

BUSHWALKERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs
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BUSHFIRES IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Over the past few months there have been many bushfires in the Blue Mountains, including areas which are extremely popular bushwalking destinations.

The most publicised fire was the one which burnt much of the Grose Valley, before Christmas. This was actually started from two sources

- one between Mt. Victoria and Bell which probably started from faulty train brakes;
- the other in the Hat Hill area appeared to be deliberately lit.

These two fronts joined and were added to by back-burning carried out by fire-fighters.

As a result walking tracks to Blue Gum forest have been closed to bushwalkers. This action has been taken because many of the tracks are no longer well defined and many steps have been burnt making the tracks unsafe. Temporary closure of tracks will also enable regeneration of vegetation to take place.

Another fire, started by lightning in the Newnes State Forest, has burnt out much of the Wolgan Canyon area. This fire extended down to the Wolgan-Capertee junction, however it appears patchy and many canyons remained unburnt.

There was also a lightning induced fire along the Gingra Range which extended from the Kowmung River to Little Gingra Creek. Smaller fires occurred at Bindook, Erskine Creek and Glenbrook.

Information on these fires and the re-opening of the Grose Valley tracks can be obtained from the Blue Mountains District Office of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Great Western Highway, Blackheath, phone (047) 87 8877.

Roger Lembit

WHAT TO DO IN A BUSHFIRE

Most experienced bushwalkers minimise their risk by walking, liloing or canyoning in cool rivers and creeks over the summer period (or by sitting in front of bulldozers!). It is both irresponsible and dangerous to enter areas where fires are burning.

Should you get caught in a fire it is best to move downhill towards water. If the fire is moving too quickly it is best to find an open space free of fallen trees, clear away leaf litter and lie face down covering all exposed skin. Most people die from the radiated heat, sometimes following suffocation by smoke. Old bushwalkers recommend burning a fire break and stepping into the burnt area, however this should be done with great care and is not recommended by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Running through the fire front should only be attempted if flames are less than a metre high and a metre across (a fairly rare occurrence in hot, dry summer conditions).

DO NOT LIGHT FIRES DURING A TOTAL FIRE BAN

Roger Lembit

SIX FOOT TRACK

The Land Board Office, Orange has advised the following information regarding the 6 Foot Track from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves.

1. From Nellies Glen, the fire trail is legal access until it turns northerly across Megalong Creek.
2. From this point to Hartley Cemetery there is a legal Crown road through two freehold portions to the South of the creek. As this is not clearly evident, it is suggested that access be gained by walking along the banks of Megalong Creek to the "Old Ford Reserve".

3. From Hartley Cemetery, the track passes through the private property "Euroka" before heading down to the Cox's River. According to the Land Board, this portion of the track was never a "continuous legal access". The owner of Euroka has no objections to through walkers who use the existing farm tracks to cross his property. All intending walkers should however, make prior contact with the owner before commencing their trip.
4. From the western boundary of Euroka, the track is distinct and legal down to the Cox.
5. Generally the track has become indistinct after crossing the Cox, and the fire trail through the property "Shenandoah" has been accepted as the only access. It should be noted that walkers must keep to this road.
6. This fire trail continues till it meets the Hampton-Jenolan Caves Road. This road must then be used until the top of the descent to Jenolan Caves, where the original 6 Foot Track (or fire trail approximating its location) has been identified with trail markers. Access from here to the Caves House is easily followed.

Understandably the owner of Euroka has had troubles in the past especially as day visitors/picnickers have tended to wander across his property and make use of the creek "without authority". Whilst it is not the best arrangements, it is better than none and the hassles that that involves.

Owner: J. Rawlings, 45 Peronne Avenue,
Clontarf.

Manager: Peter Vowles, "Euroka",
Megalong Valley.
(047) 87 9121.

The Land Board Office is planning to erect signs and print brochures in the future so that future problems may be alleviated - "when funds and labour permit".

OH! DAM IT

What do you do when you have a "wilderness" landscape, in which a mighty river had carved a deep gorge. Where mining had previously been conducted until the ore had become uneconomical to extract. Which subsequently had become the playground for a few bushwalkers and paddlers. Where the State was suffering larger numbers of unemployed. Well you DAM the river!! "I have long been aware that capitalists are at hand only waiting for a cheap supply of power in order to start the former industry on a larger scale". (Sydney Morning Herald, 29th October).

No, I am not referring to the Franklin River but to the Shoalhaven River - the year, 1913. It's funny how history repeats itself.



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BUSHWALKERS

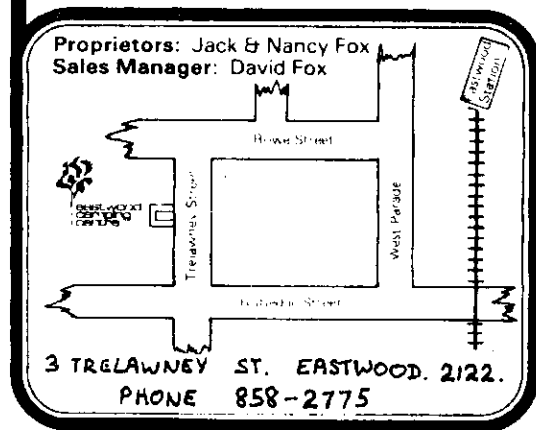
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FERAL PINES

Walkers are requested to report any sightings of feral pines in national parks, stating the area where they have been seen. However, make sure you do not confuse native clubmosses with young Pinus radiata seedlings. Clubmosses have a superficial resemblance to young pines, but may be separated by the leaf size and arrangement. Clubmosses have small, whorled leaves and may grow up to 1m high, whilst Pinus radiata has leaves which are a few centimetres long and clustered at the end of branches.

Clubmosses may also possess reproduction structures (strobili) whilst pine seedlings will not. If in doubt, consult a recognised text such as Flora Of The Sydney Region (Beadle, Evans & Carolin).

Michael Doherty
Conservation Director.

TAUTOLOGY

Fergus Bell, our S. & R. Director, recently stated that the police thought there was little chance of finding "any survivors - that is living survivors", from the Barrington Tops plane crash.

The Hikers Ten Commandments below were printed in an old hiking magazine in July 1932. I use the word "hike" advisably for this a magazine printed for those who, during the Depression, took up the activities run by such stores as H. G. Palmers - perhaps more of that later.

1. Thou shall keep the Sabbath Day for thyself and thy companion.
2. Thou shalt, whilst hiking, walk and not steal a ride on the back of motor cars. Safety first.
3. Thou shall not hum cigarettes or matches from your fellow hikers.
4. Thou shalt not covet thy fellow hiker's girl friend, nor his goods nor chattels, which he has so laboriously carried.
5. Thou shalt not use any language likely to be objectionable to your fellow hikers.
6. Thou shalt not damage any shrubs, trees, flowers or plants, but will do the best of your ability endeavour to prevent the same.
7. Thou shalt always obey the orders of those in command of the hikers.
8. Thou should always have a change of socks, as you will find it beneficial.
9. Thou shalt not pass any comments on the dress of your fellow female hikers, no matter how short the "shorts" are.
10. Thou shalt always endeavour to create good fellowship and harmony amongst the hikers and assist generally in community singing.

CL10.

PADDY PALLIN FOUNDATION

The Paddy Pallin Foundation is inviting applications for grants for 1985.

No application form is needed. A letter stating the aims of the project, the grant requested and the total cost is sufficient.

Applications should be sent to:

Paddy Pallin Foundation,
69 Liverpool Street,
SYDNEY. N.S.W. 2000.

Enquiries should be directed to Mr Robert Pallin at the Foundation (Phone number 264 2685).

No matter what the result of the Federal Election, pressure must be maintained, if any political party is to save this vital World Heritage area.

All clubs and members are urged to continue writing letters and telegrams to the Federal politicians, demanding a stop to further development in S-W Tasmania.

SNOWY RIVER TRIP

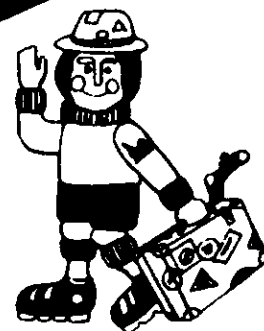
28TH DECEMBER - 31ST DECEMBER, 1981.

Following a successful rafting tour of the Franklin River in Tasmania last February, I felt a follow-up in my spare week's holiday at Christmas quite opportune. The question of which river was magically answered by a Melbourne-based tour company who sent me their brochure on the Snowy River. Finding a companion for this excursion two weeks prior to departure proved difficult with YHA personnel being typically well organised into other venues. On the last Monday club night of '81 I mentioned the trip to Phill who arrived that night as a first-timer. He had notched up two previous raft trips and was keen for his third.

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A new paddle was completed on the day before a trial run on a canoe trip 17 km. on the Nepean River to Penrith, and proved good. Unpack that trip, repack for the Snowy and away with Phill driving after a late night party - life's too short.

700 km. later we were at McKillop's Bridge at 5.45 p.m. Monday 28th December, and watching a fast current flow were persuaded to an immediate start. Eight kayaks were being off-loaded from a trailer and left before us, only to be soon passed when one flipped over on the first rapids. Recent rains and more than usual hydro water gave us 10km. in 90 minutes before our first night's camp. Spirits were high, with a superb evening, unsurpassed scenery and a slap-up dinner, and the soothing sound of running water to lull us into a good night's sleep.

We were up, fed, packed and away before the fog lifted at 8.00 a.m. Two girls had camped at Little River after walking out on the last access track for the next 16km. We next passed six members of Outward Bound sunning themselves and obviously in no hurry, planning six days for their 70km. trip.

Uninhibited shouts of excitement, adrenalin pumping, we cascaded through one rapid after another, narrowly missing rocks as we paddled a slalom course through narrow channels. We stopped to chat to the very group who sent me the brochure. Two leaders (both in the one canoe), another canoe plus three rafts each stacked high with barrels and two novices to handle them. They had each paid \$400 and were not too pleased with the organisation. Their useless paddles could barely guide let alone propel them faster than the current, and strong headwinds that we encountered later would have pushed them back. I photographed them as they negotiated an easy rapid with difficulty, putting two rafts high and dry mid-stream on rocks.

The biggest group of all were 27 members of Melbourne YHA in 15 canoes or kayaks. At each decent river drop the passing of each craft was recorded on movie film with the appropriate cheer from observers. The bamboo-shafted double paddle broke on Phill and as we fashioned a replacement YHA entered the fray with much uncertainty and some laughter when two ran aground and two others flipped over. Should be a good film. Several of the group had done the trip before and mentioned how much warmer the water was, and better than average flow.

A group of eight in rafts and four in canoes, one of which was split in half, only made the next track out, known as the Devil's Backbone. There were heavy overcast skies after lunch and a 15 minute electrical storm before it fined up again.

Anticipating the YHA to catch up we reserved a large beach for them and camped on a smaller site. A good

Until now we had passed through V-formed tree covered valleys, but for now it was spectacular vertical rock-walled narrow ravines, nearly as impressive as the Franklin. Our only portage 50m. long, followed, and the only time either of us flipped over resulting in Phill's camera getting wet. We met a Melbourne couple in a Kayak - a share broker and his wife getting away from the bizz. Two hilarious groups of four and ten were doing the river fully dressed on single airbeds. They asked if the Franklin could be done the same way! They did 38km. on the river and took four days. Ten walkers had entered down Museum Spur and were not keen to walk out in the 40°C heat. New Guinea Spur had the thickest jungle yet and Phil thought it well named. Both spurs had heliports on them, possibly for rescues.

Around the next corner on a wide stretch of white sand a space blanket had been erected as a shade. Out of the forest in single file came three families, and the sound of chain saws and the sight of four-wheel drive vehicles meant an end to the tranquility. We had rafted 64km. to Jackson's Crossing where a couple in a landrover very generously offered us a lift out the next day. Phil's hands were all blistered and he was suffering from sun-stroke, and quietly glad the ordeal was over. Comparing it to the Franklin, though there were a few narrow fast-flowing sections and the rocky ravine was good, it could only rate a poor second.

I was up at 6.00 a.m. had breakfast, packed the non-essentials for the drive out and loaded the raft to experience the last 18km. to the Basin Road. There were longer paddle sections as the river widened out and was too shallow to float free. There were a few fast stretches but as one fisherman commented, the river had dropped a foot overnight so it would be slow going before the next substantial rainfall. Fishing was not good - though a report of one 1.3kg. perch being caught was encouraging. Wildlife included hundreds of lizards, a few snakes, wallaby, black swans and more birds than I have ever seen or heard before in the Snowies, I had covered 83km. in 22 hours rafting.

Exit was by a lone poplar tree and past the second pluviometer where I dried out the air bed and raft, then deflated them for the walk out up a steep hill and along the 6km. to rendezvous with the Landrover.

For an Easter trip I am suggesting a drive along the Snowy, the scenery around McKillop's Bridge is probably the best in Aussie. We could inspect Murrindal Cave and if time permits Buchan Caves.

Morris Stocker.

FIFTY YEARS AGO (2)

Harmony/Snappy Hike Songs/Health and the Girl.

Hiking songs are going to be popular. Palings will be putting out "My Hiking Girl" next week. It is the latest English song, the work of Leslie Sarony, and it proved a big hit in England. Most likely it will get its big airing at the "On Our Selection" hike in a fortnight. (Note, this hike is to be lead by Dad - Bert Bailey).

Here is the chorus:

I walk the country lanes, the pretty country lanes,
With my sweet hiking girl,
Rain or sun, it's all one,
To my sweet hiking girl.
What do we care for weather? Not a tinkers cuss!
So long as we are together it's enough for us!
By all the stars above - I'm happy to be in love
With just a hiking girl.

Albert's have published "Hike Yourself to Jolly Good Health", and its snappy style has attracted attention. Anything that adds to the joy of the hike is good, and music is predominate.

CLIO - July 1932

YEAR OF THE TREE

1982 has been declared the year of the tree, when people are supposed to re-evaluate the benefits that trees bring, and how quickly they are being destroyed. Just over fifty years ago bushwalkers got together to save Blue Gum Forest from the bushman's axe, for the benefit of us today, and tomorrow.

The Save Blue Gum campaign produced an early walking guide for around the suburbs and the nearby bushland. It included several practical ideas, one of which was "whenever you can - plant a tree. Bury your fruit stones where they have a chance to grow".

This raises two points (i) is the Australian environment suitable for growing fruit trees outside cultivated fields, and (ii) if yes, then how successful was this advice. Many the time I've wished for a juicy orange at the top of a climb, or for a sweet watermelon beside a refreshing river. I guess we can't be right all the time.

CLIO.

ADVERTISING RATES

Advertising rates for the Newsletter are now

¼ page - \$40

½ page - \$70

full page - \$120

The price of inserts being included with the newsletter is negotiable (according to weight etc.), the minimum cost being \$40. Inserts must be ready for inclusion with the Newsletter, i.e. printed, packaged and delivered.

FEDERATION REUNION

The Federation reunion in 1983 will be held on the Cox River, at the bottom of the 6' track on the weekend 19th - 20th of March. It is being organised by the Ramblers Bushwalking Club.

Walks Secretaries should make a note of this date now for inclusion in programmes.

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Please send articles, correspondence, book reviews, details of annual or epic walks etc. to

The Editor
Bushwalkers Newsletter
F.B.W.
G.P.O. Box 2090
SYDNEY NSW 2001
