



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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MAY 1997

In This Issue

- P 2 My Kanagra - John Poleson
- P 3 Hip Hip Hoo Rae - Helen Gray
Letter to the editor: Frank Rigby
- P 4 New Training Strategy - Lucy Moore
- P 5 NAV Shield Competition
- P 6 April General Meeting - Barry Wallace
- P 9 Feet - Michael McCoy
- P 10 When You're Hot You're Hot - Greta James
- P 11 The Golden Years - Jim Brown
- P 14 A Nostrum which may very well enhance
- Don Matthews
70th Anniversary Celebrations
- P 15 Coolana Possible Conservation
Agreement
- P 17 And a good day was had by all- George Mawer
- P 18 Footnotes- Patrick James

Advertisers

- P 5 Alpsports
- P 8 Willis Walkabouts
- P 13 Eastwood Camping Centre
- back cover Paddy Pallin

My Kanagra by John Poleson

I was interested to read "some notes on Kanagra Walls" by P. Beaver in the march issue of the magazine. As anything to do with Kanagra fascinates me, I thought I would pen a few lines on what this very special area means to me.

My special Spirit of Place is an area that extends from Katoomba to Kanagra and includes the Cox, Megalong Valley, Jenolan Caves and the Kowmung River. I have had a lifelong love affair with this country and my spirit lifts as I climb the mountains feeling like a horse heading for home.

My earliest memory of the mountains was when I was four years old and my parents took me to Katoomba for a weekend. I can clearly remember standing at Echo Point staring at the mist in the valley below and saying to my father "But Dad why is the sky down on the ground". During that weekend I was taken on a walk through the Federal Pass (not bad for a four year old). I was spellbound. The smell of the rainforest, the mist, the cold clear air and the mysterious something about the place that has stayed with me ever since that day. My family often took me to the mountains after that weekend and we often stayed at Jenolan Caves. My love for this place simply increased.

I first visited Kanagra on a Senior Scout excursion when I was sixteen. The kids were all crowded onto the back of a tabletop truck and we left Sydney on Friday night camping at Lett River. Next day we drove to Kanagra and I remember the feeling when we rounded the bend in the road and I caught my first glimpse of this magic place. It was exactly the same feeling that I remembered when I was a toddler at Echo Point. My love affair with the mountains had been consummated and I was hooked for life. Shortly after then I joined a bushwalking club and took advantage of every opportunity to return to my special place.

That was back in the 1950s and there were not as many cars around. Most of our Kanagra trips took place on long weekends. We would catch the train to Blackheath where we would then hire a big old fashioned cab from "Hatswells Taxis". We would be dropped off at Kanagra, often in the middle of a raging storm or snowfall. From then on it was up to us to walk back out. In those days walkers camped in the Dance Hall Cave. The

wooden dance floor was still there and we usually threw our sleeping bags down on the rough boards and after a good stiff swig of rum to counter the cold and the cheap sleeping bag that was about all I could afford on an apprentices wages, we made the most of the night. Unfortunately, the dance floor no longer exists as vandals gradually dismantled it for firewood.

The old-timers built dance floors at Kanagra and in the Grand Arch at Jenolan Caves. The locals used to ride out from Oberon for bushdances. What a great experience it must have been to have danced the night through to the music of the local bush fiddler or concertina player. In the last century visitors to Jenolan used to travel on foot or by horseback from Tarana. The first caretaker was Jeremiah Wilson. He used to run what he called smoke concerts in the Grand Arch where visitors would dance by the light of a huge smoky fire. At midnight he would climb on top of a huge boulder called Camp Rock and crack his bullock whip. That was the signal that the party was over and it was time to roll out the swags and turn in for a good nights sleep before the hardships involved in exploring the caves the next day.

Early in the 1960s Lynn and I were married and we were lucky enough to live at Jenolan caves. I landed a job as a caves guide and Lynn worked at the little Post Office. Two of our children were born at nearby Oberon Hospital. On our days off we were able to drive to Kanagra and really get to know the place. I had an Irish mate who was a keen trout fisherman and he taught me to catch fish in the upper Kowmung. We used to scramble down Murdering Gully to Kanagra Creek where we pulled out quite a few uneducated trout.

I also got to know quite a bit about the history of the area. Did you know that the first ladder from the cave up to the Plateau was log with steps hewn by the Aborigines. The first permanent ladder was an old set of redundant caves steps from Jenolan which was erected by the great caves explorer James Wyburd around 1891. The present route was blasted out of the rock during World War 2 as an emergency escape route for people and stock should there be a Japanese invasion. The Kanagra road was constructed in 1940 despite much opposition from bushwalkers.

There is a marvelous camp fire yarn concerning a headless ghost that appears on dark stormy nights

on the tops. I quote a description given by an old bushwalker, Jim Barrett in his much recommended book "Kanagra Walls".

"The legend of Headless Rider Point and its mysterious horse and rider goes back to the very early days of cattle running around Kanagra Walls. Drovers often saw the horse and rider at night time, and generally during a storm. When camped near the point they would hear a horse madly charging up through the forested gap towards them. Illuminated by the flare from the camp fire, they would see a beautiful white horse, spurred mercilessly on by its rider... and the dark rider had always been headless. The horse always had failed to take the turn to the left and plunged out into the gorge with a shriek".

Perhaps on one dark stormy night an overdue SBW party will be battling along the plateau towards cars at Kanagra. The wind will be howling and the clouds and sleet scudding across the moon when suddenly a horse and rider.....

Hip Hip Hoo Rae! By Helen Gray

Last month on Jamberoo Mountain 120 people gathered to celebrate the 95 th birthday of Rae Page.

Rae and late husband Peter joined SBW in the 1930s. They were, like most members today, city people with city jobs - Rae an accountant and Peter a bank employee. Most people dream their dreams, but the Pages lived theirs. In the 1940s after Peter had returned from the war, they chose the alternative lifestyle. (Or whatever it was called then, probably madness.) On the slopes of Jamberoo Mountain, below the Barren Ground Cliffs, they made their home. Attempts at self-sufficiency, growing vegetables, chooks, goats, a cow, before long even supplemented by the rent from three small holiday cabins they built. Bushwalkers and like-minded people have been staying there ever since.

The Pages kept their interest in bushwalking and especially SBW, and always made bushwalkers welcome when they passed through. Decades ago they were made honorary members of our club. Rae is still very much a Sydney Bushwalker; she has contact with SBWs who stay there, she enjoys

our magazine, and with her love of people and her amazing memory, she is very much an active (in interest at least) Sydney Bushwalker.

I was lucky enough to first stay at Jamberoo in the early 1950s. I remember Rae and Peter showing me my first lyre-bird's mound and bower-bird's bower, and the magic of glow-worms on a summer's night. It was a wonderful time in my life.

And here I was a jamberoo on a beautiful, clear autumns day over 45 years since my first visit at Rae's birthday celebration. The farm Ben Ricketts is still lovely and unspoiled, the goats are still nibbling and their bells are gently ringing. Rae's garden is still there, now overgrown, but with old fruit trees, daisies, nasturtiums, vegetables gone to seed in glorious confusion. Party organiser Barry Duncan (son of foundation member Frank) lives nearby and gives Rae a hand there days. Was it really 45 years ago, Barry that we had that cow dung slinging fight? (Boys versus girls, and egged -on by the Pages who wanted manure scattered over their paddocks.) Nonogenarian cake maker and fellow organiser Freda Ashby was there, and the octogenarian SBWs were represented by "Mouldy" Harrison and Grace and John Noble. For everyone of us there, right down to the toddlers, jamberoo is a special place. But most of all, Rae is a very special and much loved person in all our lives.

It was a pleasure and privilege to celebrate your birthday with you, Rae. May you have a least 5 more.

Letter to the Editor: Frank Rigby

I enjoyed reading Frank Davis' article "Red Centre Ramble" in the March issue. However as a bushwalker with a long association with the MacDonnell Ranges, I feel I must make a few comments.

Frank seems to have confused the climates of the Top End (eg Darwin) and the Red Centre (eg Alice Springs). The two are totally different. In the centre there is no distinct WET and DRY and no "pre-monsoon storm season", as he describes it. These seasons belong to the Top End. In the Centre, as far as bushwalkers are concerned, there are two seasons, the HOT and the COOL.

Although generally arid or semi-arid, rain can occur at any time of the year, although less so in Spring. In January this year there were floods but I have also been washed out of the MacDonnell Ranges in June.

As I suggested in my book "*The MacDonnell Ranges*", bushwalking in the Centre should ideally be enjoyed from May to August inclusive. October when Frank was there, is too late in the year, hence the heat and the flies. Having said that, not every winter may be suitable for walking. It pays to keep an eye on the weather pattern of the preceding months. Periods of long drought are definitely not recommended.

So there it is. To enjoy the Centre at its best, go in the winter (June and July are usually ideal) and make sure there will be enough water around. The Alice Springs Bush walking Club could help you assess the latter. *(Notwithstanding the expert view above, firstly Don and Frank's walk had to fit in with the time available and not the weather and secondly Frank's meteorological observations were derived from NT tourist brochures. Editor)*

Magazine Articles Wanted

The Sydney Bushwalker is as good as the written word within. Style is flexible: short, medium or long, prose or poetry; humorous or serious, fact or fiction. The limit is simply your imagination.

Magazine Deadlines For articles and long notes the deadline is the first Wednesday of the month. The absolute deadline, for short notes, etc. is the general meeting held the second Wednesday of the month. The magazine is printed on the Thursday after the general meeting. Then it's too late for another month.

Contributions ideally should be on 3.5 inch floppy disk IBM PC format. Any word processor will do, but the one of choice is Word for Windows.

If you use an Apple-Macintosh computer the following directions will allow Apple-Mac files to be read by a PC

1. insert a PC formatted disk into the Apple-Macintosh computer,

2. save the file as a RTF (rich text format) file with a short file name, that is file name (max. 8 character) + 3 character extension, for example *****.rtf, eg walk.rtf,
3. you need to have a file called PC Exchange on your computer, this file is usually present on computers running under System 7 and upwards.
4. If you don't have a PC formatted disk call me and I will supply one.

Post the disk plus a hard copy of the file to me at 5/2 Hardie St., Neutral Bay N.S.W. 2089.

New training strategy: Lucy Moore

Most NSW bushwalking clubs are to be offered training materials and best practise manuals to help them train their leaders and members.

Under the training policy adopted by the Confederation at the April workshop, club representatives propose to develop resources to ensure all clubs have:

- knowledge of the new national competency standards
- access to training materials, probably based on these standards
- access to a suggested code of practice
- information about training resources and club skills

Some clubs also wanted Confederation to take a more direct role in delivering courses such as leadership skills, activity-specific skills and train-the-trainer. But the problems of getting enough trainers was seen as a sticking point.

While many trainers give generously of their time to train members of their own club, they may be reluctant to train other clubs on a voluntary basis. Introducing fees for participants and payment for trainers was seen as one solution but was held over for further discussion by the Confederation's newly formed training sub-committee.

The sub-committee is responsible for implementing the new strategy. To keep its workload to a minimum the sub-committee proposes that clubs

- nominate a training officer
- use existing resources wherever possible
- keep training resource information up to date
- actively share information with other clubs

The need for clubs to have a formal training strategy has been accelerated by the recent publication of ORCA's (Outdoor Recreation Council of Australia) new competency standards for leaders of outdoor activities.

Although the standards are yet not mandatory, many walkers fear that land managers and insurance underwriters may eventually insist on compliance by club leaders. While Confederation still rejects the need for mandatory accreditation of leaders, it does recognise the importance of helping leaders attain minimum standards of competency.

Accidents will always happen but by ensuring leaders comply with accepted or common practice, clubs can minimise the risk of negligence claims. The training strategy is the first step in achieving this goal.

NAV Shield; Australia's Premier Emergency Services navigation Event: July 1997

The NAV Shield is an overnight navigation event where teams of competitors attempt to gain as many points as possible by finding their way, on foot only, through wilderness terrain to premarked check points over an area from 80 to 100 square kilometres.

Who will enter. Teams from around Australia will include the Armed Services, Police, Fire Brigades, State Emergency Services, Volunteer Rescue Associations, Confederation of Bushwalkers members and Rogainers.

All groups must have current and relevant insurances to undertake this activity.

Groups not fitting into the above categories may enter at the discretion of the organisers.

Where and when is it The weekend of the 28th and 29th of June. In bushland to the north west of Sydney. To avoid teams gaining unfair advantage, the exact location will only be revealed the week leading up to the event.

What do you bring: Each team needs to be self sufficient from the start on Saturday morning

until the finish on Sunday afternoon. This means that the two day teams must carry sleeping bags, food, water, shelter and spare clothing for adverse weather. One day teams need not carry shelters or sleeping bags.

Regardless of weather conditions, all teams start Saturday morning at 8.45 am. One day teams conclude 7.30 pm Saturday, two day teams conclude 2.00 pm Sunday afternoon.

Organised by The event is organised by the Wilderness Rescue Group. A VRA squad that is run by the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs of NSW.

Since the late 30's the Wilderness Rescue team have been assisting in the rescue of people lost in inaccessible and remote areas of NSW. Wilderness Rescue calls on the skills and experiences of many capable bushwalkers to provide ground teams to search in weather that prohibits flying and in areas that are geographically difficult and remote.

Further Information: An information pack including acceptance number, rules and final directions will be mailed on receipt of the entry form. Make sure to have it addressed to a team member and to read it carefully.

If you have any queries ring John Tonitto on (02) 9789 2527, fax: (02) 9718 7272 or Mobile: 019 395 047. Or visit Web site: <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~rescue/navshld.html>

Class 1: 1 Day - 2 to 4 members and carrying minimum gear requirements

Class 2: 2 Day - 4 to 6 members and carrying minimum gear requirements

Teams must be of approved rescue class as in "Who Will Enter" section.

Class 2: 1 Day and 2 Day: At least two members and of rescue groups as approved by Wilderness Rescue.

Rogain: Members of the Rogain Association, adhering to rogain rules. At least two members in a team.

Entry fee and other costs, including catering, (hot food on Saturday night and Sunday lunch) are detailed on the entry form. A limited number of T-shirts and Caps to commemorate the event will be on sale at the base site.

April 1997 General Meeting.

by Barry Wallace

It was all a sharp contrast for the previous month's crowd. There we were scratching for a quorum, with the president exhorting us to "go unto the highways and byways and compel them to come in". We eventually rounded up some 16 or so warm bodies and got things underway with apologies for Dot Butler and Jim Calloway. New member Greta Woodward was welcomed in the usual way, and the minutes read and received with no matters arising.

Correspondence came in such a rush that some items may have escaped your scribe. There was a letter from Ainslie Morris supporting the decision to not hold a dinner to celebrate the club's 70th anniversary, one from ACF seeking protection for the forests, to Val Lehide at Yerranderie thanking her for assistance to a party in a time of trouble on a recent walk, from Sydney Water providing further information on the process of determining Plans of Management for the catchments, a letter regarding the huts in the Royal, from a Kerry Norris at Bendigo bushwalkers seeking permission to reprint material from a recent Sydney Bushwalker magazine, and from Owen Marks contributing to the debate on the 70th anniversary celebrations. The editor vowed and declared that he would ensure we received the details of the treasurer's report the following day, in consideration of nothing being mentioned in the meeting notes about the absence of the treasurer's report at the meeting. He didn't, it is. We can only hope he is so busy inserting the figures below he doesn't proof read this bit and do some editing. The treasurer's report revealed the following details. Opening balance, \$5499, income, \$1871, expenditures \$680, closing balance \$6690.

The walks reports began at the weekend of 14, 15, 16 March with another Coolana maintenance weekend. Morrie Ward led a party of 15 on his walk on the Barrington Tops. They started off in thick fog but the weather improved to become mild. The creek water level was about 300 mm higher than usual and this forced a rethink, and some changes in route, after they arrived late at the campsite on Saturday evening. Zol Bodlay and the party of 12 on his duckponds walk in MarraMarra National Park were disconcerted to arrive at their chosen lunch site by a pool in the creek to find the pool full of dead mullet. They

moved on to an alternative site. Other than that, the walk went well. Lynne Yeaman's Saturday walk in Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park went, with a party of 8, but no other details. Tony Crichton had 20 on his Sunday walk in the Lower Blue Mountains. It went to program and was described as a great walk. Bronny Niemeyer had a warm day for the 9 starters on her Sunday walk from Loftus to Bundeena. They managed to catch the 1600 ferry home.

Wilf Hilder's mid week walk in the Royal went, with a party of 9, despite train problems. Finding a half drowned goat on one of the beaches added a surreal touch to what was otherwise a normal enough walk on a near perfect day.

Wendy Arnott's canoe and walk trip in the pagoda country around Dunns Swamp over the weekend of 21, 22, 23 March was a combined trip with Mudgee Bushwalkers. The three SBW who went along were somewhat swamped (on dry land at least) by the 15 or so in the Mudgee contingent. The area provides car access camping, but the arrival of an 18 seater bus mid Saturday afternoon seemed to be taking things a bit far. No details were available for Tony Maynes' Morton National Park walk the same weekend. Nigel Weaver's Saturday walk from Wondabyne to Little Wobby went, led by Alan Mewett, standing in for Nigel who had a broken wrist. There were 11 starters and the day was pleasant. Maureen Carter's walk in the Royal on the Saturday suffered from volatility, in the memory of our reporter at least. It was definitely a nice day, and there were 3, or was it 7, walkers present. There was no report for Frank Sander's Chatswood to Pennant Hills Saturday walk. Of the Sunday walks, Bill Hope's walk out from Evans Lookout went, but there were no details, Tony Crichton had 8 on his Bundeena to Otford walk; again with no further details, and Wilf Hilder reported a party of 12 on Stage 2 of the Sydney to Nowra epic. They lunched and swam at Long Bay and generally enjoyed themselves.

Easter weekend, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 March, saw Bill Capon leading a party of 7 on an interesting variation of his programmed Yalwal to Safrass walk. Bill described the walk as a total disaster, what with the walk becoming circular, two days walking to accomplish in one day, and Bill's food back in the car. There was no report for Allan Donnelly's Kosciusko trip over the same period. Ian Rannard had 17 on his Kanangra to Mittagong

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walk over 28 to 31 March but things did not go to plan. Frank Sander had a nasty fall coming down the lower section of Cabbage Spire and was evacuated from Yerranderie by air to Camden and thence to Liverpool hospital. Tony Holgate's New England trip was staged as a series of day walks in generally pleasant conditions. Dick Weston's Mount Hay Range walk on Monday 31st March went, but no details were available to the meeting.

The weekend of 5, 6 April saw the Coolana weeders; bushland regeneration group that is, at work again. There was also a report that Maurice Smith's walk in the Ettrema, scheduled for the following weekend, went one week early. Probably a good idea given there were no other weekend walks scheduled this weekend. There were 9 on the walk, weather fine, track good. Tom Wenman led a party of 27 on his Berrowra to Hornsby via the Benowie Track walk on the Saturday. Conditions were hot but the walk was described as a good one. Ken Smith was also out that day, with a party of 6 on his Woodford based

walk in the Lower Blue Mountains. The trip went well despite some light scrub along the way and was used as a navigation exercise for some of the prospectives. Ken also backed up on Sunday to lead his walk from Medlow Bath to Blackheath.

Conditions were fine and the trip described as enjoyable. There was no report for Ken Cheng's walk to Ruined Castle.

Bill Holland's mid week walk went on Tuesday 15th April with a party of 11, and 5 or 6 leaders. There was some confusion over the exact location of a natural arch reported to be in the area at the time but we are sure Bill, Wilf, and all the others will debate the matter at some length.

Conservation report covered the sending of a letter to Confederation stating our preferred position on the closure of the road to Newhaven Gap. We also resolved to write to Sydney Water regarding the extensive areas of lantana growth on the banks of the Shoalhaven River below the Tallowa Dam wall.

...continued page ?

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1997 - An Exceptional Year

Both Darwin and Kununurra set new records for wet season rainfall. The clear, tropical pools that make swimming such an enjoyable part of bushwalking in Kakadu and the Kimberley have never been better.

The Pilbara had exceptionally heavy rain in January. Those taking part in our June-July Pilbara expedition will enjoy above average water supplies and wildflower displays.

Central Australia had more rain in the first few weeks of 1997 than in the previous 18 months. This year you can enjoy the gentler side of a sometimes harsh and always rugged landscape. Water is abundant, birds are everywhere and the desert is in full bloom.

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Feet by Michael McCoy

In the early 1950's an American researcher named V. T. Inman took movies of men wandering around his lab in nothing but loin cloths, subsequently describing the way we walk as a series of movements in which we alternately lose and regain our balance every time we lift a foot from the ground and put it down in front of us again. That we don't fall flat on our faces a good three or four dozen times a day would seem to say a lot for our sense of balance and the complex anatomy and function of our feet.

Whether walking or running, the force of our heels hitting the ground produces a shock wave which vibrates through our feet and is transmitted into our legs, up through the pelvis and then from one vertebra to the next all the way up our spinal column. The reason our heads don't jiggle about like those of the little toy dogs you always used to see sitting under the back windows of Valiants is in part due to a unique layer of fat. Arranged in vertical columns and reinforced by bands of tough fibrous tissue, the fat in our heels works like row upon row of tiny hydraulic shock absorbers, cushioning our feet as we stumble about the place.

The twenty-six bones that make up each of our feet are arranged in arches which provide enough intrinsic stability to hold up the rest of our body above. Many of the bones are wedge shaped and lock into place like the stones in an arched bridge, cemented together for extra strength by a network of ligaments. The tendons of the lower leg muscles provide further support, holding the bony arches in place like the thick steel cables of a suspension bridge.

On a less functional note, there are a those among us who in their more intimate moments apparently rank a healthy bit of toe sucking right up there on their list of sensual delights. So all things considered it would only make good sense that we do what we can to look after such a useful and exciting part of our anatomy.

But in reality the opposite is more often true. Our feet are so often injured and mistreated there are all sorts of medical specialists to heal our podiatric ills and teach us to give our feet the love they deserve.

Kathryn Harding-Foley is a podiatrist at Olympic Park Sports Medicine Centre in Melbourne.

Harding-Foley points out that it's hardly surprising our feet are so commonly injured when you consider their work load.

"For every kilometre we cover, each foot hits the ground around five hundred times," says Harding-Foley. "When we run the force per heel strike is around five times as high, and as we grow older the ability of our heels to absorb the shock gradually disappears as the water content of the specially designed fatty pistons drops."

Just imagine the feet of an ultra-marathon runner. Five hundred collisions per kilometre for hundreds and hundreds of kilometres is a pretty thorough beating. Dr Dick Telford, the former head of the Physiology and Applied Nutrition department at the Australian Institute of Sport, has said of competitors in the Sydney to Melbourne ultra-marathon that virtually every one will have suffered some kind of ligament damage in the course of the event. Add to that the heat and moisture inside their socks after they've been at it for a few hours and their skin, according to Harding-Foley, would literally be 'peeling off'.

Most of us find it difficult enough to watch such feats of endurance on the television, but even for us foot afflictions can be classified as either mechanical, affecting the structure and function of the foot, or dermatological, affecting the skin and nails. Our arches get strained, our heels bruised, corns and calluses sprout from around our joints and the webbing of our toes can be colonised by any number of opportunistic fungi. In all, it would be enough to put off even the most ardent of toe suckers.

"Correcting a person's walking or running pattern is often the best way of treating or reducing the likelihood of injury," suggests Harding-Foley. "We all have a characteristic style of walking and there's no one way which is right for everyone. Some people can have terrible feet and still avoid any problems, but if your gait causes discomfort or injury it will need some attention."

An inappropriate gait pattern can lead to injuries not only in the foot, but anywhere in the body where the stresses are transmitted; the shins, knees and lower back all being common sites of pain.

Harding-Foley stresses the importance of choosing footwear specific to your gait and to the

activity you intend pursuing. Orthoses can also be necessary sometimes when injuries or deformities are more advanced.

So where does this leave that icon of the Australian lifestyle, the thong? Not surprisingly, Harding-Foley doesn't like them much. "Thongs offer no support, no protection and they increase the likelihood of toe pain due the need to claw at the rubber to keep them on."

Another question that continues to spark debate whenever podiatrists meet is why some people's feet stink so much. Foot odour is to podiatry what the common cold is to general medicine; many of us suffer from it but a cure is often difficult to come by.

"The latest theory," says Harding-Foley, "is that sweat reacts with dyes and additives in the shoes. That's why shoes worn without socks will often smell pretty bad after a while. And although fungal infections aren't always odour producing, a bit of toe-jam around the webbing can cause a stink."

Toe-jam in the webbing. You heard it here first.

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When You're Hot, You're Hot by Greta James

We'd spent a very pleasant, if rather soggy, Australia Day long weekend down on the Shoalhaven at Canoe Flat with Bill Holland. After a final swim, the climb up to Badgerys Lookout was the only thing between us and the cars.

It was very steamy when we started the climb although I did start to feel some whispers of a breeze after a little while. Like all such ridges, the start was steep but I put my head down, got into low gear, and let the "rabbits" pass me thinking "I'll overtake some of them further up the hill".

As the climb wore on, I felt I was getting a little dizzy and tired but my "self talk" went along the lines of "You're imagining this. Don't wimp out. When others around you drop in the heat, you do really well." I stopped a few times for sips of water having lots for the relatively short climb.

But just when the steep section ended and there were what should have been some pleasant flattish bits, I really started to feel crook, even having pins and needles in my hands. "But never mind, keep going, don't give up."

Finally it dawned on me that this was more than just tiredness and I sat down beside the track, trying to rest and catch my breath. Ironically, the top was only about 200 metres away and I was comforted by the fact that Patrick, Fran and Bill were bringing up the rear. The most unpleasant symptom was the fact that I could not stop breathing rapidly even though I had been stopped for some time. Mark Asic, a prospective member, was the first to come by and I probably scared the life out of him by saying that it may be my heart. (That was all I could think of.) Mark took off like a rocket and raised the alarm back at the cars with Roger Browne (visiting from the UK) and Don Brooks coming back to assist. The rear guard, Patrick, Bill and Fran were next on the scene and Fran immediately diagnosed heat exhaustion and proceeded to pour water over me, providing immediate relief. Thanks Fran!

Bill went on to organise up top and Patrick stayed and provided moral support. Fran also took a towel from her pack and, after wetting it, put it around my neck. By then I was feeling a lot better and when Don and Roger arrived, they took my pack and we finally ambled up to the top. Why did the heat affect me like that? Well, it was classic weather for heat exhaustion - hot and humid - but this had never happened to me before in almost 18 years of walking. I wonder whether a contributing factor may have been the new, trendy, quick drying, synthetic shirt I was wearing. I was certainly not dehydrated. So thanks Fran, Patrick, Roger (who carried my pack) and all the rest of the party.

**SBW SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATIONS ARE IN OCTOBER
THIS YEAR. PLAN AHEAD KEEP
THE WHOLE MONTH FREE FOR
SBW ACTIVITIES**

The Golden Years by Jim Brown

Which were the Golden Years of the Club? Now be honest about it; it was the period when you, dear reader, were most active in Club affairs, now wasn't it? Thus the people who were walking and most active in Club management during the 1930's consider those were the great days: and the generations of the 1940's and 50's no doubt believe the place is going downhill. While, bless you, if you're of more recent stock and very active, the Golden Years are NOW.

For my part, accepting the above formula, the late 40's and early 50's should have been the high point, but in a way I was lucky because just as my spell of vigorous walking went into decline, the Chronic Operas came along and extended my personal Golden Years.

The idea of telling a story, preferably something touching on Club doings, in verse and song at a campfire was not a brand new idea when the Chronic Operas were spawned. Other people had done something similar on a few occasions in the 1930's, but I think it can be said fairly that none of these earlier operas became part of a cycle.

Not that the 1952 originators envisaged a series. It simply happened that a superior campfire was planned for the Club's 25th Birthday Reunion at Springvale near Woy Woy. Happily there was a story to tell - how at an Instructional Weekend in August the leader almost missed the train, how the President, no less, "pulled the air" on the train driver when he started out of Glenbrook with half of the party still aboard, and how the Treasurer was hit on the skull by a rolling stone (dislodged by an un-financial member of course).

Working on this promising material President Malcolm McGregor and Pat Sullivan (now Wood) produced "Instruction Plus" with hastily written verse put to tunes by Sir Arthur Sullivan (no relation to Pat) and to popular campfire ballads. My own part in this epoch-making production was humble enough, words for one song and the role of the irate engine driver. The whole performance went very nicely and was well received.

And there it would have remained if the 1953 Reunion campfire had not seemed so tame by comparison that we began to talk of an Opera for 1954. In the meantime the Club had acquired a couple of versatile pen-men in Don Matthews

who can write whimsically appealing lines, and Geoff Wagg who invents the most arrant nonsense. There was already in existence an enthusiastic singing group with quite passable voices, and not too many inhibitions about performing at a campfire.

The scene was set and the ground fertile for the 1954 Reunion and its slightly exaggerated version of a general meeting with each character riding his own hobby-horse about which he had sounded off at a meeting during the year. It included the Matthews hit *Who'd be a Walker*; it introduced *the Little Scout* with his axes, knives and firearms ready to "knock off a bird or a bunny", and it wound up with Wagg's version of *Good Bye*.

"Good bye, adieu

So long, farewell and toodle-oo,

Bon soir, whats more -

Auf wiedersehen and au revoir."

Now the team really got stuck into it. It was decided well in advance that the 1955 opera would deal with the Sunday clashes, some amiable, some not so amiable, between Police and Bushwalkers, under the title *Bobbies and Bushies*. While this was still in gestation we learned that Paddy Pallin was going abroad, so we farewelled him in the grounds of Brian Harvey's home to the tunes of *Paddy Pallin Pty. Ltd.* At his emporium it was pointed out:

*"We have paddles for canoeing with,
And fly veils for fly-shooing with,
And an Up to be and doing with,
Or we'll hire you teeth for chewing with."*

And Paddy counselled to the tune *This Nearly was Mine*,

*"Let sleeping bags lie,
Be gentle in treating them,
Don't ever try beating them-
Let sleeping bags lie."*

So to the 1955 Reunion where in an opening episode we disgraced ourselves in the nude sunbathing scene at Era where:

*"If you go sunning on Era's sands,
you'd better go in disguise.
There's bobbies there with telescopes
and frightfully powerful eyes."*

Thereafter we spent years redeeming ourselves with S&R activities, in the process of which we were introduced to the bloodhound (Wagg) and

his keeper, the unhappy police sergeant who explained (to the school song *The Golden Wattle*):

*"His bloody nose is not so keen,
He's doped on benze-bloody-drine.
He's just a bloody old has-been,
Oh, bloody, bloody, bloody."*

Hardly was the reunion over when Geoff Wagg, emulating the Tiger Walkers of earlier years led a weekend jaunt of (allegedly) 85 miles from Katoomba to Picton. It was before Warragamba flooded the Burragorang, of course. Twenty started and six finished and the rest were extracted by car, and enough silly things happened to make a story, which was sung to a combined Instructional Weekend and Working bee at Blue Gum. It may have been remorse at our recent treatment of a children's song, but we took a couple of bawdy old ballads and set respectable words, as with Geoff's *Miles to Picton (O'Reilly's Daughter)*.

*"85 miles is a long, long way,
Not many cars on the Picton Highway,
Sanitary cart, or a one-horse sleigh,
I'll take anything going my way."*

The writers had almost a year's spell now, and in that time some changes occurred. Apart from a few phrases, the earlier "operas" were sung throughout, but now some spoken dialogue was introduced, the words of the songs became more sophisticated, and the characters portrayed were vested with a degree of personality. Moreover, the remaining operas were virtually original stories, owing something to current Club affairs, and with many topical allusions, but not telling direct tales of walker doings.

In retrospect I am convinced that *The Golden Screw* (1956), *The 1001 Troglodytes* (1956), *White Antics* (1957), *McGregor's Party* (1957) and *Return of the Admiral* (1958) were the best from the scripting viewpoint. However, our audience was by now somewhat blasé, and as the stories grew more involved, they were not quite as well received as the earlier editions. Because the stories were more complex the words don't always read well out of context, and it would be futile to try and quote either in a reasonably short history of the Chronic Operas.

Of course the writers, and maybe the performers too, continued to get a great deal of pleasure out of the composition and rehearsals; I can still

remember the faces flushed with laughter and excitement as one silly episode was capped with an even screwier development.

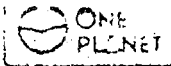
Perhaps we had become too ambitious and were trying to "put over" plays requiring much more rehearsal and much more elaborate staging than one can justify for a one night campfire show. At all events, we came to the conclusion after the 1958 Reunion that the Chronic Operas should be suspended at least for a while.

During the next few years the strong singing group thinned out, family commitments weighed on the Producer and writers, and we never really resumed. Not with full scale Chronic Operas, that is, although sketches with songs have been played at most of the subsequent Reunions, with some of the old brigade usually taking part, and often with an infusion of new blood. I hope we can continue to do that much, at least until a new team starts producing major campfire entertainment items.

You see, it reminds me of the Golden Years of the Chronic Operas: and if you feel like chuckling at such a naive and nostalgic idea, it's probably because these are your own Golden Years, and the day will almost certainly come when you too look backward.

(As we approach our 70th anniversary it is fitting to look back at the people and antics of an earlier period. Next month will be the first anniversary of Jim Brown's death and this article from October 1967 is a most suitable way to remember Jim: President, Secretary, Editor, author, actor, producer, father and friend. Editor.)

**Congratulations to
Rae Page
who had her 95th birthday recently.
Read all about it in
Hip Hip Hoo Rae.**



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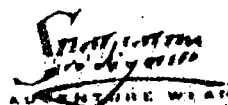
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A Nostrum which may very well enhance... by Don Matthews

*I sat down with the magazine,
A tear rolled down my cheek,
The Editor of robust build
was being extremely meek.
This mood* won't last, I thought, at least
Not more than half a week
* the editor's mood*

I wrote that this afternoon, whilst sitting on a rock down on the local creek. I had been struggling to write something, anything, for the magazine. I have been trying to do this since "Reunion campfire Verses" was printed in November 1992. Somehow prose is not my strength. There is a long list of past and present SBW prose writers who (or is it whom) I admire. Some of them wrote (write) admirable verse as well. How do they do it?

I have a good deal of sympathy for Editors, more so when the incumbent has portrayed Cinderella with such aplomb (or presence). (viz. the Butler production of the Spoonesed version 1991) I portrayed her (Cinderella that is) in a more spindly fashion in 1987.

I went down the creek today, looking for inspiration. Fortunately I took my binoculars for though I did not find much in the way of inspiration I did find a Brown Owl in a coachwood tree. Though not as exotic as a partridge in a pear tree it was I thought a pretty fair achievement for a novice birdwatcher. I call it a Brown owl because it was brown. I don't really know what sort of owl it is. There's nothing like it in the book. I didn't even find the brown owl until I was alerted by a very agitated red whiskered bul bul (*Pycnonotus jocosus* in case the computer gets confused. Might this sort of input cause it to self destruct?) whose territory and nest it perceived to be under threat.

I came home content with the sighting of a few birds which I hadn't seen down there before and an envelope covered with scribble.

As I strolled up the final ridge I heard a brass band belting out jungle rhythms at a park on the hill. All you could hear was the drummer who was enthusiastic if nothing else. Suddenly they switched to a few bars of the last movement of the Beethoven ninth. This I thought is an omen of some sort. The drum beat, now less strident, matched my steady plod and I suddenly felt quite euphoric, rather than just content. The lines of verse are about all I could salvage from a 12 km wander in the bush though. It will take a marathon effort to fill a page at that rate!

I could write a bit about damper. Seeing that it's the 70th, I have been tidying up for later display a photographic montage of Club characters engaged in making, and then eating or otherwise disposing of damper. "The Damper Competition 1974". The photos are a bit faded and are precariously glued to butchers paper, yellow with age and with the remnants of sticky tape attached from when it has been stuck to the walls of the hut at Coolana, or perhaps the clubrooms at St. Leonards, or Crows Nest or Haberfield. I'd better look up montage, I suppose just in case.

I quote the Oxford Illustrated Dictionary: "arrangement of cut out illustrations or fragments of them, as artists technique of making pictures" Well there you go! I am wrong. It is not a montage though it is certainly becoming a bit fragmentary around the edges. Tine says "just call it a collection". Perhaps I should.

I like the sound of montage though. I like the verse which accompanies the pictures too. As most of the characters depicted are lasting pretty well twenty three years later, there may be a message there somewhere.

*This tattered document I sometime found
A relic of an episode profound,
A record of some prehistoric rite,
Wherein the celebrants first rend, then bite,
A substance from the ashes, wrapped in foil,
The product of much craftiness and toil.
A strange and powerful remedy, perchance?
A nostrum which may very well enhance
Athletic prowess, even illness hamper.
What's that! It's just an ordinary Damper??*

I gave the draft of the above bit of nonsense to Tine for comment. "I doubt if its the result of the exercise and fresh air" she said "or the Beethoven". And then you've been reading *Through the Looking Glass* again, haven't you? I can always tell".

70th Anniversary Celebrations.

The sub-committee vested with this task was formed last year and has been meeting planning and plotting ever since. Now it the time to start to reveal what has been hatched. Not all at once just in case you dear reader find it difficult to absorb it all. Firstly DON'T plan anything for October this year.

On 11-12 October we're having the Reunion at Coolana: campfire, entertainment, cake, milo,

damper compition, singing, investiture of the president, annual airing of the ex-presidents, swimming carnival for the temperature insensitive plus lots more (but no steak knives); all those activities that have been part of SBW for 70 years. Come along, no need to book a room, be prepared as usual for hot, cold, wet and/or dry weather.

Friday 17 October is the date for the dinner at North Sydney Leagues Club. More details next month but we have the Celebrity Room (main function room) from about 6 pm to 12 midnight. Come early, leave late and don't worry if the car turns into a pumkin. There's oodles of room to walk and talk or to sit and chat without going anywhere neer the dreaded poker machines. The cost will be **about** \$30 a person; it has not been finalised as yet so it could go up a bit. Drinks are extra to your own account. The dinner will not be a formal affair but dress rules apply in the Club, *smart casual* is the way to dress. There's no mention in the Club's Dress Rules about men wearing kilts so it would be best to forget your celtic urges for the night.

On **Sunday 19 October** we are having a picnic-barbeque at Manly Dam. This is the opportunity for everyone to get together in a daylight campfire type of atmosphere spiced with the aroma of fried onions and burnt meat. This day is as costly as you wish make it; king prawns and chanpaign or bangers and beer. The picnic area is accessible to all by car, by foot or by wheelchair. Tables and chairs will be there. To enter the Manly Dam site there is an entry fee of \$6 per car. To enter by foot costs nothing.

At the clubroom on **Wednesday 22 October** some activities will take place, details have not been finalised as yet, the backroom brigade are still working on it.

You may wonder why are so many events are concentrated in so few days. A good question and with a very simple answer. With our diverse membership people come from all over the place. To accommodate the intersate and distant intrastate travellers we have tried to shorten the time that these people will be away from home. So if you do loose a bit of slep that week, you'll have 5 years till the next big SBW function.

Coolana - Possible Conservation Agreement with NPWS

The Committee has agreed in principle to investigate entering into a voluntary onservation agreement with the National Park and Wildlife Service for the Club's property "Coolana" in the Kangaroo Valley. This will be a protracted process requiring preliminary application, survey by NPWS, negotiating a management agreement and legal contract.

A voluntary conservation agreement is a contractual agreement, legally binding on the landholder, all future landholders, and the Service as the agent of the Minister. It may be varied or terminated if both the owner and the Minister consent. The conservation agreement is intended to protect the natural conservation values of land. Amongst other things it encourages the study, preservation, protection, care or propagation of native fauna and flora. It may well reflect the intentions of those earlier members who raised or donated funds for the purchase of Coolana.

The advantage to the club will be the advice, guidance and assistance from the NPWS in preserving and perpetuating the conservation values of our property. Our existing use of the land and possible extension of these uses can be safeguarded in the management agreement. Assistance from the NPWS may include funding for equipment/materials and staffing for flora and fauna surveys, weed control and elimination of feral animals such as foxes, pigs and goats. Rate and land tax relief are also possible.

Early discussion with an NPWS representative has been favourable. They were already aware to some extent of our property and its significant features. There are suggestions that the Crown land between our property and the Tallowa Dam will become a NPWS Nature Reserve and Coolana provides a corridor to this area for the endangered rock wallaby species located further upstream. Also, our river frontage flats currently, under NSW Water Board administration, will eventually pass to the NPWS. Coolana, under a conservation agreement, will blend in with their land management practices.

It is still early days with much to be learnt about conservation agreements and liaison with the NPWS. The Committee welcomes input from

members particular those who are willing to assist with this process. The Autumn Social Programme will include a night with a NPWS representative who will enlighten us on this subject. The Committee will ensure that all members have opportunity to play a part in the final decision.

Please contact me with your suggestions and observations. **Bill Holland**: Conservation Secretary

John Holly (84-715) 1913-1997

The Club was informed this week of the death of honorary member John Holly. John joined the SBW in 1963 and died suddenly of a heart attack on 28 January. John was a confirmed bachelor with three passions in life, photography, zoology and bushwalking and the Club gave him the opportunity to indulge in all three at once. His niece Eve, is managing his estate and may call on his bushwalking friends to identify some of John's numerous photos.

Continued: April 1997 General Meeting.

Confederation report began with news that the latest 6 monthly liaison meeting between NPWS and the Confederation has been deferred. Confederation are to support a trip to Melbourne for the Tracks and Access Officer to attend an SAA committee meeting on a proposed standard for track markings. The price for St Johns first aid courses is to rise. The Confederation's code of ethics for bushwalking is to be named the "Bushwalkers Code" (there is no indication of just where the apostrophe goes). The Confederation's rules and regulations are to be printed and presumably distributed.

For some unknown reason general business brings a spate of announcements, rather than business, and this one was no exception. A number of cars were broken into at Curra Moors during daylight hours, the 70th anniversary dinner lives, on a Friday no less, and the meeting closed at 2115.

Change of Address

Eddie Giacomel and Jennifer Trevor-Roberts
17 Putarri Ave., Sy Ives N.S.W. 2075, 9144
5095 phone & fax.

If you have changed your name, address and/or phone number(s) since the membership list was published in January this year, and you want SBW members to know it let the committee know or send the editor a note.

And a good day was had by all. By George Mawer

It was early Sunday morning April 27 when I looked out the back door and decided it was going to be a fine day. I thought "Great! I'll go on Errol's walk". I packed some lunch, ate a quick breakfast and drove to Sutherland station. Tom was on the platform but no sign of Errol or his shadow. We got into the second carriage when the train arrived and there weren't any other SBW passengers. Curious.

When the train arrived at Cronulla and we alighted I saw that there were a lot of familiar faces further along the platform so we joined them. Paul said that Errol was sick and that he had nominated to take the walk. We walked down to the Gunnamatta Bay wharf where the little Bundeena ferry was waiting. The trip across Port Hacking to Bundeena was pleasant and as always, gave the opportunity to chat a little before the walk started.

At Bundeena we gathered in the customary circle and Paul said he would take the party to Deer Pool and return. This was a lesser distance than the programmed walk and after some grumblings and huddled conferences it evolved that Zol would lead a walk to Little Marley and then across to Winifred falls and on to Sutherland. Joan said she had come to do the walk as programmed and would do so. That gave us three parties, each doing something a little different.

When Joan was asked if she had done her intended walk before she said "Yes, but in the opposite direction". She added that she had a map and *would look at it if necessary*. I opted to go with Joan's party as it sounded as though it had the potential to get more interesting. Joan told Zol that we might see them along the way (which I very much doubted) and we set off.

We walked sort of westward around the sandy beaches of the Bundeena side of the bay, around rocky headlands and across mangrove mud flats. We took directions from a few people along the way who materialised at appropriate times and had our morning tea break on a rocky platform on a high point overlooking the rather large and very picturesque Cabbage Tree Basin lagoon.

Then a slow easy climb along the Maianbar ridge (which included some roadway) and then down to

Anise falls on Saddle Gully creek. Quite pretty but almost dry. We needed a swim so continued on to Winifred Falls where we explored upstream a little to a nice little swimming hole for a pre-lunch dip.

We were about half way through our lunch when, to my surprise, Zol and his party arrived. After lunch we four pushed on but took a side trip down Muddy Creek for another swim and to look at some rock engravings. Then some bush bashing and rock scrambling across and steeply down to the Hacking and along to Audley.

We wanted to ride the tram from the old RNP station to Loftus and managed to get there just in time for the last tram of the day. I was most relieved as the prospect of walking along the tramway to Loftus was not appealing.

It was a glorious, mostly sunny autumn day. Ideal for walking. (ideal for anything) There was a good mix of scenery and walking conditions. The company was excellent. Spirits remained high all day. The creek water was icy at first and then very invigorating - Joan insisted that it was good for muscle tone.

Thank-you Errol. Thank you Joan, Ray and Nora.

That part of the RNP through which our route took us looks good and seems to be recovering well from THE FIRE. However there are some quite noticeable changes in the type of vegetation and vigorous re-growth density in some familiar places.

Footnotes by Patrick James

This column is not meant to be an editorial but a current affairs (as in news, not who's with who) forum. However from time to time something akin to editorialising may creep in.

I was amazed by the thousands of entries in *Spot the mistakes in the April magazine competition*. Unfortunately no one single entry listed all the mistakes so the prize will have to jackpot. As you know this competition is open every month with first prize a bushwalk with the editor; second prize is two bushwalks with the editor. To those of you who voiced their concern about the quality of the magazine, thank you. I'm approaching the top of a steep learning curve, but not so steep that I'll slip backwards. If the June edition is not up to your expectations then phone or write to me.

On a serious note Elizabeth Radcliff suffered a stroke on 9 May at work and is now in Bankstown Hospital (9709 0444, ward 2J, room 4, visiting hours 10.00-1300, 1430-2000). Her mother Rosemary rushed out from Wales to help Steve, Sophia (5) and Alexander (2). Steve and Elizabeth joined SBW in 1982 and have walked with the Club since then except when family constraints took precedence and during a 3 year sojourn in Tasmania. Members may have met up with the family at Coolana. Elizabeth, we wish you a full and speedy recovery.

In the Clubrooms. In April two outstanding social nights were held. The first where David Roots explained why the Earth moves and shakes with earthquakes and volcanos, why the Shakey Isles are the shakey isles and why it may not be best to stay in a highrise hotel in San Fransisco. Irrespective of political developments north of the border, Australia is moving closer to Indonesia, but only at the rate of about 6 cm per year.

The second social Wednesday saw SBW member and photographer of note Henry Gold explain some of his technique to a room full of potentially competitor photographers. Henry showed some of his good shots and, like John West, some of his rejects. One of Henry's photographic secrets is to have plenty of time to wait for the right moment no matter if it takes hours or days or even years.

Positions Vacant #1. The position of Social Secretary is still vacant. Open to a SBW member with flair, charm and perfect social skills, used to

public speaking, and able to relate at all levels from boardroom to engineroom. On the job training in this rewarding and vital position will be given. This is your opportunity to gain an insight into the workings of the Club. As I said last month if you can walk and talk at the same time you're in. Don't be shy.

Positions Vacant #2. In for a penny in for a pound; we do need a Clubroom Reporter. To write each month a few words (in sentence form) about what's been happening. For this position you must be able to write, reading skills are an advantage and listening skill are desirable. If we don't get someone soon, we'll get tired of the current style of reporting.

Club Coolana. The weekend of 3 and 4 May saw a number of people gamboling in the sunshine at Coolana. Firstly there was a goodly group of memebbers engaged in macro gardening, slashing, burning, clearing and in particular planting of trees. Such practical and applied landcare is transforming Coolana into a most attractive and valuable asset. Years ago when it was a working dairy the land at Coolana no doubt was fairly open. Since then many cycles of seeding, growth and die-off plus cycles of drought, fire and flood have seen much of the land and in particular the land along the river become infested with weeds and blocked by fallen timber. Much work by dedicated zealots (I know zealots are by definition dedicated) have returned, and are returning the land to a bushwalkers delight. All in time for the 70th Reunion.

And talking of planting only a very few plants were received for replanting at Coolana, however all was not in vain as some \$80 was donated to buy plants with. The request for garden tools, rakes, shovels, spades, etc is still valid. Bring them to the clubroom or contact anyone on the committee to arrange pick-up. The request for garden machinery, lawnmowers, chainsaws, etc also is still valid.

Coolana Maintenance weekends are scheduled for 31 May-1 June and 26-27 July. On the first of these wekends the track from the road to our parking area will be worked over. If you have experience working on a chain gang or a railroad or simply would like to spend a few hours digging, wheelbarrowing, raking, labouring, levelling or pickaxing ring me (02 9904 1515).