

"THE FAINTERS" - VIC

Established June 1931

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney Bush Walkers Inc, 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.

\*The Clubroom will  
be closed over  
Xmas/New Year.

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### NOVEMBER 1993

		Page
Spring at Danjera	by Morag Ryder	2
New Members		2
Mud	Stuart Brooks	3
Conservation Notes	Alex Colley	4
A Search, But in Vain	Jim R. Oxley	7
Exposed	"	8
Not Stages 14/15 Sydney to Lithgow, but a Walk Through History	Anon	11
The October General Meeting	Barry Wallace	12
Nancye's Wait for the Clydesdale Horses	Maurice Smith	14

### Advertisements

Alpsports	5
Blue Mountain Outdoor Clothing Specialists	6
Eastwood Camping Centre	9
Mountain Equipment	10
Willis's Walkabouts	13

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# SPRING AT DANIERA



Secretive Spring  
sidling in among the bushes  
brushing them with flowers  
and stirring the bees  
with her warm breath

On the ridge tops, old mallees lean  
hollowed by fire and twisted by wind  
but Spring strokes their silver skins  
giving such intense pleasure  
they break into a rash of flowers

Flowers oozing a honeyed sweetness  
that incites the bees to nuzzle  
the wattle's golden tresses  
and hang on the soft red lips  
of the shy grevillea.

Morag Ryder

## XMAS PRESENTS - Buy for yourself or for friends.....

Henry Gold's NSW WILDERNESS CALENDAR 1994. From Alex Colley at the Clubroom at \$11 or send your cheque to Alex (\$11 + \$2.75 postage) C/- Colong Foundation, Grosvenor Walk, 88 Cumberland Street, Sydney 2000.

also

A book "The Life & Journeys of BARRALLIER" by Andy Macqueen. From bookshops or direct from A. Macqueen, 39 Bee Farm Road, Springwood 2777 - \$14.95 plus \$3.00 postage. This book will be reviewed in the December magazine.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKERS..LIST OF NEW MEMBERS

NAME	ADDRESS	HOME PHONE	BUS. PHONE
KNIGHT MR PAUL	40 VICTORIA ST MALABAR 2036	661 4650	286 7432
KNIGHT MRS MARIAN	40 VICTORIA ST MALABAR 2036	661 4650	694 5900
TRINDER MR PATRICK	53 HUDSON PDE CLAREVILLE 2107		
SYMONS MR RAYMOND	16 McELHONE PL SURRY HILLS 2010	361 6948	352 6632

## SYDNEY BUSHWALKER XMAS PARTY

THE CLUB'S XMAS PARTY will be held on Wednesday, 15th December. Please bring some party food, the Club will provide drinks.

\*\*\*\*\*

M U D

by Stuart Brooks

"The comfort of bushwalkers is not high on the list of priorities for the Service."

This is the N.P.W.S. Ranger at Collingwood River talking. I had made a few complimentary remarks about the work they were doing to stabilise the track between Waldheim and Cradle Mountain - Tasmania - and had gone on to inquire whether something similar could be done in the notoriously boggy bits such as the Louisa Plains.

The Ranger, possibly a genetic relation of Morag's, went on to say - "You North Islanders should forget about the rain and the mud and just enjoy the scenery and wilderness."

One of my early experiences with mud (I remember vividly still) was on the track into Frenchman's Cap. It was a rainy, gloomy afternoon and we were trying to make time as we had been told the hut at Lake Vera was hard to find even in good light. As we slipped, slid and wallowed across the button-grass plains of the Lodden River (the "Sodden Lodden" is aptly named) I can remember thinking "This had better be worth it." (It was.) There was some talk of re-routing this track to firmer ground by way of Pickaxe Ridge, but to my latest information, this project has been put on the back burner (pity).

A somewhat later encounter with the black stuff was in Blowhard Valley. On this occasion, fortunately, we had with us a wily old Hobart walker who showed us the art of the long stick. Poke and prod every suspicious-looking muddy bit. There is no way of telling, by just looking - if a muddy bit is one inch or 3 feet deep. And if you have to sidle round a deepish bit - use the stick to help you balance on the slippery button-grass tussocks on the edge of the track. The track through Blowhard has since been diverted to higher ground and is now a fast and pleasant walk through to the South Coast.

Le is not a noted mud-runner. It was, therefore, something of a quizzical look I received when I presented her recently with a new and shiny pair of knee-length gaiters. This was nothing to the look I got a couple of weeks later when she went knee-deep into a nice muddy mess. This was on the track into Lake Judd. For the most part a high and firm track, it does descend, from time to time, to cross the Ann River and its attendant peat plains. Just as we were about to leave on this walk, a group of local Tassy walkers took off before us - not before passing on some gratuitous advice about "keeping to the centre of the track to minimise walker impact".

I grasped my long stick a little tighter and thought to myself "You bet!" Le is made of sterner stuff and was trying hard to practise such praise-worthy ideals. Not too long after her initiation into mud-holes, I noticed (without comment) that she was carrying a long stick - and prodding - and sidling.

Lake Judd is a spectacle worth a bit of mud. The track ends abruptly in thick rainforest on the edge of the lake where there is a small cleared campsite. The view is spectacular. The lake is long and narrow (say 4 k by  $\frac{1}{2}$  k). On two sides the towering ramparts of the Mount Eliza-Mount Ann massif sweep, unbroken, from the water's edge 600 metres to the cliff tops. On the other two sides the lake is fringed with thick overhanging rainforest. At this campsite we met a guy with a great job. He walked all the regular tracks and inspected all the regular campsites, photographing and taking

notes so that staff in the comfort and warmth of the N.P.W.S. headquarters could assess the impact walkers were having.

None of this prepares you for the Louisa Plains. As soon as you leave the forest along the edge of the Louisa River you are into a buttongrass plain that seems to go on for ever. What with heavy use and a rainfall measured in metres rather than millimetres, there are some extensive and deep mudholes to negotiate. We met one lass who had spent half an hour standing in a 3-foot deep bog waiting for her partner (good old Dad) to catch up and help her out. Trying to extricate your self, unaided, is a dicy business and you and your pack could end up with a nice, thick, all-over coating. You do a lot of poking, prodding and sidling on the Louisa Plains.

Our rain-loving Ranger must have sensed my disappointment at his remarks, as he went on to say in a slightly more conciliatory tone, "Actually, we are looking at cost and labour effective ways of dealing with areas like the Louisa Plains - something like a narrow boardwalk made from two planks laid side by side."

Hasta la dios.

\*\*\*\*\*

### CONSERVATION NOTES

by Alex Colley

The 4th National Wilderness Conference was attended by more than 80 conservationists, including 21 from other states and a number of scientists and academics. When opening the Conference The Hon. Neville Wran, AC, QC called for the establishment of a national wilderness system. Dr. Bob Brown said that Australia's wild forests faced the most reckless onslaught in history, largely to feed the job shedding woodchip companies. He attacked the Federal Government for its failure to use its corporation powers to save the forests. Dot Butler and Peter Treseder presented a vivid, moving and humorous description of wilderness recreation. Both stressed the environmental and educational value of childhood wilderness experience. An updated version of the Colong Foundation's Red Index of Wilderness was made available to the Conference. It covers 27 NSW wilderness areas, nearly all of which are subject to development threats.

The Friends of Durras, in which Ainslie Morris and Mike Reynolds were very active, are to be congratulated on raising \$100,000 for the purchase of 370 ha of water frontage on Durras Lake. The Bush Heritage organisation, established by Dr. Bob Brown with the proceeds of the Goldman environmental prize, has bought two blocks in Tasmania and one on the Daintree. Such purchases by groups of dedicated environmentalists would not be necessary if governments were environmentally responsible.

In NSW Clover Moore's South-East Forests Bill was defeated in the Upper House by the vote of the Rev. Fred Nile, who preferred the interests of the woodchippers to the preservation of God's kingdom. Clover intends to move a censure motion against the Government for its failure to implement the National Forest Policy.

\*\*\*\*\*

PLEASE NOTE - The Clubroom will be closed 22nd, 29th December and 5th, 12th and 26th January 1994. Please consult Social Program.

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## A SEARCH, BUT IN VAIN

By: James R Oxley

I still have his photograph. Looking now, I see an old man, balding, a wisp of hair floating from the top of the head. He is smiling, but it is an empty smile. His eyes, so free of mirth, seem, desperately, to be seeking a return through emptiness to a time when it all went wrong. His teeth seem clenched against a future, dread.

Bob Younger's voice, past midnight, told me to be waiting with my day pack, at 'four', to 'look for a body, maybe', somewhere on Kings Tableland. The old man had de-camped from a nursing home after being lodged there, respite for his family. Police Rescue suspected that he 'went bush'.

There were about forty bush walker volunteers on that cool November morning, but only three Sydney Bush Walkers; Bob, Greta and myself.

As usual, Bushwalker's Federation were looking for something bigger from SBW. Their reasoning being that Sydney Bush Walkers, as one of the biggest and most historic clubs in Australia, should give better support for a Federation which it helped found.

This party of three would also have liked more. We had some advantages. I am a public servant whose employer gives time and full pay for search activities; Greta is employed by a multi-national and Bob is retired. Perhaps there are more like us or otherwise who can give time and energy for something so worthwhile.

The search was hardly spectacular. Helicopters swept cobalt skies as lines of bush walkers walked in prescribed patterns through vicious scrub that had seen too many bushfires. Nobody saw a live old man that day or after. There were occasional sightings of what were, maybe, his footprints, but nothing else.

The police continued the search the following day, but it's difficult to find a man who it seemed, wanted to be lost. Perhaps he found what he was looking for, or revenge. (ps: John Toneto, of S&R advises that his skeleton was found some time later, in another search).

The Police Rescue sergeant, with such grey, gentle eyes (no suicide could resist) thanked us as he as he presented our service certificates.

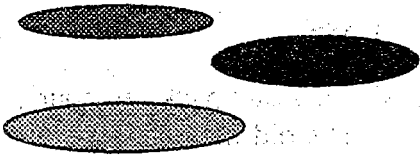
Driving back to Sydney I thought of the old man who had taken my sleep and given a nice day away from a boring job. He had certainly given one person joy.

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To register as a volunteer for SEARCH & RESCUE please ring: **Morrie Ward; 4496381(H) or 4498791(W)** and you too might, late one night, hear a voice at some ungodly hour calling you to unexpected pleasure (tell your boss you're in S&R).

### ADVISE AVAILABILITY:

- (i) **Without notice or** days's notice required.
- (ii) Difficult search ability or standard search.
- (iii) First Aid Certificate? S&R practices attended.
- (iv) Available for other duties such as no-notice driving and base camp duties.
- (v) Do you want you boss to be notified by our S&R? (Name and Phone No.)



# Exposed

by: James R Oxley

News, Monday: the mother looks back desperately as she leaves Jensens Swamp. At 11.00 pm on 25 October 1993, I receive a call from Morrie Ward. At long last, another 'call out'. For some reason, nobody else from the club is available, and because I do not drive, I ring further for a lift with a team from Coast and Mountain Walkers. After a restless sleep I take a taxi to the 4.00 am rendezvous. The driver, Brian, who found the wreck, gives a briefing as we go.

It is a beautiful day to miss work and Jensens Swamp is a hive of activity. The helicopters fly in. The useful are from National Parks, Westpac and Polair. The useless are the insects of the press. I have never been close to a helicopter and gaze, rapt as the giant blades slice the air.

As there is no team from Sydney Bush Walkers, I go with a scratch team on Boyd Range where we will act as radio relay. A helicopter carries three passengers, and I don't feel worried as, like a giant spider suspended from its silver thread, I drop gently to the ground. Then my body betrays me as I head for the nearest scrub with nervous diarrhoea.

The dipole (aerial) is soon up and Graham, who is the expert, takes the radio for much of the day. Time passes easily in the warm sun and I think sadly of the missed work back at the office ('haaa!'). Looking into the valley, I wish I was there, scrambling down Spinebender or Wheengee Whungee Creeks. There is no use projecting. There may soon be a time when I'm in among those nettles.

At morning tea, Springwood Bush Walkers discover the first body in advanced decay, with two sets of shoes beside it. The insects of the press rise into the air. Before lunch, the same team find the second body one hundred and fifty metres down Wheengee. The sounds of insects fill the air.

As we are the link for the searchers below we are the last team taken out. There is a fair breeze and the sun is setting when the NP helicopter eventually locates us; then I am in the loop. Slowly rising, the breeze takes me towards the trees. The pilot rapidly elevates and I am 150 feet above the ground; a few thousand feet above Spinebender Creek. Kanangra whirls beneath me as I synchronise slowly with the helicopter blades. Feeling very exposed; I 'think of England'.

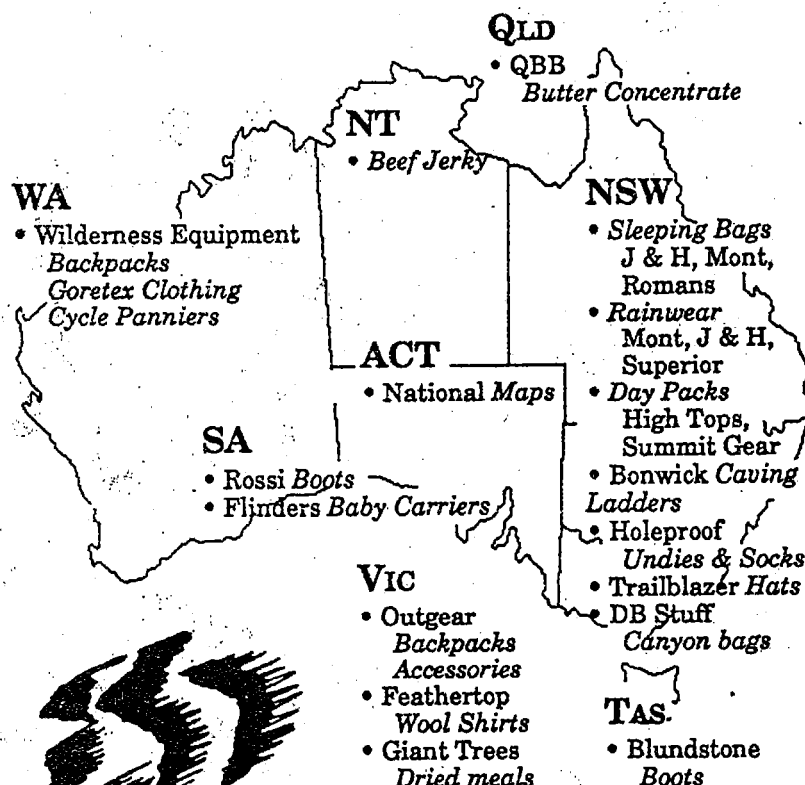
Our easy-going pilots reckon there is no time for a fourth winch up so Dave comes up with three packs. With all four packages crammed in, some faces seem to say that I am not alone with my thinking.

Jensens Swamp is nearly empty when we fly in - 'all hail the conquering heroes'. For some reason I don't need to run for the scrub. The body must be learning something. My friends from Coast and Mountain Walkers have waited. As I lounge back in comfort, I think yet again, 'Not bad for a Person with a Disability' (genetically so).

PS. All members of SBW are eligible for Search and Rescue. It is not necessary for you to hang from helicopters. Driving a party in and helping around base still makes you part of a team of craftsmen who care for others. You are insured against accident.



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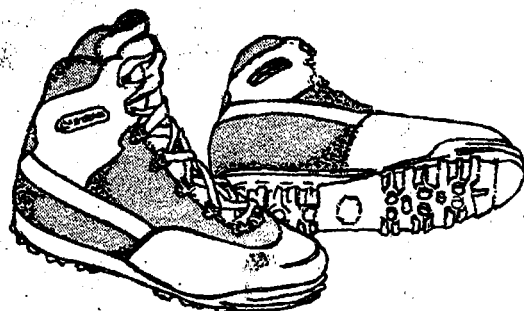
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Who went ? - Wilf Hilder (Leader), Carol Lubbers, John Hogan, John Coulson, Geoff Grace (author), and, (part of the time) - Margaret Sheens, David Trender & John Trender.

This was possibly the most significant historical two-day walk to appear on the program this year.

The historical record of the various early descents from the high ground of the Blue Mountains to the valley of the Cox River is fascinating. On 11 & 12 September '93, led by Wilf, we walked through that history.

In 1815, two years after Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson went into the history books with their "crossing" of the Blue Mountains, Lieutenant Cox followed Surveyor Evans surveyed line and using convict labour carved a roadway to fledgling Bathurst. The most significant part of that road remains today - Cox's Pass. It descends from the top of Mount York. Considering it was used by horse drawn traffic, remnants of it are frighteningly steep and hazardous. No doubt pressures for a better route existed from the start.

Lawson provided an alternative with his "Long Alley". It was completed in 1822 but also had steep and some difficult, swampy sections. Where Lawson's Long Alley arrives on the valley floor, we camped. The bush road remains exactly as it would have been all those years ago. Tucked up in sleeping bags in the hush of the night it was easy to imagine a horse drawn coach, creaking and swaying past on its way to Bathurst.

Commencing in the valley a kilometre further on, Lockyer began work in 1823 on a new pass which, if completed, would have provided another, possibly better route. Stone retaining walls remain as evidence of progress made. However, Major Mitchell used clout to get his own way, stopped the job and diverted the labour to development of his pet route - a pass up and around Mount Victoria. The present highway follows exactly that route today - Mitchell's Pass - now Victoria Pass.

Victoria Pass was too steep for early motor vehicles. In 1912, Berghofer, a President of former Blaxland Shire Council, provided yet another pass. It starts near the bottom of Victoria Pass and follows easy contours to arrive at Mount York Road, opposite where Lawson's Long Alley commences descent. Berghofers Pass was completed and used in parallel with Victoria Pass until the 1960's. A washaway has made it unusable for motor vehicles.

We traversed them one and all - alternately down one then up the other through Saturday and Sunday. We saw much more besides including for example, Colitt's Inn - both the existing Inn and traces of the reputed original Inn at the bottom of Cox's Pass.

The objective of walking to Lithgow was incidental. Wilf's walk was a non-stop excursion into history.

### THE OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

Around 18 members were present by 2010 so Spiro, in the chair, called them all to order and got proceedings under way. There were no new members for welcome so we proceeded forthwith to the reading and receipt of the Minutes of the previous meeting. There were no matters arising from the Minutes so we read the correspondence.

We have received letters from State Rail re the fence across the path from Glenbrook to the gorge, Willis's Walkabouts offering to show us slides of some of the places they visit, (programming constraints make it difficult for us to take up this offer but Committee will write to them explaining and asking for a more remote date for future use) and Confederation advising us of some leadership workshops which are scheduled.

The Treasurer's Report indicated that we earned \$438, spent \$1,427 and ended the month with a balance of \$5,872.

It was time for the Walks Report, Bill was away on holidays, and the Treasurer was still on his feet. Tony's presentation of the Walks Report began at the weekend of 11,12 September with Wilf Hilder taking a party of 9 on his Great West Walk segments 14 and 15 from Mount Victoria to Mount Victoria via the bush-covered remains of certain relics of the past. The weather was fine and they enjoyed a pleasant weekend. Bill Holland's weekend in the mountains did not go. Ralph Penglis's Bundeena to Otford walk went, but we have no details. Tony Holgate led a party of 5 on his Dharug N.P. semi-exploratory walk. The walk was lovely and there were some navigational problems, as befits a semi-exploratory trip.

For the weekend of 17,18,19 September, Carol Lubbers' walk in the vicinity of the Castle went, with a party of 5 and no other details. There were no details of any kind for Tom Wenman's Megalong Valley walk. Maurice Smith's Glenbrook to coffee shop walk had a party of 4 and no other information. Zol Bodlay's walk in the Marra Marra N.P. went to program with a party of 10. It was described as most informative and they had an oranges pig-out along the way at some abandoned orchard. Greta James's walk in the vicinity of Bundeena had a party of 11, experiencing some difficulties with waterlogged terrain but otherwise all went well.

Fran Holland's bike ride/dinner/bush-dance/barbecue trip west of Bathurst went over the weekend of 24,25,26 September in perfect weather with a mixed party of 15 drivers, riders, bon-vivants and others. As part of all that socialising they also got to renew acquaintance with Colin and Judy Barnes, now living in Carcoar. Hi Colin, hi Judy. Dick Weston's Megalong Valley weekend trip did not go, and of the way walks - there were no details for Tony Maynes' Mount Hay Road to Evans Lookout trip, Wilf Hilder's Kanimbla Valley trip went with a party of 11 in good weather and just a touch of mutiny from the party when the scrub got thick. Morag Ryder led a party of 8 on her walk from Blaxland to Lapstone. There was also a rumour that they spotted Dick Weston somewhere along the way.

The October long weekend brought news that there was no news on Ian Wolfe's Wilderness Wanderings X-C ski trip. Ric King's Widdin Brook walk did not go, but Ian Rannard reported a party of 19 on his Gundungura area walk. There was some rain and numerous leeches. Bill Capon's walk, "Ettrema Highlights", went, in the rain, with a party of 11, not always including Bill. It seems he became detached for around an hour one day. Technically of course, it was the party that was lost. The walk was re-routed due to problems with wet creeks and they eventually bailed out via a farm property where they had a bit of luck. The first vehicle along after they reached the road, 25 km from the cars, stopped and picked up the drivers and told the rest of the by now wet and getting

colder party where the nearest informally accessible shelter was.

Oliver Crawford's walk in the Wolgan over the weekend of 8,9,10 October did not go. Wilf Hilder reported problems with street directories and home brew on stages 16 and 17 of the Great West Walk. There were 9 to 12 in the party and they came out to Bell in time to have afternoon tea there on the Sunday, so it couldn't have been all bad. Ralph Penglis had 10 starters on his Manly to Cremorne trip. It was a beautiful day and the party was fast. Tom Wenman's stroll in the Megalong Valley went, without Tom for some reason. Jim Percy was leader and Jan Mohandas was pace setter. Conditions were pleasant and the party numbered from 6 to 8 depending on who counted and when.

Conservation Report indicated that a Wilderness Conference has been held.

Confederation Report brought mention that there were three S & R call-outs during the month, that the Bushwalkers Ball has returned a profit of \$1,200, and that there appears to be a continuing push for leader accreditation for walking groups.

General Business saw discussion of the closure by Hornsby Council of the Benowie Track in the vicinity of the Hornsby Rifle Range. It seems that a survey has indicated that the track runs through an area which could be struck by ricochets from the range. The opinion was expressed that, despite there being a number of government bodies involved, it will all be sorted out in the near future.

The announcements followed and the meeting closed at 2122.

\* \* \* \* \*

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## FROM THE CLUBROOM

By Maurice Smith

### NANCYE'S WAIT FOR THE CLYDESDALE HORSES

This month's column starts with two questions. Question one is "what has a gestation period of eleven months?" Question two is "what has a gestation period of four years and generates five volumes of work papers?"

The answers, respectively, are, firstly, a Clydesdale horse, and, secondly, Nancye Alderson's children's book featuring Clydesdale horses. These facts and many others were revealed to us at the club meeting on the evening of 29 September, 1993 by Nancye, whom many members will know, is a member of the club, an active walker and walks leader.

The assembled members were quite intrigued to learn about Clydesdale horses in Australia today, where the Carlton Brewery Clydesdale team is a perennial favourite at major events such as Sydney's Royal Easter Show. Only an organisation of the size of Carlton is able to afford the very large upkeep costs involved in operating a large stable, over 20 horses, and the associated equipment, such as the drays hauled by the team.

Nancye told us how the idea for the book came to be planted in her fertile brain. The book started its life as an article written by Nancye, a freelance journalist, that a capital city newspaper published. The article was based on her experience as a passenger riding in style on the Clydesdale horse-drawn dray at the Sydney Easter Show. A friend suggested that the experience could be turned into a children's book.

Thus began a year's research into Clydesdales, including visits to Carlton's stud farm as well as to other Clydesdale studs, discussions with horse show judges and so on. In addition to that side of the research Nancye also took us into her confidence about the advice she obtained about writing a book for children.

After the research period reached its conclusion then followed a year of writing and editing, including learning how to use a personal computer based word processor. The frustrations involved with this were significant when she lost about half of the book due to a computer malfunction.

Nancye had the good fortune to have a group of three youngsters who were also horse lovers, to whom she read each chapter as her "sounding board", including how to make the book's children more life-like.

With the writing effort over then followed two year's of work with Springwood based Butterfly Press leading to the publication of her book "The Clydesdale Are Waiting". The sales are proceeding quite well.

Thank you for sharing your experience with us Nancye. We look forward to your next book.

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