

# The Bushwalker

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## An Eventful Weekend

Brian Walker from the CMW reports on his discovery of a downed plane in the Kanangra Boyd National Park

"Have a look at this Springo. Tell me what you make of it." I handed Springo the binoculars and pointed out the spot I had been examining on a steep spur about 2 km away on the opposite side of the valley.

We were on the Badbury Knoll, above the junction of Christys and Wheengee Whungee Creeks. I was the first in the group to finish the climb up from our campsite. While waiting for the others I had taken out my binoculars to scan the eastward facing slopes of the Boyd range for any sign of a crashed aircraft.

I knew a light plane had gone down somewhere in the mountains three weeks previously and the search for it had been centred in the Kanangra Boyd region. As no wreckage had been found, I surmised it was probably hidden beneath the forest canopy. But if this were so, I felt sure the trees directly above the crash would be scorched because crashed planes invariably burn.

On the way up to Badbury Knoll I stopped a couple of times to check out white objects on the opposite ridge. Each turned out to be a clump of flowering clematis in a treetop. From the crest of the knoll yet another patch of white caught my eye on the distant slopes of the Boyd Range. Again it was clematis. But as I panned my binoculars slowly to the left I suddenly came across what I had been looking for - a scorched tree. It happened as quickly as that.

On the ground beneath the forest canopy, through a tiny gap in the trees, I could just make out an object that looked decidedly out of place. After studying it carefully for several minutes, I became convinced it was a lump of twisted metal. Immediately I thought: could this be a piece of the missing plane?

As soon as the other three members of the party arrived - first David Springthorpe, our leader this trip, then Lyn Elsinger and Hamish Stewart - I got them to look at what I had seen. Eventually the others were pretty sure it was twisted metal we were looking at, shiny in parts and blackened around the edges.

The object we were examining lay on a steep, short spur above Spinebender Creek, about 300m downhill from the Uni Rover Trail. It was in a place no one in their right mind would ever walk because of the steepness of the slope and the dense undergrowth. We quickly ruled out any idea of crossing from Badbury Knoll for a closer look because of the extremely rugged terrain. It was 10.00a.m. on Sunday morning. To try and get a better view from a different angle, I ran about 300m down the ridge to Hyperion Knoll. From this vantage point I could see a swathe had been cut through the trees on the distant spur. Clearly visible along its length were pieces of what appeared to be wreckage. At the top end of the swathe was a bright blue object; the colour was completely out of place in this environment. One big tree had a brown scorch mark right up the centre, as if a big fire had been burning fiercely below it.

I got a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach as I became convinced that what I was looking at was the remains of the missing plane. I ran back and rejoined the others. In my absence Springo had worked out a bearing and we set about identifying landmarks so we could get an accurate fix on the position. We checked and double checked until we were absolutely certain about the grid reference.

We then returned to the Kanangra road along our planned route past Barralier's Crown and Plateau Trig, arriving back at the car about 2.30p.m. We drove straight to Oberon police station and reported what we had seen. It was there that I learnt that part of the missing plane's fuselage had been bright blue in colour.

Polair took off as soon as the news was phones through to Sydney, although I doubted whether they would see anything because bad weather had closed in and the light was fading fast. It was raining in Oberon and we had been surrounded by fierce storms all the way from Kanangra.

It wasn't until I read the morning paper on Monday that I knew our find had been confirmed as the remains of the missing plane. The rest is history.

## Callout

27 October 1993

After the first media reports of a missing Socata trinidad plane being found, S&R rang Oberon Police to offer assistance in the land search for the missing occupants.

Oberon police contacted S&R on Monday night at 7.10pm, and asked for our assistance. The base was to be Whalans Paddock just to the south of the Boyd Crossing Kanangra.

S&R were able to field approximately 35 members including base personnel and were able to field 8 search parties.

The search area was based around the crash site on GR 288290 down into Spinebender Ck, Wheengee Whungee Ck. Christys Ck and ending at the Kowmung.

The first body, badly decomposed, was found at 10.35 am in Wheengee Whungee Ck at GR 309288. The second body was found in the creek approximately 40 minutes later 150 metres downstream. Crisis incident debriefing was offered to all members who were with the bodies and assisted the police.

- John Tonito, S&R

# Editorial

Following Gordon Lee's relinquishing of the job as newsletter editor at the August Confederation AGM, a committee was set to ensure the continuation of this valuable asset. The Bushwalker provides a good way for Confederation news to be disseminated amongst members of its affiliated clubs and a forum for the interchange of ideas and opinions.

This newsletter was originally conceived and set up by Peter Tuft, then of University of NSW Bushwalkers in 1975. It was called the "Newsletter of the Bushwalkers of NSW". The title was changed to "The Bushwalker" by past editor Gordon Lee during the 1980's to bring back the old title that came from Confederation's annual magazines that were produced intermittently during the 1930's to the 1960's.

All the members of this newsletter owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the past editor, Gordon Lee. For a long period, Gordon not only edited this newsletter, but was responsible for chasing up advertisers, vastly improving the layout and also for ensuring its distribution. All of these jobs are onerous and time consuming. Most bushwalkers know about Gordon's long period of service as Confederation President and Ball Organiser.

The new team will do well if they can match Gordon's efforts. We do bring together a wide range of bushwalkers from different clubs. Most of our group is experienced in Confederation's affairs. Our aim will be to make this newsletter interesting and informative. As well we will not shy away from being provocative and controversial when necessary.

David Noble - for the Newsletter Committee.

# Presidents Report

The YHA 50 Peaks was promoted as the "Outdoor Event Of The Year" and I thought what a great way to give all bushwalking clubs a chance to do something together. A year in the making (I know as I was on the committee), the event went off extremely well, with some great stories, poems and photos coming to the fore.

As well as promoting YHA and raising money for our own search and rescue group, it also helped the bushwalking fraternity to unite in the quest of reaching a peak together. What a great idea, with the YHA and their friends pulling off a fantastic weekend especially as the weather did everyone a big favour by being so beautiful for us.

In all 29 peaks were reached by bushwalking clubs around NSW, with many winning minor prizes for best photo. Special mention to Gundah Bushwalking Club and their witty poem after climbing Mt Exmouth. Bankstown Bushwalking Club also took the challenge to heart and bagged 4 peaks, with three separate parties heading for Canberra Friday night taking radios with them so that they were able to talk to each other on their separate peaks at 11am on Sunday 18 April 1993. The 4th peak was Mt Banks, a Sunday stroll for other club members, in all over 30 club members attending the event.

There were many country clubs involved, Talbingo & District, Shoalhaven, Geehi, Northern Rivers, Canberra to name a few. Peter Treseder, our illustrious assistant director of S&R did all 50 peaks in 8 days, finally climbing the Three Sisters with Dot Butler and Steve Irwin (S&R) at 11am Sunday, in a weary state.

It was a memorable weekend for all concerned and a super opportunity to unite our little walking clubs and if we do ever meet out there in the bush we will have a common bond to talk about... Well done to all... from the country to the city.

Our AGM in August brought about few changes to the committee, except for our newsletter, The Bushwalker. Gordon Lee, our Editor, regrettably resigned after many years of diligent work to the task, for which we owe a great deal of thanks. He is still our driving force behind the N.O.R.L.D Committee (Leadership Training) keeping a watchful eye on all the proceedings for us. We now have a Newsletter Committee, committed to

keep up the high standard that Gordon set. Good luck to them.

I would like to personally thank Gordon for all his help in the past and look forward to his input in the future.

Please feel free to write to Confederation on any issue, the Committee would like to hear from you, your input is important.

Safe and happy bushwalking,  
Robyn Cox

## The 1993 Bushwalkers Ball

By Tony Parr

September 3rd saw more than 200 members of Sydney's bushwalking fraternity gather at Petersham for the annual Bushwalkers Ball.

Quite why this event is known as a "ball" is a mystery lost in time. It is, of course, a bush dance but as far as I am aware has been called a ball since, at least, the thirties when such events were organised to help pay for the purchase of Blue Gum Forest.

The theme for this year was "being green". Only two clubs - Bankstown and Sydney University - competed for the best decorated and dressed table. The students, showing a degree of lateral thinking, came dressed as redneck loggers complete with chainsaws and axes! Fortunately they showed more restraint in using their tools than their real life counterparts when Bankstown took out the award for the second year in succession.

Thanks must go to Paddy Pallin and Mountain Equipment city stores for sponsoring the raffle and door prizes with generously donated equipment items. And a special thanks to the thirteen clubs who attended.

## Club News

Sad news that one of our member clubs is disbanding. Camden Bushwalking Club, a member of Confederation since 1980, has been battling falling membership for some time and the remaining members have reluctantly decided to call it a day. Always a small club, Camden have over the years supported Confederation in a way that would rival some of the larger clubs in the organisation.

- Tony Parr

# Bits and Pieces.

Looking for a new venue for your club's social evening? Why not try some indoor rock climbing? Basic rock climbing is a very valuable skill for bushwalkers to learn. Now Sydney has two indoor climbing gyms available for you to visit. I have now visited the Sydney Indoor Climbing Gym (59 Liverpool Road, Summer Hill - a converted squash court) a few times and peered into the new one inside the Mountain Designs City store. They both have a large number of practice climbs available. Together with a partner to belay you, you clip into a top rope and struggle up a series of artificial rock hand and footholds. When you get to the roof - your belayer lowers you to the ground. The climbs are safe and range from easy to very challenging. All age groups seem to participate - eg family groups belaying each other. The trendy climbers wear sticky boots, tights and have a chalkbag. Casual visitors can get by in sandals and shorts. A third such gym will open soon in Penrith.

David Noble

Andy Macqueen, an active member of Springwood Bushwalking Club has just published a book on the explorer Barrallier. Of all the explorers, Barrallier is probably of greatest interest to bushwalkers due to the fact that he led the first European expedition into some of the finest bushwalking country in the Blue Mountains and also that his exact route is not known. Macqueen gives an account of Barrallier's life and expeditions and explains his and others interpretations of

## Confederation Office Bearers 1993/94

**President** - Robyn Cox (Bankstown)  
**Snr Vice President** - Tony Parr (Sutherland)  
**Jnr Vice President** - David Sheppard (NPA)  
**Secretary** - Roger Lembit (Springwood)  
**Treasurer** - Diana Peters (Fairfield)  
**Assistant Secretary** - Alan Dixon (CMW)  
**Minutes Secretary** - Michael (Ted) Maack (Springwood)  
**Public Officer** - Jim Callaway (SBW)  
**S&R Director** - Keith Maxwell (Mt Druitt)  
**Publicity Officer** - Simon Knight (Sutherland)  
**Tracks and Access Officer** - Maurice Smith (Sutherland)  
**Conservation Secretary** - Louise de Beuzeville (SUBW) & Andrew Cox (SUBW)  
**Magazine Committee** - Simon Knight, Louise de Beuzeville, David Noble, Tony Parr, Andy S. Cox, Maurice Smith.

## Important Dates 1994

Clean Up Australia Day	6 March (Sun)
S&R Training Weekend	19-20 March
Easter	1-4 April
First Aid Course	28-29 May
S & R Emergency Services Rogain	25-26 June
Confederation AGM & Conference	20 August (Sat)
Bushwalkers Ball (& CMW 50th Anniversary)	16 September (Fri)
S & R Practice - Barrington	15-16 October
First Aid Course	29-30 October

where Barrallier actually went. Buy this book, read it and see if you agree. Obtainable for \$14.95 + \$3 postage from the author at 39 Bee Farm Rd, Springwood, 2777.

D.N.

### From The Minutes

- Conservation Officer Andrew Cox has accompanied state politicians on visits to the Gardens of Stone proposed additions to Wollemi and Blue Mountains National Parks.

- Andrew Cox also attended and spoke at a public meeting organised by locals protesting the nomination of the Budawang Wilderness.

- Considerable concern has been expressed about new markers on the Six Foot Track

- New proposals have been put up for more signs along the Six Foot track (which runs from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves). These signs are designed to facilitate marathon runners and are unsightly and unnecessary.

- Confederation has submitted proposals for reduced permit fees, for members

of Affiliated Bushwalking Clubs, in the Royal National Park and Tasmanian National Parks.

- Search and Rescue received donations of \$1000 from YHA for assistance in the 50 Peaks. Approval was granted for \$2200, \$1795 and \$3600 to be spent on Computer, Rock rescue gear and new

base radio respectively.

- Huts in Royal National Park will be treated on case by case bases.

- The Minister for Planning, Mr Webster, has advised that Mount Genowlan area in Garden of Stone will not be mined.

- Golden Stairs in Blue Mountains has been listed for repairs by National Parks and Wildlife Service. Volunteer labour is needed to help move materials.

- Confederation has written opposing the commencement of logging in Picton and Huon Valleys (South West Tasmania).

- Confederation missed one meeting of the State group looking at a National Proposal for Outdoor Leadership Course; and as a result has been refused representation to the next National meeting. Also a draft Policy (by the NSW Department of Sport, Recreation and Racing) includes Qualification under the course as essential for insurance for outdoor activities. The Confederation has strongly opposed this and is trying to ensure Self Accreditation for Affiliated Clubs.

- The NP&WS has asked Confederation's permission to direct large groups to camp on the Federation's Land at Blue Gum Forest (on the other side of the River to what we now call Blue Gum). The intention is to ease the load on Acacia Flat.

## S & R Snippets

### >Contacting S & R

From a quick look through some of the club newsletters it seems that there is some confusion over how you should contact S & R. The first contact if something has gone wrong should always be your club S & R representative. The club contact will call the S & R pager system

on 016020, quote pager number 277321 (there is now only the one number) and then leave a message and return phone number. One of the S & R committee will get back to you immediately. If there is no response after 15 minutes call again and repeat the message.

#### ° Remote area first aid

The first group of bushwalkers and others from VRA squads successfully completed the new Remote Area First Aid course instructed by our own David Shephard last August. This course, which is much more relevant to our bushwalking needs, can be taken in two one day sessions by those with current Senior certificates or as a three day course by those who have not. See the Confederation calendar for details of the next courses or ask if a special course can be organised for your club.

#### ° New equipment

At long last the old Codan base radio has been replaced by a new, state of the art unit that should serve S & R at least as long as the fourteen years that we have had the Codan. The old unit will not be wasted as it will be a useful mobile relay set or a backup if the new set is being serviced. With the expansion of the annual rogaine, the Wilderness Navigation Shield, into a major event S&R have become computerised. Until now the organisation of the event has been carried out on committee members personal machines but this has become impossible to manage so a notebook computer has been purchased at a considerable discount and

using funds raised by the rogaine and other fund raising events. Meanwhile our Rock Rescue Squad has acquired some extra gear which will ensure that whatever the situation they will be able to acquit themselves professionally.

#### ° Rock rescue squad

Reaccreditation of the existing squad members is currently taking place. This has to be done every couple of years in order to ensure that all members keep their skills honed. We are also planning to start training a fresh intake to the squad to better enable us to respond to calls for assistance.

- Tony Parr.

S&R would like to thank the following clubs for their participation in the callout on 27 October (see page 1) : Canberra Bushwalkers, Central West Bushwalkers, Coast and Mountain Walkers, Nepean Bushwalkers, SPAN Unlimited, Springwood Bushwalkers, Sydney Bushwalkers and Sutherland Bushwalkers.

- John Tonito

## Insurance

I have been asked several insurance questions. The questions and my responses are:

Q When does sports injury insurance cover start for a member on any particular club activity? A *The sports injury insurance cover starts when the club member leaves home to travel to the club activity. The cover ends when the club member arrives home from the club activ-*

ity.

Q Are club members covered for sports injury insurance while attending club social activities?

A Yes, including travel to and from such activities.

Q Are club visitors covered by the sports injury insurance?

A A visitor is covered by the sports injury insurance when:

- they participate in the club activity with the consent of the leader of that activity AND

- the club pays for the insurance cover (via Confederation).

Q Are clubs required to have "officers and directors" insurance?

A There is no legal requirement to have officers and directors insurance cover. If clubs have employees and engage in trading activities it may be appropriate to have this type of cover.

Q If a car pool arrangement organised for members travelling to and from a club activity requires the passengers to give the driver "petrol money", does this affect the sports injury insurance cover?

A No, it doesn't.

Q Can a club member take out supplementary sports injury insurance to have a higher level of cover?

A Yes. This will need to be personally arranged other than through Confederation.

Q What happens if a club does not pay for insurance cover on the full number of members?

A The result is that club members are not adequately insured, with the result that in the event of a claim, the club will

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*need to pay an additional premium to retrospectively obtain cover for the correct number of members.*

**Q** A club member sustains a minor sprain of an ankle when on a bushwalk. While the ankle is a short term inconvenience it does not require medical attention nor does the member notify the club or the insurer. Several months later the member casually mentions to a club officer that the ankle has not recovered completely and now requires physiotherapy. Can the member now make a claim on the insurance company?

**A** *No, because the insurance company must be notified within 30 days of the incurrence of the injury. Even if the injury is not one which initially warrants making a claim, notifying the insurer of a potential claim protects the member where subsequently (s)he incurs medical expenses of the type covered by the insurer.*

**NB** Not all clubs have taken the Confederation sports injury insurance option, check with your club committee to find out if you are covered.

**Do you have an insurance question?** If you do, please contact the Confederation's Insurance Officer, Maurice Smith.

## Towards a National Wilderness System

- A report on the Fourth National Wilderness Conference -

by David Noble

This conference organised by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness was held at the Australian Museum in Sydney during the weekend of the 8 - 10 October. One of the Confederation Conservation Officers, Andrew Cox and myself represented the Confederation at the conference. As well, Confederation Secretary Roger Lembit delivered a paper on wilderness management.

The theme of the conference was how to achieve a National Wilderness System. There had been a gap of about 10 years since the last wilderness conference so part of the time was spent reviewing progress.

The conference was opened by Neville Wran. He spoke about how a National Wilderness Protection System should become part of a trilogy of goals to be achieved by the year 2000 - the other two

goals being the Olympics and the Republic. He considered that we would achieve the wilderness goal if conservationists persuaded public opinion and hence politicians using rational arguments. This speech was followed by an address by Bob Brown. Dr Brown spoke about many of the threats to some of Australia's finest wilderness areas. He explained the lack of action to stop the destruction of wilderness being due to the prevailing culture of "economic rationalism" emanating from Canberra. One problem was the proliferation of "wilderness lodges" - the expression itself being an oxymoron!

The next day papers were presented by Keith Muir of the Colong Foundation who talked about the wilderness protection process - he highlighted some of the problems that have occurred whereby politically sensitive areas had been left out of consideration and only those areas that nobody else wanted had been declared wilderness. Rob Leslie followed with an exposition of the methodology behind the National Wilderness Inventory (a federal initiative). This was an objective way of identifying wilderness using a scientific approach. However this results of this methodology were criticised by Muir who said that it could be a double edged sword by failing to identify some areas that were under threat and deserved to be protected. One example he gave was the outcome in Victoria where there had been some success in obtaining desert wilderness areas but only small patchwork wilderness areas in the Victoria Alps rather than a big alpine wilderness area.

The next session of the conference focused on ideas to preserve the remaining wilderness. Pat Thompson of the Colong Foundation explained how they had produced a report - the Red Index, which contained up to date information on wilderness areas in NSW and the threats they faced. He considered this approach valuable and that it should be extended to all of Australia. After this, former NSW NP&WS director John Whitehouse talked about progress with wilderness legislation. The following discussion centred around the inadequacies of acts such as NSW's where a lot of areas had been identified but no action had been taken to declare areas as wilderness (except for Nattai) because of political inaction. Environmental lawyer, Brian Preston, in the next paper expressed the provocative idea that the traditional concept of wilderness should be scraped and replaced with the biosphere reserves - as scientific reasons were easier to explain that ideas of remote, untouched wild areas. Nobody else at the conference seemed to support this idea.

After the heavy discussion, it was timely that contrast was brought in by Dot Butler and Peter Treseder giving some of their personal impressions of wilderness recreation.

In the papers that followed some of the points made included:

- Penny Figgis stated that eco tourism/adventure travel was a very fast growing sector. She thought that the setting up of tourist facilities on the periphery of wilderness areas was acceptable.

- Roger Lembit, from the Confederation, spoke about the frustration in getting management action such as the closure of roads by the NP&WS in NSW.

Two papers that followed were timely and important in that they gave two different perspectives on reconciling the views of two cultures towards wilderness - namely the aboriginal and non-aboriginal views. Gavin Andrews, a NP&WS Heritage Officer and long time land rights campaigner said that aborigines had a good track record for wilderness management. They know and respect the land. A different view was presented by Geoff Mosely, former ACF Director, who expressed the fear that if wilderness areas were handed over to aborigines then this may mean that the land could become opened up to mining. He added that areas should be handed back but that they should remain as wilderness and be managed in partnership. The ACF were developing guidelines for co-management. A lot of thought provoking discussion followed this and it was evident that this was one of the major issues of the conference.

The next two papers were on fire management and mechanised access. Roger Good, a NP & WS scientific officer concerned with fires presented the widely ac-

### STOP PRESS

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cepted view that remaining wilderness areas were too small to pursue "let nature take its course" or "let burn" policies. He felt that the use of heavy vehicles was undesirable in wilderness areas but should not be ruled out as benefits may outweigh costs. Aerial suppression using modern chemicals which had little ecological effect has been very successful in some places where it had been used. Also there was a need for real knowledge to be applied rather than ad-hoc methods dealing with prescribed burning and fire fighting. Ross Scott, former ACF project officer followed by presenting an enormous list of the adverse effects of mechanised vehicles in wilderness areas. He added that 4WD's were elitist in being very expensive. The old arguments given that these vehicles allowed access to wilderness by the unfit and the elderly were neatly answered - the unfit could get fit and old people had more opportunity in the past to visit wilderness areas - after all when they were young there was much more wilderness than now exists. There is also plenty of opportunities available for these groups at the boundaries.

What is achieved by a conference such as this? Time will tell. A guide may be the action that follows from the resolu-

tions that were reached in the last session. Some of the main points covered in the resolutions were:

- the conservation movement needs to devote a lot of resources to the conservation of Australian wilderness.
- the conservation of wilderness needs to be accepted by all Australian Governments as a high priority.
- a small task group will be set up to report on how to set up a campaign for a National Wilderness System.
- the conservation movement welcomes the recognition of native title and calls for conservation organisations to engage in meaningful dialogue with aboriginal people to work towards a mutually complementary conservation ethic.

### The Bushwalker

The Bushwalker is the newsletter of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc. It is published quarterly. The aim of this newsletter is to provide articles and information of interest to the members of clubs affiliated with the Confederation.

**Contributions**, letters to the editor, original cartoons and suggestions are welcome. They should be sent to the address below. Except for short notes or letters, all contributions should be accompanied with a text file on a three and a half inch floppy disk in either Macintosh or MS DOS format. Most common word processing formats can be converted but it is better to save your document in ASCII (text) or RTF (rich text format). Artwork - line art or black and white photographs are welcome.

Any opinions expressed by individual authors do not always represent the official views of the Confederation.

**Advertising** rates are available on request. Ring Andy Cox on (02) 359 2213

**Distribution** is through the affiliated clubs and through major retail outlets.

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