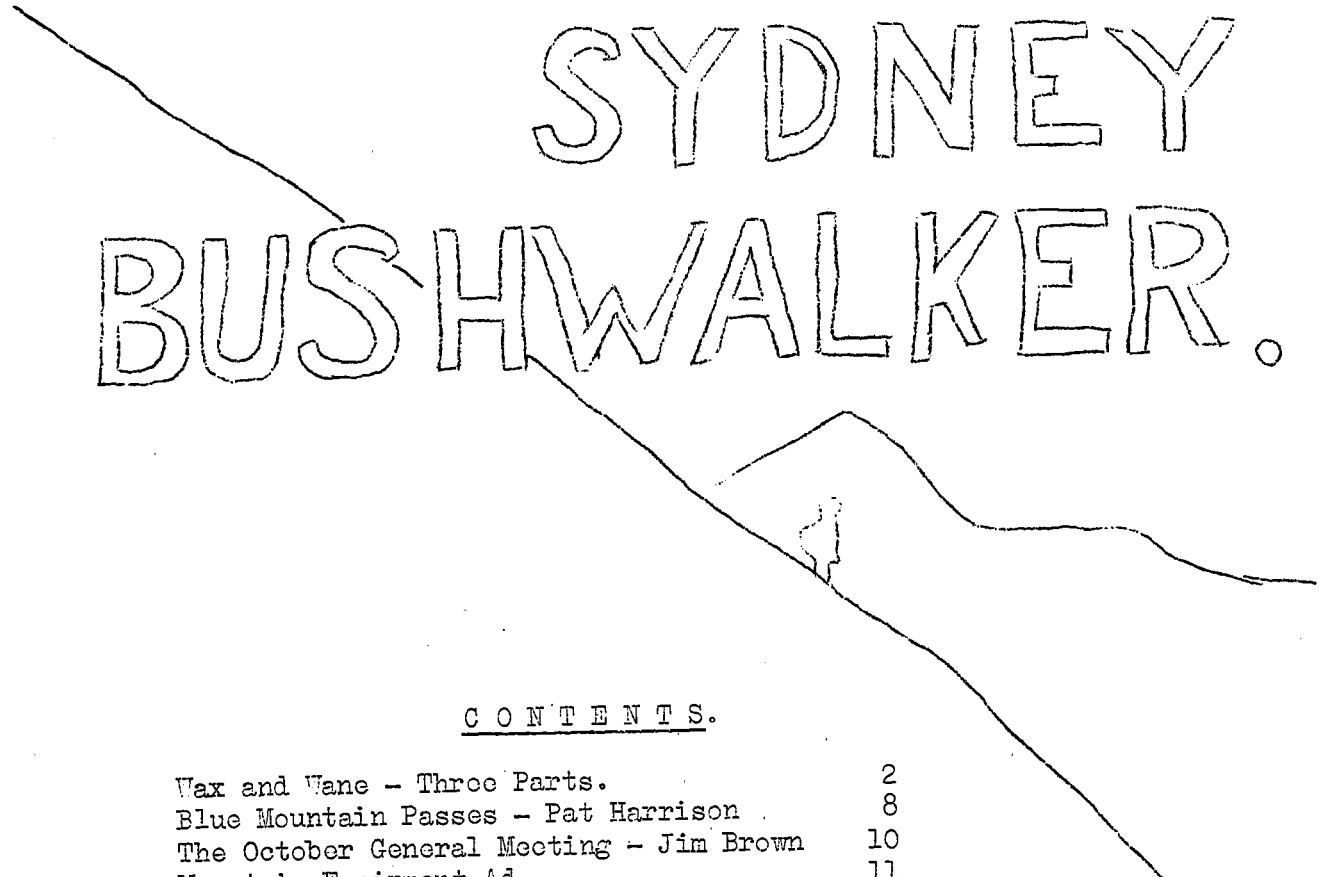


OCTOBER 1968
NOVEMBER

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER.



C O N T E N T S.

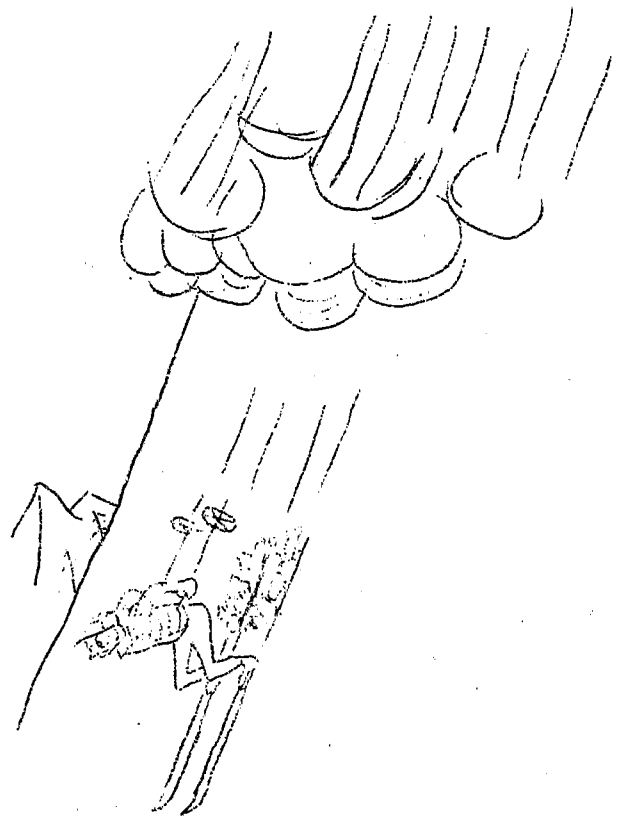
Wax and Wane - Three Parts.	2
Blue Mountain Passes - Pat Harrison	8
The October General Meeting - Jim Brown	10
Mountain Equipment Ad.	11
Federation News	13
Fiji - J. Pemberton	14
Paddy's Ad.	15
Jenny and Stan Madden's weekend	16
The Elusive Crater - Allan Wyborn	17

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest
to the Sydney Bushwalkers, Northcote Building,
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G.P.O. Sydney.

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WAX

& WAIVE



PART ONE

by Don Matthews.

In 1935, five Russian soldiers skied 4,500 miles from Nerchinsk to Moscow. It took about three months with heavy skis and with fifty pound packs. The leader was reported to have commented: "we'd have preferred a downhill race of the same distance, As it was, it was just one of those cross country runs."

It's taken me two weeks to recover from skiing, cross country, for one ninetieth the distance in one thirtieth the time with half the weight. That doesn't say much for my condition, but as our President has been telling me for years that I'm a has-been, it says something for my courage.

Really though, there's nothing to it, if you can ski, and have the right wax, the right weather, and know the route, and use the right sort of skis. There's no doubt that lightweight skis and boots, weighing together about eight pounds, have it all over the downhill variety totalling at least sixteen pounds. John Morgan persuaded me that rattrap bindings were quite adequate and eventually last year I took the plunge and bought my own lightweights. I was now committed to acquiring the glorious art of longrunning. Farewell to the tows. This was back to touring with, comparatively speaking, winged feet!

I carefully took the slender fragile planks, sanded off the protective paint from the soles, and lit the blow torch. Now to burn the base far in.

"Heat until it drives and bubbles", said the blurb. This took courage, but surprisingly the skis did not catch fire and the tar more or less soaked in dry. Admittedly this stage took several nights of rather tentative exploratory work, but finally I was ready for the base wax itself, a delightful orange in colour and very sticky. Like flypaper.

Some brave waving of the blowtorch and smoothing with the scraper got me a layer of wax, the thickness of which was anyone's guess, but it seemed about right, so with a variety of running waxes in my pocket, I set off. After two visits to the snow, and a good deal of trial and error, it was obvious that there was nothing to it - just point the skis and go! So flexible were the boots and bindings that you could just about dance in them.

There's no difficulty in deciding on location for scenic tours, either. Jagungal (6764 feet) dominates the Northern section of the Main Range. The wide sweep of the Valentine and the upper reaches of Rocky Plain River (the undulating country between Mawson's Hut and Jagungal), provide wonderful skiing, and from the heights, superb views of the western side of the Twynam-Townsend country.

The classic one way tours through this area are from Round Mountain, just off the Cabramurra-Khancoban Road, or from Kiandra via Tabletop Mountain, but the Cabramurra Road is no longer cleared, and we decided on a round trip, from Guthega to Whites River Hut via the Rolling Grounds, then Mawsons and Grey Mare Huts, (or vice versa, depending on conditions) with side trips where appropriate and with Jagungal as the central theme. The distance was about fifty miles and our loads about 25-30 pounds. We tossed the idea around one night at the Argyle Tavern and our wives smiled benignly on because of course they didn't think we'd do it, but somehow, despite all the things that can stop trips like this happening, there we were one fine September morning, Geoffrey, Frank and I, with blowtorch and flypaper, base waxing our skis at Sawpit Creek.

We had every wax in the book except Violet Klister, and if I'd taken Robert Pallin's advice we'd have had that too, but I for one had forgotten just how slippy spring snow can get. Then a bloke at Guthega stuck his head out of a hut window and said, "What have you got on, you ought to have Violet Klister", but it was too late to worry about that.

We worked on the principle that you waxed as hard as possible for the expected range of conditions and then worked with Klusters just enough to stop backslip, and we met such a range of snow texture and temperature that on the whole, we did fairly well.

The day was overcast and windy, but the Guthega Creek route, suggested by Paddy, was a gem, and we gained height slowly as we followed its course for a couple of miles until we reached the big bowl at its head, then slogged up the eight hundred feet to the Consett Stephen Pass. Tato rose majestically to the South, and its massive Northern ridge took a dive towards the depths of Windy Creek.

To the North there were endless snow covered ridges and valleys, just waiting to be explored.

The surface was now a wind eroded ice, and we skidded and skated across the Rolling Ground, and then poled down the softer snow of the long funnel leading to White's. On our left a huge cornice towered above, with a greenish jagged edge where great blocks of snow had broken off. A cautious run down the soft snow of the main gully brought us to the hut, and, as we were first in on a Friday afternoon, the promise of a bunk with mattress.

PART TWO

by Frank Rigby.

We got our bunks all right, but only just, because in tramped five members of the Canberra Alpine Club who were out to knock over Jagungal in a week-end. I thought we might end up like that pathetic fellow who composed "Double Bunking" until one of the newcomers produced a privileged key to the locked half of the hut - and, hey presto, four more bunks in the private boudoir: no doubt about Canberra, it gets everything of the best. Now if you mix with ski tourers anywhere you will be bombarded by an everlasting rhetoric

about waxes - it seems to flow out of their pores. But why did these experts keep stressing Violet Klister when we had everything but? I wondered if a mixture of our blackcurrant jam and honey mightn't do the trick just as well.

Saturday turned on a pretty nice morning for this part of the world and away went the Canberra bods for their marathon effort to Jagungal and return to Mawson Hut. Having more time and less ambition, we potted about the hut and again argued the \$64 question - ah well, the purple had worked well enough yesterday and the colour was almost violet, anyway, so on it went. Our leisurely plan was to tour to Mawson's and then decide the next stop. So it was up over Schlink Pass and around the side of Gungartan with the sun beating down fiercely and us down to our shirtsleeves at last which is a whole lot better than battling with a blizzard. At the head of Two Mile Creek we stopped in awe for there was Jagungal rearing its noble white summit above all else. Would we stand upon it? Who could tell? But ambition had begun to stir in our souls. However, right now it was pleasant just to let our skis run down the broad basin to the Valentine River and the hut - no fancy skiing, mind you, because with a pack on my back and these Nordics on my feet, I felt just like a ski bunny whenever the slope steepened a bit.

As the Canberra mob had already laid claim to Mawson's five bunks, we hatched a plan to trek over to Grey Mare hut after lunch. Maybe we would attack the mighty Jagungal from there, we thought: the next day, maybe. Don led off on the run down from the hut and shortly he was calling back, "Watch out for that patch of soft -----". It was too late for at that instant I ploughed head-first into the snow like a wombat burrowing an instant hole. They told me later that a pair of skis waving in the air was the only sign of life; but that's ski-touring for you. The route over to Grey Mare is complicated, particularly by the presence of Rocky Plain River which seems impossible to avoid. Well, there was this gushing stream barring the way, with little snowbergs bobbing up and down just to remind us how cold it was; we knew it was our moment of truth - why had we left the packed slopes and the comforts of the ski lodges? But that's ski touring for you. The multitude of tracks running up and down the river bank would have told a dramatic story to anyone following - that of a party searching desperately for a snow bridge. But alas, there were none and we became resigned to our fate. Don, gallant fellow that he is, led the way across in his socks (I take that back about Don being a has-been) and even kicked steps up the steep bank opposite (yes, still in his socks).

After some more complications, including, of course, some very complicated falls ("Are you fair-dinkum?" says Geoff, quickly substituting

Next morning both we and the weather were rather dull and there didn't seem to be much inspiration to get moving. Finally Geof was the honest one - "Look, fellas, I don't reckon I've got a Jagungal in me today." That settled it. We would have an "easy" day and amble back to Mawsons. "Easy", did I say? Well, it did mean 3 hours on our skis, plus unmentionable ups and downs, plus another crossing of the Rocky Plain River (makes me shiver even now!). But after lunch the sun came out, the terrain was beaut for touring and the scenery magnificent. Life was very good.

Back at Mawson's we filled in the rest of the day reading and debating great philosophies. We also filled up the water can which is dead easy at this hut - you merely open the window and shovel in the snow.

As day turned into night, the clouds disappeared completely, the wind dropped and the bottom dropped out of the thermometer. All the omens pointed to a glorious morning for Jagungal, the climax of the tour, but that is another story.

PART THREE

By Geof Wagg.

THE JAGUNGAL 1st DAY

Crackling flames and the soft glow of the hurricane lamp meant that Donald had breakfast on the way. Came Digby's voice in tones of muffled anguish.

"Great Heavens! Man it's still the middle of the night!"

"Here's your spirit of adventure, Dig?" Mumbled from Digby. Rigby followed by "Did I hear you say something about drinking chocolate?"

Digby and I had discovered that Donald's enthusiasm wouldn't let him lay in bed and we traded on it shamelessly.

Outside the sky was perfectly clear for the first time and the snow so crisp that our skis scarcely left a mark as we ran down the slope to the Valentine River. Long light lit the coarse snow crystals which glittered as we moved like fields of diamonds. A dingo startled by our sudden and silent appearance bounded across our path and up the nearby slope, paused once then disappeared among the rocks. Reproachful howls drew our attention to two half grown pups left in the side valley.

A short climb brought us to a glorious run into the upper section of Rocky Plain Creek which we were relieved to find completely covered.

Our route now ran on a gently climbing course through undulating snowfields of a most precise beauty artistically relieved with snow gums and granite groups.

About here we were joined by the two day old tracks of the Canberra

Alpine Club group but where we hardly dented the surface they had sunk 2 or 3 inches deep. Soon the climb began in earnest and we became more exposed to the biting wind. By the time we parked our skis and ran the last 50 feet to the trig, it was one of those lazy winds that goes straight through rather than all the way round.

The trig itself was a confection in wind blown snow more like some exotic cake decoration than anything else but Digby and I were happy to huddle by the rough stacked stones of the base in spite of the sunshine while Donald stumped about, bristling his moustache and saying,

"Ah, yes, there's so and so!" and "Still plenty of snow in Victoria on whatsitsname!" In the end we were quite glad to get him away because although we'd been very enthusiastic about getting to Jagungal, the summit wasn't exactly the most comfortable spot, even with the view on this glorious day. Besides there was still the descent. The upper (steeper) section was quite icy and some of us still weren't too confident about turning on langlauf skis.

Donald managed it in broad, dignified sweeps standing erect like a captain going down with his ship. I proceeded in a series of frantic swerves punctuated by holes in the snow and Digby played it very cool with skis under rigid control and himself apparently frozen in the egg-laying position. All this made us feel very good and when the excitement was over we found some snow grass in the lee of a granite boulder and basked in the sun and ate all the food we'd brought with us which incidentally was nearly all the food we had.

Much later we pressed on, with the snow getting softer by the minute. Digby tried some new wax on his skis; a concoction about the colour and consistency of marmalade. They looked like nothing more than frozen flypapers but the experiment proved a great success and he took to climbing the ridges beside our route just for the pleasure of ski-ing down. Don and I voted he should carry the rucksack.

Almost back at the Mawson Hut we saw the two dingo pups way down the Valentine river and even closer to the hut a bitch with a much younger pup still at the fluffy stage.

By 3.30 we were sitting round the fire drinking tea after a perfect day that none of us had really expected us to get.

The next morning was another early start because we had a long haul to White's River Hut first of all then over the Rolling Ground to Guthega. We were finishing the last of the food at this stage in fact the porridge was so thin that Digby (the gourmet) refused to eat it.

On the stretch back to White's River we had a firm snow surface and found it very good going even with a pack. We had gained a lot of confidence in the last few days but at least one of us found it was still possible to fall down in a disorganised heap from the standing position. In the saddle above White's the snow was soft and the heat almost oppressive as we allowed on sidling course towards the Rolling Ground. Soon, however, we met the wind again and thick banks of driven cloud which brought conditions back to a normal freeze and gave us a surface of frozen crust. This section seemed to go on for ever but then the high ridge of Mt. Tate rose ahead of us and we were soon running down into Guthega Creek.

About a mile short of the dam we lunched in a charming spot, a grassy island in the middle of the creek and here Digby entertained his friends by doing balancing tricks on a slab of snow concluding with a slow, dignified subsiding backward lurch which left him pinned down, unable to move. We could hardly get him out for laughing.

An hour later in the Guthega car park I was picking myself up for the last time from the jaded brown slush that passes for snow to tourist eyes when I suddenly appreciated the indignity of falling into this stuff after the glorious snow I'd fallen into over the last few days. And I thought to myself

"Ah, yes, in the crackling crust of the Rolling Ground, the glittering purity of the Valentine Valley and in the gleaming ridge of Jagungal -- I've left my mark, I've certainly left my mark!!"

BLUE MOUNTAINS PASSES

Pat Harrison.

1. GENTLE'S PASS is the means of getting from the High to the Low Gangerang. A rope is not needed to negotiate this pass, but it could be possible under very wet conditions for a bit of pack cord to come in handy, for the pass is mostly a steep earth slope which would become slippery after a lot of water had cascaded down. Care is needed at all times however, to guard against bumping your pack against the wall on the way down and thereby knocking yourself down the last few feet head first.

The pass is easily found from the bottom by following the cliff line around to the break in the wall as shown on Dunphy's map of the Gangerang and Wild Dog Mountains, but from the top it is somewhat harder to find owing to the fact that the top entrance needs to be gained by crawling under a chockstone; consequently some kind person has made a cairn nearby.

The topography of the area is well shown on the Kanangra map by the Lands Department in a scale of 2 inches to 1 mile.

2. COMPAGNONI'S PASS, provides easy passage between Ti-Willa Mountain and Ti-Willa Buttress. A few pitons and a chain were fixed in position by the University of N.S.W. Bushwalkers in March, 1963, and thus there is now no problem in negotiating this place.

There is a very steep scrubby slope below the pass, and further down, where the ground levels and broadens, vigilance is needed to make sure that you change direction on the Buttress, otherwise you find yourself in Ti-Willa Creek: hence the admonition on the map to "Watch your Step."

Dunphy's Gangerang and the Lands Department Kanangra are the maps needed.

3. LACY'S PASS is the name I propose for the pass which gets you from the Tonalli River to Lacy's Creek. The Lands Department Burragorang map shows a Lacy's Gap; but I think this needs amplification, for in reality three names are needed to give an accurate impression of the topography of the area.

As you climb the steep spur from the Tonalli you discover that there is an isolated headland above you. This headland could well be called Lacy's Head and the gap between the headland and the plateau would properly be called Lacy's Gap, for it is the only gap around here.

A scramble up on to the headland is worthwhile for the views it provides not only of the amphitheatre through which the Tonalli twists and turns but also further afield to the Wollondilly country. The headland is clothed with Mallee Gum and the leaf mould of centuries.

Walk along the western side of the isolated headland just below the cliffs, go across Lacy's Gap, then go up a narrow ramp which you will immediately see, and the rest of the way is straightforward. As you go up the ramp you will notice a piece of wire netting and a rabbit trap. Apparently in pre-Warragamba Dam days the Yerranderie rabbits found the only way down to Lacy's Creek!

Having got up on to the plateau, you can get into the South Canyon of Lacy's Creek by steering N.E. to the side creek at 29391° or by steering NORTH for 1200 yards then NE to the creek.

Whichever way you go you will be enthralled by the really magnificent Blue Gums in the creek and by the prolific bird life which is so tame that you will receive inquisitive visitors at lunch time.

The South Canyon has a reputation for strange noises, but they no doubt are explainable by the acoustical qualities of this ever-to-remain-unspoilt valley.

THE OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING.

Jim Brown.

There were two new members to welcome -- Pat Harrison and Peter Mac Intosh, although we had the feeling that Pat was already an "old member" -- at least in experience and background.

The half yearly minutes evoked no comment, nor did the Correspondence which contained a letter from the Wild Life Preservation Association inviting all to a gathering on 6th November when Allan Strom would be guest of honour, and an acceptance by Kath McKay of Honorary Membership.

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Secretary read an entirely acceptable financial statement marking an increase to \$682 in the current account during September. The Walks Report showed that activity in September started sedately, but rose to a climax. Lawrence Quaken's walk in the Wild Dog Mts. lapsed for lack of starters, but on the same weekend Alan Pike took a party of 13 to Blue Gum and Lockley's Pylon: and Doone Wyborn made a successful descent of the Grose from Blue Gum to Richmond. There were 25 people on a day walk in Heathcote Creek area lead by David Ingram.

On the following weekend Dot Noble's trip to the Barren Ground brought 16, and Don Woods had a party of 10 in the Corang River area, while Doone Wyborn was again active on a trip in the Kowmung-Yerranderie country. There were 13 people on Jack Gentle's day walk from Helensburgh. Barry's Wallace and Pacey had no less than 16 prospectives on their Instructional to Govett's Leap Creek, and a car swap trip in the wild Colo-Angourarra Creek-Wollongambie Creek country lead jointly by Don Finch and Joan Rigby produced a total of 17 people who hopped many more rocks than usual.

Gladys Roberts on a day walk of 22nd September had a small party in the Cowan Creek area, while on the last weekend of the month Margaret Wyborn conducted a bicycle jaunt from Rylstone to the Putty Road via fire trails. Military bridges consisting of narrow planks provided the element of hazard to the riders. To conclude, David Ingram's day walk from Wondabyne produced the month's record attendance of 37.

Barry Wallace outlined Federation activities, including advice of new caves in the Church Creek area which had been made known to Sydney Newspapers, but not published; the support of the Conservation Committee in efforts to save Lane Cove River banks from becoming an expressway; request by the Rock Rescue team for new equipment, and advice that Federation's S & R organisation would co-operate with Police Department exercises. There was also a representation to the National Park regarding the condition of the Uloola Falls track, and a request that entries in visitor's books be kept fairly polite as the books finally went to the Mitchell Library.

MOUNTAIN

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Frank Rigby interposed to point out the National Parks Association's request for volunteer bushfire fighters, saying about 100 people were registered, but many more required.

So to General Business, where Jack Gantle spoke to recent events including the formation of a Club for senior members, and suggested the Club give consideration to means of maintaining the interest of members of long standing. This provoked discussion, after some initial pensive hesitation: Frank Ashdown ventured the view that the Club already catered reasonably for those who actually attended, and could not assume what would be popular for old members who did not appear. Kath Brown suggested that old members retained their membership on sentimental grounds, and it may be wiser to try to accommodate people still capable of walking, but temporarily pinned down by family responsibilities. Barry Wallace felt there was merit in the proposal to keep older members keen on Club affairs, while Wilf Hilder considered the Club already did its best for anyone who was not bedridden and should look instead to its intake of new and vigorous people. In his reply Jack said his motion had achieved its purpose of bringing people to consider the problem, and while he could not suggest possible lines of action, his motion related to members of long standing, not only the elderly. It was then carried.

Frank Ashdown asked what of the unfinancial members, and the President stated they had been crossed off the books at the October Committee meeting, but it was hoped some at least would seek readmission. The Secretary said 31 active, 1 associate and 6 non-active members had been removed from the records.

To conclude there were announcements. From Wilf Hilder advice of new maps including the Yalwal 2" to one mile and certain publications available from the Lands Department, including the management plan for Bouddi, and a poster regarding Dorrigo National Park. The President said Doone Wyborn's reorganisation of the map cabinet was almost complete, and it was proposed to wheel the cupboard into the meeting room on Wednesday nights. The bushfire regulations were again in force until the end of March, although complete ban on cooking fires had not been imposed except in Kuringgai Chase. It was suggested members should not start fires until there was water hand for quenching, if necessary. Sam Hinde said a large part of Burning Palms had sustained fire damage, although access tracks were still clear. And finally David Ingram mentioned changes in the timetables for Illawarra Line trains at weekends.

Despite the docile beginning it was close to 9.30 when the curtain was drawn on the October meeting.

NOTICE - THE EDITOR HAS CHANGED HIS ADDRESS - Could you send all magazine articles to the following address -

ROSS WYBORN, 1/73 Harris Street,
HARRIS PARK. N.S.W. 2150.

NEW SOUTH WALES FEDERATION OF BUSHWALKING CLUBS - CO-OPERATIONIN POLICE DEPARTMENT S & R EXERCISE.NOVEMBER 30th and DECEMBER 1st.

The Federation's S & R Section has been invited to co-operate in an exercise involving the following organisations:

Federation of Bushwalkers' Clubs,
Land Rover Owners' Club.
Civil Defence Organisation.
Ambulance Services.
N.S.W. Police Department's:

- . Officers' Course Group.
- . Communications.
- . Flood boats.
- . Rescue Squad.
- . Transport.

We would be pleased if members of the Sydney Bushwalkers would co-operate. A rendezvous point in the area north of Wisemans Ferry will be advised later. Please inform your club S & R representative if you are available. He will in turn inform me of the total numbers of your club.

THE COMMITTEE OF THE S & R SECTION RECOMMENDS THIS EXERCISE TO WALKERS AS IT WILL MATERIALLY IMPROVE THE DEGREE OF CO-OPERATION WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN OUR SECTION, THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, CIVIL DEFENCE, AMBULANCE SERVICES AND LAND ROVER OWNERS' CLUB.

N.M. Melville.
Field Officer S & R.

Forthcoming Walk 14-15th December

A walk in the mountains south-west of Canberra, where there are alpine meadows, granite boulders, snow gums, long days, crisp nights, good views, and where it is still springtime at 6000 feet on Morgan, Bimberi and Murray.

SEE PAT HARRISON 895352 H. or 251670 B. for more details.

Letter to the Sydney Bushwalkers from The Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia.

"It has been drawn to our attention that two of the camping sites used by visitors to Colong Reserve have been spoilt by the amount of litter and rubbish left by campers.

"Whilst we realise that your organisation encourages members to leave camping sites clean and tidy could you also bring to your members attention the need to see that all visitors to our natural areas leave them clean and tidy and ask your members when ever possible to clean up some of the rubbish which has already been spread about.

"Our committee is afraid that the present condition of Batsh Camp and the entrances to the Colong Caves themselves in the Colong Reserve could be used as an argument against those who are at present fighting to prevent limestone mining in the area.

Miss G. Hanley, Hon. Secretary.

FIJI.

J. Pemberton.

Walking and climbing in Fiji can be very hard work, but also very satisfying. Have you thought of trying it? The main island, Viti Levu, is about 60 miles by 80 miles and roughly circular. A road runs round the island with a few roads penetrating the interior to provide access to the mountainous tropical bush country which delights the members of the Fiji Rucksack Club and could delight you, too. Suva is the principal, in fact the only city and many good walks and climbs are available on day outings from Suva. Mount Korobaba (2½ hours from Suva) gives a wonderful view of the Suva peninsular, harbor, lagoon and reef. Joske's Thumb is a fairly hard day and involves a little very elementary rock-climbing. The thumb also gives superb views and a great sense of height, being so steep in the final stages. The rivers provide easy but still scenically beautiful journeys by motorised "punt" and cross-island walks can be arranged. There are no good swimming-beaches within 30 miles of Suva, by road, but a group of people could hire a launch and sail away to smaller islands where the swimming is superb.

Tempted, and not worried about the humidity and 120" of rainfall p.a. (some of which is sure to fall on you)? I suggest that you drop a note to

Samuela Levu,
C/ Lands Department,
SUVA. FIJI.

who, I'm sure, will be pleased to help.

PADDY MADE

15.

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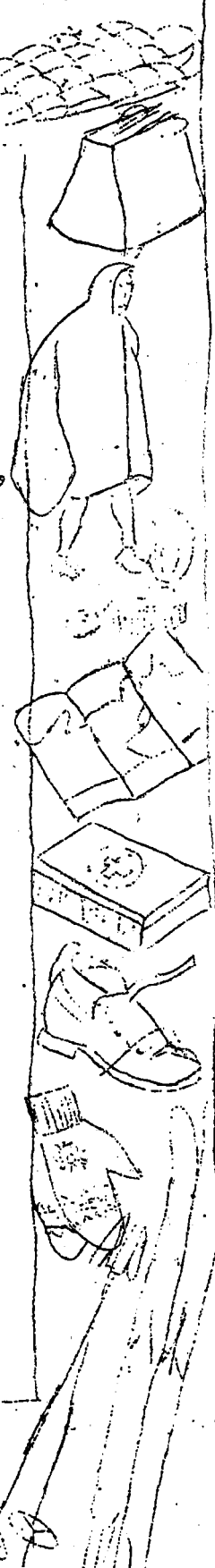
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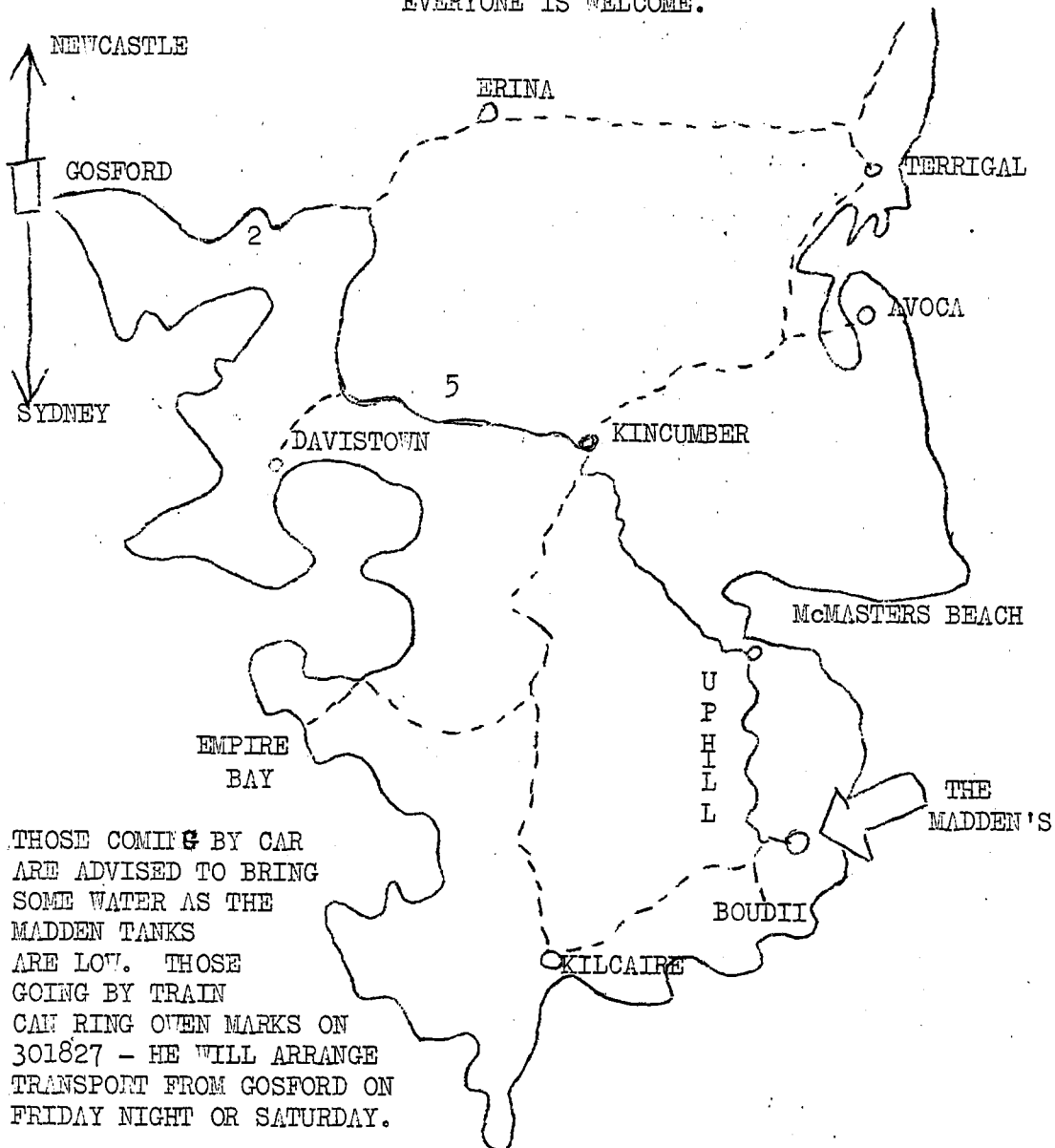
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HOW TO FIND STAN AND JENNIE MADDEN'S PLACE AT BOUDDI FOR THEIR PRE-XMAS SWIMMING-WALKING AND LAZING AROUND WEEKEND. NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 1,2.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME.



Instructions.

From Gosford take the Terrigal Road for 2 miles, then turn right to Kincumber. Here turn right to MacMasters Beach, continue uphill on Bitumen from MacMasters Beach until the crest of the road is reached - about 20 yards before the Bouddi National Park notice - a road turns off to the left marked "S. Madden".

YOU HAVE ARRIVED.

THE ELUSIVE CRATER

by Allan Wyborn.

We have been fascinated by this "crater" on the Upper Wollongambe Creek near Bell since first discovering it on the Wallerawang military map some years ago. A general view in this direction can be obtained from Du Fours Rocks at Mt. Wilson, and then lately we saw some of it on an aerial survey photograph. Hence it was that on an official walk started out on 26th October to explore the region.

It was blowing a howling westerly as we parked the cars just before the Zig-Zag Hill leading to Mt. Wilson. We were a round dozen with John and Rosalind Blanche, Doug. Frower, Ann Ireland, Margaret King, Peter Moss, Laurie Quaken, Laurie Raynor, Eric Rhodes, Peter and Jill Whitmore and yours truly. Leaving the road to the west at the bottom of the Zig Zag we followed an old timber trail for a mile to the Green Hill. From here the trip was trackless, and we looked down on our first hurdle, the October Creek. Like most of this Wollongambe country the creek was at the bottom of a sheer gorge, access being obtained by a smaller side gorge, to make an easy crossing at GR339593 Katoomba. It was then straight up and over a 700 foot high ridge to lunch on Upper Bell Creek supposedly, as we later found it was only a large branch of Bell Creek. The going was slow following the creek downstream until the usual canyon ~~was typical of this country~~ appeared. The walls went up a few hundred feet forming a beautiful cirque about half a mile long on the south side. At creek level the walls were only a few feet apart with deep water. Some of us were not prepared for compulsory swims, being without canyon bags, and also the water was very cold so early in the season, so we scrambled out on the north side to the top of the ridge. Here the wind was so strong we could have been blown back below.

Unlike the lower Wollongambe area recently reported where you can "go all the way without getting your feet wet", the upper stretches of Bell and Wollongambe Creeks ensure swimming through gorges so narrow that lilos would be a nuisance.

It was three miles of ridge bashing to reach a good camp site on the real Bell Creek just as dark approached. With the present drought all normal small creeks were dry, and we were very pleased to have plentiful water from Bell Creek. The campsite itself was very good amongst beautiful waratahs, there being a good "verandah" of overhanging rock for about a hundred feet long giving wind and rain protection. In this type of country one can easily do without a tent. After tea as the weather cleared we enjoyed a long campfire where everyone joined in the singing.

Next morning was clear and still in contrast with the previous day. As canyon swimming was out because of reasons above mentioned, we left our packs and started up the other side of Bell Creek through a narrow cleft to look for the Crater.

Rocky tops and gorges surrounded us in all directions, and we were able to get a proper fix on landmarks for the first time on the trip. The rock formations here are fantastic, consisting of "curly" windblown sandstone from the smallest size to huge cliffs.

There was the "Crater" only a few miles away on the other side of the Wollongambe but separated from us by an unbroken line of cliffs on either side of the creek. Nobody really believes it is a volcanic crater, but the contours suggest a hollowed out shape like a crater. With more time and ropes it would have been possible to make it, but we reluctantly turned back to Bell Creek.

(For a future trip access would be much quicker from Bell Trig GR283578 Katoomba leaving cars on the Bell Line of Road.)

After lunch we started off down Bell Creek walking in the creek bed until the canyon narrowed to a few feet wide with a long pool at least ten feet deep at its beginning. In these pools the clarity was amazing due to lack of rain in the drought. Bronze carp were swimming near the sharp sandy bottoms and lazy red crayfish were very plentiful.

We climbed out again up the cliffs and the remainder of the journey consisted of backtracking to Mt. Wilson, which we reached at 5 p.m. Everybody voted it good country.

It is pleasing to note that the whole of the Wollongambe and Bell Creeks, and Yarrowun and Bungloboori further north, have recently been added to the Blue Mountains National Park. The exciting and inaccessible nature of this country, should ensure its future preservation and will make it very popular for bushwalkers.

WANTED.

Old walks programmes to complete a set for club records.

EARLIEST on file is June-November, 1936.

MISSING November 1936-June 1938.

March-June 1941, July-February 1947.

Most of the 1950-1966 period.

AVAILABLE for exchange, some spare programmes from 1941 onwards.

CONTACT Joan Rigby, Club Archivist at 391161 Ext. 013 or 392741 if you can fill in the blanks.
