

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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## FEBRUARY 1993

	Page
Mining Will Move Mountains	2
Photo - Looking over the Capertee Valley	3
Tantalizing Tantangara	5
Happy New Year	7
How I Joined the S.B.W. - Part 2	9
Confederation Notes - January Meeting	11
Fire Bans	11
A Five Day Trek in South America	13
Social Notes	14
The January General Meeting	15

### Advertisements

Paddy Pallin - Leaders in Adventure	8
Eastwood Camping Centre	12
Willis's Walkabouts	16

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### MINING WILL MOVE MOUNTAINS

(Or, to quote Danielle Cook in the S.M.H. "Making a Coal Hill out of a Mountain".)

by Alex Colley

The Capertee Valley, with its sandstone mesas and escarpments is one of the most scenic valleys in the State. On the western side it is dominated by the twin Mountains Airly and Genowlan which intrude some five miles into the valley. Atop their cliffs are some of the finest "pagoda" formations in the Blue Mountains, or anywhere else.

Carol Lubbers led a walk there at the end of last May. On the Saturday 14 of the party climbed Pantoney's Crown nearby, but Keith Muir and I explored the old shale mining rope haulage track which conveyed oil shale from the Airly mines through the top of the mountain to the now abandoned village of Torbane. Along this track are many fascinating relics of the Airly mining village and mining installations. (If you want to know more read "Bent Backs" by Jim W. Brown of Lithgow.) On the Sunday Phil Irvine, who has a weekend stone cabin built in the gap between the two mountains, led us up to the diamond mine Cape Hatteras and The Grotto on Mount Genowlan. It was a lovely day and we enjoyed a fine view over the Capertee Valley to the cliffs beyond.

Early last year Novacoal, a subsidiary of CRA, lodged an application to mine beneath the mountains. The proposal involved subsidence of 1.7 metres and similar damage to that caused to some 16 percent of the cliff lines and pagoda formations by the activities of the four mines on the Newnes Plateau to the north could be anticipated. As it was proposed to mine beyond the cliffs beneath the talus slopes there would be much destruction of tree cover.

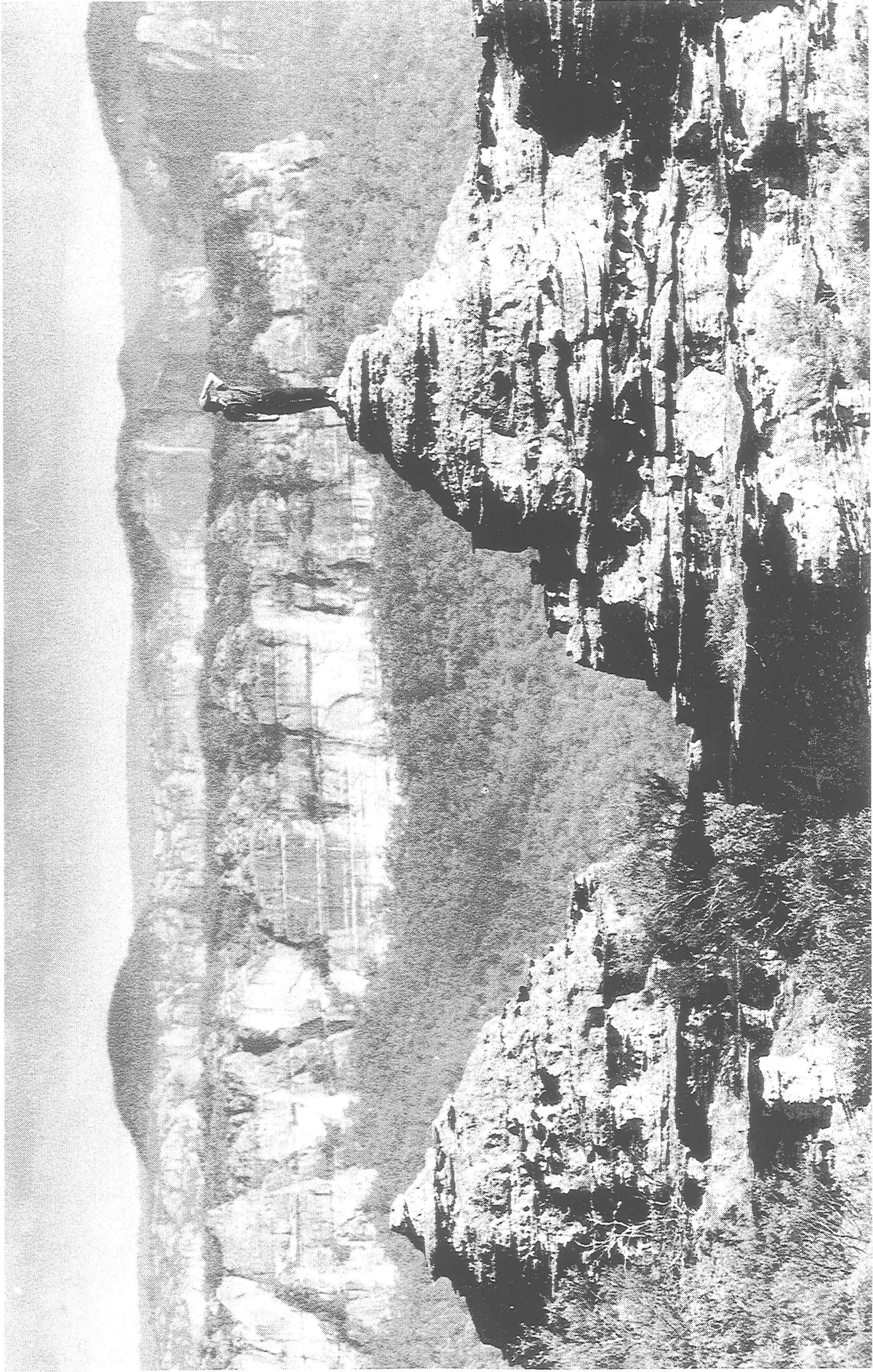
The Mining Warden rejected the application, finding Novacoal's environmental studies inadequate. The proposal has been afforded a second chance by a planning inquiry held at the end of last year. Novacoal refused to undertake further environmental studies, despite the inadequacy of these studies. Mining methods would be subject to experiment, protection zones would not cover pagodas or oil shale mining relics and the department of Planning wants to recommend mining conditions after the Inquiry is over.

Already coal resources once earmarked for power generation at Wallerawang are being exported and the Road Traffic Authority wants to try hauling coal from the western coalfield to Port Kembla by road trains, despite the fact that heavy trucks are estimated to inflict damage to roads costing some \$50,000 a year more than they contribute to road costs.

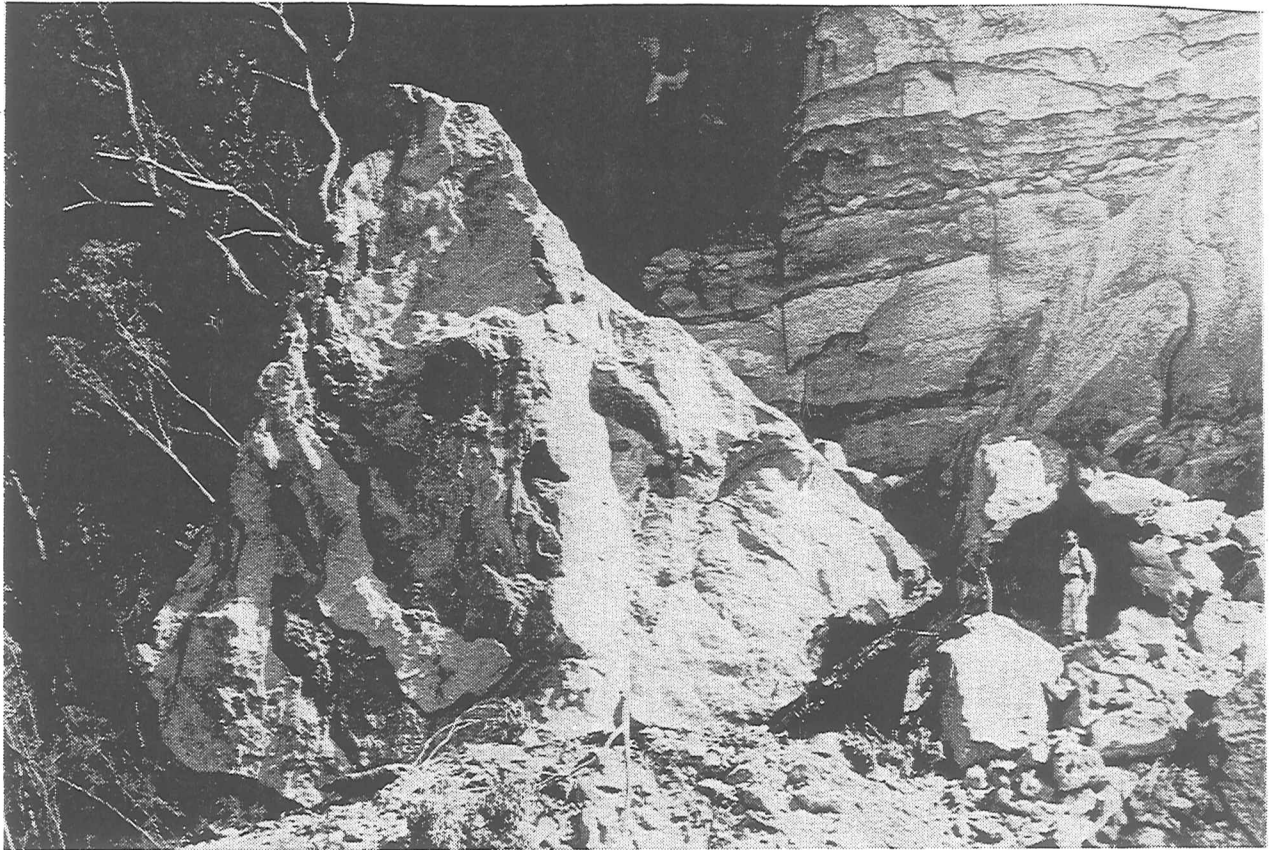
By the time this is published the Inquiry Commissioner will probably make his finding. It is probable that the call for jobs, jobs, jobs - regardless of environmental damage will determine the issue, despite the fact that there are enormous reserves of coal elsewhere in the State.

Mounts Airly and Genowlan are part of the "Gardens of Stone" National Park proposal and of the Blue Mountains World Heritage submission.

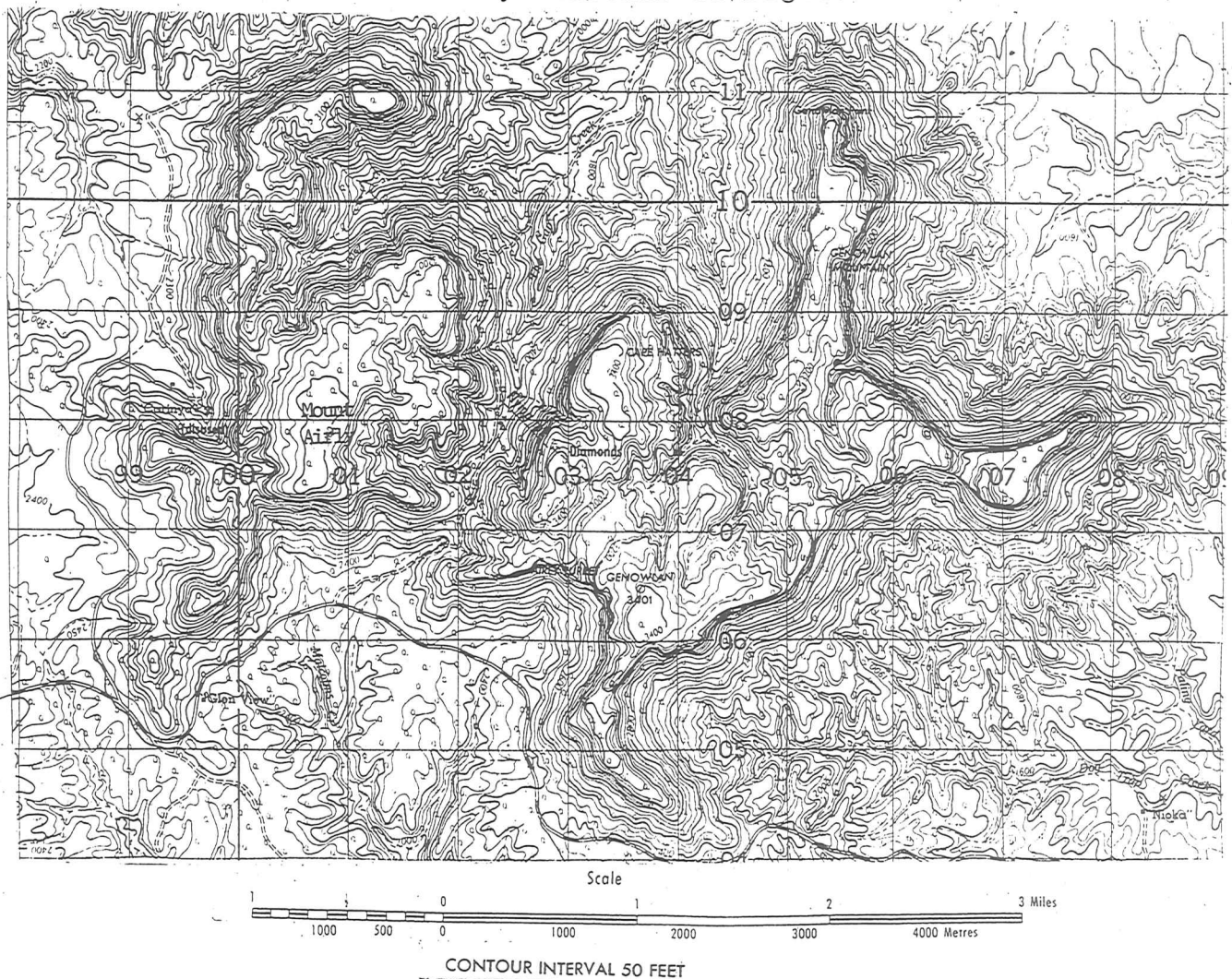
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Looking from Mount Genowlan over the Capertee Valley to the Red Rocks and the cliffs of the Capertee-Wolgan divide beyond.  
Photograph by Rick Stevens, courtesy of the Sydney Morning Herald



One of many cliff collapses caused by mining near the Upper Wolgan escarpment, Scale indicated by figure of Rodney Falconer at right.



TANTALIZING TANTANGARA

by Richard Brading

LEADER: Ian Rannard

WALKERS: Colin and Judy Barnes, Karen and Richard Brading, Ione Dean, Peter Dorman, Erith Hamilton, Brian Holden, Bruce MacDonald, Lance MacDonald, Geoff McIntosh, Ainslie Morris, Mike Reynolds, Michele Powell, Glad Rannard, Jennifer Trevor-Roberts, Allan Wells, Don Willcox

The letter said: "Each day we will walk from 8 am, looking to camp around 3 pm. The long evenings can be spent on the optional side trips or lazing about the camp quaffing tea etc. Bringing a book to read is OK." Those words were like an oasis in the hectic pre-Christmas rush of Smog City.

We met at Adaminaby at 3 pm on Boxing Day - 19 eager walkers catching up on news or making new friends. Soon the bus made its way past the old Kiandra Goldfields to deposit us unceremoniously near Simpsons Diggings. It was but 2 km to a pretty campsite overlooking a rolling grass valley. Ian led the energetic on a short walk up Mount Gooandra.

27.12.92: Gooandra Hut was the first of five historic huts or homesteads we would visit. The area was grazed for over a century until it was incorporated into Kosciuszko National Park after World War II. The buildings are frozen in time and give an idea of the life of the old high-country graziers.

The Gooandra homestead is an old Kiandra boarding house transported there in the 1920's and stands next to the gravity-defying chimney of an 1860's miner's hut. The homestead is well-ventilated due to a missing north wall and raises the question of whether such huts should be restored or removed. In my view the area is appropriate for the retention of such huts due to their historic value and the level of human interference around them. The homestead looks across Tantangara Plain which is one of many in the area and a minefield of swamps, tussock grass and holes. I was grateful to Ian for avoiding the pleasures of crossing nearby Boggy Plain.

Witz or Witses Hut was our next port of call. Built in 1952 from the remains of an 1880's hut on the site, it is an attractive slab hut. From there we lunched under snowgums at Zinc Ridge before making camp on a knoll overlooking the Murrumbidgee where it enters Tantangara Reservoir. A handful set off to find a shallow place to cross the river while we more indulgent types went for a swim.

28.12.92: Crossing the Murrumbidgee was cold but uneventful. A strong wind was blowing, following the cool change the night before. We wandered alongside Tantangara Reservoir for the day to reach Old Currango Hut in the afternoon. This historic hut from the 1870's has been well restored and old magazines lining the walls have been preserved with perspex. My favourite was a wartime article lambasting Hitler for depriving oppressed peoples of their vitamins. Camp was made on nearby Charlies Creek where Michele and Ione set up their now-famous hairdressing salon.

29.12.92: Our journey took us along the aptly-named Mosquito Creek Fire Trail to Cooleman Plain, a limestone region with sinkholes and a wedge-tail eagle circling above. After passing the remains of the Mount

Black mine we descended into the Cave Creek gorge. The frequent creek crossings kept us cool and there was time to explore Cooleman Cave by torchlight. Lunch was followed by a hot climb out over a ridge near Black Mountain to descend into a pretty clearing where a herd of brumbies galloped by our campsite.

30.12.92: Two walkers munching breakfast at Pockets Hut were somewhat surprised at our party of 19 rolling up at 8.30 am. This was a comfortable hut in the 1930's with electric lights, hot and cold running water, bath and shower, and a Rolls Royce parked in the garage. All long gone. We passed a pump house where water is diverted from the Goodradigbee River into Tantangara Reservoir by an aquaduct and from there to Lake Eucumbene as part of the hydro-electric scheme. Over the next hill is Oldfields Hut, ugly at first sight but with an old-world charm on closer examination and in the shade of beautiful Black Sallee trees.

We followed the Goodradigbee upstream and left the track to find a secluded campsite in the shadow of Mount Murray. It was here that we found a green leech that would have paired well with the yellow worm found earlier in the walk.

31.12.92: New Year's Eve was a warm day to climb Mount Morgan (1874 metres). Its ample summit is covered with granite tors to allow everyone to enjoy the panorama. Jagungal loomed large in the south, just to the right of the snow-capped Main Range. We could see much of the path we had trod, and spy out peaks in all directions. After a rest back at camp, Ian led another optional late afternoon walk. The evening's festivities were enjoyed in calm, warm weather. Happy Hour was a varied spread which we quickly consumed and was followed by raucous singing. Mike's witty verse capped off the evening and is reproduced in this publication.

Finally the New Year was welcomed in with a hoot and a bang, and we all tumbled into bed by the light of the bright stars overhead.

1.1.93: New Year's Day. The walk out was a pleasant roll down 9 km of firetrail to meet the bus at Yaouk (as in kayak). Our raincoats remained unused, our thermals hardly needed, but the insect repellent a well-loved companion.

Thanks, Ian, from us all, for a pleasant and well-planned walk.

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#### THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 10th March 1993. The President, Office Bearers and Committee will be elected for the coming year. Only members may vote (not prospectives) and all ACTIVE MEMBERS are eligible to stand for every office. Come along and register your vote.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

by Mike Reynolds

Nineteen walkers set out on a bushwalking trip  
With Ian the captain in charge of the ship,  
Although we are walkers both gallant and bold,  
When Ian shouts "Tes break" we do as we're told.

Chorus: Dinkie-Di, Dinkie-Di -  
I hope you don't think I would tell you a lie.

Brian Holden set out with a very light pack,  
But picking it up spifflicated his back,  
But I think it's all part of his devious plans  
To get his bum massaged by feminine hands.

Chorus;

Michele and Ione set strong precedent,  
With their hairdressing salon for ladies and gents,  
Geoff McIntosh went for a shampoo and set,  
But a quick dust and polish was all he could get.

Chorus:

All the way from South EFRICA Jennifer came  
To learn all she could of the bushwalking game.  
Said she, "I'm delighted to be on the track,  
But I'm rather unhappy my billy's turned bleck!"

Chorus:

Don Willcox came out, he's a man of renown,  
Who at each opportunity is lying down.  
He tells me he soon hopes to master the knack  
Of remaining recumbent while walking the track.

Chorus:

Bruce and Lance came along with their packs full of grub,  
But they scaled all the hills and they crossed all the scrub,  
The secret it seems of the strength in their legs  
Is a diet of cheesecake and hard-boiled eggs.

Chorus;

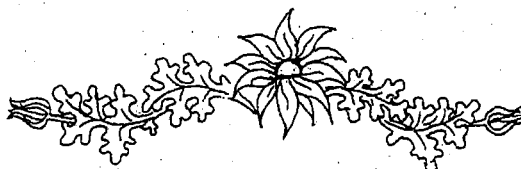
The weather's been great, not too hot, not too cold,  
The mozzies and march flies have been rather bold.  
The sun has been shining, the rain's not been pouring,  
That's not distant thunder, it's just Allan snoring.

Chorus:

Now it's New Year's Eve, and our trip's nearly done,  
We've had a great walk and it's been lots of fun.  
We've drunk all the rum and we've run out of beer,  
But we wish all Bush Walkers a HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Chorus:

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EARTH WIND FIRE RAIN



# THE PADDY PALLIN UPDATE

FROM THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE

SEPT-NOV 1992

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

## GORE-TEX VALUE - THE BARCOO, \$249

The Tanami Barcoo jacket is now available at all Paddy Pallin 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 PALLIN CLUB

Back in June we launched The Paddy Pallin 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 Pallin 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 chewer! 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

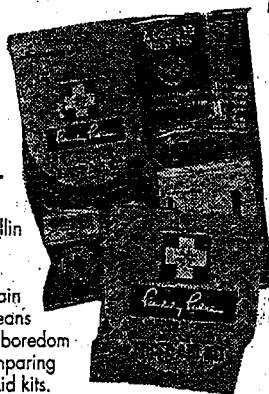
## PADDY PALLIN COVERS THE COUNTRY!

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 Pallin store call Toll Free 008 805398 for a copy of The Paddy Pallin 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 Pallin 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 First Aid Kit came about. A week or so later we were meeting with St John Ambulance and many months later the joint Paddy Pallin/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

## DON'T BAG THE ENVIRONMENT - 16,000 BAGS SAVED!

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 Pallin 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

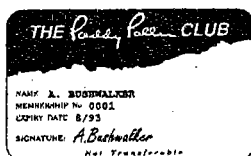
**Drytech**, the fabric that revolutionized the Bodywear market, has two more garments in the range. The cycle short style **Techshorts** are obviously ideal for cycling but also well suited to canoeing or bushwalking with the stretch of the Drytech Jersey fabric accommodating the most extreme movements. 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 Pallin*

THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE

Sydney	507 Kent St NSW 2000	Ph 02 2642685
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Canberra	11 Lansdale St Braddon ACT 2601	Ph 06 2573883
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 8988594
Adelaide	228 Rundle St SA 5000	Ph 08 2323155
Perth	1/891 Hay St WA 6000	Ph 09 3212666
Hobart	76 Elizabeth St TAS 7000	Ph 002 310777
Launceston	59 Brisbane St TAS 7250	Ph 003 314240
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THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS HAVE ARRIVED. See them in your Paddy Pallin store now!

HOW I JOINED THE S.B.W.PART 2

by "Puffing Billy"

HOW I FAILED MY FIRST TEST WALK

The problem now became: How do I join the bushwalkers? Enquiries led me to a dingy shop above Wynyard station, run by one Paddy Pallin. This legendary gentleman explained that the best club for me would be the Sydney Bush Walkers; but it was tough, elitist and not unduly welcoming to foreign, inexperienced youths. Everyone who joined must first demonstrate self-reliance and stamina in the bush and must also exhibit some undefined and variable quality called "compatibility".

Well, I had exhibited plenty of self-reliance and stamina in the bush; but that had not been in this local-style vertical bush. My quest for the holy grail of bushwalking was therefore put on the back-burner for three years (to be truthful, my studies kept my head well down, betimes). In this time, I started saving my pennies until I could join the dawn queues at Paddy's to buy, first, a rucksack and, second, a willesden tent. For a sleeping bag, I stitched up an old eiderdown rescued from a scrap-heap at home. Later, I queued for a Paddy "Alpine", therein to freeze through the wakeful winter nights in the frosty Blue Mountains valleys. Not for us, these new-fangled, space-age box-quilted eiderdowns or imitation reindeer fur, rated for comfortable slumber in ambient temperatures down to minus something, weighing less than two kilos and occupying less space than a dehydrated snack! In those days, a Paddy "Alpine" was the sign that you had "arrived". Preferably with a few blizzard stains and ostentatious repairs upon it.

Eventually there came a time when I decided to approach the hallowed halls of the Sydney Bush Walkers and attempt whatever trials and approbations they might wish to impose. By this time, I was not alone in my quest. My good friend Stuart Brooks came with me. No, please don't laugh yet; we haven't reached the point of the joke. Together, in the intervening years, we had become veteran freelance walkers in our own right, with triumphs like Burning Palms, Cox's River and Nellie's Glen behind us.

One Friday night in Hamilton Street, we presented ourselves for inspection. We swiftly learned about test walks, field weekends, and various other tests including the ultimate need for seven members to testify to our "compatibility". We paid our money and pocketed the element of felled rainforest presented to us (walks program, hints to prospectives, etc.). Then we were introduced to the President. A statuesque lady red-head, smartly dressed, serene and severe. To us, as President of the S.B.W., she was someone just slightly lesser than The Queen, and I am sure that we both touched our forelocks in awe. Her name was Edna and, regardless of anything that I might say later in this Truthful Jones story, I soon found that she was and still is one of this world's gracious ladies.

Edna mentioned that she was leading a test walk on the coming Sunday and invited us to join her retinue. Bundeena - Marley - Audley. An easy stroll for a couple of likely lads like us. We promptly agreed. So, also, did a third joiner that night. Alan Stuckey, if I remember aright.

Sunday morning on the Bundeena-Marley track was a warmish spring morn beneath the golden sun, walking between pale greypink grevilleas. The warmth of the sun was such that, by the time we reached Marley Pool, we were all sweaty and thirsty. The members promptly shed their outer garments or disappeared behind bushes to reappear in swim togs, soon to be cavorting

in the cooling waters. But alas! we inexperienced and improvident prospectives were without cossies. However, salvation arrived in the form of three mature, obviously highly experienced and equally highly loquacious male members, tailing the party. Without hesitation, they peeled off everything, and I mean everything, and dived in. We soon followed, very avante garde in those days.

No sooner were we in than Edna's voice announced, "Leader moving off!" Egad, she did, too. Moved off and left us in the wild without a leader. "Don't worry," the three tails assured us. "We'll soon catch them". In full trust of three such experienced members, we continued our aquatic cavort.

Soon, though, we all resumed the walk, up a rising track to the crest of a ridge to the west. At the top of the ridge, we came to a T junction on the track. As we three trailing prospectives approached it, we found our three mentors enacting a quite astonishing scene. The map was spread on the ground and a vehement three-way argument was raging, as to which way to proceed. One protagonist pointed north, one pointed south, while the third, Quixote-like, was for reconnoitring in all directions at once.

Now, older members might be interested to know who these three members were, if they have not already guessed; but we must be wary of the laws of slander. Perhaps I can call them Burden, Ireland and Cosglade. I later found that, individually, they were three sensible, most helpful characters, one with a wide following in extended, well organised off-program walks. But, what we three innocent prospectives did not then know was that, together, they spelt one word: DISASTER! Well, we were soon to learn.

Stuart and I had no doubts. We knew to turn south and regarded the antagonists with silent astonishment. When, still shouting, they moved off northward, we just had to go, too.

Three kilometres we ran - and I do mean ran, because their aim was to overtake Edna. Then another pause on the track. Puff, puff, puff from the prospectives: argue, argue, argue among the members. We're going the wrong way, they at last decided. Back we ran, four kilometres to a creek-side and the astonished faces of Edna and the rest, just finishing lunch. "Where on earth have you all been?" cried the other members. "Leader moving off!" cried Edna.

At about 5 pm, we reached Audley with three footweary prospectives at the tail, viewing the final climb with very little enthusiasm. But, lo! a passing vehicle and a reflex action of Stuart's thumb found us zooming up it in an open truck. As we passed the worthy leader and her brood, we waved cheerily to them. Some waved back; but the redheaded lady gave us a shock/horror glance, swiftly followed by a "We don't own them," sort of look.

Reunited at the railway station, Edna explained that the most heinous action that a prospective could commit was to hitch a ride up the final, or any other, hill on a test walk, thereby failing to demonstrate the ability to do the whole distance. Alas! our day had been an utter waste. The three of us had failed our first test walk.

#### Postscript.

Edna later showed her graciousness by reinstating us. She had apparently not known of our Redex-type trial in the morning. Stuart went on to become S.B.W.'s longest-time prospective, ever - he took fourteen years to become a member; but followed that by about the same number of years as a committee member and office bearer. I, on the other hand, took a mere fourteen months.

CONFEDERATION OF BUSHWALKING CLUBS NSW - JANUARY 1993 GENERAL MEETING.

by Spiro Hajinakitas

The Government has not included a representative of the Bushwalking movement in the Blue Mountains National Park Advisory Committee.

ACTION: Confederation to write to the Minister.

NPA is organizing a clean up of the coastline from Burning Palms to Garie Beach on 7th March. Meet at 9 am. Volunteers contact Andrew Harrigan (phone) 542 0636.

Confederation to investigate disturbing reports of the Western Deua Wilderness being logged.

SEARCH & RESCUE - Next practice to be held in the Heathcote area on 27/28 March. Emphasis to be on self rescue. A new trailer has been bought and the old one sold.

Confederation has written to Hon. Ros Kelly MP suggesting the Government increase the money allocated to investigate the possible World Heritage listing of the Blue Mountains National Park from \$40,000 to \$200,000.

In Tasmania popular areas such as the Western Arthurs are subject to over-use and permits will soon be introduced.

The bridge at the Endrick River crossing is now a concrete 4-lane structure and the Tianjara bridge is soon to get the same treatment. It appears plans are afoot to make the Neriga-Sassafras a major road.

On a recent TV program the Government promoted the tourism aspects of the National Horse Trail without properly representing the environmental side as the trail does intrude into wilderness areas.

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FIRE BANS

by Allan Wells

It should go without saying that during the bushfire season, if and when a day of Total Fire Ban is declared that bushwalkers (along with everyone else) abide by the law. Unfortunately this has not always been the case.

A Total Fire Ban means no open fires or portable stoves may be lit during the stated hours the ban is in place. The deliberate lighting of a fire during a Total Fire Ban carries a penalty/fine of up to \$10,000 and/or a gaol sentence if convicted i.e. it is a criminal offence.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service may impose a fire ban in a park at any time. Sometimes you may be permitted to light a portable stove i.e. the ban only applies to open fires. Check with the local N.P.W.S. office if in doubt. Failure to observe a N.P.W.S. fire ban carries a penalty of \$500.

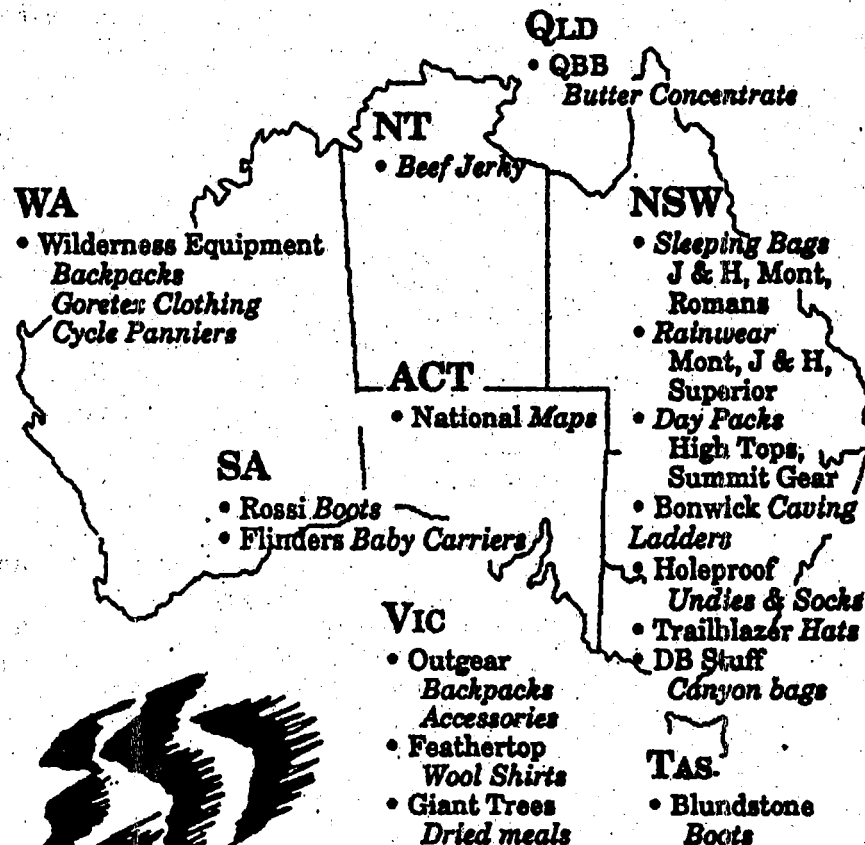
Total fire ban periods (usually 24 hours) are announced on national and local radio. N.P.W.S. do not announce parks fire bans but display signs at park entrances and/or at the beginning of tracks.

Remember if in doubt about fire conditions check with the local Police, N.S.W. Fire Brigade or N.P.W.S.

Happy, safe and considerate bushwalking.

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A FIVE DAY TREK FROM THE ECUADORIAN CENTRAL VALLEY OVER THE  
EASTERNMOST ANDES CHAIN TO MACAS IN THE AMAZON BASIN.

by Gerry Leitner

Starting point was Riobamba, a picturesque provincial capital some 200 km south of Quito. You get there from Quito by frequent minibuses in 3-4 hours. Riobamba is also called Sultan de los Andes for its magnificent setting with vistas to nine snow covered mountains including Chimborazo (6310 m) and several volcanoes, including Altar, Sangay and Tungurahua. Its origins go back to pre-hispanic times. The original Spanish town was destroyed on 4th February 1797 by a disastrous earthquake and moved to its present location. On Saturdays Indians from the region come to the markets in town to sell their products on the ten or so market places. Most interesting are those held on Plaza San Alfonso and Plaza La Concepcion. From Riobamba local buses connect the remote Indian villages scattered in the Cordillera.

I took such a rural bus to Llicto up in the Rio Guamote Valley. From here onwards it was on foot on mountain and jungle trails. A young school teacher visiting her family was my guide on the first day. Llicto village is inhabited by Puruha Indians with only a few Spanish speakers. The following day her mother in her late eighties led me (barefoot) to the junction of the Rio Cohadas which I followed up to the Rio Atillo junction which has its source in Lago Atillo. I camped on the east side of Lago Atillo which is completely surrounded by mountains in the vicinity of 5500 m. The lake itself is at an altitude of 4000 m with excellent trout fishing. After spending a freezing night complete with snowstorm I was seriously contemplating a return to the central valley. When a fresh breeze blew the cloud cover away I could see within a stone's throw the mountain pass and I decided to continue. My informants in Llicto confirmed that a pre-hispanic trail led from the pass down into the Amazon basin.

Nevertheless it took until lunch time from the lake's edge to arrive at the pass. From the pass you have splendid views down into the Rio Upano Valley and most remarkable vistas of Volcan Sangay which is active: the trail leads through dense jungle skirting the base of the volcano within striking distance. The trail at first is well defined between huge boulders and usually little icy streams run through the trail. Many of these streams betray their volcanic origin: a strong mineral content and brown or yellowish colour. Nevertheless there is no shortage of water all the way to Macas. As you descend into the valley you start peeling, first your gloves and raincoat and then jumper. You are now passing through thick jungle which is interrupted only by the torrential streams coming down and which become bigger and fiercer the further down you come. As soon as you find that you are not on the main trail never use a short cut, always go back until you arrive at the spot where you went astray.

After spending the third night in a jungle clearing perched on a slope (which I suspect was cleared some time ago by squatters) I came across the first signs of the approaching civilization. Undomesticated cattle roaming in the forest, more tree trunks over wild rivers serving as primitive bridges and annoyingly more side trails branching off. However my sense of direction always kept me on the right trail.

The fourth night I spent in an abandoned hut. The trails leading onto the clearing were mostly peccary trails and "off limits" unless you are prepared to come face to face with one of these animals of the pig family. From here the trail improves considerably leading steep down into the Rio Upano Valley near the riverbed which is unfordable. The trail remains on the south side of the river and you have to ford some medium-sized tributaries. At midday I encountered some villagers from Pueblo Alshi.

The villagers told me the hut I slept in was all that was left of the abandoned village of Zufliga. Also an area with frequent sightings of pumas. They had killed a puma here recently.

The final leg of my journey to Macas was on a rural bus. In Macas I had to report to the local police to notify them of my arrival in the "Oriente".

Please note: The area west of Macas up the Rio Upano and incorporating the lake area in the high sierra around Lago Atillo has been declared a national park, which also includes Volcan Sangay. Starting point for the Sangay section is Macas and Guamote is the starting point for the Lago Atillo area. There is now a road from Guamote down to Macas. East of Macas begins the tribal area of the Jivaros, once known as fierce warriors with the habit of shrinking the heads of their slain enemies.

Fruit available in the forest are large yellow passion fruits and wild red bananas which I used to fry or add to my soups. I suppose there are more edible fruit around, however I only stuck to the ones I was familiar with.

It should be noted that from Llicto until my arrival in the first village in the jungle I only met four people on the trail. I was completely dependent on myself and on the not so exact map from the Instituto Geografico Militar in Quito. For a start the trail was incorrectly marked and there were a lot more unbridged rivers to ford than were shown on the map. Some of the rivers on the eastern slopes of the chain were not safe to cross and I had to make many detours to find a suitable crossing. Tree trunks across such torrential rivers were always considered a godsend.

The full Riobamba-Macas hike is recommended for outdoor enthusiasts; organized tours are now available from Riobamba. Riobamba has a range of good tourist hotels. In civilisation Macas is a small jungle town on the edge of the Amazon Basin with a growing number of tourist hotels mostly of the backpacking type. From Macas you can return by bus to the highland. There are frequent buses south to Cuenca in the central valley.

TAME has weekly flights to Quito. The airstrip is almost in the centre of town.

In Macas you can buy from "civilised" Jivaros the shrunken heads of howler monkeys. To put your mind at rest, head-hunting is a thing of the past and the trade in shrunken human heads has been prohibited.

This was just one of my adventurous trekking trips in South America in recent years, testing my fitness to the limit.

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#### SOCIAL NOTES FOR MARCH

by Belinda McKenzie

- 24 March - Be sure you don't miss George Mawer's "Leadership Night" - He goes to a lot of trouble and you will get a good idea of the pleasures as well as the responsibilities of leading a trip.
- 31 March - Peter Christian's Audio-Visual Night. Excellent slides accompanied by music.

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THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallsce

There were some 17 or so members present at around 2029 when the President in the chair called the gathering to order, or what passes for it on such occasions, and got the meeting under way. There were apologies from Fran Holland, Dick Weston and Kenn Clacher and there were no new members to welcome. The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and received with no matters arising.

Correspondence brought a letter from solicitors acting for our insurance company indicating that Frances Drew will be continuing her action for ~~damages with a hearing before a magistrate. The hearing on 15 January will~~ set a hearing date, probably in June or July this year.

The Treasurer's Report was next, regaling us with tales of monetary splendour. We acquired income of \$2,657 for the month, spent \$2,690 and the bank balance was \$1,729.

The Walks Secretary then took the floor, or as much of it as was ceded to him by the ever-muttering rabble in the back row, and presented the Walks Report. We began at the weekend of 11,12,13 December with a no report for George Mawer's walk in the Budawangs. Zol Bodlay reported a party of 7 and fine weather with swimming for his Saturday day walk on Brisbane Waters N.P. and Peter Christian mentioned a party of 3 with 20 apostles on his Firefly Canyon odyssey/clash/fixture abseiling trip. Errol Sheedy had 14 starters and sunny if breezy conditions with lots of swimming for his Bundeena to Bundeena via Deer Pool day walk, and there was no report of Geoff McIntosh's Du Faurs Creek li-lo trip.

The weekend of 18,19,20 December saw Ian Wolfe cancelling his canyoning trip down East Christie's Creek due to excess water. We are assured it will be re-scheduled, so stay in touch with Ian if you want to be in the swim, so to speak. Zol Bodlay's Saturday day walk saw a party of 10 enjoying fine conditions, swimming and cave site visits with paintings. Tony Mayne's Stanwell to Otford walk went to program, also with a party of 10, and Wilf, setting out on the perilous walk west through the wilds of Sydney, reported 8 starters on the stage through Annandale and Glebe Point. Jean Kendall had a great mob of around 27 on her Otford to Bundeena walk, but insisted that they were all under the strictest control throughout.

Over the Christmas period we had Ian Rannard heading north from Kiandra, leading his Kosciusko area walk with a party of 19, enjoying fine weather on a trip reported as having gone well, while George Walton was heading south from Kiandra leading his Kosciusko area walk at about the same time with a party of 9, enjoying similar weather and some large snowdrifts along the way. Despite the 52 cars in the parking area at Round Mountain they encountered few people once they cleared the fire trails and even enjoyed the luxury of an expired food drop near Grey Mare Hut. Maurie Bloom led a party of 16 on a walk in the Victorian Alps. They all enjoyed the walk and even managed to say it was worth the long drive/bus ride. Geoff Dowsett is reported to have had a party numbering around 20 on a far south coast walk near Nadgee Faunal Reserve but no details, other than an aggrieved letter from N.P.W.S., are available at time of writing.

Of the not-so-extended walks Zol Bodlay's Saturday 2nd January walk was led by Wilf Hilder with a party of one. It was a fiercely hot day and there were mutinous elements abroad it seems, as the party deviated from the programmed walk, but proclaimed Glenbrook Creek to be O.K. Jim Callaway reported a party of 5 on a walk from Otford to Werrong on the 27 December.

Over the weekend of 8,9,10 January Ian Wolfe had a party of 8 enjoying

warm conditions and good scenery on his Bungonia canyoning and abseiling weekend. David Rostron led a walk down Morong Deep, but as is sometimes the way of it with David's walks, no details are available. Kenn Clacher's Claustal Canyon/Bell Canyon trip was deferred, and Zol Bodlay's Colo River day walk was declared a "corks walk" with Les Powell sporting a broken arm (in-line roller blades or something, I think they said), and Heather Finch hobbling along with a crook back. What disabilities the other 6 starters had to qualify them for the walk we were not advised. Wilf was out there doing it again, on his own walk this time, with a party of 10 negotiating some doubtful rights-of-way on the stage from Meadowbank Ferry terminal to Seven Hills station.

Conservation Report noted that Alex will write to N.P.W.S. who are said to be in the throes of formulating a Plan of Management for the new Nattai National Park to encourage them to consider our views on the following matters: (a) Resume and eliminate inholdings as far as possible. (b) Close all roads except maintained park roads. (c) Restrict or eliminate issue by the Water Board of access permits for vehicular access to Yerranderie. (d) Eliminate sewage and partially treated effluent inflows to the river. (e) Manage State Recreational Areas within the park as national park areas. (f) Eliminate the remaining marked trail sections between Mittagong and Katoomba. The Report also indicated that the proposed Paint-ball war games development on the Marra Marra N.P. boundary has been unanimously rejected by Hornsby Council. There was mention from the floor that while we had all been watching other threats to the Nattai N.P., the Mittagong bypass had done significantly more damage to the Nattai catchment than all of the other threats taken together.

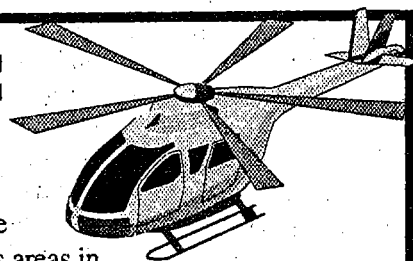
The Confederation Report confirmed our worst fears; insurances and the definition of visitors are still matters of profound uncertainty with that august body.

There was no General Business apart from a brief farewell and thank-you for so many things to George and Helen Gray who are moving to Woodhill, and a Bon Voyage to George Floyd who is setting off to South America for three months. After that it was just a matter of the announcements and the meeting closed at 2131.

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## MORAN RIVER:

**April 25 - May 15 1993**



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 fourth 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 10 March.

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**

