

# THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney Bush Walkers, Box 4476, G.P.O. Sydney, N.S.W. 2001. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening from 7.30 p.m. at the Wireless Institute Building, 14 Atchison Street, St. Leonards. Enquiries concerning the Club should be referred to Mrs. Marcia Shappert - telephone 30.2028.

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# EDITORIAL

## HOW NATURAL NATURE?

Earlier this month it was my good fortune to visit Japan, a country which is vastly different in background, culture and attitude to our own. Whilst dining one evening in a Tokyo restaurant I commented to my host what a sweet juicy melon it was I was eating. My host's reply was "Ah yes, that is a very special melon. When the vine is young, the farmer picks out the best flower and cuts all the others off, thus all the goodness of the vine is concentrated into that one piece of fruit." After pondering this somewhat, I realised that it is quite in keeping with normal Japanese habit, and any attempt to grow as many melons as possible on the one vine (perhaps our approach) would be quite alien. The ancient art of Bonsai adopts a similar approach. An object of beauty is created, with the help of Nature, but using disfigurement as a tool. In Japan the azalea and camelia bushes are stripped of their flower buds except for a few of the very best, thus ensuring that those flowers which do bloom are exquisite specimens. Those beautiful Japanese gardens we imagine, and see pictures of, are carefully tended, pruned and manicured to give an impression of Nature and of naturalness. We ourselves cultivate rose bushes which have to be regularly pruned to give the best display, and bowling green flat lawns which demand constant and never-ending attention to ensure the exclusion of extraneous vegetation. Is this Nature? It's not plastic, so it must be Nature! But is it natural, that is the question. It also struck me in Japan that the people in general have tremendous environmental awareness. Almost any subject under discussion will sooner or later touch on environmental issues. Further thought made me conclude that this is what one would expect from a population of 110 million people, crowded onto a small group of islands, and dependant on their processing industries for survival. Furthermore, it made me realise that we in Australia, as conservationists and environmentalists, have a much easier task than our Japanese counterparts. The natural environment (at least in part) still exists for us, on our doorstep. We need only to ensure its perpetuation, not effect its re-creation. Let us make sure it stays that way.

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# THE ADVENTURES OF OWEN

by Owen Marks.

Lately you may have come across that blasé bushwalking bore who has conquered puny Peruvian peaks; or else has walked 14 days in waist deep mud in Tasmania and has the turn of mind to rave about it. Let me tell you how I conquered the Himalayas and achieved my life's ambition; Annapurna was my destination. Apart from Everest, it was the only mountain I'd ever heard of apart from Rum Doodle, and accompanied by two assistants and two porters, we all set out from Pokhara in western Nepal and headed north towards China.

But first I shall tell you about my preparations here in Sydney. It was very simple. I was outfitted by the St. Vincent de Paul second-hand shop at Newtown. Woollen evening pants with a shiny satin stripe (my two offsidiers Helen Gray and Frank Taeker bought the same), some lovely boots that were comfy with two pairs of sox and an old windjacket that had no buttons. From my extensive wardrobe at home I took a woollen tummy band, a balaclava and my yellow long pants that have been a constant companion over the years; yes, the same ones that have been with me in the Snowy Mountains, on top of Adams Peak in Ceylon, filtered my drinking water in Central Lombok, but they are not the ones that I have worn to the Opera House. Those ski-ing pants that I wore to Joan Sutherland's "Lucia" were my black ones. Where was I? Oh yes, equipment. I also took 23 shirts and 13 pairs of u/pants and singlets; a sleeping bag and a folding umbrella. You may well ask what does a mountaineer want with an umbrella. A simple answer will dispel those questions. It was there to fill up a hole in my rucksack. It was my ploy. The umbrella was full of holes and was broken anyway. My theory was to trick the would be thieves that abound in airports; rucksacks being open go. I would always pack the gear so that 3 inches of umbrella would always be poking out, and if anything was going to be stolen it would be that. It was never touched nor was anything else. Finally I took a packet of Aspros as my first-aid equipment.

Having not walked for 6 months and being physically unfit I decided to meet Frank and Helen in Darjeeling (they were fiddling in Burma whilst I was burning in Bangladesh). Walking around the bazaars in Darjeeling and visiting friends at Kalimpong on the Sikkim border and seeing the Tibetan Refugee Camp near the West Bengal/Nepalese border was the only training I had. It was more than enough. From these observations you, the reader, can see that there is no need for months of training; no need for special clothes. If you could speak Nepali or Tibetan it may help you at times, otherwise Hindi is quite sufficient. I had no trouble, although Frank was useless as you all can imagine and Helen could only speak Indonesian.

Back to our trip. With our walk permits all valid, we arrived at Pokhara late in the afternoon and commenced to walk due north until we

could find porters. Through the town - no porters! Passed the outer suburbs to the famous Shining Hospital; still no porters. Away up the valley could be seen the Tibetan Refugee Camp in the evening gloom. 25 minutes to go and I had a terrific headache, so much so I had to lay down when I reached the funny "hotel" and left the hiring of the porters to Helen and Frank. A big mistake. Was I cranky later on in the trip. The porters were to receive \$1 a day PLUS food. We were informed that porters supply their own food. And were they gigantic eaters; once they consumed 16 rupees over lunch and dinner between them. I kept recalling a movie of China made in the late 30s; the warlord's wife wouldn't feed her porters because "They will eat all our money up" and they were forced under the point of a gun to march until they dropped. Where was I? Ah yes, New Years Eve at our crazy hotel. Our room was in the middle of the road. Don't call me a liar. Ask Helen or Frank. It is true. The house was there long before the road and the 15ft wide road had a corner of the building askew plank in the middle of it.

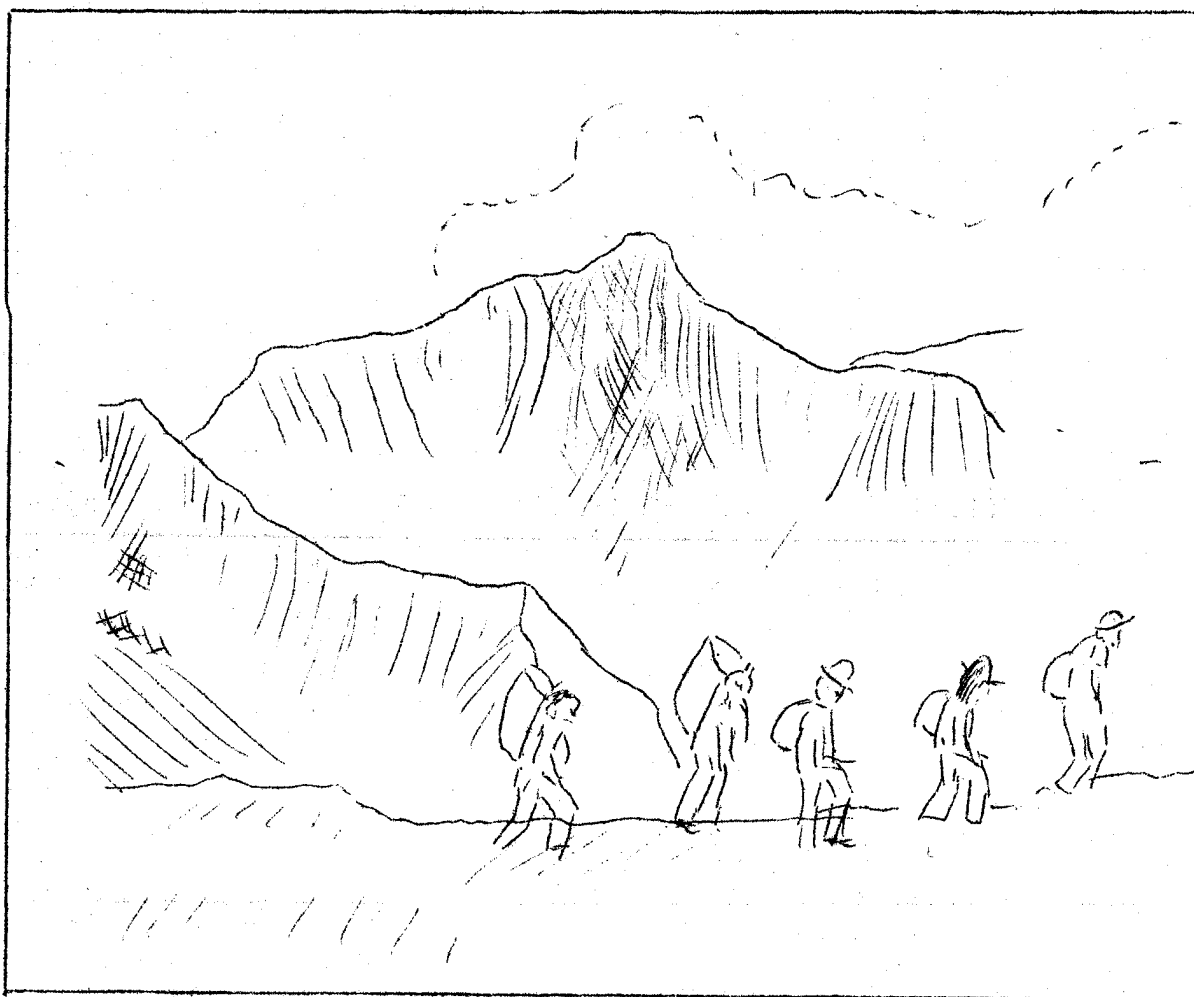
I was snoring around 8 p.m. all three of us in the same room. At dawn opened the window and lo! Guess what was in view. Macchupuchare (The Fishtail). I awoke my offsidiers and called "Here is my New Years present!" A glorious mountain, yet our route and destination lay further behind it and we were awaiting our porters for an early start. Breakfast was ordered for 7.30 and were surprised to find our porters were expecting breakfast too. To shame them into not eating much, we ate very sparingly. Back in civilization we all tend to eat too much anyway.

Our porters were very odd. Both Tibetan. The eldest had two cotton shirts and a pair of jeans; the youngest had 3 pairs of pants on and 4 shirts. No parkas, no balaclavas, no sox either, or gloves. The eldest had lice. The younger spoke English. Of course they were not really porters at all. It seems they had nothing to do and were just filling in time.

#### Our Journey.

Set out along this wide valley with snow peaks on one side and waltzed from tea shop to tea shop. A straw hut with a kettle boiling and the inevitable Tibetan lady and the basket of mandarins. At the bottom of a cliff the path stopped at a few huts and then the steps commenced. (Only a few thousand feet to lunch.) What sights there are; puny porters carrying baskets with holes in the back. Sick people are carried and face backwards. The young porters literally jump from step to step and the person being carried is jogged beyond belief. Still it is better than walking and I thought what a good idea. Quite reasonable, from memory it was 32 rupees a day (\$2). At the top of the hill was a village where we had lunch. It was nearly always omlette and tea. The shops had quite a remarkable lot of goods for sale. We would have no trouble in buying spray to drive away bed bugs.

We wound along a ridge always up, passing fields of what seems to be mustard seed or digitalis. Frank tried to lift a load that a Tibetan gent had just taken off. 20 gallons of kerosene and a sewing machine head. Impossible to move. Mule trails with lots of dull bells around their necks wind their way all the time. They have red plumes and exotic tails wound with red wool. The track is always interesting.



Men in nice suits carrying valises going from nowhere to nowhere; Nepali women in their colourful aprons carrying roofing slates that weigh 50 lbs; kids going to school (I wonder how Aussie youngsters would like climbing 3000 ft of a morning and returning at night - I saw this myself later at Gandrung, whilst recovering from hallucinatory experiences in the Dreaded Rhododendron Forest). Actually this is the main road to Tibet, rice goes northwards and salt goes south. Passes a village here and there, but mainly rice terraces all dry at the moment, this area has no water.

That evening we arrived at a village called Chandrakot, a collection of lodges all called Annapurna. Let me stop and I will in all modesty describe an overnight in a Tibetan inn. On the ground floor is a table and benches, with a kitchen attached. Rugs are always rolled up and you can grab one and plonk down, which our porters did. The aristocracy slept upstairs. The first floor is nothing but beds and blankets with a miniature window that is always closed. It is also the storeroom. Bags of dried corn cobs, rice, potatoes, etc., with bottles of rice wine, kero against the walls near the ladders. No stairs, I forgot to mention. There is no charge for accommodation. Dinner is always rice and a sprinkling of vegies, breakfast is fried egg (poached is cheaper - no oil, see!) with chappatis. There is never any washing facilities or any toilets of any description. You go anywhere. Seven rupees per person will cover all expenses bar wine. Seven rupees = 42c. Which is not too bad. Add lunch and say 8 cups of tea and the whole day will come to less than \$1 Aust.

Here in Chandrakot we came across a wide variety of walkers. Kiwis, Yanks, French and a weird Japanese family. The two-year old baby was carried by his own porter and had a sunshade. The proud parents were dripping with movie cameras and tape recorded the songs of passing locals. They gave us peanut butter sandwiches. The father was one of a group that a few years ago parachuted onto Everest and skied down it.

That morning from the front fence was a view of Annapurna 1 (or was it 2 or 3). Climbing down to the valley below, its snowy peak was always visible between the trees. I reached the swinging bridge and found the porters who said that they had no permits to go further, and so they said they would climb around the police checkpoint. I was to tell the police I had no porters. Then they vanished up a hill. Panic. Will they run off with all our gear. I rush back to find my assistants, calmly drinking tea. I went berserk. I had been waiting 30 minutes and Frank and Helen couldn't have cared less. A foreboding of things to come. (Little did I think that in less than 4 days, a mutiny would occur in our party.) I persuaded them to rush through the village and chase our absconding, thieving, always hungry porters. We finally found them sitting in the sun, acting casual.

Thackeray if he was writing this episode would have noticed the sheer 1000 ft cliffs covered in moss and vines, described in detail how the filtered sunshine sparkled in the limpid pools, have mentioned the contrasts between the harsh natural marble river bed and the light airy faerie nothingness of the ferns and Daphne bushes that surround you on all sides. He would have described with loving detail how the hot sun sent its shiny shafts into the gloomy Rhododendron forests, of how every limb was covered

in moss with hairs 5" long and giving that 'Merlin will appear any minute' feeling. As it was all I saw were the faces of our porters. They hadn't nicked off after all. With relief we walked on to a swinging bridge where we were going to stop at a nearby hamlet for lunch. Seated at an inn were three New Zealanders that we had passed here and there; they shouted "We've eaten the only egg in the village". Consternation. Our porters laughed and said that there will be another egg in the next one. Right they were.

I never mentioned the episode of serenading a Tibetan family of porters. Helen and I came across Mother-Father-Son all resting their awe-inspiring loads. I said "Let's sing them a song". Helen answered "That would be absolutely fantasmagorical. What will we sing?" says I, "How about 'Down By The Station Early In The Morning'?" When we finished (we gave them actions as well) they sat stoney-faced, immobile, neither blinking nor smiling nor anything. Had they turned into stone? "Let's give them 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'" I said. We hadn't finished when the New Zealanders arrived too and they joined in this famous Australasian Hymn. When we all finished we bowed and stood our ground. It seems we were all invisible. Never in the history of mankind could such a thing occur again, unless you sing another group of songs to more Tibetan porters.

Back to our lunch spot. The porters pointed up in the air and said that is where we'll stay for the night. Up in the clouds perched on a cliff was Helle. Only 3000 ft up all those stairs. Horse trains passed us coming down as did a young chap carrying a dead body strapped onto a basket on his back. Climbing became so hot I decided to take my yellow pants off and walk in my underpants. (My singlet came down to my knees.) The local maidens always giggled when they saw me and they made vulgar signs with their index finger assuming I had nothing on underneath. I would stop still, and then when they were silent and still, I would whip up my singlet. Screams of laughter would echo in the valleys. It became my standard trick.

Helle was a 5 house village and I bought a tin of condensed milk in a pokey shop. Saw some Coca Cola too. Next morning we were to climb to 10,000 ft through dark forests, so we went to bed early, about 8. Next morn we climbed up and up; such Rhododendrons (as big as 300 year old oaks) but only in bud. For lunch that day a rare treat. The porters were amazed when we had a spoonful of condensed milk, each spoonful carefully placed in each palm of the hand.

Up and up and the porters and my two offsidiers were far ahead when I decided to have a short lay down in the sun underneath some pink rhododendrons. I was attacked by hallucinations. Vivid dreams yet I was awake. Too weird to write down. I got a trifle worried and decided to catch the party up. Helen was drinking tea and Frank was looking at monkeys. I told them what had happened and we all laughed.

Up on the horizon was the mountain pass of Gorepanne (Horses Water) and we arrived at 4 p.m. We dumped our baggage in a most fabulous inn, and zoomed up another 500 ft to the top of the pass and a hill to the left. This view is the best we saw. The entire western Himalayas with Dalaghiri at the centre. To our right was Annapurna 1, 2, 3 and behind us was Macchupuchare. \*\*\*\*\* (Owen's story continues next month!)

OBITUARY

It is with the deepest regret  
that we record the passing away  
on 13th. April, 1976, of

JACK DEBERT.

aged 76 years.

Jack was a Foundation Member  
of the Sydney Bush Walkers  
and contributed significantly  
to its formation and growth.  
He held the office of Club  
President in 1928/29 and was  
a member of the Editorial  
Committee in 1936 as well as  
carrying out many other functions.  
He will be sadly missed by all  
those who knew him.



THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

by Jim Brown.

The Annual General Meeting of '76 could be counted a highly successful affair; although attendance was not high - starting at about 45 and building up to something like 60 at its peak - there was a surprising amount of competition for the offices, including even two candidates for the Treasurer's task, and an agreeable good-humoured approach to any questions that arose.

First, two new members were welcomed - Bill Blackburn and John Fox -- and we heard the February Minutes, with no questions arising. Correspondence contained the usual bulletins and magazines, a letter recording the payment by the Electricity Commission of \$150 for the damage caused at Coolana by the easement for a transmission line, and the notice of rates by Shoalhaven Council on the property, which also amounts to about \$150 and will be settled in quarterly instalments. A further item related to an amendment to the Myall Lakes National Park and to this Alex Colley, Conservation Secretary, indicated he had prepared a reply saying the proposal represents quite a pleasing improvement, as it means most of the lake foreshores will be reserved as parkland and there will be a strip of rural land which may not be developed bordering the Park. However, the Club considers (Alex continued) that the whole of the area should be reserved and embodied in the Park. The Club affirmed its support of this answer.

Next the special Annual Meeting affairs with the Annual Report and then the Financial Statement being taken as read and adopted without quibble. Standing orders were suspended to allow election of officers to go on concurrently with other normal business, the system of voting was agreed (first past the post), and Craig Shappert, Peter Miller and Peter Scandrett undertook to be scrutineers. A question was raised about the admissibility of proxy votes and after thought the President ruled that, as we had not recognised them before and there had not been any prior arrangements made, they could not be accepted.

The voting, which then got under way, went on in quite an animated fashion, with two or more people offering themselves for most of the posts. The results were given in the March magazine.

In intervals between electing officials, we learned that the ready cash in our account at end of February stood at \$1189, and then launched into a recital of walks activities which was interrupted on several occasions to proceed with voting.

The report commenced with Jim Vatiliotis' trip (inherited from John Redfern) into the Splendour Rock area on 13-15th February: 13 rolled up, including 11 prospectives and all went as programmed. Over the same weekend a trip to be led by David Rostron into the Kowmung Gorge area was scrubbed off because of the abundance of water, but the two day walks went as scheduled. An account of your reporter's descent on a nudist colony at Werong (in company with 25 walkers) appeared last month and the

jointly led trip by Elaine Brown and Len Newland in Kangaroo Creek found trails overgrown, but the walking quite pleasant.

Over the weekend 20-22nd February Oliver Crawford took a trip into the Bungonia territory. Evidently the way down was in a rather precipitous creek and as the Shoalhaven was not reached till late Saturday afternoon, the trip was curtailed to return via Mt. Ayre. Down in the valley below Blackheath, Jeff Bridger led an energetic day walk in wettish conditions, with 8 starters: emerging from the valley about 5 p.m., there was still a moderate trudge through continuing rain back to Govetts Leap lookout where the cars had been left. The other day walk was conducted by Roy Braithwaite, with 8 or 9 people. There were intermittent showers and the return was short-circuited to avoid over-indulging the leech population in the Palm Jungle.

For the final weekend of February, Alastair Battye had a team down in the Wolgan Valley, looking for the southern leg of a pass which goes over the divide into the Capertee. The ascent to the plateau was quite successful, but as the weather broke down and since the Capertee Pass was already known, the party returned to Newnes. Bill Burke's party to the Shoalhaven numbered  $5\frac{1}{2}$  (there was an 8-year-old along). Bill reported the trip "gets better every year", there was a lot of water flowing through the boulders of Bungonia Gorge, and the 8-year-old, pushing through the scrub in Barber's Creek, said there "was no time to cry".

Of Margaret Reid's trip to Rocky Ponds on 29th February, Marcia Shappert reported 30 present, pleasant weather, and said it was her first walk in about 4 years. On to the final weekend reported, when Roy Higginbotham's Christy's Creek trip was scrubbed because of diabolical weather in the preceding week, and David Rostron's programmed jaunt suffered the same fate. At Coolana George Gray had a working bee, which advanced hut construction quite a way: a fortnight before another working bee had laid in the water supply line. Finally Kath Brown's day walk to Burning Palms had 19 people, and the jaunt went as planned, with lush wet weather growth everywhere around.

Arising from the Federation report (included in the March issue) Dot Butler suggested some funds may be available from the Paddy Pallin Foundation to assist production of a "de luxe" magazine to celebrate the Club's 50th birthday in 1977. As an alternative Kath Brown wondered if some funds would be available for the acquisition of more gear suitable for beginners at the walking game as part of the Club's equipment hire service.

The only topic which really brought earnest debate was the fixing of the Club's annual subscription and entrance fee. Retiring Treasurer Frank Roberts, pointed to a fairly heavy excess of expenditure over income on magazine production, and since this could be expected to inflate with higher postages, proposed that subscriptions rise by \$1.50. Other speakers came in, both for and against. Kath Brown suggested it was scarcely fair to treat the magazine as a separate item, since the Club's circulars and walks programmes went out with it. Bill Burke mentioned

that more than a year's supply of covers were already printed and the cost would be stable therefore. So long as we covered expenditure, it should be enough. He agreed that the price for magazine subscription alone (for non-active members or other subscribers) should rise to a more realistic figure. Neville Page, the Editor, felt an increase was justified with the small profit in the past year and Marcia Shappert said \$1.50 represented 3 cents per week. After Owen Marks had spoken of "Auditors and Treasurers always going berserk about subscription increases", Dot Butler proposed an amendment - an increase of \$1.00 and this was accepted by mover and seconder and replaced the original motion.

Gladys Roberts now put up a second amendment - an increase of 50 cents only, and the mover this time did not rise to the bait. After further talking in which Alastair Battye wondered if the incoming Treasurer had experience in "deficit budgeting", the second amendment was lost, and the motion as originally amended was carried. Thus subscriptions become - Single full member \$8.50, married couple \$10.50, students \$5.00 and magazine subscriptions (alone) \$4.00.

Spiro Hajinakitas had a constitutional amendment, and it was carried without dissent, once it was made known that it merely brought the majority required to amend the pattern test walks to the same proportion as any other amendment to the Constitution, namely 3/5th of those voting.

We had almost got to the announcements and advertisements section, when Peter Miller moved (and it was carried with acclamation) that we carry a vote of thanks to the retiring Committee. Having said it once - only to have another question raised briefly afterwards - the retiring President, Barry Wallace, tapped the Bone tenderly on the table and said in the time-honoured phrase "Let us Re-une". It was just on 10.25 p.m.

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THE SOUTH-WEST OF THE SOUTH-WEST.

PART I

by Frank Rigby.

One sunny day in 1971 I stood on top of the New Harbour Range which encloses the western side of Tasmania's Cox Bight. The view along the south coast towards South-West Cape was, I recall, exciting - a succession of blue bays, white beaches and rocky headlands, with the mountains rising beyond. Impressions of wild beauty and utter remoteness stayed with me for five years, until I could resist the invitation no longer.

Christmas Eve, 1975; breakfast at home in Canberra, out of the big jet at Hobart Airport, straight into a tiny plane and a cut lunch on the beach at Cox Bight for Joan and me. The physical transition from ordered Canberra to the Tasmanian wilderness is too rapid for the mental adjustment that comes more slowly. A cold southerly is whipping into the Bight and scudding clouds with the menace of rain give us a typical Tassie welcome; but it does not really matter, because the weather clothes the South-West landscape with that incomparable atmosphere that seems to belong so well. And anyway, we have twelve days ahead of us to do our thing.

Sleep soundly to the lullaby of a roaring surf and a new day is early upon us. Strangely, the overcast dissolves into a blue vault in the space of thirty minutes and our world is born anew; sunlight glitters everywhere, bouncing back from water, sand and quartzite peak, and it feels really great to be alive. It happens to be Christmas Day back in the turmoil of civilisation but here it is nothing more than Day 2 for us. Indeed, the rest of mankind and its institutions might have suddenly ceased to exist for we have five kilometers of beach to ourselves; there is only simplicity, peace and beauty and I begin to wonder if we ourselves are unwelcome intruders, who perhaps should not have entered this place.

Day 3 begins all hustle and bustle, and we are away with 38 pounds on our backs, a mild shock on a morning with the promise of heat to come. On the route to "Melaleuca" we meet a couple doing the South Coast Track, our last human contact for nine days. Below Half Woody Hill (how aptly named!) we forsake the beaten track for unfamiliar territory. The first test comes quickly at the crossing of Melaleuca Creek where it takes half-an-hour to thrash a way through a hundred yards of scrub! But that's Tasmania, though fortunately not all over. Plod over the button grass in the growing heat to the foot of Melaleuca Range, where we shelter in a few square feet of shade for lunch and watch a leech take ten minutes to traverse four feet of Tasmania to get at me; nice to know there's something slower than ourselves in this country. Then it is sweat and toil up the shadeless spur of the range; in the whole blue dome there is not even a wisp of cloud and the radiation is intense - is this really Tassie or have we made a terrible mistake somewhere? But there's no doubt about the tremendous landscape opening up around us as we climb. Gaze in awe at that saw-tooth skyline to the north and that great finger thrusting above all else further over to the east, for the Western Arthurs and Federation Peak are sunbaking today. On top of the range at last and we pick up the staked route to Window Pane Bay. Downhill now and at 7.30 p.m. we collapse onto a small but pleasant campsite, carved out of the forest concealing Window Pane Creek. It is a little bit of heaven after a long and tiring day.

It is well into Day 4 before we are atop the South-West Cape Range and having our first glimpse of the west coast. It is strikingly beautiful; to the north Port Davey and its offshore islands, below us Window Pane Bay like a big blue jewel. The curving stretch of its beach is dissected by the Cola-coloured channel of Window Pane Creek and behind is the green forest, through which the Hobart Walking Club has mercifully cut a track. We cannot wait to get down; and awaiting us where the creek meets the beach is quite the prettiest coast campsite I have known.

It is not hard to be a lotus-eater in such a place, so we stay put the next day too, the fourth in a row full of golden sunshine. At 9 p.m. a flattened fireball of a sun quenches itself in the southern ocean and an hour later it is dark enough to go to bed - one must not waste the precious hours of darkness for they are indeed brief. Window Pane Bay is unique but we must get on with the walk.

Day 6 is planned for early up-and-doing, a day to ride the crest of the South-West Cape Range, the route to the Cape itself. If only the weather will hold!

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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\*\*\*\*\* E Q U I P M E N T \*\*\*\*\*

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# WALKING IN ZULULAND

by Patrick McBride.

Last December I spent two fascinating and very enjoyable weeks in South Africa and Rhodesia, most of it not relevant to bushwalking, so I am going to restrict this article to the part that is; the three days I spent on foot in the Umfolozi Nature Reserve. This reserve is just under 50,000 hectares in area, about half the size of the Blue Mountains National Park, and is situated in Zululand, in the north-east of the Republic. Approximately one-third is open to visitors and criss-crossed with roads along which they may drive and view the game; the rest is kept as a wilderness area and visitors are only allowed entry on a twice-weekly "Wilderness Trail" which lasts three days.

I drove up from Durban on the Friday afternoon, equipped with a box of groceries from Woolworths (usual disclaimers) on the back seat and my trusty Spiro Ketas sandals on the floor beside me. Since no vehicles are allowed to travel the reserve after sunset I had allowed myself plenty of time and it was still mid-afternoon when I pulled into Masinda, the starting point for Wilderness Trails. There was hardly time to notice the round thatched buildings and neatly trimmed lawn before I was meeting the other members of the party and Allen Hallett, the Trails Officer who was to accompany us. They were mildly surprised to learn I was from overseas as these walking trails are well off the normal tourist beat, and they had assumed I was a Jo'burg man because of the car registration.

We were relaxing outside our huts afterwards in deck chairs, enjoying the last rays of sunlight and scanning the hillside opposite with binoculars when I had my first introduction to the style of African hiking ("bushwalking" is a term unknown to the local folk). One of the Zulu staff came to collect the provisions we wanted cooked that night, and having given him the steak and veges, we settled back to our remote game spotting. Before dark we were able to tally three rhinos and numerous wildebeeste and zebras. Then at the appointed time we adjourned inside the hut and the three cooks turned up, laden with steaming, covered plates and proceeded to lay the table. Much the same system applied at camps on the trail except that instead of a linen tablecloth we had a tarpaulin spread on the ground. It was never necessary for us to do menial chores such as firelighting or washing up. The rest of the party were less impressed by all this; they had houseboys at home and took such attention as a matter of course. I really don't know how I'll manage back in Australia - perhaps I should look for some gullible prospectives.

The following morning was cool and sunny and we set off soon after breakfast, walking in single file with the Trails Officer in the lead and a non-white ranger, also armed, bringing up the rear. This may seem undesirable regimentation in what should be one of the most free of sports, but the presence of dangerous animals makes an armed and experienced guide a reasonable safety measure. In practice the trail

was just like a three-day bushwalk with the Trails Officer as leader and the party proved one of the most easy-going and companionable groups I have walked with. Never did I feel a stranger in a strange land.

The bushveld through which we travelled was curiously park-like, consisting of gently rolling hills with a grass cover and scattered low trees, hardly the sort of background one expects for some of the world's largest and fiercest wildlife. Except on the borders of the river few of the trees stood taller than 5 metres and both leaves and grass were of a rich green colour, almost artificial-looking to Australian eyes.

We followed the trail upwards to a small hill which dropped away sharply on the other side to the river. Here was a large rock which made an excellent lookout point and we sat down and relaxed to admire the view below us. The bed of the river was wide and choked with sandbanks, a result of farming methods up-river which cause severe erosion and fast run-off. The water itself was muddy and slow moving. On the opposite bank tall spreading fig trees shaded an expanse of bright green grass which gave way to bushveld further inland. A troop of baboons was squabbling somewhere on the scarp below us and a flock of heron-like birds were calling with raucous voices as they flew along the water.

Our rest over, we scrambled down to the border and waded across the Umfolozi, a procedure I got to know quite well. The water was warm, gently flowing and up to the waist in depth. Somehow it happened that lunch, or evening camp, was always on the opposite bank of the river.

Our two nights on the trail were spent at a semi-permanent camp beside the White Umfolozi River where we enjoyed the luxury of tents and stretchers. The only other furniture was the seating round the campfire which consisted of two logs and a rhino skull so the wilderness aspect was well maintained. There was an unobtrusive enclosing fence of wire netting and thornbush and we were told this was a fairly recent innovation. Earlier parties had had the excitement of discovering lion wandering through the camp at night and Park officials felt it was only a matter of time before someone was taken. We ourselves were quite happy to have the fence there.

As far as walking itself went the pace was leisurely and we covered about 16 km each day, mostly following pads made by the animals, although the countryside is open enough to allow walking in any direction. Our provisions and gear for the night were carried in on asses so we had no more than cameras, binoculars and lunch to weigh us down. Temperatures were mild in the morning turning to hot and humid by midday and then in the early afternoon a brief thunderstorm generally occurred to bring cooler conditions. We spent the hottest part of the day with a lunch stop and siesta, after cooling ourselves off with a swim in the river. There are crocodiles in the Umfolozi but the water is too muddy to see them and no-one seems much concerned.

What made this trip out of the ordinary was the feeling of excitement always present; of not knowing what animal might lie ahead behind a bush

or over the next rise. The richness of South African fauna is incredible and makes the Australian bush seem a desert by comparison. It was a rare ten minutes that we did not catch sight of nyala, warthog or a herd of impala or hear the sneezy snorts of wildebeeste as they sensed our presence. Teeming with game is the only expression.

Despite the numbers of the wildlife, and particularly of rhino, dangerous encounters are rare and we had only one mildly alarming experience.

The party was filing down a gentle slope of scattered thornbush and rather more strung out than was desirable. While not actually drowsy the heat of the afternoon and the steady walking had us less alert than usual. I was walking right at the back and closest to the Zulu boy when he clicked a warning and pointed to a clump of bushes ahead. Two rhino were resting there, partly concealed and motionless, no doubt half asleep on this warm afternoon. A couple of seconds later before we could warn them the front of the party nearly walked into the rhino and man and beast suddenly became aware of each other.

With a muffled snort the rhino dashed to the side and then stopped abruptly, looking very agitated as they tried to size up the situation. Their agility and speed was amazing and quite alarming at such close quarters. Allen and his offsider had just moved to action stations between us and the rhino when the latter displayed their renowned unpredictability and charged. Before we had time to seek safety in the nearest tree (and six of us would have looked funny trying to all fit in a three-metre thornbush) two quick shots rang out as Allen fired near the feet of the leading rhino and caused them both to veer away from us.

When the sound of heavy bodies crashing through the bush had died away we settled down in the shade to let our adrenalin burn off and someone asked Allen the inevitable question -- Which animal did he consider the most dangerous? At the time the rest of us had the feeling it ought to be rhino but he nominated lion, giving as reason that he had had more dangerous encounters with lion. His rifle holds three bullets and the first is always a soft-nosed one to stop a charging lioness.

All too quickly the three days were up and we found ourselves back at Masinda, regretting the end of the walk and exclaiming what a pity it was to have to return to our work-a-day lives -- at least the others were, I was still on holidays!

Seeing Africa this way left a very vivid impression and I can still recall the exhilaration of walking the bushveld as I write these lines. If you get the chance to visit Africa, take it.

Not all hiking in South Africa is like the Wilderness Trail and there are many Reserves without dangerous animals such as Giants Castle where normal hiking is practised. If you wish to walk in Umfolozi it is necessary to book about three months ahead and further details may be obtained from the writer or from:- Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board, P.O. Box 662, Pietermaritzburg, R.S.A.

\* \* \* \* \*



WERONG - FEBRUARY, 1976.

by Jim Brown.

Returning from a telephone discussion with Editor Neville Page about the material in a forthcoming magazine, Kath said: "Neville wants me to write something about the nudists we saw at Werong. I don't know about that. It's no use just giving the bare facts. You've got to develop a theme and dress it up a bit."

Now I know Kath doesn't make corny gags like that - she leaves that side of the coin to me. But what can I say except give the unadorned facts?

It was the day walk of 15th February - a sultry, sticky day if ever. At Otford Station we had 20 starters, with five of the Younger clan to join us on the top road. Explaining what was ahead of us, I told the party we would go over the hill, down to Bulgo, along the rocks to Werong or Hell Hole Beach, which I said "was one of those nominated as a legitimate nude bathing beach, but because of the difficulty of approach, I didn't think anyone would take it up".

Well, that's where I was wrong. We went up a hill, down a hill, and along about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of rocks in the oppressive heat, and when we got to Werong, the nudists were there. About 25 or 30 people were at Werong, and of these perhaps 10 or 12 male bathers or sunbakers were in a state of nature. Of the 3 or 4 women present all were wearing bikinis or more.

Having a mixed party including some of reasonably tender years, I decided to consult an oracle. The only oracle available was another Past President in Bob Younger and he wasn't much help. I asked him if he intended to be "with it" and then, as an afterthought "or without it". He told me it was a damned ambiguous question and he proposed not to be with it or without it. In fact, all the walkers bathed in conspicuous respectability, and retreated up to the hillside for lunch.

Observations so far suggested the Werong contingent was made up of habitues. Of those on the beach only one or two had a white-skinned area around the loins indicating they usually wore trunks. I felt sure the savage sun of 15th February would soon broil them. I found myself humming over and over that old ballad:-

"Now Sinbad was a sailor and you know what sailors are - - -  
(Here a missing couplet I couldn't remember)

He saw a batch of mermaids combing out their locks.  
The naked truth upset him and he ended on the rocks."

The mermaids never appeared. Werong is no place for the male voyeur. It may qualify for Cleo magazine. I did notice that the lantana around Werong is thicker than usual, but someone seems to have been at some pains to clear the tracks. I can understand that. I would clear the lantana if I were in the habit of going about in the altogether. About 2.30 p.m. we finally left Werong and its swinging colony to the sun and surf and the lantana. On the way up the track we passed several parties still moving towards the beach. Maybe the place is growing notorious. \* \* \* \* \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

# REUNION

# '76

By  
Puffing  
Billy

There I was, enjoying my super-lightweight, multi-purpose, fully-collapsible aluminium chair when Spiro insinuated himself into the group with that confidential, moustachioed, you-can't-say-no smile of his.

"We've just decided," said he, "that you're writing up the reunion."

"And who is we?" I demanded imperiously.

"Well," responded Spiro, his all-seeing, all-knowing, black eyes darting around in search of hypothetical conspirators, "Me and - er - Helen and -er - Dot and ....."

"Say no more," I urged. "With enemies like that, who dares refuse?" So here it is.

- - - - -

Having read the instructions and listened attentively to Dot Butler's spiel at the Annual General, we parked the car and looked around for the promised bamboo tent poles. "Have to find them," I assured my chauffeur. "Remember, Dot said she'd put them here because tent poles and timber are scarce at the camping spot."

Bamboo tent poles? Never a sign of bamboo tent poles. Muttering curses at the perfidy of women and Dot in particular, we started down the hill, gathering tent-poles, abdul sticks and scarce-at-the-camping-spot firewood.

Somewhere down the hill, staggering along behind my armful of timber, I suddenly found people ... and tents ... and camp fires ... and Putto making johnny cakes ... and Dot.

"Where's those !!?!?! bamboo tent poles!" I roared at her. "Why, right here," she answered with a you-couldn't-be-angry-with-me smile (oh, couldn't I?). "I thought I'd save you all the trouble and bring them down."

Having too much appreciation of the ridiculous to be angry for long, (and don't you need it in S.B.W.), we forgave her and set about reuning. Having also an appreciation of the priorities, we unfolded the chairs, broke out the necessities from the esky, settled back with a couple of iced tubes and remarked in plaintive, suitably-loud voices that we couldn't have lunch yet, as we'd first have to pitch the tent and stow the gear because rain was threatening. And lo! a good fairy appeared beside us; and the good fairy was Margaret Putt; and each hand was proffering one of Putto's johnny cakes; and if you haven't tasted Putto's johnny cakes, you've missed the next best thing to sex.

Lunch over and tent up, we made our first inspection of the S.B.W. hectares comprising Coolana. From the group near the terrace earmarked for the reunion campfire, we proceeded down the road past the spot where the Browns were dining in regal seclusion - until later comers blossomed their site into a satellite village. Not the Snow Browns, mark you;

the Kath and Jim Browns. The Snow Browns, along with the Don Finches, had given advance notice of non-attendance due to high states of being in the pudding club. Had they forgotten that Woods Creek reunion years ago, with Kath McInnes looking the shape of an uncooked damper? No panic, you'll remember - Debbie didn't arrive for another 36 hours. Whew!

Suddenly, as we rounded a curve and dipped over a hill, our ears were assailed by sounds of voices commanding, hammers hammering and femals chattering. And right there, before our boggling eyes was a skeleton: the skeleton of a monstrous shelter shed, with foremen Gray, Shappert, Beck, Hodgson, Cotton and Vaattiliottis (as Spiro said, you can't spell these Greek names in strine) supervising a whole anthill of workers.

How was that for opportunism? A reunion-full of journeymen, wives and sweethearts. And if you cybernetics merchants ever wanted a lesson in control, you got it when someone hit Hans Beck's finger with a heavy setting maul. In deference to the ladies and the kids, not a syllable escaped his grimacing lips. But, oh my! did his Adam's apple work overtime.

With the trusses up, a truce was called, buckets were filled from the laid-on water supply, and we dispersed to our respective camp sites, spread over the hillside from the camp fire to the lush green banks by the river.

Came dark, the fun began. Under the batton of maestro Bob Younger, by the light of the Putt-Hajinaketas bonfire, we romped melodiously through the song sheet, to the accompaniment of Bob Hodgson's and Peter Scandrett's mouth organs. Interspersed, of course, with literary, dramatic (?) and comic gems along the way.

Dot Butler spun us the great Gilbertian yarn of the "Nancy Bell". An "elderly naval man" in the form of a white-bearded Jim Brown, with crew by way of Barry Wallace, Craig Shappert, Bob Younger, Spiro and midshipmite Susan Gray and various others ...

" ..... gave a hitch to his trousers which  
Is a trick all seamen larn,  
And having got rid of a thumping quid  
He spun this painful yarn."

We were then regaled with the story of how J.B. was marooned with his fellow mariners and in the last dire distress of starvation ate them all up (even Spiro!) until in the end:

" He never larfs, and he never smiles  
And he never larks nor plays,  
But he sits and croaks, and a single joke  
He has, which is to say:  
'Oh, I am the cook, and the captain bold  
And the mate of the Nancy brig,  
And the bosun tight and the midshipmite  
And the crew of the captain's gig.'"

Lest we should doubt their virtuosity, a quartet of the same crew, miraculously reincarnated, with Jim Brown as the chair-leech, recreated the February general meeting of the Burning Palms Chapter of the Blood-suckers of Australia. Commencing with their entreaty to the Great Leech Above:

"Blood, blood, beautiful blood,  
Warms your inside when you're crawling through mud,  
So send us a scout troop,  
We don't care what blood group,  
And see us go loop-loop  
For their beautiful blood."

They continued their deliberations until walkers were seen coming down the Squeeze Hole track, when they closed with the anthem:

"With joy we watch our prey parade  
Over mossy logs thru' jungle shade  
Resting their limbs in grassy glade -  
In grassy glade.  
And always we have found before  
They bring to us a goodly store  
Of flowing, red, nutritious gore.  
Bushwalkers, bushwalkers,  
Our old bloody mates!"

Next in line was Owen Marks, usurping S.A. Premier Don Dunstan's poetry-reading talents. He chose a 40-page story, drama, tragedy and comedy (with Owen, it had to be all four) on the theme,

"The Lady Jane was tall and slim,  
The Lady Jane was fair;  
And Sir Thomas, her Lord, was stout of limb,  
But his cough was short, and his eyes were dim,  
And he wore green "specs" with a tortoiseshell rim,  
And his hat was remarkably broad in the brim,  
And she was uncommonly fond of him,  
And they were a loving pair."

But alas and alack! There was also another lover.

Dung Khan, the Dalai Lama, was just loosening his vocal chords for a special request; but was eclipsed by the sudden onset of the initiation of new members. Carol Gibbons, Rudolph Werner, Frank Roberts, Stephen Knightley, Bill Blackburn and John Fox were blindfolded, paired off and given spoons and billies of porridge with which to feed each other. Bill Blackburn's beard adorned with smears of goo is a sight to make even strong men split their sides, but alas! the expected sight of "Stephanie" Knightley's long blonde locks encased in porridge did not eventuate because Frank Roberts was just too, too wily. He instructed Stephanie to blow and simply followed the aeolian pathway to the target. Shame!

Among all this, it was discovered that Robyn Preston has always excaped initiation. A wild bush chase in the dark failed to capture her, but - - she'll keep!

As signals from the subsidiary fire made it known that supper was nearly cooked, Helen Gray was inducted as our new President with that unique mixture of pomp and comic relief that only hoary Past Presidents and the S.B.W. rabble can amalgamate. As our fourth woman President, Helen was vested with the President's symbols of office. Jim Brown,

Barry Wallace, Spiro Hajinaketas, Frank Rigby, Bob Younger and Ron Knightley were enough to hang her with Harry Savage's beautifully carved horn flannel-flower, clasped hands, boot and map of Australia. Plus, of course, the Bone.

The moment for salivating now having arrived, we all queued up for the snag sandwiches and tomato sauce. Women and children last, would you believe?

Sunday morning brought back the hammering hammers again as the roof went up on the shed, the Frank Rigbys cooked their breakfast in last night's embers, Don Matthews lurked over all with his telephoto lens, and the damper contest proceeded. Some there were reluctant to enter the contest, pleading that they had no flour. But Spiro, that master politician who disarms all logic, produced ten kilos of it, free!

At 10.30, the cry of "Here Come The Judge!" called the assembled cooks and onlookers to attention. For the benefit of new members - and, we hope, for some of the cooks - the Judge explained that a damper contest, as all could see from the results displayed, is divided into a number of subsections: the true, or damper subsection; the chapattie subsection; the johnny-cake subsection; the meadow-cake subsection; and the charcoal subsection. Moreover, it is an art, fit only for the purist; with flour, water and salt as the only permissible ingredients - no additives like eggs, butter, milk, sticks, raw sausages, rum or dirt from under the fingernails.

Possessing, himself, a slight pollution of the taste buds, he called upon a substitute taster in the form of Helen Rowen, who showed her true diplomacy by declaring a dead heat, one female and one male - the creators thereof being Joan Rigby and Frank Roberts. "And they used my flour!" bemoaned the dethroned champion, Spiro.

As we repaired to the river where hardy types like Bob Hodgson, Jim Vatiliotis, Peter Stitt and various kinder went for a voluntary swim (and Dot Stitt went for a not-so-voluntary one), we were joined by the Frank Youngs from across the river by canoe, Rowen ma and pa from Bundanoon, and the Raymondes, with Dorothy Hasluck, from being lost the night before. They had read the instructions and knew there'd be a sign to point the way. But who, in the dark and the rain, would know that a sign saying "M.B.S." was actually "S.B.W." upside down?

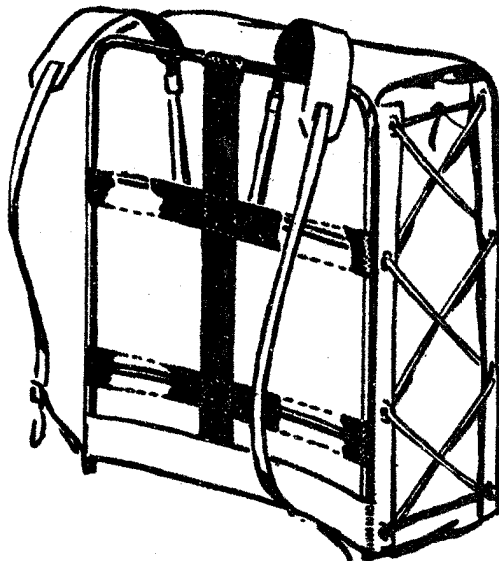
And so the weekend was nearly over. We went back to our fire, eased our way between the various McInneses who'd taken it over, emptied the osky, folded the chairs and motored home.

But not, of course, before consulting Jim Brown's computer which had faithfully kept track of the pulsating hordes to record 58 adults including 20 with more than 20 years' membership apiece, plus 20 children and Geoffrey McInnes. Fair dinkum, he's a different species, that one; when he grows up, he'll outdo Spiro, Paul Hogan and his mum all rolled in together.

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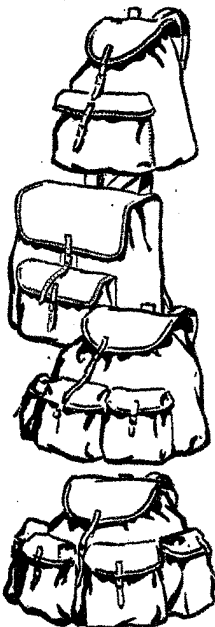
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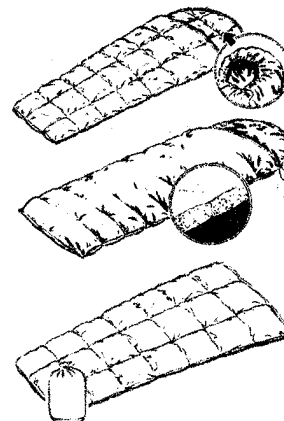
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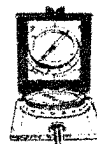
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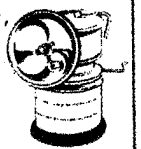
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Magazine subscriptions for non-members	\$4.00

Subscriptions may be paid to Jim Vatiliotis (Treasurer) or John Holly in the club rooms or may be posted to:-

The Treasurer,  
The Sydney Bush Walkers,  
Box 4476 G.P.O. Sydney. 2001.

Note:- Receipts for payments by cheque will not be posted out unless requested.

\*\*\*\*\*

WALKS NOTES.

by Len Newland.

The winter walks programme is due for publication shortly, so I would like to ask all members to consider walks for that programme now.

The walks for May are:-

- 7, 8, 9 - A test walk at Kanangra Walls presented by Tom Wenman.
- 8, 9 - Barbara Evans and Ian Waltmarsh have a medium standard walk from Wentworth Falls to Mt. Solitary.
- Sunday 9 - Another test walk, this time at Cowan. The leader is Peter Miller.
- 8 - 23 - Victor Lewin presents the sequel to his grand tour in Lamington National Park last year.
- 14,15,16 - Neville Page is giving an on-site lesson in finding your way about - at Bonnum Pic, where this ability can be very useful.
- 14,15,16 - Hans Beck leads a 36 km walk on the Nattai River.
- Sunday 16 - A nice pleasant day in the hands of Gladys Roberts at Bobbin Head.
- 21,22,23 - Another test walk at Kanangra, led on this occasion by Tony Marshall.



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May

21,22,23 - In the Yerranderie area, Bill Burke is running another walk of test standard - from Bat's Camp.

Sunday 23 - Margaret Reid's outing from Wondabyne to Pindar Cave - an easy day walk. Please board the 8.30 C train in the last carriage. Wondabyne station is so small that this is the only carriage that stops at the platform.

28,29,30 - Walks from a base camp at Airly (Glen Davis area), led by John Redfern.

28,29,30 - Hilltop to the Nattai River with Barbara Evans.

Sunday 30 - Joe Marton leads the way to Mt. Solitary and all the scenic wonder of the Blue Mountains at Katoomba. A very early start.

Sunday 30 - The Bundeena - Marley walk. Travel by relaxing ferry to nice seabord bush, led by David Ingram.

\*\*\*\*\*

OBSERVER'S NOTEBOOK

The stork has certainly been busy this month:

Firstly, to Snow Brown and Clarrie was born a son, whom they have decided to call Ross.  
And to Don and Heather Finch, a daughter by name of Kylie.  
Congratulations to both couples from all your bushwalking friends.

\*\*\*\*\*

Stephen Harvey will soon be moving to Melbourne because of a job transfer. Stephen holds two official positions with the Club; that of Federation Delegate (with Committee representation) and Equipment Hire Officer. Because of his transfer, Stephen has had to resign these positions which means they will be thrown open for election at the May General Meeting. If you wish to make a nomination, or volunteer yourself for either of these positions, come along to the May meeting.

\*\*\*\*\*

OWEN'S THEATRE PARTY A theatre party has been organised by Owen Marks to see the Swedish film version of "The Magic Flute" on Monday 3rd. May. Price per seat is \$2.50. If interested speak to Owen and reserve your place/s. His telephone number is 30.1827.

\*\*\*\*\*

BUSHWALKERS' BARBECUE EVENING

A barbecue is to be held in honour of Ray M. Tyson to celebrate his retirement.

You are invited to attend the function which is to be held at Colin Putt's place, 65 Burdett Street Hornsby. The date is Friday night 14th. May, 1976, commencing at 6.30 p.m.

Subscription: \$3.00 per head. Bring your spouse etc.

This cost is to cover presentation to Ray, and

Salads, Tea, Coffee etc.

You should provide your favourite cut of meat and grog.

also

Bring your own eating irons, cup, plates and glass, song book.

There will be a campfire singsong as well.

Should you desire to stay the night bring your sleeping bag etc.

The event will be held wet or fine and cover will be provided in the event of rain.

R.S.V.P. NOT LATER THAN: 8th. May 1976, and enclose your cheque, money order etc. to cover the cost, to

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