

The Bushwalker

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Bushfires Hit The Blue Mountains

by Tony Parr

You would have to be a hermit to have missed the media coverage of the devastating bushfires that hit the State during January. What was not reported during that time was the effect that the fire had on the walking trails in the Grose Valley.

The fire started, allegedly by an arsonist, at the junction of Bells Line of Road and the Mount Wilson road on Friday 7th January and quickly spread across Mt Banks where spot fires entered the Grose Valley. Hot north-westerly winds soon carried the blaze down stream to the Faulconbridge/Winmalee area where most of the property damage occurred. Everyone heard about the damage to homes and infrastructure here but the fate of the valley has yet to be publicised.

A couple of groups have been through Clastral Canyon since the fire and they report that while the area around the carpark is untouched the bush around the Camels Hump and down to Rainbow Ravine has been totally blackened. The canyon itself shows some signs of damage where spot fires entered the section below Thunder Junction and there is a lot of burnt timber in the water. Any parties going through should be very wary of log jams and snags in the water and on the tracks in and out to be aware of the danger posed by burnt trees that may shed limbs without warning.

On Sunday 23 January a group of about 30 members of the Friends of Blue Gum entered the valley at Perrys' Lookdown to survey the damage to the forest. The track down Dockers Buttress has been burnt out but the route is basically passable provided care is taken. The new timber bridge about two thirds of the way down has gone as have several sections of steps. Due to the danger posed by falling trees this, and most of the other

tracks into the Grose, will remain officially closed at least until we have winds strong enough to remove any such hazards or the NP&WS has the resources to manually repair the tracks.

The good news is that Blue Gum has escaped relatively untouched. About half of the flat on the western side of the Grose/Govetts junction has had fire through the understorey but this has damaged very few Blue Gums and we saw only about six trees that had fallen or were in danger of falling. The wildlife and, unfortunately, the feral animals should have no trouble surviving as there are plenty of areas that were untouched. The Acacia Flat camping area was also spared the flames although the bush both upstream and downstream has had a fire through the understorey.

Looking up and down the valley the fire has been fierce in places but there are still plenty of green areas to be seen. The damage appears to be nowhere near as severe as that suffered by the valley during the 1982 fires so with luck access down most tracks will be open within a few months.

Fahey's First Step For Wilderness

by Andrew Cox

On 23 December 1993, John Fahey's "Christmas Present to NSW" was announced. After waiting more than three years since the nomination of ten wilderness areas under the *NSW Wilderness Act*, NSW Cabinet agreed to declare parts of seven of the wilderness areas nominated.

The seven wilderness areas declared, from north to south, are Lost World, Washpool, Guy Fawkes, Oxley

(Macleay Gorges), Deua, Goodradigbee and Nadgee. The fate of the remaining three wilderness areas is less certain. Binghi (northern tablelands) is rejected, Binderi (Mann, far North Coast) will be subject to a socio-economic study, while the Kanangra-Boyd wilderness declaration is deferred until plans for the flood mitigation scheme at Warragamba Dam are announced.

The announcement, while recognised as a positive step towards protection of NSW wilderness, falls well short of satisfactory. Of more than 825,000 ha originally nominated in ten areas, only about 280,000 ha will be declared in seven areas. The seven areas will be fragmented by roads, horse trails and stock routes into 18 undisturbed segments, some no larger than 1000 ha!

With most threats to the ten wilderness areas existing beyond national park boundaries, the announcement offers little relief by rejecting almost all land outside national parks.

As a typical example, the Deua wilderness nominated, by Confederation in 1989, will be broken by 4WD trails into three areas. Only half of the 83,900 ha nominated area will be declared, and one quarter of the rejected wilderness is referred for a socio-economic study. Logging has been taking place within the NPWS identified wilderness area over a number of years, and will largely continue.

How does the decision effect bushwalkers? Appropriate passive recreation (eg. walking or canoeing) is permitted in declared wilderness, provided minimal impact techniques are practiced. Increasing the legally recognised wilderness will ensure protection of existing undisturbed areas from inappropriate activities, preferably managed in the national park estate.

There is pressure on the Fahey government both within the coalition and from some rural groups, to water-down or

Editorial

As the snow was falling outside our tents in the wilds of Central Tasmania last January it was hard to accept the credibility of reports of NSW's bushfires coming in on the BBC World Service News we heard on our tiny radio. Latter, back in Hobart we could observe the graphic images coming in on the TV. Predictably we also heard reports about the fires being due to bad management practices of the NP&WS. These issues have been affectively dispelled by the Service and their Minister but I would like to raise one point. For many years now, management plans have been prepared by the Service for Blue Mountains and Wollemi National Parks and have awaited gazettal by the Minister. These plans contain large sections on fire management. Surely it is time for these large and important parks to have effective management plans operating.

On another matter - the Wilderness declarations by the NSW government sounded good on the day they were announced. Closer inspection of the fragmented areas unfortunately reveals that the government has only made a small step in the right direction. Few places in the developed world have as much remaining wilderness as NSW. But what remains in NSW as wilderness is in fact very small - only about 4% of the state. Surely what is left must be protected from any further compromises.

This newsletter is produced by a small committee of the Confederation. Most of the regular contributors are also active in other Confederation areas and generously lend their expertise. However we would like to see increased input from members of affiliated clubs. Feel free to submit contributions. Some possible ideas are historical articles, local conservation issues, your favourite walk or peak, critiques of gear or publications etc.

David Noble - for the Newsletter Committee.

cancel the pre-Christmas wilderness announcement. What the wilderness nomination process has shown, during the public submission period, is that the NSW people want wilderness. In the largest public consultation program undertaken by NPWS, 75% of 16,000 submissions received were in favour of wilderness dedication.

A joint party-room decision by NSW Liberal and National Party members in February will revisit the December 1993 decision. As Bob Carr has branded the wilderness announcement as a "cruel hoax", and the Independents likely to concur, next polling day we should tell John Fahey's government what we think of his "gift for our grandchildren".

Then And Now In The CMW

by Gwen Bednal

1994 will be a special year for the Coast and Mountain Walkers as we will celebrate our diamond jubilee. We walkers of the 1990's function in an age of high tech gear, contoured packs that swing with our movements, light waterproof tents and dehydrated foods that allow us to complete long independent walks. It wasn't like this 60 years ago and some of the differences are fascinating.

By way of comparison we can look back on a 14 day walk, undertaken by our club founder, Ninian Melville with Alan Ward and Beryl Heather. They travelled from Katoomba to Hilltop between 28-12-34 and 10-01-35. Even reaching the start of the walk took one and a half days and involved a train journey to Katoomba, spending the night there and subsequently taking a touring car 50

Nominated but not declared

Central Deua Wilderness

Burra Oulla Wilderness

Woila Deua Wilderness

4WD Corridors

Nominated but not declared

DEUA WILDERNESS AREAS

Example of Fragmentation Of The Deua Wilderness

miles to the top of Oberon Hill. The party even stopped to do a tourist inspection of Lucas Cave. Going up Oberon Hill meant frequent walking for the passengers when the engine boiled! Later when a lift on a truck was offered by the shire engineer, the party accepted with alacrity, only to be laughed at and jeered by Taro and Las Purer, who were travelling the other way, for accepting the ride. (At least this wouldn't have changed).

At last the real walk began with a look at the Dance Floor cave where revellers from Jenolan and Oberon tripped the

light fantastic on a wooded floor constructed over 100 years ago. Across Kanangra Tops they enjoyed views of Cloudmaker, Crafts Walls and Scotts Main Range.

The men carried guns and fishing rods. Quite often rabbit stew was on the menu and sometimes they amused themselves by shooting the tops off trees but did leave the profuse wildlife alone.

Fishing was not successful as the canny fish would not eat the crickets left for bait.



Sometimes the walkers slept under the stars, near the campfire. At other times Beryl paid for accommodation and a soft bed at such places as Moody's Guest House. They stopped at Coxs River Post Office where Beryl posted a letter, sent a telegram and telephoned a friend. (Nowadays we'd have to carry a Yippie phone).

Quite often the party was able to buy supplies such as eggs, milk, tinned corned beef and soft drinks. Sometimes they picked mulberries and plums and were given lemons and apricots.

These were the days of the small farms and settlements so they met a few friendly bush characters along the way and found a way of life lost to those of us who walk today. We are more likely to encounter barbed wire fences and NO TRESPASSERS signs.

Unchanging over the 60 years is our enjoyment of walking and love of the bush. May it continue for another 60 years and beyond.

Presidents Report

Bushfires must be the hottest topic in NSW at the moment and if you believed all the initial news reports it seemed there was no where left for us to walk. But, as initial news reports are often grossly exaggerated and although some parks have been devastated, most have been spared and it is only a matter of choosing your area carefully.

At times like this it is always easy to try and find blame, instead let us take a positive attitude and learn from our past and maybe help lesson the impact of such fires in the future. We all have to take care of the bush, particularly in the hot and dry summer months.

If not for the hard work of the thousands of volunteers we may have lost much more. I know you all have thanked them in your own way, but now they need your support by all of us doing the right thing. To all those members of Confederation and others in the community who were affected by the bushfires we offer our commiserations and support.

Confederation has helped support an NPA leaflet to dispel some of the myths of the fires - please read and hand on - it is

important the message is relayed to others outside the bushwalking clubs.

To other important matters; Coast and Mountain Walkers 60th Anniversary this year with many activities planned and a journal published to mark the occasion. With 2 years of feverish, behind the scenes activity going on I'm sure it will be a year to remember for all CMW members. Best wishes and happy anniversary.

S&R has many interesting events planned for this year, in particular the weekend of 19/20th March at cataract Scout Camp. For any information about S&R each club has a representative so make sure you contact them for all up and coming events.

We are taking the AGM (20/21 August) to the country this year in recognition of our many country clubs - although distance is great we hope attendance will be high from both city and country clubs. We hope to make it a relaxed but action packed weekend ... hope to see many of you there.

Safe and happy bushwalking,

Robyn Cox

Conservation Clippings

by Andrew Cox

Ettrema and Budawangs Wilderness

Both the Ettrema and Budawangs areas have long been noted for their wilderness qualities. The Budawangs is regularly visited by walkers, largely due to its dramatic double cliff-lined plateaus and pinnacles. The lesser known Ettrema to the north is not so popular. The dramatic and rugged Ettrema Gorge and its tributaries remain largely untouched and inaccessible. Thus it is little surprise that the National Parks and Wildlife Service reported that these two areas satisfy the wilderness criteria after being nominated for wilderness protection by NSW University Bushwalking and Mountaineering Club.

Between the wilderness nomination in 1991 and the release of the NPWS wilderness assessment report in 1993, virtually all of Morton National Park between the Shoalhaven River and the Nowra-Nerriga Road was declared as the 60,000 ha

Ettrema wilderness. The 1993 NPWS report proposed a further eastern Ettrema extension, centred around (but not including) Yalwal. It included the Yarramunmun and Boolijong Creek valleys and Yalwal State Forest, currently being degraded by widespread 4WD and trail bike use. One track allows illegal vehicular access through the declared Ettrema wilderness to the head of Bundundah and Ettrema Creeks.

4WD groups and others purporting to represent "access for all" (at all costs) vigorously oppose declaration of the eastern Ettrema extension. During the five month public submission period in 1993, more than 4,000 submissions supporting declaration of all wilderness identified by NPWS were made.

Confederation has attended various meetings at Nowra, and written a number of submissions to ensure the Vacant Crown land and State Forest lands forming the extension are not subject to the current unrestricted and inappropriate vehicular activities, and to ensure they are legally protected as wilderness.

The fate of both the Ettrema extensions and the Budawang wilderness nomination now rests with government. A decision is expected later this year.

Coal Mine Extension Beneath Bungleboori Creek

Planned extensions to Clarence Colliery, west of Bell in the northern Blue Mountains, have raised questions about the damaging effects of the coal mine. Extraction has recently intensified on the mining lease beneath Bungleboori Creek (south arm) headwaters since the "long wall" mining extraction technique has been used. After each pass across the coal seam, the roof collapses, resulting in surface subsidence of 1 - 2 metres.

Last year, walkers discovered fresh cracks near Bungleboori Creek, directly above collapsed tunnels. The failure of the Environmental Impact Study to record this damage highlights the inadequacy of their environmental monitoring.

Confederation has called for detailed environmental studies to be undertaken on both the existing operations, and the proposed extension. Plans should be developed to reduce likely cliff collapses and minimise the risk of damage to endangered flora. The unchecked construction of tracks and diggings for core sampling and surface works must also be scrutinised.

Conflicts from coal mining damage, sand mining and forestry activities continue to threaten the Newnes Plateau area. The Gardens of Stone National Park proposal hopes to protect areas that are currently outside Wollemi National Park such as important pagoda formations,

canyons including the popular Rocky Creek and rare plants on the Newnes Plateau. Please report any recent cracks or collapses you may find in rock formations in this area to Confederation.

Kowmung To Be Flooded!

The Kowmung Committee, established during previous unsuccessful attempts to construct a dam on the Kowmung River, has been revived. Flood mitigation works at Warragamba Dam may cause seven km of the Kowmung River (almost to Ti Willa Ck) and eleven km of the Cox River (past Kanangra Creek) in the Blue Mountains National Park, to be submerged for up to a month following extreme floods.

An Environmental Impact Statement, detailing the proposal, will be released within a year. The preferred option recommends the construction of a new dam, 40m higher than existing stored water levels, which will be able to withstand 1 in 10,000 year floods. Expert engineers believe the present dam may not hold under these conditions.

Viable alternatives to raising the flood water height exist. We need people willing to join the Confederation's Kowmung Committee to analyse alternatives and to assist this important campaign. All offers are welcome, especially if you have photographs of potentially effected areas. Contact (02) 690 1059 to help.

Sand Mining off Royal National Park and Botany Bay National Park

A proposal to dredge offshore sand deposits from the sea bed to supply sand for Sydney's construction industry, has attracted strong public opposition. Sand will be extracted from one area of 8 km sq to within 1 km of Botany Bay National Park (Kurnell). The second 7.4 km sq. area is at least 500m from the northern coastal cliffs of Royal National Park, and within the proposed Curracurrong Marine Protected Area.

The two 100m long barges will be a visual and audible pollutant to users of the national parks. Concerns are also raised over the effects of the sediment plume from washed sand, the risk of de-

pleting Sydney's southern beaches of sand, and intensifying wave action on the nearby shore. The proposal is now subject to a Commission of Inquiry. An unfavourable finding will surely signal an end to this marine mining

Bushfires

The fires that ravaged NSW during the start of the year caused unfortunate death and extreme damage to property, bushland and native animals.

One nasty consequence of the fires was the opportunistic attacks dealt on environmentalists and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

To counter the poorly informed claims, Confederation has assisted the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) produce a fact sheet called "Burning Questions". It clearly dispels many of the myths arising from the latest bushfires, and provides a useful reference source. To obtain a copy, send \$2 to NPA, PO Box A96, South Sydney NSW 2000.

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Taro's Ladder

A Brief History And My Personal Experience

by Maurice Smith

On an extended walk earlier this year, I had my first experience with Taro's Ladder. You might well say "so what!". I had heard of this "ladder", however, I had never seen it. After seeing it and experiencing it I became interested in its history. I don't have the full story, so maybe some readers can fill in the blanks. I hope that my research and experience will be of some interest to you, so here goes.

Firstly, where is it? It is at the southern end of the Narrow Neck peninsula at Katoomba.

What is its purpose? It is a very convenient way of getting down from Narrow Neck to the Wild Dog Mountains and from there it is an easy access to the Coxs River and the Kowmung River, to name but a few attractions.

Why is it necessary? Unless you are an experienced rock climber or own a hang glider there is no way off the end of Narrow Neck, especially if you are carrying an overnight rucksack.

Who built it? The ladder was originally built by William Tarr, an enthusiastic bushwalker, who was an early member of the Sydney Bushwalking Club.

When was it built? Sometime between 1928, when the first descent was made by walkers using ropes, and 1938, when a photograph of the ladder as it was then and an article referring to the ladder appeared in the Confederation's annual magazine "Bushwalker". My guess is that it was constructed in the early 1930's. Can any reader provide me with more information as to when it was built?

What is its method of construction? The original construction was, to quote the 1938 edition of the Bushwalker magazine "accomplished by stringing together small lengths of saplings with fencing wire and two ladders made in this fashion were suspended down the cliff to obviate the worst obstacles. ... As the ladders have been standing for many years repairs have been necessary from time to time to ensure their safety and recently the saplings were replaced by wooden battens well painted to resist the weather".

In November, 1940 the suspended wooden ladders were replaced by large (and very strong) metal bolts which have been firmly cemented into the rock face. The Warrigal Club did the work to replace the wooden ladders, and they suggested that

the name be changed to Taro's Pass. However, the original name has stuck. The 1943 edition of the Bushwalker makes reference to the ladder when it notes "the new edition of Taro's Ladder at the end of Clear Hill will not wear out in a hurry".

How long is the ladder? Probably about 15 metres in all, although it seems to be much longer than that when you encounter it for the first time. It has two distinct stages, the first stage down is through a chimney and the second stage is down a smooth rock face.

What is it like to use? When descending the ladder for the first time ever while wearing a full overnight rucksack I felt a distinct need for a prehensile tail, similar to that which possums have. I had difficulties in finding foot holds, in manoeuvring and releasing hand holds while retaining my balance with the weight of my rucksack. Eventually, we got down the ladder and we were away. Going up the ladder should be an absolute piece of cake, as it easy to see the holds etc.

Can any reader fill in the gaps in my knowledge, or correct any errors of fact?

Lest We Forget

- from the 1945 Bushwalker

Many Bushwalkers - both men and women - served with the forces in the second world war and most of them, fortunately, returned to us. Some, however, will never again walk the bush tracks. Not one of these rests on his native soil yet the love of each for his country was deep, intimate and abiding; deep but ostentatious, intimate in a joy in the tree and grass and sky, abiding in the very fibre.

The protection and preservation of the bushlands was the job which Charles Roberts adopted as his own particular contribution to the community and he threw all his energies and his genius for organisation into during the years he was associated with the Coast and Mountain Walkers and with the Federation as its Honorary Secretary.

He was of the adventurous type who loved to break into new country; he was a good comrade and a good bushman and he did what was in his power to ensure that others would be able to find in the bush the same happiness as he himself had found.

He resigned for the Honorary Secretaryship of the Federation to join the Army and gave his life in Malaya, and stories we have heard show that the same spirit of self sacrifice and

comradeship which we known of old, still manifested itself during the time he was a Prisoner of War.

While still living in the country, Arnold Ray became a Bushwalker with the C.M.W.'S and travelled many miles on this motor bike to join his city friends on their trips.

Arnold was a good mate, he was a tireless walker and loved the comradeship of the camp fire, and gave his friendship with stint. His walking was largely done in the Blue Mountains country, although later a change of work gave him the opportunity of knowing some-thing of our Alpine country.

He was filled with the zest of living and it was not easy to imagine, when he joined the RAAF, that any harm could come to him. He went overseas and shortly after arriving in England gave his life during operations against Germany.

Although deeply imbued with a love of the green fields of his English home, Gordon Townend soon succumbed to the charm of the brown and blue Australian landscape. His wide appreciation of Nature and his tolerant manner drew him into bushwalking as a member of the C.M.W.'s and for the short time allowed, he tramped in the Blue Mountains and National Park. Finding in these rugged lands a complement to the rolling landscapes of home.

In July, 1942, he joined the RAAF hoping to be transferred to Britain. His desire to join in the defence of England was fulfilled. Two years later he was reported missing while on an operational flight over Germany.

The hand of the war fell heavily on the youth of our country. Bruce Elder had been bushwalking for a short time only before he enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy. It was in 1938 that he joined the Coast and Mountain Walkers. His first trip was of a fortnight's duration in the Clyde River district, which turned a leaning towards Nature into a positive fondness mingled with an energy of spirit which only youth can possess.

"Shattered my glass, ere half the sand had run.". What this early love for Nature would have produced we shall never know. He went down with his ship, H.M.A.S. "Sydney," in December, 1941.

Gordon Marshall Mannell was admitted to membership of the Sydney Bushwalkers in March, 1934. Those members who walked with him well remember his love of the Bush, his friendliness, and at all times his consideration for others.

He was always eager to get away from the beaten track and visit areas not familiar to the majority of bushwalkers. He was a member of the first Sydney Bush

Walker party to climb Mount King George from Blue Gum Forest, Descend Bonnum Pic, Wollondilly River, and cross the Ranges from Moruya to follow the Deua River to Araluen. The Macleary River from Uralla, via Postman's Creek, was also a trip pioneered by him.

Although the father of two young children, Gordon felt it his duty to enlist, and he left Australia for England to serve as an Air Gunner in the R.A.A.F. He was posted missing after a bombing raid on Germany early in 1945.

It was sad news for the many bushwalkers who had known Gordon Smith to hear that he had died in a Japanese prison camp in Borneo during the last stages of the war.

Gordon started as a track walker in 1921, and had an outstanding athletic career. Before he enlisted he held nearly all the Australian long distance records.

As a result of long training walks, mainly on roads, he became interested in bushwalking, and joined the Sydney Bushwalkers as a foundation member in 1928. In these early days of the Club, he pioneered, with fellow club members, a number of routes, some of which are now popular walks. They include the first traverse of the Gangerang, where his name has been given to the pass leading to the range from Kanangra; and the first trip down the Colo River. In later years he led

a number of large parties over some of the roughest of the mountain country.

He enlisted in the A.I.F. early in 1940 and was taken prisoner in Malaya early in 1942. Little is known of his subsequent movements as most of his comrades perished in Borneo.

He used his knowledge and experience of walking, together with a capacity for detailed planning, to organise a large number of very enjoyable trips for his club mates. It would have been much easier for him to go on long walks with a few strong walkers, but he usually preferred to take a large party, including many average, or even weak members. By good team work they were enabled to enjoy walks they could never have done on their own. He lead his parties by his quiet guidance and encouragement, never by assertion: which capacity is perhaps the measurement of true democratic leadership. His unassuming manner, good humour and quiet persuasiveness, endeared him to all who knew him.

George Bruce Loder was a foundation member, and first Secretary of the Trampers Club of NSW. He was well known as club delegate to the Federation Council, and as Federation Publicity Officer in 1940-41. George Loder enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in May, 1941, and trained as an observer. After doing brilliantly at training schools in Canada he

arrived in England, and was posted to the Lancasters. His work earned him selection for the Pathfinder Force, a commission in May, 1943, the D.C.F. and a Flight Lieutenantcy in October, 1943.

On 20th December, 1943, he failed to return from operations against Frankfurt, and was later reported to be buried at Doornspuyk in Holland. This was to have been his last trip as he had completed two tours on Pathfinders.

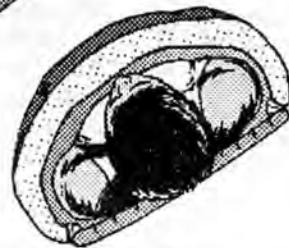
In George the Federation had one of its strongest supports, as he did not mind how much work he did when Conservation and his beloved bush was concerned. The Walking Fraternity as a whole, lost a real friend in George Loder.

Jack Wall was a likeable personality who carried out his duties as Treasurer of the Campfire Club with Keenness and zest. A foundation member of the club, he early answered the call to arms. After aircrew training in Australia and England as a radio man, he was posted to Wellingtons in the Middle East. Flying Officer Jack Wall was lost whilst returning from a mission over the Adriatic Sea on the 7th July, 1944.

Ken Grenfell was a member of the Rucksack Club for only a short time before joining the Airforce. He lost his life in a raid over Germany



Cutaway view of standard bag



Cutaway view of Macpac Névé or Pinnacle

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Mac Nichols Joined the Y.M.C.A. Ramblers early in 1939, becoming Social Secretary and an enthusiastic member of the Ramblers' Basket Ball Team. Leaving his position with the Commonwealth Bank, he enlisted in the A.I.F., being sent to Malaya. At the early age of 21 years he was tragically killed in action at Singapore during February, 1942.

James McCormack was Captain of the Y.M.C.A. Ramblers' Basket Ball Team, and a popular member of the staff of Eveready Batteries. Joining the R.A.A.F. he was attached for duty to H.M.A.S. "Canberra." As a result of wounds received in action he died on the 9th August, 1942, aged 21 years.

As we go to press we learn of two more members of the Sydney Bushwalkers to whom our debt is immeasurable, namely Reginald Hewitt and Norman Saill. We regret that short notice precludes mention of their Service records. They were bushwalkers, and their personalities live on in the hearts and minds of other walkers.

The Federation hopes to be able to perpetuate the memory of these walkers in a fitting way by the naming of a prominent place possibly in the Gangerangs. The Gangerangs, raising up to the dominating Cloudmaker, flanked some of the grandest scenery in the Blue Mountains and are practically surrounded by gorges which will stay the hands of those who may wish to change them.

Friends Of Blue Gum

The Blue Gum Forest, at the junction of the Grose River and Govetts Creek has long been associated with the bushwalking movement. In 1932 the forest was saved from destruction when members of Sydney Bushwalkers and the Mountain Trails Club negotiated the purchase of the lease from the then owner who was planning to fell the trees to make way for a walnut plantation. Since that time many a fledgling bushwalker has started their walking career with a weekend amongst what must be one of the most impressive stands of Sydney Blue Gums to be found.

Following the 60th anniversary celebrations in Blue Gum Forest last year a couple of workshop sessions, organised by ranger Cath Ireland and local resident Phillipa Coleman, saw the formation of a group of concerned bushwalkers, conservationists and local residents that came to be known as The Friends of Blue Gum. The common link between all of the participants is a love of the Blue Gum Forest and a concern for its' future given

the impact that tourism and local housing development is having.

So far the group have had three weekend meetings in the forest which have been mainly concentrated on cleaning up fire sites, weed identification and gathering an inventory of alternative camping sites. One of the sites identified has been tentatively named "Federation Flat" in recognition of the bushwalkers who did so much to save the forest in 1932.

For further information about the group contact Cath Ireland on (047) 87 8877.

- Tony Parr

Ettrema Access

Quiera clearing, on the Tolwong Road west of Ettrema gorge has been used as a parking area by bushwalkers for many years.

The clearing is held under freehold title by the Rolfe family. Despite rumours to the contrary the ownership of the clearing has not recently changed. Until now there has been no problem with bushwalkers parking along the roadside in the clearing but recently an increase in the amount of rubbish being left behind has angered the owners. They, quite justifiably, are concerned about the danger to their stock posed by this rubbish which includes glass as well as metal and plastic.

I have assured the owners that it is most unlikely that bushwalkers would have been responsible for this littering. However, the only way that we can prove this and, once again, restore a cordial relationship with the local land holders is to ensure that our members leave their vehicles in the park rather than on freehold land. Perhaps if we do this we will prove that the allegations being levelled against us are unfounded and that the real culprits will be found.

For those heading into the gorge via Myall Creek an alternative parking area that I have used for many years is on the Tolwong Road at the high point 764 (GR 407240 on the Touga 1:25000 map). There is good parking for at least ten vehicles off the road at this point. From this location there is a good ridge leading into Myall Creek as well as easy access to Sentry Box Canyon via Churinga Head. There are other possibilities both before and after Quiera Clearing for off road parking. The boundaries of the clearing are accurately marked on the Touga map.

There is, potentially, a similar problem at Tullyangela Clearing which is held under freehold title by the Crisp

family. I have heard of no such problem to date but our members should bear in mind that they may alienate locals by unauthorised parking on private property.

Details of any vehicles or persons apparently acting in such a way as to lead to us being blamed for these acts of littering should be passed on to Confederation or to the National Parks & Wildlife Service office at Nowra.

Tony Parr

Bits and Pieces

Vic Walk. The Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs are to hold their annual Federation Day Walk on 27/3/94 in the Warburton area. If you are down that way and fancy stretching your legs contact Wayne Emmins on (03) 702 1123.

Threatened Species.

"NSW has the worst record of mammal extinctions in Australia, the country with the worst modern mammal extinction record in the world." This is a quote from the newsletter of the Threatened Species Network who are seeking our support to ensure that State Govt. enacts appropriate legislation to protect our remaining wildlife.

For more information on how you can help contact Kim Brebach on (02) 241 1438 or at Shop 2, Gloucester Walk, The Rocks, NSW 2000.

NSW Bird Atlases.

Do you have an interest in the birds you see while out bushwalking? The NSW Bird Atlases are seeking volunteers to provide them with information on the distribution of bird species in NSW as the foundation for management and conservation. Time and place of listing birds is left to the individual to determine, and a brochure, atlas sheet and map is provided. If you are interested in helping contact Jen Southeren on (067) 533 242.

Map of the Croajingolong N.P. Scale 1:70,000. Available from S.R. & P.N. Brookes (03) 836 8903. RRP \$6.00.

This park is situated on the Victorian side of the Vic. NSW border where it meets the coast at Cape Howe. This makes it a long trip for most of us. If the Brookes' map is anything to go by it could however be well worthwhile. The terrain looks varied and interesting with the coastal walk looking of special interest. The campsites appear well spaced to

provide alternatives while from the notes on the map water is also available at reasonably regular intervals.

The map should be most useful for anyone planning to walk in this area if only for the notes on campsites and water.

Simon Knight

Bungonia State Recreation Area.

New fees structure implemented July 1993. \$10.00 per night per site for the first two persons, \$2.00 per night per site for the next four persons. Maximum six people per site, if you have seven you start again from \$10.00. \$5.00 per vehicle for the first night (unless you have an annual permit).

The NPWS state that the increased fees have been introduced to cover the cost of providing facilities for campers like the new hot water system and sewerage transfer at a cost of \$20,000.

A lot of people utilise the area as demonstrated by their user records. In November 1992 1,377 people registered to go caving with another 461 walking and 370 abseiling and canyoning. That's a total of 2,208. No wonder they needed new hot water and sewerage transfer systems.

Source "Bungonia Caves Newsletter"
Oct. '93.

Environment Courses

Do you want to learn more about the natural environment? The Barren grounds Bird Observatory is running a series of courses during the first half of next year. Some are:

Mammals at the Barren Grounds, 11 - 13 March
Birding Bonanza, 15 - 17 April
Identification of Eucalypts, 29 April - 1 May
Landscaping With Nature, 10 - 12 June

This is just an example of the range of courses they offer. They are fully catered and cost \$140 each. For more details write to the Observatory (PO Box 3 Jamberoo NSW 2533) or phone 042-360 195 asking for brochure outlining courses.

Interested in Archaeology?

The Archaeology Department at the University of Sydney is interested in finding volunteers to assist in their project to excavate the Bronze Age city of Rukeis in Jordan later in the year. The cost involved would be about \$1800 for airfare and \$2100 for other expenses for an 18 day stint. There would be a chance to visit other sites in Jordan as well. For more information contact Alison Betts, Hauran

Project, Archaeology A14, University of Sydney, 2006. (ph 692-2759 or 692-2090, Fax 692-4889).

A Grose Fire!

The fire which burnt out the Grose River seemed to have been deliberately lit as it started a short distance off the Mt Wilson Rd. Coincidentally, where it started was very, very close to the site of a marijuana plantation destroyed by the police a few weeks before.

David Noble

Bushwalkers On Top

In November members of Sutherland Bushwalkers and Three peaks Outdoor Society successfully climbed four peaks in the Nepal Himalaya. All in the Annapurna region, the peaks were: Pisang Peak(6091m), Chulu East(6200m), Chulu Far East(6059m) and Thorongtse(6484m). The climbs were all led by Kathmandu based expedition leader Carl Harrison, the Nepal manager of Sydney based tour organisers, Magic Mountain Himalayan Adventures. The climbers were Anthony Schnabel, Graeme Dawes, Adrian Andrews, Alan Silva, Hayden Wallace and Damian Taylor all from Sutherland Bushwalkers along with Gilbert Meunier from Three Peaks.

Tony Parr

Newsletters

Canberra Bushwalking Club (PO Box 160, Canberra, ACT 2601) is a strong active club with 357 members and 214 activities programmed in the year 92/93. They also live on the doorstep of some of the best bushwalking country in Australia.

Newcastle Bushwalking Club (PO Box 554, Charlestown, NSW 2290). "Bushwalking with our Club is designed to be more of a challenge than a picnic." Their newsletter has walk notes on the Welshpool and the Goulburn River National Parks amongst other exotic North Coast locations so they certainly have the opportunities.

Sydney Bushwalkers (GPO Box 4476, Sydney, NSW 2001). This is another club with a most comprehensive activities program, they had five extended walks over the Christmas New Year period! In fact going by their trip reports they have quite a lot of extended walks throughout the year.

National Parks Assoc. (02 264 7994). Bushwalking represents a relatively small portion of the wide ranging activities of the NPA. Their journal has some interesting articles amongst which are "Cliff Falls at Baal Bone Colliery" and "Eco tourism - What of the Future?"

"**Splash**", magazine of the River Canoe Club of NSW, (PO BOX 2192, GPO Sydney 2001).

"**NSW Rogaining Newsletter**" from the NSW Rogaining Assoc. (39 Greenslopes Ave., Mt. Ousley, NSW 2519).

"**The Colong Bulletin**" from the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd., (Gloucester Walk, 88 Cumberland St., Sydney).

"**Out There**" The Paddy Pallin Magazine of Adventure and the Outdoors. Published by Paddy Pallin. For subscriptions phone 008 805 398. Paddys' claim that this is a high quality, large format, quarterly magazine dedicated to responsible enjoyment of our outdoor heritage in Australia and elsewhere on planet earth. Having received my first copy I can endorse that.

S.K.

Some New Books:

Coxs River - Discovery, History and Development. By Jim Barrett. This excellent book is of immense interest to bushwalkers. It contains a wealth of historical information about and photographs of this important bushwalking area. Available from the author at 65 Brook Rd, Glenbrook 2773 (\$10 +\$1 for postage) A future companion volume on the Kowmung should be available by the time you read this.

Blue Mountains Dreaming - The Aboriginal Heritage. Edited by Eugene Stockton. This book gathers together material about Blue Mountains Aborigines. Interesting and well illustrated. Available from selected Blue Mountains book shops (\$14.95).

D.N.

After a rare mountaineering book? I have found Chessler Books (PO Box 399, 26030 Highway 74, Kittredge, Colorado 80457, USA) provide a useful service. They specialise in mountaineering books from around the world. For example I was able to obtain from them a copy of John Pascoe's "The Southern Alps - From the Kaikouras To the Rangitata" - a long out of print New Zealand guidebook. They periodically send me an interesting catalogue listing the titles they have available (and you can ask them to look out for a certain book that you want).

D.N.

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- * Limited Edition Booklet On The History Of CMW

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Contact:

Dennis Brown (Home And Business) (02) 799-2948
John Bednal (Home And Business) (02) 888-6819
Garry Phillipott (Business) (02) 893-6518

Or Write To:

The Secretary
CMW
GPO Box 2449
Sydney NSW 2000

Book Review

Barrallier 1773 - 1853

"Ambassador to the King of the Mountains". Andy Macqueen has recently released a fascinating little book on one of our lesser known explorers. Barrallier a fugitive from the French revolution came to Sydney with a commission in the NSW Corps. Following his appointment as aide-de-camp to Governor King he led a number of expeditions into the Blue Mountains penetrating as far as Wheengee Whungee Creek near Kanangra.

Andy's book is a biography of Barrallier, giving us a general picture of the man but concentrating on his accomplishments while here in NSW. He was apparently an excellent surveyor and it was in this capacity that he went on expeditions by boat to Jervis Bay and Western Port and up the Hunter River.

The account of his trips on foot into the Blue Mountains, an area that we still see as wilderness today, makes interesting reading. Something that really struck me was that we are no longer able to experience the excitement of meeting the indigenous people. Barrallier was meeting people who may never have seen a white man before. Can you imagine running into a group of twenty or more armed aborigines as you trek along the Kowmung?

Andy's book has a RRP of \$14.95 and is available direct from him (047-51 2556) for \$17.95 including post and packaging. Andy is available to clubs to talk about Barrallier.

Simon Knight.

How It All Began

The story of one of the new members of Confederation - the WEA Illawarra Bushwalkers Club.

With no "apparent" bushwalking club in Wollongong somebody had to think of the idea first. Credit for the formation of the club goes to Agnes Williams who persuaded her husband, Eric (Director of the WEA - Illawarra Region) to run advertisements in the WEA program of courses.

(I say "apparent" because it has come to light since that there were and still are, several organisations in Wollongong which included walking amongst their activities, eg. NPA. Outdoor Club and Walking For Pleasure)

For the foundation members of the club, it all began when they replied to these advertisements which sought "registrations of expressions of interest in the formation of a Ramblers Club". On the 20th February 1991, 22 people attended and the rest as they say is history.

The WEA Ramblers club was founded and seven volunteers (most of whom were to yet to take their first serious steps in the bush) formed a steering committee. At their first official meeting held a week later, the committee set about with great enthusiasm to get the club "off on the right track" and to organise the first Autumn program. This was published on the 14th March and comprised 12 walks, one for each weekend of Autumn and a couple of midweek walks all of which were described in some detail and included maps of how to get there.

The first walk was held in Blackbutt Reserve at Shellharbour on the 24th March 1991. This 3km "easy" was led, appropriately by Agnes (and Eric) Williams (after several "recce's) and attracted "over 20 people" as they say in the media. Agnes and Eric provided some excellent commentary on the walk, the history of the reserve was recalled and many species of flora were identified and in no small way set the standard of information expected by wide eyed new walkers.

By the middle of the Winter program the number of members participating in our walks was averaging 35 and once peaked at 47. For reasons of safety, the sanity of our leaders and to provide more variety, the 1991 Spring program in-

cluded two walks every weekend and more midweek walks. And as a result of a survey amongst the membership, social events were included for the first time. At the end of the first year, club membership had grown to 265 ranging in age from 18 to 75 and our Summer Program comprised over 70 walks and included many more social events. Attendance at these walks had dropped to an average of 20 which was more than manageable and proved to be much more sociable events.

But by now some new members were finding some of these walks a bit of a "dawdle" and were looking for something a bit more challenging. And so the WEA Illawarra Bushwalking Club was born and all "Ramblers", who wished to engage in "more adventurous and serious bushwalking".

Today, the combined membership of both clubs is approximately 235 with over 70 joining the Bushwalking Club. Both clubs are managed by one executive committee and share a constitution. Through their affiliation with the WEA, the clubs carry both Public Liability and Sport Accident insurance for their members.

Rather than weakening the "Ramblers" club the effect of establishing the new "Bushwalkers" club has been to unite the bushwalkers fraternity of the Illawarra. The activities of both clubs are contained in the one publication allowing members to choose from a great variety of walks, camping trips, bushwalking oriented holidays, social events and meetings.

Members may avail themselves of the Clubs' own library consisting of over 100 bushwalking publications including "Walks in the Illawarra and Environments" which contains just over 200 bushwalks held since the inaugura-

Important Dates 1994

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| 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 |

Stop Press

All Clubs or friends of nature

May 14th-15th 1994

Saturday & Sunday 9am
Meet at the Heritage Centre
Govetts Leap Rd
Blackheath

Fire Damaged Track Maintainence

Join Forces with the NPWS one day or both days. For more info contact Robyn Cox 8972270.

tion of the club has recently been published for the benefit of new members.

"Ramblers" and "Bushwalkers" of the Illawarra welcome visitors and members of other bushwalking clubs to join in any of their activities. They would also be interested in exchanging programs with other clubs on a regular basis. If your club would be interested or you would like more information on the clubs' activities phone our Secretary Pam Taylor on (042) 281703 or Walks Co-ordinator Patricia (Trikky) Young on (042) 266071.

Compiled by Eric Taylor (Inaugural President).

S & R Training Weekend

The next training event being organised by the S&R committee will take place over the weekend of 19th/20th March. The format of the weekend will be a series of workshops on various topics, including survival techniques and helicopter procedures. There will also be some practical exercises. For those not equipped to camp out, bunk house accommodation will be available.

This event is suitable for both experienced members of S&R and for first timers. Bring gear as you would for a two day walk and include long trousers for the helicopter training sessions. The venue is the Cataract scout camp (Appin 1:25000, GR 987084) and participants can arrive from Friday evening onwards.

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.

Address all correspondence to

The Editor, The Bushwalker

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