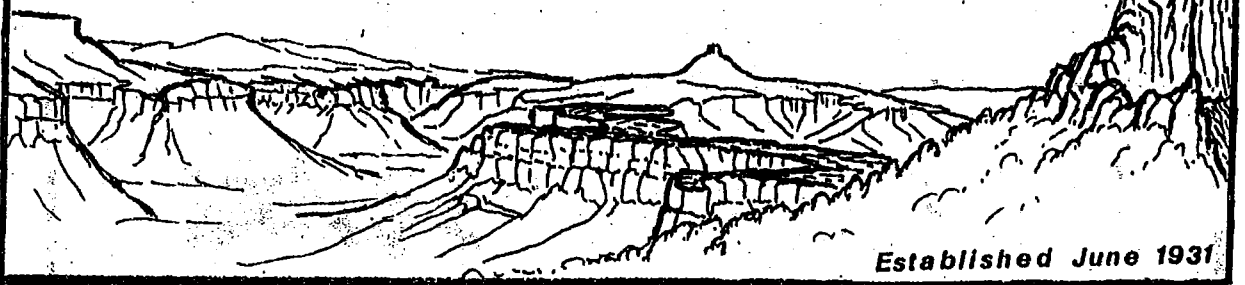


THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



PIGEON HOUSE

Established June 1931

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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OCTOBER 1992

		Page
Editorial Notes	Deborah Shapira	2
Patterns on White	Deirdre Kidd	2
Tamboritha Tango	Ian Wolfe	3
Blue Mountains Mining History	Geoff Grace	7
Hints for Foodies		8
Walks Reports - Muogamarra Nature Reserve	Alan Mewett	9
The September General Meeting	Barry Wallace	11

Advertisements

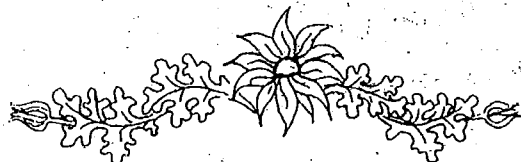
Paddy Pallin - The Leaders in Adventure	6
Eastwood Camping Centre	10
Willis's Walkabouts	12

EDITORIAL NOTES



Well another month has crept up upon us. You will all no doubt be lamenting the smallness of this month's issue. This is because the Editorial team has been extremely busy lately and was unable to spend the time: (a) coercing various persons to supply promised copy and (b) writing copy under various pseudonyms or otherwise. In any case, do regard this paragraph as a plea for copy, lots of walks reports please. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Debbie



PATTERNS ON WHITE

Mountains clothed like an ice-cream parlour
undulate under a frosty coating,
and beckon with pristine yet voluptuous forms,
ensnaring the unsuspecting climber.

Etched against a backdrop of receding blue cousins,
they proclaim their virginal white credentials,
luring man's spirit out of ravines,
to fly free and unfettered as wind and bird.

A cracked meringue casing covers
the subterranean gurgling of a creek in thaw.
New life is signalled out of silence and sun,
while the minutiae of man's becomes undone.

Dwarfed, he becomes progressively insect-like.
From a black dot on the distant range, he disappears
leaving his passions and purposes behind
for someone else to find, as etched patterns on white.



TAMBORITHA

TANGO

by Ian Wolfe

Well, after some shuffling of dates back and forth, due to changing employment commitments, we finally turned our trusty steeds south and headed down Mexico way one Friday evening. We were to rendezvous with the rest of the group at Maffra in eastern Victoria at 10 am next morning. We chose the inland route via Cooma, Bombala and Cann River with an overnight stop on the banks of the Bombala River as the quickest path.

At Maffra we met a friendly farmer who ferried one group up to the snow line whilst his son helped the drivers drop off the cars at the other end of the trip. This necessitated a 12 hour round trip through the Dandenongs and Mansfield to the terminus at Bluff car park. This sounds a bit "mega" but it proved to be a very pleasant drive through lovely forests and rolling farm land. After a sleep the drivers were in turn taken up to the snow line next morning.

The route was via the lovely valley of the Macallister River to the hamlet of Licola and thence via mountain roads to Tamboritha Saddle. Best case I had planned to start skiing from there or a few kms further along the road at Lost Plain. This was not to be, for although the snow was deep and definitely skiable the Victorians prefer to drive their 4WDs as far as possible into the snow country. This means in stage 1 until the vehicle gets bogged. In stage 2 they put on the biggest sets of chains I have ever seen and then repeat stage 1. This meant that we were driven up to Mount Lookout which was as far as the 4WD clubs had been able to "proceed" in the new snow. In all a very different attitude to what prevails north of the border.

We hurriedly shouldered our packs and skied off across the Snowy Plains and down the length of the airstrip on virgin snow. Kick and glide, kick and glide the old rhythm began to overtake me as we skied along the old timber roads lined with Snow Gums frosted with new snow. Then down and round into Bryces Plains to at last come to Guys Hut. Here the advanced party was ensconced in this lovely log hut which sleeps six comfortably.

Six inches of new snow fell overnight providing ample coverage on the plains for our route away from the road. As we were out for 9 days we had taken a sled to carry some of the load. Sleds ride on the snow or if it is new soft snow, through the snow. By swapping the draught work around and by breaking a trail we were able to proceed effectively. After striding across the plains it was back into the trees again to descend to Minogues Lookout overlooking the Bastards Neck which is the watershed between the Macallister and Wonnangatta Valleys. The Neck was used of old by the cattlemen as a natural collecting feature for the grazing of their cattle on the high summer pastures.

For us the Neck meant a long lovely sliding descent and then a long not-so-lovely pushing ascent. However the new snow coating the Mountain Ash provided a suitable vista. The day's journey ended with our emergence onto the Howitt Plains and terminus at Howitt Hut. This is a traditional cattlemen's hut made of galvanised iron and sleeps six comfortably. We

finished the day with some XCDing in heavy and deep powder off the precipitous side of the plains.

The morrow saw us striding up the open glades of the plains to link up with the road for a short time before heading off through a magical ice-encrusted forest. This brought us eventually to Macallister Springs and Vallejo Ganter Hut. This was to be our base for the next three days and is a very spacious memorial hut built in 1971-5 and sleeps 10 plus. That afternoon we ascended Mount Howitt to wet our appetites with a view of the Cross Cut Saw. The opportunity was also taken to conduct some precautionary training in self-arrest techniques with stocks, ice-axes and crampons.

Next day our traverse off the Cross Cut Saw was conducted in near perfect conditions. Firm snow, clear blue skies and little or no wind. The Saw is a jagged ridgeline extending 4 kms to the north. Apart from some of the ranges in Tassie it provides the only true alpine ridgeline traverse available in this country (for those of you who have seen the Sentinel in winter imagine four of these joined end to end). At the end of the Saw you ski onto a narrow tree-covered saddle to thence climb up to Mount Buggery before retracing your steps (thus we can truly say that we have "gone to buggery").

The vista from this area are superb. Buller and Buffalo to the north-west. The line of Bogong, the pyramid of Feathertop and the lump of Mount Hotham all to the north-east. Closer in the Viking, the Razor, the Hook and Mount Magdala all compliment the scene.



Next day we had an impromptu rest day as a cold front passed through dropping some new snow. After reading the log book and "viewing" some other material at the risk of permanent blindness, we were itching to break free of the fetters of the hut next day. As the tail of the front was still passing through this led to us going for a ski in the forest again. In and out of the Snow Gums and glades we skied, over dale and glen to work the muscles loose. The afternoon cleared enough for an ascent of West Peak and Mount Howitt again. Some XCDing on the crusty snow was attempted with some success.

The ski out was along a series of interconnecting tree-covered ridgelines and knolls. As the snow was increasingly crusty and icy this proved fast and challenging. Half-a-day's skiing brought us to the base of the King Billies which we climbed to view the vista and the progressively building snow clouds to the south. We camped in a grove of large Snow Gums and after dinner made sure everything was carefully packed away.

Twice in the night I woke due to overheating resulting from the tent being completely cocooned in several inches of snow. So it was out of the bag,

on with the bivy boots and parka and into the driving snow I jumped. First to knock the dry new snow off the tent and then to shovel it away from the sides. In all just under a foot fell that night and more continued to fall all next day.

We had a great ski down through the trees on the fire trail to Lovicks Hut for morning tea. This is a large ex cattlemen's hut which is used for horse safaris in summer and is somewhat grotty inside. After a steep pull up to Mount Lovick we met a commercial group on a day trip from Bluff Hut complete with Guide and dog. The dog seemed to be enjoying himself but we refrained from asking him what he was doing in a national park!

Bluff Hut itself is also quite large and is the base for a commercial company which has a lease on the Hut and they drive people up through the snow line in 4WDs for a weekend in the snow (again the perspectives differ). The hut has a small public section at the rear which can fit 6 people in cramped conditions.

Our original plan envisaged spending another day in the mountains skiing around the peaks of The Bluff and Mount Eadley Stoney. As it had been snowing all day and the weather report predicted this would continue overnight and probably all next day we convened a Chinese parliament and elected to ski out that afternoon. This was down a series of fire trails which snake down the escarpment. The trees here are all mightly mountain ash and it is always a magnificent way to end a trip by skiing through these trees covered in new snow.



Eventually the cars hove into sight covered in snow at 1200 m. A careful drive down the mountain in the gloaming had the snow accompany us down to 650 m before joining the traffic jam from Mount Buller. A shower, a meal in the pub, some chat with the barmaids and a sleep in a very nice Backpackers in Mansfield rounded off the day.

The trip ended with us mounting our steeds, heading them north and crossing the Rio Grande to wonder once more when we will wander down Mexico way. In all a very successful and pleasant trip in an area very infrequently visited in winter. Certainly the 8.5 day trip from Tamboritha to The Bluff must rank as the most scenic and varied ski trip in Australia.

** **

Correction to WALKS PROGRAM

TOM WENMAN'S WALK - 30/31 October, 1st November - should read:-

Kanangra Walls, Storm Breaker, Thunder Bend, Kanangra Creek, Murdering Gully. MEDIUM 25 km.

EARTH WIND FIRE RAIN

THE PADDY POLLIN UPDATE

FROM THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE

SEPT-NOV 1992

Welcome to Issue 1 of the Update, our way of letting you know the latest developments in products and activities available at your local Paddy Pollin store.

GORE-TEX VALUE

- THE BARCOO. \$249

The Tanami Barcoo jacket is now available at all Paddy Pollin stores.

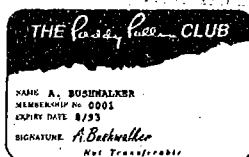
At \$249.00 it represents outstanding value for money for a fully featured Gore-Tex rainshell. The Barcoo passed with flying colours the stringent tests carried out by W.L. Gore as part of their Guaranteed To Keep You Dry programme.

The Barcoo is mid thigh length and features seamfree shoulders, a waterproof front closure, external drawcord and 2 large volume pockets. Available in Red and Mid Blue

THE PADDY POLLIN CLUB

Back in June we launched The Paddy Pollin Club in order to stay in touch with regular customers. For an annual subscription of \$10.00 members receive a host of benefits including a special Club members discount on their purchases, special rates on adventure activities as well as exclusive trips for Club members. Members receive a newsletter full of outdoor tips, product news, competitions, information on new offers etc.

To join simply pick up a brochure in your local Paddy Pollin store or telephone 008 805398 TOLL FREE.



THE TIKA CORONET — FOR TRAVELLING BUSHWALKERS.

You're off on some lengthy travels that could involve some bushwalking along the way? If so the Tika Coronet (\$389) could be the pack for you. It has both a top loading and front opening facility, a comfortable 2 size adjustable harness system that can be zipped away for avoiding the airport baggage shower! The front pocket zips off and converts to a daypack. A fine pack for those travelling to Europe but stopping off in Nepal on the way home to trek around Annapurna.



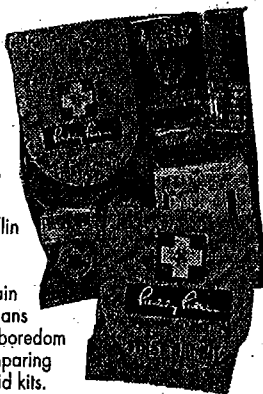
'medical' contents, the kit also contains a fully laminated First Aid Booklet, Casualty Record cards, a notebook and pencil and printed information on Hypothermia and Emergency contact numbers. \$69.95

PADDY POLLIN COVERS THE COUNTRY!

All 400+ products in our catalogue or any other item of outdoor equipment can be sent anywhere. So if you can't make it to a Paddy Pollin store call Toll Free 008 805398 for a copy of The Paddy Pollin Catalogue and full details on our Mail Order Operation

EXPANSION AND FACELIFT FOR CANBERRA STORE

By the time you read this the painters and carpet fitters will have left and our Canberra store will be looking bigger and brighter. So next time you're in the National Capital call in.



THE ADVENTURE FIRST AID KIT

A while ago some Paddy Pollin staff were tentbound in a storm on the Main Range. As a means of relieving the boredom they began comparing personal First Aid kits. Noticing a number of similarities in what they had ended up with over the years, the idea of developing a specific Adventure Kit came about. A week or so later we were meeting with St John Ambulance and many months later the joint Paddy Pollin/St John Ambulance Adventure First Aid Kit was born. The kit is packed in a brightly coloured, flexible, multi pocketed PVC pouch sealed with weatherproof press zips. Apart from the

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A big thank you to all our customers for the tremendous support you have given the above scheme whereby every time you elect not to take a bag for your purchases Paddy Pollin donates 10 cents to a charity. In the first 6 months of this year we were able to donate \$800.00 to the Wilderness Society and \$836.00 to a range of charities local to each store. That equates to some 16000 bags not going into precious landfill, less energy being used because we need to order less bags. Thanks to you, everyone benefits.

NEW INTEGRAL OFFERINGS

Drytech, the fabric that revolutionized the Bodywear market, has two more garments in the range.

The cycle short style **Techshorts** are obviously ideal for cycling but also well suited to canoeing or bushwalking with the stretch of the Drytech Jersey fabric accommodating the most extreme movements. Available in Blue and Red at \$35.95

For those who prefer short sleeves we've chopped them off the old favourite, the **Techcrew**, to give the **Techshirt** with a price of \$35.95

Paddy Pollin

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Jindabyne	Kosciusko Rd NSW 2627	Ph 064 562922
Melbourne	360 Little Bourke St VIC 3000	Ph 03 6704845
Box Hill	8 Market St VIC 3128	Ph 03 8988596
Adelaide	228 Rundle St SA 5000	Ph 08 2323155
Perth	1/891 Hay St WA 6000	Ph 09 3212666
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	(Melbourne Residents Ph 03 6709485)	Fax 03 670 4622

THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS HAVE ARRIVED See them in your Paddy Pollin store now!

BLUE MOUNTAINS MINING HISTORY

by Geoff Grace

Mining of coal and shale was once a significant industry in the Katoomba region. There were two periods of mining, the first beginning in the late 1880's and apparently lasting only a few years, the second - 1920 to 1945.

Two obvious reminders of those times are the inclined (now "scenic") railway - originally built to haul coal and shale out of the Jamison Valley, and the massive scar remaining from the Katoomba cliff-fall which occurred in 1931 - a direct result of mining subsidence.

Traces still remain of the aerial ropeway built in 1888 to carry shale mined from near the Ruined Castle. Two heavy wire ropes extended in a direct line for 4 km across the Jamison Valley from the Ruined Castle to near the top of the inclined railway. They were supported on 47 nine-metre high towers, each a tripod of heavy logs. The ropeway had a disastrous record of failures and collapsed in 1890.

Following the collapse, a horse-tramway was constructed along the eastern slopes of Narrow Neck to serve the Ruined Castle workings - more reliable than the unfortunate ropeway. Shale was also mined in the Megalong Valley. A tunnel was constructed through Narrow Neck connecting Megalong and Jamison Valleys to allow straight-line rope haulage of skips to the lower end of the inclined railway.

At the top of the inclined railway, the skips were transferred to a tramway and travelled a further 2.4 km to the Great Western Rail siding at Katoomba.

All of this construction was in use by the end of 1891. In 1893, 168 men were involved in the enterprise. It seems however that this early level of activity was not sustained for more than a few years. The resurgence of activity in the 1920's, although of longer duration, did not develop into a major commercial undertaking. New, better and more economic Western District mines with easier access gradually took over.

This now is history except that, as all Sydney Bushwalkers know, the inclined railway is used as the "scenic railway" tourist attraction. Winding gear and ropes have all been updated and have large factors of safety. Regular inspections ensure compliance with all statutory regulations.

Is there anyone who hasn't had the thrill of plunging down that breath-taking, stomach-wrenching, sickeningly steeper and steeper incline into the Jamison Valley suspended on something comparable to the longest bungee rope in the world?

When you reach the bottom, give a thought to the long-gone pit-ponies who dragged their loads along what is now the walking track to Mount Solitary.

** **





One way of lightening your load and saving some space in your pack is to repack all prepackaged foodstuffs, or combine several dry ingredients meant for the same meal, into a snap-lock bag. This way you save on the weight of the packet itself, usually made of indisposable foil and also all the air with which the manufacturer has saw fit to include in the package. After you have emptied the contents of the snap-lock bag it can be used again, even on the same trip, for such purposes as protecting the contents of your pack from an errant leaking sun-block tube.

The other day on leaving the supermarket I was surveyed on what I knew about convenience foods. The examples I was shown were such items as pasta with sauce, flavoured rice dishes etc. I had to admit that I did not purchase them too often as I did not like the taste of the ones I had tried. However, the idea appealed so what I have done in supermarkets is taken note of some of the ingredients put into them in order to gain some ideas of some quick easy meals for bush walks. Thus, you can have the advantage of "convenience foods" without the benefit of the foul tasting chemicals the manufacturers add to them.

Geoff Dowsett is planning a coastal walk to Nadgee Reserve on 2nd - 8th January, 1993. The planned trip will go from Green Cape Lighthouse to Mallacoota. If you are interested please contact him on 875 1945 day or evening.

Phone 679 1225 (H)
" 484 4242 (W)

Please alter your List of Members, and note the new phone number for his walks as follows:-

Saturday 31 October - Marra Marra N.P.
 " 14 November - Lower Blue Mountains
 Sunday 29 " - Wollemi N.P.

WALKS REPORTS



MUOGAMARRA NATURE RESERVE - 21/6/92

by Alan Mewett

Route: Peats Ferry Road, Point Loop L.O., Peats Crater, Peats Bight, Lloyd Trig.

Weather - afternoon showers. 19 in party

This is the fifth year in which I have led this walk and I find something new each time. At the first stop we usually note "the weathered remains of a spherical ferruginous concretion of a sandstone formation, the inner portion having been removed by Aborigines for water storage" and first noted by Assistant-Surveyor Govett in 1829. On this occasion we had Zol Bodlay to point out "The Whale Head", aboriginal rock engravings on the same site. It is purported to have 65 figures and 2 foot-prints but many are faint and not readily discernible to the inexperienced eye. The old Peats Ferry Road practically ran over this site for many decades.

Further along the road, Zol showed us the Creation engravings and they created great interest. We viewed Tipper's cottage which in the 1890s was a visitors waiting room at Camperdown Childrens Hospital, and in 1916 was a gate-house at Sydney's Government House. John Tipper established Muogamarra in 1934 by purchasing a 600-acre Crown Lease.

After morning tea at the Point Loop look-out, we moved down to Peats Crater and through to Peats Bight, where we lunched looking out across the Hawkesbury River to Bar Point. We retraced our steps and bush-bashed our way out of Peats Crater, a wet experience this time. On Lloyd Trig we were damp, cold and unenthused about a bash to the Kangaroo Point look-out, so we turned and headed for home, but not before viewing more engravings on beautiful tessellated rocks which thrilled the artist's eye of Geoff Bradley.

Over the five consecutive years, 61 different members, 10 prospectives and 14 visitors have accompanied me on this walk. 36 members have been once, 19 members twice, and 5 members thrice.

* * * * *

NEW ADDRESS

Kenn Clacher advises his new address:-

10 Oak Street, North Sydney 2060 - Phone 954 9708

ANYONE FOR AFRICA?

Sasha Litvak, a prospective member, is looking for travelling companions to spend about 5 weeks wandering about Africa, December 1992 - January 1993. Planned are climbs up Mount Kilimangaro and Mount Kenya and visits to game parks. If interested, please call Sasha on 663 0755 (H) or 697 4158 (W).

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MONTHLY MEETING NOTES



THE SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

It was around 2018 when the President called the 15 or so members present to order and got the meeting under way. There were apologies from Fran Holland and Jim Callaway, and new members Tony Holgate, Jacqui Callandra and Chris Stephenson were welcomed to membership. Chris had become a member some time ago but had been unable to attend a general meeting prior to this.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received with no matters arising. Correspondence saw letters to new members, a get well letter to Phil Butt, a letter to Paddy Pallin Pty Ltd regarding the Paddy Pallin Club, a letter of resignation from Alaric Benett, two incoming letters regarding the legal action for damages launched by a prospective and one outgoing letter on the same topic.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we received income of \$649.55, spent \$2,304.18 and closed the month with a balance of \$2,835.89.

The Walks Report began with an extended weekend trip through the Victorian high country over the period 22nd-31st August covered by an extended faxed report from Ian Wolfe, the leader. It seems that they, however many of them there were, had a pleasant 8-day trip. Lord knows what the rest of the fax said, Bill didn't tell us.

One week earlier, over the weekend of 14,15,16 August, Spiro led a party of 6 on a trip that almost went to Mount Colong and back. Denis Gardener's Tuglow Falls walk didn't even get close - it was cancelled. Of the day walks, Jan Mohandas led his "Six Foot Track in a Day" trip with a party of 35 plus supporters, Alan Mewett had 10 on his Valley of the Waters trip, and Maurie Bloom moved his Thirlmere Lakes (gaiters optional) walk back to the following weekend.

The weekend of 21,22,23 August saw Oliver Crawford leading a party of 7 on his Wollemi N.P. walk out of Newnes. They reported a cold Saturday morning but otherwise the weather was clement and the weekend pleasant. Bill Capon had 6 starters but only 3 finishers on his modified Three Peaks walk. There is a rumour that Bill didn't notice the difference. Ian Debert led a party of 11 on his Saturday morning start Cox River trip. There was a report of a ruptured sleeping bag and a feathered, though not tarred, prospective. Errol Sheedy had 16 enjoying a fine sunny day for his Otford to Waterfall day walk, and Wilf, remember Wilf, reported the Great North Walk stage 8 as a mixed affair, rather like the curate's egg, with some good parts, for the 12 plus one starters who turned out for it.

August 28,29,30 saw Fran Holland and a party of 20 or so enjoying the delights of her Abercrombie Caves bicycle trip. The weather was reported as hot uphill and cold downhill and it rained all Saturday night. This was no great problem as it turned out, they held a barbecue on the Sunday. Ray Hookway's Yerranderie trip did not go. Jan Mohandas reported the party of 12 on his day walk to Blue Gum from the Mount Hay fire trail as encountering strong winds over Lockley's Pylon, forcing the party to crawl to avoid being blown off their feet. Bronny Miemeyer reported a party of 9 to 12 on her Loftus to Bundeena walk, predominantly males. Bronny reported this as a positive attribute for some reason.

The weekend of 4,5,6 September saw Barry Wallace's walk to Belarah Swamp rerouted to go to Cloudmaker, Compagnoni Pass, Kowmung River and Hughes Ridge for the two who attended. Those swamps just didn't have the necessary drawing power it seems. The "Back to Bluegum" weekend saw a party of around 200 enjoying the cakes and speeches at the Forest. Jan Mohandas's walk from Kanangra to Katoomba in a day saw a party of 14 with Jan as an impromptu leader. This matter of Jan leading the walk caused some consternation for the support group waiting at Kanangra whom he had advised he was only going as far as Mount Cloudmaker and would return in due course. The other day walk, Alan Mewitt's Dharug N.P. walk, had a party of 19 enjoying a beautiful day with abundant wildflowers and brought the Walks Report to a fitting end.

The Conservation Report mentioned concerns that the State National Party are organising an orchestrated push against wilderness areas throughout country New South Wales. It seems the "locking up" argument, along with others is getting another airing. The people behind the Hacking River development plan are still out there working at keeping the idea alive but general consensus is that it is a dead issue, having been so soundly put down by a number of enquiries.

Confederation Report brought mention that a number of member clubs have expressed concern over the cover provided by the Confederation's insurance policy, and that National Parks Association and the Wilderness Society are considering joining the Confederation.

General Business brought no response, so we proceeded to the announcements and went home, but did not note the time.

* * * * *

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The wetter it is, the better it is.

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