



**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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## January 1999

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## WE'RE OUT FOR A WALK

by Pauline Watson

I was six or seven when I had my first 'real' walk. Our father had taken all of us - five girls of which I was the youngest - on many picnics when we tramped through the bush but this one was different. We went to the South Coast by train, stayed overnight, and then set off early to climb to the top of Mt. Camberwarra.

It was mid-summer and already hot when we started, each of us carrying a haversack of size and weight proportionate to our age. It was a training run for all the long walks that would follow over the years. My father often sang as he walked and we joined in accordingly. On this occasion, however, I was saving all my breath for the climb. Before we were half-way up, the sweat was pouring off my brow and my short legs were already feeling tired.

Every so often, my father would stop and call out to the troop trailing behind him: 'Time for a break'. And we would sit down, gratefully, while he doled out cups of water and we wiped our sweaty brows. He rarely sat down - he said he preferred to stand. Then he would point out various places of interest in the distance, often commenting on their geological formation; or he would pick a small, beautiful wildflower by the path or draw our attention to an unusual bird high up in the trees or sky.

Then: 'Packs up' and we would all be off again. We were the only people climbing the mountain on that hot mid-summer day. I should add that all this was happening in the late 1920s when there were very few cars around, especially those which would take the risk of going to the tops of steep mountains. My father never owned a car or learned to drive throughout the whole of his life and in fact very rarely used the car and chauffeur made available to him in several of his jobs - the usual practice at that time. Taxis were called only for dire emergencies.

Instead, like the rest of us, he travelled on public transport or walked.

So, off we set again. Suddenly we heard the 'chug, chug,' of a car coming up behind us. As soon as it reached us, the driver stopped, and, leaning out the car window, said to my father: 'Can I give some of you a lift? You all look very hot'. My heart rose. The double gift of riding in a car plus the easing of my aching legs seemed about to be given to me. I didn't, however, know my father so well at that age.

'No, thanks all the same,' was the friendly reply. 'Lovely day isn't it?' The driver and his wife looked down at me and across to my father. Then, speaking in a tone of voice which suggested - as I could only now describe it - that he was talking to a sadistic parent, the man said pleadingly: 'At least let me take the little one.' Once more my hopes rose. 'No, thanks very much', came another friendly reply. Then, smiling, by way of further explanation, no doubt: 'We're out for a walk.' The man drove off without a word.

Well, I made it to the top and we ate sandwiches and boiled the billy for tea and admired the wonderful views. The car was nowhere to be seen. My father never mentioned that incident again. The particular quality of his voice, however, when he spoke to the driver, reflecting not only the joys of walking but also his implied attitude to pressing on when the going gets tough has never left me - though at the time I'm sure it was an emotional rather than a rational response which I felt.

And in all the day walks we did during the time I lived at home plus, at least twice a year, in those for over one or two weeks camping out on the way, then for many years of walking with Ken when I was married and even now, seventy years later, when I stroll along the beach or through the National Parks on this beautiful North Coast, I sometimes think of those simple words and the wealth of meaning behind them: 'We're out for a walk'.

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## Blackheath to Richmond via the Grose valley. by Jean Malcolm.

We had a grand send off at Central Station, Mr. and Mrs. Kuhl, mother and one or two others being at the train to see us off. Knowing we were doing rather a gallop trip and all feeling in a frivolous mood we told the parents not to worry if we didn't turn up till Thursday. The carriage was packed with another Party of SBW's so we had a jolly singsong all the way up to Katoornba. Boarding the train at Strathfield, Bob and his brother got into another carriage to get a seat, so, when we emerged shivering at Blackheath, we met "Ben" for the first time. The peculiar thing is, both brothers call each other "Ben", making it confusing for strangers.

It was a freezing June night, so we rather welcomed the two miles out to Govett's Leap, to warm us up. Being glorious moonlight, the view of the valley, bathed in mist was lovely. We eventually got a rather unwilling fire going and had a welcome supper of cocoa and biscuits. We didn't bother with tents, but made use of the two refreshment rooms handy and retired about 11.30pm. Saturday morning Linda, Corkie and I were all glad to rise as our shed had an air-gap about one inch all round which made it chilly. I for one felt the wind whistling under me and was cold several times during the night. Of course it was a very exposed spot, as we realised when we viewed the valley below us in the morning sunshine --- a sea of mist, but the view was worth the discomfort. Breakfast was quite a fastidious meal, as we had tables and chairs to hand.

About 9 o'clock we started off down Govett's Leap, which is very steep and in an hour's time when we reached the bottom knees were decidedly wobbly and felt detached from the rest of us. We had a spell and were able view with satisfaction the drop we had accomplished. We followed Govett's Leap creek and about 12 o'clock struck Blue

Gum Forest, where we had a light lunch of Johnnie Cakes etc. The weather looked a bit threatening, but the rain kept off. We came to the Junction and then started off down the Grose River, which was undulating creek country all afternoon: very pretty and green.

At 4.45 we decided to stop in a green glade, which seemed a suitable camp spot, and all set out to get everything done before darkness came down. We had a very sumptuous meal, indeed Linda was accused of over-eating because she lay down after it and was appropriately chorussed with "*Another little job for the undertaker*". We were sitting talking and enjoying the warmth of the fire about 8 o'clock, when the rain suddenly started, so it was a case of dive for the tents and keep dry. My tent was put up like a doorway or lean-to of Linda's, so we able to chat even it we were forced to retire early.

The rain wasn't heavy but lasted off and on all night and cleared about 8.30 Sunday morning. On starting off, we found the country very, rough and got soaked with the wet undergrowth. Being for the most part in shadow, the bush had not dried, and the leader got the worst of it. It was rocky country, but very pretty. We lunched on the rocks beside the river, and paddled our feet in the little pools. I remember we all ate heartily at this meal, feasting on boiled bacon, Linda's "Donkey" etc. etc. However we didn't waste much time, as we knew we had to cover the ground and couldn't afford to loaf while there was daylight. We had hoped to reach Wentworth Creek before sundown, but it was about 4.30 pm. and still no sign of it.

However, we decided we must be almost there, and camped at the first available flat. This was a very pretty spot with a creek flowing just handy. The tents went up and a good stack of wood piled near so we settled down to tea. There were several courses and every one did justice to them in front of the blazing fire. We had a bit of a sing song, and I decided to retire early, rather to the

amusement of the rest. All along I had spoken of walking all night, Monday, if necessary, should we be running late and it had become the joke of the camp. Linda had said she would walk with me. So, of course, it was quite in order that I should have some extra sleep that night. We had a jolly time that night, as I only dozed, I could hear all the fun from my tent.

Next morning Linda and I arose early and she confided to me her fears that we hadn't covered as much ground as we thought and she proposed we girls start early and let the boys pick up on us. It was a glorious morning and the boys went down to the Grose, where they made a dreadful amount of noise and splashing having their cold shower. I bet it was cold, too. Ian hung his socks to dry on an overhanging branch above the fire and Corkie did the same. Somehow Ian was unfortunate and just managed to retrieve one sock from the ashes, minus the back of the leg. So we sang the popular ditty "*Another little job*" and Ian put on the sock to let us see the latest style in hosiery. Here also Beno decided we had too many loaves, so he played football with one, to lighten the load in his pack.

The going was pretty rough and 11AM. came without any sign of Wentworth Creek. We were on the right hand bank all the way and there were dozens of little creeks, which we started numbering "No. 1 Wentworth Creek", No. 2 and so on and soon reached 20. We had been told Wentworth Creek is elusive, but quite unmistakable when reached. We kept going till 1 o'clock and then decided to stop for a short rest and lunch. By this time I saw my all-night walking expedition looming large on the horizon, and it was with impatience that I stopped at all. We had oranges, dates, figs, chocolate etc. and other handy eatables, but I felt I couldn't eat as I was too anxious. I relieved Corkie of her rucksack and gave her mine, which was lighter, as I carried an eiderdown against her heavy blanket. We covered the country as quickly as possible,

altho' I felt I could have gone much quicker; just nervous energy. About 4 PM we came to a large creek and we knew we had reached Wentworth Creek at last; no doubt this time. The creek was in flood and, as we had to go up stream a bit, it took us the best part of an hour getting across and the precious daylight speeding on. According to what we had been told after Wentworth Creek the track was easy, but we hardly found it better than before. I took the lead from Ian as I seemed to be able to keep the track better, altho' at times it was very elusive. We came to Linden creek after some time.

5.15 saw us still walking and no sign of getting out of the valley with the track no better, so we held a council. Bob was for camping the night, Linda was prepared to fall in with anything, and I was for keeping going and trying to make Richmond for the early train. Ian and I were the only ones who had to be back at work the next day, and I felt I couldn't rest if there was a chance of getting thro' by the morning. Bob considered it was too dangerous travelling by night.

Very reluctantly Ian and I left the others to go ahead on our own. There was no time to fix details if we were to make the most of the daylight, and so we set off. We made a good pace as I seemed to have seven league boots and two can cover rough country so much quicker than six. I managed to keep the track fairly well. Then darkness came down and it was necessary to travel by torchlight. I had to pick out the track and then swing the torch back for Ian to follow, so our pace was slow and the ground was very rough. Also, I was inclined to forge on ahead, forgetting Ian was in inky blackness behind. Never were we more grateful for our outsize torch or "motor-lamp", as it had been nicknamed. It was a Godsend that night.

We decided about 9 o'clock to stop, as we were just ploughing rough country. Also I was terribly tired in the legs and fagged out picking the track, so we thought a rest would revive us and we could scout for the track

afterwards. We were quite near the water's edge, so I just dropped where I was, and Ian went to fill the billy. Walking had kept us warm while the dew was falling, but I discovered it had made my clothes quite damp, so I changed into my woollen things, so as to not catch a cold. The wet things I rolled in my groundsheet and strapped them to the outside of my pack. Having scouted around in search of wood, Ian thought we had better get higher up on a rock ledge to light a fire. We scrambled up on a ledge which had a rock which we could lean back on. The wood round about was non-burning or damp and Ian had to prowl around all over to find some suitable for a fire. The worst of it was that I was left in inky darkness, and had to call out now and then, so that Ian could locate me.

Twice, that fire went black out, but eventually we got it going nicely. Ian accidentally put his snakebite outfit on the fire, thinking it was a twig in the half light, which was unfortunate. Just then I remembered my wet clothes and discovered they were missing, evidently having been dragged out by the bushes on the way up. It seemed a simple thing to go straight down the way we had come up, but they were nowhere to be seen. We decided to eat first then Ian would go below and look for me.

We were by no means burdened with food having only half a loaf of bread, a jar of jam, (over which Ian danced) and some figs. Unfortunately we had no tea and a cake of chocolate was lost with my things, so we had to make do with Ian's one bar of chocolate between us. The hot chocolate, bread and jam was very welcome, as it warmed us up and revived us. Ian then took the torch and tried to trace our track from the water's edge, but this was impossible, owing to his other tracks in search of wood and mine later, so that he scoured the country in a semi-circle below our camp, not a sign of the missing things could he find.

He returned disappointed and stoked tip the fire. My snakebite outfit was with the

missing things so we felt as if our luck was out and were rather dejected. I lay back and gazed at the fire, thinking how nice and warm it was, and enjoying the spell.

The next thing I remembered I awoke with a start to discover that I had fallen asleep sitting at the fire, and Ian awoke simultaneously, to gaze at his watch in amazement. It was 10.30 PM, so we had slept one hour: rather a difference from our intended ten minutes spell. The warmth and fatigue had just got the better of us, but I felt much revived and the loss of my belongings had receded into the back of my mind and didn't seem half so vital. Before our little nap, we had considered the desirability of staying there the night, but now decided to start off immediately, as the fire was low and we were a bit chilly. Having packed up, we discovered we had been sitting right on the track, so that was a piece of luck. We managed to stick to it for some time, and both felt much fresher and cheerier than previously. There were footprints which we religiously followed, whenever possible, as the owners were more likely to be on a track than us. At times I would find myself peering ahead into the inky-black water; we had unconsciously come down to the river's edge, which made us realise how one can lose sense of direction in the bush at night. It seemed to be up and down, up and down all along this part of the river bank. We would lose our friendly footprints, and at once made a circle to see which way they had gone. They gave us confidence somehow and made the bush seem less lonely, knowing they could not be more than two days old, probably less. Thus we were thankful for the dry night, as the rain would have obliterated them from the sand. Of course, on the rocks we would lose them, but, as soon as we struck the sand, we were pretty sure to find them after a search. The ground being rough, we had short rests, as our legs got tired and we could not afford to risk a broken ankle, or worse. I had not eaten any figs for the whole trip, as I didn't care for them, so it seemed the irony of fate that I

should have them in my pack and be reduced to them that night, when we sat down. Indeed, I quite developed a liking for them, they were so juicy, and, having eaten sparingly at lunchtime, I was really, hungry. Ten minutes was our maximum rest, as we soon felt the chill night air, when sitting down. There were little creeks galore to cross, some dry, others with just a trickle, but I had an unquenchable thirst and enjoyed a drink many times.

After a while we had a friend in the moon, which shone out gloriously bright, lighting up the river and the track, and making almost as light as day. At times I was able to put out the torch when the going was fairly easy, as we wanted to reserve it as much as possible. The scenery was rather picturesque now and many times we stopped to admire the landscape in the pale moonlight. At this part it was mostly rocky country. Suddenly, we seemed to round a bend in the river, and stretched before us was the wonderful sight of an arch spanning the river. It appeared to be a rock arch covered with bush and the river flowing through it. We both stopped short and gaped at it, unable to believe our eyes, as nobody had mentioned this wonderful sight to us. It was 2 AM and, as we expected the opening out of the valley, thought it might be an hallucination. We seemed unable to get enough of it and just gazed and gazed at the sight, enhanced by the moon on the water giving the appearance of an underground river in a fairytale. Still we were puzzled that we had not heard of it, so Ian went down to see that the river was flowing in the right direction. We have since made enquiry and find that it was probably caused by a bend in the river, our standpoint and the moonlight striking the water: a truly wonderful structure had it been real. We went on and were now close to the bank, which was flat and, after a while seemed to get past the arch without ever actually being abreast of it. Not now so sure we were on the right track, Ian kept going down now and then to test the flow of the river and see that we were really travelling down stream,

and so we kept going. It had crossed our minds that the arch might mean the flattering of the valley, but the hills still towered above us on either side. After three days in the valley, it seemed to me endless: as if it would never widen out.

About 5 AM Ian went down to test the water and, as I thought he was rather quiet, I called out "Is it going the right way?" Imagine my dismay when he called back quietly but ominously "No". Up till then I had felt energetic and hopeful, but at that I just collapsed. We seemed to have been more off the track than on for the the last hour or so, and the going had been terribly rough. We had lost track of the footprints too. Tired as we both were, we seemed to be slipping and sliding all over the place, and several times just escaped a fall.

We lay down to have a much needed rest and talk the matter over. The only thing to do was to face our position. We had no map, as Bob carried that, all we had was an end of loaf and jam (which wouldn't last us long) a compass and a whistle. The compass is pretty hopeless in winding country, as you have to take an average of about four readings to get anything like an accurate direction. We decided to rest until dawn which would be in about three quarters of an hour, but did dare not close our eyes in case we would sleep. We imagined ourselves lost in the bush, how long we could last out and how we could proclaim our whereabouts to searchers. Ian was by far the stronger of the two of us and was wonderfully comforting to me, anxious as I was. They say the darkest hour comes before the dawn, and I felt this was true. Our idea now was to get up high and see our whereabouts and, if we had really gone wrong, to go back and try and pick up the others, where we had left the track. It seemed as if nothing but disaster had dogged our footsteps since we had left them.

About 6 o'clock, all of a sudden, it seemed to be daylight and Ian clambered up on top to scan the landscape. We then discovered to

our delight that we only come about 100 yards up a rather large side creek, and below us was the main stream taking a right angle bend. It was lucky we discovered our mistake so soon. With light hearts we climbed down, crossed the creek, and were soon able to pick out the footprints we had been following all night on of the main stream.

Both of us felt revived in body and spirit and kept on thinking we might still manage to get into town in time for work. Once, looking back, we imagined we saw the rest of our party some distance up stream, but it proved to be imagination, caused by a vari-coloured boulder. We went on and on and on. Ian got very easily tired now, not having the extra rest I had on the Sunday night to fall back on. We stopped for short spells of five minutes, and Ian ate jam and bread, with the latter very much in the minority. I, myself, wasn't hungry at all. I didn't feel I could waste the time eating, so I'm afraid I became a slave for "pushing-on". As well as being fagged out, we both had sore feet, (I had a blister and had to walk on the side of my foot), sometimes we got high up because the track seemed good, then down to the water's edge on the sand, which was softer for our bruised feet. Walking almost became mechanical, and the climbing and rock hopping fatigued us. We thought we saw the roof of a house, but it turned out to be just a trick of the morning sun on a rock.

At last, about 10 o'clock, the valley really opened out and we knew we were approaching Richmond. It was very pretty on this part of the river and such a glorious morning for a real laze on the bank, but no such luck for us. About 11 o'clock we reached the track which branched away from the river to Richmond. Here we had a wash, (very badly needed), bathed our feet in the river, and endeavoured to make ourselves respectable. Ian discarded the "out-of-the-back" sock and borrowed mine, but even so neither of us looked "chic". After several enquiries the farmers round about all seemed

to be Germans and unable to speak English, we at last gleaned the information that Richmond was eight miles away. What a tragedy it seemed!! Oh! those long weary miles on a hard metal road with sore feet. We had hopes for a lift which did not materialise. Many a rest we had at the roadside and Ian would just lie back on his pack and in two minutes be fast asleep. I didn't dare close my eyes in case I did the same. When we passed people on the road, we endeavoured to look happy and cheerful as tho, we were enjoying ourselves, instead of like two old pensioners limping along, as we really were when nobody was in sight. The last hundred yards we met Bob's uncle in a car out in search for him. They gave us a lift into the Post Office, and, after getting particulars sped off to the river.

It was now 2 PM and, on enquiry, we discovered a train did not run till 4 PM and no other conveyance was available. Feeling rather stranded, we adjourned to the public oval, where we regaled ourselves with fruit galore, until we felt satisfied. Later we boarded the train, where I gave Ian forty minutes to sleep while I stayed awake, and then he relieved me so that I could do the same. That took the edge off our tiredness and made us able to keep our eyes open for the rest of the journey. We arrived home at 6 PM.

The party: Jean Ashdown (nee Malcolm), Bob, Beno, Corkie, Linda, Ian (Scottie) Malcolm, Jean.

When: King's Birthday, June 1931

Distance: About 90 km (56 miles).

The popular song.

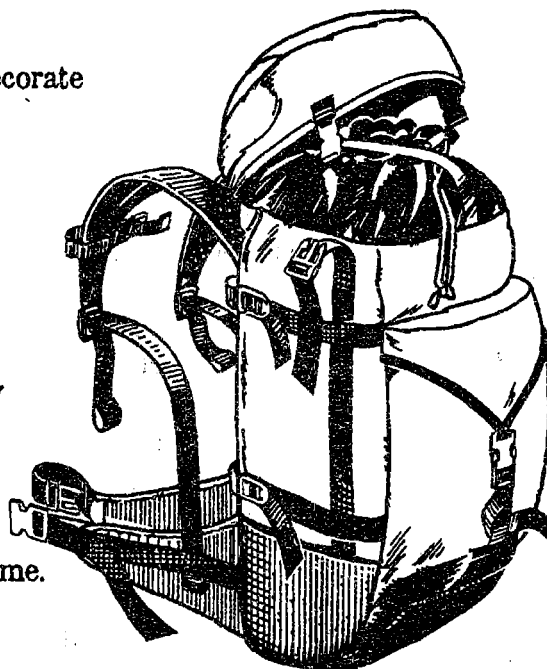
*Another little job for the undertaker,  
Another little job for the tombstone maker,  
In the village cemetery they've been digging  
a nice new grave for ...*

The 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reunion will be held at Coolana on the weekend after the Annual General Meeting in March. See the autumn walks program for details.



# TRIASSIC DAY PACK

Amongst the vast array of day packs that decorate the shelves of outdoor shops, it's difficult to pick something with the right features, what with 101 different types of nylon, allsorts of different canvases, airflow systems, expanding pockets and neon colours. So it's nice to know that if you're the type of person that wants simple robust functionality that reflects years of local bushwalking experience with solid locally made material, then the BLUE MOUNTAINS TRIASSIC could be your best companion for many years to come.



## Pack Review

by David Noble

It's good to see a pack made in the Blue Mountains for use in the Blue Mountains. The "Triassic" features two shoulder strap sizes so that the pack can be properly hip loaded, sitting down comfortably in the lumbar region of the back. This is sometimes difficult especially if you are a taller person. The harness system also includes a thick waist belt and chest strap enabling a tight fit which is great when climbing over rocks.

The volume is large enough to allow a 50m rope and wetsuit to easily fit in and the top is made larger so that your stuff slides in and out with ease. The pack has a large front pocket for those essential items such as a torch, and a top pocket for the map and camera. The pack is large enough to be used as a weekend pack when no ropes etc. are needed. This can keep the bulk down and stop you from packing too much on those weekend bushwalks.

The "Triassic" is made from durable 12oz canvas which can withstand the abuse given to it in canyons and when walking through scrub. All the seams are double stitched and sealed to prevent failure. It is also very water proof, on a recent trip down "Hole In The Wall" canyon, no water entered the main compartment despite a number of lengthy swims.

The pack is bush green in colour making the walker almost invisible in the bush. This is handy for sneaking up on wildlife with a camera or just blending in to the wilderness as you walk along. Good for those who like to keep the visual impact minimal too.

A quality Blue Mountains pack for our tough conditions, the "Triassic" carries a lifetime guarantee on workmanship and materials.

Overall an excellent pack for either short or tall with the 2 shoulder strap options. And great for canyons or short weekend trips.

**NB: David Noble is a keen canyoner and bushwalker. He is also the discoverer of the rare Wollemi Pine (WOLLEMIA NOBILIS) found in 1994.**

- ▲ Australian 12oz canvas
- ▲ Made in Katoomba the old traditional way
- ▲ 40 litre capacity
- ▲ Proper hip loading with 2 shoulder strap sizes for walking comfort
- ▲ Wide throat for easy loading and unloading
- ▲ Buckle up front pocket with internal divider
- ▲ Top lid pocket
- ▲ Extendable lid for overloading
- ▲ Padded hip belt with 38mm buckle
- ▲ Hip belt retainer for city use (conveniently holds the hip belt back and out of the way)
- ▲ Padded back (removable)
- ▲ Thumb loops on shoulder straps for more comfortable walking
- ▲ Internal compression strap for holding down your canyon rope
- ▲ Side compression straps for minimising volume
- ▲ Storm throat to keep out the rain
- ▲ Hard wearing Cordura base
- ▲ Price \$159.00

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## Ian's Red Hot New Year Walk in Kosciuszko National Park

By Charles Montross

The trip through Kosciuszko National Park started on January 3<sup>rd</sup> in Thredbo Village where we met Gordon, the bus driver from Adaminaby. Gordon drove us up through Kiandra to our start off point on Tooma Road, where we hiked 5km to Snakey Plain. We started off at 6pm and arrived at Snakey Plain at approximately 8pm. Along the way, we found out that the map didn't match reality with the trail on the ground not matching the map. Snakey Plain was a smallish, rolling plain that was marshy with some mosquitos.

We then moved out on Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup> towards Pretty Plain with a stop at Wheeler's Hut. The warmth noticed on the hike to Snakey Plain became very evident on the hike to Pretty Plain. Temperatures of 30+C were measured on Bill's backpack thermometer and everyone was having difficulties.

Along the way to Pretty Plain Hut, the group stopped to have lunch. Unfortunately the plain was virtually empty of trees and the group wound up having lunch under a tree with few leaves. Because of the difficulties experienced by the hikers, the group stayed at Pretty Plain Hut. There was not much of a problem with marsh flies, but the blowflies were plentiful, and ants made camping difficult. The group had to move around to find a spot without ants after the initial selection of a camp down the trail from the hut was found to be too dangerous.

On Tuesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, the group hiked past Grey Mare Hut and while having lunch, looked at the abandoned mining equipment. The dunny appeared to have been constructed over a deep pit with poor construction. One of the lasses noted that every time you had a movement, the dunny moved too. Heat was still a problem and the trip was modified. It was decided to camp at the intersection of the fire trail with the Geehi River which had a nice view overlooking

the river. Everyone was able to enjoy a good cooling splash in the river. It was rumored that one of the hikers sighted Elvis singing Blue Pacific along the hike out of Pretty Plain.

On Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, the group hiked to Valentine's Hut which was found to be very plush. The dunny had excellent ventilation and a panoramic view over the river. The originally planned stop at Mawson's Hut and climb over the Kerries was not done and the trip focused on getting to Schlink Pass. From lunch at the Schlink Hilton, the group hiked up Schlink Pass up towards Dicky Cooper Bogong and onto the Rolling Ground. We passed a group of hikers by the Granite Peaks, resting because of the heat. Even in the Alpine region, it was unusually warm in the 30's when normally it would be between 10 to 20°C. There were not many marsh flies or mozzies about but the ants could be bothersome when you put your pack down. The Blowflies were in abundance and a real pain. One of the guys reported about the unusual sensation of blowies in the bum when he stood up fast from the toilet. The group made it to Concept Stephen Pass by 6 PM and made camp. The weather was starting to change with moderate breezes keeping the blowies down and some cloud cover keeping the blazing sun at bay.

On Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, the group hiked passed Mt. Tate, Mts Anderson, Anton, Twynam and on to Muellers Pass. With the weather changing, the breezes cooled everyone and kept the blowies at bay. The group stopped to admire the view from Mt. Twynam and the idiot tourists who were unprepared for the weather. One of the group noted that there were dark clouds coming towards the group but someone said not to worry. Unfortunately, they were rain clouds and everyone scrambled to get into rain gear while trying to get off Mt. Twynam. The trail was very straightforward and once past Mueller's Pass, the group camped at the headwaters of the Snowy River at the base of Mt. Kosciuszko. While having a rousing sing song, the clouds rolled in and that night rain fell.

By Friday morning, January 8<sup>th</sup>, the rain had continued since it started the night before. The group had to break camp in the rain and hike up and over Mt. Kosciuszko, then down to Thredbo. Ray did an imitation of "the Blob" while breaking camp. He had packed everything into his backpack leaving only the wet tent. At the last moment, he pulled the tent poles down leaving only the tent on top of Ray. After a bit of movement by the "Blob", Ray appeared free from the "Blob" which was then stuffed away.

The group successfully hiked up Mt. Kosciuszko and down to the pass between the Rams Heads and Mt. Kosciuszko where the took advantage of the freshly emptied Porta-Loo's set up for the tourists. From there the group had fun trying to walk the wet metal grid of the elevated track towards the top of the Thredbo ski runs. A number of people slipped and landed on their bums but there were no injuries noted.

At the top of the ski runs, a quick break was had in the building before the group broke up and either headed down the trail or took the ski lift to Thredbo. A number of the hikers thought that the price of \$14 for the ski lift was a bit too much. However, the steepness of the trail down to Thredbo caused a bit of irritation to a couple of people's knees. It was noted that Thredbo got you one way or another, by either a ticket for the ski lift or by consultation with an orthopedic surgeon about the sore knees. Everyone made it safely down to the Friday Flat car park and headed home.

The Who: Wilf Hilder, Bill Holland, Fran Holland, Greta James, Patrick James, Geoff McIntosh, Charles Montross, Robyn O'Bryan, Glan Rannard, Ian Rannard (leader), Frank Sander, Jenny Stillwell, Ray Turton, Andrew Vilder, Alan Wells and Gretel Woodward.

The When: January 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, 1999

The Where: Wolseleys Gap to Thredbo.

# The Fitzroy *still* runs free.

Thanks to the pressure from many concerned individuals and organisations like the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Wilderness Society and Environs Kimberley, the WA government has agreed not to permit a dam on the Fitzroy River at Dimond Gorge. At least for now, this region has been saved.

Why not see this wild and spectacular country for yourself? If you can carry a pack, we can take you beyond the 4WD tracks and show you some of the incredible places that could have been lost.

We offer three departures for 1999: 25 April - 9 May, 9-30 May and 8-22 August. On the May trip, you need not carry any more than eight kg. On the others you carry a full pack, however, it will be quite light as you camp away from the vehicle for no more than two nights at a time and perfect weather means you can do without many things you would need in other climates.

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Happy New Year.

**FOOTNOTES** by Patrick James.

And a happy New Year to you all.

Pauline Watson, the author of our first article, although not a member of SBW, has had a long association with bushwalking. It was her father, W. J. Cleary, who lent SBW £80 in 1932 to help acquire the forestry rights to Blue Gum Forest, and so save the forest from the woodsman's axe.

Jean Ashdown (née Malcolm), the author of *Blackheath to Richmond*, was an active member of the Club in the early days. This story of their walk is published for the first time. The people, the events and the walk that Jean describes are as vivid and as real as if it was last weekend and not some 68 years ago. I have a couple of other articles by Jean which will be published in due course. Help with the names of the walkers is required!

All the extended walkers are back from being away, all safe and sound. Some of the walkers perhaps might be thinking of New Year resolutions and the need to get into condition. There was one health-related incident where a helicopter was required. Details of this next month.

Club Coolana: Volunteers are needed to go down there to continue the maintenance program. You can go at weekends or during the week. You can go alone or in a group. You can take your spouse, partner, children and/or parents.

This is the last year of the decade of the nineties. This gives us 12 months, time enough I hope, to prepare for the first year of the decade of the naughties.

**Ground to Air Communication**

Sometimes bushwalking groups need to communicate with planes or helicopters as in picking-up an injured walker. The letters (symbols) below have specific meanings in the *Ground to Air Visual Code*. Make the

symbols large enough to be seen from a distance, make the symbols with what ever is available, such as packs, people, towels, clothing, stones, etc. Smoke will help locate the party and also indicate wind direction and wind speed; parameters which helicopter pilots like to know. If a helicopter is to land: make sure the landing zone is big enough (about 40 x 40 metres or twice the overall length of the aircraft), have all the party assemble in one stationary group (so that the pilot is not distracted by different groups moving in different directions), and **DO NOT** approach the helicopter until the crew indicate to do so.

Message	symbol
Require assistance	V
require medical assistance	X
no or negative	N
yes or affirmative	Y
proceeding in this direction	↑
in doubt use international symbol	SOS

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Happy New Year.