

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER
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A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers,
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Readers will recall that Kath Mackay's death was reported in last month's magazine. It has been suggested we reproduce a poem by her which appeared in "The Sydney Bushwalker" in January, 1950 and in December, 1971. Jim Brown, editor in 1971, described the final stanza as 'the nearest to a Walker's Creed' he had read. It's a good ambition. EDITOR.

BIVOUAC

by Kath Mackay.

Here for a span of three short days was home,
these few square yards of canvas, and some cord
tautened by casual sticks and metal pins,
the earth itself our anchor. Here we lived,
tramped the bush tracks, prepared prodigious meals,
pursued our pleasant necessary tasks,
ate, drank, were merry; and when evening came
stretched limbs well-wearied to the friendly fire,
and warmed our hearts in kindly comradeship.

Now, we depart; and on the springing turf
scarce lingers yet the imprint of our bed.
Only a whisp of fern, some blackened stones
remain, mute witness to our sojourn here,
and in the sunlit silence blue wren flits,
prospecting with his little brownie wife
for morsels hidden from the human glance.

There have been conquerors who strode the earth,
and men acclaimed them; but the embittered soil
brought forth no harvest where their feet had passed,
and the torn hills might wait two decades long
before the deep woods clothed their flanks again.

Paltry ambition this, and negative,
but fame enough: when we pack up at last
our bivouac of threescore years and ten
sufficient if we leave no hurt to mar
earth's face or man's: but only, where we lived
may there be sunlight and such sense of peace
that wanderers who come upon the place
must pause, and say "Someone was happy here".

TO JAGUNGAL AND BACK.
KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK, SUMMER 1982/3.

by Jo Van Sommers.

LEADER: Barry Murdoch.

PARTICIPANTS: Joan Cooper, Colin Barnes, Jim Percy, Brian Hart, Chris Kirkpatrick, David Butler, Jeff Bridger, Diana Lynn, Judy Barber, John Redfern, Barry Wallace, Hans Stichter, Ray Dargan, Fusae Dargan, Bronwyn Shaw, John Newman, Mark Dabbs, Ainslie Morris, Lawrie Quaken, Jo van Sommers.

My map of the last day of the Kosci Christmas trip looks as if it had been washed and spin-dried on an inefficient washing-machine. I should have been warned by the rolling storm clouds that had boomed around the horizon two nights before when we had camped near Tin Hut. New Year's Eve that was, but more like Walpurgis Night when all the spooks and demons are let loose. Our campsite there had given us wide views of the horizon, all around, our tents like specks on a vast landscape, ourselves presumptuous ants daring the gods to pick us off. We must have been in the centre of the storm for the thunder moved all around the circle of the sky without getting any closer to us. While we were cooking, on our three separate fires because of the size of the party, and the mist started to blow up the Finn Swamps, we at the top fire were startled by the sight of Joan Cooper running at top speed down the hill with no thought for the treacherous alpine scrub. She had seen the mist rolling in from the top of the hill she had climbed to view Jagungal in the distance and knew she had to get down quickly before it reduced visibility to nothing.

The rain held off, and the party gathered at one campfire to see in the New Year. Midnight was deemed to occur at 9 pm, having regard to our usual 8 am start on the morrow. Bushwalkers spend a lot of time talking about food, inspecting the contents of other people's billies and passing unsolicited comments about the presentation on the plate, but the unsuspected goodies that came out of people's packs, secretly carried for five days, were quite surprising. The popcorn eating competition was won by Diana, no question, but the joke-telling was neck-and-neck between Barry Wallace and John Newman.

When we got back to civilization we learned that this storm had been ferocious at Adaminaby, with cars blown into the lake and cattle stunned by large hailstones. Yet next morning was fine for us as we climbed first Gungahlin, descended to Schlack Pass, and ascended Dicky Cooper Bogong because it was "the traditional way to go", despite some mutterings in the ranks. The day developed into clear sunshine as we lunched on the bare sides of Dicky Cooper where last year there had been huge drifts of snow. After this year's poor snow season there was nothing but patches of flattened snow grass, although there was water in the soaks. Then on across the Rolling Grounds, much loved by many walkers but not to my mind as interesting as the trail that winds up Mt. Tate. Most of the party ascended that knob, although those who knew how much further on the designated campsite was, desisted. At the end of a long sunny day the traverse around to Pounds Creek seems endless, and we didn't get to the right knoll, with its protected sites and handy water, before some members of the party decided that they had gone far enough, leaving those who had set their sights on the proper goal stranded like fish above the high water mark, and with no alternative but to

come down to the de facto site. The clouds were gathering for another go at us, and this time they let us have it full frontal, driving us into our tents at 7 pm.

Next day didn't look at all promising. Barry Murdoch, as leader, had been hoping that this day of all days, involving the crossing of the Main Range, would have been fine, but a sullen fog sat on the haunches of Little Twynam and the clouds above were torn with high winds. Many thought that a bit of fog in mid-summer was nothing to worry about and, particularly if they had not walked the Twynam, Lake Albina, Rawson Pass, Thredbo section, were keen to press on. Others, who knew what the seemingly innocuous mist was hiding, were keener to take the low route via Charlotte's Pass, the Kosci road down to Merriitts Creek and thus across to Thredbo. We set off with this latter route in mind, leaving open the option of returning to the tops if the weather improved. Some very experienced people were, however, determined to take the tops come what may; the leader was adamant that the party would not be split - and indeed it was extraordinary to have brought such a big party intact from Kiandra to our present position; so everyone had to go up. Those who also wanted to try out the dirty-weather gear they had been carrying all week got their chance. The winds howled, hail tore into our faces and fell like sago snow on the ground; the thermometer on Jim's pack registered 9 degrees; Murdoch appeared standing by the Twynam trig as the mist cleared for a moment, looking somewhat like the captain of the Flying Dutchman at the bridge of his ill-fated ship.

We lunched in the unlocked Soil Conservation Hut above Blue Lake just as we did last year - cold and hurried. No one felt like going to the creek for water, so lunch was dry. By the greatest stroke of luck the weather moderated, giving us a good crossing with views and no more hail until we struck it again near Thredbo. By another stroke of luck the Thredbo chair was still taking customers downwards until five o'clock, and we had thought that the last ride was at four, as the inquiries we made before we started had indicated. Of course they thought we meant the last ride up. For some of us, the novelty of flying into space from the upper take-off platform was quite as exciting as any part of the walk. We rode down each with their pack occupying the second seat - a kind of tribute to that reliable ally. Diana's cheery laugh could be heard floating down the length of the lift. It was well after five before we were all down and gathered where we had left our cars seven days ago. Nearly everyone stayed the night in Jindabyne, and drove back to Sydney on the Monday, visiting the National Gallery on the way.

I have started this account from the south side of Jagungal, although that is not where we began. Mt. Jagungal marks a turning point in any trip. One always seems to be either approaching it or leaving it. On the first day we met in the Thredbo carpark and took a bus hired from Boomerang Tours around to Kiandra in order to avoid the long and tedious car-swap that is otherwise necessary. This proved to be a good move, cheap at seven bucks a head for the 150 km, and we enjoyed being proper tourists for a change.

We set off from Pollocks Gully, where a plaque states that the pristine hills were once covered with the tents of up to 10,000 miners. Lunch was on the grass outside the Four Mile Hut, the last intact miner's dwelling on the Kiandra goldfields, built about 1937 and well restored. Later, Jagungal

could be seen far away in the distance, forming a backdrop to the tunnels, dams, sluices and piles of discarded earth that testify to mining activity. We camped in a wide circle of fourteen tents like pioneers fearing an attack, a little way from Broken Dam Hut, whose origins are disputed. Klaus Hueneke in his "Huts of the High Country" describes it as a combined stockman's/miner's hut moved from another site. Like all the huts we saw, it had a one-page leaflet by Klaus to supplement the log book.

Some of the party climbed Mt. Tabletop the next morning, while others, mostly the early flyers, rested below. Barry and Mark Dabbs navigated us straight to Happy's Hut, which didn't appear named on any maps, and stimulated a spirited discussion which I didn't quite follow, but which involved passionate reference to Happy Jack's Hut, Happy Jack's Plains Hut and private ownership of the one in front of us; this latter prompted by the presence of horses, saddles, cattle and short-cropped grass, the fence nearby and the indeterminate line of the Park boundary. Inside, however, there was a log-book placed by K.H.A. proving the hut to be Happy's, illegally used by stockmen, despite the rhetoric delivered for public consumption in Sydney about getting all the stock out of the Park. The log-book already carried sharp denunciations of this invasion, including one from a South Australian grazier who pointed out the profit being made by one illegal user at the taxpayers' expense. The beautiful wide plain of snowgrass was undoubtedly tempting, and as late as the 1940s there were up to 11,000 sheep on Happy Jack's Plain, so the grazier certainly knew where to go. Surely the Park Rangers could not have been unaware of their presence?

We reached Brooks Hut early in the afternoon; again someone's map showed the hut on a different site, so some of the party tried exploring for it. My group went in a circle, and coming back past Brooks were not too surprised to find a couple having afternoon tea there and sharing their brew with Brian Hart, who admitted quietly that he had a talent for being in the right place at the right time. We ended up spending the night close to where we had first dropped our packs.

The dreaded Snowy flies were kept at bay by the overcast weather, but it was not too cold on the next day for a swim in Happy Jack's Creek, a lovely deep pond. We detoured slightly to visit the H.J.P. hut, since winter tourists never know when they will have to seek shelter and it is just as well to know the location of as many refuges as possible. We passed Boobee and arrived at Mackies where we had meant to camp, but decided to shorten the following longish day by pushing on to an arm of Doubtful Creek. The stock caught the smell of the water and three lively stallions broke away from the main herd, followed by a couple of Old Grey Mares and a doughty Shetland who took two steps to everyone else's one (no prizes for guessing these). The tearaways were reined in, taking it in turns to be whipper-in on subsequent days.

The creek made a beautiful campsite, the full moon rose, filling us with false hope of sunshine on the morrow. Instead, we were reminded of the committee edict against soap in the river; as an offender in this regard, although I agree with banning detergent, shampoo and dishwashing, extinguishing burning brands and having campfires close enough to water to cause run-off of burnt wood into the stream, I still tend to regard soap as being

in the same category as, say, the depositing of wax from skis into the river after the snow melts or putting a dirty soapless body into a nice clean stream. However, it's worth changing my ways in exchange for not having anything noxious, including plastic and food scraps, burnt on the fire. I guess everyone has their little secret vices!

After a brisk hour, we reached O'Keefes to find an entry by Don and Jenny Cornell from the previous day. Unlike the more remote huts, this one is not inviting and shows signs of excessive use. We decided to be circuitous rather than direct and followed the fire-trail around through pleasantly wooded country to its junction with the Round Mountain fire-trail. After lunch we tackled the walls of Jagungal; she was teasing us with glimpses every now and then of her top through the murk; and we were delighted to find an established track through the prickly alpine scrub. This western approach was by far the easiest I have made and the ascent to the summit was made in clear weather. This was the third time in the one year that Jim and I had been to the top with the Murdoch, but we were denied the titillation of recording this feat in the log-book, since there isn't one there. We looked back on the wide plains and timbered slopes from whence we had come; and forward to the great expanse in front of us culminating in Mt. Kosciusko.

Our camp that night at the foot of Jagungal was washed out early, but the re-incarnated souls who rose again reported a magnificent red sunset. Ainslie managed to enjoy this on her own without rousing the rest of us, who were bravely sleeping through some riotous card-playing led by Hans Stichter. Judging from the accounts next day, quite a few persons viewed the sunset singly - pity!

As David Butler said, at times our trip bore too close a resemblance to walking in the Scottish Highlands. By now, I have finally caught up with myself and delivered an account of the trip towards Jagungal and away from Jagungal, which is the pattern that I was left with on looking back at that week's ramble in the Snowies.

* * * * *

THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

The meeting began at about 2024 with some 20 or so members present to answer the call of the gong. There were apologies from Fazeley Read, Spiro Hajinakitas and Joan Cooper. The only new member was Bruce Hart, who had been unable to attend the meeting on a previous occasion.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received, with no business arising, and correspondence was limited to a letter from North Sydney Council referring to our booking for the meeting hall, from Melbourne Bush Walkers, suggesting an exchange of magazines and our letter to the Premier of N.S.W. ref. the Kosciusko National Park Plan of Management.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we began the month with \$3297.23, received \$100.10, spent \$1261.27 and ended up with \$2136.06.

All of which brought us to the Walks Reports. Derek Wilson opened the bidding with his Coolana trip, touted as "a chance for beginners to learn the skills of bush camping". It seems the beginners weren't taking chances that weekend - Derek was the only starter, but the trip did go. Gordon Lee reported almost overwhelming numbers, well about 12 or 14, on his abseiling instructional at Lindfield. Sandy Johnson led 10 or 12 people on his West Head day walk on Sunday 12th December but there was no detailed report. Bob Hodgson reported an uncertain number of people, lets say 12 plus one, on his Claustal Canyon trip the same day and said it was a good trip.

The following weekend, 17,18,19 December, saw Gordon Lee out putting his previous week's students through their paces down Kalong Falls. There were 10 starters for a dry but cloudy Saturday. On Sunday it rained, so they visited Jenolan Caves. Tony Marshall had 7 people on his Kowmung River walk that same weekend. There was no report of Ken Gould's Barren Grounds trip. Of the two day walks, Kath Brown had 9 members, 2 prospectives and one visitor on her Waterfall to Heathcote trip dodging some late rain showers, and Joan Cooper reported 8 members and one visitor on her alternative route Waterfall to Heathcote trip which she described as good.

Of the extended walks over Christmas and New Year, Barry Murdoch had 21 starters enjoying the Kiandra to Thredbo traverse. There were no water problems, despite the rather dry conditions; they experienced a range of weather conditions and some divided opinions on the last day. Gordon Lee reported 3 starters on his Kosciusko trip. They spent 4 days going north from Mynyang Power Station and 3 days going south from Guthega Pondage. Bad weather on what was to be their second last day caused an early end to the walk as they bolted down and out via Spencers Creek.

Joan Rigby's New Year's weekend trip on Bimberella River and Stoney Creek had 5 people venturing into new territory. Bill Hall's day walk scheduled for 2nd January went, but there was no report.

The weekend of 7,8,9 January Bob Hodgson's Dumbano Creek trip did not go. Frank Taeker reported 10 people on his Macarthur's Flat walk. Conditions were very hot and very dry. Peter Christian's day walk Heathcote to Heathcote attracted 13 starters but there was no report. Fiona Moyes had 6 people on her Kuring-gai Chase trip in hot conditons. The swimming was O.K. but the fire which they only just beat to Berowra station was less than enjoyable. All of which brought the Walks Report to a close.

Federation Report indicates that the Search and Rescue Section are looking at the possibility of purchasing a long wheelbase 4 WD vehicle.

There was no General Busines, so it was just a matter of announcements and it was all over for another month. The meeting closed at 2048.

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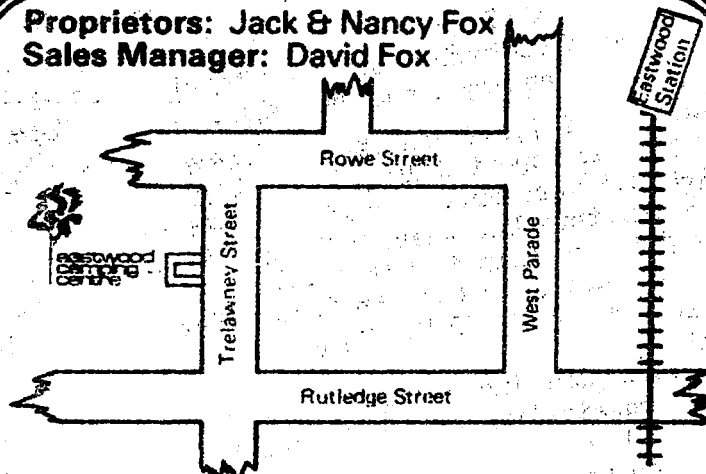
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WOLLEMI.

by Rik. King.

(The following is an account of a trip undertaken by Brian Hart and Rik. King in mid-September, 1982. The aim of the trip was to cross the Wollemi National Park by ridge walking from Mt. Coricudgy to Putty.)

The beginning of our trip was marked by much running after buses, leaving of goods and chattels all over the countryside, and losing of railway tickets, all of which would be no surprise to those familiar with the people involved. Notwithstanding, we finally arrived at Kandos at 10.45 pm on a Friday night and were deposited by taxi at the ruined sawmill near the head of the Gudgegong River.

After a cold night spent in a cave, the morning saw us trudging up the Coricudgy road. We noted water to be unusually plentiful, and this was explained later when snow was sighted on the side of the mountain. The fire road descends and crosses a gully, and it was there that water bags were filled, prior to striking off on a short ridge running to the south.

The general plan was to follow a series of interconnecting minor ridges which would eventually take us eastward with only one creek crossing being involved, viz. the Wollemi. The ridge chosen first peaked in a conical top (actually a basalt flow) from which a lower ridge continuing had to be picked out and followed. Just which one we really needed was not too clear, and our detours to break the 40 m cliffline (not shown on the map) didn't simplify the navigation. Consequently, the wrong spur upon which we found ourselves (too late) deposited us in a very steep-sided creek, although the correct route was by now apparent and not too far away. A short decisive burst (born of some desperation, I may add) saw us out of the wretched creek, on the ridge, having lunch, and with extra water.

The afternoon's walk was actually uneventful as we moved gradually north then east, with Coricudgy at our backs and the brooding mass of Monundilla to the north-west. Also prominent were Kerry and Coriaday; all the above were familiar points, having been ascended by us in the past few years. Another 300 m climb onto second basalt peak (un-named) was not really welcome and even less so was the dense vegetation on its eastern side. Shortly after coping with this, mental fatigue began to set in, and then a crucial swing of the ridge to the north saw us camped and enjoying a view of the sunset framed by the twin-peaked Kekeelbons.

We were off early on the next morning; good views of the distinctive Gaspers Mountain to the south, and Monundilla to the north-west were a feature of this section of the route, a high rocky divide between two very large (but un-named) creek systems. Forbidding descents would need to be undertaken to get at the water in either of those creeks, and thus our earlier blunder, through which the supply had been topped up, turned out in fact to be a blessing.

A notable crisis point occurred when very formidable cliffs were espied on the opposite side of a saddle into which we were descending, but a fortuitous defile taking us most of the way up, presented itself. I volunteered to investigate the remaining section, which would not go. One

moment, I was about to retreat and next moment, I found myself in the odd situation of being flat on my side, staring skywards and lying on top of Brian's pack. The latter had been positioned by a canny Brian over a sharp-edged rock for just such a contingency, whilst I was edging along the shelf some feet above. Another way was found!

By mid-morning, the threatening closeness of the Kekeelbons, which positively refused to recede into the distance, plus the fact that I was carrying no fewer than four map sheets, began to induce some strained behaviour in the other member of the party. Silent dogged marching suddenly became the order of the day!

At one patch of dense growth on basaltic soil, old tricks learnt in Queensland scrub were brought out; a long stick was found and thrown down on top of the vegetation, which was then walked on and the process repeated. At morning tea, there was much discussion on the various possibilities for the last 10 km or so down to the Wollemi. The whole process proved to be quite futile since, intending to follow one route, we in fact marched off, quite oblivious, in the direction corresponding to another!

This was to lay the foundations for major problems in the afternoon; these became all too apparent after half an hour's walk when our ridge plunged cliffward and creekward. After a period for recovery from the total bewilderment generated by finding ourselves in this incomprehensible position, solemn discussion followed; it was decided that there would be no descending into creeks, and, in the absence of some brilliant piece of lateral thinking, our steps would be retraced. During this period, a likely-looking ridge was seen, but not the connecting link thereto. After one fruitless attempt at getting across, I sensed the possibilities inherent in the afternoon and decided it was definitely time to eat. By three o'clock we had manoeuvred ourselves onto a ridge which, at least, was heading towards Wollemi Creek.... but, as always with the deep gorge of this creek, the question remained - would we get down? Luck favoured the fools, the descent was easy, and we camped early at the junction of a large creek and Wollemi Creek, this being the anticipated staging point.

Next morning the agreed-upon route was a twenty minute stroll down Wollemi Creek and up the side of the ridge - a way we had descended on a previous trip. After five minutes along the creek, however, the lure of those sandstone cliffs on the nose of the ridge proved too strong for us and a direct ascent was begun. At one exposed and slanting section, seeing Brian's frame pack about to be used as a step ladder, the instinct for self preservation welled up within, and I pushed to the front of the line and scrambled up, using the pack. The essential handhold, however, had been overstrained, and it subsequently crumbled under Brian's grasp: his composure did not appear to be at all ruffled as the piece of sandstone slid off! The pack was hauled up last by the shirt sleeve previously tied to it. In this section the scrub was rather thick, but showed some traces of our having pushed through it six weeks before. On reaching a timber road on the side of the Tollagong Range, we were surprised to see that more trees had been felled since the last visit.

The 15 km walk past Cobcroft (the crest of the range) along this lightly forested area was not unpleasant, there being the occasional view

of Kindarun to the north and Yengo to the east. The Putty area is characterized by elevated cleared valleys and it was through one of these (Condon Clear) that we wound our way down to Putty Creek, there to be collected in the late afternoon.

* * * * *

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR STATURE.

by Jim Brown.

Quite recently I re-traced what used to be one of the popular day-and-a-half trips of bygone years - a walk that used to feature on walks programmes with the same monotonous regularity that the Bundeena-Otford day gallop now appears. The route used to be: Faulconbridge - Grose River - Trig 1499 - Springwood. Except that Grose Trig, or Grose South Head, or Trig 1499 is now given as Trig 1502 - an increase of three feet or almost one metre. No, it isn't a misprint - Trig 1502 is right on the join of the Springwood and Kurrajong 1:31680 sheets, and is depicted on both of them.

As if this weren't enough to worry one, in the years up to about 1950 there used to be a board under the name plate on Waterfall Railway Station that said "Height above Sea Level 742 feet". About 1950 this was replaced with a sign reading "744 feet". And more recently even that sign has been removed.

What gives? Is the coastal plain and mountain slope of eastern N.S.W. still rising? I simply do not believe that in the present drought period additional dirt carried on the feet of walkers has built up Grose Trig by three feet or Waterfall Station by two feet. In any case the deluge years of 1950 and 1951 should have scoured away some of the dirt already there.

One suspicious factor. These height increases have occurred since the Central Mapping Authority took over the work of producing maps of N.S.W. from the Army. I know we are the Premier State - vehicle number plates tell us so. Surely it is not necessary to increase the height of certain places to prove our superiority.

Of course, I always had doubts about that Trig 1499. It sounded too much like an advertising gambit - you know, "Price cut to £1.19.11½" (in present parlance, and allowing for the inflationary spiral, "Price cut to \$29.99"). A sort of "come-on" - look, only 1499 feet to climb out of the Grose Valley - climb out almost anywhere else and you'll have to scale at least 1500 ft.

Anyway, if you want to be taller, have a word with the Central Mapping Authority. Judging from the advertisements in suburban trains showing a queer-looking bunch of hikers, plus birds and rabbits, all brandishing C.M.A. maps, they're trying to boost their revenue. For a modest price (about \$29.99, I would guess) they'll probably tell you how to increase your stature.

THE BALLAD OF CANADA GEM.

You may range the Himalaya from the Valleys of Nepal,
You may climb the gleaming Rockies where the friendly marmots call;
You may walk the friendly hills of home and ne'er a word condemn,
But you've seen nothing buddy 'til you've walked with Canada Gem.

Chorus:

Oh, her volleys are taped with plaster and her shirt is wearing thin,
She's torn the crutch from her football shorts and they're fastened with a pin,
Her socks are decomposing and her pack is swinging low
As she struggles down through 'Gemma's Slot' to the camping cave below.

We gathered down by Boolijah 'neath the arid mountain wall,
There were twelve of us and Frank, and Pete to lead us all,
Spread across the tent stood the shadow of a sturdy femme,
Four feet wide and growing, gawd strewth it's Canada Gem.

Yes her volleys are taped with sticky, and her hair has lost its curl,
But sure her mother loves her, she's a fine Canadian girl.
She's prone to sleep on a mattress soft, gives gentlemen quite a fright
When they catch her wandering for comfort stops in the middle of the night.

In Harris's Hole was Pensioner Bill, kicking the rubble down,
We down below would dodge the rocks and look up with a frown.
Pommie Frank would protest to Pete and cry out fearing death,
But Canada Gem just shook her head and mumbled below her breath.

We crossed the scrubby plateau, locating heathlands thin and wide,
And Canada Gem, she showed the way as she swung from side to side.
"It's scrubby here" she shouted back, "It's very nasty stuff,"
"You take the lead" she said to Pete. "I fear I've had enough!"

"We've got no sharp machetes, we've got no abseil slings,
What we need to cross this scunge is a pair of bloody wings!
This plateau stuff is suicide, and I'm no flaming ass."
I suppose that's why she liked it so, that strange Canadian lass!

Canada Gem she liked to sleep the night through without pause,
But sleepy little Billy shook the laager with his snores,
"I'll do him in," muttered Canada Gem, "His life you'll never save,
Unless you shift his carcass to the other end of this cave!"

There's a camping cave in the Danjera lands, the Discovery Cave by name,
Haunt of a humble hiker, and mountaineer of fame.
There's a water pool in the creek below, and ledges in the cave to the back,
Which smells of socks and sweaty pants fresh from a climbing sack.

And on the wall where the shadows fall, a pair of volleys recline,
Bound about with sticky tape, their soles held on with twine.
Abandoned now and useless, but discard them we will not,
For they belonged to Canada Gem, and they stay there till they rot!

* * * * *

SOME UNRECORDED BUDAWANG HISTORY.(A letter sent to The Budawang Committee, 18/11/82.)

by Ron Knightley.

Dear Sir,

With great pleasure, I have recently become the owner of a limited-edition copy of "Pigeon House and Beyond".** May I extend my compliments, and indeed my admiration, to all who contributed. It is a monumental project of literary co-operation which deserves all praise. Hence, the paragraphs that follow should in no way be construed as criticism - merely as an incidental fill-in of the record of bushwalker activity, noting Wilf Hilder's page 96 remarks about written records or lack of them.

On page 110 is a paragraph which begins, "The next recorded journey by bushwalkers in the area was not until King's Birthday, 1948....." On page 113 and elsewhere are references to the March 1951 edition of Ken Angel's sketch map.

At Easter 1948 Peter Price of S.B.W., free-lance bushwalker Harry Snowden and myself made an unsuccessful attempt on The Castle, using a version of Ken Angel's sketch map. Paddy Pallin, from whom we sought information on the area, had supplied us with a complimentary pre-publication print with the request that we report back to him regarding its detail accuracy in areas we traversed.

Hitching a Thursday-night lift on a truck conveying a Y.H.A. party along the Mongarlowe road, we were dropped at a more-or-less randomly chosen point which we guessed to be westward of the north-south section of Yadbore Creek, and about eight or nine miles short of Mongarlowe.

On Good Friday, we walked eastward over the Budawang Range between Currockbilly and Wog Wog and dropped into a deep gully which, as its meanderings accurately matched the sketch map, we soon identified as Yadbore Creek (now given the more respectable title of River) below the Sugar Loaf, now Wirritin Mountain. Following the creek, walking was easy because of a clear cow-pad all the way, its creek-crossings and diversions all being shown with complete accuracy on Angel's sketch map. From reading your book (page 23), I learn that at least its down-stream portion had been the Walbanga Aborigines' path.

By afternoon on Easter Saturday, we reached the junction of Oaky and Yadbore Creeks. From some short climbs up ridges above the south bank of Yadbore Creek, we had seen the southern faces of The Castle, and had concluded that feasible, though time-consuming, routes existed up the lower wall (the Conjola formation), with an inverted Y of formations up the Nowra sandstone which looked just barely possible. We ruled it out for a first attempt.

** A soft cover edition of the book "Pigeon House and Beyond; a Guide to the Budawang Range and Environs", is available from Paddy Pallin. The title comes from an article by Ray Kirkby published in Federation's 1941 Annual "The Bushwalker".

While Harry Snowden and I pitched camp and cooked dinner at the junction of Castle Creek, Peter Price made a lightning reconnaissance to the western end of Byangee Walls, from which he reported that the eastern walls of the Castle looked no more encouraging than the southern. We decided to attempt the western walls in the one day remaining to us.

Early on Easter Sunday morning, in continuing weather of exhilarating clarity, we walked up Kalianna Ridge and, because the sketch map indicated that the Conjola formation ran as an unbroken wall around the head of Oaky Creek, climbed direct up the Conjola formation, after walking about two hundred metres along its base to find an encouraging-looking chimney. Having only a tent ridge-cord for a climbing "rope", we were several hours on the climb before emerging on to the clear slopes of the Wandrawandian siltstone series.

Working northwards along it in the late afternoon, we found two surprises. One was the complete breach in the walls around the head of Oaky Creek, which has now become a virtual six-lane pathway; and the other was the "tail" of The Castle which we immediately divined as the key to its defences.

But time had run out. We beat our hasty retreat down the breach in the lower wall, along the talus and back to camp at 9.30 pm. Next day, we followed the track to Yadboro House, up Longfella Ridge and on to Drury's to our waiting transport. It was a long, long trail for me, as I had gashed my leg on a broken stump the night before - a six inch scar which I carry as a memento to this day!

Back in Sydney, we returned the sketch-map print to Paddy Pallin, reporting its detail accuracy and informing him of our conclusion that the key to The Castle lay via Kalianna Ridge, the breach in the Conjola formation and the Castle's tail. As your book records, Reg Meakins and his companions quite independently reached the same conclusion and climbed it before we could take time from work to go back.

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Turning to the 1961-1971 decade, specifically at page 131, there were various S.B.W. ventures through the area in that period, the following commencing on Friday, 5th October 1962.

After being dropped in the vicinity of Newhaven Gap by Stuart Brooks, a party consisting of Grace Rigg, Bill Burke, Gordon Redmond and me spent nine days in the area. From the burnt-out sawmill site at The Vines, we followed the Sally Creek country around Sturgiss Mountain, to camp the first night between Mount Tarn and Bibbenluke Walls. Next morning, we established a base camp on the high grassy flat under the northern base of Seven Gods pinnacles, with enthralling sunset and dawn views past Shrouded Gods and Donjon Mountains over Holland's Creek to the Upper Clyde country. Our one tent remained abdullled facing north, so that we could survey the scene by both sunlight and moonlight from our sleeping bags.

Using George Elliott's May-November 1960 edition sketch map, we made a couple of short local excursions: Over Mounts Cole and Owen, off Mount Owen into Monolith Valley, and out to the northern tip of Shrouded Gods.

We were intrigued at the map's indication of a need for a 30 foot rope to traverse the crevasse between Cole and Owen, since even Grace Rigg's diminutive legs managed to traverse it north-south and east-west without scraping her bottom.

On the Tuesday, we went through Monolith Valley and Nibelung Pass en route for Kalianna Ridge and Pigeon House. In thick fog accompanied by light rain, we lunched under a large sandstone block at the top of Oaky Creek; and thereafter, missing the turn-off in the thick fog, spent the afternoon walking down the middle of Oaky Creek in thigh-deep water.

Grace Rigg earned our hearty plaudits, as with her short legs she was frequently left well astern, even though Bill Burke shouldered her pack as well as his own. Nevertheless, whenever she caught up with the leaders, she was heard to be quietly singing despite the weather and our sodden condition. Never a single adjective escaped her lips. All three of the others earned my hearty plaudits, as never a single adjective escaped their lips to mention that I, who had been there before and should not have missed the turn-off, was the cause of all their misery. (Many years later, this afternoon sprang vividly to mind when my son Stephen, a second-generation S.B.W., remarked "I've been through the Budawangs three times and never even seen them").

With the return of the sun next day, we experiencee the joy of drying out at Yadboro House, spiced by a delicious Bill Burke damper. Longfella Ridge to Pigeon House summit and back was the principal item on the next day's fare; and Friday lunch time found us back in Monolith Valley. We had previously looked unsuccessfully for the "Natural Arch" marked on the map. On this day, we had been lazing around our lunch spot for about an hour when suddenly someone said, "There it is, right above us!" And, indeed, there it was, no more than 50 metres from us. At first, it had been all but invisible against its natural rock backdrop; and only the shift in light and shade had shown it up.

On the Saturday, again from our camp under Seven Gods, we went through Nibelung Pass once more and thence up The Castle. An easy stroll for a lady, as your book says. Provided she can happily do a lay-back on the route as we found it. The Castle log-book showed that a few weeks earlier, a party of some 20 or 30 naval cadets from Jervis Bay had placed an entry in it; but whether such a large party came and went per Shank's pony or helicopter was not made specific.

An afternoon stroll to the scenic rim, followed by Sunday morning along the bridle track over Corang to Jerricknorra (now Wog Wog) Creek, brought us to the old hut where Denise Hull (now Raymond) of S.B.W. was waiting with the Knightley dormobile to ferry us back to Sydney.

This dormobile, incidentally, which went on many S.B.W. and N.P.A. sorties of that era, was said to be the first such vehicle imported through the port of Sydney. As such, it presented the Customs staff with quite a problem. They had no "stats item" against which to list it, and no way of putting a valuation on it for the levy of customs dues in the event that I should re-sell it within the statutory period. A nimble-witted Bill Burke solved the problem by having two customs clearances issued: one for a set of kitchen cupboards and the other for an empty Bedford panel van! Armed

with these, I was able to clear it from the wharf. A few years later, Denise Hull bought it in Sydney and twice drove it solo to and from Wave Hill Station and Katherine.

I am furnishing a copy of this letter to the editor of "The Sydney Bushwalker" who may or may not choose to publish all or part of it to augment that club's records.

(Other accounts of trips in the Budawangs, recorded in earlier issues of the magazine, will be reprinted later this year. EDITOR.)

BOOK REVIEW

by Owen Marks.

"THE BIBLE IN SPAIN" - by George Borrow.

Today I have just finished reading a book that was written in 1840. It is a must for all walkers and I can recommend it to the most discerning and cultured S.B.W. member, and even the lower classes would have their minds uplifted by such a book.

George Borrow, aged 30, wandered for three years around Spain in the midst of revolution, on behalf of the Foreign Bible Society, trying to sell thousands of copies of the New Testament that were illegally printed in Madrid. I wouldn't fancy doing that even today!

What didn't happen to him! Met lunatics and dignitaries - the Jewish Prime Minister - insisted on calling uninvited on an old retired Inquisitor (the Inquisition was going only 16 years previously) - was incarcerated in Madrid's notorious prison for being an unpleasant Protestant - getting lost in bandit-ridden areas which were about everywhere - climbed the outcrop of Cape Finisterre and was arrested for spying because no one could imagine any normal person climbing hills for the view. (Reminded me of Joan Rigby, when she was arrested on one of those Greek Islands half a mile off the coast of Turkey for photographing a church. Ask her the next time you see her.)

The insight as to how tourists travelled early last century is enlightening. The ignorance of the peasantry - the stealings and casual murders that remind one of those Icelandic Sagas - the fights in stables over food for the mules and donkeys - the proud Gypsies - the list is endless. And all the time he is conscious of representing the British Protestant Way of Life and its superiority over Papal Spain.

A long book, but obtainable free from your local library, and when you have finished reading it you have been in a Time Machine and 150 years are as yesterday.

Don't forget the name - George Borrow. He wrote other books as well, and if you enjoy "The Bible in Spain" you could also enjoy "Lavengro".

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SOCIAL NOTES FOR MARCH.

by Jo Van Sommers.

- March 9 - Annual General Meeting.
- March 12/13 - Reunion at Coolana, Kangaroo Valley (See page 18).
- * March 16 - Safety and Leadership Workshop, led by Ainslie Morris.
Bring paper, pencil, bright ideas.
- March 23 - "Summer on Tasmania's West Coast" - Slides by
Warwick Daniels.
- March 30 - Wine and Cheese night: free night to finalize your
Easter trip arrangements.

* All members are invited to meet for dinner at Michels Armenian Cafe, 284 Pacific Highway, Crow's Nest. B.Y.O. Cheap, decor to match. Time: 6.30 pm.

ADVANCE NOTICE:

Slide Competition, to be judged by Henry Gold. Three Sections:-

1. Candid snaps;
2. Landscape;
3. Overseas.

April 27th, but slides must be given to Jo Van Sommers by April General Meeting, April 13th.

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NEW FERRY TIMETABLES.

There are new timetables for ferries from Cronulla to Bundeena. The morning ferries on Sunday leave Cronulla at 8.30 am, 9.30 am, 10.30 am, etc. The trains shown on the Walks Programme to connect with these ferries will therefore be 7.26 am, 8.26 am, etc.

The return ferries are changed to 4.00 pm, 5.00 pm, etc.

EVENING CLASS - MUSHROOMS & TOADSTOOLS.

If you are interested in learning to distinguish between edible and poisonous fungi, the University of Sydney is running a course of 8 meetings on Tuesdays, starting March 15th, at 7 pm at the University of N.S.W. (School of Botany). Cost \$35 - Class No.6034 (telephone 692,2907 between 9 am & 5 pm).

There are other classes available in Botany & Ecology, Birds, Astronomy, Marine Biology, Geology. Contact 692,2907 for these classes also.

Don't hesitate - classes fill rapidly.

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S.B.W. ANNUAL REUNION AT COOLANA 12/13 MARCH.

- Where? - At the Club's property on the Kangaroo River, Kangaroo Valley. Camping and shelter shed. Cars are left on the side of our access road, then walk down the hill, a few hundred metres. From Fitzroy Falls drive down Barrengarry Pass to Kangaroo Valley, cross Hampton Bridge, turn right along "Mt. Scanzi" road, our access road is about 6 km on the right-hand side, just past a notice on left marked "No Through Road".
- Who? - Members, prospectives, past members and their families.
- Why? - Fun weekend on the river, campfire with singing, skits and carryings-on Saturday night. Club provides supper.
(* Traditional inauguration of newly-elected President.)
Damper competition Sunday morning (bring S.R. flour).

Contact for Transport or to offer lifts:-

- Helen or George Gray - Phone 86-6263.

KASHMIR IN JUNE!!

The towns Srinigar, Ladaksh and Zanskar. Four weeks trekking, relaxing on houseboats and ??

AIR FARE about \$825 - Delhi return.

Contact CRAIG SHAPPERT - Telephone 30,2028(H).

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1983 BUSHWALKER RECIPE No.2 - FOOT-SLOGGING SLICE.

by Judith Rostron.

- 1 cup Wholemeal S.R. Flour
- 1 cup castor sugar
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 cup mixed fruit
- 125 g melted margarine
- 1 egg (beaten)

Mix till combined, press into small slice tin and bake at 180°C (350°F) approximately 20-30 minutes till brown. Cool, then cut. Travels well!

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