

# The Federation of Bushwalking Clubs ,N.S.W.

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## CMW'S GOLDEN JUBILEE YEAR

1984 is the Golden Jubilee year of one of the State's oldest bushwalking clubs - the Coast and Mountain Walkers (CMW).

The highlight in a year packed with historic, as well as walking activities, was the 50th anniversary dinner in February. Testament to the longevity-inducing benefits of bushwalking was the attendance at the dinner of three people of special significance in the history of outdoors activity. One was the doyen of bushwalkers and father-figure of the movement, the indomitable Paddy Pallin.

The second was Ninian Melville, the first manager of the CMW who guided and inspired its formation in February 1934. The third was the first president of CMW, Bill Holesgrove. More than 140 people attended the dinner. They were a mixture of retired members and active current members. Although there was no campfire - and no billy tea - there were still plenty of yarns swapped and quite a few photos of walks of yesteryear passed around the tables.

Several past presidents attended. Ex-members came from various parts of the State, in some cases to see old friends they had not seen since their active walking days.

Some great tales were told of the early years. For those worried about the shortage of leaders in clubs it was somewhat daunting to hear Ninian Melville's account of his experience - he led the club's first 54 walks.

And in case the view might be held that women have come into their own as walkers in recent years, let it be said that women outnumbered men 10 to 1 in the early days of the CMW. Kanangra was unreachable by car and most trips involved some train travel. There were a few uncomplimentary remarks, too, about those early examples of dehydrated food.

Walkers today owe a great debt of gratitude to those early walkers for their contribution to the making and development of maps.

They were in many instances the first to draw up maps of many areas.

Paddy Pallin paid tribute to the bushwalking pioneers in his toast to the club. He said that by their love of the bush and their commitment to the cause and ideals of conservation and preservation of public lands and parks, these people made a marked social impact on the nation. Paddy's brief address ended with a short and jolting message. Thirty years ago, he said, there were 20 clubs in the Federation, with up to 1000 members. His was the only shop in the whole of Australia supplying gear to the walkers.

"Now there are four such shops in Sydney and ones in several suburbs. But the number of people in clubs is below that of 30 years ago", he said.

He urged those in clubs to get busy and increase membership. "Membership of a club is the finest way to get to know the best walks and get to know the lore of the bush and to fight for its preservation" he said.

The organisation of the historic dinner was a tribute to three CMW stalwarts - John Bendal, the secretary; Dennis Brown, the membership secretary and Budawangs 'King', Colin Watson.

A number of special slide evenings will be held throughout the year.

And as if in anticipation of Paddy Pallin's prodding, the CMW have decided to adopt new territory. As from March 28 its new home has been Concord High School where meetings are held every second Wednesday evening. The club hopes the move will lead to a more pronounced geographical identification with the area, thereby attracting increased membership.

The club's forward programme of social events and slide nights is published in "Into the Blue", which is available at all outdoor gear shops.

Visitors from other clubs are most welcome at these historic slide nights.

Bryne Smith  
Ph. 887-2970

## STONE AND METAL IDOLS

A great number of bushwalkers appear to be converting to some form of pagan religion. Prime symbols of this faith are the stone rings and aluminium foil left in fireplaces.

Associated with this religion are two mythological statements:

- 1) Stone rings contain fires.
- 2) Aluminium foil burns.

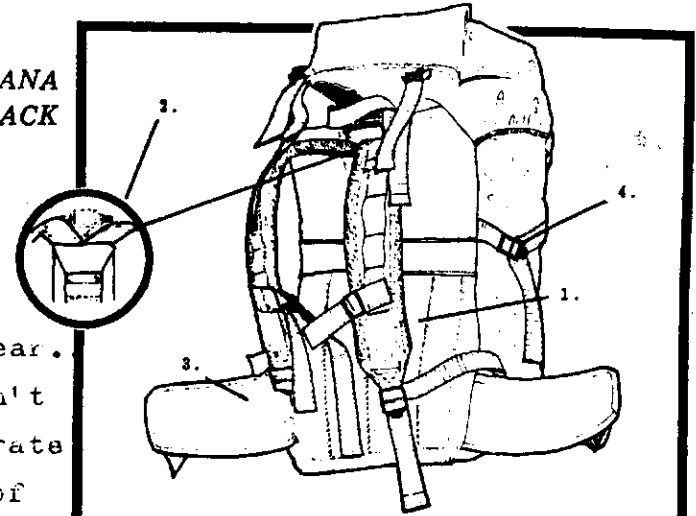
There is no scientific evidence for the first myth. On the other hand there is considerable evidence that the rocks are valuable habitat for lizards, insects and other invertebrates. Close supervision and clearance of leaf litter are more effective at preventing spread of campfires than wanton habitat destruction.

The second myth is just that - a myth! Clear evidence of this is the millions of tonnes (slight exaggeration) of aluminium left around campsites in the Blue Mountains. Help prevent future aluminium mining in National Parks - CARRY OUT YOUR FOIL (and your sabre?).

The Flame

OUTGEAR are fast developing a reputation for quality and design. So much so that the 1984 Australian Expedition to the unclimbed K2 peak have chosen them as a supplier of packs and other major items of gear. BEFORE you buy your next pack don't be conned by fancy colours, elaborate parachute harnesses and posters of pretty walkers!

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**THE AGE OF THE MOON**  
or HALVE THE NUMBER YOU FIRST THOUGHT OF!

The moon's age is measured in days from new moon; it is 7 days at first quarter, 15 days at full moon, and 22 days at third quarter. Harvey's formula is usually accurate to within a day (or occasionally two) over the Christian Era, using the Gregorian Calendar. The calculation is as follows:

- eg. 31st May, 1984
- 1) Divide the year number by 19; Keep only the remainder 8
  - 2) Multiply the remainder by 11 88
  - 3) Add 1/3 of the century number Excluding fractions 6
  - 4) Add 1/4 of the century number Excluding fractions 4
  - 5) Add the number 8 8
  - 6) Subtract the number of the century -19
  - Subtotal for 1984(see note 1) 87
  - 7) Add the number of month Starting March=1 (January=11, February=12) 3
  - 8) Add the day of the month 31
  - 9) Sum 121
  - 10) Subtract multiples of 30 -120
  - 11) Age of the moon(days) 1

If that seems too hard then why not just look up your calendar or the following table :

Year	The Moon's Age on the Zeroeth Day of each Month											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1984					0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1985	8	9	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1986	19	20	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1987	0	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1988	11	12	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1989	22	23	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	0	1	2
1990	3	4	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Note 1: To make it a little easier for each year after 1984 add 11 to this subtotal until 1995 which is divisible exactly by 19.

Year	Subtotal
1985	98
1986	109
1987	120
etc.	
1994	197
1995	-1
1996	10
1997	21
1998	32
1999	43

By the year 2000 you should have the hang of the calculations!

Ref: Earth, Moon & Planets, Fred L. Whipple, 3rd Ed., Harvard Uni Press

Keith Maxwell

### SEARCH AND RESCUE PHONE CONTACT SYSTEM

During a recent alert it was obvious that some members of the newer clubs are not fully aware of how our phone contact system works. The system as evolved is designed to share the cost of phone calls as well as minimising response time. It is a pyramid of three tiers.



Should an alert arise any club member, not necessarily a club contact, can notify any member of the committee. Usually the director is contacted but in his absence the field officers/rescue officers can call out S&R.

The director will take down written details of the alert including accident details and pre-existing medical conditions (if applicable) and next of kin.

For your safety then it is imperative always to leave as much as possible of this type of information with someone reliable who you will see immediately when you arrive back home from your trip.

The response to an alert varies from whether it is an overdue party or an accident.

Normally for an overdue party the director would be contacted the day AFTER the party was expected out. In almost all instances overdue parties have safely walked out within 24 hours of their expected time out. Thus unless circumstances dictate otherwise a minimum of 24 hours is allowed before searching is commenced.

The director would then put the committee "on alert". At this stage club contacts would NOT be notified but discussion within the committee drawing on the differing experience of the field officers/rescue officers would decide the appropriate action.

Most times this generates more questions than answers. As well as phoning back for additional information the director will now simplify the lines of communication as much as possible. Thus within the committee the director's phone or a mutually agreed phone of another member becomes the central number. All information and decisions will flow to and from this phone.

Similarly if your wife's, or brother's mate's mother is waiting for a phone call to pick him up at Katoomba when they walk out we would communicate directly with the mother so as to be notified immediately that they arrive at Katoomba. Also, you, the wife and the brother and etc. should now completely avoid phoning the member of the committee. This is necessary to keep the phone lines as open as possible.

If a search is required the director will delegate certain clubs for a particular committee member to phone. He/she will then phone ONE club contact from your club as in the list supplied each year by your club. All information to and from the committee to your club members will flow through this phone.

Thus your club's contacts must be available night and day and record written details of the call out.

Within your club the contact will arrange whatever system he/she thinks appropriate to phone members. The members notified should also take written details of the alert but under NO circumstances contact the committee.

If you choose to attend the search then you MUST inform your club contact before leaving home who MUST record your name. Once final numbers are known your contact will phone the committee and give the NUMBER of walkers coming only.

So long as you drive to and from the search by the shortest practical route you are covered by insurance from the moment you leave home.

When you arrive at the S&R base remember you must also record your name in the base logbook.

When you are present on a search unless otherwise instructed all enquiries from the press MUST be directed towards the committee.

By rigidly following this system our call back time is minimised. It has sometimes happened that the missing party has walked out just as clubs were being contacted to go and search for them. By following the above system the committee were the first to know that the party was safe and were able to immediately call off the alert and minimise inconvenience to club members.

For an accident the committee may respond immediately using the above system or depending on circumstances may choose to ask the Police Rescue Squad to do the rescue but always considering the safety of the injured person uppermost. Either way we still must notify the Police of a search or an accident alert answered.

However the Police are under no similar obligation to contact Bushwalkers' S&R if they are told of an alert. So unless it is a matter of life and death do not contact the Police. Bushwalkers' S&R is for your safety and benefit.

least 2 metres in flood at the time - we crossed just near where the river enters Lake Burragarang.

While I felt confident doing the crossing I have had little experience in these things - I expect that very few people have. My question is "Does Federation have a policy to help in these matters as it does for such things as for bushfires?". If anyone would like to make some comment or recommendations on the crossing of flooded rivers, I would be delighted in publishing it in the Newsletter.

### AS AUSSIE AS A CUP OF BILLY TEA

"... and as there were great numbers of trees lying about in all directions, we were never at a loss for a fire; for, thank God! we can make a fire where we liked, and burn what we liked, and nobody to interfere with us". (a)

Thus wrote an English visitor to Australia in 1853 upon his experiences on the gold fields. In many ways this attitude is still followed today by bushwalkers. But I wonder whether it's about time we reconsider what we are doing to the environment especially now that more recreational time means greater numbers of people in the bush.

Apart from providing internal and external warmth and a feeling of well being, fires also act as a pivot for social interaction. Sit aside from your companions on a grassy flat and you'll be left alone. Light a fire and watch the others, even strangers, gravitate towards those flames like moths. Campfires can be a pleasure and a joy - and they can be an abomination.

It seems that some people, after camping overnight, want to perpetuate their stay by leaving tombstones and scarring the land. How often have you been along a ridge, or beside a stream and found a little cluster of stones forming a wall around a sterile patch of charcoal. The odd pile of stones beneath which lay a long dead fire. (Perhaps this may explain the structure of Cayley's Repulse which has been a puzzle to historians) Many people profess their wish to preserve the environment but ensure their enjoyment has been enshrined.

"A thousand homes are waiting us by gully, plain and hill,  
A thousand fireless altars wait unseen  
But tomorrow you may follow us on any track you will,  
By the little patch of black upon the green". (b)

Controversy has raged in the past over the actions of the Flame who feels such remnants are a blight on the environment. Not only does he (or she) destroy or remove man-made objects but even carries out bits of (un)burnt metal, glass and plastic others have left behind. Thus it would appear that those who cry out the loudest are those who feel they have been desecrated. If you want a clue as to whom the Flame is, may I suggest that you look at the sole of his/her sandshoes. These will be black, not as some people would have it from walking out of Hell, rather that a number of charcoal pyres, left behind by fellow travellers have been dispersed.

I support the Vice-President, Roger Lembit, in his call (c) that Federation should set standards to ensure that bushwalking areas are not abused or threatened by over-use, with the consequent compulsory restrictions and permit systems. Already we have had cooking fires prohibited (other than on portable stoves or spirit stoves) in Royal National Park (and some others I feel). As Brian Saunders notes, "A cooking fire is as Aussie as a cup of billy tea". (d)

Unlike bushfires which quickly sweep the countryside and offer a new chance for life, a campfire concentrates on one small area. With so much heat focused in one spot, some of the nutrients in the soil are consumed and the ash residue on the surface includes a small number of chemicals, mainly potassium. These minerals cause a toxicity ensuring regeneration is retarded. Even the earth seems to compact and harden under this heat - and old campfires become an eyesore.

Therefore I would suggest the following rules should be adopted to help the environment:

- 1) If camping at a well used camping area, only use the existing fire sites and don't create and further damage. (e)
- 2) If camping at a previously unused site ("wilderness" area or not) your fire place should just about be invisible after you have left. One way to achieve this is to carry a small trowel and create a shallow pit before lighting your fire. The top soil should be returned (to as near its natural site as possible) after the fire has been extinguished. (f)
- 3) In the case of 2) above, any ash and charcoal from your fire should be dispersed prior to departure. Obviously care should be taken to ensure the fire is out before following this procedure. If you feel spreading the ash would ignite the undergrowth, were you justified lighting the fire in the first place?
- 4) Choofers of fuel stoves should be used:
  - a) when fire restrictions are in force,
  - b) in alpine conditions and areas of fragile vegetation,
  - c) where huts are used for accommodation. The vegetation around huts tends to be hit rather badly especially in bad weather and winter. In reality camping caves differ little to huts and policy should be the same for both shelters.
- 5) Choofers should be used in rainforests. Rainforest exists partially because it has been least affected by fire. It would be incongruous to start lighting campfires in this environment.
- 6) Isolated charcoal patches should be dispersed, and mini-Stonehenges demolished - with care. Unfortunately insects sometimes make their homes within or under these ruins and to disturb them may mean disruption to that nest. My practice has been to leave that community intact - after all they do have to live there.
- 7) Inevitably scattering ashes will reveal what others had hoped to hide - all sorts of rubbish. Small plastic bags should be carried and this garbage removed from the bush.

Warwick Blayden

#### References.

- a) The Gold-finder in Australia. John Sherer (1953)
- b) John Le Gay Brereton, as quoted by W.M. Hamlet (1912)
- c) F.B.W. Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 3.
- d) B. Saunders, N.P.A. Journal Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 6

## HOLIDAYS IN THE FAR NORTH

The following are précis of "adventure" holidays available in northern Queensland. All prices quoted are all inclusive from their point of departure so that the traveller from New South Wales has to add the cost of getting to Queensland.

### 1) Cape York Wilderness Trek

Departure Cairns  
Duration 5 days  
Season May - September  
Cost \$390 (though bona fide members of bushwalking clubs \$325)  
Contact Trezise Bush Guide Service  
Laura, Qld. 4871

Matthew and Stephen Trezise lead trips into Laura Sandstone where the Quinkan art sites can be viewed.

### 2) Artists of the Sandstone

Departure Cairns  
Duration 14 days  
Season June - mid July  
Cost c. \$900  
Contact Earthwatch Australia  
Kevin Weldon  
43 Victoria St.  
McMahon's Point 2060

Captain Percy Trezise has been systematically investigating the Quinkan Country locating and recording numerous art sites in the region. It has been estimated that 36% of the region remains uncharted and probably this is in the most remote area. Strong walkers who are prepared to spend up to five nights at a time out in the bush are required.

Earthwatch is a nonprofit educational organisation whose members sponsor field research of every sort throughout the world. Whilst an expensive holiday, you can claim this on your tax return as a contribution to scientific research. (Annual membership to Earthwatch is \$20).

### 3) Lawn Hill Gorge National Park

Departure Mt. Isa  
Duration 15 days  
Season May/June, September/October  
Cost \$1050 plus \$300 for "Scientific Research"  
Contact "Probe", Austrek Adventure World Pty. Ltd.  
11th Floor, 220 George St.  
Sydney, 2000

Three scientific expeditions are being run in the Gulf Country about 230 kilometres south of Mornington Island. The first, a zoological expedition will collect material from fossil sites and explore two remote plateaus for new sites.

The second trip will basically be locating, surveying and describing as many caves and associated karst areas as is possible. Immediately following this, an Archaeological Expedition will be examining a number of pre-historic and historic (Aboriginal/Chinese) campsites.

Unfortunately this third commercial operator seems to have a number of points going against it for the interested bushwalker a) it appears to be entirely a base camp activity, b) it is the most expensive of the three ventures available, and c) no mention is made of the possible tax benefits the scientific research offers.

Both tours 2&3 are lead by scientists and part of the high costs go into a research pool. Thus participants pay to spend their holidays being field research assistants to scientific research. There is also the advantage of examining some remote parts of northern Queensland with Earthwatch offering the nearest thing to a "bushwalk". Of course on such an operation like this, one must take what comes along; one's own desire to explore may be tempered by the fitness/ability of the party as well as the area set aside to be examined.

The Editor needs more short articles to fill

SPACES



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