

# THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

Established June 1931



ON 'THE AXEHEAD'

Morag Ryder

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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COLO RIVER WALK.Fri/Sat/Sun 19/20/21 July 1986.by Oliver Crawford.  
(Leader)

Map - Colo Heights 1:25000.

Bob Buck's Colo Sketch.

Party Members: Don Finch, Lucy Sullivan, Jim Rivers, Kathy Gero,  
Oliver Crawford (Leader).

Owing to a family event the Friday start did not eventuate except for one hardy (thick skinned?) soul who went that night and camped at the start of the Drip Rock trail. The rest of us found him at 8.15 am on Saturday just packing up, his sleeping bag all covered in frost.

We drove half way along the track and parked at Drip Rock itself (at least we presume so, since none of us have ever seen any rock nearby, let alone one that drips). This left about 5 km of fire trail to walk, this being a compromise between the fit and the otherwise (especially the author) in order to make the length of the walk justifiable for a weekend.

The weather was perfect and remained so for the weekend as we set off from the car in the crisp morning air. A little over an hour saw us at the cairn marking the start of the ridge leading to Clews Cave, where we stopped for nibblies and to check the map.

Clews Cave was reached right on midday, after some meandering looking for the way down through some small cliffs. There was some muttering in the ranks about not stopping for morning tea but it was pointed out that surely the scenery was enough to satisfy anyone's thirst. (Sorry, Don, I'll take the thermos along next time!)

In view of the above, we decided to have an early lunch at the creek junction just below Clews Cave, so Don, who had been here before, was volunteered to boil the billy while we others went to inspect the cave. While there we signed the visitors' book, noting Dave McIntoch's previous visits. This visitors' book had been initiated by a Venturer Unit from Lilli Pilli, a group of about 20 boys and girls from 15-18 years of age which I had met on one of my Castle trips. Since I have started a unit myself in St. Ives very recently, the frequency of coming across the trail of this active group excites my interest.

From our lunch spot we headed up to the saddle, encountering lawyer vine on the way. Leaving our packs on the saddle, we climbed Island, and the views made it really worthwhile. Unlike many high peaks in this area, there were few trees to obscure the views and we soaked them up for perhaps a little longer than was wise.

Returning to the saddle we had a little difficulty identifying the correct point to start down Pass 24, but eventually found it. (We believe Herr Buck's map to be slightly in error at this spot.) The Colo was reached at about 4.30 pm with the light in the gorge already fading. Following the East Bank we had to negotiate a section where the river cut in to form a cliff line, forcing us up high. By the time this was completed darkness was fast approaching. We could see a beach on the opposite shore, with a convenient rapid nearby, so using a stick and linking arms we walked, staggered or otherwise made it line abreast across the river and headed for the aforementioned salubrious campsite, arriving with about 20 minutes of fading daylight remaining.

With the campfire soon blazing our activities centred on transferring the food from our packs into our stomachs, some of it via the fire, amid more muttering about no afternoon tea. Happy hour was contiguous with dinner; someone had some sherry, and after a pleasant little disagreement

about the merits or popularity (I forget which) of Bach, Beethoven, Vivaldi, Mozart et al, we had a wee drop of mulberry juice and retired to bed.

We awoke to another brilliant day, and after eating last night's leftovers flavoured with bacon a la Jim, we broke camp at 8.30 and in half an hour reached the Wollangambe junction, our original intended overnight stop. It is possible that our actual campsite was better anyway.

Proceeding downstream a number of rapids were contemplated for crossing. They were either too fast, too deep, too cold or too anything to cross. Ultimately, of course, the decision was made for us and we did so in the relative calm just below a rapid where the water came to tummy height in one spot. Since by this time it was 11.30 we lit a fire on the other side and had morning tea. (I must be reforming, or was Don starting to get at me.)

The next creek to our left was Route 29 and proved to be very pretty - lots of rock ledges which thankfully were all dry, otherwise my KT 26's might have had to be jettisoned.

Lunch eventually was had at the creek junction, although water was still pretty scarce. Some was found in a small rock pool about 10 minutes walk upstream (O.K. for tea, but not for drinking). The fire was put out just before 3.00 and we continued up the side creek following Route 29, then straight up the ridge when the creek divided into two branches. This incline proved to be very negotiable with only a little rock scrambling to vary the ascent.

However, the highlight of this section was that Don found a new hero in Jim, who decided to transport a large stick home in his leg, but thought better of it. So out came all the needles, spikes, tweezers and blades and it was Lucy's sharp blade that won the day, Jim calmly cutting out a piece of his leg while Don looked on, and we others pretended not to be interested.

This absorbed about 15 minutes, but it was not long to the top when we stopped for a while on an elevated pinnacle of rock and admired the view with the dipping sun in our eyes. Regretfully we turned our backs on it all, and shortly we came back to the fire trail on which darkness descended as we walked back to the car, where we arrived about 6.00 pm.

The weekend was topped off with a good meal at the Do Drop In Restaurant in Windsor (this is becoming a ritual), where Jim made another conquest (the attractive guitarist) with his Sydney School of Guitar T shirt. You know the saying - 'Lucky Jim'!

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*Just a minute . .*

FIFTY-SIX YEARS AGO - IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS..... Is this a record?

The Half-Yearly General Meeting of the Sydney Bush Walkers held Friday, 12th September, 1930 started at 9.10 pm and closed at 9.17 pm.

Mr. Debert informed the meeting that Mr. Allan Hardy was lost on the Kowmung. The Secretary was instructed to follow the matter up and advise his people if he was not promptly located. Friday, 14th November, 1930.

(Extract from the old Minute Book by Ainslie Morris)

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SURVIVAL IN A BLIZZARD

by Geoff Grace.

The word 'blizzard' has little meaning until you experience one in its full fury. Last season, on the main range in Kosciusko National Park near the end of a N.P.A. ski crossing from Kiandra, my understanding of the word was given new meaning. I also learnt the value of a survival technique which by request, I recount here.

Everybody makes a mistake or two at times. Our crossing party was no exception. The biggest mistake was that after four days out from Kiandra, two of us proceeded up onto the main range from Consett Stephens Pass in changing weather conditions. The weather that day started out O.K. but from the West, low cloud soon scudded in. We pressed on. We should have gone back. Between Mount Tate and Anderson the weather really closed in.

In a very short space of time the wind built to such a force that it was almost impossible to stand. Unbelievably strong wind gusts with increasingly icy conditions combined with our heavy packs to quickly reduced progress to erratic staggerings. Visibility dropped to a few metres. It became imperative to make shelter for survival.

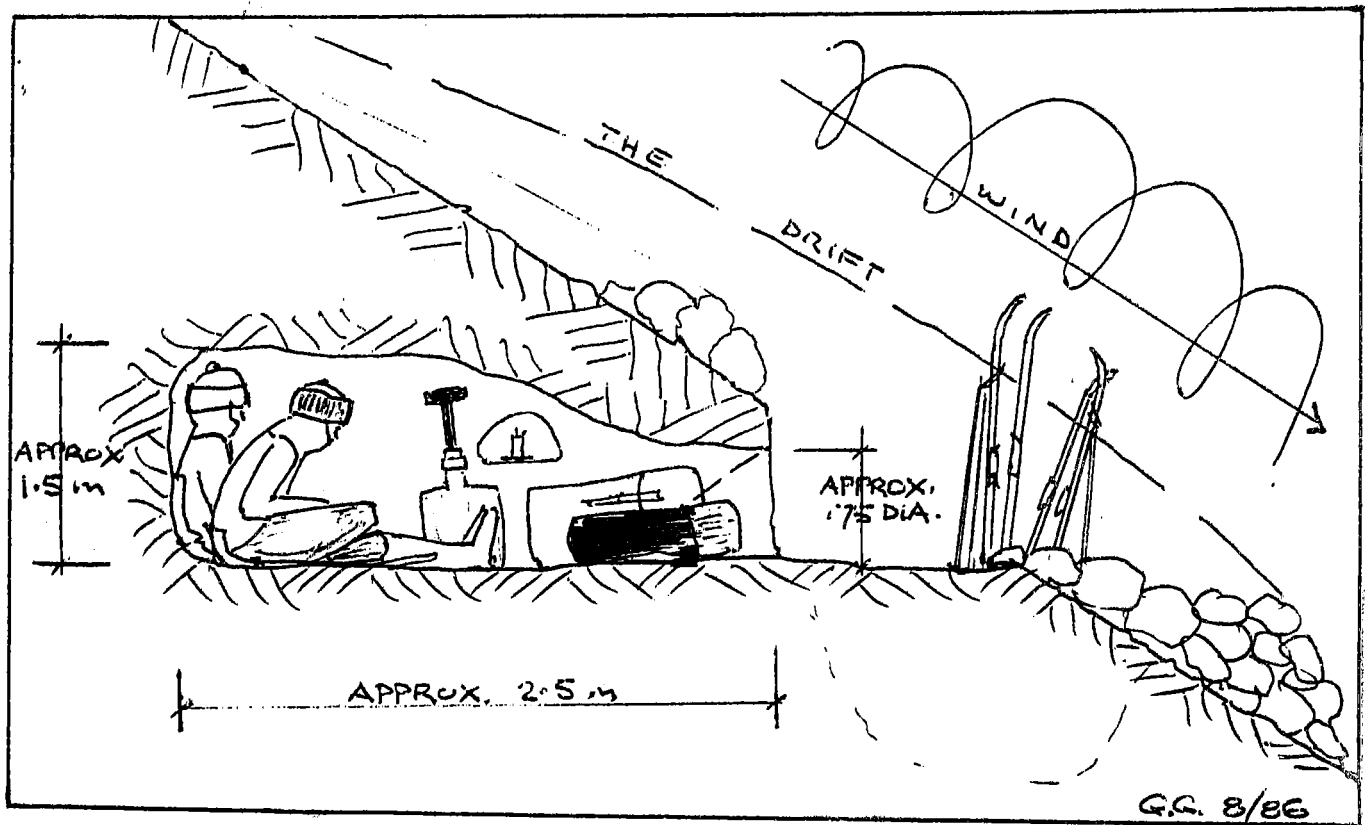
We groped for the lee of the ridge - at times on hands and knees for fear of being blown over the edge. The danger of being swept down the steep slope, possibly over a cornice, was very real. Shrieking wind with titanic gusts, blizzarding snow, ice, plummeting temperature, white-out, darkness in an hour or two. Not just words to colour a yarn but the real conditions of a life-threatening situation.

In the lee of the ridge the wind was still impossibly fierce. It boiled over and down the slope in great shrieking, turbulent hurricanes. No chance of shelter. No time to get off the range. No handy rock to shelter behind. Erect a tent? Impossible. The only thing left - dig into the snow - dig a snow cave - a solution made possible only by the foresight of my companion who carried that most essential tool for snow travellers - a shovel.

We used up valuable time and energy looking, without success, for a drift with a vertical face in which to dig straight in. In desperation, with only limited daylight left, the life-saving implement - the large, lightweight, snow shovel - was put to work straight into the steep snow slope. A vertical face about one metre square was dug out. An entrance hole about three quarters of a metre diameter was driven into this face for about a half metre. Then, further in, the main enlargement for the cave was hacked out at an angle to the entrance. Hard, freezing cold work, crouched on the knees. Several actions required for each shovelfull of snow - chop the walls - dome the roof - push spoil to entrance - shovel out. Once in, the digging was easier.

Within an hour, a life-saving shelter for two. Another half hour, a cosy retreat with enough room for packs and sleeping bags. Pitch black howling freezing darkness descends. Frozen death stalks outside. Light the choofer, cups of tea, hot food, the muted howling wind outside not even flickering the candle. Snug. Incredible. What a relief.

That night we nearly suffocated. Snow drifted over the entrance. We dug out twice.



Next day, impossible to move. The blizzard a shrieking nightmare. To avoid drifting up again, in the late afternoon we dug a huge hole immediately in front of the entrance. Our mistake was to throw the spoil down-hill. That second night we really were buried alive. The drift built-up from well down the slope and while we were asleep, covered the entrance with about two metres of snow. How we got out of that in the small hours of the morning makes a story in itself.

After two nights and a day in the cave, we had used up practically all of our fuel, mostly from melting snow for hot drinks and meals. We were reasonably dry, warm, and knew where we were. We studied the map and decided to get off the range via a route down to the Snowy River, find a snow bridge, then Charlottes Pass and the Chalet.

With as much clothing on as possible and after hot drinks and a big feed, we set out. After an hour or so of battling the elements, confusing navigation and a bad tumble down a snow slope, we were below the worst of it. We made the river. A convenient snow bridge. Charlottes, then the Chalet. It was snowing lightly with puffy winds. People were moving casually about. It was impossible to believe that, for us, just off the main range, the difference between life and death had been - a shovel! We made mistakes but through that shovel, we survived.

I am now convinced. My experience says - when cross country ski-ing, carry a shovel. A big, generous, lightweight one with demountable handle, carried on the inside of the pack so it doesn't get lost. Experiment with it in good weather. The experience will be useful - it could even save your life like it did ours. Best of all though, don't take chances with the weather.

MAMMALS OF THE SYDNEY REGION

A Talk presented at the Clubroom by "Batman" (Ray Williams) 30/7/86.

Notes by Ainslie Morris.

Platypus? Yes, in unpolluted streams. They are not a rare animal. One hundred have been banded in one kilometre of the Shoalhaven River. To see one, pick a likely riverbank and watch.

Echidna is the other common monotreme which you've probably seen.

Antechinus is the grand name for marsupial mice, although the Dusky Antechinus is the size of a rat. The Brush-tailed Phascogall is thought to be extinct in our region since 1966, and the Eastern Quoll or native cat since 1964 when a pair were removed from a house roof in Vaucluse to Muogomarra Nature Reserve. It is the last pair known of on the Australian mainland.

Long-nosed Bandicoots you may be familiar with from your gardens, but in the past 12 years they have become rarer. Dogs and cats take their toll. The Southern Brown Bandicoot has all but disappeared except from Kuring-gai but is common in Victoria.

Wombats are about, but Koalas are rare although known in Kuring-gai Chase. Of the possums, the rare one is the Mountain Brushtail Possum, only found in Watagan State Forest. Also called a "possum" but in fact a Petauridae (not a Phascolarctidae) is the Common Ringtail Possum; the Gliders are in the same group. Most common is the Greater Glider, rarely seen gliding.

Of the Kangaroos, you could see the Grey Kangaroo, the Wallaroo, the Red-Necked Wallaby, Brush-tailed Wallaby, Parma Wallaby and Red-necked Pademelon. The only true Wallaby is the Swamp Wallaby found in all areas of the Sydney Region and even backyards. The Rock Wallaby needs caves to shelter from heat over 35°C, and leaps with agility around rock ledges on its big dark feet. Watagan has all the kangaroos except the Grey and Red-necked. Look for the Grey in the Blue Mountains and the Red-necked Wallaby in Bouddi/Brisbane Water National Parks.

Gaimards Bettong may have been extinct since 1840, but Potoroos may be still in Watagan. These two are in the Potoroidae.

Australia also has a lot of rodents; not a lot are in Sydney. These are called Eutherians when you don't want to say you've got rats. The Bush Rat and Swamp Rat are common natives; the introduced ones are the Black Rat (widespread) and Brown or Sewer Rat. The Water Rat is carnivorous and lives on yabbies, molluscs and the like, even in the city area; it is often mistaken for the Brown Rat, also a good swimmer. Other Eutherians are New Holland Mouse (West Head and Dharug), Eastern Chestnut Mouse (rare) and Fawn Footed Melomys. This one climbs vines and trees with a prehensile tail (in rainforest at Moonee Moonee).

Bats which weigh as little as 4 grams. A bat which catches fish! Bats are represented by seventeen species; the Gordon colony has 40,000 Grey-headed Fruit Bats, and research is still going on to clarify where they go in winter. Actually 10,000 stay behind and the rest go south (not north) in winter. The Eastern Horseshow Bat lives in caves in the Sydney Region and uses sonar to catch insects. Some of the other species are difficult to tell apart, but Watagan seems to have most of them.

The Brown Antechinus male goes downhill rapidly after mating, an activity which takes several hours. It then loses its hair and gets brain tumours, apparently caused by mating with several females within a week, then dying (of exhaustion?).

Dusky Antechinus give birth to about the same number of young, eight or more. They race from the cloaca across the fur to the pouch in a few seconds! They just hang on to the teats and when they are 2½ months old mother can't even put her hind legs on the ground as the young still hang on!

And that's all that I can tell you, as Ray then showed his fantastic colour slides of tiny new-born young in the pouch, and gliders and bats, and told fascinating stories of the latest research. As our Social Secretary Narelle said, he's a walking encyclopedia on mammals of Australia.

The Royal Zoological Society Mammal Section meets on the third Tuesday of the month at the Education Section of the Australian Museum. Field trips are on the following weekends.

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#### OBITUARY - DOROTHY LAWRY.

The Club has heard with sadness of the death on 15th August last of Dorothy Lawry, one of the very early members of Sydney Bush Walkers, and one who over many years gave of herself for the benefit of the Club. Dorothy was amongst the S.B.W. members who were closely involved in the preservation of Blue Gum Forest in 1931-32, and later became the Club's first woman President in 1942-44.

A few years after World War II Dorothy returned to her New Zealand homeland, but later in retirement came back to Sydney. It is expected that a more detailed account of her life and activities with the bushwalkers will be published in a later magazine.

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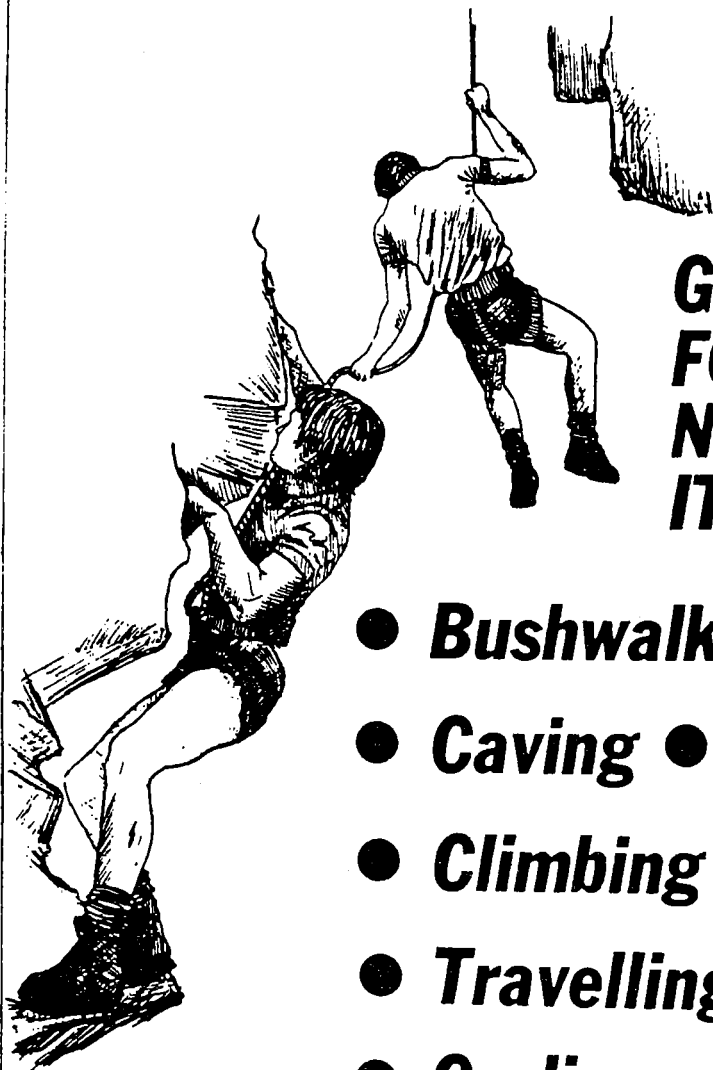
#### DEATH OF NINIAN MELVILLE.

Ninian Melville, a founder of the Coast and Mountain Walkers, and for many years closely associated with the N.S.W. Federation of Bush Walking Clubs, where he held the offices of President and Convenor of the Search & Rescue organisation, passed away on 15th August. Many of our Federation delegates over a long span will know of his devotion to the walking game and his unstinted work for the Rescue activity.

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#### OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY -

Just before this edition of the magazine went to the printers, we have heard very sad news. DAVID YOUNGER, second son of Christa and Bob, and his wife KERRY were fatally injured in a motor accident on the North Coast on 6th September. Their children, a three-year old girl and a baby girl survived the collision. The Club's deepest sympathy is expressed to Christa and Bob and to David's sisters, Julia and Fay, and brother Ian.



**A HUGE  
RANGE OF  
GEAR TO CATER  
FOR EVERYONE'S  
NEEDS, WHETHER  
IT BE FOR....**

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CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.

by Tom Wilhelm.

For a number of years, particularly since I became a citizen of Australia through naturalization, I have wanted to see the centre of this continent. Like most Australians I have travelled around the edge many times (the eastern edge at any rate) and of course I live on the edge, in Sydney. I had come as close to Alice Springs as a mere ten kilometres, but that was above it, seen from the air on my way to Indonesia, an experience also shared by many Australians. Still I felt as though I were missing something, as though I was not a real Australian, until I had seen The Centre.

My chance finally came when I was recently invited to join a group of ten bushwalkers from the S.B.W. to go on a ten day walk into the Macdonnell Ranges just west of 'The Alice'. I accepted with alacrity, happy at last to be going to see 'the real Australia'.

To most Australians, and many visitors from overseas, the Centre means one thing - The Rock. Ayers Rock, or Uluru in the native tongue, rises from a vast flat plain some four hundred kilometres south-west of Alice Springs. A splendid new hotel some twenty kilometres back from its base has been built for the ever-increasing number of visitors that want to see this fascinating geological gem. The Rock is in fact anomalous, most of the land surrounding Alice Springs is covered with mountain ranges, a fact which when discovered surprises many people, visitors and natives alike. The flight to Alice Springs is interesting, especially if you have a window seat, and can watch the green mountains of the coast give way to stony treeless desert which suddenly ends as you near Alice. The first impression of the country from the tarmac is one of greenness, albeit quite arid.

Day 1. A bus met us there and drove us some seventy kilometres west along Namatjira Drive. We were let out in the cool June air in the middle of nowhere, just in the 'mulga' as Bob, one of my fellow walkers, kept saying. To the north we could see the ranges. The first, the Heavitree Range, is not very interesting as it is made of a single ridge running east-west, like a great fence, arcing across some two hundred kilometres of country. Nothing much to walk in as it is only one row thick, no side canyons, no mystery. The next range, the Chewings Range, is the interesting one, the jewel, with several parallel ridges, twists, turns, gorges, canyons and mystery galore.

We set off. An hour or so later we crossed a little gap in the Heavitree Range and out into the dusty, flat valley between it and the Chewings Range. Well, not so flat, up close at least, as we crossed little dry rivulets and badly eroded water courses to reach the dry river bed of the Hugh River. Just before we camped we could see in the distance the cliffs of the Hugh Gorge, our destination tomorrow.

So we made the first of many riverbed camps. No sign of water and with the cloudless sky, not much chance of a flash flood, either! Soft sand to sleep on, and a mild night as we ate our first dinner, a real treat, half a stuffed chicken, carried all the way from Sydney and cooked by Spiro, who so endeared himself to the party that Shirley declared, later on, when his indispensibility was apparent, "Spiro, I will have to take you home with me at the end of the trip!" All the other dinners were to be dehydrated, somehow never quite equal to the stuffed chicken, but don't take that as a complaint, we all ate well. One of the many wonders of walking in these mountains is the ease of camp, crisp dry cloudless nights to sit around the campfire and cook..... We were all puzzled by a glowing green light seen through the trees to the west of camp, but more of that later. Then the stars! My father once told me that the ancient Greeks claimed to have been able to read by the stars, now I almost believe it. At first I kept feeling that the moon was out all the time, but it wasn't.

Day 2. Morning was as nice as you could wish. We had been warned of the possibility of frost, but it was not to be this year - the nights were balmy, mild and comfortable. We packed our too heavy packs (mine was twenty plus kgs) and headed for Hugh Gorge, whose red cliffs beckoned us as soon as we topped the first rise behind camp. We were carrying a little water that we had carried in from 'civilization', but we had to find water each day, or we would soon be trudging back south again. The country was dry, very dry; it virtually had not rained since the visit the year before!

What a desiccated country we crossed to reach the mouth of that Gorge, it almost made you want to turn around and leave. Water - the thought of it was always on my mind. We saw tire tracks here and there as four-wheel-drive vehicles can easily get around in this country. Then we reached the Gorge, the trees got bigger and things looked much nicer. Some hours later, after some easy walking, we found our first water - I took a photograph of it, poor pathetic little pool though it was. I noticed others did the same. We had seven cameras on the trip and they were actively used as the country is photogenic - the light, the rocks, the red, the Ghost Gums, the white - all really quite irresistible.

We pushed on up the Canyon, still quite open, and saw a little more water, then found a place to camp on a shelf under some fine massive Red River Gums. The party had actually used this site the year before, but then it was next to a big pool of water - not now, it was bone dry. Still, there was water just below, so we stopped and spent the rest of the afternoon on a day walk up the canyon which ran away to the west just opposite the camp.

We gathered day packs and put up our lunches, and I wished I had brought a good day pack, because we were to go on many day walks in the ensuing days. The side creek was larger than it seemed at first appearance - its branches were quite large and complicated on their own. We found a good source of water just a few minutes up this creek, better than what was in Hugh Gorge itself, and found the first of several dead Wedgetail Eagles. The wealth of plants in this environment has to be seen to be believed. We explored the first side canyon and found a waterfall, without the water of course, but impressive none the less. Heather made the best approach and sidled around the ridge while the rest of us approached the bottom and contemplated a direct attack which proved impossible. Soon she was on top. Heather stood some twenty metres above us and reported that the top canyon was also dry. Water was vital, we had to have it to live and continue the walk, so we retreated to the creek and lunch. It was strange but lovely weather, warm while walking but cool in the shade. We nibbled and had water from our wine skins - who would have thought the bags from the inside of wine casks would take over amongst walkers as water bags?

The second canyon we entered was more fruitful. We went up and found signs of animal trails and shortly after found a lovely pool of water at the foot of a waterfall! Actually some of the group had gone ahead and the rest sat to have a rest from climbing over the rocks, when we heard a Cooee, and I went forward to investigate. Soon I yelled for the others. In this dry wilderness water was the most beautiful sight, clean potable water. We found a way around the pool, a beautifully intricate and sculpted canyon, but dry above. We decided to follow this canyon to the ridge tops and we did. The vegetation changed to small gums, then to pure spinifex, and eventually you reach a saddle and you are on the ridge tops.

Spinifex is a grass that grows with protection in mind. It grows in clumps, from a fifth of a metre to a full metre in diameter and height. Usually there is room to walk between the clumps and when they are small it is easy to step over them but when they are big and growing close together it is so difficult. The reason is they are covered with needle-sharp thorns. Woe to those who fall on them with bare hands! On a steep slope with slippery underfoot it is almost impossible to avoid some intimate contact

with spinifex!! We all had the tips of spinifex buried in our hands, knees, feet and even backsides after a few days! Campfire routine always involved needles, tweezers and torch-light operations. The guide books to Central Australia say that 'spinifex is a grass' yet in a certain sense it dominates the day to day lives of walkers! It's more than just a grass, it's a menace, grows everywhere, and despite its pain and difficulty, looks beautiful and lawnlike from a distance.

We decided to return to the camp via the ridge tops by circling around the southern edge of the system from which we had climbed. The views were grand. To reach the southern ridge we had to sidle across a steep spinifex slope but David and Janet would have none of it and made a skyline traverse to a col in this southern ridge before the rest of us! We all had gaiters (thick canvas 'shin protectors' that attach to the shoe) but every time you stumbled the spinifex let you know that it was there! Spinifex would go through shoes! Solid leather would stop the needles but I wore Dunlop Volley canvas sandshoes and found them just adequate as I had to stop to take out needles and sometimes remove my shoe at times!

We all eventually reached this col and had views of the southern plain whence we had come and the foot of the side creek running away east to its junction with Hugh Gorge and our camp. The party divided - four of us went along the ridge while the rest descended to the creek and followed it home. The ridge top was tough, rough walking, not a level place for a foot - rocks, plants, always something in the way. The distance always looked smooth but the foreground was rough! The last bit of ridge was so steep it fell away in front of us, but was walkable with care (what a novice would have thought is a different matter!). We ridge walkers arrived in camp a few minutes before the others. All were tired after a long day, in exertion if not in distance.

This camp had a beautiful cliff opposite and as night set in we watched the light go glowing red, pink, purple to black. Our first cooking dinner, each member of the party brought a dinner and prepared it, long, slow and leisurely, and the second green light! This light appeared on the horizon behind the camp. It looked like a star, except that it didn't move as the night progressed. In the morning I went and retrieved a little plastic tube filled with green liquid from the top of a rock pinnacle behind the camp. Bob, who seemed to be the responsible person, wouldn't say anything about it. I honestly couldn't see how it worked, but we never saw another glowing light. However, Bob had a few other tricks!

Day 3. In the morning, after the ritual porridge, we packed and moved up the Gorge. We only went for a few hours, enough with such heavy packs, to a beautiful campsite I immediately called 'Amphitheatre Camp'. The riverbed ran north-south here and to the west was a huge amphitheatre, perhaps seven hundred metres wide and deep, and some two hundred high with fantastic red cliffs all around. What cliffs! We found a suitable riverbed site, had lunch and prepared for another afternoon day walk.

First we all walked up to see the actual Gorge, a kilometre or two upstream. There was some hope of having a swim and a wash, but in the event the water was so cold that few of us availed ourselves of the opportunity - it was more comfortable to be dirty! The Gorge, one of the largest in the Macdonnells, was impressive. The large pools, only passable by a long swim, were contained by mighty rock walls, not very colourful in the shade, but so big, and with such a profusion of plants, macraamia palms, river and ghost gums, a veritable garden in the wilderness. We retreated to camp, the washers to the sunshine to warm up, and we made preparations for an afternoon walk.

The party divided. A few remained in camp while some went downstream and up a side canyon to the west. With the leader's permission I went up the ridge next to their side canyon, with the thought of climbing to the head

of the amphitheatre. The foot of the ridge was not far from camp, a hundred metres at the most, and soon I was on my own, ascending over delightful rock toward the distant skyline. The rock is incredible; everywhere it looks fractured and shattered, yet when you take hand and footholds nothing, absolutely nothing, was loose! It must be the age. The rock is so old that it has jiggled, settled, vibrated and shaken into stable positions. Cracks, splits and gaps everywhere but at the same time firm footing. It never ceased to amaze me. My rock ran out into spinifex, and I cursed as I crossed this patch to yet another rock ridge. At this point, in plain view of camp, I could just make out people at this distance. I realized that just to the south was a hanging valley. It was in fact the upper end of the canyon that the rest of the party had decided to explore. They would be stopped by a fifty metre cliff, which I was now above, and would head back to camp, but I descended from my ridge into this beautiful little level watercourse. I decided to follow it to its head. Beautiful little cypress pines, up this tiny skyhigh valley I proceeded. Soon it became a canyon, narrowed, solid sculpted red rock, and sure enough water! Moss, wetness, only enough for a cupful, but how good it tasted. This was probably the highest water found on the entire trip.

Up I went. I noticed a few spots of white bird droppings on the rock near the water, always a sure sign that you were near precious water! In just a few minutes I climbed out of and above the canyon where the vegetation was reduced to just shrubs. In a few more minutes it had shrunk again, soon it was only ankle height. I was in a tiny valley with no view of the distant horizon and I could have been anywhere in the dry regions of the world. I felt lost. I pushed on towards the crest, astounded that in this 'desert' I couldn't put a foot down except to crush a plant!!

I finally climbed to the head of my miniature valley, expecting to find myself at the head of the amphitheatre (the stream had curved around in a direction that I felt would place me there). Instead I was lost - I could see the distant horizon but couldn't recognize anything! I calmed myself and had a good look. Far below me I could see the lip of a valley, and I finally decided that I was looking at the top edge of the amphitheatre. To my right ran a ridge which must be the one I had climbed, though high points blocked my view of it. To my left was another high point which I decided to climb before descending the other way. I had my camera and a good windbreaker without which I should have been very cold, and up I went. Fantastic view! To photograph it I had to brace myself against the rocks. I could now make out the mouth of Hugh Gorge among the welter of mountains, crags and canyons I could see from my vantage point. I thought for a moment of descending by way of the lip of the amphitheatre, but realized it was in shade all the way down and would contain unforeseen difficulties. Instead I retraced the ridge and soon reached the place where I had left it. I could see my fellow walkers back in camp and slowly in the gathering dusk I descended towards them. What a day!

Thank goodness dinner was under way by the time I returned. I could have eaten a whole kangaroo by that time, but was content with my bowlful of the communal meal and the ritual stewed apples that followed. It all tasted delicious. We all sat around the fire and sang and talked. It was a cloudy night and David our leader suggested that we put up flies for rain protection that night. We laughed. Up went the flies and sure enough just after we all turned in it rained for five minutes! That was the only rain for ten days. Still it could have been for hours. We never put the flies up again though we had a few more cloudy nights later in the trip.

TO BE CONTINUED.

\* \* \* \* \*



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THE AUGUST GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

The meeting began at around 2015 with the President in the chair calling the 25 or so members present to order with a session of vigorous gong-bashing. Talk about the technological imperative; it seems that Bob Niven has produced a new gong-basher in the form of a flannel flower hammer and it was being given a thorough work-out.

There were no apologies so we proceeded to welcome new members Alan Mitchell, Ian Wolfe and Jim Fisher with applause, badge and membership list.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received as a true and correct record and there was no business arising.

Correspondence comprised letters from the N.S.W. Minister for Planning and Environment and the Water Resources Commission acknowledging our letters enquiring about possible future dams on the Colo River; from N.P.W.S. acknowledging our letter regarding the Surf Lifesaving Club new clubhouse development at Burning Palms and confirming that the old clubhouse has now been demolished and removed as required by the original agreement; from North Sydney Council advising that bookings for the new hall are not yet open; from the Office of the N.S.W. Premier regarding woodchipping in the South East of N.S.W.; from the A.N.U. Sports Union thanking the S.B.W. members who were involved in the attempted resuscitation of an injured cross-country skier at Guthega recently; and an outgoing letter to the Paddy Pallin Foundation applying for a grant of \$1000 for organising and preserving the Club archives.

Business arising from the correspondence involved the raising from the table of a previous motion that the Club obtain the services of an archivist to carry out preliminary work on the Club archives. Resolution of this motion was now required in view of the application having been made for a grant from the Paddy Pallin Foundation. After a wide ranging debate the motion was defeated, and a foreshadowed motion that the Club explore the possibility of using volunteers to establish the Club archives was discussed and passed. A following motion that we ask the Paddy Pallin Foundation to set aside our grant application until the Club considered the matter further was also passed.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we started the month with a balance of \$4332, received \$1291, spent \$4679 (mostly on rent and insurance) and ended the month with a balance of \$946.

The Walks Report presented by Spiro in the absence of the Walks Secretary began with Peter Christian's skiing trip from 11 to 14 July, for which there was no report. Over the weekend of 11,12,13 July Jim Rennard's Cox River walk had 5 people who were reported to have had a good time. Ainslie Morris' Y.H.A. Bundanoon trip did not go but of the day walks Gordon Lee's rockclimbing/abseiling instructional was reported as successful, Ralph Pengliss' Harbour walk went, but no details were available and Greta Davis' Bluegum walk was relocated to Royal National Park (Bundeena to Otford) to cope with problems caused by the fuel strike.

The following weekend, 18,19,20 July saw Ian Debert leading 10 starters on his Bonnum Pic walk in beautiful weather and thick scrub. Wayne Steele's Jenolan River hillclimb event went, but there were no details. Oliver Crawford had 5 people on his Colo walk enjoying a spot of scrub-bashing with the Colo running well. Malcolm Boadle reported 23 people on his Wahroonga to Berowra day trip, and Jan Mohandas had 16 people on his Faulconbridge to Glenbrook walk.

Over the weekend of 25,26,27 July Ian Wolf had 5 starters and good powder snow on his cross-country ski trip, Ian Debert reported 11 people on a rather cold weekend for his Grose River walk and Bill Capon, he of the fusible billies, had 16 people enjoying a cold weekend for his Ettrema walk. The only day walk that weekend, Peter Christian's Bluegum walk, went but no details were available.

George Walton's Kanangra walk of 1,2,3 August had 5 starters and reported a good time and Malcolm Steele had 10 people on his Budawangs trip but no other details were available. There were two day walks that weekend, Len Berlin had 32 starters on his Cowan to Brooklyn walk which was described as a good trip and Gordon Lee reported 6 people and a beautiful day on his Mt. Hay walk.

Another extended cross-country ski trip, from 9 to 13 August, led by Peter Christian, reported a party of two and of the two weekend trips, 8 to 10 August both David McIntosh's Wollemi Creek trip and Don Finch's Wollongambe Crater trip did not go, probably something to do with still flooded streams following the deluge. The same problem appears to have caused the relocation of Jan Mohandas' Cox River day walk. They went to the Ruined Castle instead. There were 7 people on what turned out to be a fairly brisk walk in the short winter day. Margaret Reid reported 15 people on her Lapstone to Glenbrook historical walk, to bring the Walks Report to a close.

Federation Report brought news of the Federation Annual General Meeting and the election of officers, together with the usual reports.

The Conservation Report advised that the draft N.S.W. Wilderness Policy has been released and that progress looks likely with both main political parties indicating support.

General Business brought advice from Peter Miller that the track barrier at Coolana will be stone rather than steel as originally proposed. The meeting was of the opinion that this was an improvement in any case. A motion that we send a letter of thanks to Bob Niven for the aforementioned gong-hammer was passed and we were advised that the new Constitution would be mailed out for discussion at the Half-Yearly General Meeting.

Then it was just a matter of announcements for walks, the F.B.W. Ball and the Old Sydney Town bush dance and the President closed the meeting at around 2147 with a single gong-stroke.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### TUESDAY NIGHT AT THE PICTURES.

Hoyts, Village Cinemas or The Dendy in Martin Place have half-price tickets for most films every Tuesday. I am starting a film-going group to take advantage of these cheaper seats, so if you would like to go but have no one to go with, just check the paper, decide which film you wish to see and then contact me. I will be able to tell you who else is going and to which session, either the 5 pm or the 8 pm. Remember that the half-price tickets only apply to the above cinemas. See you at the pictures!

PETER MILLER - phone 818 1990.

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THE RAINS CAME.

Anon.

It rained and rained and rained,  
 The average fall was well maintained,  
 And when the tracks were simply bogs  
 It started raining cats and dogs.

After a drought of half an hour  
 We had a most refreshing shower,  
 And then most curious thing of all  
 A gentle rain began to fall.

Next day but one was fairly dry  
 Save for one deluge from the sky  
 Which wetted the party to the skin,  
 And then at last the rain set in.

(These verses were gleaned from the notice board at the Franz Joseph Glacier information centre N.Z. and were sent in by Malcolm McGregor. They could have been written for the early August rains in Sydney!)

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NEW MEMBERS.

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

HIGGS, Jack, 40 Darling Street, Balmain, 2041	Phone 818 1969
HIGGS, Kerry, " " " "	"
DEVERICK, Stephen, 15 Tudor Street, Surry Hills, 2010	690 1634
PRIOR, John, 16/174 Pacific Highway, North Sydney, 2060	923 2117

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OUR MAGAZINE.

by Kath Brown.

As announced on Page 18 Ainslie Morris has submitted a resignation from the position of Magazine Editor. The Committee has asked her to re-consider this decision, but in the meantime I have undertaken to be acting editor as well as typist for this September issue of the magazine.

Club members may be interested to learn what a lot of team work goes in to the magazine production. First of all, of course, are the writers. Since the magazine was first published in 1931 there have always been members who have contributed trip stories, essays, poems, reports of conservation, meetings, social occasions and also drawings and maps, so that the editor has just had to do some rounding up to keep the contributions coming in. The editor then corrects and decides what to print in which order in the magazine and then passes the material on to the typist who tries to correctly type and set out the work to best advantage.

The next people involved are the printers who receive the typed copy and using our own off-set printer, print about 450 copies of each magazine. The Production Manager then takes over (with the help of quite a number of members) to collate, put into covers with enclosures, staple, fold, wrap and then address and sort these magazines. About 400 are then posted to members and the other 50 copies are sold in camping shops or to prospectives in the clubroom.

Each issue of the magazine involves the work of about 25 or more people. On the evening the magazine is collated and wrapped in the clubroom this could be as many as 40 as members find it is quite a pleasant social night. But one of the reasons that the Sydney Bush Walkers is such a great club is that there are always many people who are prepared to work for the Club.

\* \* \* \* \*

WERE YOU AMONG THE LUCKY 18 PEOPLE ON BARRY WALLACE'S  
BONNUM PIC TRIP on 30/5 to 1/6???

"If so, you may be able to help me 'cos - I'M A HOMESICK SLEEPING BAG!

"I used to be a happy blue Dacron-filled Sandman sleeping bag until 30/5/86. At that time, in the vicinity of Bonnum Pic I was ripped away from my rightful owner by one S. Carratt who mistook me for a 'Down Produce China' bag who he in turn had borrowed from a mate. Upon returning me to his mate I was (not unnaturally) rejected and have been lonely ever since. Maybe never again will I venture out with S.B.W.! So, if YOU think you may have once owned ME please check out that little hole where you store your 'summer gear' - you may be in for a surprise! If you do get such a surprise would you please give Steve a ring as not only am I pining for my rightful owner but Steve's mate is talking about dragging him through all the courts in the land. You will be rewarded for your honesty."

Please phone STEVE CARRATT - 212 5921 or 982 4858.

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ANNOUNCEMENT.

The Committee announces with regret that a letter of resignation has been received from Ainslie Morris as Vice-President and Editor. The Committee carried a resolution asking her to re-consider this action.

THE SECRETARY.

NOTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING 3/ 9/86.

Other business at the Committee Meeting included the matter of the need to look for new Clubrooms; vandalism at Coolana with a decision to remove the visitors book; the construction of a gate (barrier) at the entrance to Coolana; a report on the inspection of the Club's archives by a sub-committee as per motion of the August General Meeting; further discussion of the new Constitution.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY N.S.W.

Each year for the past eleven years, the Launceston Walking Club has come to Sydney to entertain, thrill and inspire us with brilliant film coverage of the wild and gentle beauty of Tasmania.

This year's show promises to be even better. Titled "South West Journey", the program includes a walk from Butler's Gorge via South Innes to Maydena near the Gordon River. A climb of Federation Peak approached from Port Davey and also from Luck Man's Lead. A boat exhibition round the environs of Port Davey, and a look at the diverse wildlife of Mt. Chappell Island.

There is also a N.S.W. segment which includes a new audio visual of N.S.W. wilderness.

Screening times this year are Friday 24th and Saturday 25th of October, 7.30 pm till 10.15 pm. There is also a matinee on the Saturday afternoon at 2 pm. Produced by the Launceston Walking Club and The Wilderness Society, presented by The Wilderness Society.

Showing on the above dates at the Law School Theatre, corner of King and Elizabeth Streets, Sydney. Everyone, especially nature lovers, bush walkers and campers would enjoy this show.

For further information please contact Geoff McInerney at The Wilderness Society, Phone 267 7929.

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SOCIAL NOTES FOR OCTOBER.

by Narelle Lovell.

Rodney Falconer, a member of the Colong Committee and a tireless worker for the cause of the environment will show slides and speak about that interesting area The Pagodas on 15th October.

The Club AUCTION will be held on 22nd. Raid your garage, wardrobe, kitchen cupboards, and bring in your old backpacks, boots and other such paraphernalia for the discerning tastes of your fellow members. Who can resist bargains? Also bring MONEY - for those bargains you want to buy.

The Scrub Bashers will be performing on 29th, for musical devotees of the Australian Folk genre - note well.