

THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKER

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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, 1982.

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SNOWY MOUNTAINS - DEC 27 to JAN 2.

by Jo van Sommers.

Main Range - Jagungal - Main Range.Led by Jim Percy and Barrie Murdoch.

On Christmas Day 1981, Two Triple Jay, admittedly not a particularly reliable source, announced the prospect of a White Christmas at Perisher Valley. This gave me some pause. The following day was to be the start of seven days walking on the Main Range and out to Jagungal and back. Every other time I had been to the Snowy Mountains, summer or winter, there had been the comfort of a lodge to return to. Obviously I needed some advice. I knew that Bill Burke had a private party of seasoned members at his Perisher Valley Lodge at the same time as I was going to be bravely exposing myself to the elements. Besides, the food list I'd dug out from the last long walk I'd done (ssh, it was 1957!) was full of strange items like dehydrated vegetable stew, hanks of bacon and Ry Vita biscuits. Surely something good must have happened to lightweight food in the interval. Sure enough, Bill provided me with a terrific list which I followed faithfully to the last gram. He also regaled me with tales of previous disasters. Had I heard of the time he was rung up at Perisher from Charlotte's Pass by a bedraggled party who asked him to come and get them before they froze? What about the time he was marooned in Mawson's Hut for nearly three days in a Christmastime blizzard? Did the leaders know to head for a hut and stay there if the weather turned nasty? Had I remembered to pack my beanie, gloves, long trousers, heavy rainjacket and stormproof tent?

By this time I was starting to think I was preparing for a trip to Antarctica. However, I was glad I took all those items. We drove up on Boxing Day and made a cold camp at Sawpit Creek. Next day we rendezvoused at Charlotte's Pass in a freezing wind. Our party was preceded by a group of giant Atlases with incredible legs, who moved off smartly into the bleakness, slapping their goitres and ignoring the gale. I felt suddenly frail and puny. We were supposed to climb Kosci from Merritt's Creek, but by the time we got to the creek the rain and mist forced us into Seaman's Hut for a soggy lunch. We zipped across the fields of alpine flowers to Albina Hut, which is being nicely maintained by a group of volunteers and was not full before our party of eleven got there. However it was cold even inside, and there is no way of cooking unless you have brought a stove or carried firewood. We had a somewhat subdued cold dinner. Laurie endeared himself to everyone by making us all cups of tea on his backpacked stove. Despite the rain, the aroma from downstairs drove several of the party to the dubious shelter of their tents. Barbara and John almost got washed away and decided that wet sleeping bags, swirling mists and very cold weather made it advisable to return to Charlotte's Pass. Keith and Kathy and Laurie went with them, so the party was almost halved at one blow. The rump set off through the mist; those who had been there before described to those who hadn't the splendours of the scenery. At this stage my thoughts turned to the crowd at Kandahar. Perhaps they were sitting around at this moment, having a second cup of coffee and planning gourmet meals!

We had lunch in the spartan surroundings of the hydrology hut near Blue Lake. Joan had spent nearly three days alone in the basement of this

hut during the previous Christmas, when it had snowed heavily. Just as well I hadn't rung her up as well, or I may never have gone. This time however, the hut itself was open, sort-of. One stood on a convenient deck-chair and climbed into the second-storey door, which had been opened (but not forced) by previous visitors. Another cold hut without any cooking facilities. At Kandahar, I thought wistfully as I bit into my lightweight lunch biscuit, they would be having pots of hot soup, substantial sandwiches, even quiche or spaghetti marinara; accompanied by copious amounts of fermented products. I had another glass of delicious Tang.

We struggled off into the mist on the Twynam track (marked 'Closed'). Our co-leader, Barry, was going to decide whether to proceed or not, depending on what could be seen from the trig. Fortunately, the mist lifted briefly and we pushed on to Pounds Creek, where we camped early. This put us half a day behind schedule but we figured we had battled bravely enough for one day. There was a lot of snow about and we had had some anxious moments trying to re-locate the track after it had disappeared into the subterranean depths of large snowdrifts. The weather got better the lower we went, and by sunset we had a good fire to sit around and drink a toast (in tea of course) to Laurie the Teamaker.

Next day we set off at eight a.m. to conquer Mt. Tate, Dickie Cooper Bogong, a million prickly bushes, a road bash, and 23 kilometres. We camped near Valentine's Hut, where the supply of wood was depleted by the numerous users of the hut. However, we found enough to yarn around the fire by and guess at the implications of the sky patterns. A thick hogsback hung in the east; a crescent moon in the west; peaceful stars in the north and scudding clouds in the south. It must have all cancelled itself out, for the morning was beautiful. Winter followed by spring! Off we galloped at eight a.m. again, still making up time, arriving at Grey Mare Hut in mid-morning and inspecting the famous Rat Menu. The reputation of this hut may need to be revised, as it too was clean and tidy and being maintained by a volunteer group.

We followed the Strumbo Range, avoiding the Strawberry Hill approach to Jagungal and tackling ridges to the west. It was a long climb through tenacious bushes that fought back gamely and often needed two or three assaults before they conceded defeat. We camped in a delightful spot on the edge of a glacial cirque about an hour's walk from the summit of Jagungal. Next morning we rocketed up to the peak, packless, and were astonished to find that Keith and Kathy, whom we had not seen for days, had been there just two hours before.

The seasons had changed again, and we now had summer weather for the trip to Mawson's Hut, which meant two things - one good, swimming, and one bad, hordes of march flies. This was supposed to be an easy day of 12 km as programmed, since we had made up the ground lost by the first two days of bad weather, but somehow it turned into another 19 km day. It was New Year's Eve, too, and a less likely set of celebrants you never saw. It seemed time before dinner to bring out the demon rum and give everyone a bit of a kick-start. Under the circumstances, it was decreed that midnight

would be at 10 o'clock. Strange and exotic delicacies appeared, boisterous games were played, and by ten o'clock we found we were quite wide awake! We managed to stay awake until eleven after all, helped along by Jim's popcorn made in a billy.

A wild and stormy dawn drove Brian and his tent into the safety of the nearby hut. It wasn't that he thought he'd get blown away, he explained, but he wasn't going to carry that rotten tent wet again. We'd had winter, spring, summer; and now it was autumnal as we set off at the all too familiar hour of eight a.m. for White's River Hut. By autumnal I mean it looked as if the day was going to be a repeat of the first two days but less cold. We got to the hut so early we decided to knock off the Rolling Ground and Mt. Tate as well and get back to our happy spot at Pounds Creek. The 26 km was too much for Brian's feet, which looked pre-masticated by the time we got there. The wind, which had been strong all day, really got going and made cooking very difficult. Once again my thoughts turned to the Perisher mob. No doubt they were planning the execution of wonderful culinary feats over a few pre-dinner drinks. I discovered a teaspoon each of the good stuff left over from the night before. My dinner of scrambled powdered egg, eaten in the shelter of a tent, was quite delicious, thank you!

Up till the last day we had all been quite serious about this strange bushwalking business. Barry had co-led, mostly from the front; and Jim had co-led, mostly from the rear; giving succour to the wounded and faith to the fainthearted. Although we had walked a long way already, on the last day we decided to add a bit more to our trip and whizz out to The Sentinel and back. Since I was the only one who had been there before, the co-leaders naively entrusted me with route-finding. We did have a lovely walk out to the end of Watson's Crags! Those who pronounced this effort to be superior to The Sentinel anyway got hugs.

A huge drift hung above Blue Lake. Out came pieces of plastic, garbage bags, rubber mats, anything that would slide, and we took the slope the 'easy' way - on our bottoms. This part of the mountain was alive with people; some heard us shrieking with laughter as we tramped back up the slope for another go. One of these innocents caused quite a stir when she said she hoped she would be like us when she was as old as we were! There was another big drift above Hedley Tarn which we treated with more respect as it sloped steeply into icy water. We made Charlotte's Pass by six p.m. I wanted to visit Kandahar; but the thought of six bedraggled bods arriving smack in the middle of dinner would be too much even for B.B., I reckoned. Instead we went back to Sawpit for hot showers and into Jindabyne, where we finished the walk in fine style at the Bowling Club. This is a good spot to know about, although Colin wishes he'd never heard of it! We had had a terrific week with lots of variety, and our little party had worked well as a group. Joan was pushing our luck a bit when she tried to convince the ranger that we were a family and should only pay for one campsite at Sawpit, but we all will remember the ambiance of this trip for a long time.

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THREE MONTHS' LONG SERVICE LEAVEPART 2.

by Evelyn Walker.

LINDOS.

The 11.30 bus from Rhodes city took us along the 56 km run down the east coast to Lindos. It was full of tourists and baggage and one elderly local woman decided to sit with her shopping on the floor. An hour and a half later we pulled into the village square which had a large leafy tree in the middle. The square was on the edge of the village and that was as far as traffic could go. On a rocky outcrop above the village, with the white, box-like houses clustered at its feet, rose the impressive battlemented acropolis, and beneath us the sweep of the bay, where some people were stretched on the sand. And the air was filled with the sweet scent of lemon blossom.

Shouldering my pack I walked down into the main street looking for Pension Athina. Some 10-12 feet in width and cobbled, the main street was lined for quite a distance with the prettiest Greek dresses, blouses and skirts. Quite a surprise! The little whitewashed shops on each side had metal rails running along the wall with holes for hangers, which served excellently to display the clothing. Warm invitations to look at other goods came from every direction.

No one I asked had heard of Pension Athina but at last someone suggested I enquire at Alexi's bar. There a helpful man offered to show me the way, but the place was closed and very unpromising. Back to Alexi's. Then a boy was sent and a man appeared who fortunately knew of the arrangement. Further down the cobbled street, right at a shop which I fixed in my memory, then left down another street hardly six feet wide and we stopped at a gate in the long white wall. At last I was to see into one of those courtyards! Inside there was a whitewashed one-storey house, with attractive plants trailing up it, and a stair on one side leading to two rooms at the top, with a narrow room between containing a basin and loo. Over part of the family home there was a flat roof with a clothes line and pegs, together with a shower rose, rail and curtain, so that one might have enjoyed an al fresco shower if the day was not windy. There was an excellent view of the acropolis and other rooftops. Below was the secluded courtyard - a real retreat from the throng outside.

Back to Alexi's again, where I would be having my breakfast, and I sat at a table in the street under a tree enjoying a 'hotdog' from next door - all that seemed to be offering, as Alexi's only serves breakfast. However the hotdog consisted of slices of hot meat wrapped in an envelope of bread and tasted very good.

The urge to explore had now become irresistible. The little cobbled streets, ranging in width from 10 to 4 feet, edged with long white walls and drained by neat little slots running down the centre, were all equally enticing. The only traffic which used them was motorised carts used to deliver food and drink, and they rattled over the cobbles sounding like motor bikes. On the way towards the acropolis there was an old Byzantine church, plain on the outside by amazingly ornate within. The large arched entrance with its notice asking women to be modestly dressed led to a domed interior with two short domed wings. In the dim light given by a candelabra

one could make out the carved wood, painted in gold, and an intricately carved gold screen with the usual paintings of saints. To the left a lofty red pu pit gave a good view of the congregation. The air was filled with incense.

On leaving I climbed up some well made cobbled steps edged with square blocks of stone up the rock to the acropolis. On either side of the path for 100 yards the ground was spread with hand-worked lace tablecloths in white and off-white and women pleaded with us to examine them. The work was excellent and the price cheap but I just couldn't think of a use for a lace tablecloth, so kept going to the entrance, only to find that the gate would not be opening until 4 pm. Relieved to find another path down, which would avoid the tablecloth women, I had a drink on the beach, resolved to come to terms with the Greek siesta.

The climb back to the acropolis by the second path revealed its purpose - to provide sidesaddle donkey rides for those who did not want to walk up the steep path. The acropolis is certainly impressive from the outside. Set on a hill of steep cliffs of attractively coloured and eroded rock, it gives a commanding view of the little bay. Entry was gained by a steep flight of pink/brown steps to an arched doorway which led through well-preserved walls. Inside there were several groups of columns and part of an old building in the same warm brown - interesting, but less so than the walls. Down on one side was the little natural harbour, entirely undeveloped, where St. Paul is thought to have landed.

At 8 pm I went to the nearest restaurant, O Perikli, just round the corner and, seeing it nearly full, concluded that it must be good. It was a little spartan. The tablecloths were covered with clean paper secured by an elastic band which ran right round. The people appeared to be largely locals and people travelling cheaply as the place made no pretence of attracting tourists like the smarter places. But the moussaka and tomato salad were second to none. A small girl of about five busied herself with clearing the bottles and struggling to spread a clean paper cloth on a nearby table. She was helped and encouraged by her proud father. The Greeks are obviously fond of their children and show it.

After dinner when darkness had fallen Lindos became even more enchanting. The narrow streets were lit by attractive lamps attached to the walls at each corner and beckon one to go on to the next. The village seemed so safe and happy. Further on were the smarter restaurants, but there were few people in them by then.

That night the one warm blanket on the bed was by no means warm enough. On the wardrobe a pile of flokati rugs offered the only solution and I spread one on my bed and slept.

Twiddling the four taps in the washroom next morning in a vain hunt for hot water for the basin, I was suddenly sprayed with cold. Looking up, I noticed a shower rose in the ceiling which soaked everything in the tiny space - loo, basin, walls, window - and any clothing. Not having the familiar bush-walking garbage bag to keep things dry would make showering difficult. But it was an obvious improvement on the one outside.

From the flat roof it was easy to see that many one-storey houses had

similar upstairs accommodation. I wondered how the families had been able to raise the capital, and whether the government might have helped as an excellent way of increasing accommodation without changing the appearance of the village.

Round a few corners for breakfast at Alexi's, consisting of hot bread, jam and 'Nescoffee'. Bacon and eggs were also available but no fresh orange juice, despite the fact that the tiny fruit shop contained plenty of oranges.

Climbing some steps from the square in order to get above the village I found the way blocked by almost sheer rock. On the way down I came upon a man hoeing a tiny flat area -- no more than eight by five feet, edged with a wall of stones cleared from the soil. Tomatoes were being grown. Further down similar tiny plots were raising onions and cucumbers. Every possible patch was put to use.

After buying a cheese roll and apple cake I decided to walk to Lardos, the next village, some 8 km away. A German couple on the way told me that a tiny hamlet called Pefki, containing two restaurants and about ten people, was not far. They were planning to move there as they found Lindos too crowded. It certainly did fill up when the tourist buses started arriving and the slow queue climbed to the acropolis, but early or late it seemed delightful to me. Pefki turned out to be bigger than expected, but very scattered. The road resembled a dirt road in the Australian bush, with ruts and rocks in places, but otherwise good. Then I came to a few very comfortable houses -- more like expensive ones in Australia -- overlooking the sea and owning boats. Obviously millionaires' (or foreigners') alley.

Along a well made main road for five minutes, down another dirt road, and there was Lardos. In the heart of the village of newly painted and tumbledown houses was an attractive fountain, at which a woman filled a large pottery water jar, but there were no neat slots down the streets to drain the water, which flowed haphazardly. Another woman standing in her doorway addressed me in halting French and invited me inside. The home seemed to have only one bright blue room with a ceiling lined with wood, and containing two beds and a table, a television and a fridge. She offered me a boiled sweet and told me she had to go and bake some bread - there must have been a little bakehouse at the back.

After dinner that evening in one of the smarter restaurants I saw a notice outside a taverna advertising the televising of a football match between Liverpool and Munich. This brought in a fair crowd of supporters and I was lucky to get a seat with four friendly Germans to watch the full-colour programme, but I didn't stay long enough to find out who won.

On an early walk to the square next day I saw two elderly men sitting chatting under the tree. I went back for my camera but when I returned they had gone and the tourist buses were filling the square. Up on the rock the slow column of people was crawling up to the acropolis. Time to get out. I could have taken a ride on one of the buses going back to Rhodes and dropped off at one of the stops, but decided to walk to another village, Kalathos. The air was filled with a pleasant aromatic scent which I traced to a plant with pale blue flowers, but the amateur botanist who just happened along at

that moment couldn't identify it, though he had come to Lindos for a holiday to study the plants. Round the corner, and there was somebody's pride and joy - a large modern hotel in its own bay. I felt grateful for my little courtyard.

Kalathos was very small, yet even there building was going on. I noticed the same interesting practice as in other places - every building has a number, even the church. Some zealous numberer has slapped still fairly new numbers on new and derelict building alike. On the way back I cut across a ridge to the beach. The day-trippers had gone and the charm of Lindos returned in the evening sunshine.

A delicious dinner of satsiki (yoghourt and onions) and I was ready for Socrates' bar, where I met again a young fellow who was working in Lindos all summer at the Acropolis disco. He invited some of us along but the noise was earsplitting and I didn't stay long.

And so the next morning, after a quick walk round before the tourists arrived, I caught the early bus back to Rhodes and then on to the airport for my flight to Athens. I had been told in Australia that it is Lindos which 'sells' Rhodes for the tourist and certainly it's as well worth seeing as the capital. But it's essential to stay for a few nights, in a little pension with a courtyard, to enjoy its charm to the full.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

Dear Helen,

As one who has been going to "Coolana" for quite a few years, I would like to thank you and Dot Butler for the use of the mattresses in the building. I am sure I speak for many other people.

The destruction of these items is regrettable and contrary to the usual spirit of co-operation.

Let's hope the Coolana Committee is consulted in the future.

JOHN REDFERN.

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS.

The list of members with addresses and telephone numbers which will be sent out with the Annual Report will be compiled in the first two weeks of February.

Would members please notify the Hon. Secretary as soon as possible of any changes of address or 'phone number or any other correction of last year's entry which has not to date been given to her.

SHEILA BINNS.
Hon. Secretary.

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED.

The National Parks & Wildlife Foundation is seeking helpers for a Door Knock Appeal to be held on Sunday 28th February '82.

Interested members are asked to phone AUDREY CROLL on 997,1951 (Home) or 92,1084 (Business).

DISCOUNT ON PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPLIES.

Rod ('Hec') Carruthers is offering a 10% discount on films, photographs and equipment from Paxtons Camera House, 283 George Street, to all members of S.B.W.

SKI-ING.

Ski-ing at Lake Jindabyne Sport & Recreation Centre between

26th June - 2nd July.

\$15 a day for adults, including 3 meals a day and bed (\$105 for the week).

\$6.50 a day for Lessons and use of T-Bar.

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Contact BRUCE LUMBY on 4114727 by 28th February.



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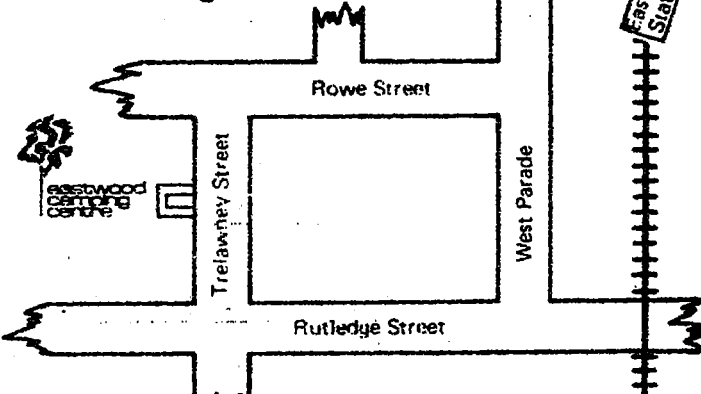
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THE HEAPHY.

by Bill Gamble.

North-west Nelson Forest Park in New Zealand's South Island has a walking track named the Heaphy, after an explorer employed by the pioneering New Zealand Company around 1840. The route was supposed to develop into a road - the steady grades on the mountain sections indicate the work of a surveyor rather than a mountain goat - but it is now well established as a popular walking track from Golden Bay, in Nelson province, to the West Coast. As an aside: for those who have walked from the Nelson end of the track and are still keen, the nearby Wangapeka Track starting just south of Karamea (for the most part still within the Forest Park, but including some State Forest) will take them back into Nelson province by another route across the mountains.

The interest of the Heaphy Track, among other things, is its bringing together of disparate scenery - the coastal strip is reminiscent of, say, the coastline around Palm Jungle and Werong in Royal National Park; the sub-tropical rain forest on the rugged mountain slopes of a jungle setting, perhaps more in keeping with rain forest on the hills near Cairns; and the rolling, open country of the Goulard Downs a little like the land around Cooma - all traversed in a space of 70-odd kilometres.

The Heaphy Track is well defined, huts and shelters strategically placed, signs located where they are needed to dispel doubts, and sturdy footbridges across most of the streams and rivers. In fact, a map is not needed for route-finding, but a copy of NZMS 245 (Heaphy Track, 2nd or later edition which includes a commentary on the track and surrounding area) is worth carrying in one's pack and is a couple of dollars well spent. For the Wangapeka Track take NZMS 233 (3rd or later edition which includes a commentary etc.).

The track crosses an area of intrinsic, if not unique, beauty, but that is not to say that the scenery is always apparent. A walker's reaction must be measured against the weather encountered. This is a part of New Zealand where the weather is notoriously unreliable. An undisputed fact is one of the heaviest rainfalls in the country - at nearby Bainham about 5 metres a year. Strong winds, big seas and sand as abrasive as carborundum can turn the 16 km coastal strip north from Kohaihai into a tough walk where lives have been lost. Come back and amble along the same strip on a fine day and the beauty is apparent and the colours intense: of mountain slopes covered in dense primeval forest plunging to the shoreline, rocky headlands that are seemingly impassable, and sweeping surf beaches of fine sand (undertows and dangerous currents to boot) backed by groves of lush Nikau palms. On a warm summer's day, it all looks rather tropical.

At the mouth of the Heaphy River, where the track moves inland a few kilometres before climbing up to the Goulard Downs wildlife refuge and scenic reserve, there is enough flat ground for the Nikau palms to widen into a plantation-sized spread. The Forest Service provides a hut adjacent to the lagoon and this is supplemented by a shelter down among the palms at the back of nearby Heaphy Beach. Hopefully, there will be a fine evening to watch the sun set on the Tasman Sea in a blaze of red not seen in the tropics, yet with the silhouettes of the palms that could be a South Pacific island. But make sure the sunset is watched in comfort by covering up with long pants and

shirt with sleeves. The sandflies are legend.

The condition of the track in the next stage of 20 km up to McKay Hut, on the mountain rim of the Downs, depends on the rainfall. In fine weather the mud may be ankle deep. If it has been raining, knee deep could be closer to the mark. One can speculate on walking the track before streams and rivers were bridged. Formidable barriers requiring river crossing experience. From the outset it is worthwhile to be on the lookout for a fallen branch which will make a good walking staff - it gives stability when edging past mud patches in tight places and in finding out how firm and/or deep the mud may be.

Before the track heads up the ridge, there is another well-built hut called Lewis - about 12 km upriver from the Heaphy Hut. It is on high ground well above the flood banks of the Heaphy River. In the early morning and evening a quiet walk along the river flats could be rewarded with deer at the water's edge. I interrupted the late afternoon ablutions of a fine stag in the autumn of 1977.

On a clear day, McKay Hut is the place to see at once where one has been and is going. Down and to the south-west can be seen the sand strip at the mouth of the Heaphy River. Away to the north-east, beyond the rim of mountains on the other side of the Downs, can be seen the jagged outline of the Anatoki Range - right in line with Perry Saddle, with its hut, 24 km away. Beyond the hut, and out of sight, is the route down to the head of the track at Brown Hut, and out to the small town of Collingwood on the edge of Golden Bay. Under a dense forest canopy 760 m have been gained and the temperature is much cooler, often bitterly cold, even in summer. Expect strong winds. The McKay Hut has gas cookers - cylinders are brought in by helicopter to replenish the supply. There is no excuse for dying of exposure at McKay Hut, nor at Perry Saddle Hut which has similar facilities.

The Goulard Downs are deceptive. Out of McKay Hut it takes a couple of hours of steady walking to reach the rolling tussock country, although the impression is that the Downs are much closer and just around the next corner. Also, the Downs appear rolling at a distance, but close-up are deeply rutted by gullies with swiftly flowing streams. In parts, the track is as wide as a road, the result of walkers moving out to avoid mud patches and in turn creating bigger mud patches. At the time I walked the track, the Forest Service was re-building much of the route using drainage channels and gravel for a cambered path. Where done, it brings the track back to a proper width.

There is a shelter part way across called Blue Duck and/or Saxon (take your pick), located on dry ground maybe a couple of metres higher than the swamp nearby crossed by the track. The main hut in the area, the Downs, is a few kilometres farther on - it is a galvanised iron shelter in the oldest traditions of New Zealand tramping and still going strong. Like all huts and shelters along the route, it is home to native field mice, and food and packs are best slung from a rafter with a cord. Do not be surprised if some of the mice find time to skitter across sleeping bags during the night. Wekas, the New Zealand woodhen, will be found around some of the huts too.

At Perry Saddle the end of the walk is at hand, if not quite in sight. It is the high point of the trip if nearby Mt. Perry is scrambled - 1217 m.

The hut sits astride the saddle at 890 m in what seems to be a very exposed position. But it is secure, and a welcome refuge from often bitter and bleak weather. As mentioned, there is the opportunity to climb Mt. Perry as a side trip from the hut, but be prepared for some hard scrub-bashing as the ridge is worked.

The final day of walking is all downhill. With an early start and fine weather one can see the serrated edge of the Anatoki Range now but a few kilometres away to the east and silhouetted in the dawn light. A place for a leisurely lunch is Aorere shelter part way down. From this place on a clear day, Mt. Egmont, 290 km away in the North Island can sometimes be seen. The Aorere River and the farming valley are below, stretching away towards Golden Bay. For those attracted to a toilet with an aspect, the Forest Service has placed one facing the best view - the door was missing in 1977 and there was much to contemplate while squatting in the eagles nest.

The walk downhill is a time to enjoy a forest of tall trees (a logger's dream) and a reminder that this is what most of the now cleared hillsides of Nelson farmlands must have been like when the first settlers arrived barely 130 years ago. By mid-afternoon, a last bridge at the Brown River and the choice is of staying overnight at the head of the track in Brown Hut with its communal sleeping platform for about 20 keen walkers; walking the road in the hope of hitching a ride to Collingwood and the bus; or, if you are affluent or anxious to get back to town, using the public telephone to call for a taxi.

The commentaries on the track say 4 days should be allowed for the crossing with food for 5 days to cover delays by weather. Seven days was too short for me, but one bloke I met midway was aiming to do it in 2 days.

Someday I will go again. Anyone who enjoys a good walk might do the same. I suggest that you go prepared and do not be offput by the prospect of mud, rain, rain and more rain. Go on the hunch of a favourable weather break that will make the 70-odd kilometres of the Heaphy Track a walk to be remembered. The memories will be around years after the last sandfly and mosquito bites have stopped itching.

Postscript:

As indicated, this is about a walk in the autumn of 1977. Members will appreciate that man-made structures and some facilities change over time. However, the essence of the walk will not as long as the surrounding country remains undisturbed.

* * * * *

THE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

The meeting got away to a somewhat hesitant start at about 2015 with more than 30 members present and the President in the chair. There was an apology from Fazeley Read and a precautionary apology from Barbara Bruce, who only arrived late as it turned out.

The Minutes were read and received without business arising.

Correspondence brought a letter from the South-West Tasmania Committee asking that letters be sent to the Senate Select Committee on South-West Tasmania urging the preservation of the area in its natural state, a letter from the Budawangs Committee referring to the inclusion of the Tianjarra firing range in the Budawangs National Park. Each of these letters produced motions that we write to the responsible bodies and express our concern.

All of which brought us to the Treasurer's Report. It seems we started the month with \$2,251.86, had income of \$14.00, spent \$1,002.10 and ended up with \$1,263.76. We obviously don't want too many months like that one. The Coolana account had a closing balance of \$21.32.

The Federation Report brought news of a query to F.B.W. from C.M.W. Club regarding Federation's handling of some matters, an abseiling accident (falling rock type) in Spring Creek and conservation and access matters. Federation is to register the name "Bushsports" which they have been using for their bushcraft training courses.

The Walks Report began with the weekend of 13,14,15 November. It seems that a bloke named Barry Wallace led some 13 people on his Murruin Creek, Tomat Falls trip in good weather, Ralph Pengliss had 23 people on his Bundeena day walk and Neil Brown struggled through Kath's memory to lead 17 starters on his Waterfall to Heathcote walk that same day.

The following weekend saw Jim Laing, with a little help from his party of 14, leading his Kanangra exploratory walk appropriately enough down "Dark Angel Spur". Peter Christian's Saturday start Mount Solitary failed to report.....perhaps they are still out there. Jo Van Sommers reported 7 members, 7 prospectives and 2 visitors on her slightly damp day walk from Currawong to The Basin. One can only wonder at her statement that "It (the walk) was a little longer than programmed due to the adventurous nature of the party". Meryl Watman had 8 members one visitor and some rain on her National Park ramble.

Snow Brown's Six-Foot Track extravaganza on the Cox River attracted 47 starters, many of them children, over the weekend of 27,28,29 November. Despite that turn-out Tony Marshall was still able to manage 14 starters for a bit of rapids shooting on his canoe trip on the Tallowa dam. Ken Gould's bike trip showed the strain, however, and did not go. Of the three day walks Sheila Binns had 4 members, 2 prospectives and beaut christmas bells in the Heathcote National Park, Peter Dyce had 4 people on his Faulconbridge to Glenbrook walk and Joe Marton reported 21 starters in humid conditions on his Blue Labyrinth walk. There were flannel flowers, swimming, and they caught an early train, which was running late, so there!

Meryl Watman's midweek walk to Myuna Creek for a swim attracted 6 members and 2 visitors.

Fiona Moyes had 6 people on her Bungonia Gorge ramble on the hot, hot weekend of 4,5,6 December. Gordon Lee abandoned his Saturday rock climb in scorching heat but had 10 takers for abseiling on Sunday the 6th. There was no report of Ralph Penglis' "Discover Sydney Harbour" walk for that same Sunday. Perhaps they found it. Ann Brown's Stanwell Park day walk had 5 starters but no Ann. It was led by Neil. Derek Wilson reported 11 swimming starters on his Royal National Park ramble. All of which ended the Walks Report. Amen.

The Coolana Report brought news of a letter of thanks to Wayne Steel for the water storage tank, a report of the barn (shed) dance, and advice that Mr. George Davison has donated a fine scale contour map of Coolana. In that same vein, John Redfern has obtained aerial photos of the Coolana area. The extent of damage of the latest bushfire was detailed and the Coolana Account details presented. The Club auction, under the hammer, so to speak, of C. Brown (Esq.) raised \$216.00 plus \$12 or so in after closing sales.

It was then only a matter of announcements, and the President closed the meeting at 2103.

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SOCIAL NOTES FOR FEBRUARY.

by Peter Miller.

Wednesday, February 17th:

Canton - Taiwan - Japan - Elwyn Morris.

Elwyn will show slides of her visit to the countries listed above. Elwyn is a regular contributor to the social programme and always shows very high quality slides.

DINNER before the meeting will be held at Chehades Lebanese Restaurant, 270 Pacific Highway, Crow's Nest at 6.30 pm.

Wednesday, February 24th:

Members' Slide Night.

This will be the time to show the slides of those memorable Christmas trips just gone or any other slides of general interest.

WALKS PROGRAMME - MARCH, APRIL, MAY 1982.

This programme will be going before Committee on Wednesday, 3rd February. After 20th January, Jim Percy will be looking after the draft programme, so members who would like to lead a walk please contact him in the Clubroom or by phone on 520,9861 (H).

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NATURE NOTES - ULOOLA TRACK.

by Kath Brown.

"Look," said Jim. "Bloodroot."

He was looking at a straight stem bearing a cluster of blackened seed pods, or so I thought.

"Oh, what colour is the flower?" I asked.

"Black - that's it." said Jim.

"Black," said I, "a BLACK flower?"

"Well, as you see. And the flower books say 'blackish or dark red flowers'. Botanical name 'Haemodorum'."

I looked closely at this 'black' flower. Not dead seed pods, black but slightly shiny, most with $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, slightly brownish, round swellings (developing seed pods?) in the middle, but the black twisting small petals? sepals? stamens? had some miniscule yellow pollen pads. So, yes, a functioning flower - and BLACK.

During the rest of the easy day walk I noticed many of these black flower clusters on the top of the two to three foot stems, with reed-like leaves at the base. I suppose 'bloodroot' comes from the root which we did not see. What strange flowers (as well as beautiful ones) we have in our bushland.

The walk was along the Uloola Track, near Waterfall, and passes along the Uloola Swamp which was burnt out completely during the bushfires of November 1980. I'm pleased to report that the swamp is making a good recovery, looking nice and green again, mainly from new grasses. But also the blackboys are recovering, and bear many tall spikes which had flowered in the spring and now, in early summer, had many small brown seed pods on them.

The swamp banksia was also growing well, its new growth covered with golden-brown hairs, like velvet. We also saw some new flower spikes, mostly still tight and brown, but one or two getting the typical bright emerald green colour that the swamp banksia flowers have. The banksia asplenifolia, which grows on the edge of the swamp, was also getting its new foliage - this is covered with rust-brown velvet. There were other small flowers in the swamp - white heaths, yellow-eyes (xyris) and also native parsley with its charming sprays of creamy flowers.

But the thing that was most striking and delightful were the many Christmas Bells in flower. The whole swamp was spotted with them.

Further along the track we saw pink trigger flowers, bright blue lobelia, mauve scaevola and mauve fringed lily, and also more native parsley. Near Uloola Falls tall shrubs of Christmas bush were turning red and there were summer wattles in flower.

The easy day walks not too far from Sydney have a different interest every time you do them, as the changing seasons bring the many different flowers, both beautiful or strange.

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