
THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers, Box 4476, G.P.O., Sydney, 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 Ann Ravn, Telephone 798.8607.

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	Page
Alan Pike's Guoagang Trip - Tony Marshall	2
Advertisement	6
September Meeting Notes - Barry Wallace	7
S.B.W. Songbook - John Redfern	8
Coolin' at Coolana - Ainslie Morris	9
Recollections - Owen Marks	10
Letter from Singapore - Alastair Battye	12
David Cotton's Bee Walk	15
Letter to the Editor and Social Notes for November	16
The Federation Ball - 1980 - Mollie Shortshorts	17

ALAN PIKE'S GUCUAGANG TRIP.

Tony Marshall.

Everything went well on this trip but it was really a typical medium to hard bushwalk which might have appeared on the programme in any month, the only unusual feature being the small party of three. I had intended to explain why I enjoyed the walk so much but am unable to do it justice. All I can do is tell what we saw and did and hope this conveys some feeling of how good it was to enjoy the beauty and challenge of the bush and the companionship of friends.

The walk was programmed as: Carlon's Farm - Breakfast Creek - Cox's River - Mt. Jenolan - Mt. Queahgong - Mt. Gucuagang - Nooroo Gable - Konangaroo - Cox's River - Breakfast Creek - Carlon's Farm. The distance was given as 45 km and the grade was ++ hard.

One of the main activities on any trip is talking about other walkers. Accordingly I will give some background on the starters for this walk.

Alan Pike, leader, a man of vast experience. Famed for his balancing act on a boulder, during a landslide, while hurtling towards the rest of the party. Due to a shortage of rope and daylight he once spent a night on a narrow ledge halfway down Kanangra Falls. He encourages party members by advising them that the top of the ridge, the campsite or other desirable objective is only "a biscuit toss away". Alan regards this trip as an annual test and knows that if ever he fails to make it back he will be past his best.

Sandy Hume. The only club member for whom twenty walkers would hold a pose while she took twenty minutes to figure out the intricacies of a new camera. On an earlier trip she impressed by beating us all up Crafts Ridge. This was a bit embarrassing as about two thirds of the way up we had decided that as she was only a girl and only on her second walk she could not possibly be in front of us and must have walked off the ridge. We were about to start looking for her when we heard a call as she had come back down to find out what the hold up was.

As for myself, I can leave that to other walkers and other walks.

We left Sydney about 7 p.m. on the first Friday in September and arrived at Carlon's Farm at 9.30 p.m. I still wonder about the bloke who collected our parking fee. Was he actually connected with the farm or did he just happen to be standing there?

The plan was to camp at the junction of Breakfast Creek and Cox's River that night, a walk of about 7 km. Walking up the hill beyond Carlon's homestead soon took care of the cold night and in any case it was much warmer once we were over the crest and following the track which leads down Breakfast Creek. The going proved much easier than I expected - probably due to the low water level. Alan had warned us to

take good torches and knew the track well so little time was wasted trying to find it in the dark. We arrived at the junction just on midnight, all three of us showing signs of tiredness, and camped on the southern bank of Breakfast Creek. After a search we found enough wood to light a fire, had a cup of tea, and went to bed. My main recollection of this walk down the creek is the resonant croaking of frogs breaking into the still of the night.

ful

It was delight/to wake up right out in the bush on a crisp Saturday morning. Walking on Friday night is an excellent idea and should be done more often as it makes a good weekend seem like a good three day trip. We were on our way at 7.00 and an hour later reached the ridge that would take us to Mt. Jenolan. This ridge is easy to identify as it rises between two creeks which join Cox's River only about 10 metres apart, although the map indicates they are 150 metres apart.

After taking a ten minute break and filling our water bottles we started up the 1,000 metres to the top of Mt. Jenolan. The ridge was thinly timbered and it was pleasant to feel the gentle spring sun on our backs. There was an unbroken view south down Cox's River, over undulating valleys in the far distance, and east to the stark sandstone cliffs of Narrow Neck and the Wild Dog Mountains. The views became more extensive as we climbed giving us some reward for our effort. Navigation is simple, just keep to the highest point. Not far from the top we came across a small flock of birds which Sandy identified as King Parrots. They were gorgeous with a vivid red head and body complimented by emerald wings. At 10 o'clock we reached the top of Mt. Jenolan and had a twenty minute rest encouraging ourselves by saying that most of the climbing for the day was now over.

From Mt. Jenolan to Mt. Queahgong the ridge levelled out and narrowed but the scrub was becoming thicker. We were now looking down onto the ribbon of Cox's River far below us on one side and the chasm of Mumbadah Creek looked interesting. I wonder why it is that no trips go down that way. It was 11 a.m. when we arrived at Mount Queahgong.

The ridge swings south from Queahgong toward Mt. Guouogang. We continued along it keeping to the highest point but as the ridge was now less clearly defined and we had to take some care not to walk off it. At about noon the ridge opened out and we concentrated on heading for a knoll which the map showed to be five hundred metres to the northwest of the main Guouagang trig. From the knoll we followed a bearing worked out from the map (110° magnetic) to the trig. After a twenty minute frolic through some vicious scrub we caught a glimpse of the two metre cairn which marks the top of Guouagang, reaching it a few minutes later at 1 p.m. and stopped for lunch.

People have told me there are no views from Guouogang but I don't agree. I have been looking for a house lately and perhaps I have been talking to too many real estate agents but if you stand on the trig and look around you can see for an uninterrupted 360°. In front of the

trig is the massive of Mt. Cloudmaker. Beyond it the white rock faces of the Axehead Mountains and the Broken Rock Range stand over a maze of ridges and creeks. To the right of Cloudmaker Kanangra Walls can be made out in the distance. From here they look like a scale model and it is hard to relate them to the huge cliff line seen from Kanangra Tops. The rolling Megalong Valley is to the left of Cloudmaker. Behind the trig is a range of blue green mountains with deep valleys. The range gradually becomes less distinct until it merges with the horizon.

The top of Guouagang gave me the only disappointment of the trip. I had been looking forward to seeing my signature from the Three Peaks trip in the visitors' book. The book I signed had been replaced by some rotten school kids. Now no one will believe I ever got there.

A little after 1 o'clock we left the trig and headed off on a bearing of 166° or slightly west of south to pick up Nooroo Gable. We had no trouble getting onto the ridge as it stands out clearly. After spending a few minutes checking our position we started off down hill. To begin with the going was slow because of the scrub and some scree slopes. The ridge takes several twists and turns so we had to keep our eyes on just which way it was going although the sides are so steep we would have had to try hard to get off it completely. On the way down we could see the rugged grey walls of Davies Canyon. This reminded us of the superb trip through that canyon and started us anticipating what might be on the summer programme.

The day had become hot. There had been no water since Cox's River and we had climbed and descended over 1,000 metres. The three of us were mighty weary when we got to Kanangra River at 4 p.m. There were some shallow pools in the river, it was just the beginning of spring and I doubt they had seen any sun that day. Nevertheless Alan was determined on a swim. After a short hesitation Sandy and I followed his sterling example. The water was so cold my legs ached after a few seconds. The swim would have lasted less than five minutes but it was amazingly refreshing to wash off the salt and sweat. We came out of the water completely invigorated.

After a quarter of an hour we started to walk down Kanangra River. The river is actually smaller than Kanangra Creek towards which we were walking. It may be trite, but walking along the mountain stream moved me. The clear water flowed over pastel granite rocks and under fallen trees. It ran through fern glens and open timber country all set in the hazy light of the afternoon sun. On our way down the river we saw one or two wallabies and disturbed a tawney coated wombat which was browsing near the water.

We arrived at the Kanangra Creek junction at a quarter to six and found an ideal campsite. As I picture the scene it centres on a large thickly grassed flat. South of the flat the river runs over a broad shelf of pink granite. To the east, on the other side of the creek, a stand of casuarinas is offset by an orange and black outcrop of rock behind them. The boulder strewn creek turns northwest and

behind the campsite a ridge rises to the western skyline. The water in both the creek and the river could not be bettered and there was plenty of sun bleached driftwood which burns well. When the sun set we were left with a black night and a sky crowded with bright stars.

After dinner there was one of those conversations that only occur on bushwalks. It ranged from the differing sensitivity of people to being scratched by the scrub to the relevance, in a world where most people are hungry, of a recently announced theory that the Milky Way had collided with another galaxy billions of years ago. We went to bed about nine. None of us stirred until daylight.

Next morning we started walking at 8.30. We had to cross the creek often and played around like five year olds trying to get over with dry feet. Most of the time we walked in silence which is something that cannot be done in a large party. After half an hour we were at Konangaroo where we met a party of horse riders. It is a selfish attitude but meeting another group broke the spell, from then on we were on our way home.

We continued along Cox's River at a leisurely pace taking long breaks and short swims. During the day we saw our first black snake of the season, some trout and various water birds. At three o'clock we started up Breakfast Creek. Near Carlons Farm we heard the calls of Bell Birds and after a while we were able to pick out the tiny birds on trees just off the track.

By five o'clock we were above Carlons Farm on the hill we had climbed on Friday night and the trip was over. Alan asked us to look south where we saw the distant outline of Mounts Jenolan and Queahgong, and above them the dominating silhouette of Mount Guouogang.

RECENT EVENTS

Congratulations to Christine and Terry Norris on the occasion of the birth of their third child, Andrew Shannon.

On the Injured List are;

John Redfern who dislocated his shoulder when he fell over his own feet,

Shirley Dean who scalded her hand with her spaghetti water, &
Tine Matthews who broke her arm when she fell over her broom.

Eighty persons helped Gem Gagne celebrate her fortieth Birthday at the Heffron Hall, Darlinghurst. Congratulations Gem.



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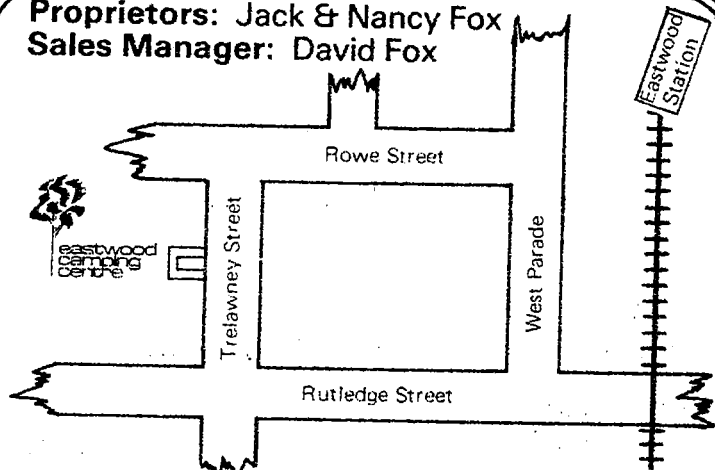
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THE SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING.

Barry Wallace

It was 2019 and there were 45 or so members present when the president called the rabble to order and welcomed the new members, whose name was legion.

There was Chris Perez, Joy Heynes, Lorraine Bloomfield, Sandra Hume, Rudy Doylin, George Floyd and Elwyn Morris. They are all persons, so one can't comment on the preponderance of names of one sort or another.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and received. Anne Ravn has volunteered to be the club telephone contact and was elected unopposed.

Correspondence brought letters from the National Mapping authority indicating that they will proceed with the preparation of a new, 'improved', Snowy Mountains map and a letter from the director of the ACF asking if they may approach our membership as part of a recruiting drive. There were also letters out to the new members.

The Treasurer reported that we started the month with \$2298.62, received \$230.00, spent \$90.00 and ended up with \$2438.62.

Federation report brought news that capitation fees for 1980/81 will be 75c. per member for a minimum of 20 or a maximum of 200 members and that the H.E.C. are still working toward the original Franklin River scheme.

General business saw a motion passed that the club make a donation of \$100 to the National Trust rainforest appeal. We also decided to write to the Federation pointing out that the prerequisites for participation in search and rescue would exclude most S.B.S. members. The club is also to write to the relevant minister regarding off road vehicle use of trails in the Moreton National Park.

The walks report brought news that there was no report on Peter Harris's Ettrema walk of 15,16,17 August. Ian Debert reported 10 starters and fine weather on his Glow Worm tunnel walk while Brain Hart had to divert his group of 7 to a walk through Constance Gorge because of fuel shortages. George Walton saw no such problem with his 9 members, 7 prospectives and 2 visitors on his Govett's Leap walk. Barry Zieren led the other day walk, in the West Head area, and reported 20 people enjoying a long morning tea and two swims.

The following weekend 22,23,24 August saw John Redfern leading an unknown number of people on what was described as a "good walk" in the Kanangra area. David Rostron's ski-touring walk was cancelled, but George Walton reported a strangely assorted group of 11 on his Kanangra to Katoomba walk. There was some rumour that they spent the Monday completing the stroll along Narrow Neck. On the Sunday that weekend

that veteran meeting reporter Jim Brown had 25 people on his Waterfall walk and Meryl Watman reported 23 starters for her Lilyvale to Bundeena walk.

Tony Marshall led a group of 17 starters on an easy (?) Colo walk for the weekend 29,30,31 August and reported beaut pools with sandy beaches along the way. That same weekend Bob Younger had 10 members on an easy walk on the Nattai. The chief activities were reported as tea drinking and gossiping. There were three day walks that Sunday, David Ingram led 13 members, 4 prospectives and 2 visitors on a hot and windy walk from Bundeena to Bundeena, Vic Lewin led 26 people through strong winds and some rain around Mt. Hay and Joe Marton had 15 starters on his Waterfall to Otford stroll.

The weekend of 5,6,7 September saw Alan Pike leading a party of three on his modified 3 peak trip while Fazeley Read had 4 starters on a windy but fine walk in the Morton National Park. That same weekend Jim Brown had 28 people on his Hawkesbury trip bedevilled by late trains. Leone Vella presided over the gallop of some 15 or 16 people from Marley to Otford. They are reported to have caught a wide range of trains. All of which brought the walks report to an end.

In general business the Coolana Report was taken as read. Coolana was chosen as reunion site and Spiro was sort of pushed into being convener. The committee is to consult with Alex Colley on recommendations for N.P.W.S. development policy.

And then it was just a matter of announcements and it was all over again at 2140.

S.B.W. SONGBOOK.

John Redfern

Some time ago it was decided to produce our own song book. Indeed, some work has been done independently by both Barbara Bruce and Peter Scandrett.

Many people like to sing at camp fires, however, like me, they cannot remember the words of songs. Other advantages of our own song book could be: it would contain the songs that would be our own choice, it could be readily available at the club room and it could sell for cost price.

To assess the interest in continuing with a book, and to help evaluate the contents, every one is invited to submit their ideas. These entries could be in the form of songs preferred (and if possible the words) or the types of songs preferred, e.g. the percentage of say: Australian folk songs, songs from other countries, traditional bushwalking songs, standard community type songs, modern songs, humorous songs etc. Also, of course, our own SBW songs.

If there is enough interest for the book to become a reality, and we can afford it, people with expertise in songs or music would be welcome to decide the final contents.

If anyone would like to help could they check with me please, either at the Club or on 8081702.

COOLIN' IT AT COOLANA

Ainslie Morris.

The Labor Day weekend and Saturday dawned bright and early as Saturdays have a habit of doing), with me eager to be off to Coolana with Elwyn and Les. As it turned out, the closure of Morton National Park because of bushfires had inspired a number of members to head for Kangaroo Valley.

We arrived at midday, at about the time that the late arrivals were getting out of bed, or as they put it, "finishing their shopping". Well, we didn't drive a hundred miles for nothing, for we soon felt at home with a fire going in the suburban brick barbie. A safe place to boil a billy, whatever its aesthetic appeal may be.

A few sensitive souls (me, for instance) camped by the riverside, leaving the plebs to take over the hut. They were so glad they all had it to themselves, with sound effects that night provided by - not naming any names, of course - Tony D. or Bob G.

Sunday morning dawned bright and early too. The two unnamed gentlemen above had driven back from town a while before, and parked in the same spot (creatures of habit we soon become). The spot had, however, developed a hole about three feet deep, and the Vee Dub fell into it. Which just goes to prove that cars can get drunk.

The men, each and every one of them, singlehandedly pulled the sorry and sober Vee Dub out, and soon Sunday reverted to a day of rest and recreation.

Three of us did the recreation bit. Jim and Anne Percy, and I, walked down to Apple Tree Flat on the Shoalhaven River below Tallowa Dam. A large goanna was there first. It was six feet long, and we know that because Jim is six feet tall, so while he lay down, Anne and I grabbed the goanna and stretched it out next to him. (Well, you don't think we had a tape measure with us, surely!).

Sunday evening brought many delights. Food (Denise still flogging her Arab grass-cuttings that she called "tabouli"). Music (Len N. on guitar with cunningly concealed tape recorder playing John Williams). Conversation (with repartee led by our Dave).

We also had a wildlife discussion, in which the droppings of rabbits and sheep were compared. "Who dung it?" says our Dave. Seriously, though a friend of mine who is not as quick as we are at sighting wild animals is writing a book: "What Dung is That?"

Monday was too hot to write about, so you won't read about it. We tidied up the hut, not leaving any cast-off camping or household articles, except for a member of the Committee (just a hint - initials P.M.), sleeping soundly, au naturel.

RECOLLECTIONS.

Owen Marks (& Dot Butler in background.)

A few weeks ago on the 24 hour marathon orienteering contest, Dot Butler and I were describing our Mexican mountaineering trips to one and all around the camp fire, when it occurred to Dorothy that not many of the new members would know anything at all about those "halcyon days" (if I can quote Bill Gillam), and so it comes to pass, with Dot gathering her thoughts and memories as easily as she collects mattresses, with old photographs turned over and with my voluminous letters that I used to write in those days (that are now fading in my junk box); this article is written, more as a warning to those who follow, than as a simple story of our first of many adventures.

Today if you climb^{to} the palace in Chapultepec Park in Mexico City and gaze at the surrounding mountains, you would see nothing due to the smog. When we were there in the Fifties Mexico was a sleepy city, with donkeys carrying large water jars, revolver shots in the market place and musicians outnumbering the shoe-shine boys. But from the same Palace that one of the Hapsburgs built for his potty wife Charlotte (Yes, the same Carlotta who went insane during her visit to the Pope and refused to leave his bedroom), from the balcony you could see Popocatepetl and Ixtlaciuhatl, just two glorious snow covered peaks in a series of ranges.

The local mountaineering club gave us a free map and a young boy to interpret the map for us. In vain we tried to say we spoke Spanish more fluently than Cervantes himself and that we couldn't afford a guide. He was free and his job was to interpret the map and that was that. We gave up fighting and took Pepe (nick name for Joseph) along with us plus his brother and their 2 burros (ethnic for donkeys). We forget his brother's name as he disappeared the next day after falling off 5 times, with the wicker baskets of wine flasks all cascading down the rocky gullies. About five miles (which was really about 12) from the Popo saddle we made a camp, away from the dusty highway and got all organized for our 6 day trek into the nether regions.

What we took would amaze Baron Munchausen. We had bought lots of apples and cabbages on the advice of the French Consul, who assured us quite solemnly that last thing at night to eat an apple and a cup full of raw cabbage would give us our own central heating system. Dorothy was awe struck at this idea and thought that Napoleon must have been a genius to have thought of this AND to have made all his army do what he ordered. (Little wonder that the Muscovites cleared the city!) I remarked to Pepe that it wouldn't work in Mexico because of the altitude affecting the air pressure in the stomach, but he believed the story. Later on I was proved wrong. It does work, but you have to draw the neck string very tight on your sleeping bag.

The first climb you pass cactus, pulque plants and plants that are similar to the Gynea Lily, but as the day grew, so did the vegetation.

Very tall trees with bright blue flowers and dense undergrowth to scratch your legs. We walked along a narrow, but well used track that passes no habitation. Once you arrive at the Paseo de los Locos we turned left and started to climb up a grassy slope that goes up to the volcano; the track we left goes down to Toluca. This was the actual pass that the Spaniards first arrived by and it was found to be too hard and so that by the 16th century the road goes where it does today.

At the junction is a lovely shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows which was not very reassuring. Every stone represents a soul of a mountaineer who has perished on the slopes and the picture of our Lady was real Aztec. By that I mean its drawing is Realism. A bright red heart dripping blood that was enamel lead paint, with our Lady smiling as she ripped out her heart with her fingernails. I think it must have been a real Aztec god that has been taken over by the new religion and placed in a new setting. I remembered that in Iceland it was the custom to place a rock on top of a pass, too; but over there it was to placate Loki, and Dorothy from her memory quoted a poem by Frost on the same subject.

Going up the slope on the following day, at the first hump (where today a big chalet stands according to the tourist pamphlets of the 1980s) we decided to spend a whole afternoon sitting and gazing out onto the Valley and to drink from ice fed crystal streams. Here we met an Algerian anthropologist who tried to explain his theory of how there was no caveman period in our history. I didn't write it down and Dot doesn't remember a thing about it, but we both remember his theory on Calendar Reform which is quite logical if you think about it, and there is enough matter in it for another full article if ever the editor twists my arm to write something.....anything!

Our young interpreter of maps Pepe would say every hour or so "I am Pepe on Popo." He was about 20 or so with 3 children and he would recount adventures of what he did during the day. Quite simply....he did nothing. He would go gathering wildflowers with his fellow villagers, chase the goats, watch the rattlesnakes, play the guitar and a huge harp of which he showed us a snap. His wife did all the work and farming and everything was ordained to be like so forever and ever.

As it was not the rainy season, there was no need to pitch the tent, but being cold we all slept under a heavy cotton blanket with a hole in the dead centre. Dot slept with her head through it and her feet towards the edge, whilst we had our feet in the centre. The Algerian took a picture of us because it looked like a monster from outer space.

Early next morning leaving our stupid but friendly 'interpreter of maps' behind with the burros, we set off for the summit of Popocatepetl. Not at all difficult; just a long gentle slope that goes on and on. My shoes were not quite waterproof on the ice and I had plastic bags in my sox and once when Dot slipped I saved her from a slippery dip of a thousand feet. She will deny it but only for me she would be a blob of strawberry jam. The summit was deserted and we had a drink of Port wine to celebrate.

Part 2 to come.

A LETTER FROM SINGAPORE.

Alastair Battye.

12 Balmoral Park,
Singapore. 1025.
September, 1980.

It is about time I wrote to let you know what goes on up in this part of the mysterious east. Actually it's not too mysterious anymore: Every day Singapore is becoming more industrial, more urban, more developed, more revolting. Same with the inhabitants. It's a shame, the Chinese and Indians and Malays have always been most courteous people. With affluence they're becoming downright grasping and rude - here, and arrogant. And every day more of the heart and soul of Singapore is torn out to appease the god called "urban renewal" and replaced with heartless and mindless people files called modern buildings.

Just at the moment I'm sitting, writing this note in a Tudor house (built truly in the original style) on an island off Singapore. There's ivy on the walls and English flowers in the courtyard gardens and a huge fireplace - on the equator no less, but the ambience is a little deranged by the view over the Johore Straits through coconut palms and kelong fish traps to the new Changi airport.

But unlike Singapore it's gloriously peaceful. No traffic, just the caretaker's chooks running around.

In fact the place was built by a long ago director of the company, who was homesick, many aeons ago. He was not like Methuselah, he is long dead and the house, well known in this Republic, is available for use by the company staff. We have it this weekend.

'We' excludes Lisa. She has finangled herself a part time job as an assistant keeper at the Singapore zoo and is quite convinced she is now in paradise. She even sports a scar on her cheek where she was bitten by an orang utan.

But the draw of the zoo was greater than the alternative of Pulau Ubin, so Lisa is absent this weekend.

The four of us, Claire, myself, Chris and friend sailed across on our little boat. The sailing over was no sweat but on arrival.....the currents in the strait are treacherous and wild and totally opposed to the wind which comes from three directions. The landing was entertaining - but I refuse to describe it. Let me just whisper the old acronym 'snafu'.

Although Singapore is at present irritating I suppose any place drives one crazy in time and Singapore is not much different to Sydney or wherever in that respect. It's just a bit more exotic. Here we ourselves are ethnic, the local word is 'feringhi'. O.K. lah?

The sort of exotica I mean: I usually eat lunch at the local hawkers stalls, the modern Singapore version of the traditional makan

man. These days he no longer roams with his makan cart but is fastened down in an area of stalls, sterilised, purified, health inspected and, more to the point, addressed so the government can get at him for income tax.

But I digress. The other day after lunch (satay and mee soto, I think) I was walking back to work along the old Singapore river area when I saw an old, old man pedalling a trishaw. Actually I have seen him before, several times, he is old and very bent. So bent that he is curved like a parenthesis over his handlebars gazing fixedly at the ground beneath. He can look no higher up. He is so bent. I wonder when I see him how he negotiates the murderous traffic all round him - that he cannot see, and I wonder at the courage of those that ride with him. But the other day there he was bent over the handlebars and in the trishaw was another old man, also bent. Both were the picture of age, desecration and absolute dignity. The traffic just did not exist.

A short extract from the diary which may be of interest. Hari Raya, the end of the muslim fasting month, occurred a few weeks ago....
Extract from the Straits Times:

"Morning Storm Leaves Trail of Havoc.

A thunderstorm tore across Singapore early yesterday causing floods, a landslide, traffic jams, stalling vehicles and damaging part of the ceiling of the Singapore Cultural Theatre. Westerly winds of 16 to 23 knots uprooted trees in several parts of the island. No one was injured."

Extract from the Straits Times:

"Malaysia to Celebrate Tomorrow.

-Hari Raya Puasa in Malaysia will fall on Wednesday as the new moon was not sighted at three places tonight.

The keeper of the Rulers seal said the new moon was not sighted at Telok Kemang, Johore Baru and Kampung Pulau Sayak, Kuala Muda (Kedah)."

Well didn't it rain, didn't it rain, didn't it rain! Singapore never has long week-ends, well hardly ever. Public holidays are mostly religious and are on the day they're on; none of this nonsense of transferring them to a Monday, that would be totally against the gruesome work ethic of the Chinese and the Government would not tolerate it.

But this past week-end the gods screwed it all up and we wound up with Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday off, and the government couldn't do a thing about it.

The weather in Singapore is usually hot and sunny with occasional rainstorms. A full wet day is unusual - and very welcome because it cools the place down. More than one wet day means it's the monsoon arriving or the gods are annoyed. Anyway there's no biscuit in more than one wet day because (a) it cools the place down and (b) there are no long weekends (Murphy's Law)!

So this was a long weekend, so it rained for four days. It poured and poured, it flooded the island, it rinsed out the Republic's beaut

parades - and the Army got wet and the Government could do nothing. It jammed the causeway, all those people fleeing from Singapore to Malasia for the weekend (serves them right, they should have been working, the reactionary dogs). Worst of all we couldn't go sailing. The spirit of Mr. Murphy lives on, blast his soul.

To show we weren't to be downtrodden by a mere natural law we drove to Changi anyway, with sails and lunch in the car. And the rain came down and the roads were flooded. At Changi it rained even harder - to prove a point - so after two hours and lunch we conceded defeat and left. The rain was heavier and the roads were even floodier.

Such weather seems to bring out the worst in Singapore drivers. At the best of times they're shocking bad, in rain one wonders if one has blundered into bedlam. In heavy rain there are two classes of drivers, those that drive in the middle of the road at 4 miles per hour and those that drive on the wrong side of the road at 70 miles per hour. One that drives at 40 is bracketed by the snails and the rockets - both looming out of the pouring murk at a relative 40 mph or so.

Both though have the basic local 'lurching' characteristic. On a several lane road they will suddenly or slowly, for no seeming reason at all, shift into another lane. It has nothing whatever to do with where they're going, they well may lurch over three lanes to the right then curve back left to turn left a hundred yards later. Of course there's no indication of which way or when they may lurch, they may do nothing, they may turn their indicators on but that means nothing other than the indicator lights work.

Singapore buses have a sophisticated little computer on board which randomly selects which indicator lights to flash ensuring it has no bearing on what the bus may have in mind to do. There is a classic T.V. ad here for something or other, which shows a Singapore bus slashing right across six lanes of heavy traffic with its left turn indicator lights flashing furiously. Strangely Singapore drivers see nothing odd in the ad.

The hellish thing about it all is it's not only the drivers who lurch. Pedestrians are also given to it. Walking along it's highly likely a group alongside will suddenly lurch en mass in front of or into you. There's no malice, it's just as a group one collective leg seems to suddenly get shorter. They sometimes lurch into shop windows. Singles do it too but it's more interesting (and puzzling) to watch a group reaction. And it's by no means an unusual phenomenon.

I have a theory that it's to do with being on the equator. The coriolis forces are unstable on the equator (the things that make your bathwater spin down the plughole), and it affects the local populace. But only those born here in this lightly and unstably forced place. Them like us have learned to resist such forces in higher latitudes and can walk and drive relatively straight lines.

And still it rains and rains and rains. The kids are indoors - I think I'll kill them before nightfall.

Interestingly, Singapore has become quickly very affluent, due to the hard work of the inhabitants. Now, having become affluent, everyone is rapidly becoming more rude, objectionable, grasping and lazy. The old Singapore is almost gone.

David Cotton.

As this trip will be dependent on private transport, I would prefer ~~hearing from people with or without transport who would like to participate in this outing by the Wednesday or on Wednesday evening at the latest prior to the trip.~~ I can be contacted at work, generally between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on 5433444.

Letter to the Editor.

Mt. Fortesque Station,
Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania.

Dear Ms Gray,

It is with the utmost pleasure that I write this letter to you as Editor of the Sydney Bushwalker Magazine. My grandson sent me a copy of your last edition, and I find that I have had greatness thrust upon me in the guise of having a mountain on my property that from the top on New Years Day I can be the first person in Australia to see the sun rise. I often climb the hill, and have to admit that it is only a few times that I have had the honour of greeting Old Sol: I shall endeavour to make a special climb next New Years Eve and I will be able to die happy, if I wake up that is.

Please inform Mr. Hec Carruthers that the honour for last year probably belongs to him, nobody ever climbs Mt. Fortesque and I think it rained in Hobart Town.

Whoever the author is he must be a genius. Please convey to him my thanks and tell him that I have the article framed.

Yours sincerely

Eric Tortney.

SOCIAL NOTES FOR NOVEMBER - by Peter Miller.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19.

CLUB AUCTION.

Bring along all those unused items of bushwalking gear and objects d'art for the annual club action.

Proceeds from the auction go towards club funds. For high value items the seller may nominate what proportion goes to the club.

(Please remember to take home unsold items).

DINNER will be held before the auction at the Nam Roc Chinese Restaurant, 538 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards. 7.00 to 8.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26

ART AND CRAFT EXHIBITION

We haven't tried this before so it will be interesting to see how many artistic people we have in the club.

Please bring along any works of art made by yourself or your children. Paintings, pottery, weaving, sculpture, leatherwork or basketwork or similar items are required.

Items will be for display only, and please remember to take them home at the end of the evening.

THE FEDERATION BALL OF 1980

by Mollie Shortshorts

Bushwalkers are a scruffy looking lot when they are on the track. It's amazing how they scrub up for occasions like the Federated Bushwalkers' Ball. Some of them were darned near unrecognizable without the visual cues of being able to see their legs and grotty sneakers. I had to go on other leads on Friday the 26th September, when 300 of the species converged on the Ashfield Town Hall.

The Sydney Bushwalkers were well represented. Correction! There were a lot of us there, nearly fifty in fact. Snow and Clarabelle Brown were there. A dance with Snow is rather like being swept off your feet while attempting to ford the Kowmung in mid-winter. It's exciting and scary at the same time. Clarabelle was all a'twitter because she'd been put on the 'hot crumpet' list of that discerning gourmet Ian Debert. Pete Stitt was there with the pitons between his teeth and being well reined in by Dot. Ian Chung looked as if he was prepared to do emergency surgery on some of the more desperate dancers, if he could get his hands on them before Margaret Hodgson did. Di Chung was leading from the rear.

A terrible thing happened in Strip the Willow. Such dangers the young are exposed to! I think Brian Goldstraw probably has a case for invasion of privacy, Wayne Steele should definitely sue, Peter Christian will never be the same again, and Tony Denham's virginal reputation is tarnished for ever. David Rutherford looked as if he was half way up the steel ladders and had just noticed that they were parting company with the rock. What is the world coming to? A man cannot go out alone without being molested these days.

The standard of dressing was absolutely rock-bottom. Vinnies Boutique must have sold out in several suburbs in order to provide the - ough - gowns. Ainslie Morris had a lot of change out of five dollars for her black number of unknown age, complete with red rose. I missed the dance on the table with the rose between the teeth. Pity. Helen Rowan was nostalgically attired in something she used to wear in the country, Barbara Bruce cheated just a tiny bit by being Miss 1980, Jo van Sommers got closer to the mark as Miss 1910. Joy was coy about her age; she wasn't wearing a sash, and not much else either. Vivien Sheffer was dressed like a cowgirl, all ready to rope 'em in.

El Presidente Bob Hodgson wore a suit, yet! Such dignity. But the prize for male sartorial elegance has got to go to Mark Dabbs, complete with top hat made from part of a foamie, painted black. Check your foamie, next trip. Mark will give you the pattern and anything else you ask for, as far as I can see. He broke all his promises and went straight off at midnight to join the walk led by Barry Wallace. Don Cornell was way out in front as usual with Jenny hanging right in there. Their rock-hopping technique was a big advantage in avoiding all the discarded tinnies decorating the floor. Search and Rescue were called out and Tony Marshall was eventually located under the table. He was demonstrating prussicking to Lyn Wilson. Now, at last, we know what it means to prussick! Judith Rostron administered a bit of quick first aid to another body under another table, whose name will be suppressed in deference to the libel laws.

The Progressive Barn Dance. Your gossip columnist is happy to report that there's life in the old dogs yet. First, a superb waltz with light-footed David Rostron. There must be something he can't do. Then a bit of old-time grace and aplomb from that graceful old-timer Bob Younger. I was only looking, Christa, honestly! A mad whirl with Phil Butt. No one was looking, I hope. A stylish twirl with Bill Burke. He had the temerity to suggest I wasn't absolutely sober. From then on it was all downhill and I can't bear to give you the details.

Denise Shaw and Jo Witt were surrounded by a million friends and having a heck of a time. It seems they forgot to go straight home. Unfortunately my sidekick seems to have got the details rather confused. It wasn't nice of Sue Butters to lift that man right off his feet like that. Play fair, girls. Ann Ravn kept hearing the phone right all night, but it was just a terrible omen. Helen Gray was taking notes all night but I couldn't spot where she had the tape recorder hidden. At least there were no photographers!

Fortunately the frivolity of the young and carefree was nicely balanced by the sedate manners of the respectable marrieds. At least they started the night that way. Models of decorum were Jim and Anne Percy and Bob and Rosslyn Duncan. Hiding behind mountains of food were Geoff and Denise Udel. She fed him dainty morsels, ceaselessly. No-one else had much time to eat. Too busy drinking and dancing.

Those country boys John Redfern and Gordon Lee were sliding in the sawdust before we even got to sprinkle the floor. (If you don't know what this means, ask your grandmother). Gordon did a great job organising the Ball. By the end of the night he looked somewhat frayed around the edges, and could hardly manage enough breath to get us to take down the trestles. There was raging far into the night at David Ingram's place. (That's young Davo, the one with the well-stocked refrigerator).

The Ashfield Town Hall is a fine example of debased Colonial shed, spartanly decorated with raw wood. I missed the boughs ripped from gum trees and hung in the rafters that identify a real bush dance. We were an unimaginative lot and didn't win one of the beaut prizes for table decorations, although our tables looked like Harvest Sunday in a good year. The prize for costumes was won by the Underwater Bushwalking Club of Tasmania. I thought we all should have worn our N.Z. black jackets and thrown buckets of water over each other all night. This would have achieved an authentic wet look, appropriate to the theme of S.W. Tasmania, and wasn't what you were thinking at all. Everyone had a lot of fun. See you next year!

----- The Things That Happen

There were fifty or so persons at this Chinese Banquet, Mountains of food, a litre or so of wine and some orange juice. Heather Finch took herself home while she was sober, so Bill Burke gave his car to Don Finch saying he'd get Spiro to drive him (Bill) home. Spiro of course didn't know of the plan and went off without Bill, who was last seen pouring himself another drink and good-naturedly laughing about it all.