe that the approach to fire fighting policy requires radical revision. Three questions call for an answer:-

1. Why do fires occur?
2. Where do they occur?
3. Why must they be fought in the bush?

The answer to the first question is known. Nearly all outbreaks are the result of the careless use of fire. This is acknowledged in the Annual Reports of the Dept. of Conservation, where the causes of fire are analysed. The main cause is burning off. Next in order of importance is roadside carelessness.

Burning off is simply a cheap and easy means of producing green herbage to feed stock, or of clearing land. It results in increased run-off, soil erosion, stream siltation, and consequent destruction of stream banks. In so far as any clearing of scrubland is justified, it should be accomplished by other means.

Present bush fire policy accepts that this practice will continue, together with roadside carelessness and other irresponsible human action. The S.B.W., however, believes that first priority should be accorded to fire prevention. Within the Club this has been a completely effective policy. Our members don't start bush fires.

The second question - where do fires occur? - can also be simply answered. They start where people burn off, or are careless, usually on private property, but sometimes on crown land, or reserves, where permitted or illicit grazing of stock takes place.

The third question is - why should wilderness areas be used for fire fighting? either when fires break out, or when breaks are being created by "fuel reduction"? This is simply because wilderness areas are considered of no consequence when private property is threatened.

Recognition of these facts, coupled with appreciation of the value of wilderness, would result in a complete reversal of present fire fighting practice.

It would mean firstly, that the assumption that frequent fires are inevitable should be abandoned. They are inevitable only if burning as a pastoral management practice continues, and carelessness is condoned. Burning off should be made illegal, and more resources devoted to law enforcement.. It is obviously beyond the resources of the police force to accomplish this. A bush-fire patrol, analagous in function, though

not in cost, to the highway patrol recommended by Dr. Nielson, should be established. Its functions would be advisory, supervisory, and when necessary, disciplinary.

The second policy reversal would be to place the onus of fire precautions primarily on the property owner. Where it is necessary to make fire breaks, or effect fuel reduction, this should be done, not in remote bushland, but on the borders of developed areas. Both on properties and elsewhere there are other means than "controlled burning" of creating effective fire breaks. There are hand and mechanical means available. Strip grazing, or the planting of pastures, can produce breaks consisting of short green grass, a very effective form of fire break.

If these policies are adopted, incidence of fires in wilderness will be greatly reduced. They will not be eliminated, because some fires are caused by lightning and other natural causes, and some illegal fires will be lit. But they could be reduced to the frequency which prevailed when natural causes and aboriginals were the only source of conflagrations, a level to which the regenerative capacity of native flora and fauna has long been conditioned.

Roading for access, and for the creation of fire breaks, would then be unnecessary. Incidence of fire would be reduced because such roads are used by timber interests and graziers. There would be no "roadside fires". Indiscriminate burning of wilderness by such means as aerial incendiaryism would cease.

We agree with the recommendation for a Commonwealth Government mobile fire-fighting force transferred and supported by aircraft, but there is no need for the formation of a special force. The army is such a force and requires nothing beyond official sanction to operate, special training, and some additional equipment.

TASMANIAD - Part 5.

by Kathie Stuart.

Thurs. 28th Feb. Another sleep-in (till 10), but excusable because of not getting to sleep till the wee small hours. Anyway, the last section was completed on the beach, where there was quite a collection arranged in horizontal attitudes.

The leftover bones etc. from the breakfast shark were chucked in the water by some eco-minded person - a shoal of tiny fish made short work of anything edible, even before it had settled on the bottom. Before the scraps were thrown out Spiro took them into his care, bunged them in a billy of water with some secret herbs and spices (like garlic, egg powder and, I think, margarine) to produce a gastronomic masterpiece summarily termed "Spiro's garlic and shark fin (among other things) soup". Other potential chefs emerged as those who found time hanging heavy on their hands participated in a damper-cooking contest (your choice of plain or fancy). Non-participants barracked for this or that cook (or for the damper if they preferred it to the cook) and were vociferous in their

suggestions as to method of cooking (and when this was exhausted, in their advice as to length of cooking time, etc.). The unfortunate dampers lasted only long enough to be photographed in a frightened huddle before the hungry horde pounced and gulped down its individual portions of loaves and fishes. If I remember rightly one of our budding damper-makers went on, in a bullet rise to fame and glory, to win the regional damper competition at the Club's Reunion; the results (if any) of the F.B.C. Reunion are unavailable.

After lunch I had a last nice long lonely walk along the beach back in the direction we'd come; only it had to be cut short, unfortunately, because of the projected departure of the vanguard. The previous night the various possibilities had been discussed - (i) send in a vanguard to the airstrip on Thursday afternoon to be ferried out to Hobart in the first couple of plane loads Friday morning, while the rearguard was coming in; or (ii) have the plane come and land on Cox's Bight Beach (the difficulty here was ignorance of tides and hardness of sand); or (iii) just about any permutation or combination you care to think up.

Pt. Eric extended inland into a ridge, which could be crossed by following the bombardier tracks (the prospector's caterpillar-tread vehicle) from the beach, or, as I later realised, by going over to the other side of the point through the grove behind the campsite, and along the track from there. At 2.30, George, Bob B. and I were almost the last of the vanguard to leave: I took the bombardier track and they took the bush track, thus gaining an unfair advantage which I attempted to equalise by running along my section to draw level before they got onto the track. However, I soon had to step aside for George, and was walking along the bombardier track with B.B. close behind - in fact I heard him accelerate as we neared the one-lane walking track again - so of course I courteously stood aside (naturally, this had nothing to do with the fact that I like to go nice and slowly where possible). At this stage I was second-last only to Larry (who left a good while after the rest of us). The thought jolted me into action - if I didn't hop to it I might end up being last! I determined it would not be so; there would be at least one person, then two people, three, etc. behind me - so saying I undertook the taxing task of overtaking all the cripples, misfits, invalids, etc. up ahead, then relaxed the pace so that B.B. and co. ahead of me were, as nearly as possible, always at least on the horizon.

As I reached King's collection of outhouses and mining equipment, etc. that portion of the landscape was in shadow. Without Theo's erstwhile hat glinting in the low sunlight ahead I mislaid the leaders and when I looked again they were nowhere in sight. However this end of the settlement didn't look the kind of thing I wanted so I headed out in the general direction I had last seen them. More by luck than anything else I came upon a quonset hut a short distance away, but there was no sign of the others there, and no sounds of life from within the hut. I was just standing on the perimeter of the sunlight deliberating on their possible location - across that river on the right? I couldn't see a definite track down there; should I wait and go with those behind me? but on the other hand was it worth bestirring myself to go back and stand on the top of the hill where I'd be sure not to miss them if they turned aside early? A piercing whistle, doubtless intended

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to indicate the whereabouts of those I sought was unhelpful because I couldn't decide whether it had come from across the river or down near the hut. Finally I decided to go and investigate the hut first because it meant losing less valuable height if I was wrong; I strolled down with my pack still on, too lazy to take it off because that would mean putting it on again. You'd never guess it, but it just so happened that this was the day's destination.

Times of departure from the beach had ranged from 2.00 to 2.30 - the first to reach King's Hut got there about 20 to 5, the last about 20 past. There were three double-bunks inside, and I promptly bagged a bottom bunk as more convenient. I was informed that the gentlemen had gallantly taken the top bunks to save the ladies climbing, and therefore I wouldn't have had the choice anyway. Thereupon I immediately reversed my decision and swapped with Bill, who preferred a bottom bunk anyway, to prove that I did so too have a choice if I wanted one, so there. The three leftovers slept on the floor on bits of foam ("The type that turns hard ground into concrete." P.B.), Tina under the table on a spare mattress. Theo suffered an attack of domesticity after tea (or maybe it was the synthetic meat-yuk) and washed the billies. Later on there was some unkind speculation as to the origin of the rather horrific-looking green foam which appeared while he was brushing his teeth - it was remarked that if he washed his teeth anything like he washed the billies, it was probably from the teeth; but it eventuated (as soon as Theo could articulate again) that the toothpaste itself had originally been green.

Footnote: Danny King, tinminer (does it mostly by himself) and walkers' friend - written up in Saturday Herald Weekend Magazine as the southernmost inhabitant of Australia. (N.B. this doesn't take account of the people at Cockle Creek, which is further south - I THINK.)

Friday, 1st March: Breakfast in bed (more or less - Bill was up fixing the fire at 7.00 (?) - I only got up because it was easier to eat round the table than on a rickety top bunk). After breakfast we carted our packs up to the airstrip, a quartz-gravelled patch of ground officially labelled "Melaleuca Airport". While awaiting the light plane which was to ferry us out to Cambridge Airport (in Hobart), we went visiting, over to Danny King's house. A son-in-law greeted us, he was in the middle of breakfast but Danny was due back any minute. Unfortunately he arrived at 9.00, 5 mins before the plane did, so there was just time for a round of handshakes, "Hello, goodbye and pleestameetcha", and a last "How lovely" flung at his pictures before the first batch of four departed for the runway.

Apparently there was to be only the one plane, which would have entailed 5 round trips (of about $1\frac{3}{4}$ hrs each) for the pilot. However a few extra packs were taken on the second trip, and on the third and fourth trips there was an extra person in the luggage compartment. On the last flight they only cleared the ground with a couple of feet to spare despite having pulled out all the stops. "No worries, mate," said the pilot, "I've got a bit less fuel in the tank this trip." However this intended reassurance only had the effect of adding the worry of the engine failing in mid-flight. The last flight was exclusively favoured with yet more thrills and spills in the form of a side trip to fly over Lake Pedder, and a wingspin over Federation Peak.

(To be concluded)

SPENCERS PEAK HUT.

by Gordon Broome.

There it was, the much searched for hut, resting on a carpet of yellow gold daisies, with a backdrop of magnificently twisted snowgums. It looked a pathetically lonely, dilapidated little thing, its plea for help and sympathy accentuated by the partially demolished rubble-stone fireplace. To the front, some forty yards away, was crystal clear running water. The far surrounding scenery is breathtaking yet restful - a pantheists paradise.

On first sight I knew something must be done to alleviate this touching loneliness. No abode is at peace without human occupancy, and the little hut is far from being fit for such a task, and this is where it all began, the urge on my part and several others, to restore the hut for use by weary walkers or skiers who need frugal but safe refuge.

Spencers Peak Hut was built by or for a Mr. Mould in 1934 as a shelter for stockmen and that is the sum total of its known history, or perhaps it should be said, written history. The hut is constructed of corrugated iron with a dirt floor and is 16 ft. x 14 ft. Its position is not marked on the available maps, but is somewhere between Cesjacks Hut and Spencers Peak. Map reference will be verified on future visit. Some members of the S.B.W. propose to restore the hut with perhaps some improvements such as a verandah and a small country shed hidden among the gums. These additions would necessarily meet the vintage and blend with the surrounds.

The Kosciusko Huts Association, who were previously approached, have informed that the application by the previously mentioned group for caretakership has been approved. The caretakership is not in the name of the S.B.W. (this could be altered if the club so desired) but will be the responsibility only of those members wishing to be involved. So those of us involved now intend to get on with the job.

We (that is, the members involved) are required as caretakers to aim to provide a simple overnight shelter which is structurally sound, durable, reasonably well insulated, easy to maintain and clean.

It will be necessary to eventually fit the hut with:- water buckets, blankets, bush-saw, shovel, axe, broom, cooking stove and fuel, map, First Aid kit, money box and visitors book. That is, after we have repaired the fireplace, developed the floor, made good the roof and walls, insulated with internal lining, installed sleeping platforms, bench, stools, shelves, table and of course a verandah and toilet.

At present we have in stock an axe, bush-saw, 2 doors, 2 pot-belly stoves, a few sheets of corrugated iron, some spring-head nails, and a jemmy, plus a very dilapidated hut, so there is an opening for new or used building materials and suggestions.

WALKS SECRETARY'S NOTES FOR DECEMBER.

by Bob Hodgson.

- 1974
- Sunday 1st Dec. - Joe Marton is leading a fast test walk along the coast from Bundeena to Otford. Beautiful views of the blue Pacific, and maybe time for a quick swim at lunchtime. A late train back.
- 6,7, 8 - By hook or by crook Roy Higginbottom will be first on a Blue Mountains trip on the summer programme. Roy's walk takes in some terrific scenery all the way to Cambage Spire after which you may take the plunge and the weight off your feet by paddling down the Kowmung River on your li-lo. From this position you can really enjoy the Bulga Denis Canyon.
- Sunday 8 - Kath Brown won't be setting any sprint records on this leisurely stroll from Bundeena to Little Marley. Plenty of time to enjoy the scenery and have a dip in Deer Pool and another at the beach.
- 14, 15 - A Saturday morning start with Hans Beck and you will be in all the glory that is the Cox's River, fully clad in its spring growth, luscious blackberries eager to be eaten; what bliss!
- 13,14,15 - Better start cleaning up and servicing your old push bike. Frank Molloy along with his fine band of pedal pushers will be pedalling the fire trails of the Blue Labyrinth.
- 20,21,22 - A little swimming and a lot of good abseiling make Davies Canyon one of the best canyon trips around. David Rostron is giving you the opportunity to descend this remarkable canyon, so book early as small parties are preferred on these trips.
- Sunday 22 - Gladys Roberts is off on another peaceful walk through the Royal National Park, saving a little foot-slogging by catching the bus to Governor Game Lookout.
- 22 to 27 - Frank Molloy is taking six whole days (including Christmas) for a lazy holiday stroll around the eastern Blue Labyrinth and the Nepean River. Bring your li-lo for a great easy living holiday.
- Thursday 26 - Boxing Day - a must for the big Christmas dinner eaters. Walk off all those unnecessary calories. Meryl Watman will lead this tramp around the Royal National Park to Burning Palms and Garie Beaches.
- 29 to Jan.5 - Frank Malloy is really going to have a ball, starting at Rylstone he and his gallant band of pedal pushers will be urging their machines all the way to the Putty Road. The expedition of a life time.

THE S.B.W. XMAS PARTY 1974.

The Club Xmas party will be held in the clubrooms on Wednesday, 18th December. As Owen Marks, the Social Secretary, will be away overseas on that date, the job of organising the party has been undertaken by Bill Hall, (phone No. 57,5145). Bill would be glad to hear of anyone who is prepared to help with the supper (or washing up, clearing up, etc.), or who could help in any other way to make the evening a success.

What to bring. A glass for drinking and a plate of party food. All drink (alcoholic, soft, coffee) is supplied by the Club.

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THE CODE OF ETHICS OF BUSHWALKING.

The following is adapted from a publication by the N.S.W. Federation of Bush Walking Clubs. If you are an experienced walker it is assumed you have learned these points over the years, but a beginner "just learning the game", might like to know what other bushwalkers expect of them.

Be a good conservationist:

- Never cut down trees or pick wildflowers.
- Never kill birds or animals or allow others to do so.
- Use only dead branches for tent poles, and dead wood for your fires.
- While camping, do the least possible damage to shrubs and plants. Always leave a campsite so it would be difficult to tell that it had been camped on.
- Before lighting your fire, clear away all dead leaves, bracken and litter.
- Don't light a fire close to a tree trunk, stump or log.
- Make sure fires are completely out before leaving by putting them out with water.

Individual Campcraft.

- Always carry a first aid kit and be able to use it.
- Always carry a torch and matches.
- Always carry map and compass.
- Leave with your people written details of your intended walk route.
- Regard streams on farms as being polluted, also streams that may have town sewage.
- A high standard of camp hygiene should be maintained. All rubbish and human waste should be buried at a reasonable distance from the camp, and away from tracks.
- Food scraps should not be left on a dying fire, nor thrown into a stream or pool. They should be buried.
- Tins should be burned and bashed before burial. Or else carried home.
- Don't wash or bathe upstream from where others are drawing drinking water.
- Don't camp alongside another party unless invited.
- Don't light your fire too close to any tent.
- Don't use other's fires, wood or water unless invited; when you do use them, do your share of replacing.
- When using a recognised camping place, don't chop up tent poles for firewood.
- On the track, don't break out of line to push to the front.
- Don't leave the party without informing the leader.