

THE JULY GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

It was about 8.16 p.m. on one of winter's cooler evenings when Fazely, flanked by secretaries Alastair and Barbara, for warmth, gonged the gong and called the 22 or so members and others to order for the July General Meeting.

Once more it was ladies night for new members, with Diane Southgate and Jacqueline Bruen being welcomed with badge, constitution and applause.

The minutes were read and received without comment.

Incoming correspondence included letters from Federation regarding costs incurred during the preparations for the Court enquiry into mining applications in the E trema area; advising details of a coming orienteering competition, and warning of the various wilderness areas presently under threat by mining leases.

Correspondence out consisted of letters to new members and an order for cloth badges.

Federation report brought news of proposed search and rescue excercises in August, February and May; advice that representatives of the N.P.W.S. will address federation in August and the announcement of the Federation Ball to be held on 6th October this year.

The Treasurer's report indicated a starting balance of \$1,685.77, incomings of \$374.00, expenditure of \$402.97 to provide a closing balance of \$1,656.80.

And then it was time for, oh no!, oh yes!, the Walks Reports. The weekend of June 16,17,18 saw John Redfern leading 9 members and 1 prospective on the Bonnum Pic, Wollondilly River, Burnt Flat Creek circuit in fine weather. They completed the walk without problems, but spent some time getting their cars out to the main road over the black soil track. David Rutherford's Cox river trip brought out 2 members and 2 prospectives, but the flooded state of the Cox turned it into a there-and-back along Yellow Pup with lunch in Mobbs Soak Cave. Jim Brown's day walk from Wondabyne started somewhat early due to train re-scheduling. We are assured that the 12 members, 4 prospectives and 1 visitor were on the track at 8.30 a.m. Nobody mentioned when they finished the walk, but Jim's trips are usually orderly (the programmed ones are, that is). Neil Brown's Waterfall trip was cancelled.

On the following weekend, the 23,24,25 June, Brian Hart led 9 bodies on a trip in the Wattagan Creek area. They were somewhat blighted by a trail bike rally which was being conducted at the same time. That well-known firm of C. & C. Austin had 8 members out from Kanangra on the same weekend on a walk described as hard with worthwhile views. Vic Lewin had his 4 members and 6 prospectives back at the cars before dark on his Govett's Leap test walk of the 25th, while Paul Mawhinney had 20 bods on his Waterfall to Audley trip the same day.

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Peter Miller and John Redfern's combined walk from Airly on the 1-2 July had 9 members and 6 prospectives out on a fine Saturday. The rainy Sunday which followed brought out the best in the white ants and they were all back at the cars by mid-afternoon. David Rutherford's 30 km. test walk from Kanangra attracted 4 members and 1 prospective on the same weekend. On the Sunday, Bill Hall led 3 members and 1 prospective on a rainy walk out from Waterfall. Anne Morgan's trip of July 2 was cancelled.

On the weekend of July 7,8,9 Phil Lormer led 3 members and 1 prospective on a cold and snowy walk on the Colboyd range. There was no response when details of Peter Harris' trip into the Ettrema region were called for (this is getting to be a habit!). Pat McBride's day trip from Mt. Hay ran a little overtime and the 13 starters reached the cars at 9.00 p.m. John Noble led 13 bods on his Tunks Creek trip on the 9th; to conclude the Walks Report.

The call for general business went unanswered, so after a brief burst of announcements, the President closed the meeting at about 8.56 p.m.

* * * * *

CENTRALIAN ANECDOTES

by Frank Rigby

Firstly there was Joan Rigby, our leader. Then there was Irene Davies and Don Shepherd from C.B.C. and Snow Brown and wife Clarrie from S.B.W. Oh yes, I nearly forgot, I was there too. The gang of six, a mixed but compatible bag of walkers, flew by East-West to the Alice in June for two separate walks - a six day trip in the Chewings Range west of Stanley Chasm and a seven day exploratory jaunt in the Finke Gorge National Park. Irene and the Browns were having their very first taste of the Red Heart. Well, a walk like this is virtually indescribable so you will have to be contented with a few anecdotes that seem to stick in the memory

One always imagines a cloudless sky and a blazing sun out there in the Centre; nearly, but not quite true. Throughout May and early June old Huey had been playing some curious tricks over most of the continent. "I wouldn't mind betting we arrive in the pouring rain", predicted our little ray of sunshine, Irene, and sure enough we did. Snow was flabbergasted as he saw his promised suntan going down the drain. Into the bargain we barely saw the Simpson Desert from the Fokker, so thick was the murk. Not to be daunted, our gallant leader had us away from the fleshpots of the Alice early the next morning, thankfully in improving weather. What a sight! The clouds were boiling up and around the mountain tops just as if it were the Budawangs. No, we had not made a mistake in the navigation because the landscape was much too red to be anywhere else, especially the Budawangs.

The first objective was Hugh Gorge, about thirteen miles west of Stanley. Sorry about the mundane name but in truth it's explorer MacDouall Stuart's fault. I agree that such a magnificent place deserves a better name than "Hugh" and the party argued over the vexed questions of white mens' names,

black mens' names, descriptive names, euphonic names, explorers' privilege, official maps and what have you. I fear that we shall have to scrap both the Names Board and the maps and start again from Square One; then the arguments will really start in earnest.

Now I seem to have my anecdotes in confusion already. Where was I? Ah yes, Hugh Gorge and that first campsite! The Alice Valley which we crossed to reach the Chewings Range is not singularly impressive just there, especially on a dullish day, but the moment you get to the southern entrance (more correctly the exit) of the Gorge everything changes (please refer to pictures in "The MacDonnell Ranges" by Gold and Rigby - this is a free plug). On this occasion water was pouring out of the Gorge which in itself was unusual but it was not just that; the river red gums, the macrozamia and the lush green vegetation of many species and, to cap everything, the massive red walls all around and above had the first timers gasping for breath. Somebody said that the landscape must have been all freshly painted by an artist. Indeed, it is the Centre at its best. Our camp was beside a large pool into which the stream tumbled at the further end, playing for us a sweet water music not often heard in the MacDonnells. Across the pool the painted walls rose almost sheer from the water, here and there sporting a stark-white ghost gum just for the contrast. At the pool's edge on our side several stately river gums completed the picture. But not quite, for a small side canyon entered close by, also with its quota of running water. I felt that I had come "home" again, and at what a time!

How do you like your Cointreau? Around the campfire after D.V.'s and salami, with coffee and cigars (sorry, one cigar), served in plastic eye baths from a plastic flask? A touch of grampus living in the wilderness? Yes indeed.

Still in Hugh Gorge. Actually it is the northern end, some three miles through the Chewings Range from the Alice Valley, that is the most dramatic part of all. An innocent-looking creek (when it runs) suddenly plunges into a dark, narrow rocky canyon with the most unbelievable colours and contours. The drop here to the permanent water is several feet and the view inside is restricted for the cleft quickly turns a corner - all in all, not an inviting spot for a first entry. The other end, however, terminates in a broad sunny pool with a sandy beach. It was here that we launched the li-lo (don't sound so surprised!). Every well-equipped party in the arid interior carries a li-lo. The water was frigid and the sun could not penetrate that twisting chasm but such trivia could not stop our intrepid Shep - he was paddling out of sight into the unknown to shouts of last-minute advice from the gallery. Would we ever see him again? An eternity passed, then the ears picked up the faint lap-lapping of a paddled li-lo and our hero emerged, resplendent in his triumph. "She's a quarter mile long, incredibly high, so narrow in one spot the li-lo scraped the sides, something like a cathedral only painted red!" And so another mystery of the MacDonnell Ranges had been solved. Joan and Irene (women sure can be tough!) also made the voyage but the three pikers would not budge from Terra Firma and a place in the sun.

P.S. Subsequent, more considered assessments reduced the length of the canyon to about 200 metres.

It happened in the black of the night. In that twilight period between sleep and wakefulness I thought it was the thrashings of a huge sail lashed by a force 12 hurricane. Nothing so dramatic, though it was intriguing. There was Irene, standing in silhouette against the sky, flapping her innerbag for all she was worth. Poor girl, I thought. The tropic suns been too much for her, we must get her to a doctor. But the real explanation was simple though a trifle gruesome. Something had seemed to be crawling across her stomach, and indeed it was. A monstrous six inch centipede, apparently eager for warmth and company, had found its way down into her sleeping bag. The joys of bushwalking!

And that reminds me, how many bushwalkers have heard the dingos howling? If not, then they have missed a supreme experience of the Australian bush. We sat on a craggy ridge overlooking the Finke Gorge and below, in what is probably the Centre's largest permanent waterhole, the ducks and wading birds and pelicans were sporting (this place is marked on our maps as the Boggy Hole, most inappropriately I might add, but was known to the aborigines as Elitaturra - which name do you prefer?). The country spread around us seemed almost unreal and surely might more suitably be part of the Red Planet than of Mother Earth. I was reflecting on many things, fact and fantasy all mixed up together, when suddenly it started. The weirdness of the sound was so utterly right in that equally weird landscape. Somewhere across the craggy slopes, not so far away, a lone dingo gave full vent to its emotions, whatever they may have been; and from across the Gorge it was answered by another. So it went on, chorus after chorus as we sat spellbound. Were the strange two-legged intruders, the old friend but the new enemy, the cause of the commotion? No one could tell. Do you know, there is only one thing more eerie than the dingos by day, and that is when they start up in the still blackness of the night. Instinctively, one snuggles down into the depths of the sleeping bag, reassuring oneself that they are, after all, no larger than a dog.

With this bedtime story I must finish or the Editor will be slashing her red pencil everywhere. Perhaps when we see you around the campfire, we can spin a few more stories culled from a very happy bushwalk out there in the very-much-alive Heart of Australia.

* * * * *

APOLOGIES

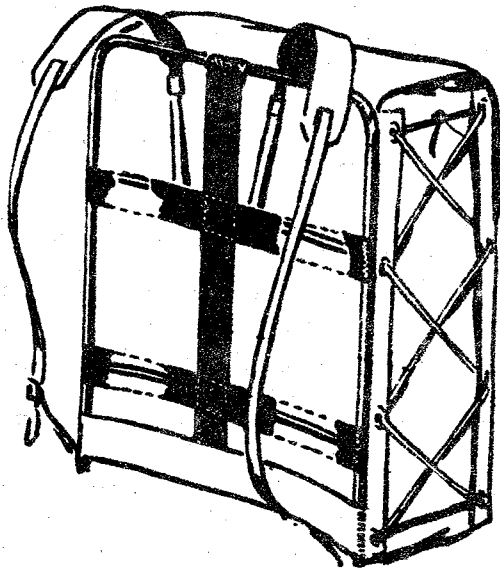
Apologies to Tine Matthews for incorrectly calling her Tina.

No apologies to "Anon" who was amazed to find Point Perpendicular written as "Point Persperdialia" which was the best the typist and editor could make of his scrawl.

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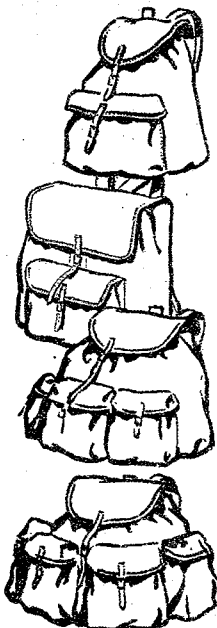
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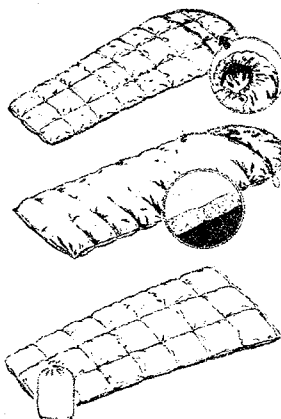
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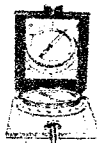
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Paddy Pallen

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PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

by David Cotton

My Photographic Exhibition held on Wednesday evening 19th July was a tremendous success. About 60 people attended and the socialising over wine and cheese was something of a success on its own.

This was the second Photographic Exhibition that I have run and in comparison to my first exhibition it was a vastly improved presentation. Many improvements in general technique, and modifications to dark room equipment and methods, resulted directly from the valuable experience gained in overcoming many of the problems and difficulties encountered when putting together the first exhibition. Consequently this second exhibition was much easier and a much more enjoyable experience to put together.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Holley, John Redfern, Tine and Claire Matthews for their valuable help and assistance. Many thanks in particular to Peter Scandrett for assisting me in the rather difficult task of setting up the prints on the display boards and relocating many of them as space became short. Many thanks also to all the people who brought along additional wine and cheese, etc., and many thanks to all the people who came along and helped make the evening such a tremendous success. I am sure that most people had an enjoyable time.

Many thanks also to the people who helped remove the photos from the display boards and helped with the cleaning up, as with all the work and excitement I had managed to get a little bit beyond it.

Very special thanks to all the young people, particularly Kathleen Gray, who with great patience have allowed me to photograph them, thus providing me with the valuable experience necessary to bring about improvement of my photographic technique.

WINE AND CHEESE NOTES:-

Any static type of display such as the above photographic exhibition requires something extra to encourage and promote social intercourse; a little wine and cheese attends to this end quite adequately. In general, for the 60 or so people present, about 1 kg of cheese, 4 boxes of crackers and about 5 litres of wine (white being preferred more than red) was quite sufficient, although a little savoury type meat would have been a welcome addition. When the Club is not supporting the costs involved as with this photographic exhibition, a request for a donation of 25 cents per head for those consuming covers the costs incurred satisfactorily.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ADVENTURE WORKSHOPS:-

Workshops run over the weekends of 22nd and 23rd and 29th and 30th July, which were basically designed to provide the people attending with full use of

all equipment and facilities enabling them to process their own black and white prints, simply and economically, for the basic cost of materials used (7 cents) each for 7 x 5 prints, failed to attract more than two people. I was not really surprised or disappointed at this result as it was basically expected. I was disappointed that no children or young people attended, as black and white photography is ideally a young person's creative pastime. I was disappointed to see that on both weekends the workshops took the place of one of the usual weekend walks.

Photography is generally not recognised as having valuable potential as a creative family pastime that aids and helps promote efficient communication within the family unit. This is of great value in providing a visual record of the growth of the family, together with other passing events, which once passed and not recorded, are irretrievably lost, remaining only as vague and distant memories.

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SOCIAL NOTES - SEPTEMBER.

by Christine Austin.

September 20th - Phil Hall has just returned from Nepal and would like us all to share with him an experience he describes as wonderful. He has, in particular, some slides of Gokyo Lakes which are a little "out of the way" of the normal trip.

September 27th - Several years ago, I believe, a "Character Night" was held. As it was supposed to have been great fun, I thought another would be appropriate. Please bring slides of your friends from S.B.W. (amusing or serious). Perhaps the embarrassing or libellous should be left at home.

IMPORTANT NOTE - SLIDE COMPETITION.

Henry Gold (whose posters of The Border Ranges and Kakadu I'm sure you're familiar with) has agreed to come along next February or March to judge a slide competition. I'll announce the exact date later in the year. I was at a slide competition recently and they are great fun, as well as informative.

Henry tells me that several years ago S.B.W. arranged a competition but it had to be cancelled due to lack of enthusiasm. So don't let that happen again, everyone!

There are two sections:-

- (a) Landscapes
- (b) Bushwalking Feeling (includes slides of people)

Please give me the slides two weeks before the date of the competition. Henry will need to have the slides to study and to arrange into two sections. I would say 15 slides per person maximum. Please start photographing now, everyone! You may be surprised at your own talent.

* * * * *

"LEGS"

by Ian Dèbert

All bushwalkers would be lost without them. Imagine crawling around on one's hands or body. This article is simply called "Legs", in other words "The Legs I have seen in the Club". You can't miss them, especially if they are wearing shorts. Most of us end up getting them scratched, bruised, battered or even broken, the latter not very often, thank heavens!

Let's take our beloved President, Fazeley Read. If there were a prize for the scratchiest legs, I am sure she would win hands down, or should I say "Legs" down. If one tu ies legs, which I don't as you see, then take particular notice of Fazeley's after a walk. One would think someone has got to her with a razor or some such weapon.

Anyway, enough of Fazeley's poor "Legs". Us men are also targets for scratches caused by a lovely little vine called lawyer, or "wait a while". Take Barry Wallace and myself, two tough bush bashers in search of a pair of lost binoculars in the Mt. Hay area. Anyone who saw us after we had returned to the car would have thought we had been through a barbed wire fence a dozen times. The worst thing about vines is when you get scratched in the same place twice - once is bad enough! There are numerous other people who get scratched just like us - all the fun of walking? Some may not think so.

There are other types of "Legs" too. The ones that don't see the sun very often - you can pick them anywhere. Cloud white or they are lobster red after a day in the sun. There are hairy "Legs" which camouflage cuts and scratches. Who has them? Just look next time you go out on a walk. They are a definite advantage. So all you lady walkers, don't shave that hair, leave it on. Or are you smart and wear jeans (if you can walk in them, especially in hot weather). There are also the "Legs" which are battered out of shape by years of abuse, knocks and falls; the knees are nobbly, the shins dented and out of shape. I am sure most of us fit one category or another, so next time you go on a walk take a good look and just see how you shape up with the rest, or scratch up, then you can say to your friends "The Legs I have seen in the Club".

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GETTING BACK - PART 2

by Marion Lloyd

Three years pass in London. A friend and I cooked up a trip to East Africa but abruptly plans changed and the next thing I know I'm flying out of London to Singapore. I was a plague to all my English friends as I distributed trunks and tea chests to any friend who had room (I left Oz. with one pack). Winding up my financial affairs was murderous, a bomb mini van to unload plus all the farewell pub evenings to contend with (I didn't know whether I was coming back or not).

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The last night in London some friends took me on a pub crawl of our favourite haunts, to a show and dinner afterwards. We returned to my flat to do a 2 hour stint of packing (6 of us). About 3.00 a.m. I went downstairs to bid them goodnight, when the front door blew shut. Our phone was out of order, so I howled through the security intercom; my flat mates couldn't hear it, so I buzzed all 6 flats in desperation. Finally, a foreign voice "Who eez it, you wake me at zis hour. No I weel not open zis door". The intercom went dumb. "Swine", I cursed. So I had to bunk down with my friends for a few hours. We were up at 6.00 a.m. to experience the first heavy frost of the year. The Kombi was white frosted, the doors were jammed shut with ice. It took ½ hour to defrost the front windows and get the doors opened.

A spotter was placed at the back window and 2 heads stuck out the side ones to navigate as we screamed back to my flat to do the last lot of packing. One friend took dictation, one in charge of packing, another was responsible for leaving remaining junk at Oxford and finally another clucked around making certain my travelling papers were in order. As a reward I shared out my green shield stamps.

All the way to Heathrow I was writing, dictating, packing as the van reached top speed of 55 m.p.h. as it trundled flat out along the motorway. We arrived at Heathrow an hour before take off time at 11.00 a.m. No sooner had we sat down to relax over coffee when my flight number was called. I think it was the biggest club farewell I have experienced, but I couldn't dally over such trivialities.

My next concern was the worthiness of the Aeroflot (Russian) plane, I was to embark. I had read in the papers and friends were quick to tell me the number of Aeroflot planes that were crashing inside the U.S.S.R. with disconcerting regularity, but they seemed safe once away from the U.S.S.R. boundaries, or maybe such happenings were hushed up. However, Aeroflot offered the cheapest return ticket to London (235 pounds return), cheaper than 1 way charter flights by the scheduled airlines. It seemed that the agencies that could offer such amazingly cheap flights were run by Pakistanis and Indians. The catch comes when you want to trade in the return ticket; the guy I bought mine from was very evasive. It took my mother 10 weeks when she was in London to obtain a refund.

I was welcomed aboard by a plump, pleasant looking air hostess, who told me I could sit where I liked - I have a fascination for sitting over a wing. I guess when I get bored with the clouds, I can study the aerodynamics of the wing flaps. Suddenly a blast of pop music shattered the air and when I asked the hostess if she would turn it down a little bit, she looked very hurt and puzzled. A few seconds later there was blissful silence.

Settled, I began to scrutinize my fellow travellers coming aboard. At the entrance stood an official whose designation seemed unclear. He was young, well built, had a crew cut, wore gold rimmed glasses and a double breasted coat and had the cold, aloof exterior of a K.G.B. He would patrol up and down the plane looking intently. Was he the steward, the engineer or a spy? I thought I would leave my request for a glass of water to the air hostess.

The passengers filing past this official were a mixed bag of nationalities. I was surprised at the high percentage of Pakistanis and Indians, there were a sprinkling of Asians, a reasonable number of Russians, mostly businessmen I assumed, and despite their dark, drab suits and white shirts they looked reasonably affluent, one or two even had bright ties. There were a small number of westerners - a few older conventionals, but mostly young ones travelling cheap.

The girl that sat next to me I could not fathom. In outward appearances, she seemed a hippy, but there seemed an inner quietism. We chattered, she told me she was a vegetarian and her only liquid was water. She was on the way to India to live in an ashram where she had been several times and her guru apparently was renowned throughout India.

Our air hostesses were buxom lasses and looked more fresh from the farm compared with the sophisticated curvacious femmes one encounters on Qantas or B.O.A.C., or the fragile butterfly-like creatures of Thai Air and Singapore Airlines. I found them very pleasant and helpful and I liked their service. They left me in peace with my sleeping tablet - the most complicated request was never a problem. I was even given an untranslated copy of Pravda. Wonder what I missed?

We landed in Moscow during a blizzard. Anticipating the worst, I had brought along my new Point Five dacron parka. We were shunted into an unheated bus and for some unknown reason we had to sit in this ice box for a good 20 minutes. When we finally got going it seemed only a couple of minutes to the terminal.

All the officials tramped about in greatcoats, peaked caps and heavy boots, looking very much like Russian stereotype soldiers. At first the terminal looked impressive, the dark night and artificial lighting hid the defects. The unpainted concrete was cracked and in places flaking off both inside and out. The light fittings and wiring appeared botched jobs. The officials were pleasant and polite but there seemed to be a lack of spontaneous friendliness and no one ever seemed to smile. Going through customs was a drawn out affair, their system appears archaic and inefficient. The waiting hall at first appeared huge and impressive, but felt spartan-like although there were comfortable chairs. Around the walls were plenty of photographs depicting Russians at work, but not much on leisure. It seemed a sort of subtle propaganda effort.

By this time, my American friend and I had become firm cronies and we did our battles with officialdom together. Patience and persistence was our motto. War nearly broke out between us westerners and the refreshment counter as we tried to get food. The experienced travellers carried food with them or accumulated it on the way, but the not-so-wise were beginning to starve (our plane was to go in an hour, we waited four hours). However, we ganged together to make an united attack, as an individual effort was useless. The system seemed like this. You want a cold drink and cake (no sandwiches, pies, etc.) You would get into line one to give the order and receive a ticket to join line two to pay the money. Then onto line three to collect order. On the other side woman one gives a ticket and she passes order to woman two to get item, she would give it to the cashier, who passes it on to woman four to give to us (the lime juice was like a concoction mixed at a four-year-old tea party and the cake terrible).

However, this procedure rarely ran smoothly, if one had the privilege to be served at all. Any Russian officer had priority and the locals with their massive frames would push in.

There were about 10 Westerners and we studied our strategy from all angles and decided we would:-

- a) each have a collective order, and
- b) each have part of the order, and
- c) we were then allotted our lines and queues.

It was very much like a game of Russian roulette:-

- a) to see who got served
- b) how many items were considered
- c) what was produced at the end, and
- d) how long it took.

All this would have been hilarious, but after long waits for food and planes we were seething with discontent.

Eventually, about midnight my plane took off. The haul over Russia was a long one, I think the first touchdown was Lahore, then Dehli. The food was surprisingly good - we were served so much caviar that you could spread it like peanut butter and the cakes which were sickeningly rich, were multi-layered, separated by thick mock cream.

At Dehli my American friend changed into a sari and as I watched her leaving the plane, I wondered what life in an ashram was like. I know I'd starve.

The climatic shock of landing in Singapore during the monsoon was as painful as landing in Moscow in winter. The volume and noise of the rain was frightful and between downpours it was very hot, steamy and sticky. In the terminal the methodical fast efficiency left one breathless and confused after Moscow. Within half an hour I was processed and in a taxi heading for the hotel where I was to meet my friend, who was coming from Australia. Sometime the next day he turned up unrecognisable. His beard was trimmed to a few centimetres from his face and he was even wearing a tie. The last time he went through Singapore customs they gave him a hard time, as he was coming from England, overland. He had no luggage and he blithely explained it was on the way to England and back and that in the confusion of all this he had left the xmas cake that Mum had made at the airport, never to be seen again!

I flew to Indonesia from Malaysia, then took the sick run from Bali to Darwin with Merpati Airlines? It must be one of the most unpredictable, hazardous and expensive trips in all Asia. The plane had four engines and as usual I took up my position over the starboard wing. We took off, but the plane laboured to gain height and even as it circled out to sea it didn't pick up speed. I looked at my wing and the inner engine had smoke and steam pouring from it. So we had to spend 5 hours waiting for it to be fixed, which gave ample time for the passengers to get to know each other.

Up once more; the food is terrible, rice wrapped in banana leaves, bananas, tea and nothing else. Everyone is starving. The crew (overstaffed) had nothing to do and would have long chats with the passengers. About an hour out of Darwin we flew into a storm and the plane was hit "by a thunderbolt", said the Captain. The plane shook violently and we all looked scared. The radio cables were put out of action and the turbulence gave us a rough ride. We flew into another storm over Darwin and we spent $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour circling above it. It seemed eerie to be flying on top of a storm and it looked beautiful.

The pilot found a break in the clouds and dived through to land. It was the worst storm Darwin had experienced that wet season. Everywhere there was flooding. The terminal floor was covered by about 2 inches of water, the aboriginals who were sitting in clusters gazed passively, whilst the kids were having a wonderful time playing in the water. The customs officials waved us through and gave us lots of tablets to take or be quarantined.

I stayed a couple of weeks in Darwin, which was long enough to stay with relatives and nothing to do because of the wet. I felt I needed to be on the move again as the wet was un-arable - seemed to be worse than Asia. However, the roads out of Darwin and across the top were opening and closing at a few hours notice, because of flood waters, which made land transport out of the question. So once again, it was back up in the air.

* * * * *

DADDER NO MORE

by Jim Brown

A lot of years ago, when we were young and oh, dear, I almost wrote "gay" and that could well be misunderstood nowadays well, when we were young and carefree, the group with which I was doing most of my walking made several trips to the lower part of Erskine Creek. Now, Erskine Creek has affiliations with the early history of N.S.W., as it is named after Major Erskine of the Rum Corps, and Erskine Street, City and the inner suburb of Erskineville, probably take their names from the same officer. Not that we were particularly interested in the historical aspect - we simply thought it a pleasant change from the other country which was commonly covered by walking trips. In fact some of us spent three days of a Christmas holiday weekend in a commodious sandstone overhang by the Erskine, and the organiser of our party told us it was known to walkers as Dadder Cave. It was years later that I realised "Dadder" was an abbreviation (and euphemism) for Death Adder. We didn't notice any - any death adders, I mean.

The accepted way of going to this cave was to follow the old cart track from the Causeway on Glenbrook Creek as far as The Oaks, and then turn south along a faint cart track on another ridge until one came to a certain large burned log. There, one left the ridge and dived down into Monkey Ropes Creek, and followed this down to its junction with Lincoln Creek, and almost immediately one was at Erskine Creek. About thirty minutes upstream on the opposite (true right) bank of Erskine Creek was the cave - in total about 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours fairly easy walking from Glenbrook.

Just lately, I felt an urge to do some "sentimental journeys" into walking country I hadn't explored for some years, and one of the places I thought about was Erskine Creek. However, that wasn't in my mind when I pushed off on a chilly Thursday morning late in July. In fact, in the temporary absence of family, I had asked Don Matthews to be my "S. & R. contact", and told him I would be going out along the Narrow Necks and probably onto Splendour Rock. As I left Sydney, Erskine Creek and Dadder Cave were reserved for another occasion.

I went by train, partly because I wanted to have no retreat from a night out in a tent, and felt that in the chill of July a car stationed at, say, Carlons, may weaken my resolution. After all, the target was to do it, as nearly as possible, in the manner of the 1940's.

But when we stopped at Glenbrook about 8.00 a.m. we were all summoned out of the train and told that buses would move us onto Valley Heights. Some delay ensued and after a time I made discreet enquiries and found there was some confusion over the bus-train link, especially as both west-bound and Sydney-bound travellers had to be accommodated. I waited a little longer, thought about Erskine Creek and Dadder Cave, figuratively threw up my hands in disgust, picked up the pack and started off towards Glenbrook Creek. It was almost an hour later that I began to have misgivings because (1) I was departing completely from the programme I had nominated to my potential rescuer and (2) I had no maps covering the country I was going into, and some of it I hadn't entered for almost 30 years.

At the present time the road that goes into the Blue Mountains National Park at Glenbrook is undergoing a major face-lift, widening and re-surfacing. To assist this work it is closed to the entry of tourists cars on week days, which meant that I didn't have the irritation of passing cars as I stumped on towards The Oaks. The only vehicle sighted was a Ranger's landrover. I did find, though, that I was paying the price for not having carried a weekend pack for some months, and both neck and shoulders began to ache by the time I'd passed Woody Pear Dam.

From The Oaks, the ridge south also has a tourist road along it now, signposted for Nepean Lookout and Erskine Creek. At one point a "Service Trail - Walkers Only" sign goes off on the right, and although I didn't think it was the same place as the old path to Monkey Ropes Creek, I explored along it. It does lead to a fairly steep foot track down into Monkey Ropes - a little way up from Erskine Creek, I would guess - but by this time I'd also seen signs referring to "Jack Evans Trail" and remembered that this goes down to the Erskine, up the other side and through to Warragamba Dam. I was tempted by this new project, coupled with the point that it would keep me on a formed trail in case of mishap.

Back then to the tourist road and on along it to the junction with Jack Evans track, and there I took lunch before going down to the Erskine. A lovely sunny afternoon, rather windy and chilly as I looked around for the continuation of the track on the other side. I couldn't find it, because Erskine Creek, like all the other mountain streams, is showing the effect of the torrents that poured down its valley during the June rains. In places the devastation goes fifty or sixty feet up the sides of the ravine. The Erskine, of course, flows in a fairly tight sandstone gorge: in fact I kept being reminded during the afternoon of the lower sections of the Colo, reduced on a scale of about one to two. There are the same sandstone cliffs, nearly sheer in places, the same rock-s'ewn creek bed, much the same kind of vegetation.

Frustrated in the bid to find the continuation of Jack Evans trail, I thought again about the trip upstream and through to Dadder Cave - about 2½ hours, I guessed, and with the clock at a little past 2.00 p.m., there should be ample time. There were the footprints in the sand of other parties going upstream, and although the walking was slow (I was being most cautious, of course), it was not really difficult. Somewhere towards 4.00 p.m. I reached the outflow of the Lincoln/Monkey Ropes Creeks, and discovered that the easy progress along the true right bank of the Erskine was certainly not as it used to be. The river-level has been thoroughly scoured out, and it was a case either of recrossing and taking the shadowy west side, or pushing through a fairly thick growth on a sidling course some height above the stream. The effect of lugging a weekend pack for six or seven hours was taking its toll, and in a moment of flagging resolve I decided to abandon the idea of reaching the cave for the night and have an early stop at the Creek junction, where there is a reasonable flat much used by local campers.

In fact, it was an extremely dirty campsite, with stacks of empty food tins and packages, some burned and some just thrown down. I managed to find a less noisesome corner, and as the cold of evening descended, put on all available layers, pitched the tent and started a healthy fire. Over the cooking, I decided that it should be practicable to continue up the west bank in the morning, when the sun should be shining on that side, across and have a look at the old cave campsite, return and go out via Monkey Ropes Creek. Perhaps it was the result of the heavier than usual pack, but I was quite willing to turn in early, and by 6.30 p.m. slipped into the flea bag and inner bag of silk. I didn't emerge for 12½ hours, and slept for 11 of them.

Somehow, by morning light, with dew over all the scrub, the passage up the west bank was less alluring. In my waking moments, too, I'd been thinking that an early arrival home and the signal that all was well to my S. & R. contact had a lot of appeal. With mixed feelings I breakfasted, mentally tossed a coin, decided to leave Dadder Cave this time, and made my way out up Monkey Ropes Creek. There was no difficulty in leaving the gully and I regained the same tourist road I'd followed the previous morning. The shoulders were already getting attuned to the weekend pack, and on the road I made comfortable time, via The Oaks, Red Hands Cave and Campfire Creek, back to Glenbrook by 2.30 p.m. Thus, I was really early home, telephoned Don to let him know that there would not be any alarm on this occasion, and also told him how futile he would have been if I'd not returned.

Later, over dinner, I unearthed the "Blue Labrynth" map to check on the meagre amount of ground I'd covered, and immediately spotted something I'd never noticed on it before. Dadder Cave is shown as being on the true left bank of Erskine Creek, and probably twice as far above Monkey Ropes Creek as I'd remembered it. In other words, if the map is correct, I've never been to Dadder Cave, and the one we used all those years ago is unnamed and not shown on the map. Oddly, I felt rather comforted that I hadn't perservered up the Erskine that Friday morning. Certainly I could have re-visited our old lodging place and waxed sentimental about it. What a let-down it would then have been to find it isn't Dadder Cave after all.

The Scots have a bagpipe lament "Lochaber No More". I have chosen to call this "Dadder No More". On the other hand, sometime when the water in Erskine Creek isn't quite so cold, and my shoulders are in better shape to carry a pack, I may go back and have a look at the real thing, as well as the pseudo-Dadder Cave.

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SPRING WALKS PROGRAMME & SOCIAL PROGRAMME - SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 1978.

CLUB ROOMS: 14 Atchison St., St. Leonards (Wireless Institute Building)
Open Wednesday evenings from 7.30 p.m.

POSTAL ADDRESS: Box 4476 G.P.O. Sydney 2001.

ENQUIRIES REGARDING THE CLUB: Mrs. Marcia Shappert - Tel. 30-2028.

SEPTEMBER

1,2,3 BINDOOK: - Barrallier - Murruin Ck. - Bindook - The Plateau - Tomat Ck - Wollondilly River - Barrallier 25 km MEDIUM Map: Bindook
Cars to be driven to Barrallier where the Wombeyan Caves Rd (out from Mittagong) meets the Wollondilly River. An interesting two day walk. One climb up to Bindook and a steep descent down Tomat Ck. The Wollondilly will have to be crossed twice, once at the start and also at the end. Expansive views from Bindook with Mt. Colong seemingly only a stone's throw away. A TEST WALK.
LEADER: IAN DEBERT 649 8676 (H) 649 0281 (B).

Sunday 3rd GROSE VALLEY: - Govett's Leap - Junction Rock - Fortress Ck - Junction Rock - Fortress Ck Falls - Junction Rock - Govett's Leap 13 km MEDIUM Map: Katoomba
8.30 a.m. start from Govett's Leap, just west of Blackheath. Some climbing with spectacular views of the South Eastern Grose Valley. A day test walk.
LEADER: Victor Lewin 504096 (H).

Sunday 3rd ROYAL NATIONAL PARK: - Heathcote - Tuckawa Rill - Head of Navigation - Robertson Knoll - Uloola Track - Kangaroo Ck - Karloo Track - Heathcote 14 km MEDIUM
Map: Port Hacking. Train: 8.20 E Change at Sutherland. A scenic day walk a little scrub bashing - mostly track walking. LEADER: GORDON LEE 3982145 (7.30 am - 3.30 pm)

8,9,10 AIRLY: Airly turrett - Genowland Mt - Genowland Ck - Mt. Torbane, Mt. Black, Airly. 30 km MEDIUM Map: Glen Alice 1:25000. A two day test walk in the historic mining area of Airly, east of Capertee (Nth of Lithgow). As a dry camp on Sat. night is anticipated, some sort of water container may be necessary. Expansive valley views, interesting sandstone formations. LEADER: GEM GAGNE 824597 (H).

Saturday 9th NORMAN LINDSAY ART GALLERY AND HOME 12 km EASY. Train: 8.00 am (C) to Fauldonbridge. Walk to Gallery at Norman Lindsay's old home at Springwood maintained by the National Trust set in a combination of landscape and natural grounds. LEADER: NANCY ALDERSON 8583317 (H).

Sunday 10th WEST HEAD: Church Point - Halls Wharf - West Head Rd - Elvina Bay. 9 km EASY
Map: Hawkesbury. 10.15 a.m. ferry from Church Point. A very scenic day walk in the Kuring-gai Chase. Magnificent coastal views and the possibility of sighting many wildflowers including the native rose. LEADER: BARRY ZIEREN 934830 (H)

15,16,17 GROSE VALLEY: Mt. Hay - Grose River - Lockley Pylon - Mt. Hay Rd. 28 km MEDIUM
Maps: Katoomba & Mt. Wilson. A good two day walk with a variety of scenery. Cars to be driven to Mt. Hay Rd, near Leura. A flat grassy soft campsite on the Grose River assured. LEADER: PETER MILLER 952689 (H).

16/17 KEDUMBA Wentworth Falls - Kedumba Ck - Mt Solitary - Ruined Castle - Scenic Railway - Katoomba 28 km MEDIUM Maps: Jamison & Katoomba 1:31680
TRAIN: 12.45 (Sat afternoon) (C) Tickets to Katoomba. A very popular Saturday afternoon start test walk offering excellent views of the Jamison & Kedumba Valleys & Narrow Neck and a luxurious ride up to Katoomba on the scenic railway. LEADER: IAN DEBERT PHs: 649 8676 (H) 649 0281 (B)

- SEPTEMBER GROSE VALLEY: Bell Station - Hartley Vale - Surveyor Ck - Grose R - Blue Gum -
 15,16,17 Junction Rock - Govett's Leap - Blackheath 27km MEDIUM Maps: Mt Wilson &
 Katoomba. Cars to Blackheath Friday night and train to Bell Station,
 camp on ridge at Hartley Vale. Good creek and river walking, and camp site
 and a rather steep climb up to Govett's Leap. LEADER: VIC LEWIN 504096 (H).
- 22,23,24 NORTH BUWANGS: Nerriga Road - Corang River - Corang Trig - Bibbenluke Walls -
 Square Top Mt - Nerriga Road. A Test Walk. 40 km MEDIUM Maps: Corang 2"
 Nerriga 1.50000. Friday night camp on Nerriga Road where it crosses Corang
 River. A very popular walking area with an unusual route. LEADER: DON FINCH (now
 in Canberra). Contact Spiro Hajinakitas 6812000 (B) 3571381 (H).
- 23,24 "COOLANA" WORKING BEE - Kangaroo Valley. A pleasant week-end (or Sat or Sun)
 at the Club's own land "Coolana" in the Kangaroo Valley. Help required to finish
 the hut in time for the barn dance to be held on the last weekend in November.
 Camp in the hut or on the lush green river flats. LEADER: GEORGE GREY 866263 (H)
- Sunday 24 BLUE LABRYNTHS: Faulconbridge - Victory Track - Glenbrook Ck - Glenbrook.
 20 km MEDIUM Maps: Blue Labrynth Tracks. Test Walk.
 Mainly track walking through the lower Blue Mts. LEADER: HANS BECK 7980103 (H).
- LONG KANANGRA - Cloudmaker - Tiwilla - Butcher's Ck - Kowmung R - Gingra Ridge -
 WEEKEND Kanangra Walls. 55km MEDIUM Map: Yerranderie A 3 day test walk covering
 SEPT. 29,30 a lot of traditional weekend walking area with no scrub bashing. Pleasant creek
 OCT. 1,2 and ridge walking - good campsites. Kanangra 3/4 hour past Jenolan.
 LEADER: PETER MILLER 952689 (H).
- Sept. 29,30 NTH BUDAWANGS: Base Camp at Yadboro 3 day trips. 1. 9 am start - Davidson Head
 Oct. 1,2 Sculptural Caves - Hume Head - Pidgeon House Mtn (stay for supper) 15 km MEDIUM
 A test walk. 2. 7.30 am start - Dead Man's Gulph Rd - Pickering Pt - Byangee
 Walls)traverse) - Castle Gap (climb/descent) Castle Ck Ridge - Yadboro Flat
 18 km MEDIUM A test walk. 3. Pidgeon House Ck - Swimming 10 km EASY
 Maps: Corang & Milton LEADER: VICTOR LEWIN 504096.
- Sept. 29,30 TURON RIVER Sofala - Turon R - Macquarie River 60 km MEDIUM. An unusual
 Oct. 1,2 three day test walk. Cars to be driven to Sofala. Explore the interesting old
 Chinese mining relics. Quite a lot of river crossing is anticipated.
 LEADER: BRIAN HART BUS. PHONES: 723447, 721262

Ø indicates a Test Walk

++ indicates harder than a Test Walk

All train times are from Central Station E= Electric C= Country

All walks without transport details are private transport - contact leader for details.
 Please note - vehicles are not expected to wait more than 15 minutes after pick-up time.

N.B. From about mid-September to end of October on each Sunday major changes in the
 railway time tables will have to be adopted due to proposed modifications to
 signalling system around Sydney. It is suggested that leaders and members
 using rail transport for day walks should make arrangements for each particular
 Sunday.