

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers Incorporated, Box 4476 GPO, Sydney 2001. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening from 7.45 pm at the Ella Community Centre, 58a Dalhousie Street, Haberfield (next door to the Post Office). Prospective members and visitors are invited to visit the Club any Wednesday. To advertise in this magazine please contact the Business Manager.

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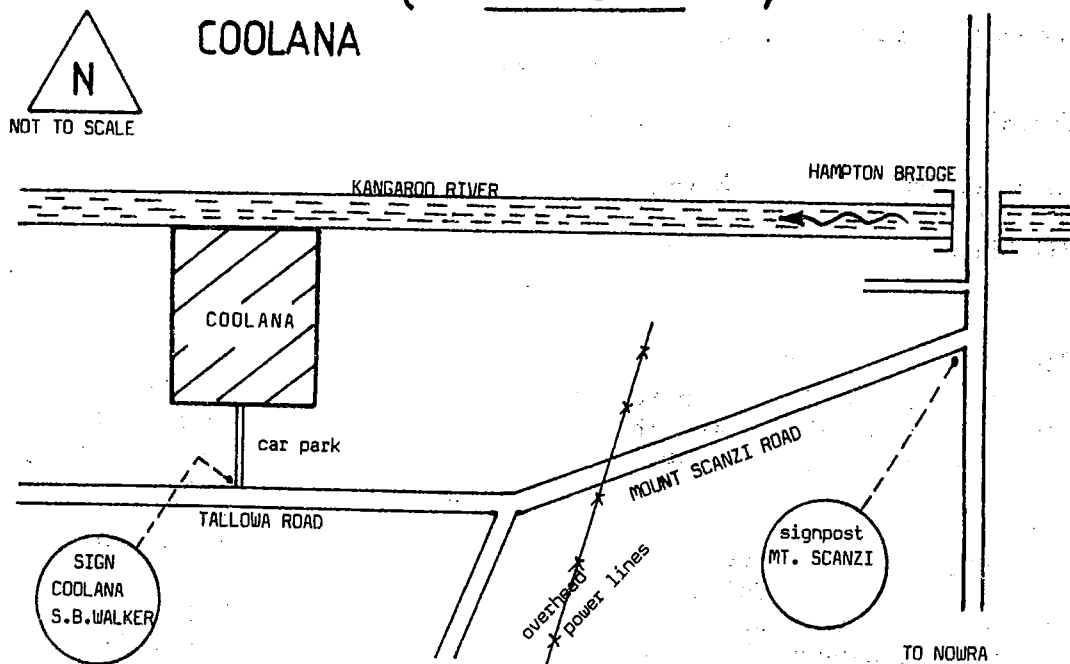


As usual, our Annual Reunion will be held at Coolana. The Social Program will give you details of date and contact phone numbers, and the map below will make it easy for you to find our property.

You can reach it via the Hume Highway, turning off at State Route 79 (the Moss Vale Road). Alternatively, drive down the Princes Highway and turn off at Berry into the Kangaroo Valley Road. Either way, Hampton Bridge in Kangaroo Valley marks the turnoff.

Apart from the usual Reunion Events, you can swim or canoe in the river, or just relax and listen to the birds sing. What if it rains? Retreat to the shelter shed of course, and snuggle around the fire!

(See also Pages 14 & 16)



SEARCH AND RESCUE....

Ever wondered how its done? Just how is a search and rescue organised.... how are all the searchers co-ordinated.... how is a difficult rescue achieved? Come and see on March 31/April 1, when S & R have their next practice at Howes Swamp, near the Putty Road.

Contact John Porter for all details - on Ph. 797.9784



BIKE TRIPPING

BY DOT BUTLER

Part One....

MITTAGONG TO KATOOMBA

In the early days of the Sydney Bush Walkers the Club was not mechanised as it is today. Its entire rolling stock comprised one motor car, two motor bikes and a number of bitza bicycles which were their owners' pride and joy. Just in the ordinary run of work Max Gentle, a builder, cycled up to Cairns - through a million acres of prickly pear. Alan Rigby's recorded mileage was in the 60,000 bracket. Taro was also a cycle rider all his life and up to the age of 70 odd did a hundred mile bike trip every birthday.

There was a bike-gang of four or five of us who did regular trips into the mountains; there was not much traffic in pre-war Australia and we generally had the back roads to ourselves. Of course there were no such things as fire trails - much of the country they now deface was a blank white space on the map still awaiting the first trails of bushwalkers. Max was a keen type who kept records of all his trips. When he toted them up after two years the mileage covered was found to be considerable - as far as my score was concerned I had covered 20,000 miles.

For many years after World War II, cycling seemed to have died a natural death. People were tired of wartime stringencies; their reaction now was to look for more relaxing pastimes, like lying on the beach at Era. But another spin of Time's wheel and even that is a thing of the past. Our new generation of young Tigers and Tigeresses wanted something to test them to the limit, and so in the mid-60's bike trips came back again. The great increase in the number of motorcars on the road ruled out road cycling for pleasure, but fire trails were a horse of another colour. Because 100 miles is a nice round figure, that was the length of the chosen route.

The first of the new era bike trips was in 1966, from Mittagong to Katoomba via Scott's Main Range and the deserted silver-mining township of Yerranderie.

It was a cold wet Friday night when twelve of us, after a morale-booster at Joe's Restaurant set off in a long straggling unlit line to cover the 13 or so miles to the firetrail off the Wombeyan Caves Road, which was to be our starting point for the morrow. We got there in the dark, and over-shot the turn-off. Ross yelled "Stop!" and there was a great pile-up of bikes and bodies on the road as everyone tried to apply brakes simultaneously. The commotion was beard by local landholders, the Goodfellows, who came to our rescue. They gave us a fantastic supper by a warm fire in their drawing room and let us sleep snug and dry in their woolshed. Sadly John Scott, who was going to do the distance without being encumbered by a bike, had set out earlier and was not with us. He spent the night in a remote corner of the property under a sheet of corrugated iron.

Mr. Goodfellow told us to watch out for dingo traps he had set along the trail; we could easily identify the places - we would see the scrap of newspaper with which he had handled the traps to keep his scent off them.

Next morning we got away about 8 am. We watched out for the tell-tale bits of paper denoting the dingo traps, but it was not easy to pull up on a downhill run. It was not possible to pull out of whatever rut you were in, so often the bike ran right through the danger area, the front wheel springing the trap, which then closed, letting the back wheel pass safely over it. There were some loud panic shrieks before we mastered this trick.

In due time we arrived at Burnt Flat Creek, where we had breakfast. We had to wheel our bikes down the creek and at the bottom Ross got a puncture. By this time people were beginning to think that the trip was not possible as it was already 11 am and we had only come a couple of miles. At this stage Paul Hinkley brought out a little sign which read "KATOOMBA and/or BUST" and tied it on the back of his bike, so we pushed on. This is where Ganderpipe came out with his classic statement - "You can get spread out on a trip like this". Little did he realise what was to come.

We made good time across the Wollondilly and up the steep walk on the other side. We were together for lunch in Burnes Creek. We then pushed our bikes up the long drawn out hills



CROSSING THE WOLLONDILLY



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT - IAN DILLON, ROSS WYBORN, WADE BUTLER, DOONE WYBORN
ALAN PIKE, ROGER LOCKWOOD & DOT BUTLER.

to Yerranderie. On walking up one hill we found a little fox caught in a dingo trap. The poor little creature had tried to gnaw his trapped foot off but had not succeeded. He looked almost done. To put him out of his misery two of the young boys, hating to do it, killed him with a large rock.

That night some of us camped at Yerranderie and some at Byrnes Gap. Next morning we were up at first light and away an hour later. We had to go down and up a few valleys before we reached Scott's Main Range. When we were just about on top Ross's bike broke down beyond repair. There was nothing to do but leave it there. Ross took out the tubes and started walking but was quickly overtaken by the riders, being now on easy riding country. The late comers, finding Ross's discarded bike by the wayside, put a note on it "ROSS WYBORN - OATLEY", and Rosso was surprised when the station master rang him some days later to say he had something for him. The Ranger had picked up the bike and kindly despatched it C.O.D. to Oatley. Rosso wasn't all that pleased to have to cash up for a piece of junk beyond repair.

Before long we reached Karamba, Father Coughlan's hut and chapel used by the Catholic Bushies. After some food Ross started off walking and soon we others followed and streaked past him, but as we had uphill walking he caught us up on top of Mount Cookem where the road runs out. As leader, Ross gave a "Day-0" and received answers from all over the valley. We then headed down the track, wheeling our bikes down, hanging on to the back of the seat so the bike couldn't get away.

We had only gone a short distance when we met Brian Harding. He had been out on a day walk and was sitting by the Cox River waiting for the cyclists when a rock came rolling over a cliff on the opposite side of the river. Following the rock came a bicycle, and following the bicycle came a body; the first of the party had arrived on the Cox.

The two walkers, Ross and Brian, went out via the White Dog track to Brian's car, parked at Medlow Gap. Then, after a meal at Katoomba, drove out to Narrow Neck to see if anyone was coming in.

First came Doone, who had pulled his bike up Taro's Ladders on a piece of string and rode in along the Neck. He was closely followed by Roger who had thrown his bike away at Medlow Gap and walked in along the Neck. Roger was closely followed by John Scott who had walked the whole distance from Mittagong to Katoomba. As there was no sign of anyone else, these four went home.

Rona Butler, Bob Smith, Alan Pike and Don Finch, after pushing their bikes up to Medlow Gap, which they reached just on nightfall, continued on to Debert's Knob then pulled their bikes up Taro's Ladders in the dark. They caught a late train at Katoomba and arrived home at 5 am next day. The rest of the party stayed at Medlow Gap for the night and came out next morning, passing our bikes up Taro's Ladders from one to another hanging in a human chain from the spikes.

This trip aroused such interest in the Club that next year we repeated it, but instead of rain and cold the weather could not have been hotter - 104 degrees in the shade and 140 degrees in the sun, and the mercury threatening to burst out of the thermometer when we placed it on a sheet of corrugated iron at the Chapel on Scott's Main Range. Needless to say, every dam or puddle hole we found along the route was used for cooling-off purposes.

(NEXT MONTH - PART 2 - "RYLSTONE TO SINGLETON")

CONGRATULATIONS

Good wishes from the Club to Sandy (nee Hynes) and John Williams whose first child Daniel John was born early February. Another little bushwalker?

NEW MEMBERS

A welcome to two new members who were admitted in February:-

JONKMAN, Naryke

Phone 371 9592

MANUSU, Patricia

" 398 4368

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CONSERVATIONBLUE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS THREATENED

by Alex Colley
Hon. Conservation Secretary

"Barralier Trail"

The following letter was sent to Mr. Colin Hollis, Federal M.P. for Throsby, at the Club's request:-

Dear Mr. Hollis,

The Sydney Bushwalkers seek your support for the preservation of the national parks, proposed national park and wilderness areas traversed by the so-called "Barralier Trail".

We are concerned that a management plan prepared by local and government authorities and local interests would open the way for severe damage of the natural features of the area.

A complete management plan has already been presented in the form of the Nattai National Park and Kanangra Boyd and Nattai Wilderness nominations (the wilderness have been nominated under the provisions of the Wilderness Act). These proposals have been referred by the Minister to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for examination and report.

If accepted, these proposals will place the entire route of the trail under the supervision of the NPWS and the wildernesses will be managed in accord with the Service's wilderness policy issued on March 8th 1985, a copy of which is attached.

The trail, with its clearing, tree felling, huts, bridges, vehicular intrusion etc. violates most of the NPWS guidelines.

This Club is unable to comprehend why an organisation which plans the desecration of wilderness should be granted \$30,000 for the establishment of a Wilderness Education Centre.

The national park and wilderness submissions were a preliminary to a World Heritage listing for the Blue Mountains submission, which includes the Nattai. The World Heritage submission has the support of the State Government but its acceptability to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature would be prejudiced by a development such as the Barralier Trail.

The country between Mittagong and Katoomba contains some of Australia's most scenic and accessible wilderness. Its effective preservation depends upon the creation of the Nattai Park and Wilderness management by the NPWS. World Heritage listing would give international recognition to its qualities and afford the most effective protection available. Although the park and wilderness proposals are a State matter, your support as the Federal Member concerned would be valued.

As you are probably aware the park proposal has the approval of State M.P.s the Hon. John Fahey and Mr. Robert Webster. Your view on World Heritage listing will no doubt be sought after on the Federal level.

Yours sincerely,

A. G. COLLEY O.A.M.,

Hon. Conservation Secretary.

N.P.W.S. Wilderness Management Policy

The following points from the above policy are relative in this matter:-

- * Wilderness area will be maintained as free as possible from signs, trailmarkers and other management devices.
- * Tracks other than those essential for management of wilderness areas themselves will be closed (Section 61(2)(b) of the Act refers).
- * The use by private or commercial interests of any form of motorised transport (including the landing of aircraft), will not be permitted.
- * Motorised transport operated by any agency, except for essential management or rescue operations, will not be permitted.

* * * * *

MITTAGONG to KATOOMBASeptember 28 - October 3. LEADER Ian Rannard

by Morag Ryder

PART TWO: Butcher's Creek to Cox's RiverSunday 1st October

Woken at 5 am by the dawn chorus, we left camp at 7.30, carrying a litre of water for the Axehead journey. Past the dozing 4WD community and grateful for a chilly morning to climb on to Gander Head. On top we viewed a sparkling world, took photos and checked out two small camping caves. We found a nice flat campsite at the middle of the range, and walked through scented pink boronia to the far end of the Axehead. A grove of casuarinas shaded us for morning tea, then down the slippery side track we went, through a little forest of huge, scarlet flowered grevillias and back to more casuarinas. We were glad of their shade as it was already warm.

Time, 10.45. "Early lunch on Butcher's Creek," said Ian. We walked knee-deep through a rustling sea of cobalt-blue *Stypanandra*, catching occasional drifts of wattle scent. 11.30 on Butcher's, a lazy one-hour lunch and then up the curving ridge to reach the road on Scott's Main Range by 1 pm.

We managed to keep in the shade most of the way to our turnoff, while a vigorous west wind played Wagnerian-style music in the trees. At a high point we came to a small dam full of water, which Ian called Donohoe's Clearing. West we went, through more *Stypanandra* on Sandy Creek Ridge, stopping briefly for a drink. Wattle enveloped us as we strolled down, eventually coming to a little rocky nose, smothered in a violet-scented pea flower. Emerging from this cloud of perfume at 4.30 pm, we saw our campsite on the Kowmung - green, elevated and sheltered.

Monday 2nd

A mild and sparkling morning, left camp at 7.30 and wandered along animal tracks, down to the gauging station. What appeared to be a large rusting container, proved to be a dead cow. Animals had eaten part of the head and neck, but someone with butchering skills had neatly removed the forequarter and hindquarter on one side. Fresh 4WD tracks were everywhere, there must have been a hungry crowd to feed! We hurried on, leaving the goannas to dine, and found a level, stoney bottom for our river crossing. After the previous day's long road-walk, our feet were sore and the cobblestones painful. At Ti Willa Creek we collected water and stopped to talk to a walker who was doing six days solo. He had seen three horse-men with dogs driving cattle downstream and we wondered who they could have been.

"This is Hell Hill," said Ian, as we started up - and it certainly was hellishly steep. The flowers gave some compensation, white, yellow, orange, pink and blue. Then came a cool southerly, driving before it a fleecy flock of clouds. On top of Wonga Mountain was a grey-gum, with the words 'Hell Hill' carved in it. Mint bush and mountain holly were flowering on the tops as we walked towards a huge stand of turpentine. The only undergrowth beneath them was fern, and here we reclined in the dappled shade for lunch. It was here also I discovered I had left my mug at Ti Willa Creek, so thereafter tea was drunk straight from the billy.

Descending Bungalooloo Spur, turpentine gave way to forest she-oak, gum and wattle, with purple native indigo as understorey. Lower down we found another little forest, this time of a strongly scented wattle. Below this, we were surprised to see about twenty weary walkers sitting on the grass. They were a commercial trekking group, and had spent all day walking along Narrow Neck, then down to the Cox. We sympathised over their blistered feet and silently wondered where they would camp. At their rate of progress it would take them about three hours to reach the Kowmung.

Having collected water from a side creek, we skirted a large and sulky-looking tiger snake, before choosing an elevated campsite. Evening brought a glorious sunset followed by brief showers. When the stars re-appeared we saw lights at ground level as well, torches moving around further downstream.

Tuesday 3rd

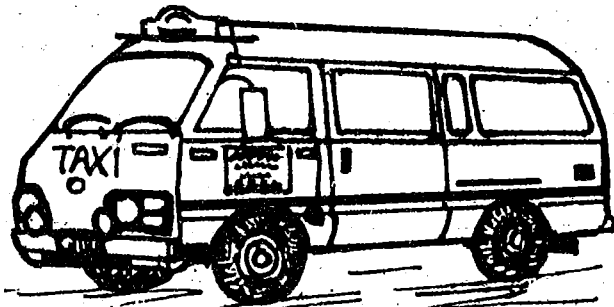
The local kookaburras started rioting at first light, so we decamped at 7.10 am. The Cox was thigh deep where we crossed at the flying fox, and once past the huts we decided to climb White Dog Ridge, instead of walking that interminable fire trail. Half an hour of moderate climbing took us to the top, with extensive views over the Cox. Blessing the cool breeze, we went on to have morning tea at Debert's Knob and climb Tarro's Ladders. Glad had never climbed them, but despite her small size, went up without fuss or difficulty. After a long stop to admire the views, we continued on to lunch at the pipeline.

The afternoon was filled in by walking along Narrow Neck; stopping for long, appreciative looks at the cloud-dappled sweeps of Megalong and Jamison Valleys. It had been one of the most perfect walks I had ever experienced. Pity you missed it.

FEDERATION NOTES

by John Porter

Federation is now incorporated, and has a new name - CONFEDERATION OF BUSHWALKING CLUBS N.S.W. Meetings will be held quarterly in January, April, July (A.G.M.) and October, at Burwood Public School on the third Tuesday of the month. The Committee of office bearers will meet monthly. A special extra meeting will be called for any major decisions. Meetings start at 7.30 pm.

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PORTRAIT OF A CLIMBER

PART THREE:

BY 'CLIO'

'The Sydney Rock Climbers'

In October 1935 Dr. Dark and Brant returned to investigate the then unclimbed Split Rock (now Crater Bluff). Though they were unsuccessful in their attempt, a number of possible routes were eliminated. They also reconnoitered the Green Glacier route but didn't reach the summit.

Eric returned to the Warrumbungles with a party from Sydney Bush Walkers which included Marie Byles and Dot Butler. Dot recalled that "Marie Byles was a friend of Dr. Eric Dark and in 1936 they organised a trip to the Warrumbungles and invited me along. This was my first introduction to technical climbing. Accustomed to rushing up and over rock faces barefoot and unroped, jumping for likely-looking holds, swinging about on scant bits of vegetation growing out of cliffs, it was a new (and somewhat painful) experience to be tied on to a restraining rope, hooked over impeding belays, obliged to 'stop and make sure two holds are secure before relinquishing the third'. I got very restive under all this restraint but by the time I had spent ten days climbing in the Warrumbungles with that superb and exacting teacher, Eric Dark, I was quite reconciled to using a rope, and even thought it rather fun."

Dr. Dark was impressed and considered Dot to be the most natural climber he had ever seen. (Dot was named Australian Geographic Society's "Adventurer of the Year" for 1988.)

Dr. Dark commented "At that time Crater Bluff was unclimbed. It was considered a very difficult climb because we didn't have the techniques which we now have with safety ropes. We were on narrow ledges, as wide as a window sill, hundreds of feet up, trees looking like tiny matchsticks down below."

By climbing tree ferns they eventually reached the summit (via the now Tourist Route), where they lit a fire to show their party below that they had made it. Whilst they were building a cairn to mark their visit, the fire spread and soon the whole summit was ablaze. Dot in bare feet (as usual) perched upon the cairn and waited for the ashes and sparks to cool, declining Dr. Dark's offer of a piggy back.



Dark and Lowe also tried the North Face (via the Diagonal Route) on Crater Bluff but were halted sixty metres below the summit as they were unable to find a continuation.

Despite their success, the Blue Mountaineers had started to disintegrate as the younger members found jobs that took them away from the mountains. Whilst he was making a descent on the Warrumbungles trip Dr. Dark had a cramp in his right forearm and he took this as a warning that his climbing days were over.

Marie Byles submitted an account of the holiday to a newspaper in which she stated that she "was amazed at the skill and agility shown by one Dot English*, and now that she had proved herself on this first-grade climb, she was going to form a Rock Climbing Section of the Sydney Bush Walkers". (*Now Dot Butler.)

So the SBW Tiger coterie started to learn rock work, but were halted by the Second World War. There were another two waves of climbers within the ambience of SBW before the Sydney Rock Climbers were formed by David Roots, son of bushwalker Wally Roots.

In 1952 the Sydney Rock Climbers also became "stars" when they were filmed climbing the Three Sisters for a tourist promotion.

As General Medical Officer for the small country town Dr. Dark became profoundly influenced by what he saw. "I was brought up as a perfectly good Tory and remained that way until the Depression began". He initially had little interest in politics until he treated a 16-year old

boy whom teachers considered to have a brilliant future in science, medicine or law, but had to resort to labouring as his parents were unemployed and had a large family to support. He thought Australia was losing the benefit of its brilliant intellectuals because of a rotten economic system which condemned them to penury. And it was that which turned him into a socialist.



DR. DARK IN THE WARRUMBUNGLES

During the second world war Dr. Dark joined the local branch of the Volunteer Defence Corps which had the responsibility of finding suitable sites for guerilla bases from which an expected Japanese occupation could be harassed. He was given the nominal rank of captain but when only six men volunteered their services, Eric was "demoted" to sergeant. In 1944 his work was criticised by a local anti-communist fanatic and he was

accused of being part of a Red plot to cache arms/illicit radio transmitters for an eventual communist takeover. Much had been made of his secret camping cave in the Blue Mountains, used only as a retreat for peace and quiet - Eleanor called it "Jerrikellimi" (the retreat of the dark pelp).

Some years later he decided to specialise and became Repatriation Medical Officer for most of the Blue Mountains. He learnt that the Repatriation department had been instructed not to recruit any socialist or leftist medicos, nor should they refer any patients to him, thus denying him a major source of income. Realising that this would destroy his medical practice Eric sold out.

He and Eleanor decided to move to southern Queensland around 1951 and join their son Michael, where they harvested macadamia nuts. One of their neighbours happened to be Eric Lowe. The Darks stayed for five years, and Eleanor based her last novel "Lantana Lane" upon her experiences there. Dr. Dark then managed to secure a job in Katoomba as School Medical Officer (without being judged upon his political beliefs) where he stayed until he was forced to retire when in his mid-80s.

He did not restrict himself solely to climbing. He was probably introduced to tennis by Eleanor and was still playing a hard-hitting game until well into his seventies. He was also a good contract bridge player, and they were both keen gardeners. In 1950 Eric's listing in "Who's Who" showed his recreations as mountain climbing, bushwalking, tennis and reading whilst Eleanor's were bushwalking, reading and gardening.

However his past could not escape him. His security file noted a 1960s Central Australian holiday, which caused alarm when it was learnt that the Darks intended to visit Woomera Rocket Range.

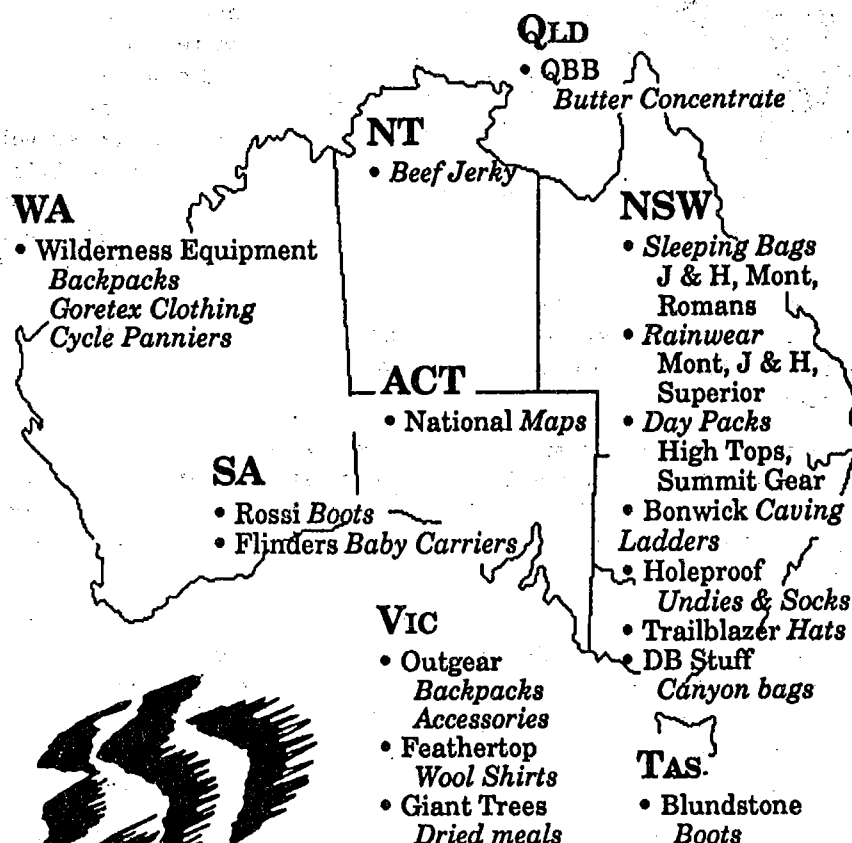
In later years the Sydney Rock Climbers made it a practice to invite Dr. Dark to their annual dinners - an event he seemed to enjoy greatly.

Dr. Eric Dark O.A., M.Bs.Chm. died on July 28, 1987, at the age of 98. Their family home "Varuna", designed by Eleanor in 1939, is to be converted into a writers' retreat.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Blue Mountains City Library, Dot Butler (The Sydney Bushwalker - various), the late Eric Dark, John Dark, Michael Dark, Lindsay Irvine, Fred Pollock, Walkabout Magazine April 1936 (L. Brant), the Brenda White Collection, Osmar White, Warwick Williams.

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MAILBAG

The sharp eyes and alert mind of COLIN PUTT found an interesting little anomaly in some information printed in November issue of the magazine. He commented -

"I was interested to read in the November Bushwalker about the new rules about campfires in Tasmania, apparently originating from the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Department. I found particularly intriguing the repeated reference to 'fuel stoves!'. The Department is clearly very concerned that any stoves used in their nominated areas should be fuel stoves, not stoves without fuel. Now, what kinds of stoves are there which don't use fuel?

"Years ago we experimented with a wood stove, i.e. one made of wood. It went well, without any fuel, for about 15 minutes but by then the whole stove had disappeared and Grandpa said it wasn't really one of his more successful inventions. Electric stoves go without fuel of course, and heaps of discarded electric stoves on top of the Western Arthurs, just like a municipal tip, would be very unsightly, but I think that the length of cord required to get to the nearest power point from Cradle Mountain, the Walls of Jerusalem, Wild Rivers or South West National Parks would be impracticable anyway.

"Are the National Parks people trying to forestall a plan by the fiendish State Hydro-electric, to dam rivers, install small power stations, and supply electricity for stoves throughout these Parks? Or have they invented a cordless electric stove like those cordless phones? These would be very handy in places where they are not banned yet, like the Blue Mountains, and if such things are to become available to the public I would like to use, in the 'fuel stove only' areas, my un-banned cordless electric blanket, cordless electric lamp, and cordless electric hedgeclipper to improve the Parks Authority's awful tracks.

"Oh, Government departmental gobbledegook, how I love it!"

(The term 'fuel stove' is now common among the camping fraternity. Just so long as everyone knows it really means 'portable stove', all will be well. EDITOR.)

SAVE THE FORESTS - BUILD WITH SCRIMBER!

ANOTHER EXHIBIT AT THE "ENVIRONMENT '90" CONFERENCE

Those clever folk in South Australia have found an alternative to sawn timber for building purposes. They use 8 year-old plantation thinnings which are shredded into long strips and laminated into a useful building material. This is produced in lengths up to 12 metres (36ft) in a range of 40 different thicknesses. They range from :

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Because it is made of long, tightly compressed strands, Scrimber does not warp or shrink (or crumble, like chip board), and the overall strength compares favourably with ordinary timber. In April it will be available in N.S.W. from Hudsons Hardware and Mitre 10 Homemaker stores.

So who said that conservation costs jobs? In S.A. it is creating a new industry! Why can't we manufacture this in N.S.W. - at Oberon, for example?

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MAILBAG

from HELEN GRAY

Dear Don and Meeting,

I have heard that some members are dissatisfied with the choice of "COOLANA" as a reunion site, mainly because of ticks.

The tick problem of the last few years has NOT been exclusive to "Coolana". It has been a problem wherever there are grassy areas. Our land at Woodhill in a much wetter, higher and more exposed site is similarly affected. Likewise we encountered many ticks on our recent week-long coast walk.

I think, then, that changing the reunion site will not solve the problem. However, taking sensible precautions will.

- (1) Sleep on the terraces, not on the river flats.
- (2) When using the river flats, take a "foamy" or groundsheet to sit on, ALWAYS.
- (3) Don't leave clothes or towels on the ground while swimming.
- (4) Use an insect repellent on your skin if you are going to be walking in the long grass. It definitely works.

Two years ago I ignored my own advice and got about 200 ticks on me. Last reunion, and on another visit, I took the above precautions and had NOT ONE BITE!

* * * * *

Kakadu - Wet Wonderland

See it when it's green
See it without the winter crowds

Why wait until June or July when the waterfalls are nearly dry? In February and March they are at their magnificent best. Wildflowers are at their most prolific. Those few bushwalkers who visit will have the wilderness all to themselves.

February and March are among the most comfortable months for walking. Daily maximum temperatures of 30-35° are the norm but this is true 12 months a year. Cloudy days feel cooler than sunny ones. It does not rain all day every day. The normal pattern is for short sharp bursts which are a welcome relief during the heat of the day. Many days have no rain at all.

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THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

There was a certain amount of worried searching of horizons, cupboards etc. at the advertised starting time of 1930, but by around 2007 there were some 20 or so members present so the President called them to order and declared the meeting begun before they could escape or worse. There were apologies from Carol Bruce, John Porter, Maurie Bloom and Jeff Niven and there were no new members to welcome. The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received with no further discussion.

Correspondence saw a letter of enquiry from a Tasmanian walker asking about walks in the Sydney region, a letter of resignation from Peter Miller and a letter from the World Environment Committee advising us of plans for a World Environment Day in July of this year. There was also a letter from Helen Gray providing advice as to the best methods to be employed to avoid tick bites at Coolana. This letter will be/has been published in this magazine. There were outgoing letters to Mr. Colin Hollis M.P., member for Throsby, a letter to Peter Miller thanking him for his contributions to the life of the Club during his time as a member, and a letter in response to the enquiry from Tasmania.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we received income of \$139.50, spent \$585.70, and closed with a balance which the Treasurer was still calculating at the time due to the rather late submission of some accounts for payment.

As was the case last month, the Walks Report was presented from the chair. The first walk covered was scheduled for 12 December, led by Bob King. It was a no-go. Jan Mohandas' Royal National Park walk on 17 December had a party of 42 reported to have been drawn from six clubs. Bob King came around again on December 26 to January 1, this time with a party of four in the wilds of Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Tim Rannard's Kosciusko N.P. trip over 26-31 December had 9 starters and Ian Rannard, over the same period, had 14 on his walk in the opposite end of the park. Jim Callaway led a party of one on his Helensburgh to Otford day walk on 31 December. There were no reports of dissent or argument on the trip.

The weekend of 7 January saw two walks programmed. Morag Ryder led a party of 6 to program on her Blackheath to Blackheath via Grand Canyon (sort of) walk, and Bill Holland reported a party of 21 and some incidental swimming on his Colo-River-the-easy-way trip.

The following weekend, January 13 and January 14 saw Ian Debert put there doing it tough on a Palm Beach to Dee Why swimming-at-end-of-walk trip in hot conditions on the 13th. The 14th saw a change in the weather, and Oliver Crawford and his intrepid band of 5 opted out of his Wollongambe trip on the grounds that it was wet, and they were low on leathery apricots. Greta Davis led a party of 14 in damp conditions on her Glenbrook area walk. All of which brought us to the end of the Walks Report.

There was a Federation Bush Walking Clubs Report. The F.B.W. has at last achieved incorporation status. Remember, you read it here! The F.B.W. Inc. are a participant in the "clean-up-Australia-day" and the S & R group will be co-ordinating the effort. The Nattai Foundation remains active with a recent advertisement in the S.M.H. for wilderness leadership teachers. The duties listed included a requirement to organise and lead Five-Day walks, although the extent of infrastructure and support services was not spelt out.

The Social Report indicated that some 120 people attended the Christmas Party. The beach party at Obelisk Beach suffered a bit from cooler weather, 12 attending although only two of those actually swam in whatever was lapping the beach at the time.

The Conservation Report serves to clear up the mystery of that earlier reported letter to Mr. Colin Hollis M.P. It seems that he had put forward some proposals for a plan of management for the Nattai area, but there are existing proposed plans of management, two of them in fact, one by the N.P.W.S. and one wilderness proposal, as well as a proposal for World Heritage Listing.

Of General Business there was nil. There was a rather extended announcement of N.P.A. planning to publish a trilogy of books on National Parks and walking. The person doing the announcing was clearly unaware of the stresses generated by a long-enough meeting and the proximity of all that cheese and crackers. It will probably all get published in the magazine and you can read it at your leisure.

THE MEETING CLOSED at 2055.

* * * * *

SOCIAL NOTES

by Dot Butler

- 28th February - NOSTALGIA NIGHT - Early days in the Club. Reg Alder, one of our keen photographers from the past, will be bringing a collection of slides, and Frank Leyden has sent 12 of his best. Members of the Dungalla Club (old retired Bushwalkers) have been invited. Tiger Walkers, hobnailed boots and discovering new routes. Photographs, equipment, our bushwalking history as it really happened. If you have any memorabilia of those Roaring Days, come and add it to the collection.
- 14th March - The Annual General Meeting. Come along and elect the Office Bearers and Committee for the next year. Only members may vote but all members are eligible to stand for office.
- 17/18th March - THE ANNUAL REUNION - will be held at Coolana, organiser DON FINCH. For those worried about ticks, read Helen Gray's article (Page). Helen is also looking after transport - if you need a lift or can offer one, phone Helen on 86 6263. On Sunday morning a damper making competition is held - bring S.R. flour if you would like to have a go. The Reunion is the occasion in which the new President is given the symbols of office. These are only produced at the Reunion and are worth looking at.
- 21st March - Tom Hayllar, of the Explorers' Club, who gave us such an interesting talk on Bhopal (India), will be telling us about SOUTH AFRICA. Don't miss this excellent speaker.
- 28th March - CULTURE NIGHT - See below - - - -

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....but do we have any talent? DO WE HAVE ANY TALENT! Musicians on many kinds of instruments, singers old and new. Not only long-time favorites like Geoff Wagg and Tom Wenman, but other polished performers like Anita and Alan Doherty. (You have never heard their duets?, then you have a treat in store!) They are all coming to entertain you on our Culture Night - which takes place on 28th MARCH

GOODBYE PETER....

Last month Peter Miller wrote a letter to the Committee to say that after 40 years of walking, he was hanging up his boots. Many members will remember Peter as a strong walker who was for many years a good leader in the Club. Even the newest members will remember his mapping instructionals. Not only did he lead walks but he was on Committee at different times (Committee member 1978-9, Social Secretary 1980-2, Vice-President 1985-6).

I had the pleasure of walking with him numerous times. His wonderful off-beat humour could raise the campfire conversation from mundane to uproarious in about two seconds. He could make witty comments on almost any subject, from changing nappies to Super String theory. But now, alas, he's gone. All we can say is - wherever you go and whatever you do, Peter, we wish you the best of everything. And I, for one, will miss you.

MORAG RYDER

JAGUNGAL

On a recent trip in the Snowy Mountains the pronunciation of the name "JAGUNGAL" was under discussion. Present walkers usually pronounce it JA-GUN-GAL with two hard "G"s. However, walkers in years gone by pronounced it "JAGUN'AL", with the emphasis on the initial syllable. This may be the correct pronunciation - who knows? After all, even in English we don't use a hard "G" in the middle of the word "singing", and in Italian the "G" in the middle of the word "figlia" (daughter) is not pronounced at all.