



THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER is a monthly bulletin of matters of interest to members of The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc PO Box 431 Milsons Point 1565. 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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## NOVEMBER 1999

Issue No. 780

2. October General Meeting Report
3. A Colo-Uraterer Venture  
by Max Gentle
8. Frank Rigby's illness.
8. Coolana Music Festival.
8. Note from John Hogan
10. Bushwalkers Locked out  
Too by Garth Coulter & Peter Stitt
11. Change to SBW Website  
by Eddy Giacomel
12. SBW Younger Members Group  
by Eddy Giacomel
12. Mid-week Walking Group  
by Bill Holland
13. KNP Illegal Pig Shooters
13. Coolana News:  
Plant Survey received  
Donations called for
14. GPS Information  
compiled by Ray Hookway
16. SBW Photo.Comp. Advert
17. Wet in Wollangambe  
by Frank Davis

### ADVERTISERS

Alpsport	front cover
Eastwood Camping Centre	9
Ecotrek :	
Bogong Jack Adventures	7
Outland	16
Paddy Pallin	back cover
U Relax 4 We'll Drive	8
Willis's Walkabouts	5

## The October General Meeting

*Reported by Barry Wallace*

The meeting began at around 2011 with the president in the chair and 16 or so members present. There were apologies for Gretel Woodward and Fran Holland and new members Margaret Barrie, Gavin Lower and Rick Symons were called for welcome to the club in the usual way.

The minutes of the September general meeting were read and received, with the only matter arising being mention that the letter regarding funding cuts to the NPWS was still in draft form awaiting the required specific details.

Correspondence included a letter from Natural Areas Limited, enclosing a share certificate, from a Nigel Haverman wishing to survey our membership for information, a return thanks for our condolences on the death of Bill Hall, minutes of the recent Confederation meeting and details of Confederation's wilderness policy.

The treasurer's report was next, with information that we began the month with a balance of \$11,346, and ended with a balance of \$12,678.

Bill Capon presented the walks reports, leading off with the weekend of 11, 12 September when Michelle Powell and Owen Kimberley led a walk out from Yerranderie. The party of 3 had a great time despite some reported shoe problems along the way.

Wilf Hilder led a party of three on his Saturday walk in the Illawarra Escarpment State Recreation Area. It was a beautiful day with the Gynea lilies in bloom, and a late lunch due to errors in certain guesstimations.

Ralph Penglis's Sunday walk on Sydney Harbour had no details other than a head count of around 12. David Trinder led 11 starters on his Sunday walk on Kings Tableland on a good day, and David Robinson had 14 walkers out on his Bundeena to Waterfall trip the same day.

Kenn Clacher reported 4 starters, an excellent trip and four river crossings on his

Jagungal jaunt over the extended weekend of 18 to 20 September.

Wilf Hilder led two starters on stages 7 and 8 of the Great Illawarra Coast Walk over the weekend of 18, 19 September. The K to K on the other hand, went over the weekend of 17, 18, 19 September with a cast of 6 walkers and 7 support staff. Conditions were clear and pleasant due to earlier strong winds accompanying a cool change.

Anne Maguire had 26 and great weather conditions for her Sunday walk out from Wentworth falls but Geoff Dowsett's bicycle trip in Wollemi National Park that day did not go.

The weekend of 24, 25, 26 September saw Tony Manes with the party of 16 on his walk in Morton National Park enjoying fine conditions on the Saturday but experiencing rain on the Sunday.

Peter Miller and the party of 11 on his Saturday walk out from Mountain Lagoon experienced wet conditions. Ron Watters' Sunday trip to Gibraltar Range had 11 starters, encountered several kangaroos and narrowly avoided impact with a feral pig during a rapid descent of one of the ridges. They also reported the area extensively ploughed up by pigs.

Patrick James reported rumbles of thunder and 12 walkers on a gruelling stroll for his Parramatta History walk. There is a suggestion he is attempting to capture in writing his emotional response to the Parramatta Dam. Watch this space folks.

The October Long Weekend saw arrival of the deluge.

The party of 12 on Ian Rannard's Barrington/Gloucester trip abandoned the walk on Sunday afternoon after heavy rain and extensive mud.

Peter Miller's party of three, on his attempt to climb Mount Colong one more time, was heartened by the fine Saturday after a long night of rain on Friday. The rains returned at dusk on Saturday however, and were still at it when the party moved out to the getting-home side of the creeks on Sunday morning. Peter Kaye had 9 on his Hill End walk.

Conditions were wet but the walk was lovely.

Bill Capon treated the 7 starters on his Wolgan area walk to a couple of eleven hour days to make up for the wet conditions. Judy Jones and the party of 10 on her Sunday Sydney Harbour walk adapted to the wet conditions by joining the Manly Jazz Festival.

Geoff Dowsett's Munmorah State Recreation area walk the same day saw wet conditions and ended up listening to a country rock band, presumably under shelter.

Conditions had fined somewhat by the weekend of 9, 10 October when Roger Treagus led a party of 20 on his Sunday walk from Mount Ku-ring-gai to Narrabeen Beach in unexpectedly hot conditions. Only 16 people saw out the full distance with progress in the conditions being slow and the overall experience described as not easily forgotten.

Phil Newman had a party of four on his Sunday walk out from Carlons on a long, hot day.

Ian Rannard's mid week walk from Lidcombe to Hurlstone Park attracted a party of 6 to conclude the walks reports for the month.

Conservation report brought news that the Regional Forest Agreements for the NSW south coast areas are pending. As has been the case Australia wide, loss of further forest areas to the agreements is anticipated.

A new edition of the NSW wilderness areas red index was launched on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

The Bush Club celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary recently.

George Mawer has possession of Nuri's training notes.

There was no general business, so after the announcements the meeting closed at 2114.

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## A Colo - Uraterer Venture by Maxwell Gentle

Reprinted from the December 1931 (Issue 4) Sydney Bushwalker

*This early epic trip by two of the SBW 'Tigers' traversed a spectacularly rugged area that still presents interesting possibilities for present day walkers.*

*If members are interested in reading similar stories of early walks please let me know.*

*Gordon Smith, Max Gentle's partner on this walk, died at the infamous Sandakan POW camp five months before the Japanese capitulated. Max Gentle died of a heart attack at the age of 51 in July 1962. Ed*

Mr. Gordon Smith and I arrived at Capertee Railway Station at 4.30 am. Thursday, February 5th, 1931. Daybreak found us walking leisurely along the undulating roadway that runs from Capertee to Glen Alice. It zig-zagged around the head of Coco Creek and passed under the shadow of spectacular-sandstone walls, but after a while a more open country was reached, over which were scattered numerous sheep stations. After passing the Coco Creek ford we found ourselves in a broad valley. We had left the aptly-termed Tower Mountain (Crown Mt.) behind us, and were now abreast of Mount Genowlan on our left and Canobla Gap on our right.

The surrounding mountains gave an impression of great wildness. A few miles to the northward could be seen the Chimney Stack, (Mt. Tayer) which, from its conical appearance may have been a one-time volcano. Though the surrounding country was purely sandstone the bed of Coco Creek was composed of granite cobblestones. The creek itself was a chain of pools, fringed with river oaks and occasional willows. The undulating grassland through which it flowed was all taken up by sheep and cattle runs.

After passing the conical Mt. Canobla we found ourselves abreast of Mt. Gundangaroo, and when later we reached

downstream. Along the broad river flats we passed acres and acres of lucerne paddocks, and shortly came to a homestead, where we interviewed the owner, Mr. W. Masters. He gave us valuable information concerning the route to Uraterer Mountain, known locally as Gosper's Mountain. With a cheery good-bye he assured us that we would get lost. He had never been there himself, he said, and 10 years previously had nearly perished in a vain attempt to reach Gosper's.

That night we camped on the river bank 4 miles downstream from the Glen Alice Crossing. Naturally we felt very tired, having that day walked 27 miles along a hard, rocky road. We carried only 40lb. packs, but had no sleep at all on the previous night. Next morning found us walking down through a valley that reminded us of the Burragorang, only the sandstone walls here rose higher and were much cleaner cut. The valley was narrowing in fast and soon presented the appearance of a gigantic canyon. A bridle track was followed along this section of the river and at time it rose a little above the riverbed. An abandoned shale mine was passed in this locality and soon we reached the junction of the Running Stream. The water in it was quite good and a pleasant relief after the bad water of the Capertee.

The Running Stream gorge is an enormously deep and narrow canyon, and but for its presence there could be a more practicable route from the Capertee Valley to Gosper's Mountain. (Running Stream is Coorongoo Creek flowing from north to south). [Running Stream Creek actually does give an easier route to Gosper's Mountain. *Ed.*]

The Capertee River was followed downstream for a further five miles, where the bridle track was found to pass through a cleared flat. There was an old, tumble-down hut, and as Mr Masters had said, there was a break in the sandstone walls on the northern side of the valley. There was a steep basalt hill leading up to it and it was decided upon as our way of access to the higher tableland

beyond, i.e. to Uraterer. Mr Masters knew the basalt ridge by the name of "Grassy Hill", and it is appropriate to its base. However, when ascending the hill next morning, we found the upper section to be a rocky knife-edge ridge and it provided a similarly thrilling experience as the last lap of the ascent to the Cloudmaker (Gongorang Peaks) from the Kanangra side. The tableland beyond was reached later by way of sandstone crevasses, and farther on we found ourselves on a range which reminded us of distant Wanganderry. The country traversed here was puzzling in its make-up and hideous in its aspect. Nothing could be seen of the Capertee Gorge behind us, it was a perpendicular split in the earth's surface fully 2,500 feet deep. Shortly we came to a slight rise in the range, a point from where we could look across over vale and hill to a treeless dome. Obviously it was Uraterer. Often after long and painful effort we would reach a similar vantage point, and always the will-of-the-wisp seemed as far away as ever.

Late that afternoon I found myself sitting down in a semi-exhausted condition. I was gazing upon a segment of the most expansive cyclorama of my life, and like a man in a dream I realized that I was on the crest of Uraterer and that Gordon Smith was beside me. In the foreground there was seen a maze of wooded gullies and cliffs and crags. It was a scene of great wildness rather than of beauty; it would make a master-bushman shudder. Practically nothing could be seen of the Colo, Capertee and Running Stream Canyons, these being perpendicular slits in the earth's crust. Beyond this nearer mountain fastness could be seen the dim outlines of mountain ranges extending, maybe, up to 100 miles in every direction.

We considered the great outlook for some time. Nightfall found us with our tent pitched under the clump of quince trees, and within 20 yards of an excellent permanent spring. About 60 years ago two brothers by the

name of Gosper selected at this outpost, and from information received I believe there is a bridle track from Gosper's Mountain (Uraterer) running down the Wirraba Range and joining the Richmond track about 10 miles from Putty. This may be my next way of getting to Gosper's. The soil there is similar to Dillon's Valley at Woy Woy and probably volcanic. Amazing fertility is seen on every hand, and the 150 wild cattle grazing there were looking well. Had it not been for violent yelling and hooing we would have been trampled underfoot. We had stewed quinces for tea and breakfast.

Next morning we left with regret this throne of the everlasting hills to take on the big proposition of finding a way back to the Capertee Valley. On the way back we made three mistakes of note, and it was only because of the fact that I made very accurate calculations on the way that saved us from otherwise inevitable disaster. Shortly before dusk we reached the Capertee River and next morning faced another big proposition, the Colo River.

The bridle track continued on down the river and saved us much time. The sandstone bluffs that hemmed in the valley presented a very striking appearance and in my opinion the gorge scenery puts the Nattai and Burragorang Valleys in the shade. A few wallabies were seen and Wonga pigeons and wild duck were in great numbers. About 3 miles before the Wolgan River Junction, the track died out and we plunged into the roughest river walking that I had up to this time experienced. The steep sided banks were strewn with boulders and overgrown with blackberry, lawyer vines, lantana and nettles. It came so suddenly that it took the stomach out of me, and after doing  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles in 4 hours I suggested giving it up. However, my more determined mate knew only one word – "forward".

Next morning, after  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles of similar work, we reached the point where the inflow of the Wolgan joins the Capertee and so forms the Colo. We could look up the Wolgan a short way and it appeared hellish rough.

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From this point the Colo flowed between huge boulders for about a mile, after which there was a long stretch of sandbank - a pleasant relief. Another mile, however, and rock-hopping was the order of things. Scrambling over boulders and bashing our way through lawyer vines and other creepers, alternated with short stretches of sandbank. Frequent waist-deep wadings were necessary, as was also the case down the whole length of the Colo, and treacherous quick-sands had to be guarded against. The towering cliffs on each side of the valley presented a very broken appearance and occasionally we caught glimpses of gigantic sandstone caves at great heights above the river. Such was the order of things until the entrance of Wollemi Creek was reached. It had about as much water in it as Kanangra River. The Wollemi Gorge was hemmed in by towering precipices, and I doubt if its profound depths are ever disturbed by mankind. Three quarters of a mile beyond we chose a sandbank as our campsite for the night. Nearby was a seemingly bottomless pool, and opposite a cliff face rose for about 1,500 feet sheer.

Next morning we pushed onward again and much to our dismay the sand-banks disappeared. We found that clambering over boulders was good for all-round muscular development. The rocks were purely of sandstone and in places had a topping of ironstone. The Colo River was in the form of long, smooth pools alternating with rapids, where the water flowed between barriers of boulders. As a rule these barriers were the only practicable crossing places. By this time our packs weighed only 30 pounds each, but with the hellish rough walking we found them quite heavy enough. The monotony of rock hopping was broken here and there by a rough passage through lawyer vines. Occasionally blackberry and wild raspberry bushes barred the way, and these had to be gone around, either through the water, or around the hillsides above. We were very disappointed that the blackberry was not in fruit; on the other hand a shotgun was sadly

missed on the trip. There were wild duck in droves, and never being disturbed they would provide excellent shooting at close range. Towards sundown our spirits were brightened by the reappearance of sandbars and that night we camped on a fine stretch of sand, beside a deep pool. We had covered 8 miles for the day.

On the following day we found that 4 miles was our limit. The going was frightfully rough and consisted of hauling one another over boulders and through crevasses. In places a rocky buttress would rise, sheer out of the water, and sometimes the water was shallow enough to permit a passage around. In other cases it was doubtful if the depth could be measured in hundreds of feet. The Colo in this section is a magnificent canoeing stream and should satisfy the most exacting. Towering walls of sandstone rise almost from the water's edge, and here and there are narrow shelves at varying heights where turpentine and gum grow wild. At intervals is seen a cliff face of more moderate height and from its foot descends steeply a forest-clad slope to the waters of the Colo. The Colo pools teem with perch and eels and will long be remembered by the writer as the best fishing place he has ever known. At the close of the third day from the Wollemi Creek Junction we reached the Wollangambe. There was a large pool we afterwards named the Wollangambe Basin. On its north side a cliff face arose out of the water for 1,000 feet sheer. This added greatly to the rugged beauty of the place, and take the writer's word for it, the Wollangambe Gorge is a wild hole and would provide great sport for adventurous bushwalkers. However, we afterwards learned we had left the most scenic part of the Colo Gorge behind us. It puts the Nattai, Burragorang and Cox Valleys in the shade, and in places rivals the scenery at the foot of Kanangra Walls. All along the river was an atmosphere of terrible wildness that lent it an atmosphere of additional charm.

From information gathered previously we learned that many years ago a Government Surveyor constructed a track down the Colo River from the Wollangambe Junction to the Blacksmith's Creek. On the following morning I arose at day-light and after a search discovered the track on a steep hillside on the southern side of the river. When I returned to camp we had breakfast and shortly after commenced our journey along the winding track. It zig-zagged along the steep hillside and in many places was obliterated by landslides and covered by fallen timber, but, in spite of its roughness it permitted faster travelling than the boulder-strewn river in this section. Mid-day found us having lunch at Blacksmith's Creek. Then three miles of rough travelling from there brought us to a place on the river where the general aspect of things convinced us that the hills around the river were losing their height. The going along the river was so rough we decided upon a cross-country stunt to the Tootie Creek Junction. Much to our dismay we climbed 1,700 feet before we could look into the Tootie Gorge.

The country was precipitous, but miraculously we found a way down and that night camped in a cave on Tootie Creek. Next day we followed it down for 11 miles before we reached the Colo and realized we had not saved any distance worth mentioning. Our spirits were brightened by the appearance of grazing cattle. Shortly we found a trail and at once assumed it would lead to civilization, but it hugged the southern bank for some 8 miles. The surrounding hills were becoming lower and the riverbanks beginning to open out into narrow flats. Lawyer vines and blackberry bushes abounded and the timber began to increase in size. Shortly we reached an orange orchard, and a mile farther on a homestead where we were told there was a motor road leading into Upper Colo. Four miles along this brought us to where the Richmond-Putty Road crossed the Colo. Before nightfall we walked a further 2 miles towards Kurrajong and camped in a cave by the wayside.

Next morning we, breakfasted at the Wheeny Creek crossing and reached Kurrajong about

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mid-day. We had completed our trip down the Colo River. We would say it was noteworthy for its two main features, viz: magnificent scenery and the roughness of the walking. It occupied 11½ days.

*(The Smith-Gentle Colo River venture holds the distinction of being the fastest known traverse of the Colo, notwithstanding the fact that 2 days were occupied on the Gaspers Mountain (Uraterer) side trip. Their's also is the smallest party. Two previous successful attempts are known and one, at least, partly so. Apparently the going is so discouragingly difficult that only the able-bodied and most sanguine could ever hope to win through, - and the penalty for failure in this aloof canyon could well be the most extreme. M.J.Dunphy)*

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### SOCIAL NOTES

#### News of Frank Rigby's illness.

Whilst on a trip to North Queensland in September, long time member, and former club president Frank Rigby, experienced chest pains resulting in him having a heart by-pass operation.

Frank is now recuperating at home in Canberra and hopes to be back into his normal active mode soon.

Anyone seeking advice on North Queensland hospitals should speak to Frank. He spent time in Mosman and Cairns hospitals before finally having the operation in Townsville. Get well soon Frank.

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#### Message from John Hogan

John Hogan will be visiting Sydney for the 'wet season' and would be happy to "babysit" the home of anyone going away in the early part of the year 2000.

He will have space in his van on the trip down from Cairns shortly before Christmas and anyone who would like to accompany him should contact him by phone.

He intends to again conduct his popular bus trip to the Nimboyda River for white water

rafting probably in February. Interested members should contact him early.

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### MUSIC FESTIVAL AT COOLANA

*Reported by Bill Holland*

Over twenty people braved the rather pessimistic weather forecast to attend the "Hootenanny" Bush Music event at Coolana on the first weekend in November. As it turned out the weather was ideal. Warm enough for swimming; cloudy by day and starry skies at night. The long table and shelter tarpaulin enabled us to stay on the river flats rather than use the shelter shed.

We all had a great time singing along with music provided by John and Chris Poleson. They proved to be excellent entertainers and kept us going until nearly midnight with bush ballads, folk songs, ditties and blue grass music. Margaret Niven demonstrated line dancing which, when attempted by the assembly, proved to be easier to watch than do.

Thanks John, Chris and Margaret. The success of this event encourages us to make it an annual event.

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### "U RELAX 4 WE'LL DRIVE"

**John Hogan advises that he will be in Sydney for the northern wet season and his tour business will be closed until next year.**

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### **Bushwalkers Locked out Too** by *Garth Coulter and Peter Stitt*

We are replying to Henry Gold's article in the September 1999 Sydney Bushwalker.

The Coolana Report, distributed with the September issue of the magazine illustrates the main point which we have been trying to make; we recommend that Henry read it.

The finding of the Coolana Special Subcommittee (the CSSC) report that the restrictions applying to access to national parks and wilderness areas "...will become an increasing burden on walking clubs and other organisations" states our position and that of the Out Door Recreation Party (the ORP) and like minded community groups.

In fact this has already occurred without walkers recognising what has happened. Walking club committees have simply pushed a particular agenda which, in many ways, is against the interests of their own members. Question; have denial of access and restrictions on activities on public lands been factors in the current high prospective drop out rate and the aging memberships of most walking clubs?

We think that the answer is an emphatic yes; how often these days do we hear the refrain "*Trips are not nearly as much fun without a campfire*". Clubs need to seriously consider where the best interests of their members lie. The current restrictions on access to public lands, which the walking clubs have contributed to, are ludicrous and will not be sustainable in the face of rising public resentment. The extreme greens attitude to hazard reduction burning is clearly a much greater danger to public lands and the threatened species thereon, than reasonable access for walking clubs, including the holding of re-unions in national parks.

We suggest that the interests of the average member of the SBW would be much better served by the club supporting the ORP or a like minded organisation, than some of the

more extreme conservation groups which it has favoured in the past.

Interestingly Henry's quotes from the ORP web page are totally consistent with the sentiments expressed in the CSSC Report. Further, his quotes from the Journal of the Public Land Users Association (PLUA) are basically that organisation discussing the fact that denial of access to public lands is an increasing problem for the groups that PLUA was seeking to represent. Precisely the point which the CSSC is making. In addition PLUA is discussing those organisations they see as contributing to the access problem, and what to do about it.

Incidentally our inquiries lead us to believe that PLUA is no longer active.

The only reasons for the establishment of the ORP were to obtain better access to the public lands of this State for the people who have to pay for them (us) and a more transparent, democratic and accountable system of managing those lands. This outcome resulted from increasing public resentment by a wide range of community groups who enjoy the outdoors and have been increasingly denied access to public lands which had previously been available to them.

Unfortunately the way the extreme greens and the NPWS have manipulated the "consultation" process on wilderness means that citizens can not be conditionally in favour of wilderness; you either have to be in favour, or opposed. We (ourselves, this is not the official ORP position although we are working on it) have long held the view that the establishment of national parks and wilderness should be subject to the procedures laid down in the EP & A Act.

This would ensure among other things:

1. More reasoned debate.
2. Plans of management to be debated and agreed, prior to gazetting.
3. Interests of user groups such as bushwalkers to be better addressed

It is interesting to note that at the NPWS's 1998 "Visions For The New Millennium" conference, a recurring theme amongst the keynote speakers at the plenary session was the need for the Service to get the public onside, with access seen as a tool in achieving general public support. This of course is the very opposite of what has been happening in NSW, with the Service, egged on by the extreme greens, pushing for ever more restrictive access, and getting more and more community groups offside.

Which brings us to the broader issue of the environment. Over the last 40 to 50 years the conservation movement has done a brilliant job of increasing the level of environmental awareness in the community. This is something which had to happen, however it seems to us that the movement has taken an increasingly extremist approach, which is also getting the community offside.

Forty years ago, you could not persuade company managements that they needed to be more environmentally aware. Now you cannot persuade the more extreme members of the conservation movement that they should tame down their level of rhetoric and the committing of untruths.

Failure by the conservation movement to take a more reasoned approach will inevitably lead to a backlash and it will be, we believe, the environment that suffers.

In summary, we believe that there needs to be a more reasoned and prioritised approach to issues such as the environment and access to public lands. There also needs to be a greater willingness to compromise; something that the Fundis (the extreme greens) in particular, need to learn.

And besides, the environment is too important to be left to the conservation movement. They simply do not understand the issues.

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## CHANGE TO SBW WEBSITE.

by Eddy Giacomel

[www.sbw.org.au](http://www.sbw.org.au)

At the committee meeting on Wednesday 3 November it was resolved that SBW should have its own web site and its own domain name. It is my pleasure therefore to announce that the web site became operative on Guy Fawkes Day (Friday 5 November 1999) at 22:30 Eastern Standard Summer Time (9-1/2 hours before polling booths opened for the Republican Referendum).

The club can be proud of the excellent design by Matthew Bruce, nephew of member Barbara Bruce.

The new SBW site will have a links to Confederation and hence all clubs linked to that site.

The initial use of the web site will be for information to persons intending to join the club. However, I'm sure that many more uses will be found. Consideration has been given to a "members only" section accessible by a password - refer "The Back Page" of the summer *Walks Program*. Perhaps we could also have a brief section on the history of the club so that (new) members who don't have access to a book such as *"The Sydney Bush Walkers - The first sixty years"* can learn about the history of the club. Anyone interested in writing or coordinating a history of the club for the web site please contact me (phone 9144 5095). Other ideas and comments are also welcome.

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## SBW YOUNGER MEMBERS GROUP

by Eddy Giacomet

For some years there has been discussion in the club about catering for younger members and attracting the next generation of bushwalkers. Unlike today, a few decades ago the club had many members in their twenties and in their teens. There are many theories about the increase in the average age of bushwalkers in what appears to be all bushwalking clubs. Reasons given range from changes in society and lifestyle, to competition from other activities. Some may argue that there is no problem; perhaps the pendulum will swing the other way and perhaps the best way to address the issue is to let it address itself. Alternatively, if we do nothing we may miss an opportunity to attract younger members.

The committee has resolved to form a younger members group with the aim of encouraging younger people to join and to continue in the club. It will be an informal association of the young and those that want to be young. While there is no strict cutoff age limit, this group is aimed at those in their 30s and younger. It is not intended to be an exclusive group, merely a method of enabling younger members to meet other younger members.

The initial response has been encouraging. However, for this group to succeed it will require younger members to make an effort to participate and the "not younger members" (such as me) to provide encouragement.

This group is not the only special interest group in the club. We also have the "Mid Week Walkers" and there is no reason why other special interest groups should not be formed.

Further details about the Younger Members Group can be found on 'The Back Page' of the summer *Walks Program*.

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## THE MID-WEEK WALKING GROUP

by Bill Holland

This group is mainly retired, semi-retired, non-working people or those personally organised to take time off work when more attractive ways of spending the mid-week days emerge. Some of our past trips have included Wombeyan Caves, Lord Howe Island and Currawong Cottages.

Our next activities are shown in the Summer Walks Programme where there are Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday walks for each week. However, we also offer extended mid week activities such as:

### HOUSE BOAT ON MYALL LAKES

Monday March 6th - Friday March 11th

Five days of cruising in large houseboat cruiser. A combination of cruising, walking, swimming, and rest. Boat hire cost is \$180 per person for the five days. There is a limit of eight people. Please send in \$60 share of deposit with your booking.

**Note:** We can make arrangements to share transport from Sydney

### MOLE STATION HOLIDAY COTTAGE

Monday April 10th - Friday April 14th

#### WALKING IN NATIONAL PARKS

We have booked a holiday cottage "Mole Station" near Tenterfield for mid-week. Close proximity to Boonoo Boonoo, Girraween, Bald Rock and Sundown National Parks. Walking is planned for each day followed by relaxed evenings. Transport arrangements can be made to reduce costs.

They have a cottage sleeping eight people and it costs about \$35 per head for the five days. Please send in \$25 share of deposit with your booking. Everything is supplied except food and we will organise a food group to assist with this. It is a fair way to drive but we will share cars and can break the trip with other activities.

Please feel welcome to join us. Advise your bookings for the above two trips by phoning Bill Holland on 9484 6636, or for the technically minded:

Email to: [billholl@hotmail.net.au](mailto:billholl@hotmail.net.au).

Numbers are limited so early booking is advisable.

This group is open to all. We would like to have you join us at any time and would welcome your suggestions. We have a regular newsletter covering past and planned events. If you wish to receive this please let me know.

Some future possible events are:

- Cabins near Jenolan Caves
- Cabins near Durras Lakes - South Coast
- Walking along Bi-Centennial Trails etc
- Hinchinbrook Island

It need not always be easy walking and cabin camping. Some of us are still keen to do some strenuous walking and a four or five day mid-walk may be organised soon.

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## ILLEGAL PIG SHOOTERS IN THE KNP

**A request for information of any sightings.**

Illegal pig shooters have been observed in the KNP.

As well as presenting a hazard to walkers and campers, some shooters are reported to be using dogs, obtained from animal pounds, which sometimes take up residence in the park and create problems for Park wildlife and to the stock on adjacent grazing properties.

The NP&WLS have a program of pig trapping and also shooting pigs from helicopters, and they have even used radio tracking of released pigs fitted with miniature transmitters.

**They do not license private pig shooters.**

Please report any sightings of shooters, including their vehicle registration numbers, to the NP&WLS at Jindabyne on: (02) 6450 5555.

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## COOLANA NEWS

### COOLANA PLANT SURVEY RECEIVED

A copy of a report entitled "Survey And Description of Vascular Plant Species and Assemblages Brush Rock-Wallaby Sites, Kangaroo Valley KVI West of Hampden Bridge", has been received.

This report prepared for the NPWS by Gary Leonard, is, as suggested by its title, specific to the Kangaroo Valley area. Appendix F covers "Crown Land and Sydney Bush Walkers Land" (Coolana). It lists over three hundred plants located on our property by their botanic and common names.

These details may be of interest to those of botanical bent in the Club and a copy of the report will be kept in the Club Archives. Appendix F will be displayed in the shelter shed at Coolana and will form an attachment to the Coolana Management Plan.

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### DONATIONS TO THE COOLANA FUND

The response to the recent published report of the special Coolana committee has been most favorable and it is obvious that the majority of club members wish to retain Coolana.

The Coolana maintenance group would like to point out that the maintenance fund is still open and any member can contribute money to that fund in any amount at any time.

Donations can be sent to the club secretary.

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### PERSONAL ADVERTISEMENTS WELCOME

Personal Advertisements, from members, for the sale or donation of items of gear, associated with bushwalking activities, will be published free of charge if possible.

Notices regarding private walks will also be published free.

Details should be sent to the editor via mail or Email.

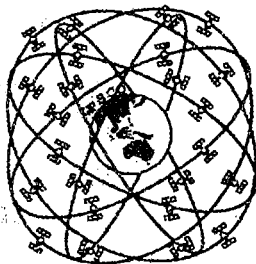
## THE GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM (GPS) INFORMATION

*Compiled by Ray Hookway*

Several club members have acquired GPS receivers to assist in navigation in remote areas and others are wondering whether they should do so also.

What is GPS? Would a GPS receiver help me to navigate in the bush? How hard is it to use a GPS receiver? How accurate is it? How reliable are its readings? Which GPS receiver should I buy? These questions are possibly running through the minds of those people. This article is an attempt to remove some of the mystery and to possibly help people to make a more informed choice.

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite navigation system designed and installed by the US Department of Defence (DOD) commencing in 1978. ① The system, which cost the US taxpayer over \$10 billion, (and costs nothing to use), was fully commissioned in 1995. It is comprised of 24 Navstar satellites in 6 circular orbits at an altitude of about 20,200km and inclined at an angle of 55° to the Equator as per the drawing. ② Each orbit contains 4 equally spaced satellites that circle the globe in 12 hours and pass over the same spot on the earth every 24 hours.



At any one time at least six satellites should be 'visible' from any point on earth.

The satellites are controlled from a US DOD master control station in Colorado Springs USA, which is linked to several monitoring stations around the world. The satellites transmit signals on two L band radio frequencies containing information on satellite identity, its precise position, its the

velocity and the time as determined by 4 atomic clocks in each satellite.

The GPS receiver measures the time taken for the signal from at least four satellites to reach it to determine its:

- latitude
- longitude
- height above mean sea level
- GPS receiver clock error compensation ③
- velocity over the ground (for boat, car, plane or other vehicle).

The receiver can be used to locate one's present location or, by feeding in the bearings of other locations, it can be used to determine the direction to take to get to that other location.

This information can be stored in the receiver's memory as a 'waypoint' and recalled at any time for future use. By storing a series of 'waypoints' a route can be plotted from point A to point B. (Very useful in a white-out on the Rolling Ground.)

### How accurate is a GPS receiver?

Each satellite transmits two sets of signals, an encoded Precise Positioning Service (PPS) for the military and official users and a standard Positioning Service (SPS) for general use. The basic accuracy of the system is approximately  $\pm 22$  M horizontally and 27M Vertically, but for security reasons, the DOD uses a system called Selective Availability (SA) for non military users. This inserts a variable error into the information transmitted by each satellite to reduce this accuracy to  $\pm 100$ M horizontally and 160M vertically. By standing in the one spot and averaging several position readings this error can be reduced and most good GPS receivers have an automatic averaging position although, because the SA on each satellite is different and the SA changes slowly the average as indicated may still not achieve the military PPS accuracy.

By the use of a commercially available system called Differential GPS. (DGPS) which transmits GPS corrections derived

from measuring the error at known fixed locations, accuracies of 1M horizontally can be achieved. (This system requires a special second receiver tuned to the frequency transmitting the DGPS information.)

Accuracy down to cms or even mms is apparently achievable with the correct equipment and procedures and modern surveying makes use of this facility.

The DOD intend to phase out SA over the next decade thus improving the accuracy of bearings for all users.

Other factors can affect the accuracy of the final reading such as reflections from hills cliffs or buildings, ionospheric and/or tropospheric absorption. (but then even the simple compass can be affected by ore bodies or the presence of metal in the area).

The best GPS accuracy is achieved in open country in dry weather.

#### **Where does one obtain information on GPS?**

The Internet is a good source of information. Typing in 'GPS' on Yahoo, AltaVista or other directory or search engine will provide access to many sources of information from receiver manufacturers and suppliers, the Coast Guard and from the US DOD.

The accuracy of the cheapest and the higher priced hand held units is basically identical and the extra cost sometimes covers unnecessary extras eg many GPS receivers contain features aimed at boat owners such as charts of harbours showing the positions of buoys, etc. One important feature not fitted to the cheapest units is a long life battery(10years), to ensure stored information is not lost when the operating batteries go flat and have to be changed. Operating batteries, usually AA cells, can sometimes last only about 24 hours.

The GPS receiver should have at least 8 channels permitting processing of up to 8 satellites at once (8 is the maximum number of satellites that can be seen at any one time).

As it takes 30 seconds to download the information from one satellite it could take 2 minutes to obtain the information from the four satellites required for accuracy, if the

GPS receiver only had one channel and had to process each satellite sequentially.

Before making a purchase or even approaching a salesman I strongly recommend that intending GPS receiver purchasers first read a basic book on the subject. Unfortunately, most books on GPS appear to be written for overseas use and/or for boating users and contain much information that is not relevant to Australian bushwalking use. One basic book that I found very useful and readable is: '**Exploring GPS. A GPS Users' Guide**'. Published by the Australian Global Positioning System Consortium (GPSCO), this small book (\$15.00, 106 pages), started life as a one day course for field workers and professional map users coming to grips with GPS. It gets down to the basics of how to choose, and how to get the most out of hand-held GPS receivers. It is in some libraries and is available from Dick Smith's, bushwalking stores, the Boat Shop and the map shop in Crows Nest, etc.

It stresses and explains 'The four Golden Rules of GPS':

1. Always use four or more satellites
2. Always only use your receiver when the PDOP<5. ③
3. Always use the correct map datum
4. Use an average position when possible. ④

A list of the chapter headings illustrates the practical nature of the publication.

1. GPS: The Nuts and Bolts.
2. GPS: How does it work?
3. Choosing a GPS receiver.
4. Getting Started – (Exercises 1 to 6)
5. On the Move – (Exercises 7 to 11)
6. Improving your accuracy – (Exercise 12)
7. Real Time DGPS

With experience and if used correctly with intelligence and common sense, a GPS receiver could be most useful, particularly in featureless country and in conditions of poor visibility, but it does not remove the requirement for the user to be able to read a map and to use a magnetic compass.

**Notes.** ① The Soviets have a similar GPS system called GLONASS giving similar accuracy.

② Drawing reproduced from Exploring GPS by permission of the publishers GPSCO

③ PDOP = Position Dilution Of Precision. The accuracy of the positioning accuracy depends upon the location of the satellites used which must be as far apart as possible. Most GPS receivers indicate the PDOP by a number on the screen, the lower the number the greater the possible accuracy.

④ By standing still for a short time, several different positions will be shown due to various factors including the SA. By averaging these readings a more accurate position *should* be arrived at. Better quality GPS receivers include automatic averaging.

⑤ This permits a simple clock to be used in the GPS receiver

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Articles or letters for the magazine from club members outlining their experiences using GPS receivers, in actual walking or skiing situations, would be welcome. Ed

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### \*\*\* FINAL NOTICE \*\*\*

## SBW PHOTOGRAPH AND SLIDE COMPETITION

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 1999. \$300 total prize value

For full details see page 6 of  
Winter or Spring Walks  
each category, kindly donated



the May 1999 Magazine or the rear page of the  
programs. There will be a \$50 gift voucher, for the winner of  
by the following bushwalking shops:

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## WET IN WOLLANGAMBE

by Frank Davis

'Easy-Medium Canyon' read the Walks Schedule. The Rambler's programme said 'Introduction to Canyoning'.

Didn't sound too difficult. I could do that. An option of walk or canyon, Bush Club and Ramblers together. Experienced leaders - Don Brooks (SBW) and Dick Weston (SBW). Would there ever be a better chance to try canyoning?

Our group of twenty divided into the thirteen to walk with Don and the five who were to follow Dick into Du Faur's Canyon. Of those with Dick, I think the 'virgin to canyoning' slightly outnumbered those with 'some experience' by 3 to 2.

The river is reached via a track that starts near the Fire Station on Mt. Wilson Road. A somewhat eroded track down to a rock outcrop at Flat Saddle. This marks the side track leading to Joe's Canyon and provides a great morning tea site.

Joe's Canyon proved to be narrow and scenically impressive. The water shallow and patchy, and impossible to skirt. I wondered why I had bothered to avoid puddles at the beginning of the track.

We reached Du Faur's Canyon, changed into our 'wet' gear, waterproofed our backpacks and launched ourselves into the unknown.

They say experience is a wonderful thing. Well lack of experience, I'm here to tell you, can be a real problem.

I wore a full-length Lycra suit over thermals and I had a Lilo narrower than normal (to allow easier arm movement). Lycra had been just fine for diving in Queensland; even over thermals it was no match for the chill of the water here. The smaller Lilo was O.K. - until, because it was not rubberised, it allowed air to escape through the fabric when it became wet.

Aside from the distractions of marvelling at breath-taking views, trying to photograph them with an inadequate disposable camera and repeatedly inflating my Lilo, the canyon was traversed.

Imagine rock-hopping, or negotiating a badly eroded track obstructed by fallen timber. Imagine doing this blindfolded. Apart from obscuring any hazards the muddied water was flowing. This may assist paddling - it doesn't do a lot for walking.

We reached the junction of Bell Creek Canyon, which Dick intended to enter. While the others explored I chased a small, warming patch of sunlight which moved all too rapidly as the sun moved across the opening of the canyon. The thermals had proved inadequate and to go into an even colder canyon had not seemed wise. The intrepid five returned and we took lunch.

Dick had planned to return, upstream, to our starting point. A stronger than normal water flow and comments from members of another group suggested the easier way would be to continue downstream. This would take us into the Wollangambe River and to an exit point. "There was only a bit of a rock 'block-up' and a tree 'block-up' 'it was only half an hour', they said.

Distant thunder claps were heard and a spattering of rain began to fall. This tends to concentrate the mind when you are enclosed within high rock walls and standing in flowing water.

And so, off we went - downstream. Back onto a deflating Lilo, back into the cold water.

The rock block-up turned out to be a jumble of large boulders that, if dry, would have presented few problems. Now, fast flowing, tumbling water made their negotiation uncertain and in places, I achieved body contortions I had not thought possible.

The tree block-up had apparently been scattered by recent rains and now trunks and branches lay in wait, submerged and hidden.

We reached the exit point. It had taken longer than the half-hour predicted. While it would be difficult to describe as pleasant, the 'trip' was exhilarating. The grandeur of canyon scenery is beyond description.

Towering stone walls advance and recede: they could be daunting - if you could tear your mind from the beauty of the place long enough to worry.

My first experience of canyoning, and I had learned at least two things. Wear a real wetsuit and take flotation that floats.

On the way back up the ridge the rain became a torrent and the track became a wild cascade. Lightning and thunderclaps came simultaneously. The rain turned to hail.

We left the track and sought the shelter of a large rockface. The soaking rain had caught up with the walking party as well and they had become as wet as we canyoners.

Fine weather returned in time to give us perfect conditions at Wynnes Rock for the ritual of afternoon tea.

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#### Next Month

#### Myalls and Miles

Another damp walk, this time in the Barrington area is described by Frank Davis

#### Articles are wanted for your magazine

Magazine editors abhor blank pages as nature abhors a vacuum.

Some editors must resort to writing their own articles, or use wide gaps between paragraphs, or resurrect old articles.

The editor's job would be made much easier, and the magazine would be made more interesting, if you sent in that article, that you have been meaning to write, now.

Articles may be submitted as typed copy, on floppy disk or via email.

It is preferred that they be in Microsoft Word but any current word processing program would be acceptable.

My email address is:

[r-raymond@ozemail.com.au](mailto:r-raymond@ozemail.com.au)