

MOORE CREEK

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.

* * * * *

EDITOR	Judy O'Connor, 43 Pine Street, Cammeray 2062 Telephone 929 8629
BUSINESS MANAGER	Joy Hynes, 36 Lewis Street, Dee Why 2099 Telephone 982 2615 or 888 3144 (Business)
PRODUCTION MANAGER	George Gray - Telephone 876 6263
TYPIST	Kath Brown & others
ILLUSTRATOR	Morag Ryder
PRINTERS	Kenn Clacher, Les Powell, Margaret Niven, Barrie Murdoch & Kay Chan

* * * * *

JANUARY 1992

	Page
Windy Over Wollemi	2
A Bushwalk in Borneo	4
Conservation - Nattai Park	9
To Take the High Road or the Low Road?	11
The December General Meeting	13
Was This Bushwalking??	15
Social Notes	16
New Members	16

* * * * *

Advertisements

Willis's Walkabouts	7
Paddy Pallin - the Leaders in Adventure	8
Eastwood Camping Centre	14

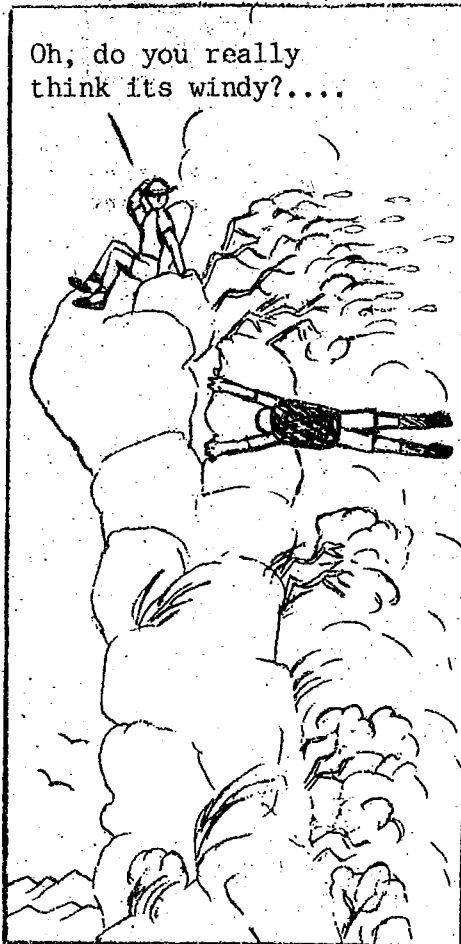
* * * * *

WINDY OVER WOLLEMI

By Morag Ryder

Leader:- Geoff MacIntosh

Party:- Sev Sternhell, Carol Lubbers, Burt Carter, Bob Milne, Erica Gray, Vince Smith, Louise Bulmer & Morag Ryder.



Oh, do you really think its windy?....

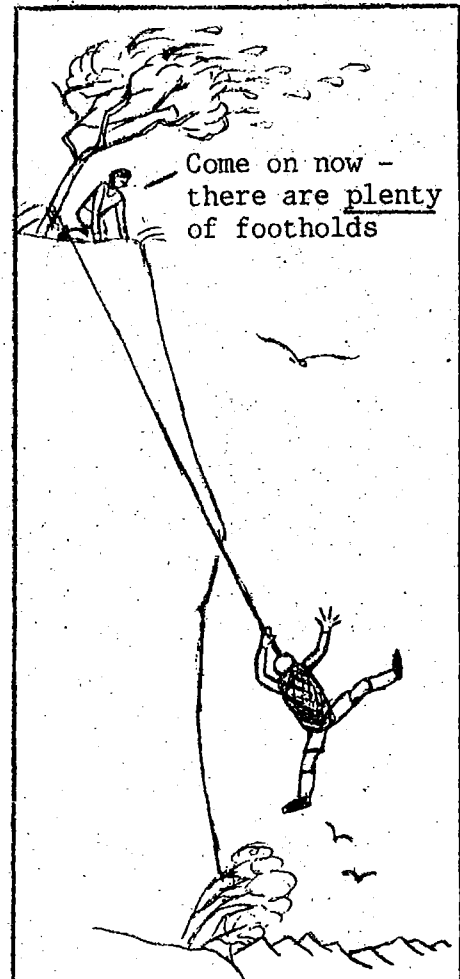
Friday September 20th, 10pm

The headlights of Sev's car swept the Glen Davis camping ground, illuminating cars and several tents. "We must be the last", said Sev, and spreading our sleeping bags in the station wagon, we were asleep almost immediately.

Saturday 21st.

We left our cars behind the tourist information centre and spent the next hour and a half wandering up Pipeline Pass in hot morning sunshine. Sev was out of practice and complained about cramps in his legs. Once on top, we made our way through the flowering bushes to a nice rock-shelf, which was morning tea stop.

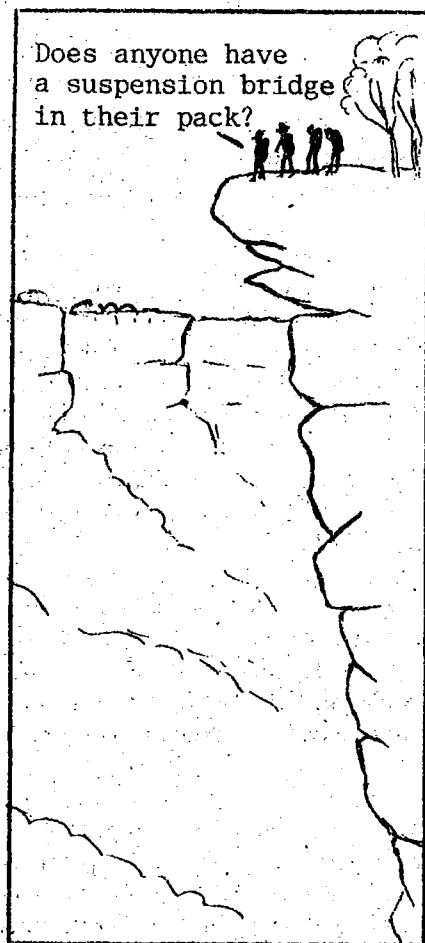
From here it was left, right, up, down and round about; with lots of tricky navigation through the jumble of tors and crevices which form the landscape in that part of the world. Shortly after having lunch and collecting water for our dry camp, the interesting part began.



Come on now - there are plenty of footholds

To reach our campsite near Glen Davis trig, we had to climb a narrow ridge which rapidly became a rocky crest, about a metre wide. What made this little scramble interesting was the cross wind, which was now gusting to about Force 9, bending the trees almost double. We cautiously inched our way up the crest, while the wind did its best to snatch us away. Next came a long, smooth, steeply sloping rock face, over-looking a deep drop to the valley below. The bold and nimble organised a hand line, which we lesser mortals used to scramble up, while the wind playfully tried to sweep us off the mountain.

After a short adrenalin-subsidence break, we turned our backs to the wind and followed Geoff to our camp in a little tree-filled hollow. It was fun to sit there, sheltered by rock walls, and watch the sunset clouds whisking overhead. They brought us only two sprinkles of rain that night, hardly enough to wet our flysheets.



Sunday 22nd

Fine, warm and calm. Away we went, mostly downhill, trotting along great rockshelves which ran like highways across the eroded ridge-tops. The sun shone, the flowers bloomed, the birds chattered and so did we. A deep valley ahead brought us and conversation to a halt. There should have been a saddle to take us across, but there was not.

We continued along, trying to reconcile the map with the landscape. Down a dip, up a hump, the trees diminished and the unmistakable peak of Glen Davis Trig appeared.

With this indisputable marker for a bearing, we did a smart left turn and walked across the missing saddle. Morning tea was called and we had 360° views while sunbaking on the rocks.

The sun blazed down as we made our way along what seemed an endless ridge to Freshwater Creek. Never did a name seem so tantalising. With water bottles almost empty and the temperature rising every minute, fresh water was just what we needed.

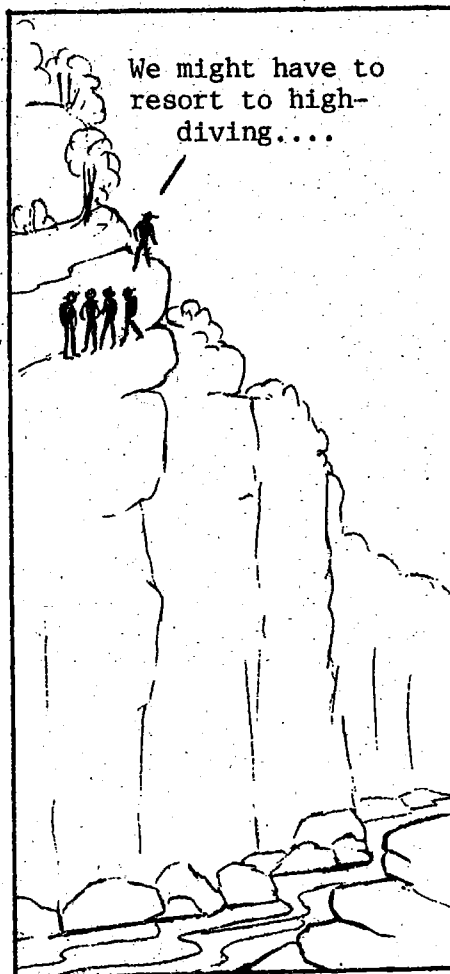
A steep and sudden drop signalled the end of our ridge and a rocky chasm indicated Freshwater Creek - down about 100 metres vertical.

We proceeded: sidle - down a bit; sidle - down a bit. The bushes became thicker and scratchier.

"There should be a gully just here" muttered Geoff. And there was, all misty green with moss and reasonably slippery. But there below was our reward, a small flow of clear water between the boulders of Freshwater Creek. A leisurely lunch was declared, more sunbaking and much tea drinking. Shadows in the gully grew longer and we rockhopped down until halted by a magnificent waterfall - abseiling quality.

Thankfully, Geoff decided to sidle the ridge, so the cool creek was abandoned and we were back in the hot and prickly scrub. Little rock faces gave us additional exercise and the scrub provided quite a few splinters.

A final drop down the nose into the tail end of Freshwater Creek - and we were in the valley, with nothing to do except stroll along the fire-trail and decide where we would stop for dinner.



A BUSHWALK IN BORNEO

BY MORIE WARD

As anyone who has been on one of my walks would know, I have a special interest in orchids, ferns and rainforests. When I read a magazine article on a national park in Borneo said to contain over one thousand five hundred different species of orchids and more plant species than any other place on earth, it certainly aroused my interest.

That was in 1983 and since that time I collected as much information as I could on the park and the more I read the more fascinated I became. Known as Kinabalu Park, it contains the highest mountain in South East Asia and goes in elevation from about 400 metres to over 4,100 metres. Steamy jungle covers most of the lower slopes and is home to the world's largest flower, the Rafflesia, which has a single flower up to one metre in diameter. Apart from the wide range of plant life the 78,000 hectare park was said to contain many fascinating animals including orang utans, clouded leopards, loris, tarsiers, bearded pigs and even two species of flying snakes. Also, I found that apart from the Amazon basin, Borneo has the largest area of unlogged tropical rainforest in the world and in the northern State of Sabah, where Kinabalu Park is located, tigers and rhino still roam parts of the southern area of that state which is largely unmapped and unexplored.

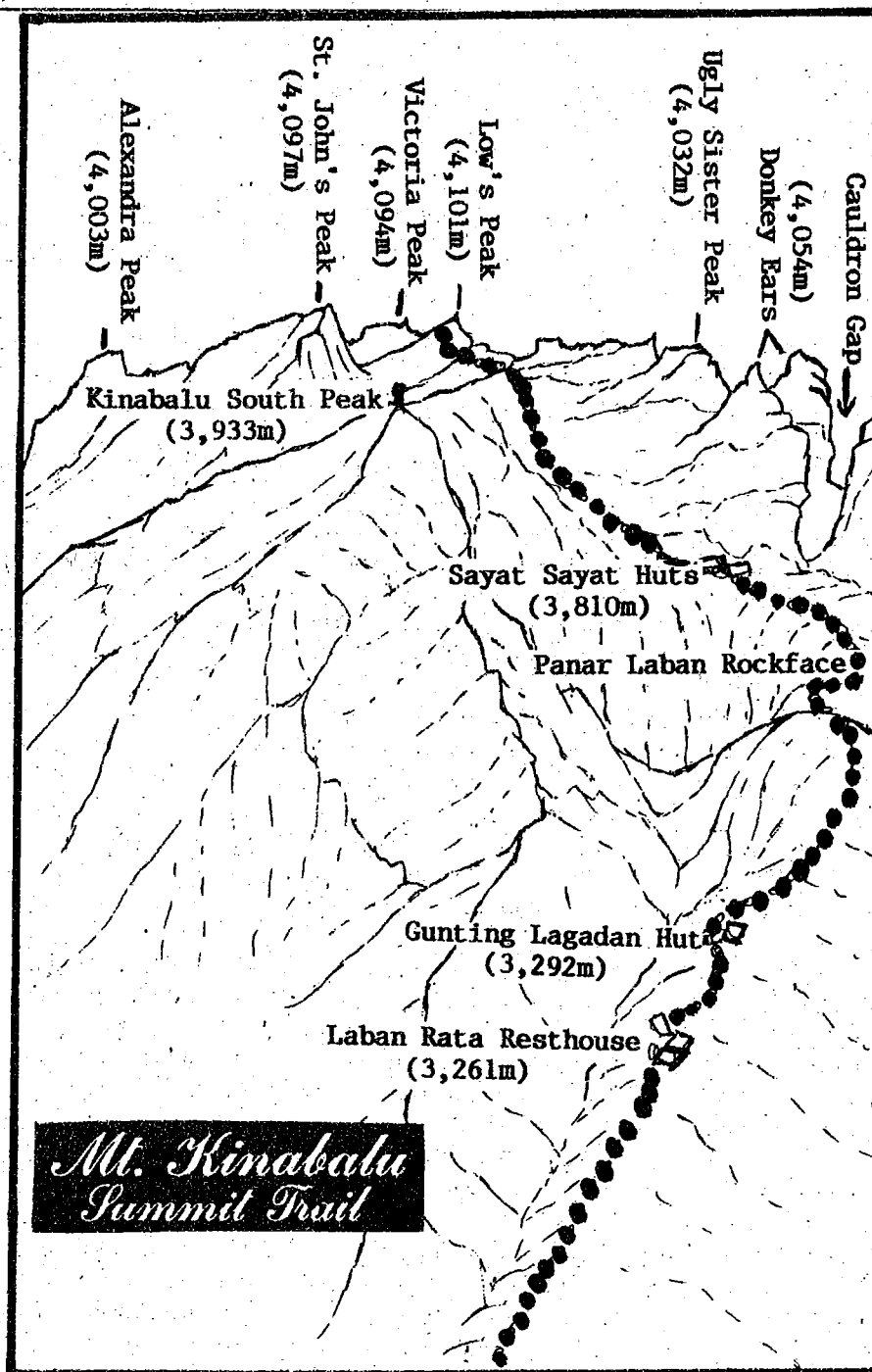
Kinabalu Park is only ninety kilometres by road from the port city of Kota Kinabalu, which is the largest city in Sabah with a population of around 250,000. Last Christmas (1990), after a short business trip to Hong Kong with lots of shopping to keep Jenny happy, we flew into Kota Kinabalu to stay at Tanjung Aru Beach Resort, a short distance out from town and on the edge of Tunku Abdul Rahman National Park. The resort itself was a beautiful place and Tunku Abdul Rahman Park consisted of five jungle clad islands, surrounded by coral reefs, with an hourly shuttle boat service from the resort.

We spent the first few days lazing around snorkeling and exploring these islands and went to another park at Sepilok for a day trip, where we saw about twenty orang utans while wandering along jungle trails. However, every morning at breakfast the peaks of Mount Kinabalu could be seen towering above the clouds and seemed to attract me like a magnet. After a day exploring the trails around the headquarters of Kinabalu Park I made arrangements to climb the summit. Like many things in Sabah the climb was shrouded in red tape. I had to book overnight accommodation at one of five mountain huts located at elevations of 11,000 to 12,500 feet, pay a climbing fee, hire a compulsory guide for a minimum of two days, obtain a park entry permit and finally pay a documentation fee. There were also a list of optional extras such as the hire of a sleeping bag at the hut where despite being almost on the equator it can get down to zero degrees. However, the total cost of all this was less than fifty dollars Australian and the people were very friendly.

Monday, the day of my walk, came and after an early breakfast and a short taxi ride I arrived in Kota Kinabalu in time to catch the 7.00 am local bus to the park. After several false starts we finally got under way about 7.30 and arrived at the Park headquarters, at an elevation of 1,500 metres at 9.30 am. After signing a book and filling in my life history, I had to pay another \$1.00 fee and was then able to collect my guide. His name was Dapit Sarabun and although his English was not the best, he seemed to have a good knowledge of the park's plant life, which was what I had requested. We then caught a mini bus, along with three other walkers, to save a six kilometre road bash to the start of the summit track.

As we climbed out of the bus shortly before 10.00 am I was somewhat stunned to see a party of about forty Japanese picking up their packs and starting off on the track. When we finally got going it was like Pitt Street as the track went downhill into a gully, so we stopped for a while and explored the jungle around a nearby waterfall. Although the temperature was cooler than on the coast, it was quite steamy and the rainforest very lush. Tree trunks were covered with orchids and we found a patch of "slipper" orchids in flower on the ground. There were also splashes of colour from the rhododendrons that varied in colour from dark red through several shades of orange and pink to white. A giant moss also grew in great profusion here and reached a height of almost a metre (*Dawsonia*).

As we moved on, the track was lined with begonias and pitcher plants and further back in the forest, tree ferns were also common. Soon we were climbing up a series of steps formed by tree roots and by the time we had reached the first trail shelter and lookout at 1,900 metres, the traffic had cleared considerably. However, as the shelter was becoming crowded we kept on going and now seemed to be ahead of the Japanese party. The jungle soon changed and climbing ferns and vines draped the trees and several species of palms became prominent.



We also started to encounter people coming down and some seemed badly distressed. The only ones who spoke English were two young New Zealand blokes who said they had made it to the top but had suffered badly from altitude sickness shortly after leaving the overnight huts.

After the second shelter and lookout at about 2,100 metres the rainforest canopy became noticeably lower. Tree trunks were snarled and twisted and their branches loaded down with masses of epiphytic orchids. A little more climbing and the orchids were replaced by epiphytic ferns and then moss and more moss. We entered the weird world of the moss or cloud forest with long dangling moss hanging from every branch and mosses of many different types covering the branches and much of the ground. Shortly after the third trail shelter at an elevation of 2,400 metres, a very steep track went off to the left marked Laylang-Laylang (place of swallows). My guide told me this was a short cut but it was better if we went that way on the way down. We kept on the main trail through a bamboo forest where the most common species was a tall climbing and quite delicate plant which draped the trees like moss (*Bambusa gibbsiea*). A little later tree ferns and ground ferns were becoming common and the forest seemed to be alive with many different types of birds. We had encountered the occasional monkey lower down the mountain, on the lookout for food; and these were now replaced by a type of small squirrel that was scampering all over the place (*Borneo Mountain Squirrel*).

By the time we arrived at the fourth trail shelter and emergency overnight hut, the bamboos had disappeared and rhododendrons were now everywhere with the main species being the bright yellow Lows Rhododendron (*Rhododendron lowii*). After a section where the trail climbed very steeply, the ground became rocky and much drier and the rain forest canopy disappeared. The vegetation had changed abruptly. Trees were much smaller, shrubs of many types now appeared and a type of stunted twisted pine became common. We were now above the cloud line and had a clear view of the granite peaks of Mount Kinabalu summit and we seemed to be onto a long steep ridge leading up to the base of the mountain.

A sign in English said that for the next two thousand feet it was the home of giant pitcher plants. My guide took me off into the scrub to look at these fascinating plants. There were about six different species and most scrambled over bushes and shrubs and had leaves similar to a Vanilla Orchid. The pitchers were so large they seemed to be waiting for small animals rather than insects. Many held over a litre of fluid and the largest species held up to four litres and was quite capable of devouring small animals. My guide then took me on a side track into a gully and along a swiftly flowing mountain stream to Paka Cave. There were orchids and rhododendrons in abundance here, with the orchids now growing on rocks as well as the branches of small trees. A small red flowered rhododendron was in bloom and there were large clumps of the beautiful Mountain Necklace Orchid (*Coelogyne massangeana*), which although it had finished its main flowering season still had the occasional spike left. There were also great masses of a *Dendrobium* orchid, with white flowers, growing in every spare rock crevice that was known as the Mountain *Dendrobium*.

Back on the trail again we were soon at the next lookout and we stopped here to admire the beautiful view of the mist shrouded jungle clad peaks down below. By now the change in altitude from sea level several hours earlier to over three thousand metres where I was now was having its effect on me and it was taking an enormous amount of energy for every step. My guide told me it was only a few hundred metres more to our overnight hut. I was not sure if he meant vertical or horizontal but just kept going slowly on and arrived at the LABAN RATA RESTHOUSE right on 2.30 pm. The building was like a boomerang shaped, two storey pole house, that followed the contour of the side of the mountain.

Apart from a few nibbles, I had not eaten since an early breakfast at the hotel, so after being shown to my room upstairs I came down and enjoyed a hearty meal from the small restaurant run by the fulltime caretaker family. The place was deserted, and we were told that we were the first walkers to arrive for the day, which surprised me somewhat considering the number on the track and our late start and slow dawdle up the mountain. By the time I had finished my meal and had a couple of cups of beautiful Sabah Tea, I was feeling a lot better and looking forward to talking to someone other than my guide. However, although by now there were at least ten or twelve others to arrive, as fast as they came in they disappeared upstairs to sleep it off. So, after a few directions from my guide, who also wanted to have a sleep, I set off to do some exploring by myself.

By the time I returned it was about five thirty, and the Japanese party had just gone by up to the next hut located about 150 metres further on. Our hut was now alive with activity and it seemed that most of the would be sleepers couldn't get to sleep and an English speaking group had now gathered at one end of the hut to await the sunset. It was somewhat of a multinational group and included, two French, four Germans, two English and seven Australians. Of the Australians, there was a family who now lived in Kuala Lumpur, a young couple from Perth plus myself. The English and French were in a bad way with the effects of the altitude and all four said they were having trouble breathing and were heading down at first light in the morning. We were told that if we wanted to climb to the summit in the morning we had to be ready to leave at 3.00 am. Apart from enjoying the sunrise at 6.30 am this was also necessary as most of the view would be obscured by cloud by 7.30-8.00 am.

I had a four bunk room to myself and at 2.30 am was awakened by an alarm clock in the Germans' room next door. I had time for a meal of scrambled eggs with my guide before we departed at 3.10 am. The lights were on at the hut containing the Japanese party, and as we went past there was plenty of noise but I breathed a sigh of relief that they had not started off yet. Although I did not find out until later, they were not going up any higher but going back down again.

After leaving this hut behind, we climbed for the first two hundred metres up ladders made from sapplings tied together with rattan, until the tree line ended at the Panar Laban Rockface. From here it was eight hundred metres of granite rock to the summit. On this first section of rockface, which was almost vertical, two thick ropes hung down and were anchored every five metres or so and this made the climb quite safe and straight forward, and from here to the summit it was roped all the way. I was conscious of the need to take it slowly to minimise the effects of the quick increase in altitude, but even so I went up one rope too quickly and my head

started to spin. My guide made me go down about ten metres and rest for a while and this seemed to do the trick, but from there on I went at a snail's pace. I kept thinking we were going so slowly we would be lucky to make it to the summit in time for sunrise, and with no moon at all was surprised when my guide, who was about five metres ahead of myself and two Malay soldiers, pointed out a shiny object up ahead in the darkness, with his torch, and said it was the summit plaque.

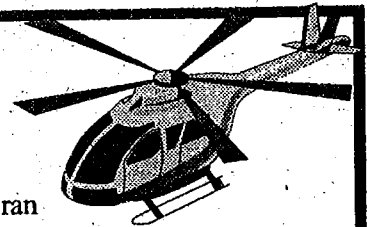
It was still only 5.00 am as the four of us clambered up the last few metres and stood together at the summit. After a photo session we settled down for the long wait until dawn. Despite being almost on the equator the thermometer on my pack read two degrees and with a stiff breeze blowing it was bitterly cold. However sunrise was truly magnificent and something that I will remember for the rest of my life. With the arrival of the Perth couple together with the four Germans right on sunrise it became quite crowded and after twenty minutes, when the cameras had stopped clicking, I became aware of the fact that I was only about one metre away from a very steep drop. To be precise it was an almost vertical drop of one thousand six hundred metres into what is named Lows Gully, so I decided it was time to start back down by way of the roped route. My guide took me to several other vantage points for a few more photos and then we set off down the ropes at a very much faster pace than I had come up.

After dropping below 4,000 metres I found I had no ill effects whatever from the altitude, and together with the two Malay soldiers broke into a gallop down the mountain with our guides trailing far behind. It was then back to the hotel for a dip in the pool and lunch.

* * * * *

MORAN RIVER:

April 19 - May 9 1992



Situated just to the south of the Mitchell Plateau in the Kimberley, the Moran River is one of the least known and least accessible wilderness areas in Australia. It is also one of the most incredibly beautiful. The river gorges seem to go on forever. Aboriginal art sites, shady monsoon forest, waterfalls, abundant wildlife, good fishing - this area has it all. Although this will be only our third visit, the Moran has a greater percent of repeat visits than any other area we visit.

Two weeks is not enough to do justice to this magnificent area. Our trip lasts three. We will beat the problem of accessibility by using a combination of helicopters and light aircraft to get us to and from the walk and to set down a food drop at our halfway point. Although long distance helicopter rides are very expensive, we are so keen to ensure that this trip goes ahead that we are offering a substantial advance purchase discount to anyone booking before the end of January.

Write or phone for our 16 page brochure and ask for the Moran River trip notes.

Willis's Walkabouts
12 Carrington Street Millner NT 0810
Tel (089) 852134 Fax (089) 852355



Paddy Pallin

THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE

For 60 years Australia's own Paddy Pallin company has invested considerable time and energy seeking ways in which to enjoy great outdoor activities unencumbered by spoiling weather conditions. The result is Paddy Pallin's superior Integral Clothing range. And your reward is a range of garments layered for maximised performance and supreme comfort in all weather conditions.

60
SIXTY YEARS
OF ADVENTURE



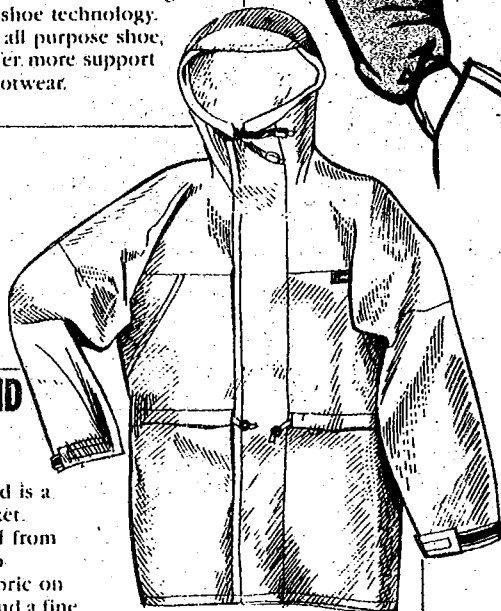
HIGH TEC LADY LITE \$93.50

These lightweight low cut boots combine the benefits of walking boots with running shoe technology. Popular as an all purpose shoe, Lady Lite's offer more support than casual footwear.
Sizes: 3-8



SLIPSTREAM \$99

Slipstream is the ultralight solution to cool breezes and unexpected drizzle. The zippered shawl collar seals quickly and snugly in variable weather conditions. And opens up in warmer conditions for added ventilation. An adjustable drawcord hem offers similar comfort options around the waist. A lightweight 300 grams, the Slipstream is made of durable easy care Exodus cloth. Available in colours Ebony/Sage and Ebony/Blueberry.
Sizes: XS-XL



VAGABOND \$159

The Vagabond is a true rain jacket. Manufactured from tough ripstop Stormtech fabric on the outside and a fine tricot mesh inside (for excess condensation dispersment), few jackets compare on performance. Other Vagabond design features include a unique hood that turns with your head and chest pockets that remain accessible whilst wearing packs and harnesses.
Sizes: XS-XL

SCARPA TREK \$229

Steep slopes, wet ground and long journeys are taken in stride by Italy's world famous Scarpa Treks. Nothing less than the finest materials and craftsmanship have ever been accepted by this recognised leader in quality footwear. Because comfort and durability are Scarpa Trek's reason for being. This legendary comfort can be attributed to the fine selection of leathers, natural curring soles and soft ankle cuffs that make up every Scarpa Trek shoe.
Sizes: 35-48



507 Kent St
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 264 2140

527 Kingsway
MIRANDA NSW 2228
Phone: (02) 525 6829

Kosciusko Rd
JINDABYNE NSW 2627
Phone: (064) 562 922

11 Lonsdale St
BRADDON ACT 2601
Phone: (06) 257 3883

PLEASE SEND ME A FREE COPY OF
'91 INTEGRAL CLOTHING CATALOGUE

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

PADDY PALLIN PTY LTD
145 Hordern Place
Camperdown
NSW
2050

Conservation

by Alex Colley

December 1991 was a vintage month for conservation. There were three notable gains - the launch of the Red Index of Wilderness (see next month's magazine), the establishment of the Wilderness Fund (as described in the last issue) and the gazettal of Nattai National Park.

NATTAI PARK - WHAT'S LEFT OF IT

Sixty years ago the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council formulated a proposal for a Greater Blue Mountains National Park stretching from Mount Boonboorwa in the north to the Upper Nattai in the south. It had four divisions, northern, central and southern, and a separate Nattai Park in the south. By 1987 all but the Nattai Park had become national Parks.

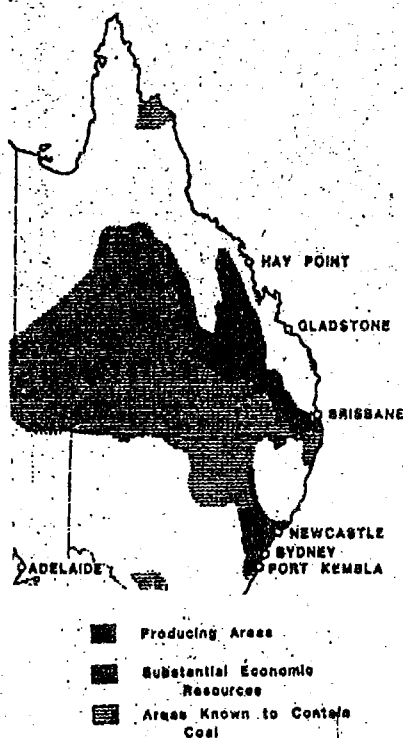
In 1974 the National Parks Association put forward a Nattai National Park proposal, but it was not accepted. In 1987 the Colong Foundation for Wilderness and the Total Environment Centre commissioned Keith Muir (B. Nat. Res. Hon.) to prepare a submission. A professional and detailed submission was written complete with Henry Gold photographs and maps drafted by Bill Brennan and paid for by a donation from the SBW. It was accompanied by the nomination, under the Wilderness Act, of a 30,000 ha. Nattai Wilderness.

The proposal triggered development proposals such as the Barrallier Trail and logging at the junction of the Nattai and Alum Rivers, both opposed by the SBW and the Mount Flora quarry. The most determined opposition came from mining interests, led by the Australian Gas Company/Amoco consortium. AGL already holds exploration licences covering 15,981 sq.km. of the Sydney basin of which only 750 sq.km. is within the park proposal. As a proportion of the prospective coal and gas-bearing measures of eastern Australia the Nattai is insignificant. All of the seven mines started in the park area have been abandoned. The CSIRO estimates that the untapped gas reserves under eastern Australia are three times larger than known existing gas reserves.

BLACK COAL RESOURCES

EASTERN AUSTRALIA

(As per Joint Coal Board)



Nevertheless the possibility of mining the Nattai reserves was seized upon by the State Government, which has a firm policy of withholding the gazettal of parks until the land has been proved useless for any other purpose.

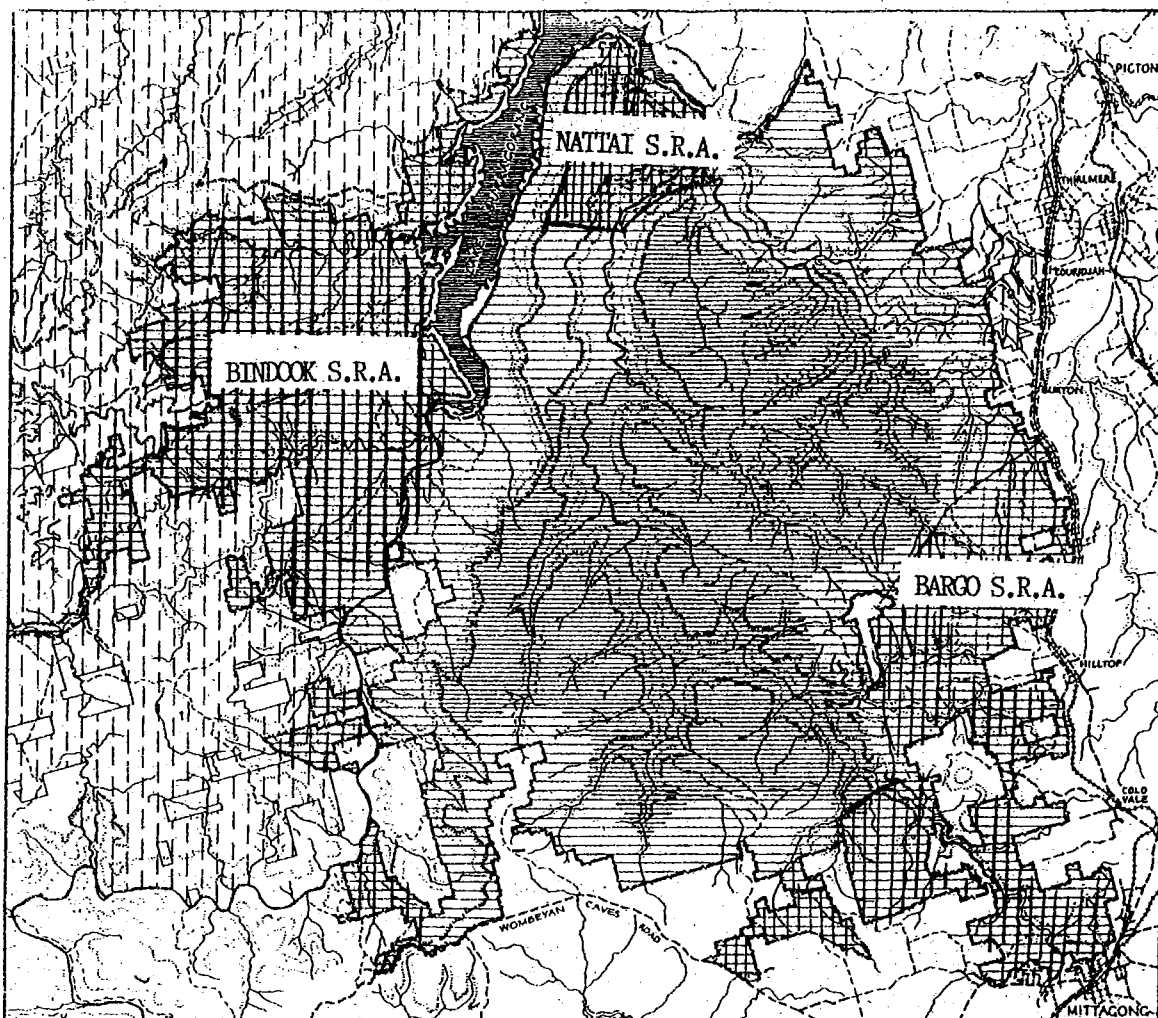
The four year delay in reaching a decision on the park and wilderness would no doubt have continued indefinitely had it not been for Dr. Terry Metherell's initiative in introducing a Nattai Park Bill on November 15th. This confronted the Government with the choice of creating the park or incurring the stigma of being anti-conservation and the probability of defeat (since the ALP, the Independents and the Rev. Nile supported the Bill).

Spurred by the Nattai Bill, the Government proclaimed a park under the National Parks and Wildlife Act and a wilderness under the Wilderness Act. The park covered 60,000 ha. of the Colong Foundation proposal. Most of the remainder was put into the Bindook, Nattai and Bargo State Recreation areas. Some areas in the south and Jellore State Forest were also excluded.

The purpose of the State Recreation Areas was not recreation but the authorisation of prospecting and mining, an activity ridiculously inappropriate for the Bindook area where mining ceased in the twenties. Prospecting some 15 years ago entailed the pumping out of the old Yerranderie workings,

resulting in a flood of anaerobic arsenic and lead impregnated water flowing down Tonalli Creek to Lake Burragorang. There would also be an inevitable spill over of off-road vehicles and horse riders from the State Recreation Area into the adjoining wilderness and water catchment areas. Another SRA of 15,000 ha. was created on the eastern side of Lake Burragorang, north of the Nattai. This area has already been badly scarred by cliff collapses caused by mining.

It was not until shortly before Christmas, the time for the publication of unpopular decisions, that it became known that exploration and mining beneath national parks was not ruled out under the provisions of the National Parks Act. The Nattai Wilderness was declared to a depth of only 60 metres, leaving the way open for mining beneath it. This in spite of the fact that on November 15th the Hon. Tim Moore told Parliament that, "So far as I am concerned, there will be no mining in or under the national park which will include the wilderness area. That is prohibited by statute and I would consider it improper to even address a submission on exploration in a wilderness area."










MAP 2 PARK PROPOSAL

THE NATTAI NATIONAL PARK PROPOSAL

THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR
WILDERNESS LTD DEC 1987

LEGEND

- Proposed Nattai National Park 
- Wilderness Area within park proposal 
- Blue Mountains National Park 
- Thirlmere Lakes National Park 

- Railways 
 - Roads, vehicle tracks 
 - Excisions 
- 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Km



Despite this about turn, engineered by National Party Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy, the Hon. Robert Webster, there is a fair chance that most or all the Colong Foundation proposal will eventually be achieved. It is unlikely that exploitable deposits of silver and lead will be found in the Bindook State Recreation Area, or that, if discovered, they would be exploited. Water Board opposition and widespread public protest could be anticipated. It has proved unprofitable to mine coal in the area, nor has long period prospecting in the Sydney Basin yet led to an economic discovery of natural gas.

If nothing is discovered the Minister has said that the Nattai and Bargo State Recreation Areas will be added to the park, and the Bindook State Recreation Area added to the Blue Mountains National Park. It is probable that any mining proposal would be strongly opposed by the parliamentary proponents of the park.

It is a sad reflection on our materialistic society that a proposal to preserve a beautiful remnant of the natural environment is subordinated to unnecessary possible development.

* * * * *

TO TAKE THE HIGH ROAD OR THE LOW ROAD?

by Ian Wolfe

This indeed was the question. I had regretfully had to cancel a 4 day ski trip in the Happy Jacks Plain area in July due to its low elevation and scarcity of snow. The heavy snowfalls of the end of the season had resurrected the concept of running this trip over the October long weekend. However, the thunder storms and hot weather in the two weeks prior put paid to that idea.

Instead it was back to the original plot of spending four days touring and XCDing around the summit area. The party of 9, having assembled at Thredbo, caught the chairlift to the top (\$13) before heading off in brilliant sunshine towards the Ramshead. Unfortunately enroute we were disturbed by a skidoo, well outside the resort boundary, ferrying some alpine skiers to the Ramshead. After stopping the driver we politely questioned him whilst another party member took a photograph of the skidoo and its number plate. He pleaded ignorance to being outside of the authorised area for skidoo's and was slightly abashed when informed that we would be reporting the incident to the NPWS. Maybe the word will get around and hopefully this noisy intrusion into the park will be reduced.

Putting this event behind us we enjoyed the fine views from the Ramshead summit before descending into the valley of the Swampy Plains River to Cootapatamba Hut. This bright red hut with a unique chimney entrance is the sole example of a purpose designed survival shelter in the park. It has bunks for two or standing room for ten at a pinch.

After a leisurely lunch we skied down the valley beside the river to find an early campsite. An afternoon ski around the surrounding bogongs ended with a marvellous sunset overlooking the Geehi Valley. The night itself began with a carpet of stars and ended with increasing wind. This heralded a grey dawn and a low scudding cloud base. After packing up we headed north to the west of Kossie and as we climbed the cloud dropped down to greet us. Soon we were engulfed and visibility was reduced to 50m or less.

We therefore went into adverse weather navigation mode ie one person as route finder/lead navigator, one as check navigator/leader, the party skiing close together in Indian file and one person nominated as tail-end-charlie. In this manner we snaked, by bearing and time calculation, from one known point to the next. We arrived at our campsite in Moraine Pass Creek for a late lunch. Here we carved out of the side of an eroded cornice some sheltered sites for our tents. One tent group, who were feeling somewhat energetic, went to the extent of creating a combination snow cave/igloo inside which they erected their tent! The rest of us enjoyed ourselves by practising our turns or by skiing up over the lip of the Pass to peer down into Kunama Cirque.

The next day dawned clear but windy and after a lengthy sleep in (to allow the sun time to unfreeze the snow) we headed off on a day trip towards Mt Townsend. We zigzagged up Muellers Peak to have morning tea with a view of Watsons Crag. It was then that disaster struck not once but twice, all be it in a minor way. One of the girls performed a telemark which didn't carve and instead strained an ankle ligament. So it was out with the first aid kit and a strapping of limbs ensued.

They say that lightning never strikes twice, well they lie! For in the next 30 m another of the girls did a telemark which broke the bale on her binding. On subsequent analysis this appeared to be due to a combination of metal fatigue and a heavy telemark boot matched to a light/medium weight binding (Skilhom). So it was out with the spare binding and the screw drivers.

We split the party at this point, the broken & strained (with a suitable escort) then proceeded back via easy stages to the campsite whilst the rest of us headed for Townsend. The summit was attained in a marvellous swirling orographic cloud which parted long enough for us to enjoy the views in all directions. We then skied off the NW end down for a series of runs to the treeline. These are some of the longest runs in Australia with the gradient being optimised for parallels as well as telemarks. After lunch we played around until the orographic cloud settled in for the duration. This encouraged us to ski back to towards the campsite with a frolic in Rawson Creek providing an interesting interlude.

Next day had a very low cloud base being pushed along by a brisk wind. Our plans of climbing Kossie on our way out were shelved. Instead we skied into Seamans Hut for morning tea before heading back to Thredbo in the lee of Etheridge. A sheltered slope provided an ideal practise site which we proceeded to carve up with gay abandon. The trip was concluded by a thigh burning descent down the front slopes of Thredbo in the heavy snow.

In all a great four days in the mountains where we experienced the full range of weather, slopes, views and dramas.

THE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

The meeting, rotated 90 degrees in the usual room to allow for a later presentation by Ben Esgate (g'day Ben) on bushfires, began at around 2007 with almost 17 members present and the President in the chair.

There were apologies from Helen Gray, George Gray and Jim Callaway. The welcome to new members was deferred to a later part of the meeting. Their names were Don Willcox, Ken Smith, Ross Shaw and John Hogan.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received. Correspondence was comprised of letters to our new members; to speakers who had made presentations to club meetings, from Geoff Grace regarding the Nattai Park proposal, a welcome refund on our subscription to Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs and a notice from Australia Post regarding our address for return of mail.

The Treasurer's Report was next. It seems we received income of \$794, spent \$1,967 and closed with a balance of \$381. A motion that we transfer \$600 to the Conservation Fund was passed after explanation and some debate.

In order to provide more time for Ben Esgate's talk the Walks Report was presented in jumble order, sort of. If your walk did not get mentioned and you feel you have a grievance, talk to Carol or Bill. They also threw in a walk belonging to last month's meeting. It is not included here. Unscrambled as best I can, the report goes like this:-

Over the weekend 16,17th November Greta James had 8 walkers on her Gingra Creek, Kowmung River walk which was described as a good trip. There was no information on John Nagy's Shoalhaven trip and although we know Alan Mewett's Cowan to Brooklyn walk went, there are no details, not even the times! (Lost in the mail I guess.)

The weekend of 22,23,24 November saw Kenn Clacher stringing along a party of 14 on his Kalang Falls - Wallora Canyon abseiling trip. Both days were hot and fine and Murdering Gully still is, on hot afternoons. Ian Debert's Cox's River walk went led by Keith Docherty with a party of 8. Morag Ryder's Faulconbridge to Glenbrook trip did not go, but Bronny Niemeyer had a party of 12 on her King's Cross to South Head walk.

Les Powell led 9 intrepid souls on his Ettrema Creek trip over the weekend of 29,30 November, 12 December. The creek was low, and although the Saturday was cool it warmed up on Sunday in time for the climb out up Myall Creek. George Mawer led a party of 5 on his Kanuka Brook walk and Ray Turton had 20 on his Heathcote to Waterfall trip.

The weekend of 7,8 December saw Bill Holland and a party of 8 enjoying a Colo River bludge walk in warm conditions. Nancye Alderson's Blue Mountains historical day walk was cancelled but Tony Manes led a party of 13 in good weather from Stanwell Park to Otford via the coast. There was no report of Errol Sheedy's Deer Pool walk. All of which brought the Walks Report to an end.

Details of the Conservation Report will appear in the magazine. Briefly the matters covered were the launch of the Colong Foundation's Red Index of NSW parks and wilderness areas, a donation of \$130 to the NSW Government's Wilderness Fund, the Nattai National Park has been proclaimed and SBW have donated \$300 to the Colong Foundation, \$200 to the North-East Forrest Alliance and \$100 to the Blue Mountains World Heritage Committee. These amounts were disbursed from the Club's Conservation Fund.

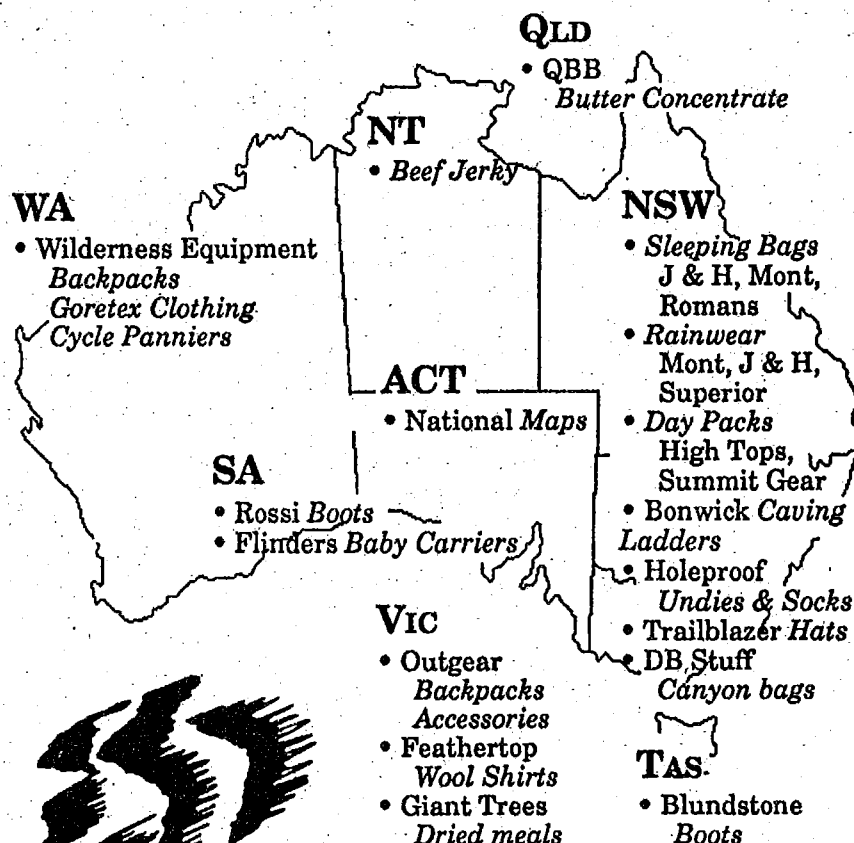
There was no Confederation Report.

General Business saw agreement to take no action of the "Heritage of Australian Walking" proposal which had been put to the previous General Meeting.

The General Meeting never did close, at least not while I was there. We moved on to a timely presentation on BUSHFIRES by Ben Esgate. It appears that after so many years of cooler, wetter conditions, when we do have bushfires they will probably be quite fierce. A summary of Ben's advice has appeared in the magazine. Read it. It could help you to avoid risking your life in a fire.

* * * * *

**FROM EVERY STATE,
AUSTRALIAN MADE
IS GREAT!**



**EASTWOOD
CAMPING
CENTRE**

3 Trelawney St (PO Box 131) Eastwood NSW 2122

PHONE US TODAY & SAY "G'DAY"
02-858-3833

WAS THIS BUSHWALKING ? ?

by Rosemary MacDougall

Having read Frances Ing's letter in the November 1991 magazine, I felt I should hasten to describe my first walk with SBW - Jan M'Dhandas's Gourmet Weekend at the end of October at Kanuka Brook.

I too had been told that SBW were very serious about walking, what with maps, first aid kits, jumpers (woollen) and raincoats irrespective of the temperature.

If I had not walked with Jan before and come to accept him as a man of his word (it's not far, you can make it) I may well have been surprised at the goods and chattels which appeared at the commencement of the walk.

After lengthy discussions as to whether we should leave our cars in the parking lot at Glenbrook railway station, at the Police Station (too far away and too unreliable), it was decided that we should foregather outside some residences and leave our cars there.

We duly assembled; various people were carrying hand luggage (I thought you had to have your hands free), billies (obviously these people didn't know how to pack a pack), lanterns (I understood bushwalkers were supposed to be in bed by nightfall), serving dishes (he must eat a lot) and other paraphernalia.

Some people seemed to have a permanent lean forward which they claimed was caused by the bottles of champagne and wine in their packs. Goodness me, what sort of a weekend was I in for?

Bravely I followed the leader! Alas! After 100 metres there was a cry from Fran Holland bringing up the rear. "You're going too far - it's this way." As you can imagine my confidence was shattered but I'd come this far so it seemed sensible to press on in the general direction of our destination.

Fortunately we did not have to go far under the burden of our heavy packs before a smoko was called. We rested for a short while by the creek before moving on to our lunch spot. I had expected to be walking for some time but lo and behold lunch was just around the corner - and a gourmet lunch as Jan had promised emerged from everywhere. It was, I thought, a feast fit for kings - how could they keep this up for the whole weekend!

We moved to our camp site enjoying several swimming stops along the way. By 4.30 Jan announced it was time to dress for happy hour. I had tried to find out exactly how people might be attired for the occasion but Jan's response was non-committal. I therefore decided that as my tiara was at the dry cleaners my party dress and long gloves would have to do.

The garb in which people appeared was astonishing. There were the kissing nuns, the butler and the maid, the Maharajah (no points for guessing who that was) and various other assortments. The show was stolen by Dick Weston's act of gallantry when he carried one of the ladies who was dressed for 1950's wedding or church social over the creek to the festivities (my enquiries reveal he did not carry her back at the end of the night).

The food which was presented by everyone was delightful. The array of cheeses and wine would have left Len Evans for dead. We had everything from hors d'oeuvres to entrees, main course and for sweets fresh fruit dipped in hot chocolate. Entertainment was provided by yours truly, Bill Holland and other chorus guys and gals.

With the worries of the world sorted out over a yarn around the campfire we hit the hay to fight another day.

What a wonderful memorable weekend. Thank you everyone - I hope to survive your rigorous walks to become a member and join you again in 1992.

A Prospective.

(P.S. If you hear any vicious rumours that I am the Currawong Kid then I reserve the right of reply!)

* * * * *

SOCIAL NOTES

February 5 Committee Meeting

12 General Meeting

19 NATURAL HEALTH SOCIETY - 'Nutrition for Walking Forever'
talk by Roger French.

26 ALAN SPENDLOVE of MACPAC - Come and learn the best way to
take care of your bushwalking gear - plus information on
the latest developments in new equipment.

DINNER at La Trattoria (Italian Restaurant), 34 Burton Street, at
approx. 6.30 pm.

All other Club evenings, members coming straight from work are very
welcome to join others in the club kitchen with 'take aways'. Good variety
available in the area.

Any questions or suggestions for social program welcome, please
ring Fran Holland 484 6636.

NEW MEMBERS

Four new members were welcomed at the December General Meeting. They are:-
JOHN HOGAN, ROSS SHAW, KEN SMITH and DON WILLCOX.

Their names, addresses and telephone numbers will appear in 1992 List of
Members which will be posted to all members in February.

* * * * *

KOSCIUSKO AT CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR.....

We have just heard that George Mawer's trip ended in trouble - well
trouble for George. Attempting to cross a snow drift (or was it ice?)
he slipped and fell, breaking a bone in his ankle. The party were able
to arrange for a stretcher and transport to get him to safety. Back now
in Sydney he is in plaster and won't be walking for about three months.
Bad luck, George, you have our sympathy but also good wishes for a complete
recovery. And hope you will lead many more good trips.

