

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 at 8 pm at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli (near Milson's Point Railway Station). Visitors and prospective members are welcome any Wednesday. To advertise in this magazine please contact the Business Manager.

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SEPTEMBER 1991

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WESTERN MACDONNELLS, CENTRAL AUSTRALIA, JUNE 1991.

by Deborah Shapira

Participants: Dot Butler, Alex Colley, Don Finch (Leader), Heather Finch, Alistair Graham, Brian Holden, Ros Kerrigan, Peg Putt, Deb Shapira, Barry Wallace. Average age: 52.4 years.

Day 1

Arrived rather bleary-eyed at Sydney Airport some time before dawn. An uneventful flight followed with a 2.5 hour stopover in Brisbane on the way to Alice Springs. Our transport picked us up and took us to our motel where we booked in five to a room. A few of us went in to town where we achieved not much more than the purchase of an ice cream. Arriving back we found that Peg and Alistair had arrived from Tasmania. We went out to dinner and took Grant, a local bush walker, who had been so helpful in finding our transport.

Day 2

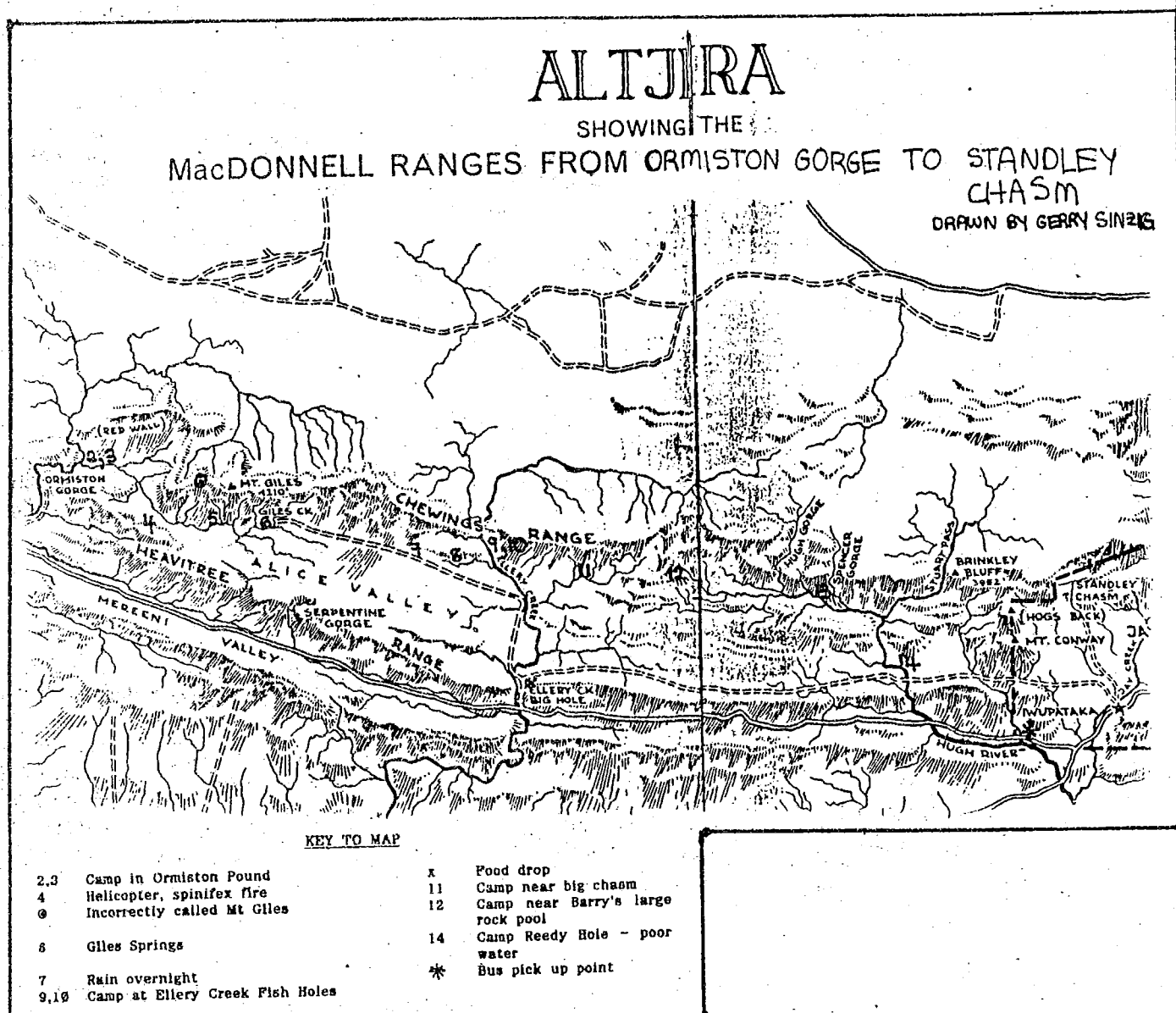
Most of us arose early either due to anticipation of our pending adventure or the eagerness to enjoy the last "civilised" hot shower for two weeks. The bus arrived and drove us to Ellery Creek Big Hole. Don and Barry paddled three large bags containing food for the second week through the gap on two lilos and buried them on the other side. Camphor was sprinkled all over it in the hope that the native wildlife might be deterred from investigating it. Next we continued west to Ormiston Gorge where we farewelled the bus and put our big packs on. We then left the picnickers and sightseers behind and marched through the gorge before finding a shady place for lunch and a chance to appreciate our surroundings of gloriously rust coloured rocks and the odd ghost gum clinging precariously to the rock walls. Afterwards, we walked through to the end of the gorge, wandered into the pound and found a beach to camp beside Ormiston Creek. From what we could see this contained large clear pools of water at regular intervals. Behind us was the Red Wall which stretched around to Mt Giles. We went to bed eagerly so that we could view the night show, a panorama of stars, planets and exploding asteroids, a sight visible in increasingly few places in the world.

Day 3

Today's program was a choice between charging up the Red Wall, descending the other side via a gully, tearing across miles of spinifex ridges to eventually walk across the pound to rejoin the campsite and ambling towards North Ormiston to explore the Canyon of the Thirteen Pools. For reasons best known to myself I decided to accompany the former party. This was rewarded by a magnificent vista of the entire Ormiston Pound area with its accompanying waterways dotted with large water pools and Mt Sonder (the Sleeping Lady) to the west. We wandered along the top for a while before a suitable ridge was found for descent. This became a gully which ran into an unnamed creek which formed a beautiful canyon into which of course we had to immerse our hot sweaty bodies and beside which we ate our lunch. Fortunately, this was the only place that any wading was required. After following this creek out onto the plain it struck me on looking back that there was no way one could guess what was hidden within. On the spinifex ridges we spotted several kangaroos. It was getting late when we reached the northern arm of Ormiston Creek, however it was less rough walking at this stage. We walked along at a steady pace and caught a glimpse of Mt Giles in the sunset. We arrived at camp in the very last light at 6.20 pm.

Day 4

Today we wandered east along the northern arm of Ormiston Creek and enjoyed plenty of stops in the shade of red river gums to escape the heat. We had a glorious long lunch beside one waterhole where we could swim and use the facilities for such chores as sock washing. After lunch we continued along whilst observing some rather unusual cloud formations to the south east. At yet another rest stop we observed a helicopter which appeared to be circling us. On its return some of us waved. The next thing we knew it had landed and three men were emerging. "Please stay on this side of the river as we are about to set alight all the spinifex to make a firebreak up to Mt Giles," said the one who had the word "Captain" sewn on his shirt and a diamond stud in his ear. Apparently, during the winter and favourable weather conditions, firebreaks are created to prevent massive bushfires in this area which becomes a giant wind funnel during the summer. "Thank you for finding us," I said, as we were about to cross to



camp in a creek-bed below Mt Giles. "I am glad I found you, too," he replied. "You wouldn't believe all the paper work this has saved me!" Therefore, we hied ourselves up to the nearest rocky outcrop and watched the helicopter drop pellets of potassium permanganate plus igniter all over the spinifex ridges in front of us and then watched all the spinifex burn. Some question was raised within the party as to the safety of all the animals in the region and whether anything else besides spinifex would be affected. Peg and Alistair expressed some annoyance since this is what happens in Tasmania every time they get a fine day (something I imagine does not occur frequently). Camp was set up in the immediate vicinity. The fires burned most of the night and there was still one or two smouldering in the morning.

Day 5*

We walked through the blackened ridges on an overcast morning until we reached a creek below Mt Giles. After a fairly lengthy morning tea most of the party embarked upon the climb up Mt Giles (the one which has the trig). Dot stayed to mind the gear and Alex stayed to mind Dot. It was a steep rocky climb to reach the top which eventually gave us 360 degree views. Climbing down was reasonably tricky with both Ros and I succeeding in ripping the seats of our trousers. After lunch we walked across a few more ridges and camped in a creek-bed full of huge trees, an area looking rather other-worldly compared to the dry ridges above it. In the evening Ros and I engaged in emergency needlework while we sang Happy Birthday to Peg.

Day 6

Due to the presence of a cloud cover most of us had our flies up. It was just as well as we awoke to a light drizzle in the early light. We wandered off towards Giles Springs. At about mid-morning a canyon was found so some of us wandered into it to have a look. At about lunchtime we reached Giles Springs, apparently now approachable by 4WD due to the presence of tyre tracks and fireplaces. We climbed up a fair way only to find that higher up would prove to be too damp to sleep there so down we came again to indulge in an afternoon of eating, hot water hair washing, clothes washing and then after the chores were done some of us undertook some exploration up to the top of the Springs. It is amazing to find in the middle of the 'Dry Centre' a plethora of pools, waterfalls, ferns and undergrowth one would normally associate with a rain forest.

Day 7

At dawn it rained lightly and we set off in cool and cloudy conditions. Walking along a gully we drove off a dingo. Lunch was a rather chilly affair in another creek. During the afternoon Dot entertained us with some rather wild tales of dubious authenticity, to which she admitted. Rain threatened so tent flies were put up. We decided to blame our Tasmanian companions for this unseasonable and unreasonable phenomenon. I felt the need to go to bed early as had been the case every night and decided to blame the amount of rum in our nightly ration.

Day 8

It rained almost ALL night. We were supposed to follow the creek to Ellery Creek, a distance of 3.5 return trips to Wahroonga Station from Dot's house. At about 10:45 we realised that Alec had decided to try another railway station and was no longer with us. Search parties were organised and he was found eventually late in the afternoon thanks to Barry and Don. He'd forgotten the rule that when one is separated from the party one is supposed to stop and not move until found. However, having once been in a similar situation myself I knew that an illogical reasoning takes over one's actions. In any case we were very glad to see him safe and sound and the worst consequence was that Don lost his distinctive pink Mickey Mouse ears he'd been sporting on his hat throughout the trip. We were all pretty bedraggled and damp by the time we made camp on slightly higher ground above the creek bed in case of flooding!!

Day 9

A very early start on a day dawning bright and clear. We went at a brisk pace to Ellery Creek where everyone unpacked. Most of the party headed south with empty packs to pick up the food drop. My job was to do the housework at camp with Dot and Alex. It reminded one of those unfortunate but necessary days when you have to stay at home doing domestic chores. At sundown a herd of cattle came down to drink. After much lowing and investigative glances in our direction they decided to go ahead cautiously. Just as we were contemplating a dinner of one teaspoon of red jam, one of yellow jam and a scrape of peanut butter the party returned, some staggering, after a marathon effort of about 28 km. After washing in warm water we had dinner which included a cask of white wine which had mysteriously turned up in the food drop.

Day 10

A beautiful dawn complete with bird calls. There appeared to be no rush and it was apparent that no one was going anywhere before lunch. Heather and I decided to explore the creek upstream, as although several of us had camped in that particular spot before none of us knew what lay beyond. We climbed around the cliff at the northern end of the pool and continued along the left-hand fork. This twisted and turned and with every bend there was a new magical sight - fantastic rock formations, crystal pools and magnificent trees. At the end of it we returned with the plan that we should convince the leader that we should spend another night there in order that everyone should have an opportunity to explore. This was readily adopted. After lunch of dampers (we were to have damper every day in the second week) the afternoon was spent in leisurely exploration. The right hand fork was pretty but not as spectacular as the left hand one. With the rain gone we were able to enjoy the night sky.

Day 11

We walked beside the Chewings range, with various members of the party running off to investigate possible water sources for lunch and then later for camping. At lunch a pretty lemon and black patterned butterfly shared some of our orange Tang with us. We also had camembert cheese with our damper. I

should mention that we all shared food for three meals a day plus beverages in one food group. Don had worked out a fairly complicated system of who was carrying what for each meal and it did not take long for party members to produce whatever was required quickly in order that their packs would be lightened. A food group does require a fair amount of pre-organisation. However, everyone was pleased with the variety of food we had and overall I think everyone carried a lighter load than they would have normally done. It was becoming apparent that this part of the country did not have as much water as previously. At mid-afternoon we were divided into two parties to look for water and the party I was in found a huge tub of clean water inside a cavern about 10 mins from the place we'd decided to camp. Don and Alistair climbed up above it and returned to tell us of the religious experience they had there. That night we had some songs, poetry and lullabies.

Day 12

A group of us left early to enjoy the religious experience - another hitherto unknown magical canyon. In the meantime, the others washed up the porridge pots and packed up. After our trip we all set off walking through hot ridges. After lunch we were able to walk along a somewhat extensive system of brumby tracks. For some reason, possibly due to the ambience of dust, fresh equine and bovine droppings we developed an attack of American cowboy accents. We were actually to sight some brumbies who obligingly posed for photographs. Arriving at the planned campsite - a pretty waterhole, flat ground with attractive trees several years ago, we were disappointed to find it had turned into a stockyard and the water supply befouled. Don and Barry searched for another place and once again it was Barry who scored. The water this time was only 5 mins from the only suitable camping place - a flattish area amongst some young fierce-looking spinifex bushes.

Day 13

We spent the first part of the morning exploring possible canyons in the immediate vicinity then returned to the plain to explore more possible canyons as we made our way east. Lunch was in another previously unknown canyon just before Hugh Gorge. Afterwards we had another long trudge towards the entrance of Spencer's Gorge, arriving there rather late. Just as we approached we suddenly heard voices and then saw what appeared to be hundreds of children! We slunk back and the decision was made not to make our presence known to them. The area we were now in is leased by a person who has in the past refused to give permission to bush walkers to be there and who apparently refuses to sell the land to the NT Government to be included in a National Park. In recent years changes to the lease agreement to allow passive use of cattle leases by other individuals has been introduced by the NT Government. Thus, with our legal position unclear we retreated to a rather unpleasant flat area on top of a hill and a small party crept surreptitiously into the gorge and collected water unseen. This was achieved in the very last light and at the end of it most of us had pretty weary feet.

Day 14

A light wind became a gale during the night. Breakfast was eaten in gusty conditions. Two litres of water was distributed to each person as it was uncertain as to the quality of water we might find along the Hugh River. We trudged all morning in hot weather to a place on the map called Reedy Hole, a loop in the river bypassed by the main thoroughfare. The water there looked dubious so we boiled it for 10-15 mins before using it. The afternoon was spent quietly. Just as we were going to bed we heard a great chorus of dingo howling in close proximity. This caused one person to move her gear and sleeping place rather speedily - about 5 seconds, I think. Don tried to reply but they remained unimpressed. For our last night out we had a magnificent sky complete with the rare occasion of the line up of Jupiter, Venus and Mars.

Day 15

Set off fairly early in steamy conditions. At the Heavitree Gap we saw a massive encampment of various vehicles and large tents. The road which ran alongside the Hugh River had a lot of litter mainly in the form of beer cans. All the same the big river trees were very beautiful and we were rewarded with a visit of a flock of pink cockatoos (also known as Major Mitchell cockatoos I believe). We arrived at the main road at 10.30 and the bus arrived 15 mins later. WE had a room booked to clean up in and soon went to town in search of beer, hamburgers and other forms of decadence before our flight back. The flight being quite empty we were all allowed to visit the cockpit in small groups. Alex was in a group which saw the lights of Sydney from Parkes, a great end to an excellent holiday.



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DOWN MEMORY LANE TO BUNGONIA GORGE

Barbara Bruce

Members of Party: Jan Mohandas (Leader), Morag Ryder, Michelle Powell, Rob Webb, David Robinson, Jan Hodges, Tony Manes, Kay Chan, John Burrows, Henry Foster, Jean Kendall, Geoff McIntosh, Barbara Bruce.

On 6-7 July I had been part of Sev Sternhell's party to Yadboro and The Castle - a trip I last did many years ago. The weekend was superb in lots of ways and I experienced a rush of renewal on this return to 'serious' walking. So, still filled with this feeling of being about as capable as in earlier years, my mind zoned in on Jan Mohandas's Bungonia Gorge trip on the weekend of 20-22 July. I hadn't been to Bungonia for years, either, so I was ready for another visit.

Apparently the rest of the party intended to arrive early on the Saturday morning, but Rob, Michelle and myself all agreed we would rather drive up on the Friday night and enjoy a good night's sleep in the bush. It was delightful to wake up and watch the sun rise over the ridges and valleys, while the wind came in gusts similar in sound and interval to large waves at the beach.

Saturday morning we were all rugged up against the wind as we headed down Long Nose Point, noting the growing ravagement of the landscape by the Portland Cement mine. An hour later and I was enjoying our wander along the picturesque banks of Bungonia Creek, amused at the sight of John's pack, which reminded me of a modern day swag the way he had his tent stowed underneath and his billy strung on behind. That night we found out why he couldn't fit them inside.

A pleasant stop in the sun for morning tea and then we were on the steep climb up Mt Ayre. It felt like the middle of summer as the salt of my sweat stung my eyes. At the false top we digressed to catch the view down the Shoalhaven towards the Chimneys - quite a picture - then proceeded to the top where we found a relatively sheltered area for lunch. I believe I had the best spot - a good sized rock at my back and just enough protection from the wind for me to be able to lie back and enjoy the warmth of the sun for a nice snooze.

It was difficult to have to shift from this position of comfort, but as usual needs must. Back into the wind and down the steep shale track on the northern side of Mt Ayre. A few of us were very aware of our knees after this experience. Jan advised us to collect water from the creek before crossing and as Morag and I were waiting for the rest of the party on the further bank (we didn't bother taking off our shoes to cross - the rest did) we were discussing the current high level of the water and what it looked like without any water at all. I reflected at this point that I probably used to do a lot of talking (be quiet, Bob Younger!) because I couldn't remember very much at all. It was not far from this junction to the campsite either, so we had a nice early camp at 3pm. Good work, Jan.

Campfires are always very satisfying to the soul and this one was no different. The moon shone dully as we stole off to our tents for a good night's rest.

Sunday morning Jan took a group further up the gorge to inspect the waterfalls. He was concerned about the unusually high water level in the creek due to the recent rains, but they were able to get most of the way before having to turn back.

As Saturday's 'excitement' had been Mt Ayre, Sunday's was negotiating our way down among the boulders of Bungonia Gorge. In the intervening years I had not forgotten the size of these boulders. On this occasion the high water level meant that the usual route could not always be followed and to top it off there had been a rockfall comparatively recently. Nature once again proved how wonderful she could be by providing a tiny slot for us all to slip through. The feeling of relief didn't last for long, though, because we were soon struggling through lawyer vines, soft, rich soil and huge boulders. During this exercise quite a large rock became dislodged and rolled down over the boulders making a terrible sound: thank goodness no one was in its way.

Eventually we made it across to the other bank and after negotiating past the stinging tree it became quite easy going before we stopped for lunch at our previous day's morning tea point.

A stroll back along the pleasant banks of Bungonia Creek and then we were climbing the well graded track of Long Nose Point. Aside from the people of various trips and the boulders, this track is one of my main memories: not difficult, even pleasant, just take it nice and steady. Until you are almost at the top, anyway; the last 150 metres are a different story.

We reached the cars at around 4 pm - again not a bad time. One more trip down Memory Lane completed - I'll remember it a lot better this time.

What's next???

* * * * *

Conservation

A PLEA FOR OUR NATIONAL PARKS

Following a request raised at a recent general meeting, Alex Colley our Conservation secretary, has written to the NSW Premier, Mr Nick Greiner expressing concern, on behalf of SBW members, at the proposed reduction in the role of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. He conveyed to the Premier that SBW members feel the creation of a separate policy and wildlife unit would result in a less qualified evaluation of park and wilderness proposals.

"National parks are constantly being degraded by sewage pollution, roading, off-road vehicle penetration, so-called "control" burning, intrusive resort development and other activities," his letter read in part.

Alex also pointed out that if the State's national park system, acknowledged to be one of the world's best, is to be adequately protected, the role of the NPWS and its staffing should be augmented and that the Wildlife Act should provide for threatened species protection and wild and scenic rivers management.

It will be interesting to read the Premier's reply which will be duly reported in THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER when received.
Ed.

IN MEMORIAM - DR. BOB BINKS

by Dot Butler

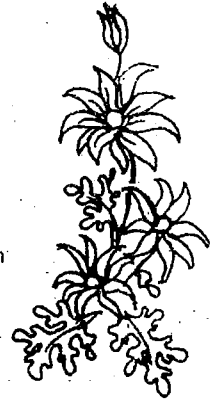
Bob Binks died on the 28th August, just short of his 70th birthday.

A Memorial Service was held on 3rd September at Killara Uniting Church, where his many friends assembled to say "Goodbye".

For many years Bob was doctor for the Bush Walkers Search & Rescue Organisation, and was always available when called out. On these troubled occasions his wise and compassionate understanding soothed both the victims and the distraught relatives.

He was happy walking in the Blue Mountains, at Kanangra, the Warrumbungles and in Tasmania, and also skiing in the Kosciusko area, and was a member of the University Alpine Club. Friends remember many fine weekends skiing and laying cork tiles on the floor of the U.A.C. Hut, and drinking "red-eyes" (red wine).

We say "Goodbye" to a profound and lovable person, and offer our condolences to his wife, Nan, daughter Gwaine, his brother, Christopher and sister Nell.



OBITUARY - ROY BRAITHWAITE

Club members who knew him well over the years will hear with sadness of the death on 24th August of Roy Braithwaite after a long illness.

Roy joined the Club in September 1947 and was a strong, vigorous and enthusiastic walker who went on many overnight walks and also on holiday trips to Kosciusko and Tasmania. After marrying fellow Club member, Mary Macdonald, home building and raising a family of four children took him from bushwalking for many years. However in the '70s, with the children grown up, he returned to the Club and led many day test walks as well as going on overnight trips and holiday trips to Kosciusko.

The Club sends its condolences to Mary and his family.

by Kath Brown



A NIGHT AT THE OBSERVATORY

by Alex Colley

Bushwalkers, who spend many nights beyond the pall of light and haze which envelope Sydney, enjoy a clear view of the stars, provided there is no cloud. So it proved on Don Finch's walk in the McDonnell Ranges in early June. Of particular interest was the conjunction of three planets, though nobody remembered which planets they were. One was obviously Venus, the brightest of the planets. Another was either Saturn or Jupiter, on the other side of the sun. The third was harder to pick, was it Mercury? no, it was too high in the sky. Was it Uranus? no, Uranus can't be seen with the naked eye. Mars perhaps? Very small for Mars, though slightly reddish, but being the other side of the sun a long way off it would be dim. Yes, it was Mars.

It was not surprising that some 40 members turned up at the Sydney Observatory on July 31st to learn more about the stars. We assembled at 8.15 pm and spent the next quarter hour or so operating a series of very instructive models on the ground floor. There was one which suspended two packets of cornflakes over pulleys. They could be raised by pulling on strings. One represented the weight of the packet on the moon - a featherweight - the other could hardly be shifted. It was the weight of a packet on Jupiter. Another of particular interest was a simulation of the movement of planets round the sun. The movement of the planets is governed by two balancing forces - centrifugal and gravity. If it weren't for gravitational attraction they would shoot off into space like a shot from a sling. The planets near the sun have to move pretty fast to maintain their orbits. Mercury goes round in about three of our months. Saturn, near the edge of the solar system, takes nearly 30 years.

Then we went to the small theatre, where Vicki gave us a talk on the history of the Observatory and Australia's present astronomical organisation with stations at Siding Springs, Mount Stromlo, Parkes etc, and showed us a video explaining some of the constellations. Most of them were named long ago, in ancient Greece. The stars do change positions, but only very slowly.

After this we were divided into three groups, each with a guide, and shown the telescopes. The oldest one, a 12 inch telescope, installed around 1858, was originally manually operated. Because the stars are continually moving around the sky, the telescope must move with them at the same height above the horizon and the same speed. This necessitates accurate movement of the telescope and its housing. If it didn't move with the stars they would streak across the eyepiece too fast for observation. Picking up the field to be looked at wasn't so easy. It was necessary to look through a small telescope attached to the main tube to find the approximate field, then define it further by looking through another with larger magnification before aligning the big tube.

Unfortunately we couldn't look at the stars because it was too cloudy, but this hardly mattered when we moved on to the newer, computer operated, electronic telescope, which can be instructed to focus straight on to the required field. What we could have seen on a fine night was clearly recalled on the computer screen - nebulae, star clusters, galaxies etc. Some example of these phenomena can be seen with the naked eye. For instance the star cluster "The Garden of the Pleides" can be seen for several months in summer. Other clusters appear only as blurred objects.

Galaxies too can be seen, the Magellan Clouds, near the Southern Cross, are galaxies. They are in a variety of shapes, most, like our own, a flattened spiral and perhaps slightly fuzzy but indistinguishable from stars without magnification. Some clusters are so concentrated that they appear as a solid mass, even when viewed through a telescope. How would it be if our solar system were part of a cluster, instead of being comparatively isolated? Would we be surrounded by suns? No, not really. The stars of the cluster are mostly a few light years apart, but they would appear, probably, as bright as Venus.

After this we went back to the theatre for further videos and questions. How is distance measured? The angle of the earth to the nearer stars is measured from opposite sides of the Earth's orbit. This enables the computation of a triangle with the base line Earth's orbit

the angles on either side of the base line and from that the distance to the apex of the triangle. This doesn't work if the stars are very distant, but there is another method. There is a star type known as a Cepheid variable which becomes brighter or dimmer at regular intervals. They are known to be about the same size, and distance of a galaxy can be calculated by brightness if one is found.

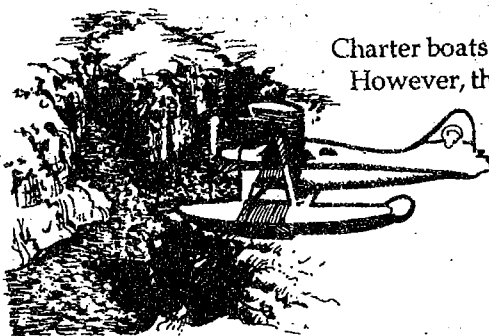
At the end of the evening we were shown a video which simulated a journey from the earth at distances measured in multiples of 10. At somewhere round 10^5 we could see the whole earth. Then we could see the whole solar system and eventually, at 10^{23} , our galaxy as a small blur. Then we came back again to the earth. We didn't stop there but went down to ever smaller particles - cells, atoms, protons and quarks. Is there a limit to space? Einstein said there was, of a sort. Are quarks made up of smaller particles? Perhaps we will never know. Nor will we ever know how it was all organised or why it is there at all.

* * * * *

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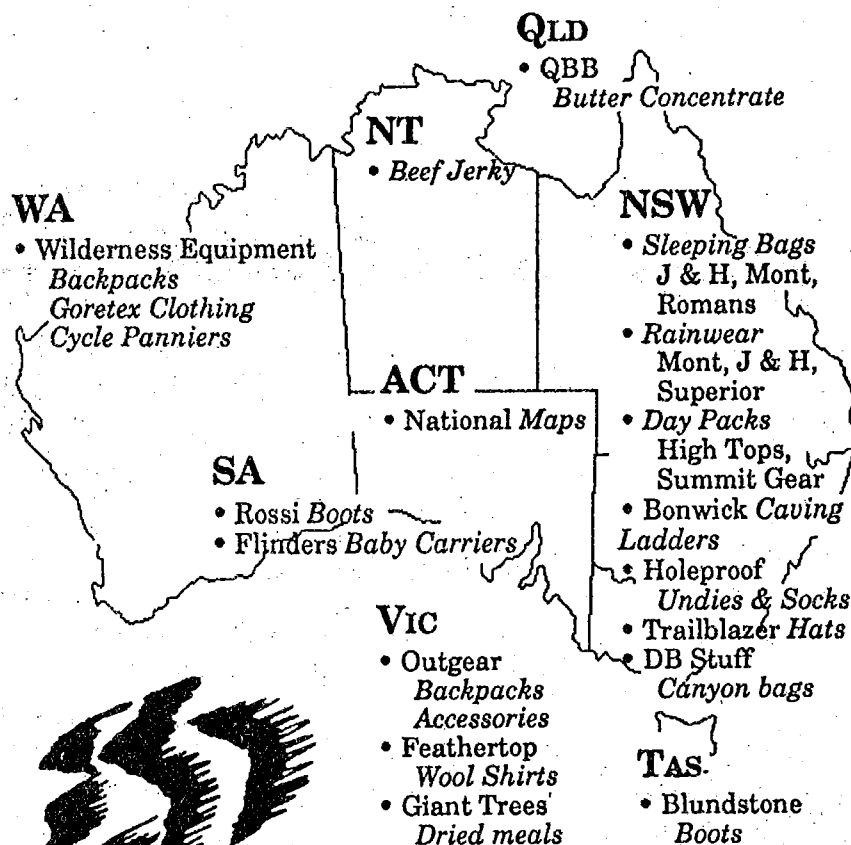


ADDITIONAL WALK - HOLIDAY WEEKEND - Monday 7th October

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THE AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

There were around 16 members present when the President, in the chair, called the meeting to order at 2023. The call for apologies brought responses on behalf of Joy Hynes, Ian Debert, Dot Butler and Peter Yardley. Of the new members, both Helen Hestelow and Bill Hope came forward to receive applause, constitution, annual report and badge.

The Minutes of the previous general meeting were read, and after some sorting out of the type of problem you can only have with a word processing package, received as a true and correct record.

Incoming correspondence included a letter from Keith Sherlock agreeing to our proposal to auction the offered painting and put the funds into the conservation fund, from Veronique Crowther, Ernie Austin and Arnold Medbury resigning from membership, a notice of the A.G.M. from Confederation together with minutes of the previous A.G.M. and leaflets on various aspects of bushwalking, and a letter from the N.P.A. regarding the proposed "Walk of Shame", designed to draw attention to the degraded state of the coastal track in Royal National Park.

The only matter arising gave rise to a discussion of the disposal of the painting offered by Keith Sherlock. The painting is valued at around \$300 and the feeling was that this value would not be likely to be realised through the club auction. It was decided to raffle the painting over the period leading up to the club Christmas Party.

There were also outgoing letters; to Confederation notifying them that Spiro has been elected to the position of delegate and that Bill Holland will act as delegate in the absence of Jim Callaway, to Kirribilli Heighbourhood Centre confirming our use of the upstairs meeting room on every Wednesday of the month, to Y.H.A. providing them with requested details of the club membership and activities, to the Commonwealth Bank employer of Peter Tresseder confirming arrangements for him to address the Club as part of our Social Program, to John Newman recommending that he consider non-active membership, and a letter, written by the Conservation Secretary to Mr. Webster, N.S.W. Minister for Planning, regarding the Blue Mountains draft Local Environment plan.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we received \$2,004, spent \$621 and ended up with a bank balance of \$7,372. A motion that the Treasurer be authorised to transfer surplus funds into appropriate accounts which will yield a higher rate of return was passed.

And so it was, that as pink angora is inexorably drawn to blue serge, we proceeded, you guessed it, to the Walks Reports. The weekend of July 12 to 14th saw both weekend trips, Jan Mohandas's Newnes to Pool Bone Gap and Bill Holland's Meryla Pass to Lake Yarunga, cancelled. Of the day walks, Dick Weston re-routed his Woodford to Springwood walk to increase the proportion of fire trail walking for the 16 starters and Jim Callaway experienced problems with the S.R.A. with closed rail lines, cancelled trains and alternative taxis. Despite all that the 12 people were able to complete a slightly re-routed version of the R.N.P. station to Waterfall walk. It was that sort of weekend, you see.

Ian Debert incorporated the party left over from Bill Holland's previous weekend cancellation into his Mount Carrialoo - Yarunga Creek trip to have a party of 9 on what was described as a pleasant walk. Jan Mohandas had 12 starters on his Mount Ayre - Bungonia - Shoalhaven walk. They reported some problems with increased water levels in Bungonia Gorge, but otherwise all appears to have gone well. Judy Mehaffey had 4 cyclists on her Bulli cycleway ride. The day was magnificent, the track level, and they lunched at the lighthouse. Alan Mewett's Biamee Creek Track had.... er, problems. The party of 14 (snapshot count - lunchtime) became dispersed somewhat due to some person (un-named in this account) locking the keys in their newish car and requiring assistance from various other persons to retrieve them. There was also a small outbreak of navigational inexactitude. None-the-less, a good time was had.

July 26th to 28 saw Jim Rivers and assistant leading a party of 11 on his Shay Ridge Dam to Mount Wilson trip. After a verry cold Friday night they made up for this by sleeping-out down on the Wollongambe River on Sunday night. They rose early after a fairly miserable meal the night before and reached Mount Wilson by 0830. Dick Weston was having none of this

nonsense for his Faulconbridge to Wentworth Cave walk - - he cancelled it. Details of Chris Perry's snow camping trip were sparse but we do know there were 3 starters. Errol Sheedy had a party of 5 plus 13 (no, I don't know what that means) on a cool and sunny day for his Waterfall to Engadine walk. Morag Ryder's Devil's Hole to Leura walk went but there are no details.

Jan Mohandas had 19 walkers on his visit to Cloudmaker trip over the 2nd to 4th August. They reported good cold weather and a rather tough Sunday. The combined Coolana maintenance and bush skills weekend attracted parties of around 3 and 15 respectively. The weather was gloriously sunny and mild and the ticks appear to have been on holiday. Ian Wolfe's cross-country ski trip was cancelled. Tony Manes reported an initial party of 8 on his Bundeena to Otford via the rocks and littoral day walk. For some reason there were numerous drop-outs as the day wore on. Chris Sonter's Lane Cove N.P. day trip went, the day was fine and warm and there were around 15 on the trip.

For the weekend of 9th to 11th August Morrie Ward cancelled his Kanangra Walls - Storm-breaker - Kanangra Creek walk and there was no report of Karl Lackmann's St. Albans area trip that same weekend. The Paddy Pallin cross-country ski race was run in the by now traditional atrocious blizzard. The Perrys, Chris and Keith, were there and lived to tell. Tony Manes' Mount Hay Road to Neates Glen day walk attracted a party of 20 on a great day and Morag Ryder saw her party of 15 safely along the Heathcote to Bundeena route.

The Social Report indicated that we managed to choose the only overcast night in a long run of fine weather for our visit to the Sydney Observatory.

Conservation Report brought news that we have received a response from Tim Moore, N.S.W. Minister for the Environment, to our letter(s) expressing our opposition to proposals to build houses on the Nattai and near Green Wattle Creek. The letter provides a guarded indication of opposition to the two proposals by the N.P.W.S. The only expression of opinion by the minister himself is: "In general, my view is that development applications in nominated wilderness areas must be judged in terms of their individual merit and consequences."

We have also received a letter thanking us for ours regarding the Blue Mountains draft Local Environment Plan. There was notice of a meeting of parties interested in conservation issues in the Blue Mountains. Copies of the Colong Bulletin are available gratis in the clubroom.

General Business saw advice of the decision to renew our public liability policy in view of the lack of resolution of details for the Confederation policy. The Club's delegates will seek clarification of this and subscription conditions at the Confederation A.G.M. We appear to have a problem justifying the total cost of Confederation membership to our Club. In the absence of details of Confederation financial reports for the year prior to the A.G.M. we will have to ask our delegates to act on general rather than specific guidelines.

The meeting closed at 2147.

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WALKS REPORT

by Tony Manes

Twenty one people (14 members, 5 prospectives and 2 visitors) attended the walk on 11th August last from Mount Hay to Evans Lookout. Excellent weather for a walk - blue sky, cool fresh air, no wind and bright sunlight. A very good group of fast walkers made leading easy. Morning tea at Lockley's Pylon was magnificent. Lunchbreak at Blue Gum for some - others chose to walk up to Perry's Lookdown and back for lunch.

Water in all creeks and river was crystal clear - the cleanest I have ever seen it. The walk up to Beauchamps Falls was pleasant, but quite cold for the rest of the walk up to Neate's Glen via the Grand Canyon. Unfortunately Jan Mohandas took a fall and injured his left thigh muscle.

All in all, it was an excellent day out.

* * * * *

MAILBAG

Letter to the Editor-

from John Newman

Too old? Never!

In recent years it has become apparent that fewer "aged" members attend meetings of our Club and also are seldom seen on bushwalks.

This is not due to lack of interest but mainly to a changed lifestyle which retirement and increasing years imposes on senior citizens.

Many clubs and associations have recognised these problems and rather than lose these "aged" members have acted with understanding and encouragement by extending to them the favour of a special category membership with concessional annual fees.

Such action is recommended to our Club and could be effected by extending the membership grade of "non-active" to read "non-active, aged and/or disabled pensioner".

(Subscriptions 1991:- Active \$30, non-active \$9, non-active with magazine \$21. Editor.)

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Readers may remember we recently quoted excerpts of a letter Club member Rudi Dezelin received from the Minister for the Environment, Mr Tim Moore, in response to Rudi's suggestion that suitable citizens be appointed honorary rangers to keep an eye on what's going on in our National Parks in regard to rubbish and litter disposal.

We invited Club members to let us know their thoughts and to tell us if they recalled such a scheme operating in the past. Lucy Sullivan of Killara has kindly sent us the following letter:-

Letter to the Editor-

from Lucy Sullivan

Re Rudi's suggestion of honorary rangers

I have heard of two people getting themselves appointed honorary rangers, although I don't know the details of the authority making the appointment. One was the father of a friend who had his place disturbed by bikies and other louts making use of a large piece of vacant land adjoining his house. He had himself made an honorary ranger so that he could tell them off - he was a large and aggressive man.

The second is a friend whose house backs on to the Lane Cove River Park. After several disputes with the rangers over their attempts to drive a fire trail past the foot of her land, she became an honorary ranger with responsibility for maintaining access and also ability to reprimand others abusing the park, e.g. dumping garden rubbish in the creek.

I think she thinks she is still a ranger, so perhaps the program hasn't entirely lapsed.

(Thanks, Lucy. Most interesting. Any other thoughts or recollections from other members? Editor.)

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CONGRATULATIONS TO - Helen and Brian GOLDSTRAW whose second child, a girl, Amy Elizabeth was born last August.

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES - Peter Yardley 8782499 (H) or 428 4444 (B)
or 8111 Holland 484 6636 (H) or 925 3309 (B).

THE EDITOR wishes any material for inclusion in the magazine to be sent to her home address, 43 Pine Street, Cammeray 2062, not to the Club box number.

THE CLUB DEBATE - 17/7/91THE STANDARDS OF THE CLUB ARE MOST CERTAINLY NOT WHAT THEY USED TO BE (THANK HEAVENS.....)

Our hard working and enterprising social secretary, Fran Holland, recently arranged a highly successful and amusing debating evening at the Club. Apart from anything else, it was a good way of sorting out the bravehearted from the shy, and it soon became clear as the former strode through the front door that, while some members do not hesitate to jump across chasms, surge up mountains and forge rivers, they are less than enthusiastic (let's face it, terrified) to speak in public.

However, one such person who has no trouble doing both with aplomb, is of course, Dot Butler, who proved that her performance in both areas is neck and neck in excellence. Dot chose the intriguing topic: "That the standards of the Club are not what they used to be" and, as Dot can do so well, she managed to inject a perfect blend of humour and sauciness into her argument.

She began her case by reflecting on the recent incident where a number of Club members were stranded on the wrong side of the Kowmung River and compared it to a time way back in the 1930s when another group of members were "misplaced" on a Club trip. It was feared, explained Dot, that the young ladies, who were accompanied by a member of the opposite sex, would lose their reputations if it became known they had spent a whole night alone in the bush with a MAN (despite the numbers being in their favour).

Club member Edgar Yardley, who was the uncle of none other than our current New Members Secretary, Peter Yardley, and another member called Ian Malcolm, later composed a song to commemorate the occasion much to the dismay of a third member, Harold Chardon (the fiance of one of the lost girls) who had tried to hush the whole event for the sake of the girls' reputations. Ah, where is such chivalry today.....

Dot's case, of course, was watertight.....if these were the standards of the Club then they have definitely dropped. She capped off her already convincing argument by producing the words of the song which were beautifully sung by Mike Reynolds and Tom Wenman. We reproduce them here in the interests of all those who like a hearty ballad to sing under the shower. They're sung to the tune of "The Mountains of Morne".

The Search Party - Where the Slopes of Mount Mouin sweep down the the Cox.

(Written by 1930s Club members Edgar Yardley and Ian Malcolm)

Now walkers, this clear hill's a wonderful sight
With its mountains uprising to left and to right,
And bushwalkers love in that region to roam
Though it's bleak and it's lonely and far, far from home.

Large parties assembled to hike out that way
To celebrate good old King George's birthday - - -
They feasted, they sang, and they scrambled o'er rocks
Where the slopes of Mount Mouin sweep down to the Cox.

In the depths of a beautiful fine frosty night
Page, Duncan and Yardley awoke in great fright;
They had camped in the valley away down below
And were snoozing so snug in the camp-fire's glow - - -

When they heard echoes sounding way up on the hill,
Sure, it gave the poor fellows a terrible thrill.
"Who is it?" they said, "at our solitude mocks
Where the slopes of Mount Mouin sweep down to the Cox?

They saw torches gleaming - - a signal, of course,
But no one could read it, 'twas Harold's strange Morse - -
Then they heard bushes crashing and voices quite near
And three stalwart fellows in camp did appear.

"Ach, sorrer," said they, "Poor old Taro's astray - -
 With four lovely ladies he's lost in some way!
 They have no food to eat! Not a match in their box
 Where the slopes of Mount Mouin sweep down to the Cox."

We sympathised deeply to hear the sad news
 Then ROLLED UP IN OUR BLANKETS TO FINISH OUR SNOOZE.
 BUT Orangoutang Roots and the rest of his pals
 Spent the shole of the night searching round for the gals.

But nothing they found, and when morning dawned clear
 Old Taro with maidens quite safe did appear - -
 But they dote on search parties, it's "so orthodox".
 Where the slopes of Mount Mouin sweep down to the Cox.

* * * * *

THE CONFEDERATION BUSHWALKING CLUBS NSW INCORPORATED
COMBINED 1990/1991 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & ANNUAL CONFERENCE
24/8/91

by Spiro Hajinakitas

The president Gordon Lee gave a welcoming address and praised the many achievements of the Confederation and criticised the lack of support given to the skeleton staff of Confederation.

Guest speaker Alex Colley spoke of the history of the conservation movement in NSW.

Secretary's Report presented by Garry Phillpott. Confederation received 319 items of correspondence (not including magazines and advertisements etc), 250 personal bushwalking enquiries and 1300 telephone enquiries.

Search & Rescue Report presented by Keith Maxwell. 1991 was a "quiet" year, only 3 callouts and 5 "alerts". It appears that Police regionalisation has resulted in regional Police overlooking Confederation's Search & Rescue's unique skills. S&R is attempting to improve the situation by contacting each region.

Insurance - Bill Holland SBW, Brian Walker CMW. Paul Leckie Yarrawood and Rose Maxwell Mount Druitt were appointed to a sub-committee to examine Confederation's rights under the insurance policy.

Treasurer's Report presented by Rose Maxwell. During her three years as treasurer Confederation has undergone some changes, such as insurance and incorporation, but more needs to change. Instead of penny pinching, "do nothing" organisation, too mean to spend on setting up the structures of a statewide body, Confederation needs the support of all the clubs, a vision of what Confederation is aiming for and the willingness to carry it through.

Part of the 1991/1992 BUDGET is as below:-

<u>GENERAL ACCOUNT INCOME</u>			<u>GENERAL ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE</u>		
<u>1991</u>		<u>1992</u>	<u>1991</u>		<u>1992</u>
9815	Fees	10 000	1 761	Newsletter	2 000
1900	Ball	1 700	-	Photocopier	4 000
2492	Insurance (sports accident)	2 500	504	Printing & Stationery	2 000
1145	Advertising newsletter	1 000	-	A.G.M.	1 500
1433	Other	1 300	3 925	Insurance	4 500
	Bank account	11 665	1 125	Ball	1 200
			1 200	to S. & R. A/c	2 000
16785		28 165	-	Conservation	1 000
			900	Postage	1 000
			918	Other	1 970
			-	Accumulated Funds	6 995
			10 333		28 165

<u>S & R ACCOUNT INCOME</u>			<u>S & R ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE</u>	
<u>1991</u>		<u>1992</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>
1 893	Rogain	2 000	-	New Equipment - Radios 10 000
1 200	Portion of Fees	2 000	-	New Trailer 1 500
5 872	Bequest & Donations	2 000	328	Printing & Stationery 700
2 480	VRA Grants	-	2 746	Rogain 2 000
1 159	Other	900	-	Travel expenses 500
	Bank A/c	12 961	846	Pagers 900
			2 860	Depreciation old equipment -
12 604		19 861	774	Other 1 700
				Accumulated Funds 2 561
			7 554	19 861

A Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was accepted by the Meeting with 2 SBW delegates Bill Holland and Jim Oxley dissenting from the portion of the Report which covered the Budget for 1991/92.

Fee Structure: At present all Member Clubs are paying \$3.50 per member per annum except NPA who are paying \$600 for what they say is a percentage of their membership that are bushwalkers. Three of the four SBW delegates spoke of SBW's opposition to the fee structure and Bill Holland gave notice that SBW would not pay any increase in fees next year as by Bill's reckoning, the Budget indicated an increase to \$7 per head. Bill criticised the expenditure of running Confederation. Many delegates spoke in support of the running of Confederation, some were surprised at SBW's attitude and Michael Maack concluded the episode by stating that if it cost \$X to run Confederation effectively, so be it! Michael also pointed out that SBW charged \$30 per head for their Club membership.

New Office Bearers Elected:

President - MICHAEL MAACK Springwood Club
 Senior Vice-President - BRIAN WALKER CMW
 Junior Vice-President - TONY PARR Camden
 Treasurer - DIANA PETERS Fairfield
 Secretary - GARRY PHILLPOTT CMW
 Assistant Secretary - SPIRO HAJINAKITAS SBW
 Minute Secretary - ALAN DIXON CMW
 Co-Editors - GORDON LEE SBW, MICHAEL MAACK and ANN BOWSKILL
 Conservation Officer - ROGER LEMBIT Springwood
 Public Officer - JIM CALLAWAY SBW
 Assistant Conservation Officer & Tracks & Access Officer - PAUL LECKIE
 Search & Rescue Director - KEITH MAXWELL Mount Druitt
 Publicity Officer - ROBYN ARTHUR
 Auditor - IAN COX
 Archives Officer - WARWICK BLAYDEN

The Conference proved to be a success and all present wished it to be staged every year. Being held on a Saturday enabled Country Clubs to participate and many yet unresolved issues such as the fee structure, aims of Confederation, Insurance, Education, Communication etc. at least got an airing, and the groundwork for the new Committee has been laid.

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WEDDING BELLS

Karen MCFARLANE married Ray PATTISON on 22nd December 1990. Their new address is:- 2/48 Pittwater Road, Gladesville 2111 Phone 816 5628

NEW MEMBERS

Please add the following names to your Membership List:-

FAN John - 2/37 McKell Street, Birchgrove 2041 Phone 810 3516 (H)

GRAY Erica - 5 Lurline Street, Wentworth Falls 2782 " (047) 57 3017 (H)

" (047) 39 4622 (B)

MARGARET NIVEN

New phone No

986 3537