



THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER is a monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc, Box 4476 GPO Sydney 2001. To advertise in this magazine, please contact the Business Manager.

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THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS INCORPORATED was founded in 1927. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening at 8 pm at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli (near Milsons Point Railway Station). Visitors and prospective members are welcome any Wednesday.

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CHRISTMAS ISSUE DECEMBER 1994

Best Wishes From The President

The year has gone so quickly and, it's almost Christmas. I'd like to wish you and your family all the best for the holidays and for the new year. Many people will be walking over Christmas and New Year and I look forward to either walking with you or to, at least, exchanging stories in January. Remember that the most dangerous part of a walk is the drive, so please take particular care.

I hope to also see lots of old and new friends at the Club Christmas party on Wednesday 21st December and at the barbecue at Balmoral on Wednesday 4th January. So have a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Greta



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A Letter

From **Gordon Lee**

The Secretary

Please let me apologise for not having replied to your letter of 11 July 1994 offering me the opportunity to become an honorary member of the club.

This honour literally "took the wind out of my sails" and I am happy to say that I accept with thanks.

You will, I hope, allow me to reminisce.

I joined the Club in 1975 after having met David Rostron in Whites River Hut some months before. Although not a precedent I had the privilege of leading a walk while still a prospective. And so anxious was I to gain membership I didn't do a "day" test walk but did three consecutive weekend tests and applied immediately.

Joining SBW changed dramatically my way of life. Had I not met Lynda Robins (also a prospective at that time) I may not have travelled. She put the idea and I travelled Nepal, India, Afghanistan and S.E. Asia for 12 months.

When I returned from Asia in '77 I was persuaded by, then, Christine Rigby to join a folk singing group which became "The Scrub Bashers" and later "Coolana". For the best part of ten years I enjoyed singing and performing for the Club with this group.

At the same time I was introduced to "Blue Grass" music by Len Newland and joined a band that took the name "Moonshine" and performed with them for the same number of years. Some of the "gigs" were for the Club.

Being a member of the Club gave me the opportunity to see more of the Australian Bush than perhaps I otherwise would have and because there were people of like mind I was able to walk (tramp) the high country of New Zealand as well as the dry country of Central Australia.

Then of course there was the contact with all those personalities

and characters that make up the Club which, in the main, was an enriching experience.

Last, but not least, it was my association with SBW that allowed me to meet the young lady who eventually became my wife.

May I now have the temerity to list what I feel were my contributions to the Club and its activities.

As I have stated above, I became a member of the "Scrub Bashers", later changed to "Coolana", who gave a number of performances at the Club as part of the Social Activities and the Bluegrass band "Moonshine" also played at Club social evenings. This was done on an ad hoc basis for nearly 10 years.

For many years also Len Newland, Bob Hodgson and I played for the "hootenanny" at Coolana - this event was the anniversary of the dedication of the Hut which I missed in 1976.

In 1977 also I became a member of Committee as a Federation Councillor and so began my long association with the Federation. As a Councillor of Federation I was a Ball Convenor, was elected President in 1981 and as far as I know was the longest running President, holding that position for ten years.

Through this association I became involved with the S&R and in 1982 I was placed on the 24 hour call list for SBW. At about the same time I took my place as a member of the S&R Committee as a Field Officer. As a result of this I took part in a number of searches.

In addition I represented Confederation, as it is now known, on several occasions at a National level.

For about eight years I was editor of "The Bushwalker" - the Confed's newsletter - which was raised to its present status by the initial efforts of John Berry and myself.

For SBW I had the unique privilege of putting on almost every program for nearly ten years a

Saturday "Rock Scrambling" and on Sunday an Abseiling Instructional. In that time only about four of these were cancelled. Attendance at the abseiling Sundays was, on average, ten plus souls, of which we didn't lose or damage any - sorry there was one damaged ankle, at ground level.

In addition during the time I was very active with the Club till 1989 I led quite a number of walks in a varied spread of terrain.

On a few other occasions I have run Navigation and Ski Touring Instruction days and weekends for the Club as well as for Confederation.

My support of events at "Coolana" (the Club's property) has been mentioned and for many years I attended almost every function that was held there from 1975 on, other than 1976, till I lost some contact with the Club when it moved to Kirribilli House. How can I forget Coolana 1977 when, not knowing any better, I drove my Honda Civic down to - and parked it at - the Hut.

This I have to mention. An exploit of Bill Capon and I led to a donation of \$100 being made to "Coolana". During a Don Finch Easter walk Bill Burke had "bet" that no walker over 40 years could "do" the Three Peaks - Cox to Cox - in 24 hours.

On the program some time later I had a "Three Peaks" walk - from Katoomba Station. In completing the walk Bill Capon and I, though benighted for five hours, managed to get from Cox to Cox in 17 hours and so win the bet. This was donated to the "Coolana" Fund. I was 57 years of old age at the time and Bill was over 40.

So perhaps I can claim that I have returned to the Club something of that which the Club has given to me.

Gordon Lee.



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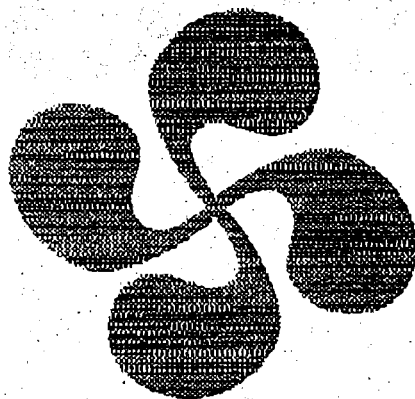
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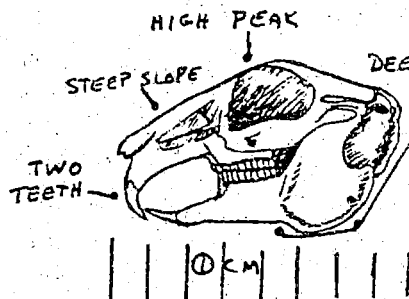
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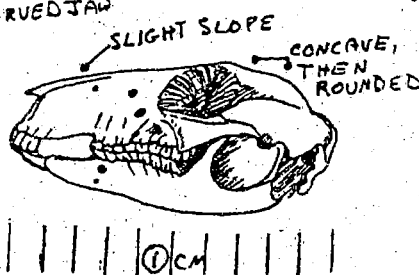
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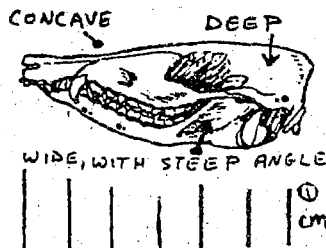
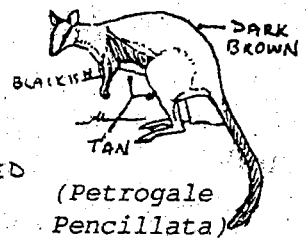
A field guide to help identify animal skulls likely to be found in N.S.W.



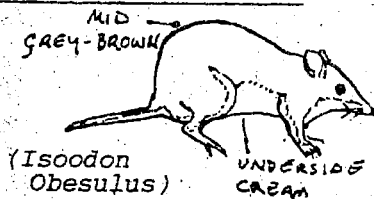
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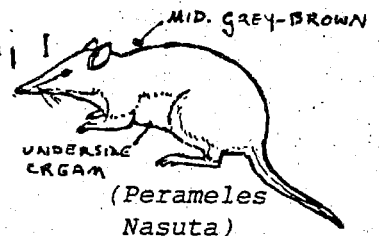
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BUSHWALKING IN KAKADU

CHANGES IN BUSHWALKING MANAGEMENT

Bushwalking in Kakadu is currently restricted to a specific network of approved routes, most of which were originally developed by Willis's Walkabouts and/or the Darwin Bushwalking Club. Park regulations require everyone who does an overnight bushwalk to obtain a camping permit showing their proposed route. Failure to obtain such a permit could result in a substantial fine.

The park authorities are planning a major review of bushwalking management in 1995. This review may result in the approval of new routes and/or the deletion of existing routes from the approved list. In any case, it will almost certainly result in additional restrictions in certain areas.

If you have ever thought of doing an extended bushwalk in Kakadu, 1995 is the time to do it, especially if there is a particular place you would like to visit.



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FROM THE CLUBROOM

THE AMAZON AND BOLIVIAN ANTIPLANO - SOUTH AMERICA

Last month Sydney Bush Walkers were once again treated to excellent 'Infotainment' at the clubrooms, starting with Gerhard Ruhl's slide presentation on 16 November. Gerhard's itinerary started with an examination of the map of South America, upon which he explained the route taken. From here we flew over magnificent rainforests only the Amazon can boast and on to the city of La Paz, capital of Bolivia with Gerhard at the controls.

La Paz is four thousand metres above sea level and crams its citizens into an amazing number of houses on very little ground space. Even the cliff faces were dotted with little shacks which Gerhard explained were the cheaper residences even though they offered the best views. This was not surprising as it appeared from the slides that even putting out the garbage would be a life threatening event.

From here we travelled through many of the surrounding towns and then Gerhard joined an organised group to explore the vast Antiplano by 4 wheel drive.

The Antiplano region of Bolivia was breathtaking to say the least, with vast lakes and rolling mountain ranges rainbow stained by layers of sulphur and minerals. Yellow Mountain was particularly wellnamed with its golden hues of crystallised sulphur, made more brilliant by reflected sunlight.

Gerhard's trip went mainly to plan we were told, except when one member of the 4 wheel drive expedition had an argument with the driver and decided he'd rather walk. The rest of the party spent a week looking for this character and finally tracked him down 30 kms away! It would have been interesting to hear the first words the search party had to offer when they finally found him.

As a result of Gerhard's presentation and Maureen Carter's, which covered the Andes and Patagonia some weeks back, at least one South American trip is being planned by motivated SBW's in the future. Thank you to Gerhard and Maureen.

HISTORIC ROCKS WALK -

23 November

An eager group of SBW historians met at 6.00 pm at the Clubrooms for John Hogan's Rocks Exploratory Walk. With the stragglers having arrived by 6.30, we took off at a fast clip across the Bridge, to the first house to be inspected. The Lord Nelson Hotel proved to be a fascinating example of early architecture and the bar in particular received a lot of attention from the party. Equally as interesting was the glassware of that period and when one enterprising SBW suggested we test its liquid holding ability the evening became even more interesting. Happy Hour platters appeared from behind the bar together with glasses of beer bearing names that included "thin sheets" and "red back" to name a few of the more memorable brews.

With historical significance of the evening mostly forgotten, we progressed to the Hero of Waterloo and then the mercantile unassisted by compass or map, where our Irish SBW's demonstrated how to test the quality of the Guinness by tracing a figure 8 on the top. With diminishing navigation skills and even less interest in anything but food we headed for Zia Pina's where the waiters seemed to pull chairs and tables out of thin air to seat our party of 20 plus.

Finally, at a much slower pace, we headed back across the Bridge and home, with many of the group hoping that history would repeat itself in the near future. It was lots of fun. Thanks John.

HINCHINBROOK ISLAND -

30 November

Our final treat for the month came from a jointly lead slide presentation from Morie Ward and David Robinson. Hinchinbrook Island was the

by JAN ROBERTS

destination and more specifically the summit of Mt Bowen (1121 metres) which had escaped conquering on a previous SBW trip.

Morie's party of 10 advanced from the south of the island, having arrived by boat at low tide and headed north towards Mt Bowen and a 1121 metre ascent. Rockhopping took on a new meaning as the party scrambled over slippery algae covered boulders which blocked the creek leading to Bowen, and the only way. From what we could see, even rest times were anything but, with one of the 'better' camp spots requiring the tethering of legs to tree roots overnight to avoid sliding over the edge.

In spite of this and the fact that it took the party three days to cover 11 of the more difficult kilometres involved, they all successfully reached the summit and signed the logbook.

Morie assured us that the view was worth any discomfort and certainly the slides presented were impressive. From the dense emerald vegetation of the rainforest to the contrasting golden arch of beaches and dazzling ocean to the east of the island, Hinchinbrook was inspiring.

Having made a safe descent and back on the beach, Tom Wenman discovered a new fish bait accidentally. Having wrestled his salami from a hungry goanna, Tom decided that the chewed part was not good for much else and hooked it to a line. The result was two fresh bream for dinner - a fitting end to the trip.

We can only hope that the new resort planned by Keith Williams on the mainland nearby will be achieved without damage to this special pocket of wilderness.

The evening was concluded with a short video complete with sound effects and personal interviews of Morie's party shooting the rapids of the Tully River in Queensland after leaving Hinchinbrook Island. Needless to say, the trip was a great success and we enjoyed the entertainment.

'til next month ... your roving reporter. □

Hats Off To Birrabang Brook.

Sunday, 6th November

David Trinder

Birrabang Canyon was alive with the roar of the wind. Everything was moving except the walls of this spectacular canyon. Eucalyptus trees normally have tufts of leaves hanging from an irregular of branches, but on this day the leaves were being drawn horizontal and were vibrating in the wild wind, while the branches swayed violently under the enormous stresses, dead trees swung threateningly, sticks and leaves flew in the air and small bushes rattled and hissed. White clouds moved quickly across the blue sky, and sunlight changed rapidly. Hats blew off and to avoid this problem they stayed off and were kept in packs and the faces were sunburnt. Normal noises of the bush were not there, birds and insects were not apparent because they could not fly in the irregular wind, speech and day's were difficult.

The canyon of Birrabang brook is formed by irregular, orange coloured towering cliffs. The sandstone is in layers and parts are weathered to a grey orange, but chunks have fallen out leaving newish orange rock. There are overhangs and ledges where trees and bushes grow. At the bottom, the brook tumbles over slippery rocks, over and under logs, into quiet clear pools and across sandy creek beds.

On Sunday, 6th November Morie Ward took a party of twenty one through Birrabang Brook. Following the creek down, the party were sliding

down banks and rocks, climbing through log jams, jumping onto sandy creek beds, wading through cold water, rock hopping and crawling under logs as they negotiated the obstacle course.

Birrabang Brook and its catchment runs from the Bell Road ridge south west to the Grose River and meets the Grose downstream from Victoria Creek and upstream from the Pearces Pass crossing.

They walked in from the Bell Road south along a ridge into the head of the brook and followed it downstream until lunch. They returned up the brook for a short distance, then scaled the eastern escarpment and took the Birrabang Ridge to the Bell Road, and walked west along the road to their cars.

All of the bush along the rout except for the moist area near the brook itself had been burnt in the January fires. New growth was obviously slow in the cold and dry conditions of winter, but the new growth is very fresh looking and covers black trunks for their full height. Many new plants are germinating and wild flowers are abundant.

Morie took them to the Ivy Inn at Bilpin for an interesting meal on the way home, and the group thanked him for a very pleasant day in the new area. □

Changed Walk Date

Greta James walk from Newnes to Zobels Gully, Constance Gorge and Deans Creek has been moved from the weekend of 10th 11th an 12th February to the previous weekend - the 3rd 4th and 5th February, 1995.

OUR CLUB

by Blue Gum

Sydney people everywhere, wonder who they are,

You see them there, you see them here, they come from near and far Dressed in shorts and hobnail boots and rucksacks on their backs, Not just men but ladies too, take to the rough bush tracks.

Each one staggers 'neath his load of grub and sleeping bag, You wonder if they are "all there" to carry such a swag.

But you dont know the pleasures that they find in these bushwalks Until you've shared their company, their campfires and their talks. Should a walker become lost - no matter where or when - Hooper's Search and Rescue Crew will be out in force again. *

Willing hands are always there to share the work or play, And rousing songs they sing around the fire at close of day. Let others ride in shiney cars and travel the easy way; Kowmung, Blue Gum, or Carlon's Head, they'll walk them any day. Every bush track is a joy to these friends as they stride, Remember if you want to roam the bushland wild and wide Sydney Bush Walkers, that's their name, so let them be your guide.



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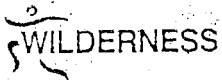
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WILDERNESS LOST

In March 1985 the Colong Committee (now the Colong Foundation) comprised largely of bushwalkers, asked the then Minister for Conservation, Bob Carr, to introduce a Bill for a Wilderness Act. In an address to the S.B.W. in their club room on Jan. 22nd 1986, he announced his support for the Act. A Wilderness Study Group, comprising representatives of the Colong Foundation, the National Parks Association, The Federation of Bushwalking Clubs and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, was appointed to frame the provisions of the Act. The Group recommended that any individual or organisation should be able to nominate a wilderness area, for the nomination to be assessed by the NPWS, and a period for submissions on the assessment. Since the State's wilderness areas were already well known to bushwalkers and nature lovers this was a realistic means of identifying and evaluating wilderness.

Four years later no areas had been declared under the Act, a situation which might have continued indefinitely had not Terry Metherell, who had resigned from the Liberal Party, proposed to introduce a Wilderness (Declaration of New Areas) Bill, which might have resulted in the defeat of the Government. This enabled Tim Moore, Minister for the Environment to announce a timetable for the assessment of the 10 areas which had been nominated and a period for the receipt of submissions on the nominations, which had been made by the Colong Foundation, the Wilderness Society and the Confederation of Bush Walking Clubs. The NPWS made only minor changes to the nominated areas and in some cases added to them. The total area assessed was 800,000 ha.

Between 70 and 80 per cent of submissions were in favour of the assessed areas except in the case of Goodradigbee, a 4WD preserve, where only 54% were in favour.

A year later, on Dec. 23rd 1993, the Government announced the declaration of 350,000 ha of the assessed areas, a declaration which it described as "a Christmas present to our grandchildren." The assessed areas had been fragmented and trimmed to allow access for 4WD vehicles, trail bikes and horse riders. An example of this was the Deua Wilderness, nominated by the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs.

The announcement was bitterly attacked by the anti-wilderness lobby, led by the anti-wilderness faction within the Government, mainly composed of National Party members, two of whom threatened to resign, putting the Government's tenure of office in doubt. The "declarations" became "proposals" and in order to gain time and appease the rebels, the Government appointed the Surveyor General, whose expertise lay in the demarkation of land tenures rather than in ecology or park management, to report on three of the areas.

The Surveyor General sought the views of 4WD clubs, horse riders, miners, graziers, loggers and everybody else with an interest in exploiting the areas for profit or pleasure. Notably missing was any reference to the interest of bushwalkers, who are the principal users of many wilderness areas. Nor was it recognised that wilderness is not solely for the benefit of local interest groups, but for the people of the State and the nation.

Acting on the Surveyor-General's report, the 350,000 ha were further fragmented, trimmed and truncated to allow vehicular and equestrian access, leaving only 113,000 ha (0.1% of the State's area) for declaration. Bushwalkers are only too aware of the damage caused by such access, but we don't have to take their word for it. The State Pollution Control Commission, in its report on the recreational use of off-road vehicles, stated that *The use of vehicles in areas with high wilderness values, jeopardise wilderness qualities. The desire to explore and trail-blaze areas of virgin country can cause*

immeasurable damage to flora and fauna leaving deep impressions as vehicles tyre-spin their way to gain traction in rough terrain. The damage to tracks caused by horses is only too evident in areas such as Mobbs Swamp and Ku-ring-gai. The National Parks Association opposes the use of horses not only in wilderness but in all national parks.

On Sept 22nd Bob Carr moved "That this House censures the Premier for breaching his promise on wilderness." He quoted his words when speaking to the Wilderness Bill in 1987, when he said "...if we fail in the task now before us, if we do not accept the responsibility to protect some of what remains, then we must surely and rightly expect the condemnation of this and future generations. He also re-affirmed his 1897 commitment to declare 12 new wilderness areas together with 20 new national parks in his first year of office.

In reply Government speakers ignored the purpose of wilderness protection, which is to preserve the last substantial remnants of the natural environment and the last refuge of many endangered species. Nor did they recognise the damage caused by the interests which were served by the reduction of the wilderness areas from 800,000 to 113,000 ha. All the well worn anti-wilderness themes were repeated, such as:

"That there is no "access" to wilderness". There is nothing to prevent anyone from entering a wilderness provided they get out of their vehicles and off their horses.

"That wilderness is only for the young and fit". Anyone can enjoy it.

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THE NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

There were approximately 18 members present at around 2005 when the president called them to order and began the meeting by calling for apologies. Fran Holland, George Mawer and Patrick James were those who had sent emissaries to convey their profound regret at being unable to be with us on the occasion.

There were no new members for welcome so we moved on to read and receive the minutes of the previous meeting. The call for matters arising brought no response so we proceeded to the correspondence.

There was a letter from Cordon Lee, accepting our offer of honorary membership, from Grace Noble advising us of the passing of Colin Broad who served for many years and in many matters as the club's Hon. solicitor, and from a group calling themselves the Sydney Water Project, inviting all and sundry to a series of public meetings to discuss Sydney's water for the future. We had written to Natural Areas Ltd asking for advice about the total number of shares issued by the company, the date of their AGM, their reporting to the Australian Securities Commission and requesting a copy of the latest annual report. They have responded to this letter, providing the information requested and affirming that they have lodged the necessary information with the A.S.C. They also provided a copy of this year's annual report. The one they mailed previously appears to have gone astray.

co-operative bodies such as bushwalking clubs. Our letter to Chris Harcher, the relevant NSW government minister, pointed out the compromises and degrees of influence likely to arise from corporate sponsorship of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

There were no matters arising from the correspondence.

The treasurer's report, presented after the walks reports on this occasion, is presented here in the usual order for the sake of consistency. We received income of \$129 spent \$1,208 and closed the month with a balance of \$2,100.

The club's annual reunion at Coolana led off the walks reports, with fine warm weather and around 60 attendees. Tony Holgate led a reunion sub-group of 12 to Mount Carrialoo on the Sunday. Despite a hot day and late start they managed to avoid overheating by sticking to the shade. Tony claims you can see forever from the top of that hill. The Confederation search and rescue practice was also conducted that weekend. They *didn't* find the aeroplane.

Over the weekend of 22, 23 October Tom Wenman cancelled his walk out from Kanangra Walls due to his need to recuperate from a minor operation. Eddie Giacomel's walk from Mountain Lagoon went, led by Roger Browne as substitute leader. There were 4 in the party and it was a pleasant weekend. There were no details of Peter Miller's training weekend at Springwood except to say there were lots of people. Maurice Smith led a party of 11 on his Glenbrook Creek Saturday walk in good weather and Bronny Niemeyer led 34 intrepid souls through a maelstrom of coffee breaks, ice cream stops and other undisclosed perils on her Harbour Foreshores walk on the Sunday.

David (fairweather) Rostron led an X-tended X-country ski trip over the period 22 to 29 October in the Kosciusko area. There was a party of 6, with some of the best skiing David can remember, whatever that means nowadays. They went to Mount Twynam on the Saturday in perfect conditions. The snow cover

was so good that there were reports of people skiing off Watsons Crags and living to tell the story. On Sunday they visited Mount Townsend. It seems David even went for a swim in Lake Albina late one afternoon. Something to do with skiing on thin ice, they said. A prescient subset of the party left the area mid afternoon on Monday in perfect conditions. This left David to preside over the sudden and profound change in the weather and enjoy the blizzard conditions which ensued. It was all too much for the party. They sounded the retreat early on Tuesday morning.

The weekend of 29, 30 October saw Bill Holland with a party of 6 on his cycling trip out from Bathurst. What with Fran away and Bill busy tending to the prospective members that's as much as we know. Jan Mohandas cancelled his Megalong Valley weekend walk due to lack of starters and John Hogan did the same for his Nattai walk due to late notifications of interest. Peter Miller's Sunday walk from Cowan to Mount Kurin-gai went, with 19 starters in warm conditions. David Robinson reported a party of 21 for his Orang-utan Pass walk. They said it was a good trip but must have hurried for some reason because they were out by 1600.

There were no details of Jim River's programmed trip to Mount Owen in the Buddawangs over the weekend of 4, 5, 6, November. Spiro led a party of 9 on his Splendour Rock weekend walk. Fortunately the strong winds that sprang up did so after the party had descended into the Cox River. Of the day walks, Frank Grennan had 16 on his Eastern Suburbs ramble on the Saturday and Morie Ward had 23 walkers being buffeted by the winds whenever they emerged from the creeks or canyons around Pierces Pass on the Sunday.

continued on page 11 ►

Its On, Its Off, Its On, And The Ice Cream Man Came at Lunch time!

Bill Holland

The radio said, "Hot! about 36° " so I cancelled the walk. Phoned everybody and put off the new callers. But one was insistent. "That's the temperature out west and we're walking near the northern beaches, it will only be about 27° ". So I resurrected the walk. Phoned most again and told them it was on (my apologies to those I couldn't contact).

Well, twelve turned up at the Palm Beach ferry wharf. Actually, I found them drinking coffee at the cafe across the road. So we caught the ferry across the water to Currawong and the walk commenced.

The views of Pittwater from the headland were, as usual, magnificent. So were the views from West Head Road! They shouldn't have been there. We could see across to Broken Bay whereas, before (i.e. before the January fires) the road had a dense bush outlook.

It was hot on top with the tree cover burnt but we made up for it at lunch time with swimming in America Bay. That's where we lost a member (shall remain nameless). We went down to the next inlet for lunch, he went back up to the top looking for us. We had ice-cream when the ice-cream boat pulled into shore but he missed out

Is this the first time that the leader has been able to organise the ice-cream man to call at lunch time in the middle of the bush?

Around the headland and back over the top after lunch, down to Bennetts Wharf for the ferry. Here, despite the undoubted sharks lurking beneath the surface, many of the members went for a swim.

Did we find our missing member? Well, we expected to see him join the ferry at The Basin. He missed it, being asleep under a shady tree, and caught the last ferry two hours later.

I'm glad the walk went, but it was bloody hot! □



Meeting Notes Continued >

Morie reckons the area is spectacular and he might just go back there sometime. All of which ended the walks reports.

Conservation report indicated that the NPWS draft plan of management for the Royal, Garrawarra SRA, and Heathcote is now out for comment. Alex will prepare a precis for publication in the magazine as there is yet plenty of time for comment. An area in the Pilliga scrub has been acquired by NPWS to save it from subdivision and clearance. Unfortunately this involved NPWS using up scarce funds to make the acquisition.

Confederation report indicated that they have noted the details of the SBW discussion with NPWS about the tracks in the Royal. It also appears that Springwood bushwalkers have expressed an opinion similar to ours on the subject of accreditation.

Of general business there was none so we proceeded through the announcements to close at something like 2123. □



A Happy Ending

Fred, (a bushwalking friend of mine) was having trouble "keeping up with his marital duties" so he decided to talk it over with his Doctor. "Drug therapy could help" said the Doc' but it would cost anything up to \$5000 and there are no guarantees. Another possibility is surgery, which would cost about \$10,000 and again, no guarantees. Anyway said the Doctor, I strongly recommend that before making any decisions you go home and talk it over with your wife.

About a week later Fred returned. "And what did you and your wife decide?" asked the Doctor. "Well" said Fred "We decided to redo the Kitchen".



The Christmas Party

Will be held in the Clubrooms at Kirribillie on Dec 21st

Weather permitting we will gather in the area behind the Clubrooms.

Please bring a plate of your finest goodies and the Club will provide refreshments.



New Year Barbeque

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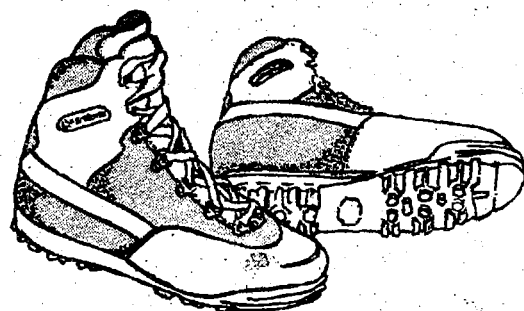


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MANAGING THE ROYAL, GARRAWARRA AND HEATHCOTE NATIONAL PARKS

Conservation
Alex Colley

The NPWS has issued a draft management plan for the above three parks. Had it not been for the campaigns initiated by the Mountain Trails Club and the S.B.W. there would be only one park - the National, and had it not been for the efforts of the Total Environment Centre there would be no Garrawarra Recreational Area. Although the "Cultural Heritage" section of the plan describes the Aborigines, the timber getters and Sir John Robertson, who proposed the Royal N.P., there is no mention of the S.B.W. Nor did we receive a copy of the plan or the accompanying Cabins Conservation Plan. In view of Sydney Lord Mayor, Councillor Sartor's, statement that future buildings in Sydney's CBD may have to be designed to seal out cancer-causing traffic fumes, Sir John's description of the park as a breathing space for urban dwellers living in the unhealthy polluted conditions of the city is even more relevant today.

Because of its proximity to the metropolitan area, particularly the southern suburbs, the 15,078 ha. of the Royal National Park are subjected to intensive usage. Some 3 million visits are made to the park every year.

Although 94% of visitors are car borne, picnicking and swimming are very popular and some 44% of visitors do some walking. This imposes heavy pressure on the natural environment, and since "protection and preservation of the natural environment" is the prime management objective, protective measures, unnecessary in larger less used parks, are necessary. Recognising this, most

bushwalkers will probably agree with many of the main

features of the management plan. These are:

Control of weeds and introduced species, including cats, dogs, pigs, house mice, brown and black rats, rabbits, foxes domestic stock and fallow deer.

No additional public roads and promotion of the use of public transport.

"Designated" walking tracks, ie. the well established tracks, will be reconstructed and if necessary re-located. This policy has been discussed with the S.B.W. and it seems to be agreed that these tracks will suffer serious erosion unless some form of paving is used on the eroded sections. Some non-designated tracks will be closed.

Camping is permitted in a number of locations, but camp fires are forbidden. This will probably not affect the S.B.W. since the areas are now used only for day walks.

Horse riding and the use of bicycles on walking tracks will be prohibited.

It is the long term aim of the Service to reduce, and if possible eliminate the number of non-park power lines and other utilities within the three areas.

It is likely that, in view of the usage pressure on the park, bushwalkers would approve the above features of the plan, but the fire management provisions are open to question. The Service's primary aim in fire management is to reduce the risk of bushfire damage to human life and property. The secondary aim is the effective management of bushfires for the protection and conservation of the natural, cultural, scenic and recreational features. This poses the question as to whether parklands should be used as firebreaks, as they were during the January fires. The

main responsibility for the protection of life and property should rest with those who choose to live in fire hazardous locations and the Councils which let them do so.

The Draft Plan's provision for the preservation of the 229 shacks in the Royal and Garrawarra Parks is unacceptable to the S.B.W. In the early days bushwalkers camped at Burning Palms. As the shacks took over there they went to South Era and as the shacks spread there to North Era. When a boarding house was proposed for North Era they bought the block which was the only suitable site. The NPWS has published a "Cabins Conservation Plan" in which the shacks are described as Heritage items. When Garrawarra was saved in 1934 the S.B.W. went along with the NPWS policy of allowing the occupants to retain the huts during their lifetime, after which they would be demolished. This policy has been abandoned. After 60 years most of the original occupants are dead, but they have been allowed to pass on the huts to their relations and friends. The timber, fibro cement and corrugated iron structures have a limited life unless they are reconstructed as they decay. Their like is replicated in alternative life style and other areas throughout NSW. The granting of a virtually hereditary title to the occupants is directly opposed to the aim of park management which is the "protection and preservation" of natural features and "the conservation of wildlife and natural bio diversity."

We have until February 20th to make a submission on the draft plan. This gives plenty of time for members to express their views at Club meetings and reach agreement on our submission to the NPWS. □

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A modicum of fitness, which most can achieve, is necessary only for overnight walks.

"That valuable resources are "locked up" in wilderness". This argument overlooks the fact that wilderness consists of the least productive country in the State. Otherwise it would not be wilderness. "Locking up" this country leaves 96% of the State for economic and recreational exploitation.

"That wilderness is solely for the benefit of bushwalkers". The purpose of declaration is environmental preservation, but supposing it was for the benefit of bushwalkers. Why shouldn't provision be made for this form of recreation, in which more people participate than in any sport? Billions of dollars are "locked up" in sporting facilities. Wilderness preservation is virtually cost free.

"That the areas are not "pristine." Of course they are not. The whole State is affected by some form of development, but the wilderness areas are the best we have.

"That there are pests weeds and feral animals in the areas". Again, of course there are. They are everywhere.

The reduction of the declarations was described as a "balanced" decision, as decisions to sacrifice more of the natural environment always are.

The wilderness campaign has been a boost for environmental awareness. It has brought nature conservation to public attention and engendered widespread support. The censure motion, only the third passed in 55 years, is strong proof of public concern. And, as Pam Allan, Shadow Minister for the Environment, pointed out, it has united the conservation movement. □



Sydney Bushwalkers Inc.

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Bushwalks of the Sydney Region - Vol 2 (NPA)	12.50
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