



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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December 1995

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Best wishes for a merry Christmas and happy New Year. Safe driving, good walking.

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FROM THE CLUBROOM

By Jan Roberts

Bushwalking and Health of the Lower Limb - October 18

October's Wednesday night Clubroom activities included an excellent slide presentation from Allan



Donnelly. Although he has only recently joined SBW, Allan is a long term walker and was able to talk to us from both the perspective of his profession as a podiatrist, and also as a keen walker.

Allan is Senior Head Teacher of Podiatry at the Sydney Institute of Technology, and his many hours of tutoring really showed in the quality of information we were exposed to during the evening. The evening bought out a large crowd of members eager to understand why various part of their lower limbs don't always perform as required. Allan gave us lots of good reasons.

Surprisingly, foot disfunction we were told, was usually to blame for most of the ailments that affect our legs and feet. With feet under constant pressure to function carrying heavy packs and under difficult walking conditions, a foot that rolls (pronates, to the educated) either in or out, can in many cases result in minor to major injuries. We SAW many of those injuries in Allan's slides, photographed in all their colorful glory (or was it gory?); from blisters to ulcers. Many of the scenarios presented were painfully close to home. It was enough to encourage many of us to rethink how we treat on our feet.

Questions abounded of course, about just what is the best footwear, with many of us expecting the humble Volley to be criticised unmercifully. Allan pointed out however, that it was very much 'horses for courses' when it comes to choosing foot wear, and wears Volleys himself on appropriate walks. Allan even admitted to once wearing Volleys with crampons mountaineering in South America!

The final message for the night was to consider buying what we wear on our feet the same way as we would in buying tyres for the car. Our most important asset Allan emphasised, deserves careful consideration how it is dressed and treated..... each body comes with one pair only.

Thank you Allan, for a most informative and entertaining evening. Our feet are very grateful also.....

Motivation and Fear - October 25

Always a popular presenter, Peter Treseder, Australian Geographic adventurer and multi-skilled athlete, treated us to another meaningful and entertaining evening during October.



This time the theme was not so much focused on any particular trip, but rather Peter sharing with us how he has overcome the many challenges faced over years of

taking considerable risks. To many of us the thought of traveling alone, over great distances to the remote areas Peter has explored, is just a little too intimidating. Peter explained however, that these expeditions have not happened without a lot of careful planning and weighing up of the risks involved. Having said that, he admitted that there have been many times when the unexpected happened and circumstances placed him in real personal danger.

I think we were all somewhat relieved to learn that Peter Treseder DOES experience fear like the rest of us. The key as he puts it is 'risk management' as opposed to 'risk taking'.

Thank you once again Peter for a very motivating night, and for sharing some of your more personal experiences and insights with us.

SBW Annual Reunion - November 4 & 5



I was on the Gold Coast at the company sales conference much to my disappointment, but from all accounts the festivities at Coolana were carried off without a hitch, and lots of good times were

had. In addition, a start was made to Joan Rigby's project to clear our beautiful property of some of the considerable weed infestation that is starting to dominate the area - more weekend working bees are planned.

The traditional damper baking competition was once again judged by Dot Butler and won by Annie Maguire, with Tess Holgate coming a close second.

Thanks to all those who participated to ensure this annual event lives on.

Macpac Gear Update - October 14

Mike Smith was out from New Zealand during October sponsored by the boys from Alpport, and presented lots of new gear on this special Tuesday night.

As on previous occasions we were able to try out all the latest bits and pieces, ask deep and meaningful questions, and generally catch up on one of the most talked about subjects at SBW: walking gear!

I've finally decided to 'bite the bullet' and ditch my 12 year old sleeping bag for one of the sleek (and LIGHTER) models. I think I'll invest in one that you can slide your Thermarest into, to stop it escaping out of the tent during a thunder storm.

Thanks to Mike, Paul and John for coming along to the clubroom once again to update our gear knowledge.

Underwater Walking and Alaskan Adventures - November 15

Maureen Carter (ably assisted by her charming husband David) together with new SBW member Bob Stewart, provided a feast of entertainment during November with their joint presentations.

Maureen and David were first, and guided us through the magnificence of the Alaskan wilderness with lots of humorous walking stories. In particular, Maureen kept us laughing with her story about the sacrifices she and David had to make to ensure they were not attacked by bears during the night in their tent.



From pristine alpine areas to vast expanses of cracking and groaning seas of ice, the scenery was breathtaking. During the night Maureen passed a number of curious objects around the gathering for

correct identification. This brought lots of interesting suggestions, and in particular the use for the object which turned out to be a bootie to keep the Husky dog's paw from freezing, received lots of attention.

We were heartened to learn also, that in spite of the vast devastation caused by the Valdez oil spill some years back, that the environment is recovering.

Bob Stewart was next, and took us virtually around the world on a diving trip to kill for. Over the years, Bob and his wife Marilyn have lived in many countries as a result of Bob's profession, and as a consequence, the opportunities to enjoy 'underwater walking' have been numerous.



We dived with Bob from the corals of Palanaca Reef in Mexico, to the crystal clear visibility of fresh water sink holes in Texas, and many of the special diving spots in between. During our tour of the depths Bob introduced us to underwater 'turkeys' without feathers, and lions without fur, and to a kaleidoscope of underwater color teeming with life. It was the second very entertaining and interesting experience for the night.

Thanks to Maureen and Bob, together with their supporting partners David and Marilyn for a lively and enjoyable night at the clubroom.

The Magic of Bandelier

-November 22

And finally the last presentation for 1995, but by no means least, came from SBW member and leader David Robinson. David and partner Jan Hodges' walk through the mystical cliffs of the Bandelier in New Mexico came about as a result of their planned walk, the Colorado Trail, being abandoned due to late snow falls.

We were informed that one of the first challenges of the walk was getting out of the car park, which ended us taking two and a half hours! Pulling out their own map and discarding the one supplied by the Park authorities, navigation became a lot easier and the walk began in earnest.

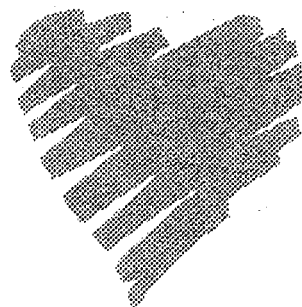
Throughout the night we were treated to David's slides of magnificent cliff faces, honey-combed by the wind and rain into objects of unique beauty. Wonderful examples of Indian cave paintings and cave dwellings, together with hand crafted arrow heads were part of the evenings' slides, and many of us I'm sure, had thoughts of exploring this region in the future.

An interesting but frightening part of the trip was the huge number of trees exploded by lightening along the way. In one of his last slides, David showed us a landscape covered with charred and exploded trunks; the sombre remains of multiple lightening strikes.

So much for the myth of lightening never striking twice in the same place.

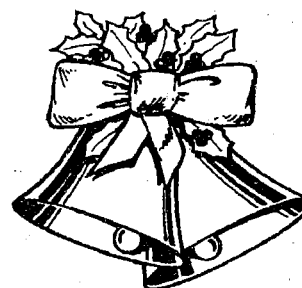
A wonderful experience David. Thank you for taking the time to share the magic of Bandelier with SBW.

Special Announcement!



No final social report for the year would be complete without a romantic inclusion, and on that basis Congratulations to Tony Crichton and Gail Murray from all your friends in SBW on the announcement of your Engagement, and all the very best for the future.....

and to all Sydney Bush Walkers, a very Merry Christmas and Happy Walking in 1996!





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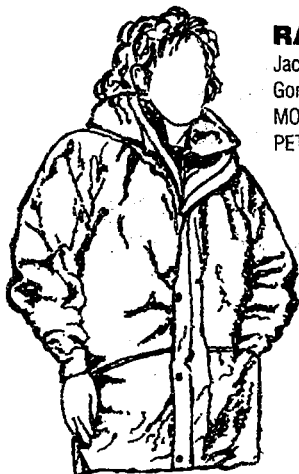
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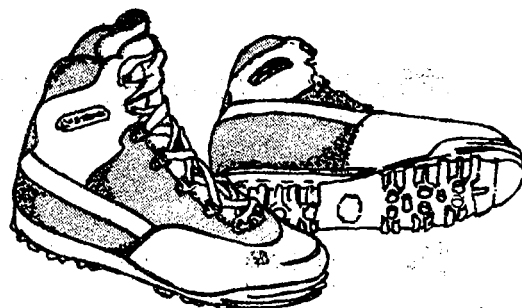


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Ettrema Creek. Nov 18, 19, 1995.

George Mawer

I had enthusiastically booked with Maurice Smith for his "Ettrema Creek" trip when I first saw the walk in the spring program. Memories of a much earlier visit to the area with Bill Capon brought back (now fading) pictures of those spectacular Ettrema Gorges and the rugged Myall Creek and I thought it would be wonderful to do it again.

Maurice phoned me on the Wednesday before the walk to confirm that I still intended to go and told me that his numbers had dropped from an original fifteen to only seven. "Probably better with a smaller party" I thought, and as it turned out there were only six when we assembled at Nowra on Friday night.

Friday night at a dry car camp on the Yarramunmun Fire Trail. A starry night with the local frog population to sing us to sleep and away at 7:30 am to "The Jumps" the headwaters of Bullfrog Creek. A 5km car swap and we were off to find Bullfrog creek. We lost some time finding a way into Bullfrog Creek but after a successfully identifying two ways that do not go we found one that does, then continued down to Ettrema Creek.

Ettrema Creek must be one of the most beautiful rugged wilderness areas in the world with spectacular towering side walls and many glorious cascades, small waterfalls and rocky pools. Being springtime there were lots of wildflowers, the predominate one being the pink apple blossom *leptospermum*. The water in the creek was absolutely transparent with the faintest tinge of emerald green. The deeper the pool the deeper the emerald colouring. There was no sand in the Ettrema pools. I noticed this early and then kept looking for it. The bottoms of even the deepest pools (around four metres) were mostly clean bare rock, and always a build up of stony gravel at the downstream end forming an exit beach. Only a few very small fish and the usual water insects.

We rock hopped down the creek and all avoided walking in the water for as long as we could but, as usual, as soon as we got our feet wet and it didn't matter any more, the walking immediately became quite a bit easier. I've noticed this before. I'll do almost anything to keep my feet dry and then once they're wet quite enjoy slopping through the shallows.

The day was mostly overcast with a light cool breeze and only a few light sprinkles of rain and so we only had one swim about an hour before camp. Camping sites are few and far between and, as we were all getting very tired, made do with a small patch of dry rain forest that gave us barely enough room for

our small party. We were all grateful for it and as there were signs of past usage I'm sure that others before us were similarly grateful for its small presence.

We all went off to bed at around dark which was an indication of just how tired everyone was. My tent fly was pitched on a garden of stones. Many seemed to be growing out of the ground and couldn't be dislodged. Anyway I managed to find just enough smooth ground to sleep reasonably comfortably provided I didn't roll around too much and disturb the stones.

An indication of how soundly everyone slept is that next morning no one complained about my snoring.

Sunday morning Maurice had us all up at about 6.00 and away by about 7.30. Because we were a couple of km short on our Saturday quota it meant that Sunday would be a longer day for us so we needed an earlier start. Regrettably we hadn't been walking for very long when it started to rain.

We made such good progress down Ettrema Creek in the morning that we overshot the Myall Creek exit point (nobody was expecting it so soon) by about a kilometre and so had to backtrack. When walking downstream, if you don't look back you can easily miss it.

Myall Creek was a problem right from the start. Gayle slipped and crashed in a small pool and banged a shin which slowed her down for a while. Then slow progress until we got to the first waterfall. The pool looked good for swimming but the sheer sides were quite impassable. We investigated a rather exposed way up and eventually opted for a climb up and around and even that was difficult enough in the very wet conditions with slippery mud and loosened vegetation. Maurice placed a climbing tape to reduce the risk and then called for a "guinea pig" to be the first one up. As there were no volunteers he ordered Paul to be first and we then all followed with varying degrees of difficulty and the occasional call of - ROCK!! Getting back down to the creek was slow and demonstrated that we were in for a long slow dangerous day if we stayed with the original plan to continue up Myall Creek so we had an early lunch and then opted to take the next ridge up and out.

The exit ridge wasn't quite vertical. In fact it was probably much less than forty five degrees in most places but for me it was a very hard slog. Once we reached our traversing ridge the views from the saddle humps were spectacular and ever changing as we climbed. There were occasional signs of previous walkers so we were hopeful that the way through the escarpment would be obvious and this was so. Just as well too because it was ▷

< about five in the afternoon when we reached the home fire trail with about one km back to the swap car. By then the day was starting to get cold and we all started to chill down. I was pleased to get into a warm car.

One of Margaret's (near new) shoes started to disintegrate quite early on Sunday morning. Luckily Elizabeth had some strong string that, combined with some superglue supplied by Maurice enabled us to repair it. Well, good enough to get through the rest of the day. Without the means of making this repair we could have had a bit of a problem. I think that most of us take our footwear too much for granted.

This was a little harder than normal on the footwear. We were in and out of the water all the time, climbing up and down wet rocks, always looking for a corner, crack or crevice to jamb the foot into to gain a positive footing, or wading through rippling water where the bottom was made up of football size rocks and our feet slipping and sliding. It reminded me that on several longer walks in recent years someone has had footwear problems. It's well worth while having a very hard look at the shoes you intend wearing on any extended walk. Will they hold together? Shoes and boots don't seem to be as durable as they used to be.

The weather could have been kinder but all in all I think everyone was pleased with the trip. Ettrema Creek is well worth the effort necessary to see it.

Thank you Maurice, and thank you Margaret and Paul and Elizabeth and Gayle. □

A Matter Of Sole

Don Cornell

The article by Karen Brading in September Sydney Bushwalker has prompted me to recall incident some years ago when Jenny and I led a walk down from Wonganderry into the Wollomdilly River Valley.

Prior to setting out I had phoned Mr Samson the property owner seeking permission to cross his property and leave vehicles next to the stockyards. We camped there on Friday night and set off about 8 am Saturday down the track leading into the valley.

We emerged up the steep track from the valley about 4 pm on Sunday to be confronted by an irate Mr Samson who was sitting on the top rail of the stockyard and demanded that we line up in front of him and show him the soles of our shoes. As expected all ten of us were wearing Dunlop Volleys.

Up to this time he had refused any request for an explanation. He then asked each vehicle owner to stand next to their vehicle. I encouraged the angry

owners to do so realising that our opportunity to cross his property might be in jeopardy.

It then became apparent that there was a white van that didn't belong to anyone from our group.

Mr Samson then told us that a person with a distinctive boot pattern had walked into his shed and removed the control knobs from his tractor and taken several spanners.

He then apologised for delaying us. I phoned him later - He told me that the van which was owned by a religious group and carried about eight young people arrived after we had left the site. He had his spanners and knobs returned after lining them up and checking each sole pattern to reveal the culprit. □

The November 1995 General Meeting.

Barry wallace

Around 20 members had arrived by 2013 so the president called the meeting to order and began proceedings. There were no apologies, so we moved on to welcome new members Bob Stewart Michael Moulton and Steve Hine.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and received with no matters arising.

Correspondence out saw letters to our new members, to Kuringai Chase N.P. thanking them for assistance with the sump catcher for Coolana, to Peter Downes and Lucy Sullivan re-admitting them to membership. We also received a more detailed response from the South Australian walking clubs' confederation to our question regarding leader accreditation. There was also a letter from the Victorian Clubs' Federation indicating that they feel such moves would be unworkable and would tend to drive mutual clubs underground. They have indicated they will advise if they come across any such proposal. All of which is fairly enlightening in view of the fact that the push for accreditation is supposed to have originated in Victoria. A letter from Maurice Smith as Confederation Secretary indicated that SBW would need to maintain detailed records of any members wishing to take out sports injury insurance through Confederation. As a result of an approach by the club, David Rostron has advised us on the clauses used and cover provided by Public Liability insurance policies. He has also commented favourably on the Sports Injury policy available through Confederation. Gordon and Serala Lee have written to update their address and fill us in on their recent moves. A letter from the Total Environment Centre ▷

< indicated a continuing need for donations to assist with their work. We also wrote to our new members.

In matters arising, Tony Holgate foreshadowed a motion that he intends to move at the AGM to change the clauses in the constitution relating to our non profit status and the procedures for dissolution of the club. From there it was a minor transition to Tony presenting the financial statements for the month. We spent \$800 and received income of \$291.

Not to be outdone, Eddie Giacomel led off the walks report with an extended review of the month from the statistician's viewpoint, listing the various parameters with values and percentages. The only figure recorded here is a total walking distance of 446 km.

The first walk covered was the extended 4 day walk in the area of Discovery Cave led by Jan Mohandas. This was postponed to another date. Margaret Sheens' Cudgegong Valley cycling trip had a party of 10 and a lovely weekend. Tony Maynes led 3 on his Bundunda Creek trip and Maurice Smith had 15 on his 2 day walks from a base camp trip. There was no report for Alan Mewett's Mill Creek day walk but Laurie Bore led 6 on his Wollongambe Crater trip on a fine mild to warm day. There was a general belief that David Robinson's walk from Otford to Waterfall went but there were no details available to the meeting.

Ian Woolfe's extended XCD trip from 16 to 22 October went but it rained. Oliver Crawford cancelled his Buddawangs trip. Tom Wenman and the party of 6 who came out for his walk along the Kowmung allowed discretion to take the better part of valour when they faced inclement weather. The walk was rerouted to 100 man cave but two of the party elected to keep their powder dry and departed for home. The remainder were making distance toward Cloudmaker when Chris Poleson had a fall, gashing his face over one eye. At this point they abandoned the trip, returning to the cars at around 1600. The injury required 7 stitches when they reached medical help. There was no report for Peter Miller's Saturday walk in Marramarra NP but Don Brooks led 6 on his Woy Woy to Wondabyne trip, reporting acceptable weather. There were no reports for either Saturday or Sunday of Tony Maynes' back to back trips in The Royal. Geoff McIntosh led a party of 8 on his Redledge Pass trip on Sunday and Wilf again obtained a pass to visit the Chapel on the Naval base as part of his circumnavigation of Port Jackson. They reported scattered showers and have now featured in numerous home made Japanese tourist videos as the caped avengers, or whatever it was the tourists made of them in their raingear.

The weekend of 27, 28, 29 October saw Allan Donnelley leading a party of 6 on his Buddawangs walk. Maureen and David Carter postponed their Kanangra Walls walk but Ron Howlett led 10 on his Barrington Tops trip. The walk turned out longer than anticipated but at least the weather did it right, raining overnight and remaining fine during the days. There were no details for Morag Ryder's Saturday walk around Narrowneck Plateau, Nancye Alderson's Medlow Bath historical ramble did not go and there were no details for Frank Sander's Northern Suburbs walk. Eddie Giacomel had 15 on his trip in Wolemi NP and Dick Weston reported tons of flies in hot conditions on his walk out to Darks Cave off the Mt Hay road, and back.

The following weekend was reunion weekend at Coolana. Did anyone count the total present? The days were fine enough but on Saturday evening just as the campfire entertainment was about to begin a large, wet, thunderstorm arrived, forcing a retreat to the hut. Spiro's spinach pie and fruitcake were up to the by now traditional high standard and on Sunday the damper competition yielded a range of results covering the usual statistical distribution curve. A swimming race was held on the Sunday and Joan Rigby conducted a walk in the rainforest area near deadhorse bridge.

Confederation report saw mention of a plan to close off part of the Mount Hay firetrail. The discussions with Sydney Water are continuing. A coal company has lodged an application for an exploration licence adjacent to the existing Clarence colliery. The Confederation's next meeting with NPWS will be held sometime in the near future.

Conservation report brought further details of the proposal to close off roads in the vicinity of the Grose River near Mount Hay with a view to establishing a sort of wilderness zone. There was some debate and a narrow vote opposing the idea. The NPW is preparing a plan of management for the private and commercial use of the canyons in the Blue Mountains area. Some of the proposed annual person trip numbers are high enough to create great alarm in those who love the areas. It was unclear whether they propose to produce an EIS but the meeting seemed to think this was a good starting point.

General business saw mention of meeting proposed by Hornsby council to discuss their policy on the use of open space in the municipality, or is that city? Then it was just a matter of the announcements and the meeting closed at around 2153. □

First Aid Weekend - St Johns Senior Certificate

Bill Holland

The second of two residential first aid instruction weekend courses was held on 2nd/3rd December. Seven people participated in the St John Senior First Aid qualifying course with instruction provided by Dave Shepherd, an accredited St Johns instructor. Dave is an active bushwalker and regularly conducts courses for the Confederation.

We had a lot of fun. Dave applied his training skills to practical bushwalking experiences. Some of the "emergencies" took place in the bushland of our garden and I'm not sure what the neighbours thought of the mock screams of pain and bandaged "casualties". Saturday night provided a change from first aid to "thirst aid" with a barbecue and some additional members adding to the social occasion.

The Club encourages all members to have formal first aid qualifications. Both The Club, and Confederation, provide bushwalking orientated first aid courses with accredited instructors. Our Club is very fortunate in having qualified St Johns instructors as members and willing to give up their time.

The Wilderness Rescue Unit of The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs is seeking to have all participants in search and rescue activities qualified to at least a current St Johns senior certificate level. As well, a certificate for Remote Area First Aid is desirable.

To assist in this, the Club is considering holding another residential course in the first half of next year. This time it will be an advanced course leading to a Remote Area First Aid qualification. It will be open to all those who have a current Senior certificate. If you are interested please advise so that a place can be reserved for you.

Prospective Members Please Note

The Club video "Finding Your Way" will be shown at the clubrooms on the first Wednesday of each month (with some exceptions), and until further notice. This is a training video on the use of map and compass, which all are invited to view.

KIMBERLEY COAST EXPEDITION

March 24 - April 27 1996

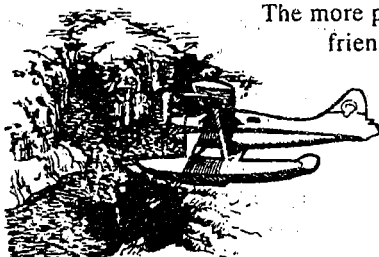
Space is still available but time is running out.

This is the longest, most adventurous trip we offer. It is not an endurance test.

You begin with a boat from Wyndham to the head of the spectacular, 20 km long Berkeley Gorge. After a day's walk to and from Berkeley Falls, you walk back north along the gorge, past a number of side gorges and waterfalls, then walk from creek to creek as you move overland to King George Falls. Here the river plunges 90 metres into the sea at the head of one of Australia's most spectacular gorges. From the King George, you walk to the Drysdale River where we do a week long loop along one of the largest rivers in the Kimberley. The expedition ends with a seaplane ride back to Kununurra.

Too long? The trip is divided into three sections. The seaplane that brings in the two food drops provides transport for those doing only one part of the trip.

The more people we have, the less it costs us per person. Book together with two friends and we'll give the three of you an additional 5% discount on top of any other discounts which may apply. For more information about this expedition and the rest of our bushwalking program contact



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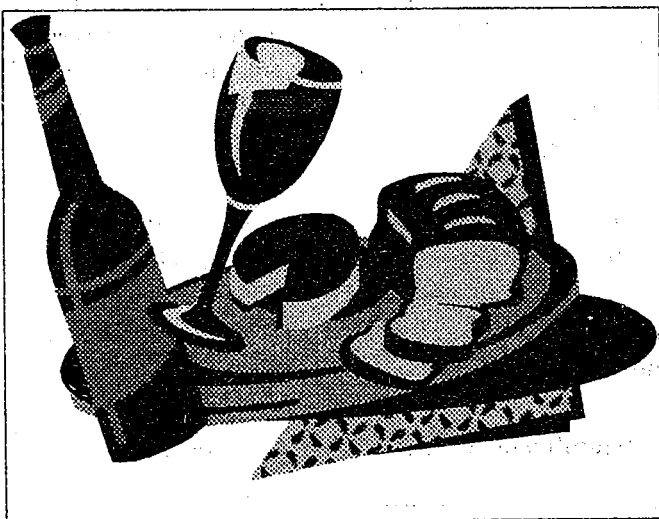
President's Christmas Wish

Greta James

Another year is almost over and once again, many people are planning their Christmas walking. The walks program has a terrific selection not only for Christmas but for the entire three months. Whatever your plans are over the holidays - walking or staying home or holidaying with the family - I hope that you enjoy the break.

If you are driving, please, take care. Remember that the drive could be the most dangerous part of the walk.

In the new year, we plan to get advice on how best to deal with the weeds at Coolana and then from time to time, we will be asking for volunteers to participate in working bees. We tend to mostly see the camping and hut areas at Coolana which are lovely but there are other sections of the property which are less frequented, which have different vegetation and which are also very beautiful. I hope many people can find time to help with the "Coolana gardening". I'm sure it will be a rewarding experience.



I look forward to seeing you at the Christmas party or on a walk or both!! In any case, Patrick and I wish you a happy Christmas and a safe and fulfilling New Year.

Wade Butler Search

Greta James

Six club members spent several days in Tasmania searching for Wade Butler. At the time of writing, no news of Wade has yet been received. Our thoughts are with Dot at this most difficult time.

Dick Smith has provided magnificent financial support which has allowed the search to continue after it had officially been called off but, even so, additional money will be needed. For this reason, the committee has decided to donate \$500 toward the search (to be ratified at the next General Meeting).

In addition, if members would like to donate money, please send it to Tony Holgate at the Club's postal address (PO Box 4476 GPO Sydney 2001) and make cheques payable to "Margaret Butler - Search and Rescue Expenses".

The six SBW members who joined the search, leaving Sydney with less than 24 hours notice, were Bill Capon, Alan Donnelly, Don Finch, Tony Holgate, Tony Manes and Jim Percy. I would like to thank you personally for your magnificent response.

Coolana Weed Update

Greta James

No, these are not ineffectual individuals who inhabit the Club's Kangaroo Valley property, but vigorous plant growth which infests areas of our land, particularly along the river flats. Joan Rigby has done some fine work documenting the flora of Coolana and she has been investigating ways of controlling the weeds - particularly methods which will not require large amounts of work over long periods. The most promising avenue at present appears to be to work with Sydney Water who own the river flats and Joan is organising a meeting with them at Coolana.

After this meeting we will organise a series of working bees/social gatherings at Coolana - so stay tuned. We'll keep you informed!!

Blue Mountains NP: Hat Hill, Crayfish Creek, The Hole & Return

Carol Lubbers

This reprint story is about a walk that took place back in January 1993 but as Geoff McIntosh has included "The Hole" in his February 96 walk, it seems appropriate to run the story again now.

The Hole

Leader: Geoff McIntosh Party: 7 members & 1 visitor: Bendigo Kerry, Pat Bradley, George Mawer, Peter Lafferty, Carol Lubbers, Keith Perry, Vince Smith & Louise Sylva

The weather was very hot as our party left Hat Hill and negotiated the short steep descent into lush and beautiful Hat Hill Creek. Lush is the word, the Blackheath Sewage Treatment Works are upcreek! If you ever need liverwort, this is the place. Just don't drink the effluent.

The climb up the other side was excruciating - hot, steep and scrubby. Frogs sat in trees calmly watching us claw by. We were consoled by the expansive views of the Grose Valley from Baltzer Lookout and awed by the sheer drop below us. It became a weekend of proposed abseils, if only we had a long enough rope!

Late on Saturday afternoon, we sidled through the scrub along Crayfish Creek to where it drops to the Grose Valley. Along the way, we indulged in several well deserved ice cold sitzbaths in the creek. At the drop, there were huge boulders from rock falls in the creek bed and many big trees beside. A green and pleasant place. We camped back along the creek in a large, clean overhang - ideal for happy hour after such a hot day.

First thing Sunday, we made a short trip to a side canyon running into Crayfish - cold, slippery, wet and dark but worth the wriggling and risk of hypothermia. Could've seen more if we'd had a long enough rope to drop in from the top, we mused.

Whilst making our way to The Hole we found an impossible side creek (just as well only one of us went over the overhang - we had to pull him back!). Geoff vowed to return to conquer by abseil. While the retrieval attempts were happening, we were buzzed by a nesting pair of rufous fantails whose nest was precariously glued to a meagre branch above the drop. We retraced our steps and continued on to Geoff's usual way and then, - *THE HOLE*.

Ominous clouds rolled across above and we became very cold, but it wasn't just because of the weather! We gladly donned our thermals. Cold, wet, slimy, scary - one at a time, with our packs on, we slid into a freezing deep pool, swam a few metres, slipped and slithered, quivered and quaked across a short, slimy, sloping section to dangle over the next edge on a rope. A few feet of freefall to more slippery rocks and Geoff's open arms, then drop packs down into a large pool at the bottom. A very thin slippery sidle with a handline for psychological comfort and Peter Lafferty cheating death to ensure our safety (but not his!), lead to a ramp down to the pool (full of big rough, slimy bounders beneath The Hole). We had arrived in an amphitheatre of high sandstone walls, the base of which was littered with great boulders and fringed with rainforest. We hastily shivered into our dry clothes and said, next time, we abseil!

Following a short exciting rainforest sidle back to the exit point on Hat Hill Creek, a hot climb was had by all back to Hat Hill. Amazing to think that all this rugged walking was so close to the tourist traps.

A magnificent weekend. Thanks, Geoff!

New Zealand South Island

Expressions of interest invited for a 6 to 10 day walk in New Zealand south island - mid February 1996. Contact Peter Rossel. work: 259 1222 home: 416 8945.