

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 7.45 pm at the Cahill Community Centre (Upper Hall), 34 Falcon Street, Crow's Nest.

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EDITOR: Ainslie Morris, 45 Austin Street, Lane Cove 2066.  
Telephone 428 3178.

BUSINESS MANAGER: Bill Burke, 3 Coral Tree Drive, Carlingford 2118.  
Telephone 871 1207.

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Helen Gray.

TYPIST: Kath Brown.

PRINTERS: Fran Longfoot & Barry Wallace.

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NORTHERN BUDAWANGS WALK - EASTER, 1986.LED BY MAURIE BLOOM.

by Elwyn Morris.

After a bad road from Nowra so deep in dust that I put my headlights on in daylight, we met the rest of the party of 19 at 9 am on Good Friday at the Nerriga pub, very much closed after a singalong the night before. I managed to navigate my way across the paddocks to an alternative toilet however. The Ladies, in the middle of nowhere, was big and new and had a sign nearby announcing that funding came from the Department of Leisure, Sport and Tourism (???).

As a tourist mecca, Nerriga consists of half-a-dozen slab huts; from one chimney the smoke curled up from the fuel stove lit for breakfast. According to the fascinating little museum in the old schoolhouse, where Maurie led us first, Nerriga had been a lively stopover on the old bullock dray route from the inland to the coast.

We left the cars at a farm which took no responsibility if the horses took a dislike to them and kicked them (they didn't). Four-wheel drives could have been more resentful of hushwalkers; we met two park rangers who said a 4WD tried to knock down a new gate the night before. When we saw the gate at lunchtime on the Endrick it had one post torn out and was semi-circular, looking as if a very angry and very stupid bull had charged it because it barred the way to HIS territory.

At this point we lost Frank Taeker to his magic mushrooms for the weekend (he photographs fungi), while the rest of us plunged into leechland. We even camped in it near Whitecat Sawmill on picturesque green sward among tree ferns, in a fine drizzle which failed to dampen spirits.

Among the four superfit prospectives was Gordon whose accent was originally English but overlaid with 16 years of Ohio and Texas. Full of enthusiasm for Australia, his new country, he was unfazed by leeches but startled by a loud cricket - "There's an alarm clock in that bush!" he told me, in genuine bewilderment.

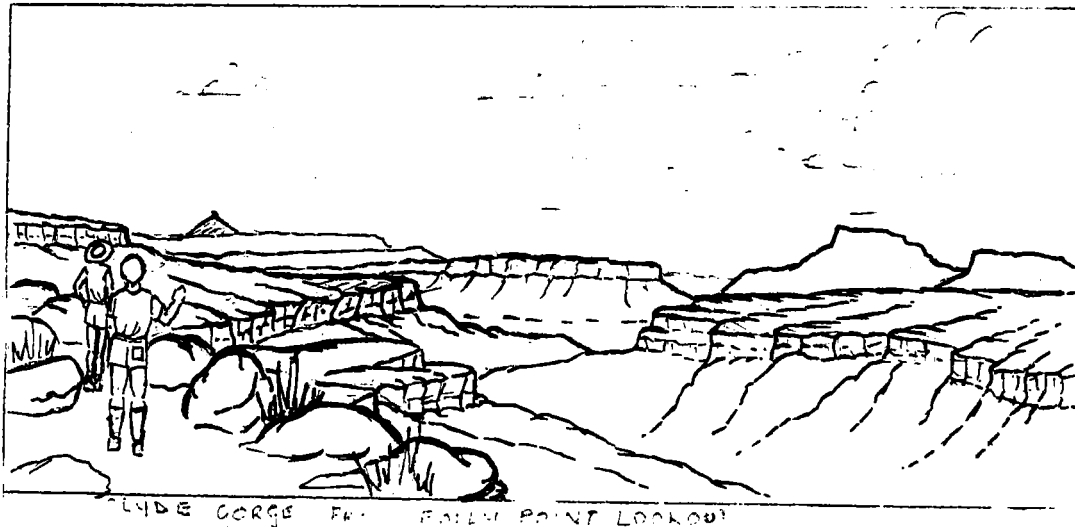
I wasn't too happy about sleeping under a fly in rain with leeches around, so I covered my face and top of my sleeping bag with my trusty Aerogard and used it as a sort of mousse in my hair. But only one person was bitten that night, on the neck.

Lost in the Mist.

Next day Maurie led us to several lookouts with magnificent views, he reckoned, if only we could see them. After a bleak, wet lunch on a mountaintop (I think), our subdued, bedraggled party headed for the ominously named Folly Point. We got lost, retraced our steps, and then followed a series of cairns with sticks pointing the way, built by some kind group who must have got sick of being called out for S. & R. After slithering down a dramatic gorge of grey layered rocks, Watson's Pass, we welcomed a huge, dry camping cave with plenty of firewood, water and even a shower (i.e. small waterfall) nearby, and room for everyone, even snorers.

In front of a roaring fire after dinner Bob Younger practised his newly learnt remedial foot massage on the ladies' aching backs. I shrieked with agony while Barbara Bruce squealed with pleasure. "How did you get such strong toes?" she asked. "My wife puts me out at night to sit on a perch with the chooks," Bob explained.

The stars came out and as we'd prayed, Easter Sunday was sunny. After criss-crossing Holland's Creek through beautiful rainforest, Maurie took the record with 30 leeches at one deeleeching stop. I got two, only because the river washed off my Aerogard at the ankles, and David Underwood got none, because he inspected his shoes every five minutes.



CLYDE GORGE FROM POINT LOOKOUT  
Illustration by Morag Ryder

Then an enormous climb of about 2,500 feet, gruelling for me and Judy if no one else, with mountain views making up for the unseen ones the day before, to our campsite on the top of Mount Tarn. There we ran into Carol Bruce, Bill Capon and Matthew Walton, doing their own thing.

Jo Van Sommers, whose idea it was to camp on Mount Tarn, had promised us a sunrise - and in spite of heavy mist overnight there was a cloudless, golden one next morning. It was greeted excitedly by our mob of sun worshippers, assembled on a high knoll with mountains rolling away in the distance below. Hans Stichter crowed like a rooster as the sun rose; we'd have felt even more uplifted if we'd known Sydney was getting two days of rain. It's usually the other way round with the Budawangs.

Down from Mount Tarn, across tussocky plains and along firetrails where the only hazards were ants - Denise: "Maurie, the ants are getting into the food!" Maurie, in command of the situation as usual: "I'll speak to them, Denise."

A final swim in a big pool meant we arrived at the cars in an unusually fresh, clean state, ready for two and a half hours of dirt road to Marulan, to avoid the coastal traffic. After a Chinese meal at Mittagong, where the key to success is to ask for "No extra salt", we had another straight run to Sydney with heavy but fast traffic - a total 4½ hours. This is a longer but probably faster route from the Budawangs on holiday weekends.

Thank you, Maurie, for a memorable Easter!

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#### AWAY FROM IT ALL.

Like to get away from it all for three months? Queanbeyan photographer-writer EDWARD STOKES is looking for a co-driver to join him in re-tracing McDouall Stuart's transcontinental expeditions later this year, for a book. Ed knows the outback well. After years roaming around Broken Hill he spent three months in 1984 retracing Sturt's expedition from the Darling River to the Simpson Desert, also for a book. In 1985 he retraced Lasseter's journeys for Dick Smith's Australian Geographic. From late July until October this year he's travelling Stuart's routes, from Adelaide to Darwin. Interested co-drivers write with personal details to Ed at:- Edward Stokes, Box 1104, Queanbeyan, N.S.W., 2620.

## BODYTALK

by Ainslie Morris.

FROM THE EDITOR: Our series on First Aid Bush Situations is over for the time being, but its popularity has prompted me to continue the idea with a regular section on the theme of body care. The beauty can take care of itself.

You are all invited to send contributions on prevention of injury and other afflictions in the great outdoors, care of your body and its health on bushwalks, safety of the individual or the whole group, and first aid.

So first up is a report on:

### MESSAGE IN THE BLACKOUT

Catherine McEwen, Principal (and founder) of Nature Care School and Clinic at 1A Frederick Street, Artarmon (phone: 439 8844), started off the evening billed as "Remedial Massage" on the Social Programme by telling us that we would be leaving our clothes on. Now take a partner, she says.... and the lights in the building - indeed, in the whole of North Sydney - went off! And we still had all our clothes on!

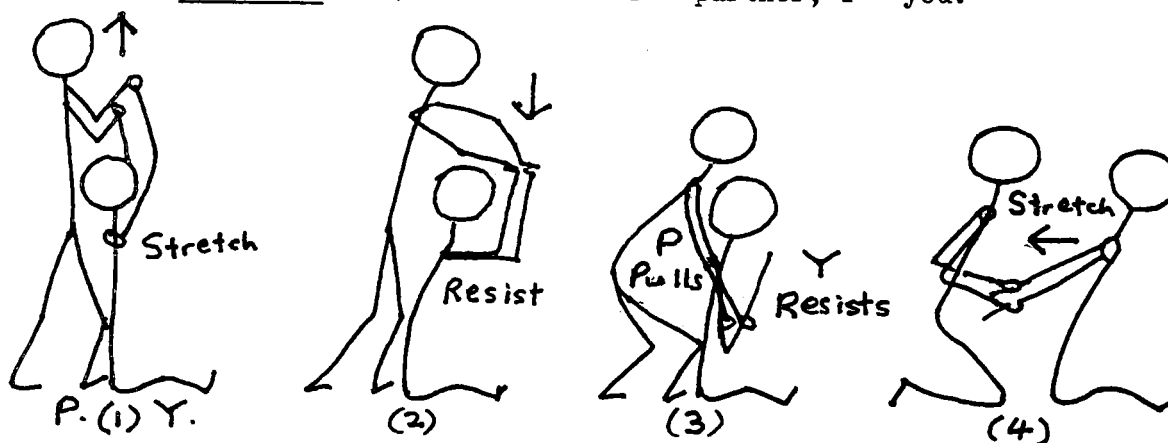
A small torch put Catherine in the spotlight (I've waited all my life for this") and our entertaining teacher proceeded with her demonstrations. She asked us where we got problems during or after our walks, and then showed us how to prevent injury or stiff sore muscles, and treat them, WHILE ON WALKS.

NECK: Using resistance to tense the muscles, and when you release tension, they then relax - very soothing. Try it:- press your hands on

- (1) your forehead - push hands against it; hold 10 seconds - relax.
- (2) back of head - ditto.
- (3) right side of head - ditto.
- (4) left side of head - ditto.

(Good on long drives, typing, carrying pack).

BACK: Mainly for Trapezius and Mid-Thoracic muscles, using resistance again, and stretches. 4 exercises - P = partner, Y = you.



P standing, Y sitting on ground, there are four positions for your arms. P braces one knee slightly sideways into your back, the other leg well back, then P:-

- (1) takes your hands and pulls your arms up - a STRETCH.
- (2) P presses down on your hands which you RESIST, then after 10 seconds, you RELAX. (To get the correct position, Y holds arms straight out in front of you, then bend elbows up at right-angles.)

- (3) P pulls your elbows towards P which you RESIST. (To get correct position hold your arms down straight then bend elbows so fists are against shoulders.)
- (4) P gently pulls your straight arms back behind you - STRETCH.

All of these relax muscles which are tense and tight from a heavy pack.

After more demonstration on ankles, calves, hamstrings, buttocks and more on the back (using feet instead of hands to massage), the lights came on again.

\* \* \* \* \*

BARBARA BRUCE has booked on this trip. She would like to have an S.B.W. group.  
PHONE HER!! 546 6570. (H)



## FIJI ADVENTURE BUSHWALKING TOUR



GREAT NEWS! We have been given official permission by Ilai Naibosi and his family to prepare a package for the Bushwalking Tours he has been organising through the Fijian interior for the past 15 years. Each night on the trek is spent in a different, remote village, with the tour group eating and sleeping the way the villagers do and gaining direct experience of the village way of life. The trek is not of a particularly difficult standard with approximately 40 kilometres covered in the six days with horses carrying the gear. This should not discourage those energetic, for there are plenty of ways to exert yourself in the Fijian bush. A typical day will include two 2 hour stages of walking in between meals, each at a different village. Along the way there are streams and rivers to cool off in and nights will be spent enjoying Fijian hospitality and entertainment. At the end of the walk there is a two day stay in Suva, Fiji's capital and an optional extension to one of Fiji's famous Island Resorts.

A package has been prepared including economy return airfares, accommodation with air conditioning and private facilities in Nadi and Suva, shared accommodation on tapa mat floors in thatched huts in villages, all meals during walk from lunch Sunday to lunch Saturday, all airport transfers where required and bus transfer from Suva to Nadi. All this costs:

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☐ We are very interested in the 1986 tour so please send full details so we can plan ahead.

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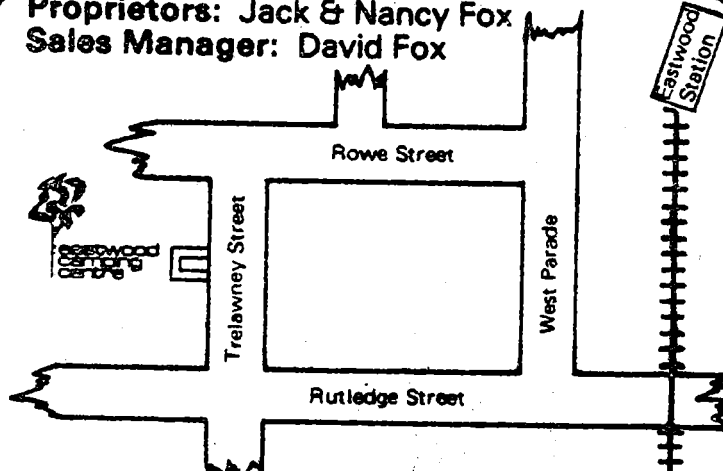
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TANTANGARA TO BRINDABELLALEADER: DON FINCH

by Janet Waterhouse.

PARTY MEMBERS: Don Finch (Little Hitler), Wendy Aliano (Choir Leader), David Rostron (The Man with \$1.13), Bill Burke (Quarter Master), Barry Wallace (Butter Custodian), Lynne Jones (Neat as a Pin), Joan Cooper (Phantom Fly Charmer), Steve Brown (The Pritikin Kid), Janet Waterhouse (Scribe).

An account of our trip 21st February to 2nd March, 1986, written from copious suggestions en route from a variety of party members.

PART 1 - The Grass-seed Plains.

Friday: We congregated in dribs and drabs on the Friday night at Don's sister's place in Canberra. With usual clarity in communication between our party's members, we discovered that no-one was quite sure of just when David, Lynne and Bill were expected or whether in fact they had collectively managed to acquire the correct address, so after a little contention over who should have the comfort of the couch, the rest of us retired anyway, the trio successfully waking the entire household just as we'd drifted off to sleep.

Saturday: Peaceful slumber was shattered at 0545 with David and Barry discussing the time and by the time they had decided that it really was too early to get up the rest of us were awake anyway (Ah, the bliss of communal living!).

The next two hours were occupied with packing and repacking, sacrificing the need for such things as personalized maps, cameras, surplus clothing, etc. none of which seemed to help lighten our packs at all. Joan worried whether her ankle would stand up to the walk, I wondered if I would cope with the weight for a walk longer than any I'd ever been on, Wendy skited about how light her pack was, while David went around lifting one pack at a time looking knowing and making us nervous.

Procrastination and deliberation were halted by Don's summons to the backyard for BBQ'd bacon and eggs and shortly afterwards our bus (Canberra Charter Coaches) arrived.

By 1030 we had been safely deposited at a point where the Snowy Mountains Highway crosses Alpine Creek Fire Trail (DENISON: 428246). This was after a brief stop in Cooma for fussy David to buy a toothbrush, having declined the offer of a secondhand one. His funds were thus reduced to \$1.13. Despite our heavy packs it really was too early to have lunch, so we set off along the peaceful fire-trail to be quickly confronted by two trail-bike riders. We chatted for a while, listened to advice about what lay ahead, and hoped our escape from civilization would not be interrupted too often.

After lunch at Alpine Creek, we followed the track and then a ridge leading to Tantangara Mountain, entrusting Bill with the task of finding a suitable campsite. We had a magnificent view from the summit (DENISON: 412288), apart from the entertainment provided by Don as he hung by his toe nails from high on the trig with the other three machos hanging from the sides like angels on a Christmas charm. To the east was Lake Eucumbene, to south Mounts Gudenby and Tabletop, and to north "beckoning" Tantangara Reservoir and our destination for Tuesday, swimming and fishing.

Whilst we frolicked on our mountain top and Lynne and Wendy showed their equally interesting navigational abilities, Bill blazed a trail around the edge of Boggy Plain, selecting a campsite nestled amongst yellow everlasting daisies and wombat holes, beside a creek inundated with swarms of what fortunately turned out NOT to be "giant mosquitoes". We whiled away

the rest of the afternoon chatting and chasing the fading sun around camp. Some of the lads tried their hand at fishing, Barry attempting to provide fish for breakfast to justify having forgotten his porridge ration.

Around the campfire, David's attempts to stimulate discussion on as many controversial issues as possible led to only mixed success, so we sauntered off to bed to ponder our week ahead.

Sunday: We awoke to David's enthusiastic cracking of sticks, the rest of the porridge party quickly realising that they had been pipped at the post for lightening their load. Breaking camp we continued to skirt Boggy Plain, gazing out on an expanse of tussock grass and the occasional outcrop of interesting boulders until a long-abandoned mine where Wendy enthusiastically handed out our scroggin and nut allotments. Feeling a trifle chilly we hurried on to explore Gooandra Hut (TANTANGARA: 387369), some party members proving their superior eyesight and navigational abilities. Reunited with David, Barry and Steve who tried hard not to appear put out (but argued the point anyway) we continued to our lunch spot.

That afternoon we continued north, crossed the Murrumbidgee where there was at least enough water to bath if not actually swim, and established camp on a nearby treed hillside (RULES POINT: 402427). Fishing was again attempted, this time with Joan's assistance, but still to no avail, while Steve charged up the nearest high hill. The rest of us mooched around camp watching airline vapour trails form overhead, picking grass seeds from our socks for the umpteenth time that day, and basically revelling in the escape from society whilst Wendy prepared a magnificent repast.

With dinner over and the light beginning to soften on the tussocky hills a great sense of peace and freedom began to sweep over us. David produced two song books and the choir took over. Despite quite an interesting mixture of musical ability, participation was with great gusto climaxed in a frantic Hokey Pokey dance, during which one of Barry's gaiters nearly met a firey fate.

Monday: The morning started early for everyone (except Don and Wendy) with 9/10 low cloud, 10°C and David fighting off nightmares which he blamed on the rum from the previous evening, but we all knew better.

During the preparation and consumption of hot tea, porridge and various comestibles, a disturbing mystery became apparent. After about five counts, the searching of numerous packs, tents, groundsheets and one or two unsuspecting persons it emerged as a sustainable fact that Lynne's wooden spoon had disappeared overnight. However, as we were leaving, Barry fell over the said spoon and received an appropriate award from Lynne. It is strongly suspected that Barry concealed the spoon solely with that amorous reward in mind.

After wisely donning gaiters, for those of us who had them, the party moved off across a saddle into Dairyman's Creek and took a long gentle ascent through delightful alpine forest to a point adjacent to Dairyman's Saddle. We had begun to think we had the place to ourselves for we had sighted very little in the way of native or feral animals. About half way up the creek, as we were proceeding along an open area of snow grass following a faint animal track, Barry suddenly spotted another track-user approaching. A large grey fox, completely unaware of our presence, was trotting slowly down the track checking out the edges for food. At 30 metres, realizing his peril, he dashed off into the adjacent forest.

Descending a long easy ridge down to Dairyman's Plain we lunched at a creek junction, where we first really noticed Joan's attraction for flies. Arriving early at Muffler's Creek, our destination for the day (RULES POINT: 474448), to avoid the optional side-trip to Mount Nattung (RULES POINT: 452469) we spent the afternoon vascillating between campsites strategically placed



on knolls on either side of the creek, carting 5 litres of water ballast each to avoid launching ourselves on a ballistic trajectory whilst crossing the tussock in the creek bed.

The Pritikin-powered Steve, refusing to be involved in this idiocy, climbed Nattung.

Reunited after a couple of hours' stubborn procrastination, we established camp and soothed our troubled brows with liquid refreshment. Don, having lost heart with tickling imaginary trout, turned his hand to the snaring of rabbits from where we suspected he had a dress-circle view of the ladies performing their ablutions. After dinner, despite our weakened state from the day's activities and good food, we summoned enough energy to sing and approximate dances such as the Flying Hora, Zorba the Greek and imitate Lynne's impressive representation of the Conga, the dance floor having been prepared for such a purpose.

Tuesday: Once again the phantom prestidigitator struck at breakfast time whisking away my porridge-coated mug which had been volunteered by Someone as a ladle. After a brief but futile search, it was assumed that David, missing from the scene, had hidden it with hopes of claiming a due reward. Assuming use of David's mug as a replacement I was confronted by an "innocent" and indignant David who pointed out the porridge-coated mug atop a "washing-up" tree.

The terrible truth about Tantangara Reservoir was realised that morning as we came over a rise to spy a car driving across the plain where the lake should have been. The lads comforted themselves by picking large dandelions, David chanting "She loves me! - she loves me not", Don "Yes they will - no they won't", Barry doing a count down got to 4 (am or pm?) whilst Bill simply proved that he had the most efficient lungs for blowing all the seeds away. (Superior? or was it all those years of extra practice at blowing out birthday candles?).

During morning tea at Old Currango Hut (RULES POINT: 505489), while we were eating Tim-tams, David tried to instill some enthusiasm for climbing Mount Bimberi into the slothful party. Some of the party thought he was frothing at the mouth again and wanted to give him a sedative, but much to David's surprise and alarm he had two takers. However on reaching the campsite I saw the folly in my enthusiasm. Unfortunately for David the Pritikin-powered Steve was still keen.

Camp that night was selected and enforced by Don (Little Hitler) after the brief flowering of Monday's democracy, despite Joan's close encounter with what appeared to be a yellow-bellied black snake and a swarm of bull-ants which were ceremonially toasted. Whilst Bill, Joan and Barry guarded camp and made the rice (white) dessert Don, Wendy, Lynne and I climbed Howell's Peak (RULES POINT: 549514). As we trudged off across a boggy rough tussocky plain in what was an unusually hot and listless afternoon I felt relieved not to be struggling to keep up with David and Steve. When we reached our peak, the trig which Wendy had so clearly spotted from the plain was found lying on the ground....very fitting for how we felt.

Back at camp we washed and supped late waiting for the return of The Terrible Two, who wandered in at dusk after a successful 28 km and 3000 ft of climbing through scrub to the top of Bimberi in just 6 hours. At first we didn't recognize them, David dressed in his under-pants, gaiters and shoes, and Steve in nothing but shorts and shoes. None the less they were welcomed and spoiled by the service of four hand-maidens (including Barry) and suitably wine and dined. It was a subdued party around the fire that night.

Wednesday: The morning dawned fine with the promise of a perfect day. A carpet of mist flowed out across the plain where the lake should

have been, the mountains in the distance peeping through above the mist. The less than musical dawn chorus of crows and kookaburras had told us nothing of the magic and tranquility of the scene now before us.

Wency and I pampered ourselves by washing our hair in warm water. What luxury!

During the course of the morning the wholemeal macaroni of the previous night began to take its toll on each one of us. Yes, Barry, it was just as well we didn't have brown rice for dessert as well!

As the mountains melted into a blue haze we set off eagerly for the long awaited swim in the cool deep pools of Cave Creek. After road-bashing our way across the tumbling plain past Bill Jones Hut we spied the rocky crags of the creek. To our dismay the creek bed was totally dry. Most of the party hurried on whilst Joan, Wendy, David (who accompanied us for at least 10 metres) and I took time out to explore a cave, 'Cave Four' (RULES POINT: 400555), reputed to have been the most impressive in the Coolaman system prior to vandalism.

For Wendy and me it was our first experience of caving and with Joan's enthusiasm and confidence spurring us on we sumped the cave, taking our fill of the clear, cool water at the end of the chamber. As we explored we found many of the formations to be still alive and admired examples of stalagmites & stalagmites, flowstone, shawls and straws so delicate and fragile. On our retreat and disappointed at the others' apparent disinterest, we sped along the rocky creek bed until we found the rear-guard.

By the time we reached the picnic area at Coolaman the billy was on the boil and we gratefully threw ourselves into the freezing waters of the creek and wondered from what underground haven it had sprung.

After lunch we trekked off to Coolamine Homestead (PEPPERCORN: 5075789) where the highlight was the double-bunger loo ('The 2-holed long-drop'), and David was tempted by the only apple on an old gnarled tree. The homestead is under reconstruction for tourism. When the long-awaited cloud to shade our journey arrived our beloved leader was examining the long-drop to see if it was in working order, and so in the scorching afternoon we trekked off across another long dusty plain to another grass-seed infested campsite beside a burbling brook at least 2 inches deep (PEPPERCORN: 517594).

Our intrepid "junior member", the Pritikin Kid, once again put us all to shame by climbing the highest mountain peak in the area, Mt. Jackson (PEPPERCORN: 540614), attempting unsuccessfully to lure me with the promise of a real 'snail haven' and leaving David tied to the apron strings. Don provided the afternoon's entertainment ("Nothing notable" - Joan) by bathing from a billy on centre stage. Joan and I found a totally secluded little bend in the creek nestled in deep tussock grass with enough water to wash and ladled copious quantities of cool water over ourselves. It was so blissful lying sunning ourselves, with no flies to bother us, that only after continuous dinner summons did we reluctantly return to camp.

After our feast on black-eyed beans no one seemed inspired for song or dance, so we played charades at which Lynne excelled. The night was capped off with Bill's charade of "No Nickers", Don's "Holy Bible", Wendy's "Naked Ape" and David's "Female Eunuch". The party retired early in fear and trembling of the anticipated effect of the black-eyed beans, while I sat on longer under a clear and starry sky watching deep shadows shorten into silhouettes as a full moon topped the trees. The embers of another friendly fire glowed warmly, softly crackling like crumpling foil. The bush was alive with the sound of chirping crickets and frogs and only faintly could I distinguish the gentle slumbering of my companions.

TO BE CONTINUED.

BEN ESGATE - A LIVING EPITAPH.

by Charlie Brown.

Having been brought up (or kicked and told to get up) in the Blue Mountains by a kindly but firm mother and a firm but inadvertantly kind father (the boy should stay at home and chop wood instead of bushwalking if he wants exercise), it was with some joy that at the tender age of thirteen that I first met Ben Esgate while illegally fishing for trout at the Blue Hole (Govetts Creek).

During those wild days when an Elvis record cost ten shillings there was no way I was going to spend five bob on a trout licence. I was most relieved after being engaged in conversation by this tough looking bushman and his dog to find that he wasn't the Resident Fishing Inspector, about to lock me up, or worse.

Vague introductions were made after discussing the weather and the state of the Tristania (whoever she might be!) and the dialogue commenced:-

- So you're Jack Brown's youngest?
- Uh yeah (who the hell are you?)
- Ben Esgate, this is Jingles. (Indicates the dog)
- Uh g'day. (The dog nodded and smiled)
- What are you fishing for?
- Uh dunno. (He still looks like a Fishing Inspector!)
- We should go for a walk someday.

Thus ended the first meeting.

Little did I know that he had just come UP Arethusa Canyon, later to become a well-known abseiling trip - well you meet strange people in the bush!

Several months later in mid July the phone rang and the voice of my nemesis suggested - no insisted - that I should forego chopping wood and take a stroll over Guouogang the coming weekend. Being an agile halfback in Katoomba High's footy team I realised I should have been at Lithgow for the knockout comp. - But being a true son of the Mountains, with a low threshold of pain and few brains I opted for the Big One. A supplementary factor was that the winds of winter had made me unfit for football with a vile dose of the 'flu, and managed as it turned out to have infected Ben as well. Jingles however was OK, having had his distemper shots long ago.

So it began - bogged on Megalong Road in pouring rain - the long struggle over a snow-covered Mount Jenolan - a freezing night on the side of Guouogang with the water freezing in the billy beside the fire - over the top the next morning and back up the Cox's to the car. Two and a half people crazed with influenza and adrenalin, deliriously beating through the bush.

Jingles never caught the 'flu and Ben and I both recovered from it, but I never recovered from Ben - a virulent infection that remains with me to this very day. Since then we have shared some really great times, and who knows that given a schooner or two I may be persuaded to share them, but in the meantime - why the epitaph?

The Old Devil looks as though he may live forever, having celebrated his 72nd birthday by leading a walk in his beloved Blue Mountains recently, so while I may not be alive to provide the necessary words on his gravestone, I do it now:-

Here's to you Ben.

Old walkers never die -

In fact they don't even have the courtesy to slow down.....

\*\*\*\*\*

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ANYONE INTERESTED IN A TRIP TO PARADISE?

by Marion Lloyd.

Heaven seems an interesting place to visit. Many people tell me the good news, that it is a nice place to live. I don't want to go forever, just my next annual holidays would be long enough to see whether I would like to rest my soul there forever. I have never yet personally met anyone who has been there and back, so I guess that speaks for itself. I'm told that it is an eternal paradise, but no one has satisfactorily specified what this paradise is like.

I envisage it to be a mixture of Norwegian fjords, waterfalls and glaciers, Swiss alpine meadows and the mellowness of the English countryside criss-crossed by those wonderful lanes and paths lined with bluebells and daffodils, across which is the occasional stone fence with its accompanying stile. A place where the people are friendly, no bureaucratic go-slows or strikes, no touting, no tipping, no rip-offs, no bargaining or hassles with cantankerous custom officials or haggling shopkeepers, and more importantly free clean loos that materialise when urgently required with no plumbing irregularities and lovely soft toilet paper.

A place where one can eat and sleep in the most lavish style without getting bored and fat, where one can eat divine exotic food without the worry of Delhi belly or Jogjakarta jog. The weather too, is always balmy and warm, none of that London pea-soup fog or perpetual drizzle, no rain that continues for weeks, no pollution, no scorchers, no flies, mosquitoes or any other creepy crawlies that tend to drive one crazy whilst travelling.

For getting around up there, one dials a cloud, one does not have to navigate or rely on a taxi-driver's sense of direction as the destination, right fare and change have already been computed. Nor does one have to argue with an Indian family to move them, their bedrolls, chooks and other luggage from your booked space, or be shunted down a railway siding to wait for hours at the whim of officials only to be reshunted onto another set of tracks for some illogical reason.

But the problem remains of how to get there. No matter how much I have hunted around, I have not found a travel agent who can offer me a cheap package deal, in fact, any deal at all. Companies such as Ausventure and Himalayan Expeditions only take you up as far as Everest base camp. How do all those people who have taken up residence in heaven get there. I can't accept that one has to kick the bucket to get a passport to those pearly gates and then be processed by a guy named Pete. Lining up at the Commonwealth Centre is bad enough for getting an Australian passport, only to be told there's been a "walkout". It seems the only way to get there is to wait patiently until my heavenly flight is called and try to be good in the meantime.

Come to think of it, the whole thing sounds frightfully boring. It sounds like a place for tourists and their wallet full of credit cards, not for a self-respecting S.B.W. traveller who loves to glorify his adversities in yarns around the campfire on his next weekend walk.

However, I am still interested; anybody else?

\*\*\*\*\*

NEW MEMBERS.

Please add the following names to your List of Members:-

NIVEN, Margaret, Lot 1, Perentie Road, Belrose, 2085	Phone 452 5526
NIVEN, Robert, " " " "	"
RUBENS, Clive, 1/2 Russell Street, Wollestonecraft, 2065	438 3659
RUBENS, Wilma, " " " "	"
SONTER, Christopher, 72 Fullers Road, Chatswood, 2067	419 3969
STITT, Michael, 49 Darling Street, Roseville, 2069	419 7161

CONSERVATION CORNER.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

by Alex Colley.

In his article "Has Conservation Gone Off Course" in your last issue, Ron Knightley no doubt expects me to rise to the bait, and I would hate to disappoint him. The last time we chose to differ in these pages was in February 1947 issue, when, under the pseudonyms "Socrates" and "Anopheles" we debated a proposal for instituting life membership of the Club. I was Anopheles.

The ski tube is supported both by the S.B.W. and the F.B.W. and this has been conveyed to the Minister. The tube should, of course, terminate at Jindabyne, but our policy is that even in its present form it is preferable to the four-lane road, immense parking area and a vast increase in accommodation within the park, with greatly increased sewage pollution, which is the alternative. It is fair enough that those who disagree with this policy should seek, within the Club, to change it, but not that they should as Club members, voice their disagreement to the Minister.

Bush fires are likely to occur in all timbered country, and their effects are the same. There were 464 fires in State Forests in 1984/85, which burnt 34,853 ha. How this compares with occurrence in parks we don't know, but if the State Forests have a better record it may well be the result of more staff, more roads, easier terrain and the burning of park lands to provide fire breaks.

I asked the question on the reseedling of the Mount Wilson/Tomah area. It was a suggestion, not a criticism.

Feral animals are found almost everywhere, and no satisfactory means has yet been found of eliminating them, in parks or elsewhere. If Ron knows how to get rid of them I would be glad if he told me. It is notable that parks are described as reservoirs of pests as soon as they are dedicated.

There is nothing to stop the N.P.W.S. zoning areas under its control as wilderness under its management plans (or Section 59 of the Act) other than staff shortage in the preparation of plans. A Wilderness Act would enable all of our dwindling wilderness areas, in parks or not, to be protected. An anti-conservationist Government which wanted to revoke park dedications, permit logging, mining and other forms of development within parks, as the National Party does (with, until recently, the support of the Liberal Party), would have to legislate to do so, a course which we would expect to create strong opposition from the public.

Of course there are no areas unchanged since European occupation, but a little over 1% of the State retains much of its original character, and it is this we seek to protect.

No doubt the undergrowth has thickened up in many places, particularly in Water Board catchments, but is Ron's plaint a plea for more bush fires and grazing, i.e. an extension of "the spreading square kilometres of blackened feather duster forests", which he describes?

The aim of regional planning is not to dictate how people should "govern their lives", but to prevent their actions from conflicting with the welfare of the region, and the state. I would like to see this principle extended to the national level on matters such as woodchipping and rain-forest preservation.

On the subject of park services, Ron may well be right in rating those in other states above that of N.S.W. The reason for this could be that they have so little to service.

Few conservationists today would agree with his assessment of The

Hon. Tom Lewis's stewardship. They believe, as did Mr. Wran, that the transfer of 80,000 acres of the Kosciusko National Park to the Forestry Commission, the alienation, rather than dedication for public use, of large areas of crown land, and his support for the quarrying of Colong and a pine plantation on the Boyd, far outweigh his conservation efforts, and probably were a factor in the defeat of the Coalition government in 1976.

As to "the few vocal radical" conservationists, the nature conservation movement is extremely fortunate that leaders such as Milo Dunphy, Dr. Bob Brown and John Sinclair sacrificed professional careers to lead it. They are supported by a strong voluntary conservation movement, the members of which probably outnumber the membership of any political party. They are opposed by wealthy development interests, which use some of the same arguments as Ron, supported by government authorities, but despite the publicity these interests buy or attract, they are a minority. Public opinion polls indicate that 80% or more of the public support issues such as opposition to the Franklin dam, to the logging and roading of rain-forests and to woodchipping.

Ron's closing query as to whether conservation is going in the right direction gives no clue as to which direction, if any, he thinks this should be. In my opinion the S.B.W. members who "bare their teeth" to conservation leaders such as Milo Dunphy and the Hon. Bob Carr, who are trying to help us, are going in precisely the wrong direction. Both these speakers were affronted by the anti-conservationist response from those who stand to gain the most from their work. I will be surprised if either of them accept another invitation to address us.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### HAS CONSERVATION GONE OFF COURSE?

by Mark Weatherley.

Under this heading Ronald Knightley raises a number of issues in his April article on Bob Carr's January address to S.B.W. and Alex Colley's February article covering that address. The questions he raises are too important to let pass without further comment and debate.

The aims of nature conservation - the protection of the irreplaceable gifts of nature from degradation or destruction - are not going to change. If Mr. Knightley has other aims, he should say what they are.

The real question is how we are going about it and what our priorities are.

The top priority in conservation in N.S.W. for the past 20 years has been to get the best of what is left of our wilderness areas under the protection of the national park system before it is too late. Priority has been given to areas that are threatened - by logging, pine planting, rutile mining, etc. etc. Fighting real and present threats from these and other sources has taken up most of the movement's resources. Only recently, with the help of ministers like the late Paul Landa and the present Bob Carr, have conservationists enjoyed periods when they have been able to get ahead of the game by getting some areas into the park system before they come under active threat.

The next order of priority has been wider issues affecting our natural heritage like protecting our forests from destructive forestry practices, siting of power and pipelines, pollution by chemicals and wastes, unsympathetic property developments, soil erosion etc. The future course of the

conservation movement is likely to give higher priority to this second group as we get closer to that happy day when most of our wilderness areas will be protected by the national park system. Protection of forests from woodchipping is emerging as the next major issue.

The details of park management have quite rightly been left to a lower level of priority in the allocation of the scarce and overstretched resources of the conservation movement. It is in this area that most of Mr. Knightley's complaints seem to lie.

I would have to confess that I share his lack of any wild enthusiasm for the N.S.W. National Parks & Wildlife Service. Its shortcomings, as he suggests, are largely a matter of funding and are a situation that Bob Carr had inherited as Minister for Planning & Environment. He deserves our help, not our criticism, to improve it. I do not think that it is valid to argue that conservation has gone off course because of any differences that one individual might have with some aspects of park management, and I personally do not think that the time has come for conservationists to promote it in their order of priorities.

If Mr. Knightley has evidence that there has been a higher incidence of bushfire damage in national parks than in state forests, he should let us have it. Shooting from the hip is not good enough. It is true that the Forestry Commission has more funding and better resources for fire control and prevention. We should be helping Mr. Carr to obtain the funding for the N.P. & W.S. to match or better the Forestry Commission in this respect.

In the park management area, a real threat has emerged in the form of abusers of parks - notably users of 4WD vehicles, trail bikes, dune buggies and other forms of off-road vehicles. It is inevitable that conservationists must attempt to contain this threat in the same way that they have checked other threats to our natural heritage. Mr. Knightley appears not to think so.

Mr. Knightley is worried that conservationists' success might turn people against us. The history of the conservation movement is that the real successes began when conservationists began to state their case clearly and to pursue it with conviction, accepting that they might ruffle some feathers in the process. Ronald Knightley seems to be advocating a return to the pussy-foot approach that was rejected when the chips were really down in the late '60's and early '70's.

It is ironic that Mr. Knightley should refer to Mr. Tom Lewis (the Minister responsible for conservation in the late 1960's and early '70's) in the following terms:

"We (presumably he is referring to conservationists) all thought that Mr. Lewis was the Creator's greatest gift to conservationists."

Mr. Knightley might have seen him that way, but we (the conservationists) definitely did not. Mr. Lewis introduced our national parks and wildlife legislation with one hand while with the other giving to private interests the public lands that should have gone into the park system. To all thinking conservationists, he was Public Enemy Number One. How else could you think of a Minister who approved a major quarrying project on the Kowmung, supported a large-scale pine planting project between Jenolan Caves and Kanangra Walls, supported rutile mining in coastal areas proposed for national parks, and whose stated policy it was to allow any mining and logging proposals to proceed to completion before including lands in the national park system. If this is the sort of direction that Mr. Knightley believes that conservation should be taking, then he should say so.



It was these policies of Mr. Lewis that provoked conservationists into their first do-or-die efforts. The Colong Committee was formed and stopped the threats to the Kowmung and the Boyd Plateau. The National Parks Association was successful in getting rutile mining out of coast parks. The vigorous course that conservationists took in those days has been continued and has been the reason for our continuing success since.

Resistance to our success is likely to come in future from the same sources as always - individuals, corporations and government bodies with something to gain from destruction of part of our natural heritage. There is very good reason to believe that the majority of the public supports us. With respect to the American comparison, I believe that Reagan was re-elected in spite of, rather than because of, his anti-conservation stance.

I don't think that I'm the only S.B.W. member who thinks that the reception some of our members gave Mr. Carr last January was a great shame. I understand that Milo Dunphy later got the same treatment, but I wasn't able to be at that meeting.

As a bushwalking club, we benefit more than anybody else from the hard grind that people like Milo, the Reserves Committee of the N.P.A., the Colong Committee, and Mr. Carr himself put into protecting the bush for us to enjoy. The reception we gave Bob Carr and Milo Dunphy as our guests must be getting us the reputation of a bunch of ungrateful ignoramuses among the real workers for conservation. If we want to be counted conservationists, we had better get ourselves together. We should be thinking of how we can make amends.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### NOTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING 7.5.86.

The Treasurer expressed concern that subscriptions are slow coming in. A strong reminder will be put on the Walks Program.

The Social Program and Walks Program were presented and discussed as is usual each quarter.

General Business concerned the draft Constitution which the Treasurer reported as half typed. Other motions were passed concerning an updated Membership List being sent after the half-yearly meeting, and \$200 being given to the Wilderness Society, and that letters be sent concerning woodchipping to the relevant political leaders.

A sub-committee is being formed to arrange the 60th Anniversary. A motion was passed that a History of the S.B.W. be prepared for the 60th Anniversary. The assistance of members is being requested by the Magazine Editor.

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### *Just a minute . .*

FROM THE COMMITTEE MEETING OF Friday, 7th August, 1931. (Fifty-five years ago, in The Good Old Days, the Club Minute Book reveals:-)

A member laid a complaint against the practice of unmarried couples sleeping in the same tent whilst on official walks. Considerable discussion took place regarding the above. Motion: That the six persons be informed that the practice of unmarried couples sleeping in the same tent on official walks is looked upon by the Committee with disapproval and is deprecated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Well!!!

'THANKS' DUE

The new printing team would like to express thanks to Barry Wallace for his continuing help with the printing of the Club magazine. The listing on the front page should be reading "PRINTERS: Barry Wallace (Teacher), all the rest (Apprentices)".

Thanks Barry

THE APRIL GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

The meeting began at around 2015 with the President belabouring the gong with the bone, and some 15 or so members present. Alas, the bone was not equal to the task, and broke in half. Anyone good at repairing old bones?

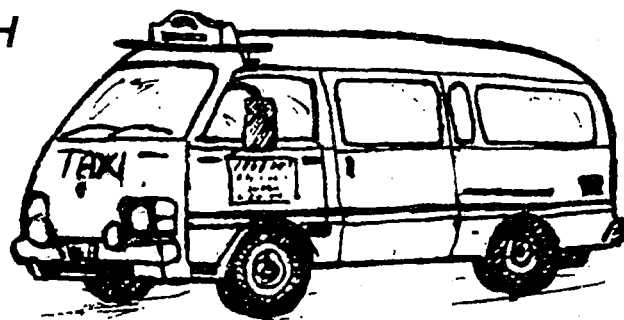
There were apologies from Greta Davis, and new members Beverley Foulds and John Vaarwerk were welcomed into membership together with Wendy Arnott who had not been able to collect her badge previously.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received and there was no correspondence of note. (That's two months in a row. Have people stopped writing to us?)

At this stage of the meeting a casual browse around the assembly revealed that the number of members had now increased to around 35.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we started the Feb-March period with a balance of \$2114.00, spent \$3595.00, gained \$2343 by whatever means, and finished the period with (\$1252.00). The negative closing balance was due to a couple of bills which had been carried over from the previous period. The Treasurer's Report was accepted.

Then came the Walks Report, a fairly tame version of last month's rush. Over the weekend 14,15,16 March the Reunion attracted about 80 participants whose doings were reported at some length in last month's magazine. The only other walk that weekend, Jan Mohandas's Leura to Leura walk had 23 starters and one accident, surprisingly enough due to a falling rock.

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The following weekend, 21,22,23 March saw Wayne Steele leading 7 starters on a hot, dry slog up hill and down ridge in the Black Range area, Frank Woodgate with no report of his Glenbrook walk, and Errol Sheedy leading 30 bods on a good day walk with a long lunch in the Waterfall area. The other Club activity that weekend, the St. Johns Ambulance First Aid Course, had 14 starters, all of whom successfully completed the course.

Easter weekend brought no report of David Rostron's family walk on the Cox River, but Allan Doherty had 11 on his Butcher's Creek trip. They reported both Butcher's and Gingra Creek as being very low. Maurie Bloom's Budawangs trip had 20 plus Frank Taeker stomping around in scotch mist and fog on the Friday/Saturday, and enjoying fine sunny weather on Sunday/Monday. John Redfern had 12 starters on his Goulburn River trip. They reported some problems with dry side creeks. Of the day walks, Laurie Quaken's West Head walk had 9 starters and Ralph Pengliss had 16 to 13 people on his somewhat modified Sydney Harbour walk.

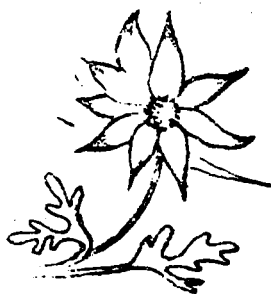
The following weekend, 4,5,6 April saw David McIntosh with 3 people on a fast and hot Colo River trip which had them back at the cars by 1500 Sunday. The prospectives weekend, run by Joan Cooper and Bill Capon had 6 prospectives finding their way around the Cox River, Breakfast Creek area. It's not clear whether Bill had them using compasses, or some other directional device, but all is reported to have gone well. There was no report of Peter Christian's day walk in Hat Hill Creek, but Les Powell had 13 starters on a warm West Head walk and Jan Mohandas had 12 on a cool 24 km stroll up Blackhorse Range to conclude the Walks Report.

Federation Report indicated that there were no S. & R. call-outs and the Reunion attracted 73 people from 9 clubs.

General Business brought further discussion of insurances and advice that a sub-committee is looking into suitable functions with which to celebrate the Club's upcoming 60th Anniversary. Suggestions from the membership would be welcome.

Then it was only a matter of the announcements, and it was all over for another month, at 2117.

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## Social Notes

by Narelle Lovell.

JUNE.

First two Wednesdays Committee and General Meetings as usual.

On 18th June Ron Murray of N.S.W. Canoe Association will be showing slides and talking on white water canoeing. There will be a display of canoes and equipment as well.

DINNER beforehand will be at Eric's Sea Food Restaurant.

As it is mid-winter, June 25th will be a FEAST - so look up recipe books, bring spicy casseroles and plum puddings and hard sauce may be in season.

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### A N N O U N C E M E N T.

The death of JACK THWAITES occurred on Sunday, 4th May, 1986 in Tasmania. He was known to many S.B.W. members as a walking companion in Tasmania, and was the founder of the Hobart Walking Club 53 years ago. He requested no condolences.

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REQUEST:

Information about the late Max Gentle (Gentle's Pass, etc.) has been requested by a friend of an S.B.W. member (an ex-member?). Please contact THE EDITOR.

Cut out: THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKERS - ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 1986.

Please send this notice with your cheque/money order to:-

Bill Holland, Hon. Treasurer,  
The Sydney Bush Walkers, Box 4476, G.P.O. Sydney 2001.

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