

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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CLAUSTRAL-PHOBIA.

by Gordon Lee.

If you consider the classic S.B.W. assault on Claustral, when 50 people attacked the canyon (more later) our effort paled by comparison. However it was not without its moments.

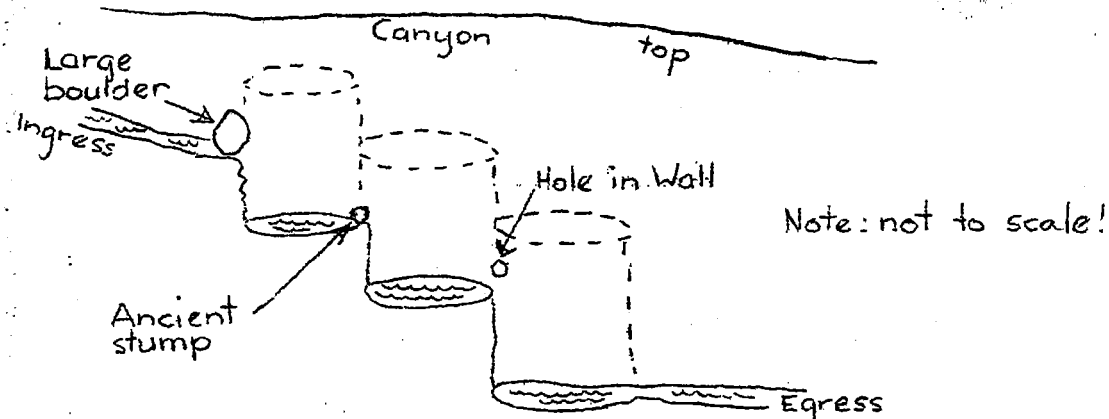
Claustral is purported to be one of the coldest of the canyons and since "taking the waters" is obligatory it was with more than some trepidation that I persuaded me to overcome extreme distaste of cold water (except when mixed with scotch) and join the other 14 masochists to go "Bathing with Bob".

I made sure I was properly attired for the occasion and thought my ensemble quite tasteful. The long blue sox merged into the off-white LJ's topped by blue denim shorts into which was tucked a dark olive-green shirt. Unseen under the shirt except where it peeped under the cuffs was a brown wool jumper. All of this was highlighted with a bright red bathing cap. From then on I felt I had missed my vocation. My repartee must have been uproariously humorous for every time I appeared before other members of the party they convulsed with mirth.

In some small measure I was able to savour the fruits of revenge (cliche - Barry Wallace please note) when watching the others' first entry into the cold water of the canyon and hearing the stifled screams when doing so.

Then there it was - the first drop.

The abseils are probably best illustrated with a small sketch:-



While others of the party were sorting themselves out Bob decided that it would be best if I led off with Craig Austen and "set up" the second and third abseil. So it came to pass that I (Oh! how I hate cold water) was to receive first baptism.

And there was I, Lord love-a-duck, no hope of keeping me trousers dry, much less of lighting me pipe (I wonder how Jim Brown would have done so under similar circumstances), trying to wrest myself from those wet white boa-constrictors which, at the wave of a magician's wand, had materialised from the rope down which I had just descended, being deluged the while by copious cascades from above.

Whilst the assault on the body physical was devilish, fiendish beyond compare were the thoughts that assailed the mind. I was standing in a dirty great hole in the ground at the edge of a bottomless pit filled with frigid black water across which I had to plunge, going heaven knows where to God knows what and those immortal lines floated mistily before my mind's eye "Abandon hope all ye who enter here" (Dante's Inferno - verse the something, line the so and so - I think).

Nor did it end there. Next I fetched up against a venerable tree stump of doubtful age and strength, wedged in the slot through which the water found its escape. And I was supposed to trust my life to this ancient lump of wood. Only the good die young (cliche - Barry Wallace please note), so thus reassured I took the rope from Craig and set up the next abseil. At the bottom of this you step on to the ledge immortalised in so many Claustal annals. In my case the warming shaft of sunlight was missing. I fear this sunlight may be as elusive as the "ghost of Pidgeon House".

We do get it easy sometimes these days and for once turn the tables on our dear Malcolm, for contrary to what it was for those intrepid souls who did this canyon 15 or more years ago there is an eroded hole in the wall of the pit. So now the water level is nearly 1500 mm or so lower than previously and anchoring the rope so much easier.

To accomplish all this I had once more to plunge my protesting body into the freezing wetness, swim to the hole and stand in 600 mm of water whilst uncoiling rope for the last abseil.

And then Oh joy! Oh rapture! I swam to where I could stand on dry? ground - it wasn't dry for long - for there I was, wetter than a shag, (cliche etc.) standing in this dank, dark, dismal dungeon of nature wondering what in the Hell I was doing there.

This was no time to stand contemplating my navel for there were many wettings before lunch at the entry of Thunder Canyon. At lunch, for reasons beyond my comprehension, many of those present wanted to stand in the fire with the wood, like so many Joans of Arc or Bobs Younger. Then, if all we had been through was not enough to try us, the rain which deluged on us from that point on certainly confirmed Murphy's Law.

Now - wait for it! - came THE Tunnel Swim. Forty metres of excruciating coldness. Death has been present here, so precautions had to be taken, like using the "Buddy" system to keep the Grim Reaper unhappy. All made this successfully.

Some of the party need special mention. Jenny Cornell who had battled courageously with the art of abseiling had the pleasure of knowing that her persistence had won through when she completed the three not so easy abseils allowing her to enjoy the wonder of this canyon. For young Geoff McInnes this was his first canyon since learning to abseil. He too enjoyed the experience.

Thank goodness we now know that it is not necessary to lasso a tree to get out of the canyon. This is accomplished by facing up to another dip in the Arctic and there right opposite on the true IH bank a steep side gully leads to the creek which is followed back to Mt. Tomah. Thanks, Bob.

Epilogue.

Several years ago Dot Butler programmed Claustral. Due to intense lobbying 50 hopefuls decided to do the trip. Snow Brown had even impressed his boss to go along. I doubt if ever there has been such an assault on this poor unsuspecting canyon.

It has been related that the last bodies were just entering the canyon as the first were lassoing the tree to gain egress. One poor soul didn't make it - Snow's boss. Because no one was around when he came to the tree he kept going. By the time he had decided he had gone too far and returned to the tree the last of the party, knowing there was no one else to come and seeing no one in front of them, pulled the rope up behind them, so the unfortunate fellow spent the night in the canyon. It is not known if Snow's promotion was influenced by this oversight.

What is amazing is that this was the only serious mishap. Contrary to the opinions of some members of the Club canyons and abseiling are not the place for the inexperienced or unfit for they are generally cold places and cold has the tendency to reduce both physical and mental competence.

There have been a number of abseiling accidents just recently, emphasised by the death of a young fellow at Margaret Falls, so PLEASE attend an abseiling course before attempting a trip. If you have not abseiled for some time do a refresher. Methods do change so some readjustment may be necessary. In any case, practice makes for competence.

Your leaders, though they may not hold Mountain Leadership Certificates, qualify by reason of their long experience and their log of successfully completed trips.

* * * * *

Since the writing and typing of Gordon's story there has occurred in Claustral Canyon the tragic death of three bushwalkers.

Two of those killed, Ian Crawford and Cheryl Russell, were two of the most senior and experienced walkers of the club Span Unlimited. The third, Noreen Ryan, was a visitor from Ireland.

It was neither inexperience nor carelessness which caused their deaths. A freak storm - an incredible 60 cm of hail - higher in the mountains, and its rapid melt, caused the sudden and disastrous flood in the canyon. The walkers, in a pool in the canyon, were overtaken by this flood. The deaths were caused by drowning.

The Sydney Bush Walkers extends its sympathy to the families of those killed and to their many friends in Span Unlimited.

THREE MONTHS' LONG SERVICE LEAVE.PART 3.

by Evelyn Walker.

ROME.

City of ornate churches, fantastic fountains, magnificent buildings and squares, the colosseum.... It was marvellous to have arrived -- and I had so little time to stay! After an extraordinary breakfast of white rolls, Danish pastries and doughnuts (the last two ignored) I booked a tour of the city and then wandered out to explore. In the Square della Repubblica stood the Basilica Santa Maria degli Angeli. The church was enormous and well lit and the floor was made of huge slabs of coloured marble in various designs. All round the walls were paintings some fifteen or sixteen feet in height. In two side arches were smaller altars and on each side of the altars pillars of magnificent green marble with a soft light catching it -- or so it seemed. On closer inspection I found to my excitement that they were excellent examples of trompe l'oeil, which I had long wanted to see. But you had to get as close as possible and look at the base of the pillar to be certain that the pillar was in fact just a brilliant painting. It was almost necessary to touch them to be sure -- the eye was indeed deceived. Further on fluted pillars supported the corners of the roof with beside them more fluted pillars -- or were they? Again it was necessary to walk right up to them to distinguish the pillars from the paintings -- exact matches and side by side! Amazing.

On the coach trip we drove to the Palatine Hill and stood on the small flat area between three slopes. These we were told were three of the seven hills of Rome on which primitive tribes had once lived, venturing down to the plain to trade or fight. Then on to the Colosseum, considered to be the centre of the city, where the emperors had put on free games for the people. A bit wrecked now, but the walls were once covered with marble -- probably pillaged for Michelangelo and many others. It was nevertheless possible to imagine the gladiators fighting each other -- or starving animals -- to the death. Then St. Paul's Basilica, where he is said to be buried, Michelangelo's celebrated carving of Moses with 'horns' of light coming from his head, a candelabra of 1170 still in use, statues, arches, buildings.... I won't bore the reader with a description of a city which is so well known. Its lavish riches formed an excellent contrast to Rhodes, but there was little time -- and less opportunity -- to get to know the residents.

PROVENCE.

Situated on a curve on the River Rhone, on rising rocky ground surrounded at one time by useless marsh, the town of Arles was obviously a good choice for a holiday. The old town is quite distinct from the new, even at a distance, by the old rounded terracotta tiles which cover the roofs, and closer at hand the old churches, very narrow streets and many Roman remains.

Perhaps the best remnant of Rome was the magnificent arena, built by Augustus in the first century BC. Having seen the remains of such arenas before, with little more than the area marked out and some pillars, statues and mouldering walls, we were delighted to find a huge oval building of a double row of massive stone arches looking extremely solid. The arches themselves were slightly irregular in width as they had had to be built on uneven rock. Inside there had once been free seating for 16,000 citizens,

at which time there were three rows of arches instead of the present two, and gladiators had fought bloody battles with bulls from the Camargue. During the ninth and tenth centuries doors had been added to the arched entrance in order to barricade out the barbarians on their periodic attacks. The Arlesiens had even built houses inside the arena and the remains of as many as 200 had been unearthed when the arena was rediscovered in 1830.

Now there was still room to seat several thousand on the huge stone steps which ran right round, and bull fights were again being held. In fact, there were to be both French and Spanish bullfights that very weekend in celebration of Easter. We shuddered. And then the difference was explained. The French were humane and merely removed cocardes or rosettes tied to the bulls' horns without in any way injuring them, and we resolved to see for ourselves.

My sister, brother-in-law, nephew and I settled into our bed-and-breakfast place, Hotel Calendal, Place Pomme. This certainly beat any bed-and-breakfast place I'd ever seen. My own double room, with a bathroom complete with shower and bidet, and a small sunny balcony, led off a good-sized courtyard garden of green trees, shrubs and loose cobbles between the paths, with plenty of white metal chairs and tables grouped together. It would be a very welcome retreat on a hot summer's day, and we enjoyed some delicious picnic lunches in a sunny corner, watching an old tortoise come slowly to life as the sun reached him, and stagger over the stones.

The cloister of St. Trophime, the oldest part of the church, dated from the twelfth century. We were able to walk all round the arched square, with a garden in the middle, and examine the ancient statues of limestone and marble, the latter being particularly well preserved, with sharp edges and whole faces. The church at Arles had been very prosperous for centuries, as the town lay on the route to St. James of Compostella in Spain, and had been an archbishopric until Napoleonic times.

Another church, that of St. Giles, also dated from the twelfth century with a richly ornate doorway of carved figures in deep relief, and the obelisk in the square outside was Roman, but only brought to Arles in the seventeenth century, when the city hall had been erected by a nephew of Mansard, the architect of Versailles. Then there was the outdoor theatre antique, partially restored. The musee of art chretienne proudly displayed its incredibly massive stone sarcophagi, intricately carved, and requiring, one would imagine, strong cranes to move them, while underneath was a straggling, dimly lit and spooky crypt which could have provided the background for a film of the early Christians living in the catacombs.

And so to Provençal cooking, another aspect of the holiday to which we had long looked forward! Le Criquet, just around the corner, had been specially recommended and gave two sittings for about 24 people, always fully booked. There we savoured the local bouillabaisse, or fish soup, calanari, delicious pork, chic pea croquettes (mouthwatering). At the end of the first sitting a plump, warm, round-faced Madame appeared from the kitchen to help clear the tables and she beamed with delight when we exclaimed "C'etait magnifique, Madame." Another recommended restaurant was Le Galoubet, which excelled in various terrines, potages, bouillabaisse, quail, red mullet

and other delights. It seemed a crime not to go through the menu at least twice -- if only we could. These were both at the same time very good and very reasonably priced. Provencal food is, of course, well known and has a distinctive style.

The Provencal accent was another matter. One coach driver pointed out things 'a gosh' instead of 'a gauche' and 'cinq' was pronounced like the kitchen sink. One guide of about 35 said that as a child she had heard the language spoken and understood it, though did not speak it herself. It had been suppressed on orders from the north, although attempts are being made to revive it. We saw a plaque written in Provencal and some sentences could be guessed at. By this time we were glad we had come to spend a week in such a rich area.

A visit to Nîmes and the Pont du Gard was not to be missed. At Nîmes there is an arena equally well preserved as that at Arles and also used for bull-fighting. But the old Maison Carrée is more amazing. Originally built as a temple dedicated to the sons of Augustus Caesar, it is in an excellent state of preservation. The roof is supported by lines of columns along each side in the Corinthian style and inside these columns is a square building which proudly displays very beautiful mosaics on its floors and other treasures. Hard to take in its great age.

We proceeded to the Pont du Gard. Constructed as an aqueduct over the river Gard by those superb Roman builders on the orders of Agrippa, the bridge is formed of three layers of arches, two of them very massive, the lower one carrying the road over which we drove. The third fine layer supports the aqueduct, and it was possible for us to walk over the bridge above these small arches, crouching to get under the slabs which still formed the roof, our feet following the path once taken by the water.

One of the reasons why we had chosen to stay at Arles arose from a desire to see for ourselves the landscape which had inspired Van Gogh. Those flat yellow fields, the yellow buildings, trees laden with blossom, the busy night scenes of smart prostitutes and gamblers and the blue night skies filled with whirling stars and shapes. So we promptly booked to join a Van Gogh walk. This however proved something less than we had hoped. As the painter never married and was supported by his brother, he had sent all his paintings back to Amsterdam, and today Arles has not even a showroom of good reproductions. Not only that -- even the houses he painted were mostly destroyed in the blitz. But nothing could daunt the enthusiasm of our guide. Carrying two small albums of reproductions covered by plastic so wrinkled that the paintings were hard to make out, she cheerfully led us on detours so that we could see a wall, a house or another small part of a general scene which had inspired this painting or that. She was having a little difficulty with her pronunciation, including her 'h's. Van Gogh, she explained earnestly, had worked on a great many paintings during his short visit of 18 months, a truth which she emphasised: "'E walked 'ard in Harles".

The Camargue! The picture of horses galloping wild and free over this area of ponds and saltmarshes had long been a vivid one to me. At one time it had been an island, regularly fertilized by the Rhone in flood, and had been covered with trees, with small clearings for cultivation. But following clearing of the land and the building of an embankment which caused instead

salt-water flooding, the area cannot now be cultivated and forms a rich natural habitat for many species. Efforts are now being made to reclaim the northern part. Areas are being planted with rice and then flooded with water brought in by dykes, and in this way the ground is being prepared for other crops; but it still has a long way to go.

There are many species of birds on the Camargue, including egrets, plover, blackheaded gulls and marsh herons, as well as the horses and bulls. But the most spectacular were the pink flamingoes which we saw feeding in water fairly close to the road before flying away and revealing the vivid red under their wings. The previous year there had been 8,000 young in a reserve, and many more fly in from Spain and Africa.

At last it was Good Friday and time for the bullfights. As we took our seats on the stone steps a procession of colourfully dressed men known as guardians rode slowly across the arena and saluted the judges who were sitting over the exit. Some announcements were made in French over the loudspeakers, 30 men dressed in white shirts and trousers filed into the ring and the first black bull entered with red rosettes tied round its horns. French bulls are lighter than the Spanish and their horns are differently shaped -- less well adapted for tossing a man over their heads! However they are certainly sharp and powerful and quite capable of goring someone to death.

The fight was started by individual men shouting and running very close to the bull, with the intention of getting it to chase the fighter. He would then make a quick sprint towards the four-foot red barricade which surrounded the arena while at the same time reaching back and trying to grasp one of the small red or white cocardes. We noticed that only a few of the men attempted this, and they held what looked like a large metal claw in one hand with which to grasp the prize. The job of the others seemed to be to arouse the bull and -- probably -- to distract it if a man got into trouble. It was of course necessary to allow the bull to get very close and there were some hair-raising moments when it seemed the man could not escape goring, until suddenly he made a spectacular leap up and over the barrier to escape. Sometimes the bull would paw the ground and snort, and then it would chase all round the edge, where the men were lined up, causing the white-clothed figures to vault over the barricade one by one, like cogs of machinery. Then the judges would announce the prize to be paid for the rosette on the right horn, or the remaining string, and challenges of the bull would resume.

After about 15 minutes of the first fight, cocardes all gone, the door was opened and the fighters tried to coax it out. It obviously didn't understand. So an older bull with a bell round its neck entered, trotted round the ring and took the young bull out with it.

The third and fourth bulls had obviously been at this game before. Each responded to the challenges more quickly and made an all-out charge for the fighter with deadly determination. There were no cloaks, no sticks to help the men, whose only resource was great speed and courage to keep in front of the bull, while reaching back to try to grasp a rosette. When he did so there was loud applause, and then the judge would announce the achievement and the prize for the next. At the end of each fight the door again opened, but these experienced bulls were quick to notice and trotted out with their

heads held high to the applause, as if to say "I showed them a thing or two". As it is in the nature of bulls to charge and nothing was done to hurt or tease them, we felt the bulls had as much satisfaction as the fighters -- and the contest was very exciting to watch.

On Saturday there was a huge street market of countless stalls selling meat, cheeses, fruit and vegetables, flowers, herbs and many other things, spread out between the lotus trees lining the street. Intent on reproducing a delicious Provencal omelette or meat dish we quickly bought large bags of mixed herbs and a tasty picnic lunch.

In the afternoon we went to watch the "Course de vaches emboulees", an opportunity for both young men and inexperienced bulls to be considered as participants in the real thing. This was held in a smaller arena, surrounded with the usual red barricade and fencing and outside that tiers of seating. "Emboulee" meant that the horns had been tipped with what looked like pieces of square stiffened leather, which would prevent serious goring. But apart from this, and the fact that anyone could join in, the fights resembled those of the professionals. A bull was released into the ring, rosettes in place, and while the judges kept calling the prices the young fellows slipped into the ring and had a go. At one time three brave youths lay side by side on the ground as the bull charged out and it leapt straight over them. While this was going on the spectators, mostly young people, were showering each other with bags of flour, and we all finished up a little whiter.

And the day after that, with barricades erected, bulls were released and trotted along some of the main streets of the town, and daring children could stand fairly near one -- and quickly slip back through the barricades to safety.

Our time in Provence was getting short. We managed a quick trip to Les Baux -- a fantastic natural fortress way up in the mountains, which had weathered countless murders, sieges, crusades and wars until it was finally sacked by Louis XIII. The scenery was so wild and impressive that it was thought Dante might have set the Enfer of his Divine Comedy here. We saw several piles of red earth, as this is where bauxite was first discovered.

And so on to Daudet's windmill, where he wrote "L'Arlesienne", another excavation at Glanum, a huge mausoleum, more lovely views.....and back for a Soiree Flamenco which was exciting to watch -- as long as the hands were kept permanently over the ears to prevent damage to eardrums.

Now it was time to turn my thoughts to Paris. So I said goodbye to my relatives, with plans to look them up again later on, and boarded the train. Provence had certainly been full of surprises and interest, and obviously the best time to visit Arles is in the week leading up to Easter. It had given us the opportunity to join in a festival in which the whole town took part, which seemed to link us with the days of ancient Rome. A rich, varied week we would remember for a good while to come.

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eastwood camping centre

BUSHWALKERS

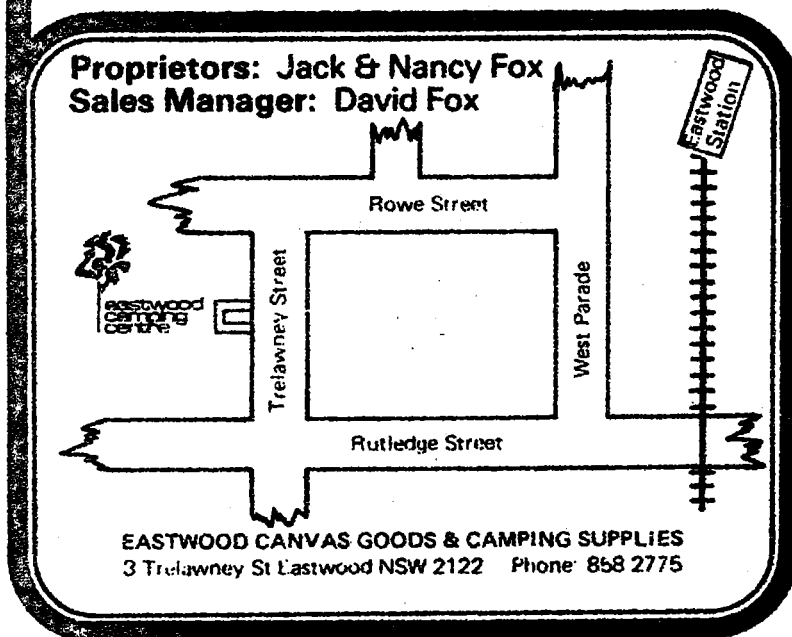
Lightweight Tents • Sleeping Bags • Rucksacks •
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THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

The meeting began at about 2034 with the President in the chair and some 35 or so members present. There were apologies from Barbara Bruce, Fazeley Read and Spiro Hajinakitas, we welcomed new member Lisa Caldwell, and the Minutes were read and received. Arising from the Minutes there was a statement to the meeting regarding concerns which had been expressed about property access in the Cox River area. Walks leaders are advised to contact the Walks Secretary for advice and information.

Correspondence brought a letter from the Hobart Walking Club requesting copies of our magazine, from Reg Forsyth and Rudy Dezelin advising change of address, from Fran Christy advising her resignation due to a move interstate, and outgoing letters, one to the new member and one to the N.S.W. Library regarding the club magazine.

Then it was the turn of the Treasurer to report on the club's financial situation. We started the month with \$1263.73, spent \$516.36, received \$119.00 and closed with \$866.40. The closing balance for the Coolana Account was \$21.32.

The Federation Report brought news that the 1982 Bushsports programme is to be issued in January, that there is growing concern over the number of cows and horses breeding up in the Bluegum and Upper Grose River, and that the Tracks and Access Committee will check on access to the Six-Foot Track.

The Walks Report began with a cancellation. Tony Marshall's Doris Creek abseiling trip for the weekend 11,12,13 December was postponed. Of the three day walks, Bob Hodgson had 15 people on his Sunday stroll down Claustrol Canyon, Jo Van Sommers reported 6 prospectives and 2 members on her Benowie Track walk from Berowra to Hornsby, and Roy Braithwaite reported a hot morning and cold afternoon change for the 14 starters on his Lilyvale to Otford walk.

The following weekend, 18,19,20 December saw Gordon Lee leading 9 people down Molong Falls on the Saturday and a party of 6 down Dione Dell on the Sunday. Ian Debert, that same weekend, had 9 people on his yet-again-run-in-reverse walk from Bluegum to Victoria Falls. On the Sunday, Bill Hall led 15 people through a morning of rain to a fine afternoon at Burning Palms, and Peter Christian had 4 members and one prospective on his Waterfall to Heatcote walk.

Of the walks programmed over the Christmas break Gordon Lee's Snowy Mountains trip went, but it seems Gordon missed the rendezvous and was not on it. He was on a trip in the area, but not in the same place at the same time as his walk. The people who went on the Jim Percy/Barry Murdoch Snowy trip, variously numbered at 11 and 6, reported a pleasant walk and much entertainment on the snowdrifts.

In the New Year it was business as usual, with Don Finch's Cox River li-lo trip over the weekend of 8,9,10th January. They reported a tough trip due to the lack of water in the river, and shortened the trip somewhat by coming up Yellow Pup ridge, all 16 of them. Bob Younger's Grose River trip scheduled for 9,10 January was cancelled. Sheila Binns had 12 starters and

good wildflowers on her Waterfall to Heathcote walk and Roy Braithwaite reported one visitor, 6 prospectives and 9 members on a rough but sunny walk from Cowan to Brooklyn. All of which ended the Walks Report.

General Business brought no response, so after announcements it was all over at 2108. Amen.

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SOCIAL NOTES FOR MARCH.

by Peter Miller.

Wednesday, March 17: Underwater slides. - Michael Turner.

The underwater slides to be shown are of exceptional quality and have taken many yhours to film. under difficult conditions. The Club was fortunate to see a collection of slides by the same photographer about two years ago.

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

Wednesday, March 24: Outward Bound Film.

This film has been made available by the Outward Bound Organization and features mature age participants on a walk. This film has been made recently and should be of interest to members who wish to attend an Outward Bound course.

Wednesday, March 31: Wine, Cheese and Nuts.

Members will be able to organize their Easter trips while they sample the wine, cheese and nuts.

SKIING HOLIDAY.

There are still a few vacancies at Jindabyne for the week of 26th June to 2nd July. The cost is \$105 for the week, which includes three meals per day. Contact BRUCE LUMBY on 81,2473 (H) or 411,4727(B) if you are interested.

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WALKS NOTICE.

March 27 - Saturday afternoon.

HISTORIC BALMAIN STROLL.

Ferry from Circular Quay - Darling Street wharf - guided tour of Balmain and historic houses - Balmain Watch House - Devonshire tea - film, slides. \$4.50 per person, with all prpceeds towards the upkeep of the historic Watch House.

Contact WAL LIDDLE - phone 452,1172 (H), 240,1402 (B).

THE GREAT ZIG-ZAG, LITHGOW VALLEY

or

RAILS TO THE WEST.

by David Ingram.

When you receive your next Walks Programme, under date 28th March, you will note a walk from Bell over the Great Zig-Zag Railway formation to Lithgow. There are no 1,000 ft cliffs or vistas extending for 60 miles. But - you will see how the railway engineers took the original Great Western Line down off the Blue Mountains into the Lithgow Valley en route to Bathurst and the Goldfields, by a series of galleries considered, at the period of construction, to be a World Wonder. Historians say that engineers came from all parts of the world to see it.

Construction took place between 1866 and 1868. When the tools and transport available then are considered, it was a feat of engineering.

Pages could be written about various aspects of the project. Instead you are offered the opportunity of a tour by electric train throughout the Blue Mountains and a ride by steam train over part of the Zig-Zag, if interested, to see for yourself.

This outing involves a return trip of 170 miles by train from Central and the cost of a minifare to Lithgow is about \$6.00. Be sure and get a minifare - the ordinary return ticket costs quite a bit more. Naturally it will not be possible to return in time for your favourite television show - the first train back to Central is due at 8.26 pm via the deviation - not the Zig-Zag. Bring a TORCH for the Clarence Tunnel.

A NIGHT OF MAGIC.

Our friend, Whaka Newmarch, the New Zealand magician whom so many bushwalkers remember with affection from his previous visit, will be in Australia again this Easter to attend a magicians' conference.

Garth and Margaret Coulter invite all his friends to a Night of Magic at their place, 37 Cornwell Avenue, Turrumurra at 7 pm on Thursday, 15th April. (Barbecue facilities available.)

Not to be outdone, Snow Brown and Clarabell are also putting on a barbecue night on Saturday, April 24th for everyone to meet Whaka again. So come along and bring your children and eats and have a wonderful night.

For further details contact Dot Butler, phone 48,2208.

SNOW'S FLOATING POOL PARTY.

by Bill Gamble.

Half a multitude may not be an unreasonable approximation of the size of Snow Brown's Six Foot Track party on the weekend of 28/29 November, 1981. It could well have claims to be the other Club reunion for 1981. Some might say that it was as much a weekend for children as for members. The age difference between the oldest and youngest would have to have been over 60 years.

It was inevitable that the party should split into manageable groups for moving along the route (Six Foot Track, Cox's River, Galong Creek, Carlons: Maps - Hampton & Jenolan 1:31680); yet Snow was able to maintain a cohesiveness which allowed an overlapping social contact at campsites and swimming holes.

Flies and heat aside, swimming was the feature of the weekend. Plenty of water in the Cox's River (a little turbid on the Saturday but beginning to clear on the Sunday) ensured a brisk current and good swimming opportunities. The walk and its success could be measured in the progress from one pool to the next.

The meeting place was the camping ground at the Megalong Creek ford adjacent to the head of the Six Foot Track. Near half the party arrived on the Friday night and the remainder soon after breakfast on the Saturday morning. A car swap enabled all vehicles except two to be parked down at Carlons at the head of the Galong Creek Track.

In the late morning, Bill Burke led a sizeable splinter group away from the Six Foot Track and down a short, steep ridge to the Cox's for the first swimming of the day, in a deep basin carved out of the granite riverbed. The merits of the pool were fully appreciated and there was some reluctance to move on. Snow continued with the rest of the party down the Six Foot Track to another swimming hole farther downstream where we all met for lunch.

About an half-hour upstream from the bridge and Little River, the Cox's was crossed and a campsite found, large enough to take the whole party along a 150 metres frontage. Another excellent swimming hole identified by red granite was at the downstream end of the campsite. In the evening there was much activity around the campfire and the strains of some pretty raucous singing managed to lift itself above the sounds of the river. The sultry, fly-ridden evening slowly cooled to make a pleasant overnight temperature. Even the flies took a break, but they were back in force at dawn with reinforcements.

On Sunday the drift was to a lunchstop at the entrance to Galong Creek. Again much swimming and, for most of the party, a start up the Creek soon after 1.00 pm. to allow plenty of time for the children to be got past the tight upper sections. The tailenders did not leave the Cox's until 3.00 pm, and with swimming and tea stops it was after 6.30 pm before they emerged at Carlons, over two hours after the front-enders.

No doubt, Snow put on the programme a most pleasant and interesting floating pool party.

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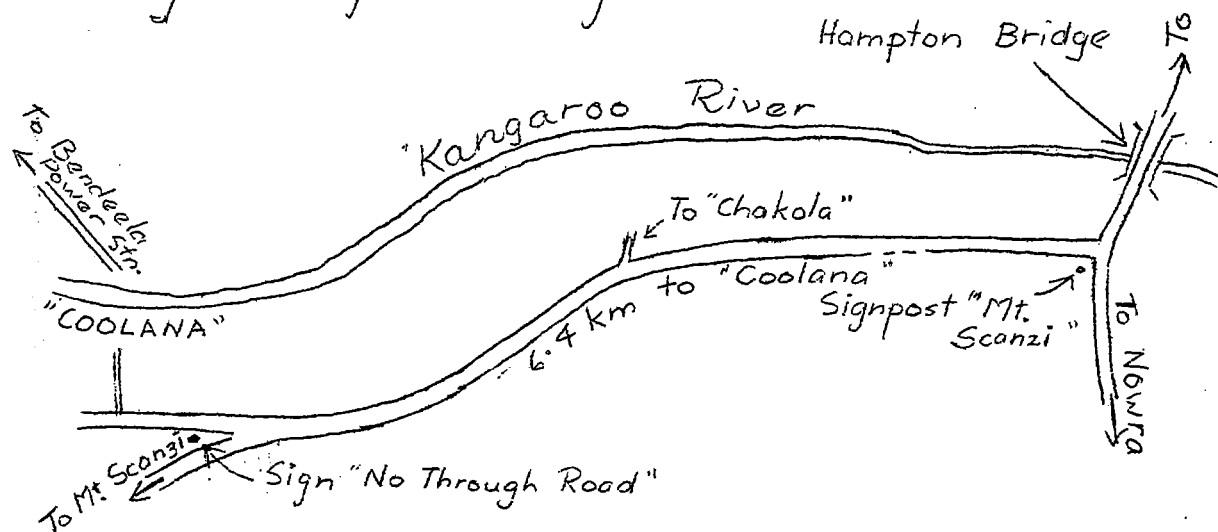
The Annual Reunion

"Coolana", Kangaroo Valley.

March 13th - 14th

All members, prospective members, past members (and families, friends, children) are welcome.

Cars are left on the side of our access road, & from here it is a walk of a few hundred metres down the hill. The hut provides sleeping space for only 20 or so - so bring your own tent. Camp-fire on Saturday night, with supper provided. On Sunday there will be the Annual Damper Competition, so bring some flour. Plenty of walking, talking, swimming etc.



MUSICAL EFFICIENCY?

When Owen Marks found himself on night-shift and unable to attend a concert, he gave his ticket to Phil Butt. The main work on the programme was Schubert's Unfinished Symphony.

"How did you enjoy the Schubert?" asked Owen of Phil next time they met.

"It's not a good symphony," stated Phil. "Haven't you noticed all its faults? Firstly, for considerable periods the four oboe players had nothing to do. The number should be reduced and their work should be more conveniently spread over the whole concert, thus eliminating peaks of activity.

"Secondly, all the twelve violins were playing identical notes. This seems unnecessary duplication. The staff of this section should be drastically cut, and if a large volume of sound is really required, this could be obtained by means of an electronic amplifier.

"Thirdly, much effort was absorbed in the playing of demi-semiquavers. This seems to me an excessive refinement and it is recommended that all notes be rounded up to the nearest semiquaver. If this were done it should be possible to use trainees and lower-grade operators.

"Fourthly, there seems to be too much repetition of some musical passages. No useful purpose is served by repeating with horns the passage that has already been handled by the strings. If all such redundant passages were eliminated, the whole concert time of two hours would have been reduced to twenty minutes and there would have been no need for an interval. If the composer had attended to these matters he would probably have been able to finish his symphony."

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

The editor has just heard that Miles Dunphy's 90th birthday was celebrated a couple of months ago. Miles, an honorary member of S.B.W., is known by walkers for his maps of the Blue Mountains, compiled and drawn by Miles many decades ago and still in use.

Congratulations, Miles.

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..... and speaking of longevity:

George Davison, our Coolana surveyor and honorary member also, is now 92, and Colin Ferguson's mother is still in good health in her 107th year!
