



**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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## February 1999

### Issue No. 771:

- 2 The Pittwater Track  
*by Roger Treagus*
- 4 Annual General Meeting  
*by Eddy Giacomel*
- 5 Proposed Insurance
- 6 And now a Mid Week Mailing List  
*by Bill Holland*
- 6 Letters, Letters
- 8 Summer Walking in the Snowy Mountains  
*by Catheryn Ollif*
- 9 Positions Vacant
- 10 A Golden Weekend  
*by Tom Wenman*
- 11 Coolana Christmas  
*by Joan Rigby*
- 13 Trekking in East Africa (Part 1)  
*by Jan Szarek*
- 15 Sanford Larson's Africa Trip  
*by Sanford Larson*
- 16 Editors of *The Sydney Bushwalker*
- 16 Footnotes  
*by Patrick James*

### ADVERTISERS

Alpsport	7
Eastwood Camping Centre	12
Outland	5
Paddy Pallin	back cover
Willis's Walkabouts	15

## THE PITTWATER TRACK by Roger Treagus

The western foreshore of Pittwater is a special place. It is where the pristine bush of Ku Ring Gai Chase National Park meets the salt water estuary along a 16 km front. The creek water is sweet, the beaches superb and the views from the headlands, stunning. There are no real roads and no cars. Mainly the sounds are birds and outboard motors and even lyre birds mimicking outboard motors. The "offshore" population numbers over 600. It is a vibrant, artistic and wonderfully eccentric community. Where else would they stage an annual dog race where the local dogs are induced to swim from Scotland Island to the mainland. The first dog ashore scores a hamper of Pal and its owner a case of fourx.

I used to live here and loved it. I got to know about the local tracks and found that it was possible to walk all the way along the length of western Pittwater from Elvina Bay in the south to West Head in the north where Pittwater meets Broken Bay. It is rather like a mini Bundeena to Otford following a shoreline through national park and having public transport at both ends; ferries – one to Church Point and the other to Palm Beach.

If you walked it this is how it could be done. Going from south to north the real starting point is Church Point where the local ferry does the rounds of Scotland Island and other wharves in Lovett Bay before getting to Elvina Bay and the start of the 16 km walk. The ferry trip itself is an experience where you stand a good chance of meeting some pretty colourful characters. From Elvina local roads run past houses in this freehold enclave. There is a lovely waterfall in Lovett bay about 1 km from the start where the road becomes a track and runs around the Bay past Salvation Creek to the road system on Lovett's north side.

You can then walk through to Towlers Bay but not before passing the YHA Hostel, a great place to relax with a great view from the hostel's verandah looking towards Palm Beach. It has the cheapest accommodation in Sydney with a view like this. It has resident goannas, lorikeets and cockatoos. At night an army of possums converge on the place attracted by the innocent overseas visitors staying there who think they are cute and need feeding. Amongst them is Black Pete who exhibits the same anti-social behaviour as a namesake I used to know in Kia-Ora Hut on the Overland Track in Tassie.

You may then need to wait for a low tide to cross Towlers Bay with dry feet or try the longer bush bash around the shoreline. Both ways lead to the first of a string of remote beaches. Past the first beach there is a climb to the plateau and to one of the great views around Sydney taking in all of southern Pittwater, the coast down to Manly and the distant city. It's a great spot for lunch. Fire trails then lead to Portuguese Beach and Coasters Retreat and the peace of the Basin, a beautiful landlocked inlet. An obliging ferry takes you to the north side of Coasters Retreat avoiding the waist deep crossing 20m wide crossing. There is a camping area here that National Parks maintain.

Further north the route is along Currawong Beach, Great Mackerel Beach and onto the maintained track system leading to West Head. There is need for some new track construction towards Currawong as the shoreline is difficult when the tide is not low. At Great Mackerel there is a ferry connection to Palm Beach making the whole walk accessible by public transport. Great Mackerel is a gem. Behind the beach is an assortment of old "weekender" houses and architectural "statements" fronting onto grass streets but mostly behind tropical foliage. Typical of the place is a sign which reads, "Quiet Please, Guard Dog Asleep".

I have taken groups on this walk many times and often the comments are, "Gee this is really different" or "I didn't know you could walk this route". Years later these walking companions say, "I'll never forget that walk we did. It was so different from other Sydney walks".

Last year it occurred to me that the idea of making it a recognised walk was worth pushing. I proposed to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Environment Minister that the walk be made into a proper track the whole way and recognised as, "The Pittwater Track" (The replies were non-committal).

The upside of the proposal is that there is only about 2 km of new track to build, it has both accommodation and camping facilities along the route and it is public transport friendly. It would be a spectacular addition to Sydney's waterside walks. The downside is that the locals fear a loss of security because they perceive that the increased access by "outsiders" poses a threat to their little piece of paradise. Also the NPWS is against new track construction in the park and are concerned about a potential increase in environmental impact, in particular regarding any endangered species.

How to overcome the downside? Firstly, the local community. A way to get them on side would be to involve them in the proposal and thoroughly brief them on the security issues – how many bushwalkers will be attracted – what sort of people they may be. The Pittwater YHA attracts many international backpackers and has seemed to harmonise well with the locals for many years – so this example could serve as a useful yardstick. There will always be detractors but if the arguments are reasonable and the community well informed, local support will come.

Secondly the environmental impacts need to be assessed. What is most likely to happen here is that some fragile areas will be

identified and a few fauna/flora species will show up as needing special protection. The track can then be re-routed around fragile areas or designed to minimise impact.

A draft Plan of Management of Ku-ring-Gai Chase NP is due for release so there is an opportunity to put this proposal forward for integration into the Plan when public submissions to the draft Plan are invited. The level of support for the proposal, particularly from the local community and NPWS, is very important to a successful outcome.

At a time when the concept of long distance tracks is appealing, such as the Great North Walk, Great Illawarra Walk and the Hume and Hovell, it would be a pity that a near urban walk of such outstanding beauty and greater accessibility as "The Pittwater" could also not be part of this push.

If you are interested in the proposal why not walk it. The walk is in the Autumn Walks Program on 27 March. I look forward to seeing you there.

*This is a very special walk which can only be programmed 4 or 5 times a year, when the sun, moon, tides and weekends are all in conjunction to allow a dry foot crossing of the estuaries and inlets along the track. This walk is also special as it is proposed to be developed as "The Pittwater Track", a new walking track to mark the centenary of the Federation of Australia. Editor.*

**SBW**  
**72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reunion**  
**at Coolana,**  
**Kangaroo Valley**  
**on the weekend 13/14 March 1999**  
 after the Annual General Meeting.  
 See the autumn walks program and  
 elsewhere in this magazine for details.

## Annual General Meeting 1999

The AGM is on Wednesday 10 March. Unlike most other AGMs, this time we have a large number of committee positions to fill. To date we know of only two or three members standing for the positions. We need:

- Secretary, New Members Secretary, Social Secretary, Committee member (Social Secretary's Assistant), Treasurer, Editor and Delegate to Confederation

Many times during the year we hear "the Club should ...". Well, wait no more. Now is your opportunity to change "the Club should ..." to "I will ...". You don't have to wait for a position to become vacant - you may challenge any member standing for re-election if you desire.

### AGM Agenda Item: INSURANCE

The option is available take insurance cover through the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs instead of our current insurer, see next page. The approximate costs are as follows:

Current insurance policy: public liability only	\$2330
Confederation insurance policy: public liability <b>and</b> personal injury insurance for members, prospective members and visitors	\$3089

You may wonder why this issue needs to come before the AGM. You may think it obvious that if the Club, for a slightly higher premium can have public liability and personal injury insurance for members, prospective members and visitors, that it should do so. However, I am advised that there is a strong body of opinion opposed to the Confederation insurance policy. So the only way in which the committee can reflect the views of members is for those views to be made known at an AGM by a vote.

This has been a controversial issue in the past - don't assume that the Club will decide one way or the other. Your vote counts (full members only - prospective members do not

have voting rights). You cannot vote by proxy. Come to the meeting, hear the arguments put for each case and *vote*.

### AGM Agenda Item: PROJECTOR

On the agenda also will be a proposal to purchase an overhead projector. This will cost the club in the order of \$2,500. We have been fortunate to borrow one on many occasions during the year, however, we are stretching the friendship to continue borrowing it. You may be familiar with the projector: the type that can project photographs, pages from books, maps, etc directly. This is YOUR club, come and hear the arguments on this issue and *vote*.

### AGM Agenda Item: Coolana - Voluntary Conservation Agreement (VCA)

The proposed VCA was reported in *The Sydney Bushwalker*, May 1997. A VCA is a legally binding agreement between the landowner and the NPWS. The benefits to the landowner would include assistance in managing the land and perhaps rate relief. The downside would be the legally binding agreement on all future landowners and the possible impact on the commercial value of the property.

There will be a motion on the agenda so the meeting can decide the *procedure* for making the decision about Coolana being covered by a VCA. The motion proposes a postal ballot so that all members can vote without attending a meeting. The constitution allows for votes to be taken only by a show of hands at a meeting. This motion is not about the future of Coolana, it is about the procedure for making a decision.

For the wording of the proposed motions refer to the AGM notice which you will have received recently or are about to receive. If you need more information before the meeting, then give me a call on 9144 5095.

Till the AGM,

Eddy Giacomel, President.

## Confederation Personal Injury Insurance Policy: Summary.

### **SBW DOES NOT CURRENTLY HOLD THIS PROPOSED INSURANCE.**

#### Period of Cover:

- The personal injury insurance period is from 1 July to 30 June of each year. Therefore any premium payment received prior to 30 June in any year will obtain personal injury insurance cover from July 1 following.

#### BENEFITS:

- Death benefit (\$10,000 if less than 18 years and \$50,000 18 to 80 years).
- Permanent disability allowances (ranging from 100% to 1% of death benefit, depending on disability).
- Non-Medicare expenses (80% of cost up to maximum \$2,000 with \$50 excess) incurred within 12 months of injury.
- Home tutorial allowance for full time students (\$25 per day for no more than 100 days, with a 24 hour elimination period).
- Domestic help allowance for non-income earners (80% of actual cost up to a maximum of \$150 per week for not more than 52 weeks, with a 7 day elimination period).
- Income compensation for income earners (80% of weekly income lost up to a maximum of \$200 per week for no more than 52 weeks, with a 7 day elimination period - less any workers compensation payments).

#### SCOPE OF COVER:

- Injuries sustained whilst engaged in official club functions including administrative and social functions.
- Injuries sustained whilst directly travelling by the shortest distance to and from the place of activity (but with cover reduced to 20%).

#### EXCLUSIONS & DEATH BENEFITS:

- Age limit - up to 80 years.
- Reduced death cover for persons aged less than 18 years.
- Reduced benefits whilst travelling to and from the activity.

•Injury that is other than through accident or chance is excluded (this exclusion extends to deliberately self inflicted injuries, effects of alcohol or drugs, injuries resulting from HIV or AIDS, childbirth or pregnancy).

•Injury resulting from heatstroke or caused by illness or disease is excluded.

•Injury resulting from pre-existing physical or congenital condition is excluded.

•Non-Medicare medical benefits provided under another insurance policy.

•Expenses covered by Section 67 of the National Health Act 1953.

•Aggregate liability under the whole of the Confederation policy \$1,000,000 (in any one year).

#### CLAIMS:

•Claims must be lodged within 30 days of the injury (the earlier the better),

•Claims should be lodged through the Secretary of the Sydney Bush Walkers Inc.

#### POLICY:

Full details of the policy may be obtained by contacting the Secretary of the Sydney Bush Walkers Inc.

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## AND NOW A MID-WEEK MAILING LIST by Bill Holland.

We've had great mid-week activities, day walks, camping at Coolana and three days at Wombean Caves. Our next trip is one week to Lord Howe Island (20th - 27th March).

Participating members have enjoyed the relaxed comfortable style of these outings with walking and relaxing opportunities.

More activities covering three to five days are planned with the following already suggested:

- cabin stay at Currawong Beach
- cabin stay near Jenolan Caves
- camping at Pretty Beach or Pebbly Beach south of Sydney
- Barrington Tops Guesthouse
- week at Lamington NP
- mid week boat hire on Hawkesbury river or Myall Lakes

All age groups and those able to arrange mid-week breaks are welcome to join us.

Where possible, these activities will be placed on the Club Walks programme in time for bookings. However, so that we can make direct contact for prompt confirmation, I would like to establish a mailing list of club members interested in obtaining more details of these and other mid-week activities.

Please advise me by phone on 9484 6636 or for the technically minded Email to "billholl@hotmail.net.au"

### Letter to Sydney Bushwalkers.

It's been fun and a new experience to go tramping with you through all the scratchy bushes, swim the pools to cool the body, and have a beer to cool the inside. My stay in Aussie land is ending at year end. I'm on my way to England to explore the green glens and European Alps. So thank-you for letting me participate with all the friendly and warm Bushies.

John Sniedze, December 1998.

### Letter to the Editor.

Hikers! HIKERS! What is our Club degenerating to. Our founding walkers would have had an apoplexy (see *The Sydney Bushwalker*, Jan. 1999, p.10). The words *bushwalker* and *bushwalking* were coined when the Club was formed in 1927 to distinguish our activities from those of hikers who were known to have no regard for the environment, to walk on roads and paths and to leave a trail of litter as they passed along.

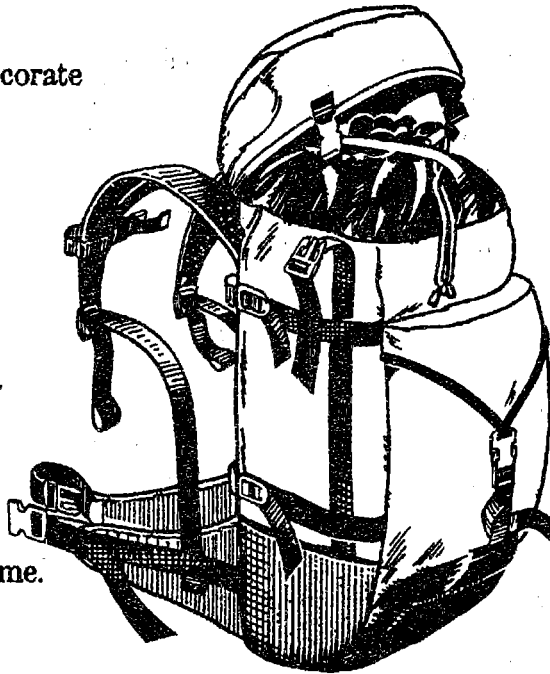
When I joined the SBW 60 years ago, the mention of the word *hiker* as applied to our activities would have brought swift admonishment. There was the possibility of being cited to appear before the Committee. Punishment could have been force fed with a soggy re-union damper, washed down with a copious draught of Kedumba Creek water.

Club history should be part of the instruction to prospectives as well as first aid and navigation. Let us keep our language pure and retain the objectives of the code of bushwalking. **Reg Alder.**

*Thanks for the letter Reg. I wondered if someone was awake out there and would notice. I gave a great deal of editorial thought to the word hiker in Charlie's article. It would have been so easy to do a global "find & replace", and hey presto all traces of hiker would be gone. But then so would have been the essence of Charlie's article. Since 1927 we have changed from a mono-culture to our present, vital, vibrant multi-cultural society; a change also reflected in SBW. If a Kiwi wants to write about tramping, that's fine by me. If someone want to go for a short walk in the Hindu Kush, that terrific. What I would like to see are oodles of articles about walking, tramping, hiking, bushwalking and associated activities, with or without pelling mistakes. Editor.*

# 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)
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- ▲ Hard wearing Cordura base
- ▲ Price \$159.00

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## Summer walking in the Snowy Mountains

*Some unreliable musings by Cathryn Ollif  
(by don't expect navigation information).*

The white horses on Lake Jindabyne were the first sign that the Sydney to Hobart sailors were not the only ones in for some bad weather on the day after Boxing Day. When we met at Jindabyne a chill wind blew menacingly and storm clouds gathered in the direction of Guthega, where we were headed. After a small navigational glitch which culminated in a side trip to Thredbo, we headed for Guthega. As we approached, the rain got heavier, the wind got stronger and the temperature dropped appreciably ... then we saw the snow! The stuff was everywhere, that is everywhere one could see—which was about one metre in all directions. I'm sure that I was not the only one entertaining thoughts of retreat when George wisely arranged accommodation at the Guthega Alpine Guesthouse. Despite the thick fog our leaders managed to navigate us from the cars to the bar and our bunks. That night we ate an excellent meal, had a drink or two and lounged around the fire, well pleased with ourselves for being in such a cozy atmosphere as the wind howled outside.

The next morning was chilly but crystal clear and sunny so no excuses could be found for staying longer in the lodge and by 8.30 am we were heading up an old firetrail leading away from Guthega power station. Amazingly, considering Sunday's weather, what followed were seven perfect days. We made our first camp at Dicky Cooper where woolly gloves and beanies were de rigueur once the sun went down and at breakfast the next morning. Our second camp was at Big Brassy Peak, then we camped at Tarn Bluff Tarn for two nights. On New Year's Eve we did a day trip to Mt Jagungal, where we enjoyed the spectacular view in fine weather. For most of us, the trip to the top of Jagungal was our first visit to that peak. We

celebrated the coming of New Year dressed appropriately, that is to say in the same clothes we would wear through the whole trip, except for Maurice who was in an outfit which defies description. Late that evening as a few of us helped Alex dispose of a bottle of vodka, a heavy fog rolled in so we rolled into our tents, soon to awaken to yet another beautiful morning on New Year's Day.

After lunch, we reached the Schlink Hilton via a beautiful valley. Just as we arrived at the hut a heavy shower sent us inside where we sheltered in the company of four people from Melbourne Bush Walkers. As soon as the well-timed shower was over we set off to find our campsite. As we had dinner that evening we were entertained with the sound of distant thunderstorms until 8.00 pm, when those of us who had not already gone to bed were forced into our tents as the thunderstorm arrived and raged overhead for about three hours. The next morning everyone reported dry and cozy tents throughout the night. The day was again perfect for our last full day of hiking and yet another scenic campsite in the evening, this time looking down on the tiny village of Guthega. During the day we visited the top of Mt Tate to add another peak to our list for us peak baggers.

In spite of the dreadful weather which first greeted us in Guthega, the weather we walked in over seven days was perfect. It was a lovely area to walk in, providing many impressive views and a real feeling of being in wilderness. Amazingly, no-one injured themselves in any way, and no-one even experienced any serious blisters. Many thanks to Maurice and George for leading such a wonderful walk and arranging such great weather and excellent campsites. Apparently some twenty five people signed up for the walk at various times, I'm sorry to say to the fourteen who dropped out—you missed a wonderful seven days.



Lucky participants in this walk were: Maurice Smith and George Mawer (co-leaders), Merrilyn Sach, Michelle Mandler (who took her navigation test by expertly leading us back to camp from Mt Jagungal!), Pamela Irvine, Liz Miller, Marie Rose, Bill Smallwood, John Slade (who became so adept at managing the fire he could provide a place to "boil" and a place to "simmer" on the same fire), Alex Urenburg (who thoughtfully provided a bottle of Vodka to greet the New Year), and myself.

## POSITIONS VACANT

Although all SBW positions are up for grabs, application are particularly invited for the following key SBW Management positions which become vacant in March. In typical HR doublespeak the incumbents wish to pursue other career opportunities.

### SECRETARY

This is a key role in SBW Management. The applicant need to be multi-skilled and multi-talented. Essential requirements: able to read and write, have a melodious minute reading voice, ambidextrous with a letter opener. The secretary sits at the right hand of the President (alternatively the President sits at the left hand of the Secretary).

### SOCIAL SECRETARY

This is a key role in SBW Management. The position probably would not suit a shy person scared witless of public speaking. Training in public speaking and assertiveness can be arranged for the lucky individual. Essential requirement is an ability to plan, manage, organise and control interesting social functions, and possibly deal with a hostile audience if things go very wrong.

### COMMITTEE MEMBER

This is a key role in SBW Management. The position without portfolio is perfect for someone who wants to dip their toe in SBW Management. The requirements for this rewarding and worthwhile position are difficult to define.

### NEW MEMBERS SECRETARY

This is a key role in SBW Management. The new members secretary is the public face of SBW. Essential requirements for this position are a happy smiling face, a happy disposition, good command of English, well groomed, outgoing personality and desire to meet new people.

### DELEGATE TO CONFEDERATION

This is a key role in SBW Management. The position is the other public face of SBW, when we go out and meet other bushwalking clubs (there are other clubs you know!), hear what they have to say and put forward our views. Essential requirements for this challenging position are tact, understanding, good listening skills, good reporting skills and some public speaking ability.

### TREASURER

This is a key role in SBW Management. Some numeracy skills are required, to 9 times table at least. A new pair of accountants thongs will be provided (to allow counting up to 20). The present Treasurer has been keeping the accounts with the computer program Quicken which makes the whole job so eassssy.

### EDITOR

This is a key role in SBW Management. Essential requirements for this challenging position are reading and writing, good command of Inglesh, charm, wit, humour, well groomed, good dancing ability, able to meet deadlines, able to extract articles from the members and some computer skills. At present the magazine is put to bed with a Bex, a cup of tea and Word for Windows 95.

### ARCHIVIST

This is a key role in SBW Management. Essential requirement for this challenging position is reading ability. A neat and orderly mindset, a sense of history and inter-generational equity are desired attributes.

## A Golden Weekend

by Tom Wenman

"If you wanted a man to encourage the van, or to shout halaloo from the rear", thus the sounds of the ballad of Ivan Skavinski Skavar floated across the level flat where we were encamped. The campsite was located close to the creek, and firewood there was in plenty, in fact just about as close to a five star campsite as you could get, assuming that the highest grade is 5\*.

As for the weather, well it had just been about perfect for the trip despite the forecast of thunderstorms.

What else would you want me to tell you about the weekend?

An easy start on Saturday morning when we all met at Bungonia prior to the start of our walk, and enjoyed the friendly camaraderie of the township, with junk sales stalls, Devonshire teas, and a generally festive air celebrating election day. A dusty drive along a newly 'graded' track through green and well cared for farm land, and then through some of the most barren and dry looking bush I have ever seen, to Matadoro Ridge, Matadoro meaning 'mother of gold' according to Wilf.

Ian had warned us that the descent down Assay Buttress would be steep, and as usual he was quite reliable. He was also true to his word when he advised us that there would be some superb views of the Shoalhaven. Descending, as we were, down a steep narrow ridge to the 'Great Horseshoe Bend' afforded us superb views of the river and the ridges running down to it, as well as perfect view of the 'Great Horseshoe Bend' itself. We arrived with great pleasure and some relief on the banks of the Shoalhaven, which had an ample although not an exceptional flow of water. The water temperature proved just right, and a lunchtime swim was most enjoyable.

That day, Saturday, we continued upstream along the river, crossing once, until we reached Touga Creek. Here a most pleasant campsite was established, by a bend in the river where there was a particularly nice pool, large, with entry from a sandy beach - more swimming' and very pleasant too.

Over dinner and around the campfire, Ian announced that in view of the warm weather and rather slow going along the river, the walk up the ridge to Wineglass Tor on tomorrow morning would be replaced by a tour of the 'diggings' located on and about Touga creek. This was greeted with some pleasure by the party. Wilf being somewhat of an authority on the area, elected to give a conducted tour of the site of the former industry and tell us of its history. The remainder of the evening was spent enjoying the delight of friendly camaraderie around a pleasantly warm camp fire in the relative coolness of the night with some anecdotal history comments by Wilf and some campfire singing aided by reference to the club song book. There was also the relaxing thought of a leisurely start to the morrow's activities.

The morrow dawned fine and sunny with no hint of the storms forecast over the week end. After the proverbial leisurely breakfast, we explored the former 'diggings' following the 'race' alongside Touga Creek for some distance. Following this interesting interlude we shouldered our packs and continued our journey upstream. Although the going was not especially difficult there were some awkward patches where the tangle of driftwood made progress somewhat slow and cumbersome. Alongside us all the while the river flowed a sparkling clear course noisily negotiating the various rapids which occurred from time to time. Lunchtime, and another splendid pool encouraged everyone to submerge themselves in the cool clear waters. Someway further on, a magnificent school of bass was spotted, lazily disporting themselves in the warm shallow waters near the bank.

Notwithstanding the tricky bits along the river, we encountered an abundance of quite inviting and splendid five star campsites, grassy, level, and shaded by casuarinas. Despite several suggestions, Ian was unmoved by pleas that they were too good to be passed by. Eventually and with some curious anticipation we arrived at the junction with Nerrimunga Creek. Some different ways across the river were selected by various members of the party, but eventually, with those who had crossed successfully rendering assistance to those still wading across, all were safely and without incident established on the other bank.

We made our way up the river bank to the campsite. Ian was right, this was a quite splendid location, as indicated in the opening remarks. Furthermore, an obvious ridge led, according to the map, easily back to 'Matadoro Ridge'. There seemed no need to venture further up the creek to the suggested ridge out.

As I have also mentioned, this evening around the campfire also proved enjoyable with song and verse an anecdote.

We departed early the next morning, up the ridge which looked so innocuous on the map, and yet, a short time after the start greeted us with a somewhat exposed dirt scramble, which no doubt sent the adrenalin racing through most of us. Thereafter a steepish climb brought us to the summit of the ridge, and Ian's precision navigation took us out to within a few hundred yards of the cars, to conclude the walk just after midday. This for a weekend away would be hard to beat.

## COOLANA CHRISTMAS by

**Joan Rigby**

PRESENT: Gemma Gagne; George and Helen Gray; Pamela Irving; three generations of the Ratcliff-Lengakis family; Frank and Joan Rigby; Hans Stichter and Laurie; Frank Woodgate; thirty+ species of birds; two Wombats and a Diamond Python.

Gemma was the first to arrive, a week before Christmas. A tent with a view was pitched on the old hut site and a comfortable day camp established under a shady tree on the flats. When the Rigbys, closely followed by Pamela, arrived on Christmas Eve, Gemma greeted us with the news that both mowers were out-of-order and that the piped water supply had stopped running. Gemma had already mowed most of the central area and it was hard to choose which lovely campsite suited best. The Rigbys selected a corner site between creek and river, plenty of shade and a wonderful succession of birds, while Pamela decided on a river view.

Some time was spent commenting on the natural regrowth of rainforest trees and the recovery of our plantings of a year ago. With the wetter season the local fauna have grazed elsewhere and most of our planted shrubs are growing well. The river banks, the last areas cleared, and, after flood, the most prone to weed invasion, had a growth of weeds 2-3 feet high which needed slashing; much of which was done in bouts over the next week.

Christmas day was celebrated, not by the arrival of Wise Men or Angels but by the restoration of our water supply. The three women involved took great pride in their successful 'Search and Restore' expedition. Joan was particularly excited by identifying two more species of trees in flower in the rainforest. Sunday was marked by the arrival of the Grays, repair of one mower and the removal for a more serious operation of its companion. The "new" wheelbarrow, a donation from Neil Schafer, simplified the mower's transport uphill.

Over the rest of the holiday week walkers camped above the cliff line, dropped in for a chat, or left for walks elsewhere. Those remaining interspersed bouts of slashing, weeding and mowing with swims and much food. Finally, only Gemma was left to enjoy the peace and beauty of Coolana.

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## Trekking in East Africa (Part 1)

by Jan Szarek

This seven week holiday trip to East Africa took place in July and August 1998. The holiday included climbing Mt. Kenya and Mt. Kilimanjaro, going on safari in Serengeti, and visiting Zanzibar and Lamu. The trekking part of the trip is described below.

### Climbing Mt. Kenya

Mount Kenya is 130 km from Kenyan capital Nairobi, and 16 km from the equator. The highest point of the mountain called Batian peak is 5,199 m (17,057 ft) above sea level and is accessible only to rock climbers. The highest point which can be reached by simple walking is called Point Lenana at 4,985 m (16,335 ft) above sea level.

Mt Kenya is not as frequently visited as nearby Mt Kilimanjaro. Many people intending to climb Mt Kilimanjaro, first climb Mt. Kenya in preparation. Climbing Mt. Kenya is significantly cheaper than climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro. Five day trek on Mt. Kenya cost about US\$200 (A\$320), and six day trek on Mt. Kilimanjaro cost about US\$600 (A\$950). Nearly everyone who have visited both mountains say that Mt. Kenya looks better.

Starting point for Mt. Kenya is the village of Naru Moru. I stayed at the local Youth Hostel. This is a cheap (US\$10 per night including dinner) and convenient place. The walk can start there, and also guides and/or porters can be arranged by the hostel manager.

Unlike Mt. Kilimanjaro where guides and porters are compulsory, there is no requirements to have guides or porters on Mt. Kenya. However for security reason there is requirement that each group must have at least two members. For individual travellers (like myself) it means that one has to hire a porter. The person I got was actually the brother of the Youth Hostel manager. He served as a porter, guide, and cook, for a fee of US\$15 per day (which included his food, accommodation, and

his park entrance fee), plus US\$15 tip at the end of the walk. My park entrance fee, accommodation, and food cost US\$25 per day.

You need a large and a small rucksack; the large pack is given to porter, who does not have own, to carry both your gear and his gear; you carry a small pack for such things as money, camera, water bottle, snacks, etc. Using firewood for cooking is not permitted, your own fuel stove is required on which your porter cooks for you and for himself. The fuel like petrol or kerosene can be purchased in Naru Moru. You need to provide own cooking pans and utensils. There is no need for sleeping mat since beds in mountain huts are covered with sponge mattress, but you need own sleeping bag. Food for you and porter is purchased in Naru Moru. Any excess luggage which is not needed for climbing can be left in the care of Youth Hostel manager.

The first day of walk starts at the Youth Hostel at altitude 2,000 m and ends at Met Station at altitude 3,050 m. This is 18 km, 6 hour walk, along the road. First 8 km are leading across the farm fields to the gate of Mt. Kenya National Park. Just before the park gates, we encountered a large group of wild buffalos. These animals need to be treated with caution as they sometimes attack people. After taking their picture one buffalo started moving towards us and we retreated. The road passes through the park gates and then goes through rain forest. The quality of road deteriorates and is passable only by the best 4WD.

On the way, we encountered a group of three people from the Netherlands and England. They were on the way down after reaching the top on the same day. Normally, they should have spent the night in the high camp before going to the very bottom. But they felt so bad that they decided to get out of there as quickly as possible. They looked half dead, walking like drunks, with red eyes.

The first night was spent in Met Station which is the group of bunkhouses. Monkeys are

playing around and buffalos approach at night; one needs to be careful when going to toilet.

It is possible to get to Met Station by 4WD car (US\$50), but walking is recommended as a way of getting better chance of acclimatising.

The only other group of travellers encountered in Met Station was consisting of three Australians from Melbourne and one Sweed. The two of Australians were doctors working in Malawi.

The second day walk along clearly defined track is 10 km long and ends in Mackinder Camp at altitude 4,300 m (14,200 ft). This is a pleasant 6 hour walk across varying vegetation. After the first hour, rain forest ends and vegetation is dominated by short grass. In the last hour before Mackinder Camp the peak of Mt. Kenya can be seen, if the weather is clear.

It is imperative that the walk is slow. People who rush end up with altitude sickness and *head blowing* headache. The Australian group walked two hours faster than me and they had severe headaches.

The Mackinder Camp is a single, three room building, which can accommodate as many as 100 people. Apart from the Australian group, there was a tough looking man camping in a little tent in front of the building.

It is freezing up there; in the morning, water near the tap outside is frozen. There are lots of hyraxes walking around. The hyrax is a small animal the size of rabbit which is related to elephant. They seems to be quite tame, approaching people as close as two meters.

The third day was a circular walk around Mt. Kenya with return to Mackinder Camp. On this day a guide is most useful, for if you take a wrong turn in one or two places, you'll end up twenty kilometres from where you want to be.

The first two hours is steep climb to Austrian Hut at altitude 4,790 m. It is small wooden building where up to ten people can sleep, and starting point for rock climbers. On the day of my arrival two Canadians were there, one sixty years old and his twenty years old grandson. We could see the young one high up on ropes climbing Batian Peak with local guide. The old climber was sitting in Austrian Hut and watching; he was unable to climb because of vomiting, and said that it was from the bad water and not from altitude sickness.

The top glacier ends near the Austrian Hut. During the day, the glacier melts and water drips slowly to small lake below. From Austrian Hut, it is one hour walk to Point Lenana at 4,985 m (16,335 ft), the highest place which can be reached without rock climbing. After Point Lenana, the track descends into another valley with extended views in all directions.

Starting from Austrian Hut, I had nausea and my steps were a bit wobbly. One hour after passing Point Lenana we stopped in a little hut for lunch. Immediately after the lunch, I vomited five times. It worried me a bit because it was still a long way to go. After a while, I recovered and felt better. Vomiting is most unusual for me; it might have been from altitude sickness, or it might have been from the local water.

The next three hours walking was wonderful, passing beautiful ponds surrounded by vegetation and overlooked by the ice covered peak of Mt. Kenya.

The fourth and last day was fast walk from Mackinder Camp all the way down to the Youth Hostel. On the way, we met a large group of young people from South Africa. They did not have guides or porters, but carrying all their gears by themselves. They slept not in bunkhouses but in their own tents which they carried, with intention to rock climb Batian Peak. In general there are lots of

travellers from South Africa in Kenya and Tanzania.

When we reached Met Station, a 4WD car arrived, with a German tourist on the way up. One week later this German man was with me in the group of trekkers climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro. After dropping tourist, the 4WD gave us a lift to Youth Hostel, which saved us walking through not very interesting section of trek.

If I went to Mt. Kenya again, the route would be slightly different. It would be five day walk with one day of rest in Mackinder Camp for better acclimatisation. The rest of the walk would be the same. If one is uncertain about the length of the trip, it is better to book a four day tour, and if you change your mind, pay for extra day during the trip. That is because if one books five days but stays only four, the fee for one night is not refundable.

*Join us next month for the continuation of this trip to East Africa.*

## Sanford Larson's Africa Trip 1997/1998: Summary

The account which follows over the next few issues is a summary of my 4 month overland (with some air legs) backpacking trip through Africa. I was travelling with my German friend Herbert on an overland trip from Egypt to South Africa, using public transport as much as possible.

Overall, Africa was a great trip, lots of hard going, and hassles, but lots of variety to see. People and places were always interesting. Unlike in Asia, I seldom got sick or lost significant weight. 4 months is, however, not really enough time to go Cairo to Cape; I felt rushed at times, and would have liked to spend longer in certain places. Good, but it'll probably be a while before I go back to Africa. Other destinations are now beckoning. Sanford Larson, April 1998

# Arnhem Land at Last!

**Jawoyn  
Explorer:  
16 May  
– 5 June**

The Jawoyn Association which represents the traditional owners of the region near Katherine has given us permission to run a special one-off trip to the headwaters of the Katherine River in the southwest corner of Kakadu and the southwest corner of Arnhem Land. Both areas are normally out of bounds to bushwalkers.

We will be accompanied by an Aboriginal guide and/or member of the Jawoyn Association staff. We will have a helicopter food drop at the halfway point.

**We may never run another trip like this again!**

It has taken us more than ten years to obtain permission for this one trip. The traditional owners have stressed that this is a one-off trip. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity. If you want to find out more, please ask for the trip notes.

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72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reunion: 13/14 March 1999, at Coolana

## Editors of the Sydney Bushwalker.

This may be a bit of a swan song but it's time the rogues gallery of editors saw the light of day. The position of editor has been filled 41 times since June 1931. Ten people held the position twice, and one brave fellow three times. We also have had joint editors and acting editors.

1	June 1931	Oct. 1932	Marjorie Hill
2	Dec. 1932	Jan. 1936	Brenda White
3	Mar. 1936	Mar. 1936	Marie Biles *
4	May 1936	Apr. 1938	Marie Biles
5	May 1938	Apr. 1942	Dorothy Lawry
6	May 1942	May 1942	Alex Colley *
7	Jun. 1942	Mar. 1945	Clare Kinsella
8	Apr. 1945	Apr. 1946	Ray Kirkby
9	May 1946	Mar. 1947	Ron Knightly
10	Apr. 1947	Mar. 1951	Alex Colley
11	Apr. 1951	Mar. 1952	Ken Meadows
12	Apr. 1952	Mar. 1954	Jim Brown
13	Apr. 1954	Mar. 1955	Dot Butler & Geoff Wagg
14			
15	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1957	Dot Butler
16	Apr. 1957	Mar. 1958	Frank Rigby
17	Apr. 1958	Mar. 1959	Geoff Wagg
18	Apr. 1959	Mar. 1962	Don Matthews
19	Apr. 1962	Mar. 1964	Stuart Brooks
20	Apr. 1964	Mar. 1965	Bob Duncan
21	Apr. 1965	Mar. 1966	Bill Gillam
22	Apr. 1966	Mar. 1967	Frank Rigby
23	Apr. 1967	Mar. 1968	Neville Page
24	Apr. 1968	Mar. 1969	Ross Wyborne
25	Apr. 1969	Mar. 1970	Bill Gillam
26	Apr. 1970	Mar. 1971	Neville Page
27	Apr. 1971	Mar. 1972	Jim Brown
28	Apr. 1972	Mar. 1976	Spiro Hajinakitas
29	Apr. 1976	Mar. 1977	Neville Page
30	Apr. 1977	Mar. 1978	Owen Marks & Dorothy Pike
31			
32	Apr. 1978	Mar. 1982	Helen Gray
33	Apr. 1982	Mar. 1984	Everlyn Walker
34	Apr. 1984	Mar. 1987	Ainslie Morris
35	Apr. 1987	Mar. 1989	Patrick James
36	Apr. 1989	Mar. 1991	Morag Ryder
37	Apr. 1991	Mar. 1992	Judy O'Connor
38	Apr. 1992	Nov. 1992	Debora Shapira
39	Dec. 1992	Mar. 1993	Spiro Hajinakitas
40	Apr. 1993	Mar. 1997	George Mawer
41	Apr. 1997	Mar. 1999	Patrick James
42	Mar. 1999		

\*acting editor 1 issue only

## FOOTNOTES by Patrick James.

Just a little bit late but happy Chinese New Year to you all. Did you sort out all the Valentine cards you received; who sent which one and why. Do you remember the occasion? Ah sweet love!

You will have received by now, or real soon now, the AGM papers. Many bushwalkers in general and SBW members in particular are very, very shy and don't attend many of the Club's social functions. The AGM is THE event when the Committee hopes for a bumper turn-out by the rank-and-file. There are a few items on the agenda (see the AGM papers and Eddy's articles on page 4) which require debate and approval by the general meeting. The meeting starts at 8 PM, plenty of time for dinner with friends beforehand. Coffee, tea and biscuits will be served.

Together with the Minister for the Environment, we are extremely pleased to announce the appointment of Wilf Hilder to the Blue Mountains District Advisory Committee. Wilf, our own bushwalking treasure and a font of much knowledge and information, is just the one for this Committee.

This issue we have the first installments of two articles on travelling in Africa. Both of these are long, and interesting reports which will be published over a number of issues. Jan Szarek spent seven weeks in 1998 and writes mainly about Mt. Kenya and Mt. Kilimanjaro. Sandy Larson took 4 months to travel from Cairo to Capetown in 1997/98.

You may recall in July and August 1997 an article by Peter Freeman on the *Snows of Kilimanjaro*. These three articles *Out of Africa* by Jan, Peter and Sandy make interesting reading and a must for anyone planning to go to Africa.