

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 pm 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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JANUARY, 1981.

Mud Sliding and Rock Skating in the Bindook Area	by Joy Hines	Page 2
Kosciusko National Park - Plan of Management Review		4
Advertisement - Eastwood Camping Centre "Stop Press"	Anon. (Dot Butler)	12
The Flowers of Srinagar - Part IV	Bill Gillam	13
Social Notes for February	Peter Miller	14
		16

MUD SLIDING & ROCK SKATING IN THE BINDOOK AREA.

by Joy Hynes.

With bush fires literally breathing down our necks, the following entrants in the above competition set off, fully prepared to drink and eat everything cold and pre-cooked, for the weekend:-

Chris and Mark Dabbs, Rowena Evans, Michael Floyd, Peter Franks, Bill Gamble, Kathy Gero, Steve Holland, Victor Lewin, Brian Palm, Frank Roberts, Cev Sternhill, Bromwyn Stow and Frank Woodgate - - - ably, or should I say DISably, led by Ian Debert with the writer bringing up the rear.

Prior to our arrival on the Wombeyan-Goodman's Ford road, a rather wet substance known as rain had fallen, thus giving us a somewhat dubious sliding introduction to the weekend frivolities. All members arrived quietly on Friday night, and were ready for an early start at 8.15 am on Saturday morning. It was good walking weather, overcast and cool, and we proceeded up Murruin Creek at a steady pace. There was very little water in the creek, but Kathy, Frank W., Ian and self ventured into a water hole at lunch time. The rock-hopping was more like boulder-hopping, but very easy going.

We were just preparing to proceed up Mt. Bindook after lunch, when a rider on horseback arrived in our midst, and we were entertained for the following quarter of an hour or so by none other than Mr. Neville Lang, who spoke about the area generally. He advised us of a better route up Bindook, which went directly up the mountain, instead of up and into the saddle and up again. After Ian and Victor conferred with the others, it was decided to follow his directions, and so we proceeded up stream a little further and then up, up and away. I am certain Mr. Lang was just getting his revenge upon us for avoiding his "entrance fee" when travelling to Yerranderie earlier this year, because if his trail was easier, I don't think I would like to have ventured up the original trail.

After what felt like several hours, we finally achieved our object, and I for one was absolutely speechless with the magnificence of the view. Small glimpses on the way up had whet our appetites, and the final goal was well worth the effort of every screaming muscle. After suitable refreshment, we proceeded towards the Yerranderie road.

The party, having somewhat spread itself liberally all over the area, met up on the road just past the top end of Bindook Gorge at the gate leading to Neville Lang's home. The Gorge was very steep with sheer rock walls, much too difficult to negotiate, and a lovely deep pool at the top. One of our gallant lads sprang to attention and opened the gate to allow a vehicle through, which turned out to be driven by Mrs. Neville Lang. Telephones have nothing on the bush telegraph, because Mrs. Lang knew who we were, and that we had been talking to her husband some few hours earlier.

We all then advanced up the road (mainly up, very few downs) to where the Tomat Falls road went off to the right. By this time most of the party were beginning to feel a little weary and footsore, but were encouraged to

go further with the thought that tomorrow would then be easier and shorter (foolish thought). We passed a few farm buildings and animals and marvelled at the endurance of people living in these remote areas. We soon arrived at the creek and decided to camp for the night. We were very fortunate to get tents up and tea cooked before the rain came down in buckets. The drought needed to be broken, but did it have to be in the middle of our walk, and in such heavy buckets?

Sunday morning arrived on time, but without the sun and with lots and lots of heavy rain, which made breakfast and breaking camp very uncomfortable and slow, and we did not depart until about 9.30 am. Owing to the dangerous condition of the falls in the rain, only six of the more courageous members of the party (Chris and Mark, Brom and Michael, Cev and Brian) decided to venture (or should I say slide) without fear or intrepidation down the falls. The remaining ten were punished for their lack of adventure by having to tramp in the rain over numerous mountains which insisted on going uphill just as quickly and steeply as they went down.

However, a surprise at lunch time made it worth while. Sloshing along the fire trail towards what is known as The Priests Hut, we came out into a clearing - truly at the end of the world - complete with 4-wheel drive, caravan, a normal-drive car and a half-finished shed.

The owner of this "apparition" by the name of Ian, positively enthused all over us and promptly invited us into his caravan (could you imagine ten wet, bedraggled, muddy-footed walkers looking like the latest entrants for "the creature from black lagoon" all oozing through the door of a nice clean van). We declined, so he opened up his nearly finished shed, urging us to make use of the hot water merrily bubbling on a large b-b-q type incinerator, or perhaps we might like a shower (cold water only unfortunately). We were further urged to help ourselves to his port, which was housed in a 20 gallon container, but not knowing how many slides we yet had to encounter, we rather begrudgingly declined.

Whilst enjoying the shelter of the dry building, the rain again arrived in buckets, and we all rather guiltily wondered where our brave "fall-sliders" were eating their lunch. We learned from our host that he is a sailor and eventually hopes to raise goats. He has done some clearing and obviously enjoys his "weekend vacations" in the mountains - we all wished him luck. Incidentally, he also knew who we were, and that we had talked to Neville Lang and later on his wife - Telecom should study their system.

Host Ian then walked a little way with us to the top of a small mountain and pointed out a track we were unaware of which led straight down onto the "Dilly" River. The rain was alternating with a weak watery sun by this time, and the afternoon's walk was rather pleasant. The views of both Murruin Creek and the Wollondilly River were delightful, and we could see the cars from a long way up the mountain. The last section was very steep, and on looking at the map we saw that we had come down off Bullnigang Range, at angles to Shauny's Creek. A short walk along the river put us back at the cars in time to drive to Mittagong for a chinese meal. A very enjoyable, if slightly damp weekend, but one that can be recommended to all who love mountain views.

KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK
PLAN OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW

(This Review was received in club correspondence for December, and as all club members are interested in Kosciusko National Park either as walkers and/or skiers, we are publishing it in full. Note that it is NOT the Draft Plan of Management which is still to be finalised. EDITOR.)

INTRODUCTION

The Planning Issue Statement on Resort Areas was published in May, 1980. This Statement was one of a series designed to stimulate interest and comment on important planning issues being considered as part of the review of the Kosciusko National Park Plan of Management. The main points covered by the Statement included:

The Planning Issues: Snowfield use has continued to expand to the stage where existing access, accommodation, and skifield facilities will reach saturation point in the near future. In considering the future management of the snowfields, the following are overriding considerations:

- . Because of the Park's international importance there must be a limit to which development can be permitted.
- . Use of the Park should be available to as wide a range of visitors as possible and not be restricted to specific sections of the community.
- . Financial constraints will dictate the amount of public funds available for road construction and provision of new services.
- . The community will not accept continued disturbance of the Park's fragile alpine and sub-alpine area.

New Skiing Opportunities: The Statement indicated that the Tooma Dam, Kings Cross and Blue Cow areas will be considered for alpine (downhill) skiing facilities. Any other areas within the Park which may be appropriate for skiing development will also be investigated.

Accommodation: It was suggested that the only additional accommodation that may be provided will be that required for essential servicing staff or to fulfill existing commitments.

Access: The use of mass transit into resort areas to cater for the increased numbers of visitors was suggested.

Over 280 written submissions, covering a wide range of opinion, had been received in response to this Statement by mid-October 1980. They have all been studied, and are helping to shape the Draft Plan of Management.

It is obvious that there is enormous public interest in the future of the Park and its Plan of Management. This sheet attempts to answer some of the most common questions from the submissions, in the hope that this will provide an informed environment for a community-wide assessment of the Draft Plan when it becomes available in the new year. The information provided in this Sheet relates to seven General issues:

- . visitor numbers
- . the impact of skiing at, and overseas comparisons with, Kosciusko National Park.

- accommodation
- access
- new skiing opportunities
- the legal requirements of planning, and
- water supply and sewerage.

It is intended to continue discussions with local government, skier representative bodies and other organisations interested in this planning process before the Draft Plan is finalised. These discussions will proceed through November. Any statistics or opinions which might conflict with the arguments outlined here should be brought to the attention of such bodies, or the Planning Officer, as soon as possible. Alternatively, others may prefer to wait until more detail is available when the Draft Plan goes on public display, and submit their views on that document. Whichever course is preferred, correspondence should be addressed to:

The Planning Officer, Kosciusko National Park, Private Mail Bag, COOMA.
N.S.W. 2630.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

A. Visitor Numbers.

I. HOW MANY WINTER VISITORS WILL BE USING THE PARK IN FUTURE YEARS?

It depends who you ask. There are a range of estimates for the next decade:

Peak Day Visitors (Eastern Resorts)

Estimate Basis	Increase pa	1980	1985	1990
Aust.Ski Federation (high)	22%	24,000	65,000	175,000
N.S.W. Ski Association	18%	24,000	55,000	126,000
Aust.Ski Federation (low)	15%	24,000	48,000	97,000
Perisher Range Planning Study	12%	24,000	42,000	75,000
Kosciusko Sub-Region Study*	9%	24,000	37,000	57,000
N.P.W.S./Dept.of Tourism	6%	24,000	32,000	43,000

Total Winter Visitors

Estimate Basis	Increase pa	1980	1985	1990
Aust.Ski Federation (high)	22%	1,010,000	2,730,000	7,378,000
N.S.W.Ski Association	18%	1,010,000	2,311,000	5,286,000
Aust.Ski Federation (low)	15%	1,010,000	2,031,000	4,086,000
Perisher Range Planning Study	12%	1,010,000	1,780,000	3,137,000
Kosciusko Sub-Region Study*	9%	1,010,000	1,554,000	2,391,000
N.P.W.S./Dept.of Tourism	6%	1,010,000	1,352,000	1,809,000

*Planning and Environment Commission

2. HOW MANY OF THE VISITORS ARE ALPINE SKIERS?

At present an estimated 1,930,000 visits are made to the Park in a year. About one third of these visits are by alpine skiers. (About half the visits are recorded for the winter months, when about 70% of visitors are alpine skiers.)

B. The Impact of Skiing on, and Overseas Comparisons with, Kosciusko N.Park.

3. SKIERS OCCUPY ONLY 3% OF THE PARK, DON'T THEY?

True, as far as it goes. However, only 15% of the Park is above the average snowline (1520 metres), and much of the snow-covered area is rolling terrain totally unsuited to alpine skiing developments. Hence, the nature of the resource will set a final limit on alpine skiing developments. Furthermore, alpine skiing is only one form of winter recreation to be catered for in the snowfields.

4. DOESN'T THE LAYER OF SNOW PROTECTING THE VEGETATION PREVENT ANY SIGNIFICANT HARM TO THE ENVIRONMENT BY SKIING?

The actual activity of snow skiing has little impact. Nevertheless, there are considerable environmental effects associated with skiing. Extensive summer slope grooming is often required, with the removal of rocks and vegetation. The construction and maintenance of lifts, access tracks and public facilities all affect the environment. The provision of services also has considerable impact on the Park, not only in resorts but also over a wider area.

5. IS IT NOT THE CASE THAT EXPANSION OF THE RESORTS WILL HAVE NO DELETERIOUS IMPACT ON THE PARK BECAUSE THE ENVIRONMENTS OF THE RESORTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY ALTERED BY EXISTING DEVELOPMENTS?

The presence of the existing resorts does not provide a justification for intensive urbanisation of the snowfields. Whilst there are problems within existing resort areas, particularly with regard of water supply and sewerage, these should be investigated and solved rather than made worse. There are many valuable environments, such as sphagnum bogs, needing protection within the skiing resorts.

6. HEAVILY USED SKIING AREAS IN EUROPE AND THE U.S.A. REMAIN BEAUTIFUL AND UNHARMED, SO HOW CAN SKIING DO ANY SIGNIFICANT HARM TO THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE PARK?

Comparisons between the skiing areas of Kosciusko National Park and overseas should be made with a great deal of caution. The skiing areas of the northern hemisphere are in temperate high latitude areas receiving extensive snow falls. By comparison, the Kosciusko resorts are in the same latitude as the African side of the Mediterranean Sea! In addition, ski field developments in Australia are all at or above the treeline, and in ecological terms are effectively far higher in the mountains than most of their overseas counterparts. There are very few examples overseas of ski resorts which are developed in environments as restricted in their continental distribution or as fragile as the alpine area of Kosciusko National Park. The international importance of the Park was officially acknowledged in January 1977, when it was designated a Biosphere Reserve under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

C.. Accommodation.

7. WHY HAS THE NEED TO RESTRICT ACCOMMODATION SUDDENLY APPEARED AS AN ISSUE?

The 1974 Plan of Management recognised that future major development of tourist overnight facilities, especially of the hotel/motel/lodge type, should be encouraged outside the Park, relieving the very problems now experienced with sewerage disposal and water supply. This principle, adopted after public input and discussion, forms the basis for the accommodation proposals outlined to date in the review of the Plan.

8. WHY HAVE THE DEVELOPMENTS AT CHARLOTTE PASS VILLAGE BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR POSSIBLE REMOVAL IN YEAR 2015?

The Charlotte Pass Village facilities are in an area of considerable conservation importance, with its glacial features, habitat of the endangered mountain pygmy possum and limited stands of mature snow gums.

Significant damage has occurred in the area due to the developments. Recent examples are the major oil spill of winter 1979, and the extensive soil erosion that required urgent remedial works. The effect of nutrients from sewage treatment is clearly evident in Spencers Creek. The damage to the David Moraine by electrical reticulation works, road works and snow clearing are other examples. There are indications that Spencers Creek is continuing to degrade and widen. The damaging effect of this process on the sphagnum bogs is considerable.

The onus is clearly on lessees to demonstrate their capacity to operate without further environmental damage and degradation of this fragile environment. If they fail to do so, the option outlined in the Planning Issue Statement will be the only responsible course of action if the long term protection of the irreplaceable natural features of the area is to be guaranteed. The year 2015 is the date the Head Lease covering the developments expires. The investments under the lease will revert to the Crown, thus enabling decisions to be made on the future use of the facilities.

9. WHY ISN'T THERE LOW COST ACCOMMODATION IN KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK?

"Low cost" accommodation is precluded from the National Park's snowfields by the enormous costs, at today's prices, of developing any new accommodation in such an environment. It is far cheaper to build outside the Park, and it must be emphasised that only one quarter of present peak day visitors stay in accommodation within the Park.

10. WOULDN'T LARGER CARPARKS CAUSE MORE DAMAGE THAN ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION?

The construction of buildings does have some detrimental effects, such as rapid run-off. However, it is the provision of associated services, such as access roads, water storage and supply and electricity reticulation, and the impact of sewerage effluent on creeks and rivers which has the greater effect. This impact reaches well beyond the resorts themselves, spreading along roads, sewerage and electricity lines for example.

It will be of little value having larger carparks if the road capacity precludes any large increase in private vehicles entering the resort areas during peak periods. Such an increase in capacity will require major road reconstruction.

D. Access.

11. WON'T THE DAILY ROAD JOURNEY TO AND FROM THE RESORTS BE BOTH LENGTHENED BY INEVITABLE DELAYS AND DANGEROUS IN BAD WEATHER IF LIMITS ARE PUT ON THE AMOUNT OF ACCOMMODATION WITHIN THE PARK?

Accommodation within the Park won't eliminate these problems. The Australian Ski Federation's conservative projections indicated that at the end of this decade there will be 97,000 visitors in the Park on a peak day (see A.1.). If this number of users could fit on the ski slopes (see 12), even a doubling of existing accommodation would result in only a 6% reduction in the traffic on the access roads. The sometimes long, sometimes dangerous journey would remain a problem to be tackled by other means. Hence, research is continuing into the safety aspects of winter access.

Holding the number of visitors entering the Park in private cars at present levels, and meeting demand with new accommodation within the Park, would result in an increase in beds from a little over 6,000 to well over 50,000 within the next 10 years. Fifty thousand beds represent about five towns with the population of Cooma, or two towns the size of Queanbeyan or Goulburn within the snowfields of Kosciusko National Park!

12. WOULDN'T A MASS TRANSIT (BUS) SYSTEM BE UNECONOMICAL AND UNRELIABLE?

There may be no practical alternative to a mass transit system. The capacity of Kosciusko Road (to Perisher, Smiggins and Guthega) and the Alpine Way (to Thredbo) in fine weather is about 6,000 cars or 19,000 people over the three hour morning "rush". This is based on the capacities of 1,000 cars per lane per hour, with each car carrying an average of 3.15 persons.

Preliminary estimates put the ultimate ski area capacity of the Park at about 50,000 visitors per day. If opportunities are available for all of these visitors by 1990, some 31,000 (50,000-19,000) peak day visitors will have to be accommodated within the Park or be transported in by other means. Extra lanes would increase the capacity of the roads but cost in excess of \$20 million, require massive car parks and still fall well short of demand. Similar expenditures would be required on sub-regional roads leading to the Park.

A possible option is to continue the current trend to a bus/car mix, with an upgraded bus service as demand requires. Each bus could carry 40 persons, whilst occupying a road space equivalent to 4 cars (carrying 12.6 people).

If major new ski areas are opened up, mass transit will probably be essential. Investigations are continuing into the efficient and economical organisation of such a system.

13. WHAT ABOUT A MONORAIL, RAILWAY OR TUNNEL SYSTEM TO IMPROVE ACCESS?

Any such option will be carefully examined, but cost will be critical, particularly if an investment has to be recouped over the normal 10-16 week skiing season. Mass transit systems are unlikely to be essential outside of peak use periods.

E. New Skiing Opportunities.

14. SHOULD NOT NEW RESORT AREAS BE DEVELOPED TO EASE PRESSURE ON EXISTING RESORTS AND TO HELP ELIMINATE OVERCROWDING?

The Planning Issue Statement on Resort Areas indicated that the

suitability of any other areas within the Park which may have potential for skiing development will be evaluated. If the Australian Ski Federation demand estimates are correct these areas will be needed by 1982; if the N.P.W.S. demand estimate is correct the areas will be needed by 1984. It is possible that some of these potential new resorts will be for day use, and hence different from Thredbo, Perisher, etc.

15. WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL OF THE EASTERN PART OF THE SNOWFIELDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SKIING OPPORTUNITIES?

Accurate estimates are difficult to determine. However the following table gives an order of magnitude derived from previous studies (e.g. Perisher Range Planning Study) and discussions with resort operators and staff. However, they are not commitments to develop; these will be proposed in the Draft Plan and, later, prescribed in the adopted Plan of Management.

Approximate Peak Day Visitor Capacity (1) - Eastern Resort Areas

a. <u>Existing</u>	Thredbo	7,500
	Perisher/Smiggins	14,500
	Guthega	650
	Charlotte Pass	800
		<u>23,450</u>

b. <u>Infill of Existing Areas</u>	Thredbo	2,500
	Perisher/Smiggins	3,000
	Guthega	550
	Charlotte Pass	150
		<u>6,200</u>

c. <u>Possible New Areas</u>	Bogong Creek (2)	6,500
	Twin Valleys (3)	4,500
	Blue Cow	3,700
		<u>14,700</u>

Total 44,350

i.e. Ski areas served by the Alpine Way	21,000	} visitors/ day
" " " " " Kosciusko Road	23,350	
(Main Road 286)		

- (1) approx. 70% of these visitors are alpine skiers.
- (2) Dead Horse Gap side of Thredbo Village skiing area.
- (3) This is one of several possible sites for a development on the Ramshead Range.

F. The Legal Requirements of Planning.

16. HOW DOES THE LAW OF THE STATE OF N.S.W. AFFECT PLANNING FOR RESORT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK?

The main legal requirements are contained in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, Clean Waters Act 1970 and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

(1) N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

(a) Section 31(4) requires that any developments proposed for a park have to be in accordance with its plan of management.

(b) Section 72(4) requires that in the preparation of a plan of management the following objectives will have to be taken into account:

- The conservation of wildlife.
- The preservation of a national park and the protection of its special features.
- The prevention of any works that adversely affect the natural condition and special features of a national park.
- The preservation of any historic structure or object or any relic or Aboriginal place in a national park.
- The appropriate use of a national park by lessees and licensees or occupants.
- The preservation of a national park as a catchment area.
- The protection of a national park against fire and erosion.
- The setting apart of wilderness areas.
- The encouragement and regulation of the appropriate use, understanding and enjoyment of a national park.

(2) Clean Waters Act 1970.

(a) Classification of Waters. The State Pollution Control Commission proposed, by advertisement in the national press, to classify the waters within Mosciusko National Park. Public submissions closed on 25th May 1979. It is proposed to classify the waters below resort areas as either Protected Waters (P) or Controlled Waters (C). This will require any effluent from resort developments to comply with the standards set in the Act. Standards will be imposed on allowable pollutants. (Sections 11, 12, 13).

(b) Licensing. When issuing a license for a sewerage works the State Pollution Control Commission must take into account the possible extent of the pollution of any waters and the classification of these waters (Section 20(6)).

(c) Discharge into Classified Waters. Nutrients are not to be discharged from the resorts if they cause excessive plant growth in the water of the receiving streams. Unless otherwise determined, there has to be a dilution of 19 parts of fresh water to 1 part effluent.

(3) Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

The Act binds the National Parks and Wildlife Service and requires that an Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for works such as resort developments (Section 112). The Environmental Impact Statement must take into account a number of factors. Of particular importance to resort developments are those referring to pollution, waste disposal, demands on natural resources (e.g. water), and cumulative effects.

The Act also requires public exhibition of Environmental Impact Statements, and allows for Commissions of Inquiry to analyse contentious issues. The Service is subject to the Land and Environment Court in all matters relating to this and the Clean Waters Act.

G. Water Supply and Sewerage.17. WHY DO SEWERAGE EFFLUENT PROBLEMS CAUSE SO MUCH CONCERN AND COMMENT?

The basic problem is that the ski resorts, unlike their overseas counterparts, are located relatively high within water catchments (see 6). Perisher Valley, for example, has to provide sufficient water for water supply, including fire fighting, and operation of a sewerage works from a catchment of less than 1,000 ha. The situation is worse at Charlotte Pass and Smiggin Holes and somewhat better at Thredbo (because it is served by a larger catchment).

Strict standards for treated effluent are required for the category of Classified Waters proposed for the resort areas (see 16(2)). It appears that the 19:1 dilution requirement cannot be met even for existing developments at Perisher Valley, Smiggin Holes and Charlotte Pass. The position at Thredbo is marginal. The State Pollution Control Commission is studying the problem with a view to amending sewerage plant licenses or imposing new standards to ensure classification requirements are met.

18. WHAT EFFECT DO WATER SUPPLY PROBLEMS HAVE ON PLANNING NEW AREAS?

None of the existing resort areas has an adequate water storage and supply capacity. The resorts high in water catchments will require considerable investigation and expenditure of funds on water supply and storage to bring storage capacity supply up to acceptable municipal standards. The answers may not be easily found, and beg questions of the scale of technological interventions appropriate for a national park and international biosphere reserve. The problem is not so critical at Guthega or Thredbo.

19. IF WATER IS A CONSTRAINT, HOW DOES THIS AFFECT PLANNING OPTIONS?

A day visitor uses far less water and produces far less sewage than an overnight visitor. The current design criteria for sewerage works indicates that five day visitors produce the same load on these services as every overnight visitor. Recent studies in the Park have suggested that the actual ratio may be nearer to 20 to 1. Hence, planning for day use rather than overnight accommodation will allow far more people to use the same facilities within the Park.

WALKS PROGRAMME: AMENDMENT.

SUNDAY, 22nd February, 1981.

Waterfall - Kingfisher Pool - Morella Karong - Moorabinda -
Heathcote. Train 8:40 C. Map: Cambelltown. 14 KM. EASY.

LEADER: DAVID INGRAM. Contact Leader in Clubroom on Wednesday,
18th February.



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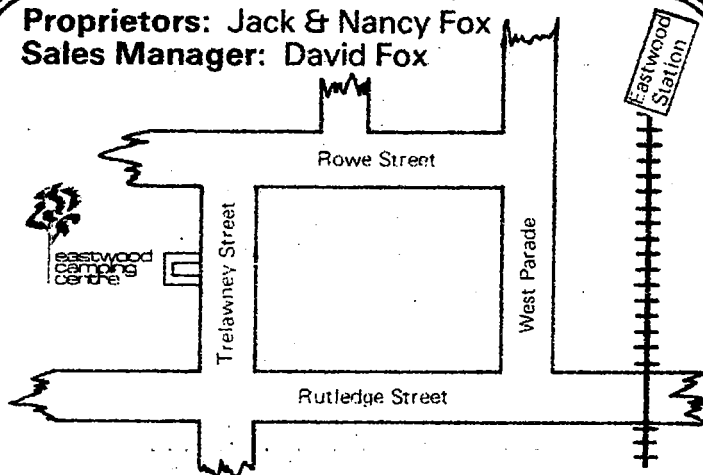
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"STOP PRESS"

(*by B. W. J.*)
by Anon.

It was revealed today that an important new coal deposit has been found in Kangaroo Valley. A spokesperson for the owners of the land on which it was discovered, The Sydney Belly Worshippers, said, he did not wish to be named nor did she want the location to be made known as the Club was not yet known to have bought the land as the Committee was still considering the matter. (The Club does in fact own the land though only a select few members know of it! "The others will come round in time." said the spokesperson.)

The purchase was considered a bargain when it was made and is said to be somewhere between the Kangaroo River and the Mt. Scansi Road. "Once the Committee decides to buy the land a new decent hut will be built on it," the spokesperson said. "They will be most gratified to know that they have built-in coal." The site is some distance from popular walking areas and public transport, but this was not seen as a problem. "Once they realise what a boon a property with coal on it is," said the spokesperson, "that will outweigh other emotional arguments."

The spokesperson pointed out that the design of the new hut will be altered by the existence of coal on the property. "It will be steam-heated from the 50 megawatt boiler we will install," he/she said. "Steam showers, and a steam winch trolley to Kangaroo Valley township will be a feature! We will be cooking with steam and a steam-powered generator will provide electricity to power the complex. At off-peak times we will sell power to the national grid. Steam heated toilets will be a feature of the place as some of the older members have piles from years of sitting on the cold slates of the old hut. A sauna for those members who have had a hard day at the Kangaroo Valley pub will be installed. We also hope to export coal and thus diversify our interests from the narrow ones of packaged bushwalking tours and cheap overseas holidays," the spokesperson said. "I am sure that members will not object to the grey tinge over everything!" was his/her final comment.

NEW PHONE NUMBER - Check Walks Programme!

Len Newland may now be contacted on Tel. 232,1252 (B).

THE FLOWERS OF SRINAGAR.PART IV.

by Bill Gillam.

Depth of field of a lens is a direct variable of the size of the lens opening - it will vary in the way marked on the lens barrel not whether it was made in Germany or Japan. All modern compound lenses are computer designed for glass characteristics and curvature of each element and coated by similarly sophisticated technology to stop stray reflected light and preserve natural colour balance. Used realistically modern lenses all approach the limits of optics. Significantly "model changes" are in the direction of motorising what was done by hand - photography as consumption not as creation.

A 50 m.m. lens is normally supplied with the camera as the standard lens. It covers an angle of view roughly equivalent to normal forward vision. It is a generally useful bland compromise giving restricted visual effects. It will focus to 0.5 metres at which distance a page of this magazine just fills the frame. Far too big for wild flower studies. Pointed at a landscape all but the most prominent features flatten out leaving the centre of interest framed with a devastatingly blue sky occupying 20% of the frame. These limitations are, I think, responsible for most of our disappointments in photography. Photographic lore has come to us through camera clubs still obsessed with the darkroom techniques of black and white, of enlarging, cropping and re-touching, insisting on publishing f numbers and exposure times with Brand X's ultra fine grain film developed with Brand Y's nano-grain developer. The practice of photography has not kept pace with the possibilities offered by freely available interchangeable lenses and high speed colour film. Contemporary photographic criticisms and exhibition (as a parallel to ART exhibition and criticism) is restricted to "flawless technique" that produces "infinite tone gradation" of grays. One might applaud Manet because his Olympia would reproduce well, and not look out of place, in the "Daily Mirror".

Interchangeable lenses offer a way of creative seeing. By buying a second-hand camera, two additional lenses and a close-up set one can explore an infinite range of vision. Second-hand cameras with built-in light meter sell for around \$100, a zoom lens a bit more, a 28 m.m. lens a bit less, and close-up sets next to nothing. Add later a teleconverter for \$30. About \$300 is still not much more than 50% of a basic new camera and restrictive standard lens. Any camera is just a black box - it is the lens that shows you the world. The added weight of all the lenses is around one kilogram. Leave the tent at home and sleep under a log if it rains.

What do these lenses do. First the zoom. Regarded as an aid to focussing and composing rather than "bringing things close" the zoom is superb. Long before the extreme focal length is reached the most important elements of a scene can be isolated, the intrusion of the sky diminished and the "design" emphasised. Once operated the versatility of the zoom is indispensable. A short focal length lens, 28 mm is ideal, gives an incredible depth of field - at f 16 with object at 1.5 metres to infinity - the major penalty is that the ultimate image encompasses more than any eye could ever see in such detail. Good slides from a 28 mm are astonishingly successful.

Close-up sets screw onto the front of a lens, with stepping rings onto any lens - the main lens is set to infinity and the whole system moved in and out to achieve focus. The lenses in a set, usually three, are additive; they can be screwed onto each other until the image is of acceptable size in the frame. They have two major short comings - the depth of field is extremely shallow, from 2 to 10 mm depending on the number of lenses used, so that focussing, moving the camera in and out, is only half this magnitude, 1 to 5 mm to gain clear focus. Add these limitations to that of delicate flowers nodding on slender stems. Brilliance of the slide is increased since the light rays have travelled through less atmosphere and the pervasive blueness of distance is not a factor.

Compared to the chemistry of colour film the physics of lenses are simple. All brands of colour film are three sensitive layers of emulsion on a backing. Each layer is sensitive to one colour alone - magenta, cyan and green/blue. Green/blue is generally the least successfully formulated and in addition has the most variable sensitivity to our eyes. Fresh colour film of different brands, even if all daylight type, will have inherently different response to these colours, a deliberate choice of the manufacturer. Kodachrome seems to have saturated blues at the expense of magenta, Agfa gives de-saturated reds and browns and its blue is unpredictable. Ektachrome gives good saturation across the spectrum; specifically Ektachrome "blacks" are luminous and give luminosity to all adjacent colours. With ageing before use all films lose saturation - saturation being the pure colour modified, in painting, by white pigment.

All these variations in film behaviour are beyond our control at the moment of making an exposure. Experiment with all the brands is needed to find one which suits your own visual perception. Or you can use colour filters - but that is beyond this introduction. Colour printing, in which the use of filters is obligatory, can alter the colour balance dramatically. "Picture" books, the medium in which we see most work by "established" photographers, has undergone such further refinement so that assessment of our own slides and our own aspirations should not be made by comparison.

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SLEEPING BAG COVERS

COOLANA FUND

If you wish to have a cover for your new "Fazeley" sleeping bag, ring Helen Gray 86 6263 after hours.

The covers are normal size, in standard light weight nylon. Cost \$2.25. All proceeds go towards Coolana's rates.

SOCIAL NOTES FOR FEBRUARY.

by Peter Miller.

Wednesday, February 18:

OUTWARD BOUND FILM.

The film covers the activities of the Outward Bound movement. Groups are shown participating in rock climbing, bushwalking, caving, canoeing and map reading. Duration 55 minutes.

DINNER will be held before the film at the Nam Roc Chinese Restaurant, 538 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards - 7.00 to 8.00 pm.

Wednesday, February 25:

KOSCIUSKO HUTS ASSOCIATION FILM.

The film is about the work of the Kosciusko Huts Association and their efforts to preserve the huts which we use in the Snowy area.

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Visit the SYDNEY OBSERVATORY at Millers Point.

Date - Tuesday, 3rd March.

Time - 7.30 pm.

Book NOW with Peter Miller, Tel. 95,2689 as there is a limit of thirty people, children welcome.

NEXT MONTH.....

Report on the Kangaroo Valley Bush
Fire and the effect on Coolana.