

The Bushwalker

Newsletter of The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc.

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Deua Wilderness - What's Left Now?

Ending a cruel hoax last Christmas, the final decision to declare only a small fraction of the wilderness identified by the National Parks and Wildlife Service will do nothing to protect wilderness in NSW.

It also represents an embarrassing backdown by the NSW Government from an already insubstantial wilderness announcement in December 1993. The Premier was successfully censured by Parliament over his handling of the issue.

Only six of the ten wilderness areas nominated have been declared, and of those six, all are substantially reduced or sliced into pieces by horse tracks, 4WD trails and stock routes.

But what was the basis for rejecting so much wilderness that was identified by the National Parks and Wildlife Service? A brief analysis of the fate of Deua will reveal some of the issues.

Deua Diced and Dropped

Confederation nominated 84,000 ha of Deua National Park and the surrounding State Forest in consideration for declaration under the Wilderness Act in 1989. The National Parks and Wildlife Service confirmed that virtually all the area nominated should be declared as wilderness.

Since then, political forces and incompatible recreation interests have dominated the process. **Deua wilderness was reduced to half of the area nominated last December, and divided into three fragments, Burra Oulla, Central Deua and Woila Deua for four wheel drive corridors.** All three areas were within Deua National Park.

A revolt among National Party

and some rural Liberal Party backbenchers forced the Government to review the Christmas compromise. The Surveyor General was called in to determine any "existing interests" in Deua, Macleay Gorges and Goodradigbee wilderness areas that legally cannot be over-ridden. However, the Surveyor General strayed far from his terms of reference, and reported on dubious claims of existing interests, illegal usage of national parks by horseriders and four wheel drivers, mineral deposits in national parks, management of feral animals and weeds and his own view on what is wilderness.

Clearly, the statutory role of National Parks and Wildlife Service to advise the Minister for the Environment on matters concerning nomination and declaration of wilderness was being usurped. Yet more worrying was the Surveyor General's report to Cabinet and the accompanying maps. The incomplete report provided to the public summarised claims of those currently using the areas in question, or keen to maintain access. In most cases, their usage had not been formally agreed to and was incompatible with the management of the national park for conserving its natural values.

Following the completion of the Surveyor General's report, Cabinet announced the centre piece of the three wilderness fragments at Deua, Central Deua, would be dropped. The final declaration covered 34,000 ha.

The "interests" reported by the Surveyor General in Central Deua were a three km section of 4WD trail in the northern end, horse trails radiating from Bendethera Caves area across the entire Central Deua section, and an area covering about 70% of Central Deua, marked "Mineral Classification A".

What is the relevance of mineral deposits in National Parks, since mining and exploration is prohibited there?

Presumably, it was information such as this that influenced Government's decision to finally reject Macleay Gorges, the Goobragandra fragment of Goodradigbee and Central Deua wilderness areas.

Andrew Cox - Conservation Officer

Warragamba EIS release thwarted

The Kowmung Committee has claimed success in thwarting the release of the Warragamba Dam raising Environmental Impact Statement until after the March 1995 election.

Water Board spokesperson, Colin Judge told Penrith Press, "The Kowmung Committee have brought up so many environmental issues that have to be investigated, that's why we have had to delay the report." The EIS was initially due for release in August this year.

This is only a temporary reprieve, since it appears that the preferred option to safeguard the dam from failure during extreme flood events still involves plans to mitigate against floods by the 23m raising. As reported in previous editions of The Bushwalker, this would have massive impacts upstream of the present Lake Burragorang, especially on the Kowmung, Coxs, Wollondilly, Nattai and Kedumba Rivers.

In a test of its credibility amongst those living in areas currently affected by floods below the dam, the Committee held a public meeting at Penrith on the banks of the Nepean River in October. The meeting focused on downstream impacts, particularly

on the Hawkesbury-Nepean River. The 150 strong crowd, most living on the floodplain area, strongly opposed the raising of the dam.

A highly critical report, prepared by consulting Risk and Environmental Engineer, Jim Irish, and released at the meeting, slammed the secrecy of the Water Board and its lack of consultation. Mr Irish reports that Cabinet's decision to raise the dam was based on a flawed process and flawed documents.

He found that "although the Government and the Water Board have made a number of studies of flood issues in the Hawkesbury-Nepean valley over the last decade, only the most cursory details have been made public". The Board has carried its studies in isolation. Local authorities in the Hawkesbury-Nepean valley, community and environment groups have been denied any involvement or information".

The success of the Penrith meeting follows a meeting in August at Katoomba attended by more than 200 people. The audience unanimously passed a motion that "condemns the NSW Government and the Water Board for their decision to raise Warragamba Dam without putting the alternatives and costs before the public for public debate." It continued, "This meeting demands that the Government protect the whole of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park, its wilderness, wild rivers, wildlife and its unsurpassed recreation potential for Sydney residents."

Enough said! Support Confederation's and the Kowmung Committee's opposition to the dam raising project. Write a letter to your local politician or the Premier. Contact the Kowmung Committee at GPO Box 2090, Sydney 2000 for more details.

Don't Raise the Dam!

Pre-script (as opposed to postscript to the next article):

Andy Macqueen got home from scouring mountainsides for the Cessna and its occupants, to find that while he was away his son Geoff had discovered someone's remains while exploring Sassafras Gully, just near home. Geoff, a walker with the Springwood club, has not been able to participate in the official search and rescue activities as he is not yet 18!

Wilderness Rescue News

by Tony Parr

In October, seventy one searchers descended on Barrington Tops as part of the on-going search for a light aircraft lost, with five passengers, in a storm in 1981. The riddle of the disappearance was not solved but a further area of dense rainforest in the Wangat Valley has been ruled out as the location of the wreckage.

Together with members of Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue, from several Sydney and regional clubs, a team from the RAAF base at Richmond also lent a hand. As well as eliminating another few square kilometers from the search area, the weekend provided some valuable practice in searching under the most difficult of conditions.

Call outs and alerts have been few during the past couple of months. The dry, hot weather with high fire danger is probably keeping the less experienced bush users at home. In early October Wilderness Rescue assisted friends and family of a missing man, believed murdered in the Deep Creek Reserve near Narrabeen, to search for clues as to his whereabouts. Seventy eight searchers failed to uncover anything new and the search was abandoned late that day.

As we go to press Wilderness Rescue is helping Police in a search for a missing couple near Gosford. More news on this next issue.

National Parks News

by Tony Parr

Late in September the NP&WS reopened all of the access tracks into the Grose Valley. The closure of these tracks followed the bushfires during January which damaged parts of all of them and led to safety and environmental concerns. Since then much reconstruction has been carried out but still more remains to be done. Users of these tracks should be aware of this and take appropriate care when negotiating damaged sections.

Blue Gum Forest and the adjoining Acacia Flat camping area has been the subject of ongoing work by members of "Friends of Blue Gum". Flora and fauna surveys following the January

fires are on going and rationalisation of the camping area is underway. A survey questionnaire has been made available at the track heads and at the Heritage Centre. Users of this area are asked to cooperate in this survey so that facilities can be improved and, hopefully, damage reduced.

The problem of Scotch Broom and Gorse infestation of the Grose River and its tributaries has been increasing in recent years. An eradication programme is underway but the problem will need long term attention.

During August a group comprising NP&WS staff, Bush Care Network, Friends of Blue Gum and Blue Mountains City Council staff took part in "The Great Grose Gorse Walk", a week long weed eradication trek from Govetts Leap to Faulconbridge. This could become an annual event until the problem is solved.

Leadership Accreditation Update

by Maurice Smith

Readers may remember the lead article in the May 1993 issue of this newsletter. A series of meetings was held recently on the issue of leader accreditation and the skills required of leaders. Further meetings are to be held over the next few months. Confederation was and will be represented at those meetings.

... bushwalking clubs will need to be accredited when they are instructing club members in an activity

It seems to be that the only time bushwalking club leaders will need to be accredited is when they are instructing club members in an activity. The defining requirement being that the instructor or leader needs to be under a duty of care to the other participants in the activity. This of course then raises the question of what is meant by the duty of care and when will it apply. We don't have answers to these questions. However, we will keep you informed of developments.

Leader accreditation will have significant effects on the commercial operators in the outdoor recreation industry, for example, all those operators who advertise in *Wild* magazine. It will also have similar effects on groups where adults are taking children into the bush, such as, school groups, church groups, and the like.

President's Report

I'm going to talk about wine, women and song. (For this, my first report as your new president, I had planned to talk about national outdoor leader accreditation, or conservation. But your Confederation delegates can fill you in on such matters—can't they?)

Yes, it all happened at Confederation's AGM weekend at Mudgee. There were winery tours, talks by Dot Butler, and the World's Greatest Bushdance. A great victory was achieved for the environment when the band leader proclaimed us better dancers than the local 4WD club. To top the weekend off, it rained! More recently, we had the World's Greatest Ball (well, bushdance really) at Petersham.



"First lady" Liz McQueen (centre) gets the low down from outgoing President Robyn, and Andy Cox at Mudgee

Many thanks to Simon Knight and Tony Parr for organising these events.

But where were the thousands of bushwalkers who missed out on the fun? Surely they weren't all out walking?

The Bushwalker

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.

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The Mudgee AGM brought changes. In particular, Robyn Cox retired from an energetic two years as president, on the excuse that she is going to cycle round the world. Roger Lembit retired as secretary after years of dedicated work.

Our new secretary is Maurice Smith, already well known as our insurance specialist. He also drives the sub-committee on the leader accreditation issue ('NORLD'). I cannot do justice to everyone in this space, but I must acknowledge the continuing work of

outback in search of water resources, but having found none, I moved to the Blue Mountains. I now walk with the Springwood Bushwalking Club, and research and write bush history. Occasionally I earn a crust as an outdoor educator with a local school and



Guest speaker at the AGM, Dot Butler sits out a dance with Jan Wouters

TAFE. My wife Liz and our three offspring Kate, Geoff and Keith are all bushwalkers - though the last two prefer the vertical variety.

I'm a relatively new comer to Confederation and I've got much to learn.

Perhaps you would like to get involved too. Remember, your Confederation depends on the energies of those people from the bushwalking clubs who choose to dedicate time and interest to the cause—the fostering of recreational bushwalking.

**Andy Macqueen
President**



Insurance Questions - No. 3

by Maurice Smith
- Confederation's Insurance Officer

This article sets out more questions and answers on insurance, as well as a section dealing with recent changes to our insurance cover.

Questions and Answers

The questions relate to the personal accident cover for bushwalkers obtainable through Confederation.

- Q. Why aren't there certificates of currency issued for the personal accident cover, in the same manner as for those issued to clubs for the public liability cover?
- A. Public liability insurance collectively covers each affiliated club, its officers and members. Therefore it is very easy to issue these certificates. However, the personal accident insurance covers individual club members. It is not feasible for our insurance broker or for Confederation to issue individual certificates of currency for the thousands of bushwalkers covered for personal accident.
- Q. Is down-hill skiing an activity covered in our personal accident insurance policy?
- A. No, only cross-country skiing is covered. It is not that easy to precisely define both activities. In essence, where club members are skiing in resort areas, using lifts or tows, on groomed slopes, where ski patrols operate, this is probably regarded as constituting down hill skiing.
- Q. A club member injured on a bushwalk ends up in hospital a long way from home as a result. Her daughter incurs considerable expense in travelling to retrieve her mother from the hospital. Is this type of expense claimable?
- A. Yes. Reasonable additional expenses are now 50% claimable to a limit of \$1,000. This is a new benefit we have obtained with our insurance broker.

Recent Changes

Confederation recently changed its insurance broker and in doing so generally obtained a better deal for clubs and their members. There is both good news and bad news.

The good news first...

Our public liability cover was \$2 million and is now \$5 million.

The additional personal accident benefits relate to the time for which compensation for loss of income, cost of domestic help, home tutoring for full time students, is paid. This has been doubled to two years. Additional expenses incurred as a result of an accident are now 50% claimable to a limit of \$1,000.

For clubs insuring all their members for personal accident, those clubs now automatically have personal accident cover for their visitors as well. The number of visitors during the year is unlimited. However, any particular visitor is limited to a maximum of five visits in any 12 month period, subject to the provisions, if any, of your club's constitution.

For clubs not insuring their members for personal accident, individual club members may now obtain their individual personal accident cover. Similarly, for club members who desire to supplement their level of personal accident cover. Contact me through your club secretary for the details.

Now for the bad news....

If a club member suffers a permanent disability or dies as a result of an accident on a club sanctioned activity the amount payable now depends on the age of the member.

Fortunately, we have had no claims of this type since the start of providing personal accident cover for bushwalkers.

The age limits are:

- (a) children under the age of 5, have no cover,
- (b) between the ages of 5 and 17, have 20% of full cover,
- (c) adults over the age of 65, have 40% of full cover.

Adults between the ages of 18 and 65 have full cover.



Conservation Clippings

by Andrew Cox

WRITE IN ABOUT ROYAL

Now is the time to have your say on the future management of Royal National Park, Sydney's most popular national park.

The draft plan of management covers Royal National Park, Heathcote National Park and Garrawarra State Recreation Area. The plan can be obtained free of charge (see below for details). Responses to the report must be received by 20 February 1995.

The plan's release has been long awaited and was further delayed following the bushfires in January which razed most of the park, destroyed infrastructure and provided the opportunity to reassess all aspects of visitation.

plan to leave most tracks in the park closed for a further two years

Of interest to bushwalkers is the plan to leave most tracks in the park closed for a further two years, and proposed modifications to camping arrangements. Camping will only be permitted in selected areas.

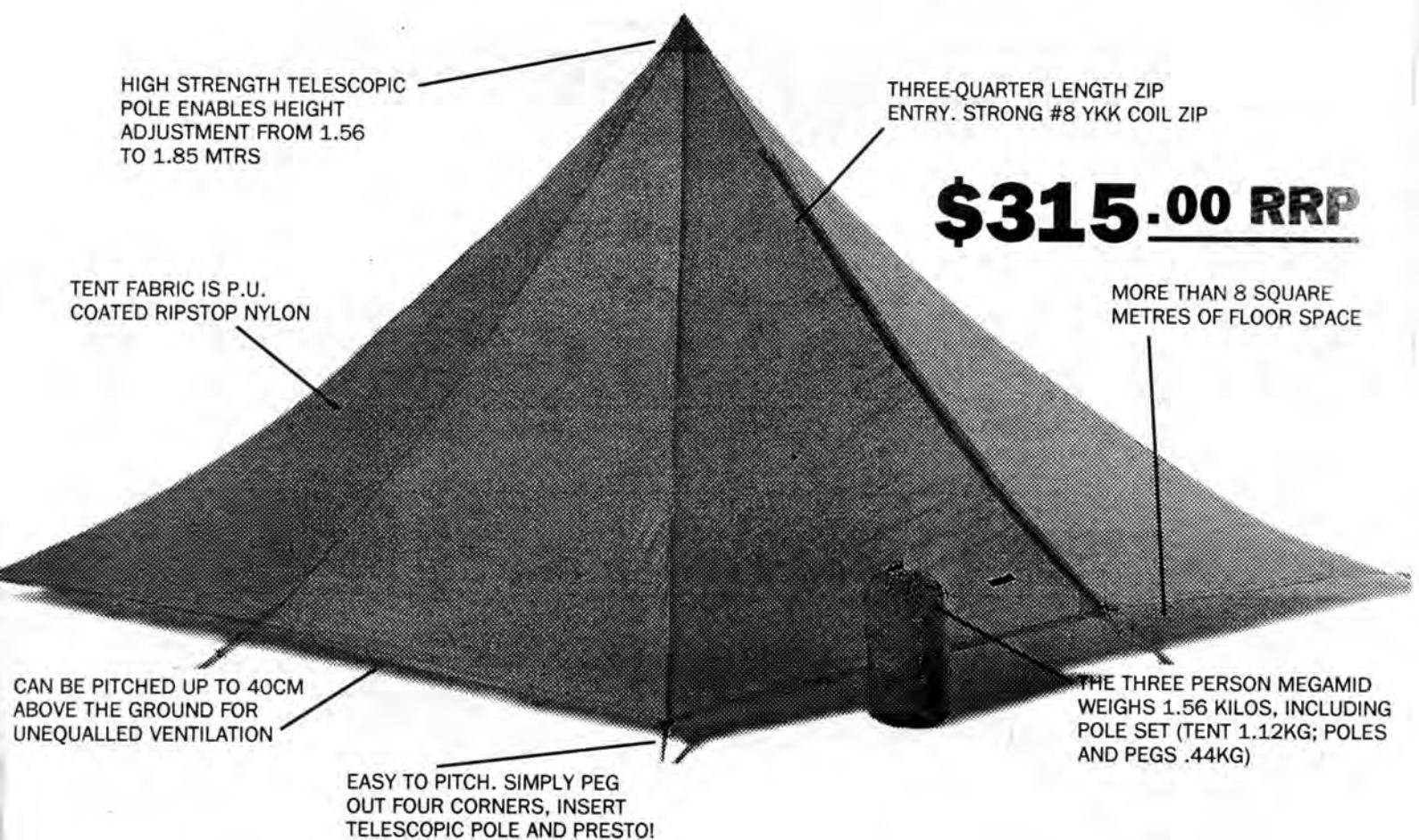
Huts to remain?

Also released at the same time will be a **Hut Conservation Plan**, which follows a study on the value of retaining the huts within the park at Era, Garie and Burning Palms. Comments on this plan are also invited by 20 February, however the plan will cost \$10.

Copies of the **Plan of Management** may be obtained from Royal National Park Visitor Centre, by writing to NPWS, PO Box 1967, Hurstville 2220 or by phoning (02) 585 6444.

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Paddy Pallin

Permits needed to walk in SW Tasmania?

Report of a meeting of the Tasmanian Walking Track Consultative Group

by David Noble (Sydney University Bushwalkers)

For many mainland bushwalkers, Tasmania becomes a second home during summer as they migrate south in search of cooler walking weather, spectacular scenery and world class wilderness. Indeed this practice has become so common and the Tasmanian wilderness becoming so well known that it is in grave danger of being loved to death.

When large parts of the Tasmanian wilderness received the recognition of being a World Heritage Area then more careful stewardship was a necessary consequence if Australia was to meet international expectations. Large parts of the World Heritage Area (WHA) are fragile alpine areas. Other parts are temperate rainforests. Both are subject to very high rainfalls. In recent years the impact of bushwalkers have been minimised by very successful and timely minimal impact bushwalking (MIB) educational campaigns and followup activities by rangers in the field.

However with a more scientific approach being undertaken to gauge the usage levels and the monitoring of actual impacts, it has become apparent that an alarming escalation of damage to the WHA by bushwalkers could develop. Some concerns are the erosion due to the trampling of walkers, the concentration of effects near recognised campsites and tracks forming in previously untracked areas.

To their credit, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service has been at the forefront of identifying the problems and coming up with management solutions. Some of which are likely to be contentious if introduced.

Bushwalkers enjoy the freedom to walk where they like in the wilderness. If a regulated system of permits was introduced that limits access to certain numbers of walkers and to only certain routes or areas then many would see this as a major infringement. But, such solutions may become necessary. The Service has produced a large report outlining the issues and various possible management strategies. An early draft of which was mailed out to interested bodies for comment. The stage has now

been set for decisions to be made regarding specific tracks and local management action. Several public meetings had been held in regional Tasmanian centres explaining issues (educating participants to the extent of the problems) and asking for feedback. The stage has now been reached where a 'Walking Track Consultative Group' has been set up which will meet regularly and allow for regular communication with the wider community.

At a first meeting to decide on the setup of the consultative group, after representation by John Chapman, the well known author of routes guides to Tasmanian walking areas, the consensus was that the group should have two mainland representatives. The reason being that mainlanders make up a large proportion of the users of the WHA (and hence are also responsible for a fair bit of the damage). After discussion by Mainland bushwalking federations I was nominated to the consultative group to represent mainland bushwalking clubs and John Chapman to represent guidebook authors.

On September 18th, I went to Tasmania to attend the next meeting. It was held in the town of Ross, approximately half way between Hobart and Launceston. About 30 people were at the meeting including a large group of Launceston Bushwalkers. Bryce McNair was in the Chair (he is the Chair of the Cradle Mtn N.P. Advisory Committee). He stated that at this meeting no voting would take place. It was to be a forum for the airing and recording of views. Points made were recorded on butchers paper and displayed.

Some of the points raised include -

- The present individual park entry fees will be replaced by a car based system. Money raised from entry into the WHA will be spent in the WHA.
- Martin Hawes (who did a lot of the original research work in the preparation of the report) outlined reasons for the possible introduction of a permit system. Permits may have to be introduced to control usage. There is a desire to keep presently trackless areas trackless. On existing tracks, too much usage

may alter the track so that it may have to be hardened (which can be both expensive and inappropriate in certain locations) and also cause crowding (bushwalkers don't want to wake up in a remote campsite in the Western Arthurs and find 40 other tents pitched there). A voluntary permit system may be the best approach.

- Any permit system would be used in conjunction with other methods - eg different methods of track hardening, restrictions on publicity (it was admitted that promotion of certain areas caused the problems). An education officer was going to be appointed.
- A possible permit system was discussed where voluntarily walkers could apply for a particular spot (via a toll free number). If you are told that X number of walkers are already visiting that spot then you may decide to go elsewhere. The systems could be set up to give priority to local clubs.
- There would still be a need for monitoring of user numbers. Logbooks at entry points had been redesigned, and this information could be supplemented with that provided by such devices as hinged duckboard switches and seismic rods.
- It may be desirable to restrict the bushwalkers bus services to only visit certain nodes. Publicity should be given to other areas such as the tracks on the Tasman Peninsula and the new Penguin to Cradle track. Also calenders and brochures should not have photos of overused areas such as the Western Arthurs.

To conclude, some sort of system will come in - it may be a permit system, it may not. There could be voluntary permits, voluntary regulation or self regulation. Whatever occurs, it was stressed, will not involve a heavy handed approach - it will be introduced like the MIB and fuel stove only initiatives.

Conservation Clipping #2

HELICOPTERS

- NO NATURAL QUIET

At a public meeting convened by Blue Mountains City Council during August, almost one hundred people approved a motion calling for helicopter joy flights to avoid disturbing "the natural quiet". Only those from a helicopter joy flight company refused to oppose demands to restrict low level helicopter flights.

This follows the trial of a "Fly Neighbourly" agreement earlier in the year, which set voluntary minimum flight heights of 1000 ft above ground level near Katoomba, the Grose and Jamison Valleys. However, even this agreement has not prevented regular reports of flights below 1000 ft. Prior to the agreement, **helicopters harassed walkers at lookouts and in valleys by hovering close to the ground.**

The agreement being formulated is relevant to all of NSW. By setting a precedent in the Blue Mountains, any minimum conditions would be easily applied to other national parks in NSW and Australia.

The Civil Aviation Authority, the controlling authority, stubbornly

refuses to force an environmental impact statement to be prepared, or to raise minimum heights.

Perhaps the meeting's thumbs down to low level helicopter flights will give them a message that is loud and clear. As loud and clear as helicopters have been to residents and bushwalkers in the Blue Mountains over recent years!

Andrew Cox

Letter To The Editor

Rick Jamieson's letter (Spring issue) shows he has failed to understand an essential point of my previous letter. I am not arguing for exclusive rights for bushwalking clubs in relation to exploratory walking. I am arguing for equal rights for present and future generations to be able to experience the bush in much the same condition as I and earlier walkers, including Jamieson, were able to enjoy. It is he who is selfish and narrow-minded.

My motivation is not seeking to lock the area up for my own use. I have done the exploratory walks. Next time I go, I will know what is around the next

corner. Rather, I am seeking to allow future walkers to find the tunnels, the water jumps and crush their knuckles at the top of the abseils themselves.

The wonder of exploring a new area should be available to new generations of bushwalkers. Regrettably, publications such as Jamieson's prevent this, by providing excessive detail and promoting over-use.

Jamieson is also wrong in asserting that the NPWS ban on campfires in the Wollangambe area is aimed at reducing incidence of bushfires. Rather, the Service perceives that the canyons are a fragile and unique area which need protection from over-use. Many rare or threatened plant species occur in the canyon environment. incidentally, I share Jamieson's disapproval of the ban which I believe to be ill conceived.

My continents do not demonstrate a so-called rift between members of clubs and other walkers including scouts. Rather they represent a rift in understanding between walkers who care deeply about the bush and the enjoyment of future walkers and those who seek to impose their own values regardless of others and the environment.

Roger Lembit



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DRAMA ON THE COX RIVER

by Joseph Krauss

I met for a hard bush walk with a group of 17 people on Sunday 21st August, to Carlons Farm, Tinpot Mountain, Godara Peak and Breakfast Creek.

At 9am we left Pack Saddlers & started walking uphill in the Blue Mountains ranges, overlooking Megalong Valley, Cox River and as far as Warragamba Dam.

Around 1pm we headed down a rocky mountain towards the bank of the Cox River. With no visible path, the terrain was very rocky and slippery, zigzagging downhill was difficult on account of the steepness. Bushes growing out of the dry soil were loose, and we were all sliding on our bottoms.

300 metres from the river, I stepped on a rock which slid under my weight, and I fell on my back, sliding down, grabbing dry bushes, but this was of no help in slowing down. I hit a huge rock, and my right foot got trapped between rocks, my body being thrown forward. This probably stopped my head hitting another rock and causing more damage. I managed to pull myself and bend towards my injured ankle, when my fellow walkers came to my help. My right boot was taken off with great difficulty.

We still had to travel another 300 me-

tres towards the river in very steep terrain. Carrying me was out of the question, so I lowered myself on my backside, with the help of my hands, sliding with my foot in the air.

Coming on the sandy bank of the river we had a quick lunch, and a rescue operation was decided. Luckily, a nurse in our team had some dressing and bandaged my foot. I had my mobile phone in my rucksack, but no signals could be obtained in the valley.

It was decided that the group should return to our base, and try the phone on a higher location, in order to contact the Riding School for a pair of horses, and eventually the Emergency Service for help.

Ian Adair and Gordon Wynn stayed back with me and collected wood for a fire, in the event of having to spend the night there. Ian collected some food which another group of walkers kindly left for us, in case we stayed for the night.

For my part, I was resting on my back with my foot in the air, and hoping some miracle would happen. Nearly 4pm and the sun was down behind the mountain's clouds, the air was getting cold. We had resigned ourselves to an overnight stay near the river.

Suddenly, a Channel 9 helicopter appeared circling overhead and then disappeared. Realising that the smoke was

obscuring our location, Ian took his pink shirt off, frantically signalling the pilot. Soon, they were circling over us again, and luckily landed 20 metres away. The TV crew interviewed us and took some films. Also, they informed us that a rescue helicopter was on the way. Within a few minutes this second helicopter landed. I was carried aboard and flown to Katoomba Hospital. Ian and Gordon were taken back by Channel 9 to Pack Saddlers, where they retrieved the cars.

After an X Ray was taken, I was informed that my foot was fractured and an operation would be necessary. It was already 7 PM when I rang home to inform my wife of the accident, and that I would be transferred by ambulance to Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney.

They were unable to reduce the fracture manually, and an operation was scheduled for the next day, Monday. This was performed at 8 PM by Dr H. Coolican, Orthopaedic Surgeon. After 3 nights in hospital, I am back home, recuperating and lucky to be alive.

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to the crew of the Helicopter Rescue Service, for the excellent help I received. Special thanks to Ian and Gordon for keeping my spirits up while in agony on the banks of the Cox River.

The Kowmung River's Journey

by Ashley Burke

The Kowmung River is the main artery of the Kanangra Boyd National Park, Southern Blue Mountains, and is one of the largest wild and unspoilt rivers in New South Wales.

It has its source at the junction of the Hollanders and Tuglow rivers, about 15 kilometres south of Jenolan Caves. Soon after its source in this rolling high country the Kowmung River loses much of its elevation in the spectacular Morong Deep, a granite chasm whose sheer walls echo the sound of thundering cascades as the river fights its way towards more placid reaches downstream.

This is one of the least frequently visited parts of the Kowmung, particularly during the winter months. In summer the warm water makes it possible to journey the length of Morong Deep, usually by swimming or liloing through the long deep pools. Whilst the Deep can be done in a weekend, a three day trip through this part of the Kowmung would be much more rewarding.

The river then winds its way in a large loop around the southern end of the Boyd Plateau, its prevailing direction easterly as it encircles the Kanangra Walls. This middle section deservedly earns the Kowmung the reputation of "Wild River" because it runs through the heart of some of the most rugged and remote terrain in the Blue Mountains area.

sound of cascading water and the sight of rising spray

Rising steeply from the river bank are massive ridge systems whose steep ramparts are dissected by numerous creeks and minor gorges. Many of these creeks contain precipitous waterfalls and the sound of cascading water and the sight of rising spray can bless the ears and pump the adrenalin of the keen abseiler or bushwalker.

The tributary creeks are also well endowed with crystal clear pools which shimmer and sparkle like jewels in the heart of the Kowmung wilderness. Some of these tributaries such as Church Creek and Billy's Creek contain lime-

stone caves and these can be explored easily with no more than a headlamp as they are much less extensive than the nearby Colong Caves.

This region is most frequently accessed from the Boyd Range via the University Rover Trail, but may also be accessed from the south by taking any of the ridges or creeks to the Kowmung from the Yerranderie Road. Hatchers Hollow offers the best camping in this area. Hanrahans Ridge is well worth a visit, if for no other reason than to stop at "The Water Saddle", an unusual geographical feature where the river bed rises almost to the level of the ridge itself, thereby offering water to the weary climber as they pass through the saddle.

It will be a sad day when the Kowmung dies so that the people of Sydney can run their dishwashers, wash their cars ...

The increased volume of water from these tributary creeks placates the Kowmung as it turns north-east for the final leg of its journey to the Coxs River and Lake Burragorang. Here the rapids are fewer and gentler and the pools longer and stiller than in the more constricted gorges upstream.

The ridges flanking this part of the river, however, are no less precipitous and it is a joy to traverse the open ridges up to Scotts Main Range on the Eastern side or to the Gingra and Ti Willa Ranges on the West. Superb camping may be had on the grassy flats on the river between Christys and Ti Willa Creeks and this part of the Kowmung is the most commonly visited section, being readily accessible from Kanangra Walls via the Gingra and Bullhead Ranges.

The final ten kilometres of the Kowmung cuts through the quartzite Walls of Mt Cookem to the East and the lower Gangerang Range to the West. This section of gorge is most commonly viewed by walkers travelling the popular walking route from Katoomba to Mittagong as they make their way up Mt Cookem and along the top of

Cookem Walls. Other parties venture into the gorge from the Coxs River or from the Gangerang range and it can be included in trips starting from Megalong Valley or Katoomba via the Narrow Neck and Wild Dog Mountains.

It is this lower Kowmung gorge which is most directly threatened by the encroaching tendrils of the Coxs River arm of Lake Burragorang. If the State Government's plan to raise the wall of Warragamba Dam comes into effect then the potential would exist for the stagnant waters of the Warragamba impoundment to destroy the lower Kowmung and Coxs Rivers forever. At times of flood the waters of Lake Burragorang would be allowed to rise above the current full storage level and inundate these wild gorges.

After slow release of this excess water the legacy of flood mitigation would leave behind silted river beds, dead vegetation, stagnant and rotting pools and infestations of weeds. All of these things are an anathema to those with an affinity for this pristine wilderness area. And what is most disturbing of all, the new dam structure would pose no structural impediment to a permanent rise to the full storage level of Lake Burragorang.

It would take no more than the sweep of a pen and the closing of a valve to drown the lower Kowmung forever. It will be a sad day when the Kowmung dies so that the people of Sydney can run their dishwashers, wash their cars and squander our precious water resources. It is the responsibility for us as the inhabitants of the driest continent on Earth to comply with the standards that our environment imposes on us rather than to subjugate our environment so that it can meet the living standards that we impose on it.



Parked Car Vandalism

by Tony Parr

I am sure that all of our readers are worried by the dramatic increase in vandalism aimed at bushwalkers motor vehicles that is being experienced at a number of popular car parking areas.

Probably of most concern are the Kanangra Walls and Mt Tomah parking areas where damage to vehicles is occurring on a regular basis.

Local police are aware of the problem but because of the remoteness of these car parks there is little that they can do. Unfortunately there are few alternative parking spots so the only advice available is to **ensure that nothing of value is left visible inside your car**. This, of course, is of little consolation when the vandals simply break windows to gain access to check the contents.

Bus in to avoid break-ins

I am currently trying to organise one of the Blue Mountains bus companies to operate regular shuttle services to locations such as Kanangra. They seem interested but say that they need to have an indication of the likely market. If clubs, or individuals, can see a future for this service give me a call, Tony Parr, on (047) 58 7421.

The company that I am talking to has a couple of mini buses available and will always be prepared to quote for groups wanting transport to any drop off points within the greater Blue Mountains or even further afield.

Confederation Office Bearers 1994/95

Position	Name	Club
President	Andy Macqueen	Springwood
Senior Vice-President	Tim Fisher	Span Outdoors
Junior Vice-President	Simon Knight	Sutherland
Secretary	Maurice Smith	Sutherland
Treasurer	Diana Peters	Fairfield
Public Officer	Jim Callaway	Sydney Bush Walkers
Tracks & Access	Michael Maack	Springwood
Assistant Secretary	Alan Dixon	Coast & Mountain Wlkrs
Minutes Secretary	Ken Smith	Sydney Bush Walkers
Search & Rescue	Keith Maxwell	Mt. Druitt
Conservation	Andrew Cox	Sydney University
Magazine Editor	David Noble	Sydney University

FOR YOUR 1995 DIARY

Following is the list of main Confederation events next year. Enter them in your new diary now!!

Remote area emergencies training weekend	1-2	April
First Aid Course*	27-28	May
Wilderness Navigation Shield Rogaine	24-25	June
Confederation AGM and bushwalk	19-20	August
Confederation Bush Dance	22	September
Wilderness Rescue Training	14-15	October
First Aid Course	28-29	October

*These courses are the accredited St John's Senior First Aid course.

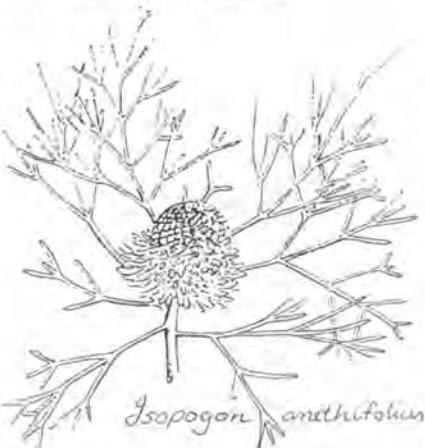
Accredited courses in **Remote Area First Aid** will also be run, according to demand. Those interested please contact Keith Maxwell (B) 02 805 8326 (H) 02 622 0049

The Botanical Bushwalker

excerpt from an article by Belinda Medlyn (Span)
illustrations by Craig Allen

PROTEACEAE - the protea family

Banksia ericifolia. The banksias are easy to recognise because of their spike-like flowers, and their furry cones with woody 'lips' (follicles) which gave rise to the Big Bad Banksia Men. This one is called the 'Lantern' Banksia because its flowers are fiery orange.



Isopogon anethifolius. There's two genera which have similar fruits: the Isopogons have rounded, woody cones (the plants are called 'Drumsticks') and the Petrophiles have similar cones, which are more cylindrical (they're called 'Conesticks'). There's two species in each genus in this area and it can take a little practice to be able to definitely say which is which. Fortunately they grow in the same habitat - I've seen three or four species lined up in a row, on a ridge in the western Blue Mts, which makes comparison quite easy!

Also in this group are the grevilleas (distinguished by their toothbrush-like flowers), the waratah, the hakeas (by their evil-looking beaked woody nuts) and the mountain devil, *Lamertia formosa* (devil because of its dog-head shaped fruit, and because it's devilishly prickly to walk through!)



NEW RESCUE DEVICE

The following letter appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 26 October, 1936:

Sir - Now that the hiking season is with us, and the certainty of small parties making cross-country walks, perhaps a hint from an old bushman might not be out of place. Firstly, I would suggest that the Government insist on all hiking parties, whose intentions it is to make a cross-country walk through an unknown part of the bush, carrying with them an ordinary bugle.

Being acquainted with most of the military calls, I would suggest that another simple one for those lost - say, four Gs - be instituted. Every one knows how the sound of the bugle in a mountain gully on a quiet night would sound. It may be heard for miles.

If - as recently - it became necessary to send out a search party, they also should carry a bugle, and give the same "lost" call. In this way it may be the means of earlier rescue, and absence of anxiety for those mostly concerned.

I am, etc, A.H.M.

So you think the guy was cracked and his idea was funny? Well, just think, in a few years someone will advocate that all bushwalkers have an electronic beacon inserted under their skin - and the Government might take the suggestion seriously. Read Andy Macqueen's article (next issue), and have a careful think about where technology and regulation is taking us.

Memories of Burragorang before the Dam

For many years I have looked back and remembered with nostalgia to the early days of my life that I spent in Burragorang Valley before it was flooded.

My father Robert Johnson, a well known and successful landscape artist was probably the first of many artists to "discover" the valley. Many paintings and prints of the valley hang in Australian homes.

About 1931 my brother and I, both under 10 years and our mother were taken by our father for our first visit to the valley. We stayed on the farm "Bimlow" which ran a guest house as did many other farms in Burragorang. It was the holiday of my young life. I learned to ride and explored a little way up and down the quiet valley road between farms. The road followed close to the Wollondilly River where huge river oaks shaded the small shallow rapids and the deep, clear pools where guests from the farms swarm.

The valley has a deep U-shape; the valley floor ranging about 1km to 2km wide is flat. The thickly forested slopes rose steeply to the spectacular sandstone cliffs and escarpment.

I was about 15 when I climbed to the top of Mount Bimlow with my father and ran all the way down as the afternoon light faded to dusk.

Later in my early twenties I went back to the valley many times to stay at Bimlow. I visited many of the people living there, being introduced by the Maxwells. Most visiting was done on horseback.

I listened to the stories of earlier days when Aboriginals lived there and of how wagons were first introduced to the valley by lowering them over the cliff tops. I heard about the dance floor at Kanangra Walls which was built in a cave. People from the valley perhaps often take many cattle up to the leases there, met and spent a night camping and dancing. Their musical instruments would be carried on top of a pack horse load of bedding and food.

Many of the valley farmers had cattle runs leased in the Kanangra, Cox and Kowmung areas. For a few years I used to ride with the Bimlow people taking out cattle or mustering them and bringing them out of these wilderness areas to the markets at Camden. Often young cattle born in the mountains would be missed and when mustered a year or two later were very wild and some exciting rides were experienced. One learned to stay on a sure footed pony and use a stock whip on those week-long musters.

During these years that I describe many bushwalkers walked with camping equipment and food; in those days often the old "Dungala" type pack, for the weekend. They usually came by train to Camden and would ride in Pippin's Service Car into the valley. There were other ways they climbed in and out of the valley as well.

For some years while I was still in my twenties the dam surveyors lodged at Bimlow. A lot of the farm people never believed that Warragamba Dam would be built.

**Heather Roy
NPA**

FRIENDS ACTIVITIES NETWORK - "FRIENDSHIP FIRST"

We are a diverse group of single people generally in the 30's to 40's age range who have established a club to promote like interests and social objectives.

Our concept of "Friendship First" accommodates the social aspirations of those single people who simply want the opportunity to meet other single men and women (we are just a little short of guys) without the strain and concern of suddenly being confronted with a social single life.

We are not "matchmakers" but we offer the opportunity of new friendships for single people through a comprehensive range of social functions and outings in a comfortable, non-stressful social environment.

Please contact Peter on 909 3306

Stuart on 906 3131 or Joanne on 955 7904

or simply write to FAN PO Box 970 Neutral Bay 2089
highlighting your contact phone No and address

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