

THE YODELLERS RANGE

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers Incorporated, Box 4476 GPO, Sydney, 2001. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening from 7.45 pm at the Ella Community Centre, 58a Dalhousie Street, Haberfield (next to the Post Office). Prospective members and visitors are invited to visit the Club on any Wednesday. To advertise in this magazine please contact the Business Manager.

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VICTORIAN ALPS - 1987

by David Rostron

Why were we there in the worst bushwalking conditions I have encountered? This was the roof of Victoria, the summit ridge of its "Queen", Mount Bogong. The temperature was zero, white-out conditions prevailed and there was horizontal snow and hail with 50 knot winds. It's no wonder this mountain has a reputation for adverse weather resulting in a number of fatalities over the years. It was obvious that any problem with route-finding or an injury could result in hypothermia and possibly death. We were more than grateful for that line of numbered snow poles across the summit ridge leading to the haven of Cleve Cole Hut.

This was Saturday 21 November, the first day of our 8-day "tourist trek" of Victoria's Alps. Our party of eight included Wendy Lippiatt, Fusae and Ray Dargan, Jeff and Bob Niven, Bill Caskey, Judith and I. The route was Mount Bogong via the Staircase Spur, Big River, Bogong High Plains, West Kiewa River, Diamantina Spur, Mount Feathertop and then a descent to Harrierville.

Plane and bus transport found us at the foot (700 m) of Mount Bogong at 9.15 am for the 1350 m ascent. The track up Staircase Spur involves a gradual climb through the entire range of alpine flora. Alpine Ash dominates the lower slopes and we entered the snow gum forest at about 1300 m. A slow steady plod caused by heavy packs and the need to "pace ourselves" over the climb, resulted in an early lunch at Bivouac Hut at 1430 m. The day's early promise of fine weather had faded and the top of the mountain (1980 m) was periodically in cloud. We were anxious to have a panoramic view from the summit and contemplated a stop at Bivouac Hut for the night. However the cloud level elevated and we continued the upward trek.

We cleared the treeline only to see the band of rain clouds to the west. Our pace quickened and some reached the summit ridge before white-out and then precipitation enveloped us. Forty-five minutes and 4 kilometres followed in atrocious conditions across the roof of Victoria. Fortunately the wind was either behind or on our right. Progress into the weather would have been unbearable.

Cleve Cole Hut had one occupant and it can accommodate 12 in comfort. Built of local stone, in memory of Cleve Cole who perished on the mountain in 1936, it was a delightful refuge. The weather cleared overnight and we retraced our steps for about 2 kilometres to appreciate the vast panorama. The peaks of the NSW Alps - Kosciusko, Townsend and Jagungal stood out clearly on the horizon.

We continued south on Victoria's Alpine Track, visiting Howman's Falls and then descended about 900 m to Big River for lunch. The ascent of about 800 m to Roper's Hut took us to the edge of the treeline of the Bogong High Plains. We camped about 500 m away in a delightful alpine environment - snow grass, trees and some flowers.

The following day dawned fine but wind increased and by midday another north-west front was almost upon us. Our route lay south along a hydro system road (of which there are many in the area). We ascended the two high peaks of these open plains, Mount Nelse North and Mount Nelse. Then followed the start of our hut crawl - Edmondsons, lunch at Johnstons, a visit to Fitzgeralds and then a descent to Kellys where we intended to camp in the vicinity.

All these huts had different characters - Edmondsons was a compact austere hut which would accommodate about 10 comfortably. Johnstons is a modern ski tourists hut, privately owned and of which only a small section is available for public use. Fitzgeralds - a rustic cattlemen's hut built in the 1890's - provides only basic shelter for 3-4, whereas Kellys is a more modern cattlemen's hut falling into disrepair. However when the rains came it gave us reasonably comfortable shelter with mattresses for 7 out of 8.

The fireplace smoked and we spent some time adjusting windows to achieve the right balance. After some had retired there was a very strong gust of wind and the sash window on the lee side fell in, hitting Ray and Fusae across the legs. If they had been lying the other way their beautiful (?) faces could have been reshaped! Fortunately the glass didn't break and their injuries were only minor. And did it rain that afternoon-evening! Despite our distaste for huts in summer we were very pleased to be there.

By morning the rain had eased but there were still strong winds and low cloud. We retraced our steps, heading west. There were no illusions about this being a "wilderness escape" and we had decided to check out Falls Creek Ski Village. This involved a road trudge for 9-10 km past Rocky Valley Storage.

The Village is a compact one - like a small Thredbo. There was no snow and everything looked green and pristine. We managed a scrub up in the amenities block, with hot water and air dryers and then ascended under the main chairlift to the top of the ridge. (The lifts run to the north and south of the ridge above the Village.)

The weather was improving with many sunny breaks as we completed a half circuit of the lake and then headed south, passing the very rustic Wallace's Hut. Wilkinson's Hut (owned by the Melbourne Bushwalkers) was the next inspected. This is a modern private (locked) lodge. We then searched for a 5-star alpine campsite, sheltered from the strong westerly wind. The location chosen was superb but water was about 100 m distant - giving it 4-star rating. The wind increased and we were subjected to many snow showers, followed by sunny breaks. The cool evening meant retirement at dusk - about 8.30 pm - for a long comfortable night.

Next morning the hut crawl continued with the large Rover Lodge (locked) being the first visited. This also had comfortable emergency shelter for 3-4 people. There was a ski tow adjacent, for those who tired of climbing, to practice their telemarks.

A further 2 km found us at Cope Hut for morning tea as we were engulfed by another snow shower. We then learned Wendy had sprained an ankle jumping across an aquaduct earlier in the day. She had doubts about continuing. With almost constant snow showers we had a great excuse for a lengthy stop.

Cope Hut, built in the late 1920's, is a comfortable basic hut with piped water and sleeping accommodation for 16. However little heat emanates from the fireplace. It is also at the edge of the tree-line and there is little wood in the area. The hut is only 500 m from the Omeo/Falls Creek Road and obviously has considerable use in winter and summer. As with almost all huts visited it was clean and well maintained.

After morning tea Wendy thought she could continue or at least give her ankle a trial. We set off into the weather, heading for Tawonga Huts on the Fainter Range - 13 km away. After a kilometre Wendy had doubts about her ability to continue so it was back to Cope Hut.

At this stage of the trip we could afford to wait a day and we needed little encouragement in view of the weather. It did improve slightly in the afternoon and four of us trekked the 5 km to Mt. Cope - the high peak of that part of the Plains.

Wendy had decided to hitchhike to Falls Creek if she couldn't continue in the morning. On awakening she made the solemn pronouncement of abandoning the trip. Typical woman though, an hour later she changed her mind, and this turned out to be the right decision. It was mainly sunny but the cool westerly continued. The temperature was just above 0° C causing us to sprint across the plain, checking out the view from Mt. Jim en route. Mt. Feathertop's cloud mantle dissipated and the vision established its reputation as the mainland's true alpine peak.

We descended past Westons Hut (rustic) to the West Kiewa River (drop of about 900 m), Blairs Hut - of large horizontal log construction was inspected and we continued down river to a comfortably grassy lunch spot.

It was necessary to produce the whip to get the troops moving again for the 1,000 metres climb up the narrow Diamantina Spur that afternoon. We experienced a vast temperature change - from the humidity of the valley to the almost freezing showers on the Razorback ridge top. We were again in white-out conditions at times and were most thankful to enter the austere Federation Hut. This is an unlined aluminium hut of recent construction with sleeping platforms for about 12. Desperate occupants had broken away sections of these platforms and used them as fuel. Wood in the area was quite scarce and it was necessary to trek 200 - 300 m for a reasonable supply. There is a most efficient pot belly stove and this soon had the hut at a pleasant temperature and dinner was cooked in no time.

We were astounded to wake to a perfect morning and Feathertop was climbed without packs. We strolled and lounged around the summit absorbing the 360° panorama. Valleys up to 1600 m below highlighted the magnificence and isolation of this alpine peak.

We then descended the north-west spur for about 300 m to the M.U.M.C. hut. This is a geodesic dome constructed in the early 1960's. A comfortable 3-level hut with panoramic views from its position on a knoll at the edge of the treeline.

Time was of no consequence as we meandered back to Little Feathertop and lunched below the main peak. Another relaxed stroll down Bungalow Spur took us to the last grassy campsite where the original Feathertop Hut was located. We enjoyed an extended Happy Hour as all those food items preserved for the "rainy day" were produced and devoured. A long evening followed - arising from the desire to prolong our companionable escape from suburbia.

It was a perfect morning for the descent of 1200 m down Bungalow Spur to Harrietville and transport home. Feathertop is obviously a popular weekend mecca for Victorians as we met 50-60 walkers heading up the track.

P.S. Every hut had a relatively clean toilet with the result that there was no paper littering the landscape. It's time NSW followed suit.

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MANAGEMENT OF BLUE MOUNTAINS AND WOLLEMI NATIONAL PARKS

by Alex Colley

The Draft Management Plans for Blue Mountains and Wollemi National Parks have been published and submissions invited. Both plans give top priority to protection, preservation and, if necessary, restoration of scenic and natural features. This means the exclusion of all damaging activities, a policy almost completely adopted for the wilderness areas within the parks.

The Blue Mountains plan provides for 21,000 ha of wilderness in the Wollongambe sector, which is part of the Colo wilderness, and 51,000 ha in the Blue Breaks and Cox's River sectors, which forms part of the Kanangra wilderness. Most of the remainder of the Colo wilderness (over 200,000 ha) is included as such in the Wollemi plan. It may be anticipated that the remainder of the Kanangra wilderness will be protected in the Kanangra Boyd National Park management plan, when that is formulated.

To make this policy effective, all tracks, except those essential for management, will be closed. Management tracks will be mainly for NPWS vehicles. Whether these tracks will create more management problems than they resolve, by reason of their inevitable use by arsonists, shooters, Off-Road-Vehicle machos, bush rock and timber thieves etc, remains to be seen. Only public and park roads will be available for public access.

Control burning will continue to be used "as a management tool" but only as a last resort in wilderness areas. It is to be hoped that burning will be restricted to the vicinity of the places where most fires start - in the developed areas, and that parks will no longer be used for the burning of firebreaks.

The Blue Mountains plan aims to "achieve classification of all waters within the park as Class "S" - specially protected under the Clean Waters Act, and the Wollemi plans aims to "remove sources of contamination" and rehabilitate catchments.

The Wollemi plan acknowledges the need for controlling developments outside the park which may affect the park itself. The Blue Mountains plan does not acknowledge this need, though it will be necessary if water quality and scenic features, such as the escarpment, are to be preserved.

The plans accord closely with the conservation ideals of the SBW. We can hope that we will once again be able to walk on tracks unused by vehicles, and that the NPWS will successfully resist the pressure groups seeking to use the parks for profit or pleasure at the expense of the natural environment.

* * * * *

IMPORTANT

Search and Rescue has now obtained two alphanumeric pagers to assist call-outs. Bushwalkers (or their relatives/friends) should;

- i) call (02) 016-020, and ask the Operator to
- ii) page 016-277.321 OR 016-277.322
- iii) and leave a short message along the lines

**"URGENT CALL OSCAR HAMMERSMITH
PHONE BOX 049 729.6426"**

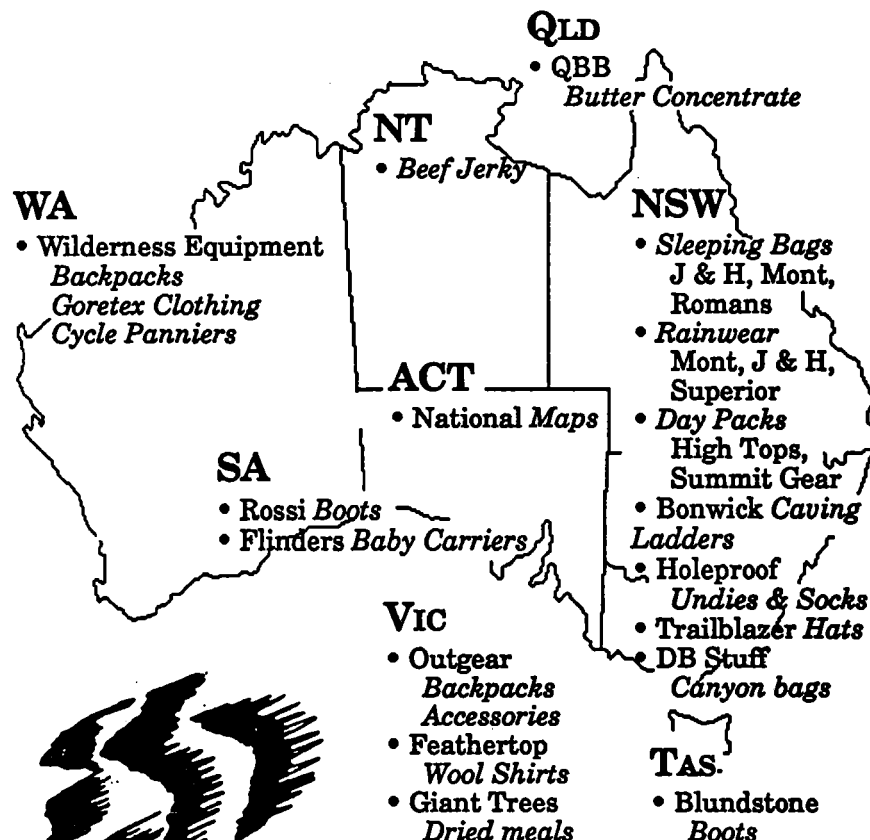
The caller should ensure that the correct number (and STD code) is recorded by the Operator. (Note - you must indicate in your message if you are calling from a public phone box as the return call will have to be lodged through a Telecom operator).

- iv) If no return call is received within 15 minutes (to allow the holder of the pager to find a phone), repeat step (i) and (ii) and quote the alternate pager number.



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THE 1988 RE-UNION

by Helen Gray

After the success of the 60th Anniversary Re-union at Coolana it was surprising that only 50 turned up at the 1988 Annual Re-union; even more surprising when you consider how perfect the weather was. However, let me add that what we lacked in numbers we made up for in quality!

Our Social Secretary, Ian Debert, and his trusty offsider, Joy Hynes, have showed no sign of slowing down after being the driving forces behind the 60th's festivities, for they immediately started working when they arrived, building the campfire and cleaning and decorating the hut. (No small task; non-bushwalkers have been using our hut and the floor was littered with cigarette butts, cans, and assorted rubbish.)

There was a rumour circulating that Kath and Jim Brown wouldn't be coming. Impossible! "They've been to every re-union for decades," said one old-timer. "Of COURSE they'll come." But it was true. That night as the campfire was lit, Barbara Bruce announced that Jim was very sick and unable to come. However, they were with us in spirit. Jim's illness hadn't stopped him from writing a sketch for us which sent-up our new Constitution (or, more specifically, the language of all constitutions). Mike Reynolds read Jim's part and Tom Wenman read Mike Reynold's part, occasionally causing some confusion but not distracting from the humour and wit of Jim's writing.

The singing solos were first rate. Thank you Tom Wenman, Barbara Bruce, Dot Butler, Mike Reynolds, Don Matthews and Geof Wagg, and an extra thanks to Barbara and Geof for leading the sing-songs.

After a handful of Presidents-Past wished Barrie Murdoch well for his further year in office, we adjourned to the hut for supper. What a supper. Laid out on tables - with tablecloths! - was a veritable feast of cakes. The President led the cheers for the two cooks, Spiro Hajinakitas and Christine Austen.

Sunday morning came round and with it the damper competition. The President, as judge, was unable to decide an outright winner, and a tie for first was given to two youngsters, Steven Clacher and Joshua Greentree (Josh's mother Dawn had become a member on the previous Wednesday). The winners looked on with pride (and disappointment?) as their winning efforts were devoured by the enthusiastic onlookers.

The Swimming Carnival was deferred until the next re-union, as a strong chilling wind on the water resulted in a marked lack of interest. Eating and talking occupied the rest of a very relaxed day and concluded a most enjoyable weekend.

P.S. Good news. With the help of new medication, Jim has made a speedy recovery.

* * * * *

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

by Barry Wallace

The meeting began at 2012 with around 40 plus persons present and the President presiding. There were apologies from those whose name was legion, but the call for new members, in this case one John Chapman, brought no response. We had more luck with two retries from the previous meeting as Dawn Greentree and Richard Brading came forward for welcome.

The minutes of the previous A.G.M. were read and agreed upon, only those with very good recall being in any position to argue in any case.

Correspondence comprised: the minutes of the F.B.W. February meeting, a letter from Jack and Edna Gentle protesting at the inclusion of the invirovote leaflet with the recent magazine, from Morag Ryder detailing some of the vicissitudes of the black art of offset printing, from Tony Marshall re the premature release of unaudited financial statements with the Annual Reports, from the Committee to Stan Madden requesting a report on the Club's offset printer, from the Committee to Jack and Edna Gentle, to new member John Chapman, from Ron Knightley expressing surprise and regret at the inclusion of political comment with and in the magazine, from Barry Zieren advising of his resignation from membership due to changes in

interests, and lastly a letter from Stan Madden advising that it is not yet time to take the printer out and beat it to death with rocks.

Correspondence was received. Matters arising saw decisions that a letter be written to Ron Knightley, and a recommendation that the incoming Committee examine the various options available for printing the magazine.

Next came the Annual Reports, with advice that copies of the Financial Report, with the changes required by the Auditor, were available; a mia-culpa from the President, and a letter to the Auditor apologising for the error and assuring him that there will be no repetition. With that matter resolved, the reports were taken as read and accepted. The Financial Report was also accepted.

Three procedural motions were then passed. These established the methods of voting and permitted the election of officers to proceed concurrent with the business of the general meeting. You will have read the results of the election in last month's magazine, the main item of remark was that we filled eleven positions before we needed to vote.

Then came the Treasurer's budget for the coming year and a recommendation as to the level of subscription. After some confusion and one or two emphatic speakers in favour we agreed to hike the subs by around 25% in view of the coming necessity to replace the printer and possibly move into the use of a P.C.

Still holding the floor, the Treasurer presented the March report. It seems we started out with \$1982, received \$205, spent \$1351 and closed the month with \$836.

Then, while the sound and fury of election frenzy raged around us, came that eye of the storm; the Walks Report. This began at the weekend of 12,13,14 (and for one party at least, 15) February with Oliver Crawford leading another of his extended rambles around the Wollongambe. There were 11 on the trip and it was a cold, damp, drear weekend. David Rostron's hard overnight walk to the Colo did not go, and Alan Mewitt has not been heard from about his Wondabyne to Wondabyne epic although there are persistent rumours that it did go. Of Errol Sheedy's Cronulla to Bundeena walk there was no word.

Kenn Clacher's Bell Canyon trip, scheduled for 19,20,21 February was deferred one week. It seemed to work O.K., they, all 5 of them, reported fine hot weather. Meanwhile, back at the weekend, David McIntosh led 11 on his Wollemi Creek trip, Joe Marton reported a party of 26 on his Glenbrook Creek walk and Belinda McKenzie cancelled her exploratory walk to Erskine Creek.

Over the weekend of 26,27,28 February Les Powell had to cancel his Shoalhaven River bludge walk for lack of starters, but Jim Percy soldiered on through the heat from Badgerie's Lookout with his party of 5, and Margaret Reid set a gentler pace for the 9 who attended her Lawson to Lawson walk on the Sunday.

The 4,5,6 March saw the return of cooler wet conditions as Ben Esgate led his party of 5 westward from Medlow Bath to clearing conditions, the Six Foot Track, and the ripe blackberries. All just a few days short of Ben's 74th birthday! Belinda McKenzie cancelled her Mill Creek circuit walk, but Jim Percy reported 10 starters on his somewhat rainy Waterfall to Heathcote walk. The F.B.W. Reunion, conducted that same weekend, was poorly attended and of Ralph Pengliss' Sydney Harbour walk there was no report. All of which brought the Walks Report to a close.

The Federation Report revealed that F.B.W. are preparing to respond to the Katoomba N.P. Plan of Management, and that the Kowmung committee require photographs of the river and some dedicated volunteers. The S & R radios appear to be working well and pagers have been purchased.

General Business brought yet more reproof over the matter of the envirovote leaflets, this time in the person of Peter Stitt. Peter has a secret question for you to ask the candidates, but one of the penalties for not attending this meeting is that you were not there to hear what it is. The meeting agreed that in future the financial year will run from January to December. It is expected that this will ease the pressure of preparing and distributing Annual Reports and the Financial Report in time for the A.G.M. in March.

Then it was just a matter of the announcements (don't forget folks, subs are NOW due and payable), and the President closed the meeting with the traditional "Let us re-une!" . . . at 2222.

"SEE YOU SUNDAY FORTNIGHT, MUM!"

by Brian Harvey

Prior to the Second World War, and still emerging from the Great Depression with its dismal wages, bushwalkers could not afford today's luxury holidays, so they had to make the most of their two weeks' vacations at low cost enjoyment. I recall Norbert Carlon saying that one free-lance walker, a school teacher, privileged to be awarded six weeks holidays, spent his entire time down on the Cox River, having first laid-in caches of non-perishables, relying on his .22 rifle for rabbit stew, with the occasional eel cooked in the hot ashes.

And so it came to pass that SBW member Ron Eddes and myself were very justifiably granted our two weeks leave commencing noon on 14th May, 1938 (after working the usual Saturday morning) that is, exactly 50 years ago next month, both still here but no so hale and hearty! Oh, me knees! We had decided we would undertake a 15 days easy trip, involving carrying an initial load of 45 meals, a feat probably beyond the present generation which would have to arrange aerial food-drops. Using Paddy's book and relying on our earlier experience we knotted out a rough menu and calculated weights and quantities therefrom. Naturally dehydrates were the keynote but we did include a couple of tins of Imperial Beef Loaf and a variety of Peck's spreads, two billies of well-cushioned fresh eggs. There was a large hunk of bacon from which rashers were cut in the morning, leaving the rind on and which was cut off at night to be boiled up in the stew billy as a tasty stock. We had two blocks of pemmican from Paddy's which he had imported from New Zealand, being an excess of requirements of the Lincoln Ellsworth South Pole Expedition. This consisted of powdered dried steak mixed with vegetable oil, packed in foil. On opening it gave off the rich aroma of blood-and-bone dust which fortunately disappeared on being added to a stew, especially if a curry one! Pemmican was devised centuries ago by the North American Indians and stored for their hard winters. Of course, today one has dried meat. Packaging was always a problem as plastic bags had not been invented; sugar, for example, was carried in a smelly oiled japara bag. I utilised gunny sacks but Ron got away without them.

On arrival at Katoomba we weighed our loads - mine was 60½ pounds (27 kilos) and Ron's 55 pounds (25 kilos), mine being the heavier due to the tent and a tripod. A taxi deposited us at the Explorers' Tree and we staggered down Nellie's Glen to camp on the Old Pub Site where local coal miners had caroused many years ago.

Following the Six Foot Track we were next day overtaken (THAT would not have been very difficult) near Little River by a private SBW party comprising Harold and Win Chardon, Dorothy Lawry, Grace Edgecombe (Noble to you) and Frances Bamsay, all to camp together that night at Jenolan River Junction. Leaving the quintette, Ron and I proceeded up Jenolan River to turn left into Mumbedah Creek which was well marked by the old Mountain Trails Club's blaze of three vertical bells in vertical line which good old Myles Dunphy had chiseled into a she-oak.

We were soon confronted by a huge steer with horns resembling motorbike handle-bars, and when we yelled at him, he made off up a slope at an amazing pace for he was lean and apparently in "good nick". Later, I spoke to Norbert Carlon about him and he said the beast was a well-known pest and should be liquidated as he possessed some magic charm which enticed marketable cattle away from the Cox. Finally we arrived at the spot where the creek narrowed to a sharp "V" to become a steep cascade of moss-covered rocks, non-negotiable with heavy packs, and called it a day.

The time had arrived to "take to the hills" and not knowing where or when we would strike water, we drank lots of tea at breakfast, to take-off up a ridge which we hoped would lead us on to Moorara Heights (now called a Buttress). It was an excellent ridge to follow and possesses two small saddles which obviously were used as cattle winter camps, these animals staying above the frost-line to feed in winter and dropping down every 3/4 days to replenish their tanks at a stream. After lunch, we ran into mist and light rain and made a crest which we judged was the highest point and sought for a saddle which was so marked on the one-mile-to-an-inch map as connecting the Heights to the Main Divide Plateau. With visibility nil we descended a couple of likely-looking spots but retreated as we were loth to needlessly lose height so arduously gained, so camped on a little flat near unlimited firewood. We caught additional water from the tent "roof", lit a roaring fire which reflected its heat back to us from a huge log and settled in with loads of tucker and water. The mist formed an eerie blanket with no sounds so that we were really in a white-out, but not lost.

Peering from the tent next morning, we were most gratified to learn that we were actually camped on the lip of the desired saddle which was much deeper than we anticipated. The mist lifted and we crossed over to discover some very old blazes on trees which took us in the desired south-westerly direction, knowing that we must cut the old Kanangra Track somewhere, our goal being the Walls. We emerged from the pleasant open forest right at Cunningham's cattle-man's hut where the Track intersected Budthingeroo Creek and were astonished to find the Kanangra Road had just reached there. After a late lunch we walked down the Track and the day being mighty cold with early darkness, we camped in a grove of trees and were glad of a big fire as we did not carry slacks to save weight. Tough.

It was pleasant easy walking along the old Kanangra Track which was a relic of the days when horse-drawn vehicles bore campers out to the Dance Floor Cave, winding in and out amongst trees, fallen logs and rock outcrops, in places almost indiscernible, and naturally much longer than the present road. We arrived at the big cave at lunch-time and settled in for a few days, dragging down lots of firewood. The crystal-clear drip that is the cave's water supply today, is in the same spot as it was fifty years ago, when it fell into a small pool thoughtfully hacked out by some person, in the solid rock. All the heavy supporting round wood beams of the dance floor were there and in one we noted the carved names of old SBW identities, Charlie Pryde and Laz Pura, Charlie being remembered for Pryde's Prospect rock out in the "Dogs".

The weather was fine and packless we wandered about the Tops, inspecting the Falls, taking photographic gems and drinking in the magnificent scenery, relaxing in the sun. One evening we were alerted by female coo-ees and down the track to the cave came Dorothy Lawry and Grace Edgecombe who had ascended Krunglebungle Track after leaving their mates. It appears they, too, had carried a bag of water to the heights and no sooner there than Grace stepped back on it and they lost the lot. Much chagrin and questionable expressions! Then we heard motor-bike engines and two riders came down, imbued with high hopes they could ride through to the then lovely Burraborang Valley, their maps showing a dotted track. After being shown the commencement of the rocky track from the cave, they rapidly changed their plans, and after camping with us made off for the back road to Wombeyan Caves and beyond.

The next morning I witnessed the most magnificent "lake" of mist. It lay about 500 feet below us in the Deep and extended right up to Blackheath. There was a white dome over Mount Dingo, Solitary an island, and away out beyond Camden and round to Tonalli was just one great white tablecloth caught up in a silvery morning sun. Cameras clicked and I set up my tripod for a silhouette at Kanangra Head. Setting the 30 seconds self-timer, I took off to make the scene, and slipping, fell heavily, badly spraining my left wrist and removing several layers from my left knee, but nevertheless was recorded on the celluloid. It was ironic that at that moment an official SBW party, camped on Breakfast Creek, was roundly cursing the rain as they cooked breakfast! And we in brilliant sunshine!

Our morning enjoyment was dampened when at lunch-time the mist swirled up and we were engulfed in misty rain, too, and this continued for the next five days, the girls making off for Katoomba via Hughes Ridge and Clear Hill, whilst we moped in the cave, hoping for a weather break, whilst I nursed a stiffened knee and painful wrist.

Fed up, Ron and I decided our luck was out and that we'd give up our cherished plan and make for civilisation and dry feet. On the Tuesday we broke camp and proceeded down Hughes Ridge and camped near some singing cascades on the Kowmung - one could easily imagine there were female voices in the night coming from the tumbling waters. The river was softly beautiful in the light rain and on rounding bends we often disturbed mobs of walleroos feeding on the moist grasses. We were thankful when making camp at the Kowmung Junction to find firewood which had been thoughtfully stacked against a tree by the girls. Once again, Grace, many thanks for the second time in fifty years! You must be ageing too!

Ron decided to go home to mother and her pumpkin scones and to courageously report having burnt out the feet of sox she had knitted. I would spend the final four days at the Carlon homestead. We walked up to the White Dog Creek Junction and struck up to the right on the well-graded ridge, on which the only tracks were those of wombats and roos, to gain Medlow Gap. Ron left me at the Black Dog Track for Katoomba via Narrow Neck whilst I proceeded along that track to Carlons where I arrived very cold and wet, clad only in shorts and cape-groundsheets, keeping my packed shirt dry. Soon I was wrapped round a bowl of delicious hot soup before a roaring fire in the hearth in the company of Norbert and three young men who were dressed as

for the South Pole, expressing amazement at the entry of an unshaven apparition out of the mist and rain, stained with bushfire charcoal.

As luck would have it, the Friday dawned clear and sunny, a time to wash filthy clothes and revel in Mrs. Carlon's cooking, also drying gear. On the morrow the men expressed a wish to see some local topography so I took them down Breakfast Creek, had a look at lower Jenolan River and back up Galong Creek to Carlons, all proving they had good legs. Sunday, the 15th day, after lunch it was up the Devil's Hole to Katoomba and the train, with the prospect of another twelve months work from the morrow.

I must mention here that our catering supplies were ample and in the knowledge of a shortened trip, we had doubled our rations over the last three days - and still had a little excess! All of which proved you can plan everything but the weather! Well, it was worth a try just for the prospect of fifteen days sheer enjoyment of the wild places. My total walking distance was estimated at 185 km. And the cost, dear readers, including return train fare, was two pounds eight shillings per head, or \$4.80. How about that??? Did someone mention inflation???

HISTORIC ADDENDUM

I made mention of the new Kanangra Road, then about halfway to the Walls, a tourist road for which there was no apparent clamour.

The story came out post-war that it was really a defence project. It must be remembered that in the late thirties the Berlin/Rome/Tokio Axis was becoming more belligerent and so it seems the Intelligence had gained information that Japan had plans on invading Australia and which, in fact, nearly came to pass but for the United States Navy. The industrialised Wollongong Area would have been a prize, so it seems a "scorched earth" strategy was adopted in that all the Illawarra cattle were to be driven to Camden, thence to the then Burragorang Valley, over the Cedar Road, up Gingra Ridge to Kanangra Tops. Up to 1938 the only access to the Tops was by an old steel ladder to the left of the Dance Floor Cave, reaching to the edge of the escarpment, this being replaced by a stony ramp blasted from the solid rock. This would have enabled cattle to be driven to Oberon and the Bathurst Plains.

Before the creation of the road, walkers had to rely on service cars from Katoomba or Blackheath which transported holiday-makers to the Caves House so that it was always mid-afternoon before one was deposited at the turn-off, so that one-and-a-half days were involved before the Walls were reached, a stark contrast to today's Friday night convenient starts. Another problem was that the Jenolan Caves Road was a single carriage-way, with "down" traffic to the Caves from midnight to noon, and "up" from noon to midnight, completely preventing any Friday night excursions. Oh! the lucky walkers of today! Or are they??? Everything too easy!!! Skill no longer required - maps like street directories - fire trails to follow - pre-cooked meals - light-weight nylon flies - detailed route books - pressure stoves - helicopter searches and evacuations! Softly, softly!!!

* * * * *

THEATRE PARTY

"BREAKING THE CODE" - by Hugh Whitmore.

The real-life subject of this play is Alan Turing, the mathematical genius who fathered the modern computer and cracked the German Enigma code during the war, thereby winning Churchill's acclaim as one of the principal architects of allied victory. BUT, his private life came close to destroying him.

Theatre - Northside Theatre, Killara.

Date - Tuesday, 17th May, 8.15 pm.

Price - Theatre party price \$16.20. Student/pensioner \$11.

Phone 909 3671 for tickets as soon as possible. FAZELEY READ.

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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SURVEYING COOLANA

by Dot Butler

There are two camping areas favoured by the mob at Re-unions, one being down on the river flats in the company of wandering jew and grass ticks, the other up on the terrace above the hut in the comforting company of George Davison's ashes, scattered under his memorial tree in 1983. The Davison Tree, the biggest by far on the property, seems to spread its mighty arms further and further each year. In like manner, tales of old Dave proliferate throughout the years.

I met him in 1971 at a Quaker Meeting at Wahroonga. I had been saying that we needed the services of a Surveyor to locate the boundaries of our conjoint properties on the Kangaroo River. This tall, snowy-haired gentleman introduced himself: "I'm a surveyor. I'm 81 and still practicing. I would be glad to be of assistance."

So began 12 years of a very happy association. Early in the morning I would pick him up at Cheltenham, together with all his surveying equipment, and we would be on the job by 10 am. He had acquired from the Lands Department the pertinent maps of the four blocks (a 50 acre and a 40 acre for the Quakers, and two 40 acre blocks for the SBW). We began the survey from the only known point - a large-headed tack driven into the N.E. corner post of "Lazy Acres". I was chairman, meaning I went ahead with the chain north, south, east or west as directed by Mr. Davison who would be peering into the eye-piece of the theodolite.

The original survey was made in 1878 and in those days all surveys of rough country land were laid out in a magnetic north/south grid, where possible below rocky escarpments. So we had to look for a peg somewhere below the precipice on the line which ran due south, between two great rocks. This was eventually located after a bit of confusion due to the fact that the survey marks of a zig-zag road were also in the vicinity.

We would work till billy-tea time, then onto the job again till lunch time, after which Dave would have a sleep, then wake up in mid-afternoon for more work. Sometimes it took us a whole day to find a peg, put in 110 years ago and now overgrown by vines and bracken, or the incised marking on a tree which had survived a century of winds and bush-fires; sometimes only a stump would remain. So we located all the corner-pegs of the Bushwalkers' and the Quakers' properties.

Good old Dave is gone now - if still with us he would be 100 next year. As I am probably the only one now who knows where all the pegs are, it would be a good idea if some of the young ones made it their business to know as much as I know, and get it all down properly on one map.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION1988

For application form
see
Reverse of this notice



FEDERATION OF BUSHWALKING CLUBS NSW - Report of March Meeting

by Spiro Hajinikitas.

Conservation: Opposition shadow minister Tim Moore* will be contacted by FBW to arrange a meeting. *(Since the elction 19/5/88 now The MInister for Conservation and Environmental matters. ED)

Kowmung Committee Report: Vote of thanks to Sydney University Bushwalkers for hard work and a donation of \$100 to be held in trust.

A letter has been received from the Minister of Water Resources which in part states that a control flooding dam on the Kowmung in conjunction with Warragamba Dam "upgrading" is not suitable for ecological and environmental reasons.

Telephone Directory: FBW has decided to pay for entry in the telephone directory under "B".

Tracks & Access: The Burgh Track in Royal National Park between Garrawarra Farm and the river has been upgraded.

Anzac Day Service at Splendour Rock: Paddy Pallin is coming. Gate will be opened at Medlow Gap at 11 am on 24/4/88 and again on 25/4/88 at 1 pm for exit. (The gate will only be opened for a short time.)

Bush Dance, Friday 13th May: Lane Cove Town Hall, 8 pm to 12 pm, Band - Hot Foot, \$8 at door. Spot prizes, lucky door guesssing competition, prize for best field costume (?), B.Y.O. food and drinks. (See also SBW party to be arranged by Denise Shaw, phone 922 6093. ED)

Search & Rescue: Two alpha-numeric pagers have been purchased to assist call-outs. (See page 5. ED)

* * * * *

WALKS NOTICE - Please note that KEN CLACHER'S Budawang walk of 6,7,8 May (Mother's Day!) has been brought forward by one week to April 29,30, 1st May.

FBW BUSH DANCE - Friday 13th May (see Federation Notes above).

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Cut out:

THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS INC. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 1988

Please send this notice with your cheque/money order to:-

The Hon. Treasurer, The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc., Box 4476 GPO, Sydney,2001.

NAME/S: (For ALL members in household)

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If a receipt is required please send a stamped self-addressed envelope.

TYPE: (Cross out any not applicable) - Single - Household - Non-active
- Non-active with magazine - Magazine subscription only.

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$

- [Single \$25, Household \$25 plus \$15 for each extra person. Non-active \$12.]
- [Non-active with magazine \$18. Magazine subscription only \$12.]
- [Prospective members \$18 (for 6 months - no magazine).]
