

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 - tel 30.2028.

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EDITORIAL

Yet again we find ourselves at that point in time of looking forward to a new year, and what it holds in store for us. 1977 - the as yet unopened flower bud, about to burst forth in a display of colour. At the same time we bear witness to the dying stages of the old year - 1976 - like the last withering petals of the now spent bloom; the orange glow of late afternoon sky; or the dying embers of the campfire at night.

The process is the same; we've done it many times before; but the observations are different every time. This time, as 1976 draws to a close we witness a deal of uncertainty: economically, socially and politically. There is uncertainty about inflation, about exchange rates, and about employment prospects. What has this got to do with bushwalking you ask? It is only a casual observation, but I think close observation would bear me out, that an inverse relationship exists between economic and social uncertainty on one hand, and the quality and level of bushwalking activity on the other.

Some of the most active periods in bushwalking history have occurred midst the trauma and uncertainty of economic recession and even depression. Perhaps it is that bushwalkers are able to achieve a calmness and inner serenity not easily achieved in an otherwise hostile world. If so, we can take comfort from the fact that whilst the prospects for 1977 might not look too bright on the surface, at least it should be a Golden year for bushwalking. And what more could we ask for in the year that Sydney Bush Walkers will be celebrating their Golden Anniversary.

Thank you everybody who has helped during 1976 to produce this Club magazine: the authors, the collators, the typists, the duplicator operators, and the business manager. And thank you readers for your support and encouragement. Have a happy Christmas time, and may 1977 be a Golden year for you too.

PERILS AND PLEASURES OF PILGRIMS TO DELHI - PART II.

by Gordon Lee.

We entered India as illegal immigrants. After having checked out of Nepal at Biranj, our rickshaw driver got a real go on and was pedalling at the incredible rate of 6 km per hour. Our protesting questions of "Indian Immigration?" only brought an increased burst of energy, raising us to the really hair-raising pace of 6½ km/hr when we pulled up with a scrutch and the smell of burnt footsole in front of a hotel in Raxaul where we hadn't even asked to be taken.

Lin uncovered our crime next morning by walking into the Indian Immigration Office and saying, "We came in last night but we didn't see you." Mutterings of "police superintendant" petrified us with thoughts of Indian jails - Black Holes of Raxaul and other terrifying imaginings. When some sympathetic Indian treatment was given us, we relaxed, talked and didn't even have our bags examined.

This hospitable action apparently set the seal for the rest of our stay in India for we have been overwhelmed and embarrassed by the hospitality here. It is embarrassing because we cannot hope to repay it.

On route to Patna, within minutes of boarding the train we were engaged in conversation by an obviously well-educated Indian whose impeccable English put us to shame. He offered us fruit and after some little time invited us to stop off at his home in Sitamarki. We kept refusing politely till he said, "If you come we shall refresh our minds." For 24 hours we were treated like V.I.P.s. We were fed the most delicious Indian food. We talked on a wide variety of topics, Australia, India, politics of both countries, social customs, religion, etc. etc.

All sorts of people - friends and relations - were invited and introduced to join in the discourse. His children were given the day off school "to listen to this interesting talk". His brother admitted to us that he had neglected his business for the day so that he could spend the time talking with us. He was a B.A. in political science - a little overawing to a non-scholarly person like myself. Every educated Indian seems to be a Bachelor of this or a Master of that but there are few who in vocation follow what their B or M has "prepared" them for. We were told much later by a graduate engineer that the education "they" were getting was of little value in a country that couldn't find them jobs with remuneration commensurate with their standard of learning.

Our host apologised for the upset nature of domestic affairs because of the absence of his wife. This was the end of the marriage season (they were Hindus) and two relatives in opposite directions from Sitamarki had found they couldn't wait for the next season of nuptials. So husband had gone one way and wife the other, duty bound, to represent the family. His wife had not yet returned, so our meals were prepared by the younger female members of the family.

When we at last bid an almost tearful farewell to our host D. P. Agarwalla, Donor of models to the Govt. of India, mem N.M.R.A. of U.S.A.

we were given a small parting gift. We were taken to the station by brother and friend and several others and given a right royal send off.

Varanasi, that centre which to the fanatically devout Hindu is as Mecca to Moslem, was not all that impressive to me. The Holy Ganggness (Ganges), when at sunrise it collects to its banks and waters the pilgrims, the holy men, the laundrymen, the bathers and pray-ers, the corpses and the tourists, could be called a colourful river, a river of contrasts. How anyone of sane mind could bathe in, let alone drink, that filthy polluted stream is beyond conception.

Twenty or thirty laundrymen all in a row along the bank rhythmically banging and thumping clothes into "cleanliness", the masses relieving themselves in the cess drains that run along the banks, and the bathers certainly don't do much for the "holy" water.

Then to see an untouchable beating all hell out of the half-consumed corpse of a Hindu in a cremation fire - in this they must take a sadistical delight, for Hindus don't do the job, no, this is for the lowest of the low on the caste scale - and to see an odd arm or leg (toes curled) sticking out of the pyre really whets the breakfast appetite. We were proudly told it only takes 3 hours to burn a body and that this labour is on a shift basis, a 24 hour roster. At least the untouchables earn money by doing so and perks from the ashes like gold fillings, rings and other saleables when the job is done.

Add to this a boatman who "ripped us off" - we only got half a ride for the agreed price of the whole ride - and a smooth operator who burgled an hour of our time to show us hand-woven brocades and batik print silk scarves, and you may agree when I say Varanasi just wasn't my "gillass che".

Between where rickshaws drop you and the bank of the Ganges just described, there is for what appeared to be some $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 mile long and perhaps 400 yards wide an area of labyrinth of the narrowest imaginable paths (to call them streets would be impossible) so tortuous you needed a guide or a compass to find your way to river or street. Guides, you could not get away from, they were hyenas, they were persistent, they were hard to shake off.

Well, we've got an Opera House. It looks like marble. It cost \$100,000,000 or more. The labourers on site from first pile driven to last coat of paint got long service leave. "She's all right though, mate. Beaut bita arkeyteckohur!!" But we haven't got a Taj Mahal.

We saw the Taj lit by a full moon in a cloudless sky. This ethereal, translucent, intangible vision was breathtaking. You crept towards it fearful that the great Geni, from some forgotten lamp, who had set it down before your eyes, would whisk it away 'ere you had sated yourself of the sight. We sat in silence and dark under the great arched dome of the mausoleum - the tribute of a grieved husband for a favourite wife - and soaked in the marvellous reverberations of sounds. It is possible to hum or sing a triad slowly note by note and not loudly either

then listen to the whole harmonious chord. I would like to have heard a musical instrument played in there, it could have been fascinating.

We returned at sunrise. A little of the magic was still there but of another world. In the clear, bright light of the morning sun it had another mein. Here was the lustrous butterfly, resplendent in its dazzling colours, glinting and sparkling as though there was some incessant and compelling necessity to attract. An unforgettable sight.

Agra has many other places and handicrafts of interest. You can buy "pure" silk shirts that "don't shrink", but when washed only regain $\frac{2}{3}$ their former size. You can purchase "very cheap" tiny, small, slightly larger, big, larger still and huge models of the Taj made from every conceivable material. You can buy a sitar at an unnameable sum which you can take back to Australia and hang on the wall or sell(?) at an "enormous profit".

Agra has a Red Fort. Jaipur has a pink city. This is undergoing reincarnation by being repainted in the most ghastly, billious pink unimaginable and will take another 12 months to complete. Some of the billious pink must have got mixed up with the red plaster for the fort, or they ran out of cochineal, because Jaipur has an "Amber Fort". Jaipur is the possessor of a most amazing astronomical observatory from point of age, preservation and accuracy. Shah Jahan (Taj M.) was responsible of course around the 1740's. Has the largest stone sundial in the world capable of an accuracy of 2 seconds, planet orbit maps and various other goodies.

The one thing you can say about Indian rail service is that it is cheap. Even reserved 2nd Class is cheap. 1st Class is treble. One thing you cannot say about Indian trains is that they are comfortable. Another thing you cannot say is that they are not overcrowded. When I saw a local train depart from Patna Station my eyes came out like organ stops. Bodies were clinging outside closed doors and there were bodies clinging to these. There were bodies on the roof - they at least looked comfortable. There were (to my utter amazement) bodies riding the bogies under the carriages. Goodness knows how many human sardines were packed inside.

Travelling 3rd Class is extremely cheap but foolish. An overnight journey with berth and booking is less than Rs.30 (under \$A3). Berths are flat wooden platforms about 6' x 2'. In 2 Tier the bottom "bunk" is the seat (no padding) and top is hung on chains. In 3 Tier bottom is seat, top is fixed and middle is hung on chains. At bedtime there is a general, usually fairly genial, reorganisation hassle. We normally chose the upper berth. Manoeuvring into it required some contortional skill. Getting your head past the fans without getting an ear lopped was the thrill of the evening. It was possible to put sleeping mat, pack and body on this platform comfortably. But from Jaipur some rascally railway ruffian saw to it that we were given a 3 tier carriage at least 2' narrower and 1' lower than usual. We had to try to get comfortable on benches 5' by 1'6" and with less headroom - it wasn't a pleasant journey.

Thanks to Mrs. Indira Ghandi and "The Emergency" it only took

1 to 1½ hrs. to get tickets and berth reservations - and at the right price. Of course you were expected to know the system varied at each station. Sometimes you had to purchase tickets first, then reserve. Sometimes you had to reserve first - sometimes you had to do both at once. By the time you got down a queue, warded off queue jumpers, and provided it was the right one ("Enquiries" sometimes mis-directed you) and the ticket vendor and you waded through the reams of paperwork so dear to the heart of Bureaucratic India (everything has to be in sextuplicate), you had your names and berth numbers recorded and at least one of these copies was usually found stuck outside your carriage.

"What an efficient system!" you gasp. "What's all the gripe about?" "Can you read Sanskrit? On a midnight black station by the light of a failing torch, helped by people who spoke Urdu not Hindi and not a word of English?" Back to square one. All this going on while the minutes to departure time ticked merrily away and the train relentlessly filled with bodies. Despite all this we got to Delhi.

This reminded me of the Foreign P.O. in Kathmandu. Inside on a large board, beautifully signwritten, was the inscription in English, "The articles listed below are forbidden exports." Underneath in columns the articles were listed for all to see in neat Sanskrit.

Delhi has a Red Fort. In fact, every city in Northern India worthy of the name has a Red Fort. They vary in quality and size and come in assorted shapes. Some have glass palaces (Persian Architecture), some have meeting places. They all have huge courtyards. They all have mosques. The Moguls built them - they must have been busy boys. How they managed this as well as all the fighting is worth investigating. The Red Fort is in Delhi (Old Delhi) and has lush green lawns for lazing on. It was great after the trials of travelling to luxuriate on the lawn under a tree and ree - lee - aaxx.

You must not confuse Delhi and New Delhi. New Delhi doesn't have a Red Fort. It has Connaught Place. This is another fiendish Indian invention to confound the unwary. It has an inner and outer circle like a bull's eye. I haven't yet worked out whether C.Pl. is the inner circle (bull) or the outer circle (inner) or the inner and outer. If it is the outer or the inner it will have two sides, inside and outside. It also has radial roads. So to find somewhere in C.Pl. you have to nominate whether it is on the inside or the outside of the inner or the outer circle and between X and Y radial roads. If however it is the inner - never mind, we'll leave that till next lesson. Q.E.D.

New Delhi in comparison with other Indian cities is BIG. The business centre is separated from the Embassies by miles of wide-wide streets. The Embassies are sited in "The Diplomatic Enclave" which is itself miles long and a mile wide. So if the bus driver puts you down one stop from your destination (either way) you have about a mile to walk.

N. Delhi has lots of trees and people and is the capital city of India. A visit to "The Super Bazaar" would certainly not convince you of this. Any one of Sydney's small back alley supermarkets would outshine and outstock the "Super Bazaar". It was, I'm afraid, a tremendous

let-down.

- Here again we met friendly and hospitable people - mostly on buses - who invited us to take coffee at the "India Coffee House" (a very inexpensive place for a light meal) and then invited us to visit them.
- We accepted the invitations. One fellow really embarrassed us by taking us to a restaurant and spending Rs.50 - to an Indian a small fortune - and refusing to let us pay half the bill.

Your wayfarers, though one was infirm and old, had ended their 20 day pilgrimage to Delhi. Where our wandering feet take us next will be revealed in the next episode. So till we meet again - Farewell. Ah Sahlaam. Waalaycoom.

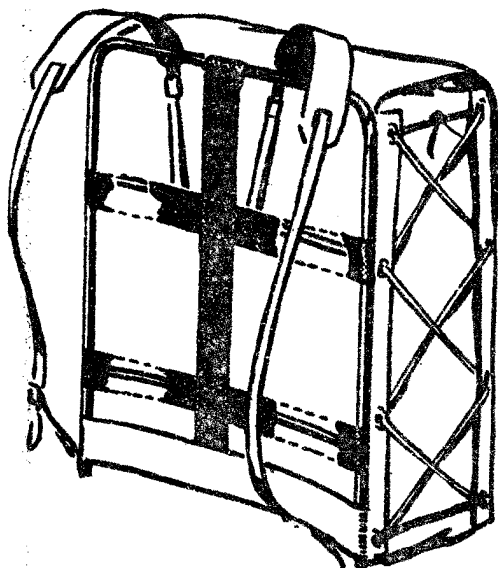
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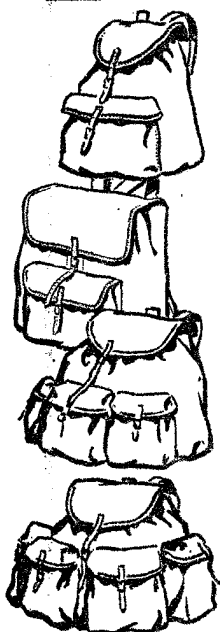
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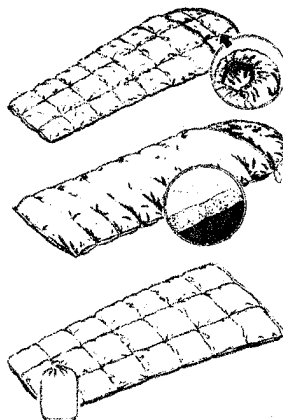
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THE NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

After a prelude of hailstones and thunder it was almost an anti-climax when the two secretaries (minute and not minute) and the president ascended into the pulpit (?) and called the 25 or so members to order at about 8.22.

Proceedings began with apologies from Ian Stephens and applause and handshakes for our three new members, Colin Houghton, Stephen Holland and Phil Bratter. Minutes were R. & R. in the approved manner, with the only matter arising, that of details of the 50th Anniversary dinner, being deferred to General Business.

Correspondence in brought the usual string of magazines, a letter of acceptance of honorary membership from Mr. Davison, and Natural Areas annual report and notice of meeting. (By the simple expedient of volunteering Dot Butler was nominated as our representative at the Natural Areas A.G.M.). A letter advising of a National Parks & Wildlife fund appeal developed into a low key talking commercial when a fund representative in the body of the meeting volunteered further details.

Correspondence out revealed only letters to new members, although there was a mention of possible output from Alex Colley as Conservation Secretary, and a suggestion that any such might be included in correspondence out in future.

Then on to the heart of the matter -- money! The treasurer provided the reassuring news that we had begun the month with \$2487.64 and ended up with \$2659.62. Incomings amounted to \$332.10 and our outgoings were \$160.12, so there!

The Federation Report was a non-event, as all our delegates had thought it was their night off. A full report, on the Federation meeting that is, was promised for the November magazine, so watch that space!

The Walks Secretary was late, and a bit of swift footwork from the body of the meeting got the walks report taken as read before people managed to get off to sleep properly. Your reporter's theory is that it was all done to screen us from the terrible facts of Bill Burke's wet weekend. Any man that gets as many fine weekends as he does was bound to get his come-uppance sooner or later. No! Don't ask me, ask Bill.

By this time the noise of rain on the roof was making body to chair communication almost unworkable, so the chair moved down from their ivory wharfed and joined the plebs down at floor level to conduct --- "General Business". All of which concerned the how, where, how much and even at one stage -- when, of the 50th Anniversary Dinner. When all was said it was decided that! --- Subject to the necessary checks and limitations (by the treasurer) we will book at the Menzies for Friday, 21st October, 1977. So keep that date free. The evening will cost about \$15 - \$20 per head plus any grog you may wish to abuse your system with. The traditional democratic process is still, at

last report, working, so if you don't like any of that, show up at a general meeting and change it.

So that was about that. We listened to the walks and social announcements, plus a short commercial from Dot Butler about people forming a syndicate to buy a ship to visit the antarctic every so often and check out its woollen socks and ice cap, or something. Don't ask me, ask her.

All of which took us up to 9.03 p.m. which was when Helen closed the meeting with a gong barely audible above the elements.

* * * * *

SANCHI SOUL SEARCHING.

by Owen Marks.

In an article by a very erudite writer in last month's magazine, he started with this sentence:- "I had just come down with typhoid." What can I write to top this? Such a beginning! I remember reading many years ago that editors just open manuscripts that have been submitted by struggling authors and have spent many years writing, but when seeing the first sentence, the novel is brushed aside into the nearest waste paper basket. Such is the power of the opening phrases. I suppose I could start off with an aside..... "Mae West smiled coyly and whispered to me, 'That was the most wonderful experience of my life'." Not strong enough? How about..... "I gazed at the autographed photograph of Cassius Clay and read the words that I had learnt by heart many years ago: 'To Owen, you are the greatest.'" Fitting indeed but all lies. I shall start this article again.....

The world came to an end but I survived. How it all came about is hereby disclosed. I boarded a plane from Patna en route to Nepal. This was in December of 1961 or early January '62. Anyway, the plane had only three or four passengers and a hostess that was on strike. After closing the door she went and sat down and knitted until the plane stopped taxiing along Katmandu Airstrip.

Nepal was all ablaze with the rumors - "The world is coming to an end." It had started a week previously with the shattering announcements by Hindu astrologers that for the first time in our solar system all the planets were in line and the earth would crumble or explode or something. On top of this, there were two invisible planets that were also in the same straight line; such gravitational force would destroy our galaxy. The whole population was camped out in the parade grounds, army barracks, parks and any vacant piece of allotment that is still around this wonderful medieval city. Only the night before there was an earth tremor and many were injured.

I booked into an empty hotel and started sightseeing. Everyone was praying. There was a man standing waist deep in the fast flowing

freezing stream that bisects the town. By doing this penance with prayer for a week he would try and avert such a calamitous occasion. The main square (where the Child Goddess is held up at the window - that one near the markets) was full of holy men reciting from holy books, wailing women, all freezing after being outside in the Himalayan winter for nearly a week, were lighting candles and getting all excited. Well, nothing happened, as you all guessed, and we tourists were all assured that the prayers of the Nepalese had saved the world.

You may be saying to yourself "What a load of rubbish!" Read on - because only three weeks later when I was in Sanchi in Central India the world really did come to an end.

By some weird astrological reasoning, India's day of reckoning would happen a month later; and so I had to put up with all that rubbish all over again. But 400 times worse. I heard Nehru on All India Radio imploring all the masses to have reason and not to be influenced by the doomsayers. Newspapers carried stories and pictures of the various pujas that were happening all over the land. Everyone was going home to perish with their loved ones.

Indian trains are crowded to overflowing at the best of times, but now when the panic was on it was just unbelievable. To get on a train, required all of my acting talents and to have the hide of an armadillo. I would wait until the train would just be pulling out and I would jump into the carriage "Reserved for Ladies", and the express would rocket along to the next station with all the ladies murmuring and getting indignant. I even travelled First Class.

I decided to travel via Benares and that was my BIG mistake. Benares being the Holy City was the focal point for India's 800 million and a safe place to be in at this terrible juncture. The reason being that as Benares is the Centre of the Universe as well, it would survive such calamities that would blot out the rest of human existence. Comfort indeed. Benares was then, as it is now and forever shall be, a city of death; to die in such holy surroundings with the Ganges flowing by and temples to gaze at with glazing eyes, and to smell the barbecues on the ghats, is to die in peace. But this is not a travelogue on Benares. Down to business.....

I arrived at Sanchi late at night by train, and I was the only one who got off at this lonely spot. I had all the station to myself, which is rare indeed in India. Sanchi is in the middle of nowhere, just a railway station, an insignificant large village and the Famous Ruins. Built 400 B.C., and the most perfectly preserved stone carving and a smallish stupa with a titty-bitsy piece of The Buddha inside. (Maybe a hair, a tooth? even a toenail clipping?)

Well, the night I arrived was the last night on earth. Next day would be - The End of the World. The village was in a frenzy. Bells bonging in the temples, non-stop chanting from the many pujas, with frenzied wailing in screaming crescendoes. What a night to be in the First Class waiting room! No sleep at all for me, and by picanninny

dawn I was a nervous wreck and thoroughly exhausted. I decided to climb the hill behind the station and explore the ruins before dawn just in case the world would come to an end and me missing such a sight. Climbed the fence and sat amidst the ruins and surveyed the universe. 200 ft. below could be seen the myriads of candles of the peasants at prayer amidst the gum trees and grevillias, and I thought that this would be a pleasant place to exit this earth from.

Dawn was fading into day and the sun was rising out of the plains of Central India. (I always like looking at sunrises and sunsets to see if I can see the green spark that is supposed to occur. I never have.) The sun was rising up above the mists when the sounds of the village behind me reached a pitch that meant in English "Prepare ye the way".

I looked back and an awesome sight greeted me. To the west along the entire horizon as far as the eye could see, north and south was a curving black cloud with white billows surging up and down. 'Twas like a monster wave miles high. Then the howling wind turned into a hurricane force wind and swept the bare country barer than bare Deccan can ever be. The wind was travelling towards the cloud and it was getting stronger as the Black Moving Wall came closer. Then the calm came and the wall of water was just about to break. The cloud could be seen to have an inner movement; from top to bottom the billowing would race and from bottom to top, and was as creepy as the Blob from Outer Space.

I ran into a solid stone shelter shed that must have been part once of the temple complex, or else it was built with excavated stones, anyway I waited for the storm to break. I felt sorry for the villagers below. I could really believe the astrologers' warning, myself. I knew it was only a mere storm but the screamings below meant that they had three or four minutes to live.

Rain pleted down; silky oaks were uprooted, sticks were whipped along like bullets and I got frightened and went to the back of the shelter shed and thought that maybe these Indians aren't stupid after all.

Half an hour and it was all over. The sun shone and the world survived. The train line didn't. Washaways, trees across the roads, considerable damage to homes, and stock were injured. The village was peaceful at last. After a week's preparation and last night's orgy of prayers, it was a wonder that they were physically able to breathe without exhaustion.

Later when I arrived at Aurangabad the newspapers were full of the anticlimax. My storm wasn't even mentioned! But all the religious Indians are assured that the power of prayer was the reason the world is here now and no matter what you say to them, it avaieth you naught.

Such is my story. What would an editor think of all this if he had judged it by the first few words? Our editor must have been impressed otherwise you would not be reading this.

Regards to all my readers and I hope that in 1977 everyone does make at least one trip to India. Always worthwhile.....

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PANTONEY'S CROWN - 9/10/11 JULY '76.

by David Cotton.

Members of the Party: Ray Hookway (leader), Margaret Reid, Fazely Read, John Redfern, Rick King and David Cotton.

Pantoney's Crown is an isolated mountain located about 5 miles east of Capertee, just off the Glen Davis Road.

On Saturday we woke early to find a bright clear day dawning with a thick crisp coating of ice over everything. After a quick breakfast we were off on an early start to "do" Pantoney's Crown.

Previous reports indicated that this was going to be a tough trip, but as the trip progressed it became more apparent that some reports of the difficulties of the area were grossly exaggerated. The approach towards Pantoney's was rather open bush with one or two patches of scrubby bush to skirt around, together with a few small hills to descend or climb.

The actual ascent of Pantoney's Crown was steep and Ray's short length of light rope came in handy over one or two spots in the final scramble to the top. The area on top was somewhat scrubby in patches. However there are many nice little spots for lunch and plenty of panoramic views in all directions.

The descent from Pantoney's on the northern end required the use of Ray's little piece of rope again in a couple of places and possibly an old pair of snow skis would be nice for going down the rather loose and steep slope along the ridge which we followed down to Cooee Creek. From here we had a short road bash back to the cars.

As a general summary I would consider the trip to be easy-medium and well worth the effort. The best approach to climb Pantoney's Crown is from the southern end. During the warmer months water in the area is scarce and it would be wise to carry drinking requirements. A short length of rope to use as a hand line would also be very valuable.

This area presents a splendid variety of walks and scrambles and I am looking forward to seeing more walking done here, especially trips that include Pantoney's Crown.

Sunday's day trip to Tayer Pic went as planned. Unfortunately I was unable to go as I had come down with a very bad bout of influenza and as a result I remained in a rather motionless horizontal position whilst the intrepid five took off on a rather quick trip to Tayer Pic and back again. From all accounts this was also quite a delightful and worthwhile trip.

TENT RECORD? - From John Hunt's book "The Ascent of Everest" - Sixty sherpas camped in a 12 man dome tent.

WALK NOTES.

by Len Newland.
(Ph.: 432419 (B))

May I take this opportunity to remind members of the availability of the autumn walks program, and their responsibility to fill it. We are especially in need of test walks after the shortage of these on the summer program, of which the following description is a good sample. I should remind members also that there is no need to avoid the program because you can only give short notice; walks can always be put on the notice board or in the magazine, such as appeared in the November magazine.

WALKS FOR JANUARY.Test Walk.

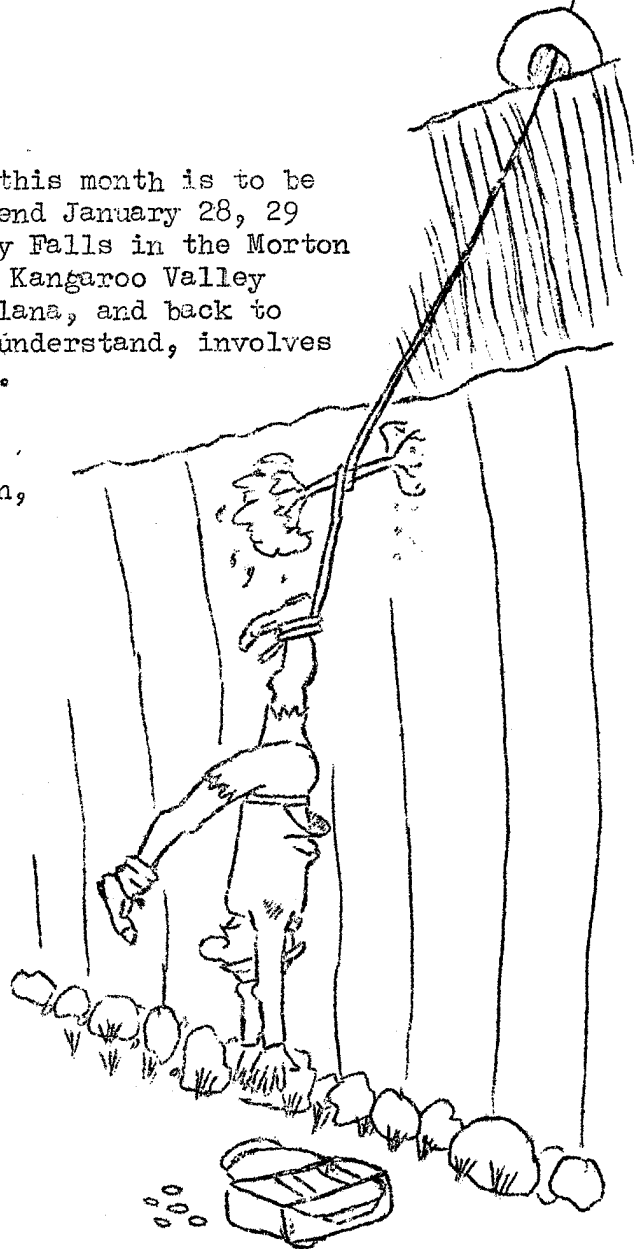
The one and only for this month is to be led by John Fox on the long weekend January 28, 29 and 30. The walk is from Fitzroy Falls in the Morton National Park to the spectacular Kangaroo Valley and the Club's own property, Coolana, and back to Fitzroy Falls. The exercise, I understand, involves an unusual approach into Coolana.

Base Camps.

John Fox strikes again, with a base camp and daily walks from Coolana, to be held on New Year's weekend January 1 and 2.

BUSHWALKER BOB

"Good trick!"



WALKS NOTES (CONT.)

Also base camping this month is Wayne Steele. On the weekend January 21, 22 and 23, he will be taking day trips from Wiseman's Ferry concentrating on Aboriginal carvings. As Wayne is topnotch at finding his way around, I am sure that this will be a fulfilling experience.

Weekend Walks/Swims.

January 14/15/16 sees Tony Denham, famous for his investigations into teas, leading a walk with swims, starting from the Six Foot Track, down to Cox's River and back to Carlon's Farm. There are a couple of very nice swimming holes in the Jenolan Creek near where it joins the Cox.

Hans Stichter also visits the Cox's River, by way of Carlon's Farm, Tinpot Hill and Breakfast Creek. He also promises swimming, and the date is January 22 and 23 (Saturday morning start).

Another weekend trip with swimming occurs on the Australia Day weekend January 28, 29, 30 and 31, with Barry Zieren at the helm. The walk will be from Bundeena to Marley. The swims? Lots.

Day Walks/Swims.

January 9th's swim is in the Hawkesbury River region, taking the ferry to Little Wobby and a walk to Rocky Ponds. Margaret Reid takes you there.

The same day sports the only day walk for the month which does not advertise swimming (but there is swimming just the same). This is Kath Brown's walk from Bundeena to Dear Pool and Little Marley. The Royal National Park in summer uniform.

January 16, and Barry Zieren appears again, to show the splendours of The Basin, Macherel Beach and West Head. With the grading very easy, I suspect swimming is the prime objective.

This day also has Sheila Binns walking and swimming from Engadine to Heathcote via Tukawa Rill, Kangaroo Creek and Karloo Pool. Kangaroo Creek contains some excellent swimming spots.

Frances Christie walks Heathcote to Kingdom Come via Lake Echtersley on January 23. I have never seen Lake Eckersley. Why not swim down and see it.

And finally, Otford to Burning Palms, on January 30. Tony Denham swims again, and you're invited to join him.

* * * * *

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CARS- SAFE IN BUSHFIRES

(The following article is reprinted from "The Bush Fire Bulletin", Autumn 1975)

Experiments carried out by the Forestry and Timber Bureau, Canberra, have confirmed that people caught in cars by bushfires should remain in their vehicles. The tests have proved findings from studies of some of Australia's worst bushfires that the safest place for a person whose car is trapped by fire is to remain in it with all the windows and vents closed. The best place to shelter is beneath the seat level whether front or rear, preferably with covering such as a blanket pulled over the body. Thermocouples (instruments to measure heat) placed inside a test car showed that the air temperature was about 51°C (125°F) - about the same as shade temperature on a hot summer day in many parts of Australia.

The worst part of the heat and radiation from a large bushfire which passes around and over a car lasts for only 3 to 5 minutes and a person who has remained in his vehicle until the fire has passed can get out and walk to safety over burnt ground. Tests conducted at the same time showed that even fierce fires should not cause car petrol tanks to explode. Seven unprotected tanks of various popular model cars, each containing about 18 litres (4 gallons) of petrol were placed on 61 cm (2 ft) thick piles of pine. None exploded as the timber was burnt. In each case, the heat forced petrol vapour out of the filler cap vent and this then burnt strongly. But no explosion resulted nor did the tank seams rupture. In tests involving the car, vapour from the petrol tank did not ignite.

The experiments were carried out in Stromlo Forest near Canberra. For the test involving the car, windows of slash pine 15 x 4½ m (50 ft long, 15 ft wide) and 1.3 to 1.8 m (4 ft to 5 ft) high were situated 3 m (10 ft) from one side of the car in one test and the same distance from both sides in another. Flames 7.5 to 9 m (25 ft to 30 ft) high were produced when the timber fuel burnt most intensely. The tests disclosed that closing the car's windows cut down the amount of radiation entering the cabin by two-thirds. The Acting Director of the Forest Research Institute (Mr. A.G. McArthur) said the tests proved beyond doubt that the safest action for people caught in cars by bushfires was to remain in their vehicles. He said that the tests on petrol tanks had shown there was no need to fear explosions from this source. Also, investigations of 1200 cars burnt in the Hobart fires of 1967 had not shown that any petrol tanks had exploded.