

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 on any Wednesday.

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# DECEMBER 1999

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The Sydney Bushwalker is printed on recycled paper.

## Editorial



This is the last Sydney Bushwalker magazine for 1999 but not the last for the century or for the millennium. Readers can look forward to 12 more issues before we farewell this century.

The magazine production team wishes all readers a happy Christmas and New Year with their family and friends. May the year 2000 be a year of memorable walking.

I would like to thank all people who contributed to the magazine in 1999 and I sincerely hope that budding authors make writing an article for the Bushwalker their number one New Years resolution for 2000.

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### **\*\*Club Christmas Timetable\*\***

Wednesday Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> Club Closed

Wednesday Dec 29<sup>th</sup> Club Closed

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### **Walks Program corrections**

Bill Capon would like members to note the following corrections to the summer walks program:

#### **1. Extended walk in Wollemi N.P.**

**Dec/Jan 26-1**

Leader Zol Bodlay advises that there is a palette of Moet Champagne secreted for New Year's eve.

Where is the cache? Come along and find out.

#### **2. Wollemi N.P.**

**Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Leader Bill Hope advises that entry to the Colo will be via Mt Townsend and not BobTurner's track as shown in the program.

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## **RAE PAGE**

### **Sydney Bushwalker Senior of the Year**

It is natural that a walking club, which commenced in 1927, should have many senior members and so it is appropriate that in the International Year of the Senior we should acknowledge one of them.

Rae Page, who is a young 97, was recently featured in a 'Manchester Guardian Weekend' article on older people who live on their own. The article, illustrated with the above delightful photo, said:

**"Jamberoo Australia.** Rae Page lives in a small house on the side of a mountain. She lives alone but is never lonely. She surrounds herself with animals and pets and lets a few holiday cabins to bring her some income.

Rae is one whose self sufficiency and outgoing nature has yielded surprisingly youthful looks for one so old. She grows her own food, keeps goats for their milk and walks in the woods every day. Her great passion was bush-walking and while she can no longer cover the same distances or terrain, she often walks the old routes again in her mind."

Rae and her late husband Peter Page joined the SBW in 1928 and were very active walkers in the early days of the club.

At the time of writing Rae was recuperating in Kiama Hospital after suffering a fall on her property.

Best wishes Rae and get well soon.

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## The November 1999 General Meeting

*reported by Barry Wallace*

There were some 15 members present when the president called the meeting to order and began proceedings. There were no apologies on this occasion. New members Bronwyn Dunn and Dirk De Bevere were welcomed to the club.

The minutes of the October general meeting were read and received, with no matters arising.

Incoming correspondence included a letter from Peter Seeton, from The Earth Day Network, from Friends of the Earth, and a letter from Peter Dalton expressing his thanks to those who served on the Coolana Sub-committee. Outgoing correspondence included letters to our new members and a letter of appreciation for their efforts to the individuals who served on the Coolana Sub-committee.

The treasurer then regaled us with tales of monetary splendour, or at least the accounts for the preceding month. We opened the period with a balance of \$12,678, and closed with \$14,423.

Bill Capon's presentation of the walks reports began at the weekend of 16, 17 October with Brian Holden's weekend cycle trip, comprised of a Saturday stage with 6 starters and a Sunday endurance event covering some 47 kilometres around Lake Illawarra involving 8 cyclists. Stages 9 and 10 of Wilf's Great Illawarra Coast Walk saw a party of 5 enjoying the spectacular coastline and coping as best they could with a missing trig station, or that's what Wilf said. The Sunday developed into a bit of a gallop to catch the infrequent train home, resulting in an arrival at the station with only 7 minutes to spare. (I should note at this point that this report is not entirely based on my scratchy notes of what was presented at the meeting, but has been enhanced by the insertion of certain additional details provided after the meeting from a source not entirely unrelated to the walks secretary.) Carole Beales had 18 on her Saturday walk

out from Wentworth Falls. We know there were lots of prospectives but have no information at all on the promised coffee shop. Margaret Sheens' brisk early morning walk saw 3 starters enjoying a beautiful morning in the vicinity of Balmoral Beach. There is no truth in the rumour that this was just a cover for ensuring a parking spot for later in the day. Tony Crichton's Sunday trip out from the Mount Hay firetrail had a party of 14 and a beautiful day.

Wilf reported 3 starters and a perfect cool morning for his midweek walk from Malabar to La Perouse. The 1440 bus rescued them before the heat of the day took hold.

October 22, 23, 24 saw Tony Manes with a party of 7 out in very wet conditions on his Newnes area walk. Track conditions were so wet that at least one member elected to swim back to Newnes along Little Capertee Creek, or is that river? The notes are unclear on that point. We know there were 6 on Wayne Steele's walk to Yerranderie that weekend but have no other details. (You'd think Bill would have been right onto that.) Tony Holgate reported 6 on his Saturday seemingly convoluted walk from Evans Lookout. Plans were thrown out somewhat due to traffic problems following a car smash on the Western Road, but Govetts Leap Falls were spectacular with lots of water. Rosemary MacDougal cancelled her Saturday walk around Springwood area and Linda Mallet did the same for her Sunday trip down the Six-Foot Track due the prevailing wet conditions. Errol Sheedy and the party of 5 on his Sunday walk in the Royal also reported wet conditions with swollen creeks. Discretion took over when they reached a well-flooded Kangaroo Creek and decided to retrace their steps.

Jan Pieters reported 13 starters enjoying a good weekend for his walk out from Blaydons Pass over the weekend of 29, 30, 31 October. The access road was rougher than usual due to works on the gas pipeline. They also reported extensive evidence of recent flooding. Carole Beales' walk out

from Pierces Pass was transferred to the previous weekend but no details for the walk are available from either source. Ron Watters' Saturday walk to Russells Needle had the party of 3 enduring wet conditions for most of the day. They did get a break of fine conditions for lunch on Russells Needle. Patrick James' Sunday walk on the Great North Road appears to have lacked the promised perfect weather. The 10 starters and Patrick gathered in the good food, fine wine, and history, and rerouted the walk in the direction of out during what appeared to be an all day shower of rain. Geoff McIntosh and the party of 8 on his Cowan to Hawkesbury station via the Great North Walk encountered similar conditions with perhaps the added feature of leeches.

We were off and running with an engrossing report for Ian Rannard's mid week walk from St Leonards to Wynyard when someone realised the report was for another walk, not this one. It was a blow from which this fine walk never really recovered, as they say.

Spiro cancelled his walk from Kanangra walls to Scotts Main Range scheduled for the weekend of 5, 6, 7 November but Tony Manes had a party of 6 in the upper reaches of the Kowmung River that weekend. It was described as a great walk with lots of time to relax. Roger Treagus reported rainy conditions and leeches feasting on the party of 15 who went on his Saturday walk on the foreshores of Pittwater. There were no details available for Zol Bodlay's walk that day from Pearl beach to Patonga. Nigel Weaver postponed his mount Solitary trip to the following weekend. Lucy Moore's Sunday trip out from Glenbrook went to program with 13 starters and wet conditions.

A memorial walk for Geoff Bridges was conducted on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November to Bluegum forest. Some 40 or so walkers, together with Geoff's siblings participated.

Conservation report indicated that Peta Seeton, NSW shadow minister for the environment has indicated a wish to open a dialogue on the coalition's environmental policy at the last election.

The Confederation expects to issue its calendar for next year this month.

There was no general business, so after the announcements the meeting closed at 2104.

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### Club January Social Program.

**Wednesday Jan 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Picnic at Balmoral Beach**

Meet at southern end

BYO food and drink

Enquiries Bill Holland Ph. 9484 6636

**Wednesday Jan 12<sup>th</sup>**

**The Rocks Pub Crawl**

Meet: 7pm Kirribilli N'hood Centre OR

7.30pm Lord Nelson Hotel

Ends with dinner somewhere

**Wednesday Jan 19<sup>th</sup>**

8pm General Meeting and Walks report

**Wednesday Jan 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Club closed Australia Day Public Holiday**

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## MYALLS and MILES

by *Frank Davis*

*SBW members on the walk were. Graham Condon, Frank Davis, Wilf Hilder, Gretel Woodward.*

It rained and rained and rained.  
The average fall was well maintained.  
And when the tracks were simply bogs,  
it started raining cats and dogs.  
After a drought of half an hour,  
We had a most refreshing shower.  
And then, most curious thing of all,  
A gentle rain began to fall.  
Next day but one was fairly dry,  
Save for one deluge from the sky,  
Which wetted the party to the skin,  
And then at last the rain set in.

Anon

Appearing in September 1986 'Sydney Bushwalker', this could have been penned for the TOPS to MYALL'S HERITAGE WALK of September 1999.

We gathered from Brisbane and The Blue Mountains, from Newcastle, Taree and Sydney to walk the WALK - talk the talk. This year, the eighth annual pilgrimage, would be different. The direction would be reversed. We would start at sea level and follow the ridges of the New England Fold up to Polblue.

Inspired thinking! Instead of a full-pack climb from Lagoon Pinch to Carey's Peak, nine days, toting only day-packs would see us trail-hardened and striding easily with heavy packs over the final three days.

The start could not have been easier, we strolled from Tea Gardens to Hawks Nest while David Bye transported our packs. After the obligatory group photo (while all were still clean and tidy) our 200 km plus trek began.

The Mungo Track, behind frontal sand dunes, took us through striking wildflowers and past a couple of red-bellied black snakes. Lunch was at Pipers Creek, later we met David and truck to camp at Robinson's Crossing.

Day Two reads like a tourist brochure - we walked on the beach, visited an extensive aboriginal midden, swam at Dark Point, lunched at Brambles Green, viewed the historic locale of Tamboy and camped at Mungo Brush.

David Ratcliffe joined us on Tuesday for the walk through Mungo Brush Rainforest, a heath-land botanical tour-de-force, then beside the lake to the ferry at Bombah Point. His vast knowledge of the plants and trees in the area left the writer (at least) suffering information overload. It would have been great to have both Davids along for the whole trip. Camp was at Korsman's Landing, the lake water much colder than the ocean.

Next day the flat coastal area was left behind and we climbed the undulating Koolonock Ridge through the eucalypts of Bulahdelah State Forest.

A short detour gave an impressive view of Mount Alum, except for intrusive high-tension power lines, that possibly could have been more ascetically positioned. Wang Wauk Road took us to Shorty's Camp.

Next morning we climbed to a Forestry fire tower to be rewarded with magnificent views of the many surrounding forests (but I guess that's why they put it there). We lunched at the Trestle Bridge Picnic Ground then walked on to camp at Little Myall River. I made the mistake of fording the river and walking off ahead of the leader.

I paid for my sin when, after a long wait, I returned to find the truck had become bogged, a row of tents now pitched along the road like survivors from some natural disaster. I collected my tent and joined the long queue.

Because we had stopped short of our expected camp, Friday's was a longer walk. We camped at Ward's Glen in Craven State Forest where an overnight storm raged in a spectacular light and sound show.

Saturday morning I woke to the music of a Magpie and a Butcher Bird in a wondrous choral duet, or competition. It was difficult to get mobile for fear of disturbing that moment of magic.

The plan to cover some of the distance, this day, on wheels came unstuck when the truck could not gain access to the planned camp site because of the sodden, boggy conditions. We walked on to The Mountaineer and endured another wet camp. David's ability to erect sheltering tarps on seemingly non-existent supports made the situation easier to bear.

Sunday morning and before us stretched a stiffish climb through Gloucester Gap then down to the river to camp. The truck arrived late and our concern for David was perhaps heightened by our difficulty in getting a fire going. We appeared to have a surfeit of experts and a dearth of talent (all the fire-sticks were in the truck).

Eventually the fire was going - David arrived safely (he had accepted an invitation to attend church) and he soon had the welcome tarps aloft.

We had buckets of rain overnight, some tents flooded and the site was more like a small lake.

In light rain on Monday morning a decision was made to stay here another night. Walks to Gloucester Falls and a circuit through the Beech forest were enjoyed while our gear dried-out a little.

Today would be our last with the truck - it was decision time. For a variety of reasons, eight elected to leave with the truck next morning. Eight, including Andy, would go on.

On Tuesday we detoured to visit Arthur (Darby) Munro Hut. In continuing rain those going on elected to overnight in the hut even though it was gloomy and dusty (there was certainly no dust in the rain-soaked surrounding forest).

Next day took us through Beech forest and Eucalypts. At the junction of Lagoon Pinch Trail a late decision was made to overnight in Selby Alley Hut. Ken had already walked on towards Carey's. Andy chased him while the rest of us headed downhill to the hut. We would have to reclaim this altitude tomorrow but to sleep dry would be worth it. Ken returned with Andy, declared the hut unacceptable and retraced his steps.

It was, in a way, fortunate that the party had been halved - both huts were crowded with eight, it would have been chaos with sixteen.

There was time to spare - we could walk for two hours on Friday to reach the bus. Instead, we swung along freely on Thursday, collected Ken from Carey's, on to Black Swamp and down to the imposing vista of Big Hole. We took a civilised lunch break on picnic tables at Little Murray.

We pushed and stamped our way through interlocking thickets of the noxious Broom to reach Polblue Trig. It's called Scotch Broom. If the Scots are responsible for its presence in Australia then they have a lot to answer for.

The campsite at Polblue was reached with plenty of daylight remaining on the finest day experienced on the trip.

Friday dawned fine and clear with plenty of time for a less than usual scramble to pack while we awaited the bus. Then it was off to Gloucester to a most gracious welcome at the Tourist Information Centre.

### The Weather

It is said that everyone talks about the weather but nobody DOES anything about it. Not so - some accepted the weather and persisted - others had sound reasons for leaving early.

It was as if the Tops to Myalls Heritage Trail was reluctant to be traversed in the wrong direction. The weather worsened with increasing altitude - only really relenting

when it was inevitable we would reach the zenith.

### The People

There would be no Heritage Trail except for the foresight of Hanns Pacy and the efforts of the Lions Club of Tea Gardens.

There would have been no walk without the planning and leadership of Andy Cairns.

It would have been much more difficult without the assistance and good humoured support of David Bye.

To all the people from the scattered places. Thanks for the companionship.

Graham did us proud with his response to the speech by the Mayor of Gloucester.

### Guide Books

A Walkers Guide to The Mungo Track.

A Walkers Guide to The Tops To Myall's Heritage Trail. These two books, produced by the Lions Club of Tea Gardens, are so informative you wouldn't have to do the walk.

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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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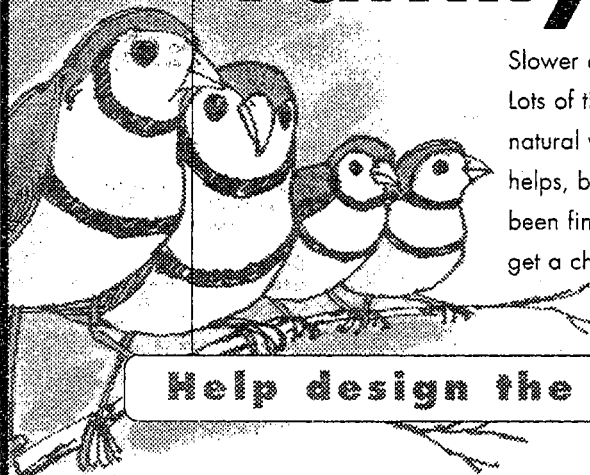
### Coolana Fund Donations

Owen Marks was so impressed with the work of the Coolana Committee and its final report that he has made a very generous donation to the Coolana fund. Perhaps Christmas is a time for others to do likewise.

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## Family Bushwalks



Slower and more relaxed than any of our normal trips. Lots of time for swimming and for the kids to explore the natural world around them. Bushwalking experience helps, but not essential on some trips. Details have not been finalised. If you ask for the information sheet, you get a chance to help design the trip and choose the dates you'd prefer.

**Help design the trip.**

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## Recipe

### Grandma's Christmas Cake

*From time to time we will publish recipes suitable for campfire cooking submitted by club members. To celebrate the festive season we have commenced with that is more suitable for home cooking. Fazeley assures me that it never fails. Ed*

#### Ingredients

You'll need a cup of butter, a cup of dried fruit, a cup of salt, a cup of brown sugar, lemon juice and a bottle of whiskey (Irish of course).

#### Method

1. Sample the whiskey to check the quality.
2. Take a large bowl, check the whiskey again to make sure that it is of the highest quality, pour one level cup and drink.
3. Repeat.
4. Turn on the electric mixer, beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl, add one spoontea of sugar and beat again.
5. Make sure the whiskey is still ok, cry another tup.
6. Turn off the mixer, break two leggs and add to the bowl and chuck in a cup of dried fruit.
7. Mix on the turner, if the fruit gets stuck in the beaters, pry it loose gently with a drewscraver.
8. Sample the whiskey again to check for tonsisticity.
9. Next sift two cups of salt or something wite, whjo cares?
10. Check the whiskey.
11. Now sift the lemon juice, strain your nuts and add on e babble-spoon of brown sugar or whatever colour you can find. Wix mel, grease the oven, turn the cake pan 350 gredees.
12. Dont forget to beat of the turner, throw the bowl out of the widow, check the whiskey carefully again and bo to ged.

*Fazeley Read*

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### Correction to November magazine article.

Two lines were accidentally deleted from Max Gentle's 'Colo-Urater Venture' article in the November Bushwalker.

The bottom lines on page 3 should read:

*'...and when later we reached the Capertee River crossing we left the Glen Alice road and followed the sluggish stream downstream.'*

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### GPS Navigation Further Information

Members who read the article on the use of GPS receivers printed in the November Bushwalker may be interested in two basic articles on the subject in the December and January issues of Electronics Australia.

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## Two questions

from Brian Holden

In April last year I was one of only 2 people out of the entire club out on an overnight weekend walk. *Is that evidence that bushwalking as an activity is on the decline, or is it just this club?*

What do you think of the following?

- There is a proliferation of retail outlets for bushwalking gear and a large number of young people are seen in se shops. There are also a lot of young people seen on the track.
- As my sons (in mid 30s) explained to me, mine was a "club" generation. Younger people are more inclined to get their own small groups together. Membership fees, constitutions, committees etc. are not part of their thinking.
- Are those over 35 generally working longer hours so that the weekend is needed to relax?
- Do we have an increasing number of members over 50 with declining energy anyway?

There was a time when many prospectives were thrown in at the deep end. On my first test walk, due to lack of advice, I had a pack which was much too heavy. There were steep climbs and we got caught in a scrubby creek which cost us 3 hours. Arriving at the campsite well after dark, I dropped my bag, fell to the ground and the next thing I knew the sun was up. My legs were covered in scratches and nettle stings. My legs and buttock muscles were so seized up I could not walk properly for a week.

Then there was my experience of an unwelcoming atmosphere in the clubroom. I put up with this for about 6 meetings and gave up going. I have no trouble now as I am a lot older and have learned to crash into ongoing conversations. This apparent cliqueness has been complained of by many newcomers. There are many close bonds in the club built on memorable shared experiences. Newcomers are not noticed. They become shadows in the background. Progressive clubs always have a scout looking out for wallflowers and who will bring those people together. *What is the current wastage in prospectives? Is it still over 50%?*

What do you think of the following?

- It is not sufficient for some leaders to screen "carefully" over the phone. The prospective who thinks he is tough has no concept of what the leader is talking about. If a leader has to spread the pack-load of a struggling prospective it would be a lot better if some prior screen prevented that situation arising.
- It is not the prospective's responsibility to speak the truth to the leader as the novice does not know what the truth is in the relationship between his or her mental and physical status and the demands of bushwalking.
- It is not the prospective's responsibility to seek out all necessary information as he cannot take it in if it does not match his own perceptions. Perceptions are created through experience and not through listening to another talk.
- The environs and climate of Sydney are the best in the world for bushwalking. We have a great product to sell. We need to regard every lost prospective as a lost sale.
- People drop out because they do not have a positive image of themselves in the bush. If one predicts one's own failure - then one will fail. Our perceptions create our reality. We have to nurture the desired perceptions in our prospectives and not put them through an obstacle course.

My feelings regarding the issues above are that there needs to be a standard compulsory and carefully designed program which eases prospectives into the activity. We must build more onto the introductory days for prospectives at Coolana. Nobody has to be educated to like nature but only a minority have a positive image of themselves moving about in the wilderness. That image has to be cultivated. Until I was aged 30, my tent was always pitched within 10 metres of my car. Nobody could have been softer. There will always be write-offs but we need to catch more of the borderline cases - and we need to be determined to catch them to ensure that the club remains viable.

*What do other members think about the matters raised by Brian? How can the club improve the current Coolana and meeting room training sessions and assist prospectives to get more from membership of the SBW? The club committee would welcome the opinions and ideas of members particularly the newer members.*

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## SHOOTERS IN NATIONAL PARKS

by *Henry Gold*

I am replying to Garth Coulter's and Peter Stitt's article in last month's issue (November), under the curious title 'Bushwalkers Locked out Too'.

Has any walker of this club ever been locked out of a National Park or any other publicly owned walking country in this State?

Garth's and Peter's party, the Outdoor Recreation Party (ORP), represents 4 wheel drivers, trail bike riders, horse riders and hunters. The ORP has little concern for bushwalkers, because their activities and aims are in conflict with bushwalking (see "Know Them By Their Words", September issue). Garth and Peter say "The only reasons

for the establishment of the ORP were to obtain better access to 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". That means more access for 4 wheel drives, trail bikes, horse riders and hunters to national parks and wilderness areas. The justification for increased high impact use is based upon the belief that taxpayer financial rights prevail over other moral issues surrounding park management, including those associated with hunting access in wilderness areas.

I have obtained the latest population figures from the Bureau of Statistics and the last NP& WLS budget tabled in parliament.

Based on those figures, the sum of \$27.36 is being spent by every member of the population of NSW on national parks and reserves this financial year.

Surely, the existence of the ORP does not entitle their members to go hunting in national parks, drive their 4WDs etc. beyond the network of 2,500 km of public roads within these important reserves, or into wilderness areas.

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& The Aran Islands.

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Presently the ORP is attempting to organise hobby hunters into membership of the Party. They are circulating a letter under the title "Experienced Amateur Hunters Wanted".

The reason given--is "To eradicate feral animals in national parks, state forests and private property." The letter says "Feral hunting will seek to reclaim fair access to the national parks of NSW for the people who have to pay for them." (\$27.36 annually - ORP's financial justification for their existence).

Hunting is illegal in public places including national parks. To ensure public safety the NPWS does not licence private shooters.

Not long ago, hunters released deer on the Bindook Tablelands in the Blue Mountains NP. Fortunately the deer were detected and eradicated by the NPWS.

On February 19 a man was shot in the Yarra Ranges National Park, Victoria by deer hunters. The man, 20, was shot on, or near McDonald Track with a .270 calibre rifle. Pig shooters also release feral pigs for pig dogging in national parks and were recently observed doing so in Kosciuszko (see 'Illegal Pig Shooters' in the November issue).

Garth and Peter suggest that SBW members join the ORP instead of conservation groups to ensure future access to their walking areas. If the ORP happened to be the owners of Coolana, they would probably have the 4 wheel drives down on the river bank, trail bikes roaring up and down the track, and shooters in the bushes.

That's what they mean by access, not to worry about the environment for all.

Garth and Peter believe that the decline in bushwalking club membership is due to the restrictions imposed on walking. I ask where have they been in the last decade? Bushwalking has become one of the most popular activities. Unless for social reasons people don't have to join clubs anymore to go bushwalking.

Bookshelves are full of books on bushcraft, navigation etc., and guidebooks cover the

best walking country. Today, a great number of bushwalkers are not members of clubs. And where are those momentous restrictions on bushwalking? I can only find them in my ageing bones.

There are no restrictions on lighting fires except in over-used parks like the Royal and Ku-ring-gai. During high fire risk, regional fire brigades may impose fire bans that can be a nuisance to bushwalkers. There has been talk of imposing a fire ban in over-used parts of the Budawangs, but this has so far not been implemented.

Every responsible bushwalker knows that restrictions of some sort need to apply in heavily used areas to prevent us from "loving our favourite haunts to death".

I heard the ORP member of the Upper House speak on the radio. It became apparent his world centres around the gear shift of his 4 wheel drive. He repeatedly called wilderness "that wilderness nonsense".

Is this a well informed opinion of the most precious parts of our remaining natural areas? How can a person like that understand environmental issues? The concluding lines in Garth's and Peter's article could have been written by him: "The environment is too important to be left to the conservation movement. They simply do not understand the issues". I pondered how to respond to that and I decided:

A GOOD LAUGH WAS ALL THAT IT DESERVED.

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#### International Signage

Dierdre Kidd has forwarded from the folkdancers magazine, 'Footnotes', details of some poorly worded signs greeting English speaking travellers:

#### In a Japanese Hotel

You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.

#### In the lobby of a Moscow motel

You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists and writers are buried every day except Thursday.

## Mundulla Yellows

A new threat to our forests

*Club member Geoff McIntosh recently attended a bird function in Berri S.A. where Dr David Paton, of the University of Adelaide gave a talk on Mundulla Yellows, a new plant disease that is threatening Australia's forests. This disease, which is reported to be worse than 'Die Back', was first noticed adjacent to roads near Mundulla S.A and is identified by the yellowing of the tree leaves.*

*Dr Paton issued the following Press Release which Geoff has forwarded for the information of club members.*

**Tuesday, 28 September 1999**

Birds Australia and the South Australian Ornithological Association call for funds to combat a new disease, which is spreading rapidly and killing trees across southern Australia.

"Mundulla Yellows" is a newly discovered disease that kills Australian plants, particularly eucalypts. It has recently been reported from all five southern Australian states where it is rapidly spreading across agricultural and urban areas. Tens of thousands of trees and shrubs now show signs of the disease and the prediction on current evidence is that more trees and shrubs will be infected and also die.

This loss of vegetation will seriously impact on Australia's biodiversity of which birds are just one component.

The disease has been reported also in revegetation sites and so threatens all the good work performed under Landcare and Natural Heritage Trust programmes. The disease also threaten agroforestry.

The causal agent, method of spread and cure for Mundulla Yellows are not known. At a joint meeting of Birds Australia and the South Australian Ornithological Association in Berri on 28th September 1999, delegates unanimously resolved that:

Federal and State politicians should be made aware that Mundulla Yellows threatens Australia's biodiversity, agroforestry and revegetation programmes and will continue to spread causing billions of dollars of damage unless substantial funding is provided immediately to:

- (i) Identify the causal agent.
- (ii) Determine the method of spread, and
- (iii) Develop effective methods of control of this disease.

**For further information contact:**

Dr David Paton,  
Department of Environmental Biology,  
University of Adelaide,  
Adelaide  
South Australia, 5005.  
**Phone.** 08 8303 4742  
**Fax.** 08 8303 4364

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### \*\*\*\*\*Blue Mts Canyon Survey\*\*\*\*\*

Nigel Hardiman who is doing the survey, reported in the October magazine, has supplied the club with postage prepaid survey forms which interested members can obtain at the meeting club room.

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### International Signage

More signs that could have been better worded:

#### **In a Rhodes shop:**

Order your summer suits Because is big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation.

#### **In a Zurich hotel:**

Because of the impropriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom, it is suggested that the lobby be used for that purpose.

#### **In an East African newspaper:**

A new swimming pool is rapidly taking shape since the contractors have thrown in the bulk of their workers

## A SUMMER WALK IN THE WERRIKIMBE NATIONAL PARK

by *Paul McCann*

*December 26th to 31st 1998*

The group of seven met at the leaders house in Armidale after lunch on Boxing day, and drove to the start of the walk at Mooraback Rest Area stopping at Apsley Falls on the way.

Storm clouds were gathering in the sky as we drove in from the Oxley Highway, but only a few spots of rain eventuated. This was the only rain we were to experience on the walk.

From the rest area we walked along an old 4WD track through lovely forest to The Racecourse, near the headwaters of Kunderang Brook for our first night's camp. The racecourse is a large swamp which forms the headwaters of both the Hastings River and Kunderang Brook (a tributary of the Macleay River) and after setting up camp some of us explored some of the waterfalls on Kunderang Brook.

While we were cooking dinner we observed that the weather had cleared and there was not a single cloud in the sky. The only animals we observed 'racing' around The Racecourse were Eastern Grey Kangaroos.

Next morning we walked along a 4WD road for a short distance before taking to the scrub. The understorey was somewhat thick in places and we pushed on to a point where I had planned to leave the packs and visit a rocky outcrop with a spectacular cliff overlooking the Forbes River gorge but due to the thick understorey we decided to press on to the River down a somewhat scrubby spur which ended in a steep descent down a side creek to the river. After lunch and a swim we continued down the Forbes River the going being easier than I thought it would be, the only obstacle being a small waterfall which we managed to skirt using

ropes to descend a small cliff back to the river. The river was very pretty with lovely rainforest along the banks and delightful pools for an optional swim.

Later in the afternoon we came to a canyon section which required swimming with packs so we decided not to proceed any further for the day and camped on rock ledges alongside the river where we managed to find enough space to pitch our tent inners using rocks as pegs.

After dinner we were entertained by the fireflies as we bedded down for the night managing to have a comfortable night's sleep on the rock ledges. The night was clear and somewhat on the cool side.

Next morning started off with a pack swim for most of the party through the canyon section. Two of us managed to bypass the first waterfall but descended back to the river only to find that we had to swim the next section. We had warmed up sufficiently by then so we prepared our packs and jumped in.

As we made our way downstream we all realized that we had made the correct decision by not proceeding any further the previous day as the sides of the canyon were very rough and rocky.

Our passage downstream alternated between rock hopping and pack swimming for most of the morning, passing numerous lovely waterfalls and spectacular cliffs. One swim involved a short jump into the water so John decided to do it in style and threw his pack into the water followed by a spectacular jump.

After an early lunch we decided that we would not proceed any further down the river so we found a lovely campsite under a canopy of towering brush box alongside a very pretty section of the river set between towering cliffs on either side. We rested for the afternoon enjoying the river and the lovely rainforest along its banks with the fireflies again providing the evening's entertainment.

Another dry and comfortable night followed with some high cloud moving in later in the night but no rain.

On the third day we rock hopped across the river and commenced our ascent out of the gorge under a cloudy sky passing by a big old rainforest tree that had been burned in a fire many years ago and had survived.

Further up the ridge we reached the top of a cliff that provided a view of the river and gorge.

Continuing up the ridge to the top, and another view looking downstream towards the Hastings River, we picked up a disused 4WD track that took us to our lunch spot at Big Hill Creek.

After lunch we continued on to the Hastings River and camped under snow gums by a pool where some of us saw a platypus later in the evening. Some of the party tried to supplement their dinner with some fresh fish from the river without success.

A relaxing afternoon was followed by a lovely evening and the earlier threatening skies cleared without any rain.

Our fourth day turned out to be the longest. A planned four hour walk to Mount Werrikimbe started off OK but soon the going became very slow. After taking a short cut up a ridge through some very thick scrub we reached another disused 4WD track. We decided after the effort involved in getting to this point that we should continue on to the trig and return to camp the long way along the track.

Upon reaching the trig we discovered that the views were obstructed by the thick regrowth. We did manage to get a view of Cobcrofts Cascades and The Mesa but overall the views were disappointing. We followed the track back to camp the long way passing through a magnificent stand of coachwood rainforest and arriving back at camp about 3PM for a somewhat late lunch under gathering storm clouds.

After packing up we continued along the track and followed a creek towards a rocky bluff through fairly open country. The final ascent towards the bluff was through dense

prickly scrub that was very painful on our already scratched legs.

We finally reached a saddle where we could see the hut at Mooraback Rest Area a few kilometres away, our destination for the day. The going became a lot easier descending through open heathland to a NPWS foot track along the Hastings River back to our cars and our camp for the evening, arriving there at about 7.30PM.

The camping area was very peaceful with only two other couples camped nearby and we slept very soundly with no rain despite the overcast conditions.

The last day saw us depart at 7AM so as to get to Uralla in sufficient time for Jose to catch the train to Sydney.

A foggy start cleared to a cloudy humid day as we drove back to the Oxley Highway and on to Uralla.

After some morning tea at Uralla we farewelled Jose and continued back to Armidale where the Brisbane people departed for home.

A good time was had by all on the walk despite the difficult terrain and some thick vegetation. Werrikimbe National Park contains a wide variety of terrain and vegetation types (including four out of the five different types of rainforest in NSW), with some areas being easier to walk in than the area we visited on this walk. The scenery includes lovely waterfalls and rocky bluffs offering spectacular views; together with the lovely rainforests and the tall eucalypt forests make future visits to the park well worthwhile. The degree of difficulty involved in walking in Werrikimbe is certainly no harder than sections of the Colo River (a few weeks before this walk I had completed a walk from Newnes to Colo Heights). If you feel like a challenge with rewards then Werrikimbe is one place you should visit.

I am planning more walks in Werrikimbe in the future including another walk along the Forbes River.

#### **SBW: Participants**

Paul McCann (leader), Jose Aguire.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **The Australian Geographic Book of the Blue Mountains**

*Written by: Peter Meredith*

*Photography by: Don Fuchs*

160 pages: rrp \$29.95

*reviewed by Alex Colley*

This beautifully illustrated book is the outcome of the wish of Howard Whelan, publisher of *The Australian Geographic*, to publish a book that would enable newcomers to share his knowledge of the region. The book covers the popular tourist attractions, which are located and described on a coloured 1:75,000 map, together with the wilderness areas.

Though the historic and cultural features of the Mountains are adequately covered the main emphasis is on the natural environment and the efforts of those most familiar with it - the bushwalkers - to thwart the developers, culminating in "a huge green crescent abutting Australia's biggest city: an island of primeval landscape in a sea of development" are described in the introduction.

Fittingly enough the first chapter covers Kanangra, the inspiration of conservation efforts led by Myles Dunphy, for the creation of a Greater Blue Mountains National Park. Kanangra also contains Colong Caves, the campaign to save which Peter describes as "the beginning of a new era in conservation. For the first time in Australia the preservation of nature became a public issue, uniting people from all sections of society."

The book itself presents a strong case for the preservation of the natural features of the Blue Mountains but it is a pity that their World Heritage value was not covered.

The World Heritage proposal is attributed to a "number of community groups" but it was actually made by the Colong Foundation, joined by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and after 10 years of campaigning, was nominated by the Federal

Government. However there is no doubt of Peter's appreciation of the Mountains. He concludes the book with his feelings when he climbed Blaxland Ridge near Upper Colo and saw the Centre Point Tower.

"I laughed aloud at my good fortune to be living in a city that had one of the world's wildest places in its backyard."

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### **SANTIAGO**

**Walking the pilgrim path from Pamplona to Santiago de Compostela.**

*Written by Almis Simankevicius (SBW member)*

140 pages rrp \$19.95

*Available from the author or currently from most North Shore bookshops*

*reviewed by Owen Marks*

A reviewer seldom has the opportunity to review so charming a book as this. Beautifully written and constructed with echoes of H.V. Morton, who wrote travel books in the 1920s and 30s, it weaves a magic spell while you wander along the famous Pilgrim's Way from Pamplona to Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain.

Alas the religious days of yesteryear have vanished. The simple pilgrims wandering across Europe are gone, but you can get the feel of it in this book centuries later. You are told history in the most delightful way, with legends, dreams and Bible stories all mixed up and this makes the story unforgettable.

Above all, there is the loneliness and beauty of the Spanish towns and villages built on hilltops with a Pilgrim hostel refuge that has hot showers in nearly every place you pass. And Spaniards are still courteous and generous. Also it seems the author can sleep while the fiestas are on, with scarcely a mention of church bells anywhere. Ah, to be young again.

You come across many religious and even non-religious people of all ages who love walking and wish to relive the past. It is a good feeling as I have done a small



pilgrimage myself many years ago when I walked part of the Pilgrims Way in England.

The book has handy hints, practical advice and even lists books to read prior to your travels.

All those Bushwalkers who love staying overnight in centuries old "refuges" and are partial to fine food which is mentioned all the time, AND done on the cheap, then this is your book and I can recommend it to all.

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### THE SBW IN 2000

Filling next year's committee and other club positions

*from Eddy Giacomel*

*A request from our president for members to think about the Annual General meeting to be held on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2000 and consider volunteering to take up positions on or off the committee.*

"A body continues in a state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line unless acted upon by an external force" – Isaac Newton

The club is an active environment. There appears to be no shortage of ideas or suggestions. What we need are means to bring these ideas to life. The club is a volunteer organisation and it runs according to what the volunteers do. If nobody does something, it doesn't get done.

The Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 8 March 2000 may provide an opportunity for you to take your ideas and suggestions beyond subjects of conversation.

There will be a number of committee and other positions to fill. If you want further information, call me on 9144 5095.

In the meantime, may you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year without the Y2K bug and enjoy your walking.

### Confederation Activities Program Jan-May 2000

#### January

18<sup>th</sup> Confederation meeting  
Ashfield RSL 7.30pm

#### February

15<sup>th</sup> Confederation meeting  
Ashfield RSL 7.30pm

Remote Area first aid  
course①  
St John Ambulance  
9212 1088

#### March

Date 5<sup>th</sup> Metrogaine  
unknown Homebush

18-19<sup>th</sup> ACT Rogaine championships

21<sup>st</sup> Confederation meeting  
Ashfield RSL 7.30pm

#### April

8-9<sup>th</sup> BWR Rescue training②

15-16<sup>th</sup> NSW Rogaine Championship.  
Colo

18<sup>th</sup> Confederation meeting  
Ashfield RSL 7.30pm

30<sup>th</sup> Paddy Pallin Rogaine  
ACT

#### May

16<sup>th</sup> Confederation meeting  
Ashfield RSL 7.30pm

27-28<sup>th</sup> Senior First Aid training  
confederation

Remote Area First Aid  
course①  
St John's Ambulance  
9212 1088

① The Remote Area First-aid course is designed for those individuals whose activities take them to isolated areas.

② BWR = Bushwalker Wilderness Rescue  
Full information on all Confederation activities can be found on their website at:  
[www.bushwalking.org.au](http://www.bushwalking.org.au)

## SBW Photo and Slide Competition

Held at the clubrooms on November 24th

reported by *Pamela Irving*

My personal choice for the 'SBW in Action' section was Bill Capon standing wistfully in the mist, clutching a bunch of flowers. Perhaps just a bit too inactive for our judge Barbara Bryan who preferred steep rocks and rope work.

The slide-show played to a packed house. Everything from close-up shots of insect heads resembling creatures from outer space, to panoramic shots of far-off mountains. There were four sections for the slides: native fauna, native flora, Australian scenery and non-Australian scenery.

As each category was projected onto the screen, Barbara gave a running commentary on each slide. Her honest remarks were appreciated by budding professional photographers. However, at the end of the night I think that most of us had decided not to give up our day jobs. Much discussion took place as members of the audience made their own selection of the best slide in each category. Barbara's choices were popular choices.

After the slides, the display boards with the photos were set up at the front of the room. There were two categories, 'SBW in Action' and an 'Open section'.

Frank Grennan in profile not quite baring his all (he was wearing boots, wasn't he?). Tuxedos at a wilderness gourmet dinner? (carrying the trousers would have meant less room for the champagne). and Greg Bridge in his beloved bush.

Judging by the number of members attending and the discussions of the various exhibits before, during and after the show, the Inaugural SBW Photo Competition was a winner. Perhaps it could become an annual event? Any suggestions about changes or

improvements could be directed to the writer.

Some people commented that we shouldn't have had the restriction that the person who actually took the photograph had to be present on the night. The reasons for this restriction were:

1. The organisers didn't want to take the responsibility for the safety of the prints and slides
2. It was meant to be a social event first, and a photo competition second.

Another restriction was that participants could receive only one prize.

A second and third choice etc were to be made in each category until a person who previously hadn't won a prize was found.

Our judge, Barbara Bryan, is president of the Northern Suburbs Camera Club and is an ex Melbourne Bush Walker.

And the winners were...

### Slides

**Flora:** 1. Frank Taeker

**Fauna** 1. Frank Taeker

2. Geoff Bradley

**Non Australian Scenery:**

1. Geoff Bradley

2. Oliver Grawford

**Australian Scenery:**

Jan Mohandas

### Prints

**SBW in Action:**

1. Geoff McIntosh

**General**

1. Glad Rannard (wasn't present)

2. Glad Rannard

3. Carole Beales

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## SANTIAGO

Walking the pilgrim path from Pamplona to Santiago de Compostela.

-What awaits the pilgrim in Santiago?

by *Almis Simankevicus*

*Many members of the SBW spend time in Europe exploring the countryside, staying in youth hostels, and other budget accommodation, and exploring parts of each country that are sometimes rarely visited by the regular tourist. This extended walk had a specific purpose but it should interest all past and future backpackers.*

*Almis' book of the trip is reviewed by Owen Marks on page 16. Ed.*

The story of Santiago de Compostela began two thousand years ago with the martyrdom of Saint James the Apostle. The subsequent discovery of his tomb in the northwest corner of the Iberian peninsula was the origin for one of Christendom's most revered showpieces - the Holy City of Santiago de Compostela.

For twelve hundred years it has been an irresistible destination for pilgrims, and to reach it required undertaking a journey of challenge and adventure. Millions of people have striven to get there, many perishing from starvation; struck down by illness or bandits. But most who arrived were not disappointed.

Carol and I decided to take up the challenge of walking from Pamplona to Santiago, a distance of around seven hundred kilometers. We began in September (autumn), the best time to begin, as the numbers of pilgrims had diminished and the heat not so terrible.

The route is known as the *Camino* - Spanish for *the way* or *the road*. The first part of our route was through the hot, dry regions of the provinces of Navarre and Rioja where the sun beats down without mercy.

It was necessary to start before daybreak to avoid the high temperatures prevalent in the afternoon. Breakfast was a short affair consisting of bread rolls, bananas and coffee.

Food remains were stuffed into the tops of our packs and we were ready to walk. It was exciting to begin the day's adventure in the early morning darkness. Our stout soled boots were comfortable, cushioning our feet adequately from the rock-strewn and bumpy surfaces of the camino. The sun rose around 7.30 am and quickly dispelled any morning chill. Leaving our village accommodation so early meant that we were able to stop at the next village on the path for our morning coffee break.

Walking into these medieval hilltop villages was amazing. Most were constructed of stone, with terracotta tiled roofs. Romanesque churches crown the hilltops and are visible for miles around. Legacies of the Roman Empire are still to be seen in the forms of roads and aqueducts.

Walking, to paraphrase an old cliché, is its own reward. It gives you a solid sense of yourself in the world that few other activities can match. However, we quickly learnt to jettison any baggage that wasn't absolutely necessary.

After the morning's break we pushed on through this fascinating, fractured landscape. Occasionally we met up with other pilgrims and enjoyed sharing part of the journey with them. The sun was warming the day quickly and everyone wore some form of sun protection.

We intended to reach the day's destination by about one o'clock in the afternoon. After this, the sun would be at its peak and it was too hot to walk for the next three hours. On average we walked twentytwo kilometres a day.

All along the way we would sip at our water bottles and fill up whenever possible. Most villages have fountains supplying potable water.

Having arrived at the day's stop, we registered at the town's *Refugio*. Refugios are special hostels built for pilgrims' use and are often attached to a church or monastery. They date back to medieval times when great

numbers of pilgrims from all over Europe journeyed to the Holy City. In the twelfth century, at the height of the pilgrimage's popularity, in excess of one million pilgrims per year attempted the arduous trip.

At the refugio, we entered our names and passport numbers in the visitors' book, then selected a bunk bed, and showered. The daily laundry was tackled next and dried out quickly in the heat and then, perhaps a snooze. Once rested we would find a suitable bar-restaurant and indulge in the big meal of the day - *Menu del Dia* - the menu of the day.

Three courses of absolutely scrumptious regional Spanish dishes with water, wine, bread and coffee transformed hungry pilgrims into replete pilgrims. This was also a pleasant time for sharing experiences with fellow travellers.

In the evenings, a visit to the impressive village church was irresistible. In many towns we gazed in awe at stupendous churches, solid statues and fascinating architecture. Our guide books provided interesting background information on the history and miracles that are such a part of this pilgrimage. Then, to bed early, for the old day had to make way for the new.

So, eventually after having walked 200km we reached Burgos, the city of El Cid, where we were able to rest and recuperate. It was pleasant to have some time to appreciate the wonders of this Spanish city without having to carry a pack around.

One of the motivations for walking the pilgrim path was to add a more reflective dimension to our lives. We were intrigued to see whether the pilgrimage would effect any changes in us by the time we arrived in Santiago.

Because we had a limited time for the pilgrimage, we took a bus from Burgos to Leon (about 160km). From there we again continued on foot. It was fantastic how many

like-minded pilgrims we met and enjoyed travelling with. The fellowship which the journey engendered, helped us all to share the highs and the lows, and was a great reminder of the thought - that we're all in this together, walking in the same direction - to Santiago.

After surviving the hot days, the weather started cooling as the track moved into higher altitudes. El Acebo, a tiny village in the mountains hosts a tavern in which a famous retired Spanish chef creates magnificent meals for his walkers. And we didn't forget the Spanish wine. We enjoyed the local wines without suffering any hangovers. Lovely stuff.

From El Acebo we began the gradual descent to our next large city - Ponferrada. All across Spain there are a huge variety of castles. The old Templar castle in Ponferrada still looks magnificent and is an architectural reminder of the mystique of the ancient Christian military orders. We spent some time exploring this ancient fortress overlooking the city.

We were conscious of the time and we had to cover around 20km every day. There were still another 200 kilometres to walk to Santiago.

The camino continued along mountain tracks and sometimes main roads. We arrived at Villa Franca del Bierzo, the last village before the next mountain range we had to cross.

*To be concluded in the January magazine*

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### Next month

**Santiago.** conclusion.

**Ticks.** Correction to First Aid notes.  
by Patrick James.

**Beyond the Comfort Zone**  
by Liz Harrington

**Snow caves, CO and CO2.**  
by the Editor